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Beyond The Guesswork

A Practical Guide to Using AI to Understand Exhibition
Performance

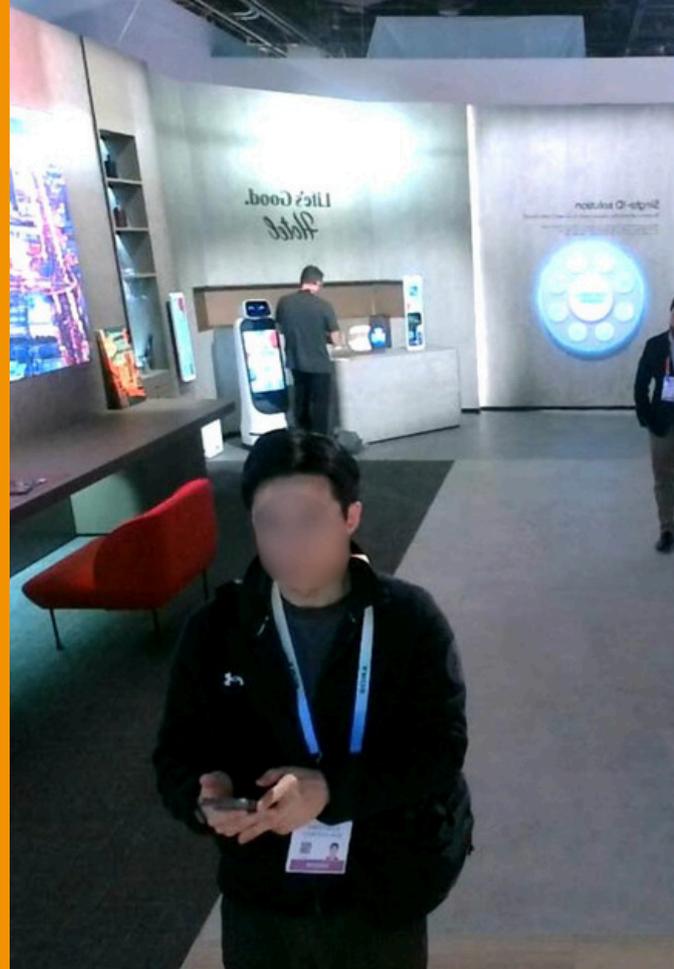
How behavioural insight is transforming ROI for congresses
and trade shows

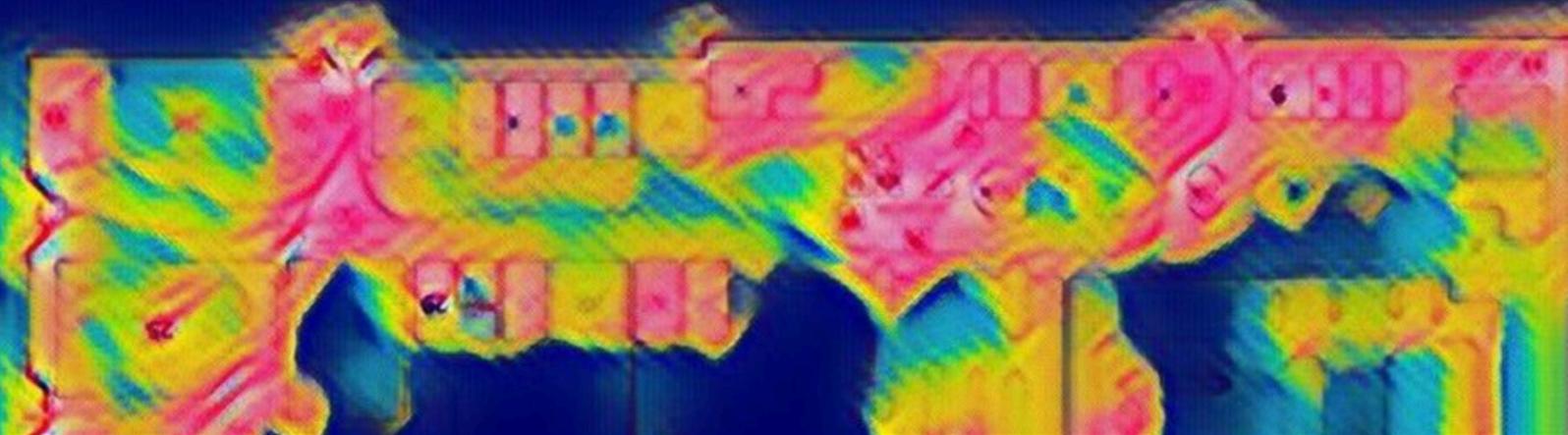
A New Era of Accountability

Exhibitions remain one of the most significant and resource-intensive elements of a marketing programme. They consume time, budget and effort, yet measuring true performance has always been difficult. Stand traffic may look healthy and conversations may feel promising, but traditional metrics rarely reveal what actually mattered.

Most measurement methods focus on counting visitors rather than understanding their behaviour. This makes it hard to distinguish genuine engagement from casual interest, which in turn makes it challenging to justify spend or improve performance year on year.

AI-powered behavioural insight offers a more accurate and objective view. It reveals how visitors move, where they spend time and what captures their attention. This guide introduces the principles behind this technology and explains how exhibitors can use it to gain clarity, strengthen decision-making and improve outcomes.





1. The Limits of Traditional Exhibition Measurement

Common indicators such as badge scans, footfall numbers and team observations provide only part of the picture. They do not reveal:

- Who engaged meaningfully
- What content captured interest
- How behaviour varied across demographics
- Which areas of the stand delivered value
- Which parts underperformed

A short visit and a sustained interaction often register in the same way, despite being very different in value. This lack of distinction makes it difficult for teams to justify investment or apply learning from one exhibition to the next.

2. What AI Sensor Technology Makes Possible

AI-powered audience measurement translates physical behaviour into measurable engagement. Sensors placed discreetly around the stand capture movement, posture, dwell time and direction of attention. This creates a clear picture of how visitors interact with each part of the stand. The technology:

- Identifies who approached or paused
- Measures how long visitors engaged
- Compares performance across zones
- Highlights content that resonates
- Estimates basic demographic patterns

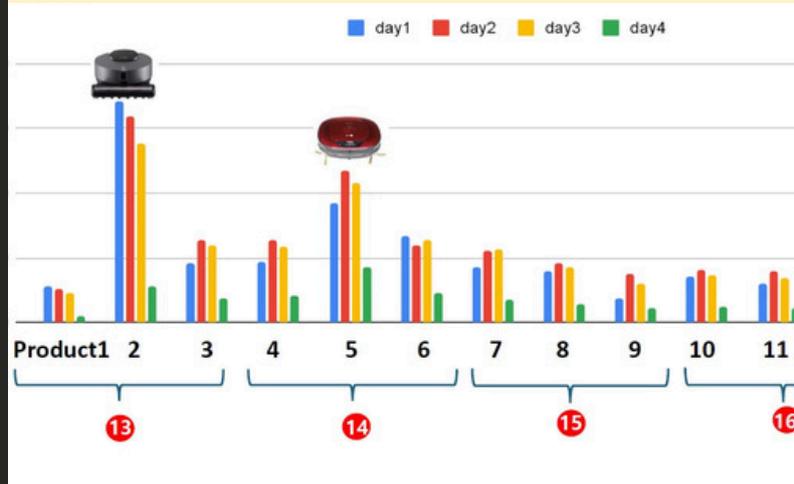
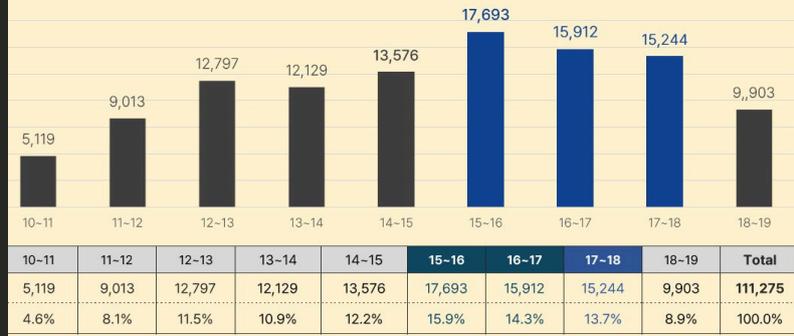
All data is fully anonymised and compliant with GDPR, CPRA and the EU AI Act. No images are stored and no individuals are identified.

3. The Metrics That Matter

The system provides several useful indicators that move beyond simple footfall.

- Pass Visitors who enter the stand area
- Near Visitors who approach a specific zone
- Glance Visitors who look toward a display or message
- Attention Visitors who show sustained focus
- Attraction and Interest Visitors who demonstrate deeper engagement through proximity and dwell time

Together, these metrics reveal how well each part of the stand performs and what content creates genuine value.



4. Improving Performance in Real Time

One of the most powerful advantages of AI measurement is its ability to inform decisions during the event. Teams can identify:

- High-performing content that deserves more prominence
- Underperforming areas that may need repositioning
- Peak traffic periods that require extra staffing
- Zones that feel congested or overlooked

This allows exhibitors to refine the stand across multi-day events and improve outcomes immediately rather than waiting for post-event reports.





5. What Behavioural Insight Reveals

Recent deployments have shown:

- Secondary product areas often outperform those positioned as the main focus
- Interactive content attracts younger audiences, while static displays hold senior clinicians for longer
- Some content draws strong initial interest but fails to sustain attention
- Visitor flow does not always follow expected patterns
- Dwell time in specific zones correlates closely with post-event lead quality

These findings highlight the value of objective insight. They also show how easily assumptions can mislead teams without behavioural data.

6. The Activate Exhibition Insight

Framework

To help teams apply these findings, we use a simple model.

Behaviour

How visitors move and where they go.

Engagement

How long they stay and how they interact.

Content

Which messages or displays perform well.

Action

What to change during the event and what to redesign next time.

This framework turns data into clear, practical decisions.

7. An AI-Ready Exhibition Checklist

Before the event

- Define priority audiences
- Identify the messages that need validation
- Map high-value areas on the stand

During the event

- Review engagement metrics daily
- Adjust placement of content if needed
- Align staffing to engagement peaks

After the event

- Compare performance across zones
- Identify which messages drove attention
- Use insight to inform next year's design

8. Looking Ahead

Exhibitions are entering a period where measurement will become more rigorous and more behaviour-led. As budgets tighten and expectations rise, teams will increasingly rely on evidence rather than assumption to justify investment.

Behavioural insight helps exhibitors understand what truly works. It also provides a foundation for smarter design, stronger engagement and better decision-making.



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See the Technology in Action

If you would like to understand how AI-powered behavioural insight could shape your next exhibition, our team can walk you through recent examples.



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