

talking BUSINESS

EXPO VISITORS COME READY TO INVEST

➔ There may have been only one Business Opportunities & Franchise Expo in New Zealand in 2009 but it was definitely a good one. Despite the prevailing economic gloom, visitors to the Auckland Expo in August were feeling positive. As exhibitor Aaron Power of Just Cabins put it, 'That was the best show ever. I'm not sure why, but people wanted to buy! I am working on some great leads at the moment.'

And Daniel Cloete, national franchise manager of sponsors Westpac confirmed, 'It was an excellent Expo for us with significantly higher enquiry levels than last year.'

In fact, numbers through the doors were almost double 2008 levels and everyone seemed happy with the range of opportunities on display. The quality of the stands was noticeably higher than in previous years and the annual Showstopper award for best stand was keenly contested. The winner was Graffiti Doctor, whose stand made excellent use of the height of the exhibition hall to proclaim its message far and wide. Having their distinctive van and actual examples of 'before and after' work on display created a real draw. But you didn't need to have a highly visual product to appeal to the crowds, as Craig Lawson of First Class Accounts reported a month after the event: 'We have signed two franchisees and are following up on another two potential franchisees from the Auckland Expo.'

The Expo's have become firm fixtures on the calendar for many organisations with franchisors and service providers eager to meet potential buyers face-to-face. As Brett Rodger of organisers Expro



explains, 'The Expo format has evolved over the years to provide a chance for visitors to talk to franchisors – and sometimes franchisees – in reasonably relaxed surroundings. Wider aisles and a steady flow of traffic mean that no-one need feel pressured and for serious or confidential conversations there are private meeting spaces available. Our full programme of free seminars helps people learn more about the whole business of self-employment and our expert panel and wide range of exhibitors ensures that they can always get the advice they need.'

Although the economic situation dictated that there was no Expo in Christchurch this year. Brett is keen to see the South Island back on the schedule for 2010. 'Basically, the message is "Book early" for both Auckland and Christchurch,' he says. 'We've had a lot of interest already for both events and are keen to see them back bigger and better in both cities. The New Zealand Expo's have a good reputation not just with New Zealand exhibitors but with our Australian clients too. It seems Kiwis like to meet the people behind the brands – and that's exactly what the Expo's are about. If you want to meet serious business buyers, contact me now to book your space for next year.' ■

ADVERTISER INFO



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