

The first ever Stationery and Office Products show (SOPX) is taking place next month. We present a preview to get your juices flowing.

show time

SOPX

for a while now, the industry has faced a partisan choice when deciding which events to attend. A wide selection of dealer group events, wholesaler roadshows and/or exhibitions have catered for the face-to-face marketing needs of the industry. Of course, that means seeing the industry through the organiser's lens. It wasn't always this way and, with the launch of the independent Stationery and Office Products Show taking place for the first time at London's Business Design Centre on 8 – 9 April, it shall again be as it once was (as the elves might have put it in Lord of the Rings).

According to Christopher Leonard-Morgan, the MD of organizer, First Events, the original idea for an all-industry show came first from a supplier to the industry.

"It was clear after we had researched that there was a genuine gap in the market for an independent, dedicated trade-only exhibition for the whole marketplace," he says. "A lot of people want an event where all suppliers can show their full ranges to all dealers and resellers, regardless of their trade affiliations and partnerships. SOPX taps into this desire, allowing visitors and exhibitors a wonderful

opportunity to meet face-to-face, forge new relationships and cement existing ones too."

STRONG RESPONSE

When news of the show first started to spread around the industry, some people had misgivings. The sun went down on the last show of this kind, BOSS Federation's TOPS, when the dealer groups began to run their own events. Despite this still being very much the lay of the land, the industry seems ready again for an all-inclusive event, and one where it doesn't mean sharing the exhibition space with Europe and the world, as you do at Paperworld.

"The market is responding to the fact that this is an all-industry event. There isn't anything like it in the UK because it's the only trade show at which all suppliers can exhibit and show their full range of products to dealers and resellers from the whole industry. It's an all-channel show," says Leonard-Morgan. "We've also responded to changing market dynamics by putting together a cost-effective event where stand sizes are no bigger than 36 metres and each exhibitor gets a fantastic, value-for-money, all-inclusive package."



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The canteen at the venue

AT THE SHOW

So, what will dealers and their sales teams find at the new event? Besides the exhibition, the exhibition house, GfK will be giving free 30 minute talks on which categories are driving growth within the office products market and their impact on the industry. The sessions will run on both days of the show and will be available on a first come, first served basis to visitors.

“Having GfK on board is great news for the show, for both exhibitors and visitors. I’m sure the seminars will be hugely popular. In business, knowledge is power and these



Exhibitor list

*(Correct at time of going to print.
Check the website for updates.)*

Acme United Europe
Acorn Office Accessories
Advanced Stamp and Plate
AF International
Alba UK
Ampac Security Products
Antalis
Applied Management
Armor SA
Axis First
Baruch Enterprises
Beta Distribution Plc
BIC UK
BlueSky Systems Solutions
Bong UK
BOSS Federation
Bostik
Bretford Manufacturing
Brother UK
Calidore Computer Systems
Cathedral Products (UK)
Clifford Packaging
Computers Unlimited
CPU Holders4U
Crafter’s Companion
Debatin UK
EC12 Europe
Emgee
Esposti
Falcon International Bags
FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council)
G H Neville
GBA Pen Company
GfK Marketing Services
Glue Dots International
Gripping Stuff International
Heart Systems
Herlitz UK
Herma GmbH
Howard Smith Paper Office & Retail
Integra Office Solutions
Last Bros (Printers)
Mailopeners
Manuscript Pen Company
Mark C Brown
Markingworld
MSE
Nestle UK
Neville UK Plc
Oscar Collections
Pentel (Stationery)
Phoenix Safe Co
Pierre Henry UK
Pioneer Marking Devices
Prima Business Control Systems
Print-Rite
Promaxx Print-Yourself Products
Pukka Pads
Reading Guide Co
Remarkable (Pencils)
Renz UK
Robinson Young
Rottner Security UK
Sakura Color Products
Salepoint
Sentry Safe UK
Shanghai Rizan Trading
Silvine
Smart Innovations
Smead UK
Staedtler (UK)
Systemcare Marketing
Talk Paper
Tetley GB
The Folding Machine Company
The Hira Co
Tipp-Ex
Vivid Laminating Technologies
Wallace Cameron & Co
William Sinclair & Sons (Stationers)

→ Besides the exhibition, the exhibition house, GfK will be giving free 30 minute talks on which categories are driving growth within the office products market and their impact on the industry

seminars will empower SOPX visitors by providing them with invaluable up-to-date information about the current health of the OP market, and where to look for sales growth.”

Accompanying this, many organizations, such as the BOSS Federation and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) will use SOPX as a platform to brief the industry with business updates and information, networking opportunities, free refreshments, “a giant Blu-Tack spider and a well stocked bar! And that’s just for starters!” adds Leonard-Morgan. “But above all else, there will be lots of products from lots of suppliers, including many of the industry’s biggest names such as Staedtler, Antalis, Brother and Smead, and companies who don’t show anywhere else in the UK. Keep an eye on the SOPX website for developments!” ●

First events' Christopher Leonard-Morgan



About the organizer

First Events has a proven track record in organising a variety of successful exhibitions in the home improvements, garden, housewares and healthcare markets. The biggest show it has organised so far is the DIY & Garden Show at Earls Court in London, with 250 stands and 4,000 visitors. The company's philosophy is to only organise events that meet a genuine need, and which are enjoyable and productive for both exhibitors and visitors.

MAKE THE MOST OF THE SHOW

1. Check out the exhibition and *Dealer Support* websites each week for the latest show news. www.sopx.co.uk and www.dealersupport.co.uk.
2. Register in advance to receive your badge and show planner/preview before the show, and save time on arrival.
3. Go through the exhibitor list beforehand to see who is showing what – where else can you see so many suppliers and so many different products in such a short space of time?
4. Make appointments beforehand with people you particularly want to see.
5. Take plenty of business cards.
6. Walk around with your eyes really open and on the stands, not looking at your feet!
7. Allow enough time for your visit.
8. Attend the free GfK seminar on what's selling and what's likely to in the year ahead.
9. Use the special Buyers' Lounge and talk to other visitors while having a complimentary cup of tea or