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Stall / Tabling guide

## Advantages of stalls / tables

Setting up a stall/table during an event or at a busy area of town, is a very effective form of spreading awareness. Leafleting & demonstrations allow for a large number of people to be exposed to a particular message, but are often limited with relation to the amount of information that can be shared and are also limiting in terms of more detailed discussions.

On the other hand, stalls and tables help provide a platform for a greater degree of interaction with your target audience. It allows for greater space for information to be displayed, allows for the placement of a variety of different messages and also serves as a platform for more detailed discussions with your target audience. Stalls and tables are also a great platform for identification of potential volunteers.

## Planning your stall / table

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**Location:** In the case of an event (could be a social event, a rock concert, festivals etc), contact the organisers and request for a stall as early as possible. Often events have a certain amount of stall kept aside for social purposes, which can be booked either free of charge or for a reduced fee.

You do not need to limit yourself to setting up stalls / tables only during events. You can also set up tables around busy areas of town, in office complexes, schools & colleges, clubs, the possibilities are endless. What you require is an area where there is a large group of people, with time on their hands, who can come and understand more about the message that you are trying to communicate.

Given that stalls/tables do take up space and can come in the way of traffic, it is important that you seek permission from the relevant authorities prior to your event.

**Visuals:** Make appropriate use of visuals to ensure a visual connect with your audience, to entice them to approach the stall to gain further information. While using visuals, keep the following in mind:

- Use bright colourful posters and keep them evenly spread out.
- Keep posters at eye range, as posters kept too high or too low tend to get missed out.
- Avoid using too many posters, as it gives a feeling of being overcrowded and prevents individual posters from creating an impact.
- In case of animal welfare issues, use a mix of positive and gruesome images. Overuse of gruesome images leads to people automatically switching off from the message, and reduces their willingness to approach your stall.
- Ideally have some text below the images, explaining the message the image is trying to convey.
- The images & text should ideally be large enough so as to be visible from at least a few feet away.
- Posters and quotes of famous celebrities & personalities have been shown to generate interest amongst passer-by's.
- The stall should ideally have one large poster at the centre, displaying either the name of your organisation or the cause that you are promoting.

**Item checklist:** The following are the items that would be required while setting up a stall / table:

- A display table
- A plain tablecloth (to ensure material kept on the table can be seen)
- A few chairs
- Posters & other visual material
- A sign/banner with your organisation / causes name
- Volunteer sign up sheets (ideally on exam boards)

- Leaflets
- Information booklets (to be used for discussions, not necessarily to be handed out)
- Paper weights
- Pens & pencils
- List of FAQs for volunteers
- Large screen TV (if possible)

## Tips for effective tabling / stalls

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On the day of the event, make sure you reach early and prepare the stall before people start to walk in.

**Volunteers:** If you have volunteers, confirm their participation a couple of days prior to the event. Prepare shifts for volunteers to ensure that they remain refreshed during the course of the day. All volunteers need to be prepped with relation to FAQs and activism etiquette. Ideally, volunteers can handle the initial interaction's with people, while the more knowledgeable person can deal with people with more difficult queries, who would like to discuss more or for discussions with potential volunteers.

**The table:** Make sure the table is kept neat at all times. A messy table reflects badly both on you and the cause you are promoting. Leaflets should be stacked neatly in vertical/horizontal piles, with the top facing upwards to be visible for passer-bys to pick up.

**Table manners:** It is fine to sit at the table, but you should stand up to greet someone who approaches the table. Standing up makes you look more inviting and gets you to people's eye level, making conversations more comfortable. Be polite, friendly and patient.

While the aim of the stall / table is to enable greater interactions, it is important that you do not spend so much time with one person that you miss contact with others who may be interested. After a certain time spent with a person, take down their contact details and offer to contact them after the event for a more detailed discussion. Always ensure you do contact such people post the event, since some of them could make very valuable volunteers.

Be sure to actively listen to whatever a person is saying. Ask thought provoking and courteous questions. Acknowledge any valid concerns a person may have, and provide counter-points in a courteous manner. Ensure that the person feels acknowledged and validated, and do not brush aside any of their views. Never get aggressive, angry or hostile, no matter what the provocation.

Be sure not to spend too much time debating with people who disagree with you. These discussions are hard to control, and can alienate people who are around. Instead, clarify your position briefly, express regret at your disagreement with the persons view and turn to someone else as quickly as possible. There is very little to gain from long debates and much to lose. Remember to be polite at all points.