

S e e d

boosting employment through
Small **e**nterprise **e** **d**evelopment

Facilitating MSE Shows: The FIT Manual

The FIT Manual Series



International Labour Organization
Geneva

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Foreword

This series of manuals reflects the experiences of the ILO's FIT programme, gained over several years in various countries. The original mandate of FIT was to consider how donor-funded supporting services for Small Enterprise Development (SED) could be made more accessible to a larger proportion of the total target group. The challenge was thus to increase both the quantity and the quality of employment opportunities in the small enterprise sector, in ways which were harmonious with the dynamics of the private sector itself.

The manuals make FIT's experiences to date available to all those wishing to achieve similar goals. They document an approach which has aimed to tailor services to meet demand as precisely as possible. By being fully demand-led, the approach respects the perspective and priorities of those in the small businesses. By working as much as possible through private-sector channels, the approach also aims for sustainability and so for substantial scale and outreach.

More information about the FIT approach can be found on the ILO web site (www.ilo.org), and in various publications, including "The Wheels of Trade: Developing Markets for Business Services", published by IT Publications of London, UK.

The FIT programme was launched with funding from the Government of the Netherlands, and this is gratefully acknowledged. Various other donor agencies have funded discrete activities that have enriched the experiences outlined in this manual; these agencies include the Government of Austria, UNDP and the European Development Fund. Again, these contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Those who are interested are invited to contact the FIT team at the ILO headquarters in Geneva for further information. In particular, this manual is also available in Spanish, on request. In conclusion, we trust that it will increase opportunities worldwide for people to have access to Decent Work.

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1. About this manual

Who is this manual for?

This manual is for agencies and groups which encourage the development of micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs). More specifically, it is aimed at those agencies which are interested to promote self-sustaining Business Development Services (BDS) with high impact. Business Development Services include the range of non-financial services that help businesses to grow. They include product development, training, marketing, business skills development and business counselling or advisory services. This manual offers one method of approaching marketing, an area often neglected by both MSEs and support agencies alike.

The manual describes the service of facilitating marketing shows, especially in rural towns and centres. There are clear indications that such shows are practical, affordable, and useful to MSEs. More critically, there are indications that the service is in demand by MSEs once they experience its benefits and that it can be offered in a self-sustaining manner. To achieve sustainability, however, the design of future pilot activities will need to be both imaginative and business-like. The manual therefore presents the findings to date and proposes a range of possibilities for future improvement.

Ultimately, if shows prove to increase profits for MSEs sufficiently, the private sector, including informal groups of MSEs or marketing firms which realize MSEs are potentially profitable customers, will take over the facilitation of MSE shows. In the meantime, support agencies which want to promote sustainability should search for ways to co-opt the private sector in the organization and financing of shows.

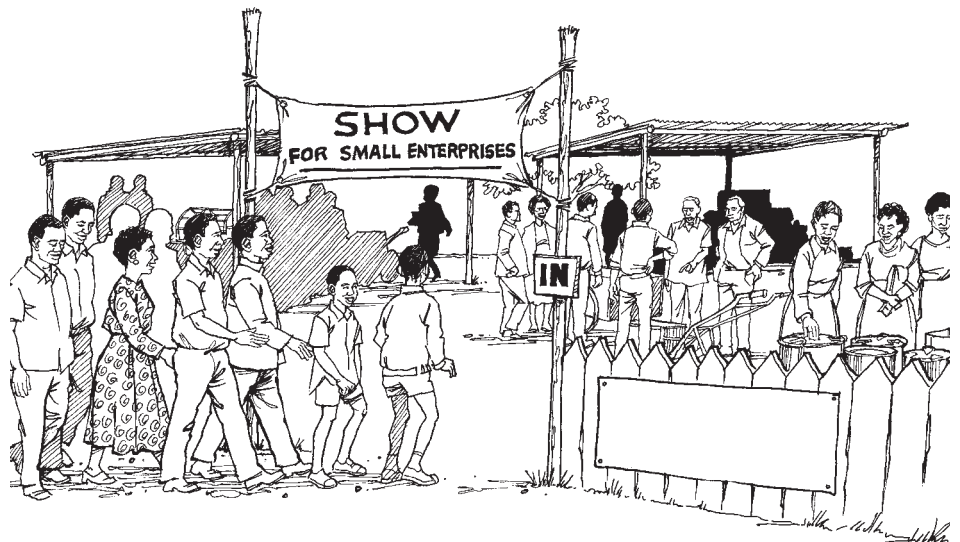
The rationale for the manual: Why now?

Methodologies for group-based savings and credit have apparently achieved both financial sustainability and an outreach to the poorer and smaller MSEs. This achievement has not yet been matched in the field of Business Development Services.

However, many practitioners assert that Business Development Services are very much needed if MSEs are to innovate and expand. As a result, there is widespread interest in the development of services which can become self-sustaining. Until recently, it was often assumed that a comprehensive package of support measures was required, in order to achieve impact. The cost of providing this package made sustainability impossible, and the impact was still very difficult to quantify with any certainty.

The provision of small loans has departed from the "total support package" method. Instead, a uniform product (credit) is offered to MSEs or groups of MSEs. Credit is frequently cited by MSEs as one of their biggest constraints to improving or expanding their businesses. How they use the credit is up to them, provided they repay. Interest rates cover the full cost of providing the credit, while still remaining below the rates charged by the informal sector (money lenders). The credit matches a clearly articulated demand of MSEs, one they are willing to pay for.

FIT's experience with MSE shows began as a final step in the process of developing new or improved products. After a new product was developed, it was promoted through shows, organized largely by MSEs themselves. The shows proved to be useful in and of themselves and clearly match the capacity and needs of the MSEs. Significantly, a number of MSEs which did not participate directly in the shows observed the benefits and went on to sponsor themselves for shows. Experts may have ideas of how to market MSE products on a wide scale or to new markets. Shows are one marketing method that MSEs have themselves recognized as a valuable way of increasing sales, reaching new customers, and discovering new product ideas.



***The concept of
MSE shows***

MSE shows exhibit micro and small-scale business products to a large group of potential customers at one time. MSE shows sponsored by FIT range from a modest event during a market day, with loud speakers and signs announcing the displays, to larger processions of transport products or day-long events. The shows build from practices familiar to most MSEs in Africa, particularly Kenya. Agricultural shows have a relatively long tradition in much of Africa, dating back to the colonial governments, especially in former British colonies. MSE shows are

modelled on agricultural shows, albeit on a smaller scale. Agricultural shows are a social and cultural event in many towns and cities, one that families look forward to and prepare for all year. In Kenya agricultural shows are held nationally, regionally, and locally. Trade fairs are common throughout the developed world and increasingly are important in the developing world. Until recently, MSEs did not generally participate in trade fairs. After their experience with MSE shows, however, some participants sponsored themselves for trade fairs or other formal sector exhibitions, including agricultural shows.

Market days are as old as trade itself in sub-Saharan Africa, and the market is perhaps the only place in many rural locations where a large population converges at once for purposes of trade. MSE shows are usually held near or within the market area on market days, taking advantage of the gathering of a dispersed population.

The Kenyan Government first held MSE (or Jua Kali) exhibitions in 1989. They were co-sponsored by the British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) and held in each of Kenya's five provinces in 1990-1997. FIT-sponsored shows also follow this model to some extent, but on a smaller scale.

On what experience is the manual based?

FIT has sponsored several MSE shows in Kenya, lasting from half a day to a full day, and has relied on support from six NGOs as well as the private sector. Similar shows are being planned for Ghana and Uganda. MSEs were involved in planning and implementing the shows, as well as in marketing products during the shows.

In addition, FIT has reviewed the experience of Kenya's Ministry of Research, Technical Training and Technology in planning and executing Jua Kali shows. Since November 1989, some 250 MSEs have been sponsored for an annual three-day national Jua Kali (MSE) exhibition. Approximately 200,000 people visit the exhibition. More such shows are being planned for 1998, and the Ministry is currently reviewing FIT's experience in planning the latest round of Jua Kali shows.

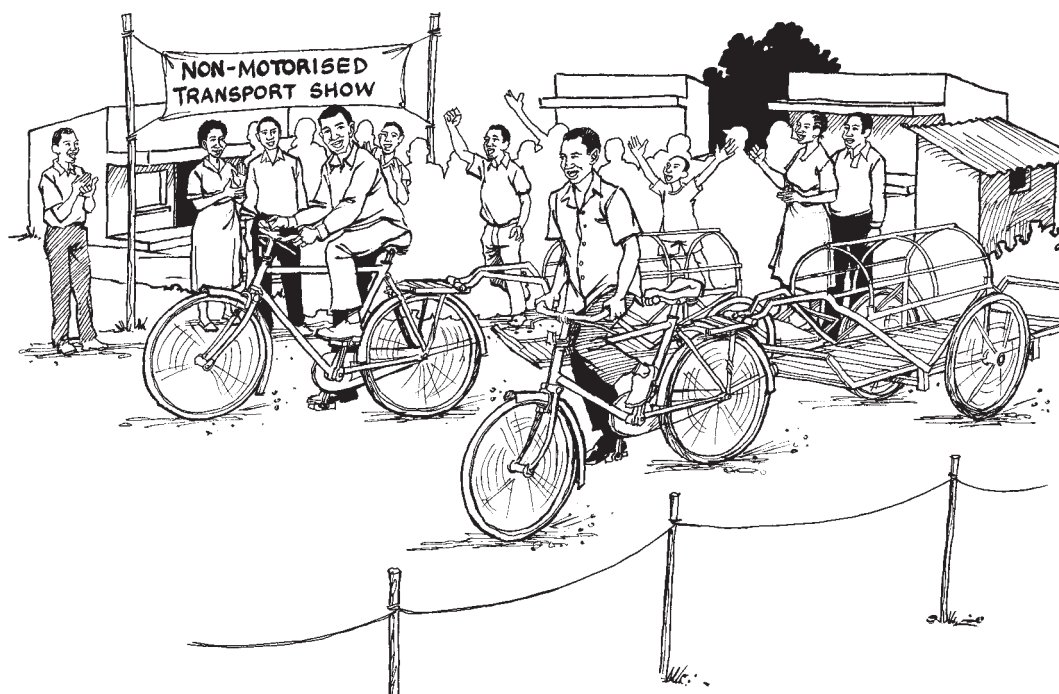
How is the manual structured?

Chapter 2 presents the case for facilitating MSE shows. Development agencies will want to know what impact the shows have on participating MSEs and also whether the service is in demand. Marketing agencies may just want to know if it is in demand. Groups of MSEs will want to know whether shows are worth the time, money and effort required and what benefits may be realized. Chapter 3 gives a step-by-step approach to facilitating shows, with emphasis on finding ways to harness the private sector to fund shows. Chapter 4 makes some suggestions for future innovations.

2. The benefits of MSE shows

The quantitative impact

MSE shows have largely been sponsored by the FIT Programme as a final step to market new and improved products developed through the process of User-Led Innovation (ULI). Evaluations of this process found increased business contacts leading to increased sales and increased profits for most of the participating MSEs. For example, shows exhibiting non-motorized transport in Western Kenya brought sales worth US\$6,000 to participating MSEs. It is difficult, however, to quantify exactly how much of these increased sales can be attributed to the new product and how much can be attributed to the new marketing technique (the shows). A survey conducted of MSEs participating in the national Jua Kali shows, much larger events than FIT-sponsored shows, found that 75 per cent of those surveyed reported finding new customers and new orders as a result of the shows. These benefits, however, were not quantified.



A less precise but equally valid indicator of the usefulness of the shows is found in the amount of money MSEs were willing to invest themselves, without further support from a local agency, in attending or organizing shows. A number of MSEs went on to sponsor themselves to participate in the national or regional agricultural shows. Others spoke of organizing their own shows (though whether this actually occurred was not followed-up). When asked, both

immediately following the show as well as some one or more years later, participating MSEs said they would be willing to cover the costs of sponsoring the shows themselves. Significantly, colleagues or competitors of the participating MSEs reported a willingness to invest even more. They had noted the benefits the shows brought to their neighbours.

In July, 1997, I went to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to attend an MSE show. I wholly sponsored myself during my four-day stay in Tanzania. (Evans King'oo, Machakos, Kenya)

While willingness to invest money in shows is a very clear indicator of MSEs' own perception of the value of shows (as MSEs generally have little cash to spare, and certainly none to invest unwisely), it should be noted that the willingness to invest time and labour is also an important indication of MSE demand for shows. MSEs generally have few employees and have to perform many tasks to keep their businesses alive. There is not much extra time to spare, unless it will bring a return on investment.

In addition to increased sales, another quantitatively measurable benefit to MSEs is the number of new customers acquired through the show. One-off sales may lead to regular customers. For some participating MSEs, the shows also lead to new agents to market their goods.

Where MSEs do not keep careful records of their profits and losses, it can be difficult to monitor the quantitative impact of MSE shows. The qualitative benefits are generally more straightforward.

The qualitative benefits

Evaluators of shows sponsored by FIT found three main areas of qualitative benefits. The first is increases in sales and new customers, which has also been mentioned above. New customers and new agents to market to new customers were reported by 89 per cent of participating MSEs. MSEs who did not participate but who went on to sponsor themselves in shows all reported finding new customers as a result of the shows. Reaching a wider market can make all the difference between MSE survival and growth. Some MSEs reported finding new outlets for their products, including an NGO, a local trader, and a group of farmers.

Another qualitative benefit reported by MSEs is an increased awareness of the benefits of marketing. Many MSEs make little or no effort to market their products. They simply wait for customers to pass by, instead of actively seeking them out. Marketing is something MSEs simply have not considered or consider inappropriate or not affordable

to a very small business. Seventy-eight per cent of participating MSEs surveyed reported finding new marketing ideas. These included ideas for product displays and visiting market centres and other public gatherings to sell goods. Furthermore, many of their competitors, who observed their neighbours change their attitudes towards marketing, followed suit and began new marketing activities of their own (according to 75 per cent of those surveyed).

After participating in the shows, MSEs reported a changed attitude towards their customers. Improved customer relationships was another benefit cited by 67 per cent of the participating MSEs surveyed. Here, however, it is difficult to know exactly how much of this benefit may be attributed to the shows, as MSEs and customers involved in the shows also had participated in a number of activities together during the ULI exercise.

The act of coming together with other MSEs to organize the shows, and the interactions that were possible during the shows with suppliers, retailers, and larger enterprises, all provided participants with opportunities for networking. These networks led to new ideas for products, new means of distributing the products, and potential subcontracting or other mutually beneficial linkages with others in the relevant subsector. For food processors in Machakos, the MSE show led to the founding of a food processors' forum, where members meet regularly to share their business experience and ideas. MSEs who participated in shows in distant towns often found local retailers or traders who were interested in marketing their products on an ongoing basis.

During the first MSE show I attended here in Kisumu, I met fellow artisans whom I never knew before. I also met a number of traders who have become important stockists of my products.
(Peter Onjiko, metalworker, Kisumu, Kenya)

The most common benefit of participating with other MSEs during the shows reported was new product ideas. This was reported by 67 per cent of participating MSEs surveyed. The new products included ploughs, planters, weeders, warmers, slicers, chippers, chaff cutters, manual water pumps, and hand carts. Of the four MSEs surveyed who did not participate but went on to sponsor themselves, all reported getting new product ideas, including wheel rims, water carts and ox carts. Even where MSEs do not network with each other, coming together for a show builds a spirit of competition amongst them.

Seeing what one's competitors are producing can inspire an entrepreneur to develop something equally marketable.

In my workshop, I have started producing jab planters, weeders, seed drills and a variety of ox ploughs that were first developed in Embu. I studied these designs during the 1994 MSE exhibition in Embu.

(Evans King'oo, Machakos)

New technologies or tools were also discovered during the shows. This was reported by 44 per cent of the participating MSEs surveyed. Some of the tools learned about included vice and sheet rollers, as well as jigs and fixtures for making wheel rims. A few MSEs also reported gaining repair skills, and one MSE reported gaining information on suppliers.

Improved management skills is another area where some participating MSEs reported benefits. Some (56 per cent) reported learning more about financial management and cost-accounting from their peers.



3. Organizing MSE shows

**Getting started:
Initial planning**

Who will feature?

Others reported improved employee relations. Again, it is not entirely clear whether this benefit can be attributed to the shows themselves, as those who reported the benefit also participated in other activities that could have helped with financial accounting. Fifty-six per cent of MSEs surveyed reported being able to solve some of their business problems through participation in the shows.

Finally, increased self-confidence was reported by a number of participating MSEs (67 per cent). The MSEs also suggested that the fact that they were so clearly involved in planning, organizing and implementing the show brought new respect for the MSE sector. The public was impressed with the products it saw and the way they were presented. Frequently in Africa smaller businesses are not accorded the same respect as larger businesses. MSEs reported some change in the prejudice they routinely face.

MSE shows can range from a small event in a provincial market place, lasting half a day, to a formal event in an urban centre, lasting one or more days. The type of show to be organized largely depends on who will be featured and what budget is available. This manual is based largely on FIT's experience organizing smaller shows.

If an NGO is involved in organizing the event, it may already have a target group of MSEs, as would be the case with an MSE association. It is important that this target group be involved in all aspects of planning and organizing the shows. In this case, planning can then match the number of MSEs to be exhibited. It is also possible for a small group of MSEs to organize a show themselves. The size of the event will depend on how many people will exhibit and how much they can afford to contribute to costs. Fund-raising can make up the difference in costs. A show need not be very expensive and should not cost more than can be realized in increased sales during and following the event.

One of the first questions to consider is: Should the show be organized on sectoral lines? For example, should one hold a show of metal products or of fabrics (clothing and furnishings) or should it be an event where a wide variety of products from various sectors are exhibited? FIT-sponsored shows have been held on sectoral lines, sometimes highly specialized. One show, for example, was devoted to non-motorized transport: carts, wagons, bicycle ambulances, and the like. There are a number of advantages in organizing a specialized show. First, MSEs themselves are more likely to benefit from coming together with their competitors and will probably discover product ideas or new tools or techniques that are useful to them. Second, the customers, dealers and suppliers the show attracts are more likely to be seriously interested in the area promoted and thus be of more use to the

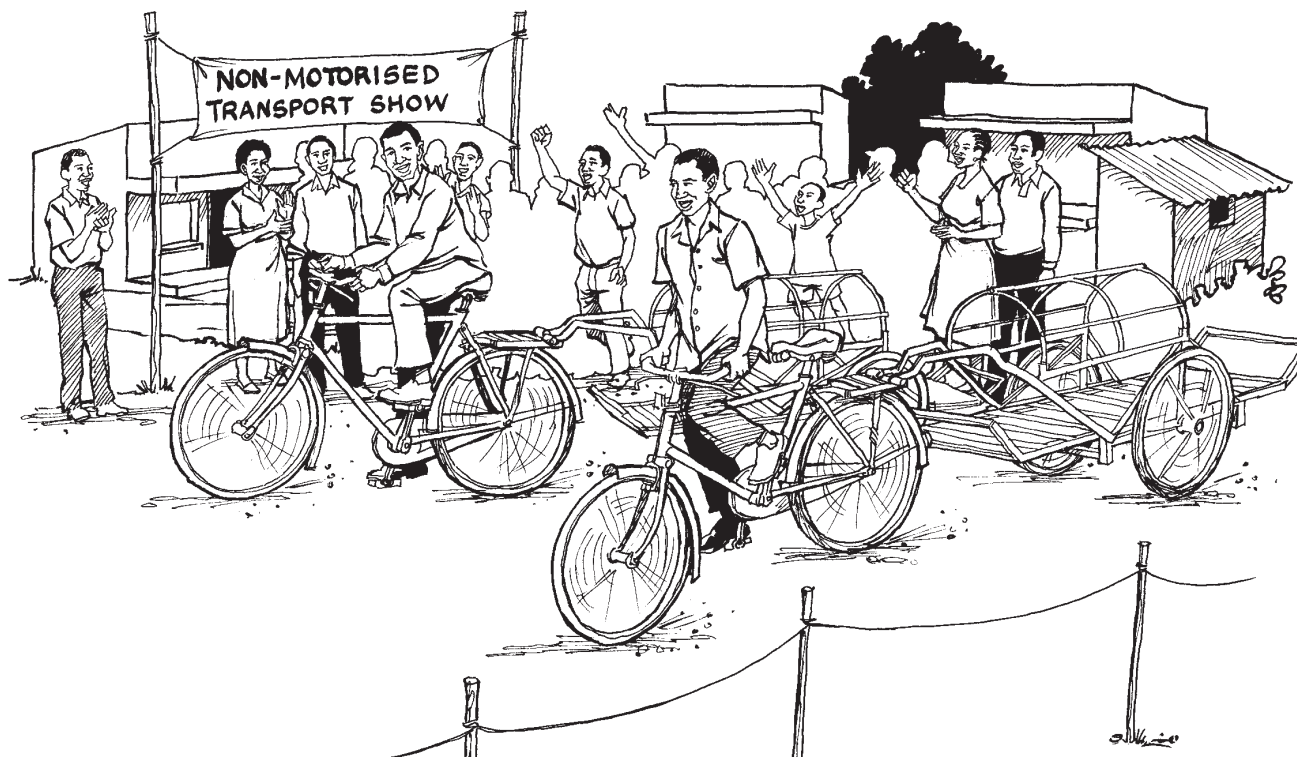
MSEs. Finally, bringing together producers from a single subsector allows MSEs and customers to see the state of the art of their subsector, raising the standard for the whole and encouraging healthy competition.

A subsector can be broadly defined. For example, it could include all metal work, including sheet metal, casting, and welding work. This would encompass many types of products and technologies. Likewise, the wood sector could include furniture, signs, building materials, and sculpture. Clothing could include shoes and leather work and accessories for hair styling. If the show is being organized by an urban group of MSEs from a large population, it might be useful to be more specialized, for example including only sheet metal or only leather work.

Once the target MSEs to be featured have been defined, it will be worthwhile to invite MSEs from the subsector who are the best in their field to participate. Master craftsmen or particularly successful entrepreneurs will have valuable products or marketing ideas to contribute. If they are not able to help organize, they should minimally be encouraged to exhibit. If it is difficult to approach people one by one in their place of work, consider organizing through MSE associations, churches, or chief's bazars.

When the final group of participants is identified, a meeting should be held to set up the broad outlines of the show's organization. The following issues will need to be resolved during this first meeting. Where will the show be held and approximately when? How long will it last, and roughly how much should it cost (how much can participants afford to contribute)? After these issues are decided collectively, smaller groups can be formed to tackle the details of putting a show together. A time to report back to the entire group should be decided. Allow at least two months to organize a show or, more realistically, three months.

The type of products to be exhibited will lend themselves to particular promotional events. For example, tailoring and leatherwork can be exhibited with a fashion show. The FIT shows included a procession through the town of all the non-motorized transport items. A metal-work show might include an exhibition of the welding techniques involved. Although all the details do not need to be worked out during this first meeting, it is a good opportunity for brainstorming, and the more ideas generated the better.



Where to hold the show

Having selected the target MSEs to participate, the next question is where to hold the show. It is important that the show have a chance to reach new customers and new markets. MSEs from a large urban centre may wish to remain in that centre in a new location that may reach new customers, but MSEs from other towns should consider exhibiting in new towns or centres altogether. Some FIT-sponsored shows took place in a number of small market centres dispersed throughout Western Kenya. The same group took their show to five different locations.

There are a number of advantages to holding a show in a small centre. Although the town may be small, it may serve a broad and relatively large population. Furthermore, people will be in town specifically to do business and may be more eager to buy than a settled urban population. Finally, the show will be more of an unusual event for a smaller town and may attract more attention and larger crowds with less effort than in an urban centre.

Whatever location is selected, it should be accessible by a main (paved) road and served by buses and other means of public transportation. It should have a number of basic amenities available, including electricity, a public telephone, a police station, lodging, and basic goods and services for sale.

Duration of the show

Once the town is selected, it may be clear how long the show should last. A small centre probably need not have a show lasting longer than a day, and half a day may be adequate. A large city could perhaps have a longer event, provided participants can spare the time and the cost involved. How long the show should be depends on how many MSEs are exhibiting. If there are less than 50 (which is most likely) the show should not last more than a day. Half a day is likely to be sufficient. It

is important to hold the attention of the viewers, and up to 100 MSE stands can easily be viewed in a day. Too few exhibits over too long a period are likely to tire potential customers.

Timing of the show

It is important to hold the event when people are likely to attend. In smaller towns shows should be held on market days. In larger cities shows might be best held on a week-end. Beyond these general considerations, one should consider other factors when determining the exact day. First, favourable weather is a consideration. Rain will increase the cost of the show considerably and is likely to keep many potential visitors away. Shows should not be planned for the rainy season. Next, shows need to be held when people are not too busy or too pressed for cash. In the rural areas, this means one must consider the growing season. Shows should not be planned for harvest or planting times, when people will have very little leisure time. Likewise, it would not be wise to plan a show around the Christmas season or near the time that school fees are due, as this is a time when people are unlikely to have extra cash.

How much should the show cost?

It is important that exhibitors understand that there are a number of expenses involved in organizing and holding a show. Advertising, materials, rental of public address systems or space, transport and clean-up are a few of the possible expenses. Of these, advertising is perhaps the single largest expense. In addition to the general expenses, each exhibitor will face a number of expenses, which could include, for example, transportation costs for getting materials and staff to the show, the cost of preparing a stand, and the time lost from the place of work. FIT shows have been organized for less than US\$1,000; larger shows may cost over ten times that amount.

It is worthwhile to try to raise funds for the show. Large businesses may be interested in the advertising the show offers or the opportunity for public relations and community service. Likewise, MSE support agencies may be willing to help finance a show, particularly one that is organized entirely by MSEs themselves. In some African countries the harambee tradition can be invoked and fund-raising events where individuals are encouraged to contribute can be held. Even if a significant amount of money can be raised for the show, it is still important for each exhibitor to pay a fee for exhibiting. The fee should be affordable, but high enough to represent a serious commitment. A fee of \$10 to \$40 would not be unreasonable.

The provision of refreshments and food during the event can be a source of revenue for the show. Concessions can be sold to local restaurants, kiosks, or companies for \$20 to \$200, depending on how large the crowd is expected to be and how close it is to established

kiosks and restaurants. Some coordination on the type of facilities necessary to provide catering will be required. Preparations will need to be finalized at least two weeks before the event.

Cost-sharing is important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it ensures that exhibitors will take the show seriously, will follow through on their commitment to exhibit and will value the effort made. Next, it encourages ownership of the process. If all participants have paid to participate, they will be more likely to make sure that the show is well planned and organized. Those selected for organizing tasks will have a greater responsibility to the group. Finally, cost-sharing will help exhibitors understand all the costs involved and will enable them

Item	Cost as % of total
Organizing costs:	
telephone, transport and mail	10
Publicity	35
Transport	20
Security	5
Venue preparation and clean-up	10
Prizes	5
Entertainment	5
Miscellaneous	10
TOTAL	100

to go on to organize shows on their own. Cost-sharing enables learning and builds confidence.

While exhibitors may want to consider charging a fee for visitors, FIT's experience has been that this is not the ideal way to organize an MSE show. Visitors are potential customers, and charging an entry fee may discourage them. Furthermore, there are increased administrative costs involved in fencing and containing the show, and visitors may have too high expectations if they have to pay an entry fee.

During the discussion on costs, the group may want to consider possible events during the show or brainstorm to come up with others. A public address system is very useful to create an atmosphere and to communicate effectively with a crowd. The possibility of music should be considered. In addition, the group can come up with ideas for events during the show to attract attention or encourage competition.

For planning purposes, the follow general budget guidelines are offered:

In the first general meeting, the approximate number of exhibitors can be determined, as well as the fee that each will pay to exhibit. Thus, a starting budget will be available, and how much more will need to be raised can be roughly determined. How and when these funds will be collected should be determined at this first meeting, and a treasurer with accounting skills should be selected.

Detailed planning

The next stages of planning should be conducted by a subgroup of all the participants. This organizing committee should include representatives from all involved parties, e.g. an NGO sponsor and MSE participants. If there is a possibility of sponsorship from a large company or if there are potential subcontracting relationships or other mutually beneficial relationships from the MSEs and large companies, they might be invited to sit on the planning committee. Ideally, the committee should not be larger than five people and should meet at least every two weeks. A few others may be recruited for specific tasks, such as advertising and fund raising. A date to report back to the whole group on progress made and to offer an opportunity for further brainstorming should be set. To build momentum, the second meeting should be held within one month of the first.



The planning committee should have overall responsibility for organizing the event. This will include the following:

- selection of venue and site of the exhibition;
- preparation of the budget and ensuring that costs remain within the budget's guidelines;
- fund-raising and accounting for funds;

- advertising the exhibition;
- preparing the venue and organizing all necessary materials, services, and transport;
- liaising with relevant local authorities, exhibitors and sponsors;
- inviting the press, local leaders, and sponsors;
- ensuring a smooth flow of activities during the event, managing any unexpected problems or emergencies;
- ensuring adequate clean-up and payment for all services;
- following up with exhibitors, sponsors and local authorities to assess benefits and make suggestions for future planning.

In addition, task forces can be mobilized to ensure that the following tasks are carried out properly:

- an advertising task force - to raise funds and arrange advertising and other promotional activities;
- an exhibitor's task force - to liaise with exhibitors, recruit additional participants, ensure fees are paid, help arrange transport, provide technical assistance in designing exhibits and report any problems or complaints.

Public relations

Co-opting the local authorities

Local, district, provincial or even the national government can be a valuable resource in planning and executing a show. In Kenya, for example, cooperation from the provincial Government can be sought to help publicize the event and to provide security. The national Government may even have funds to help sponsor the event, and within certain ministries there may be free advice and expertise. In Kenya the Ministry of Research, Technical Training and Technology has had fairly extensive experience in organizing provincial MSE shows.

Once the venue has been selected, it will be important to ensure the cooperation of the local authority. The municipal or county council should be invited to attend planning meetings, and the council's help in selecting a proper site for the show should be sought. The local Government may also be helpful in publicizing the show, as well as in suggesting where to rent equipment, how to organize transport, and who might want to help sponsor the show.

Co-opting the private sector

The private sector may be interested in helping to sponsor the show, particularly by sharing the costs of advertising if a company's goods and services are also advertised. Large companies, if contacted in time,

might help provide posters and banners for the show. Companies that provide materials and products that are used by MSEs may have a particular interest in helping to sponsor the show.

If exhibitors are involved in a competition, the private sector may be interested in sponsoring the prize or participating in judging the competition. Creative prizes could encourage linkages between the private sector and MSEs. For example, a prize could include training, subcontracting, or tools and materials supplied by a large company.



Relevant established companies and individuals should be invited to attend, even if they do not have interest in sponsoring the show. Personal invitations to be guests of the show could lead to subcontracting arrangements or to better deals in supplying the goods and services MSEs need. Depending on what type of products are being featured, it will be worthwhile to invite possible major purchasers of the products. Marketing firms should also be invited, as they may have an interest in sponsoring shows themselves in the future, especially after they see how effective the shows can be in reaching a rural market.

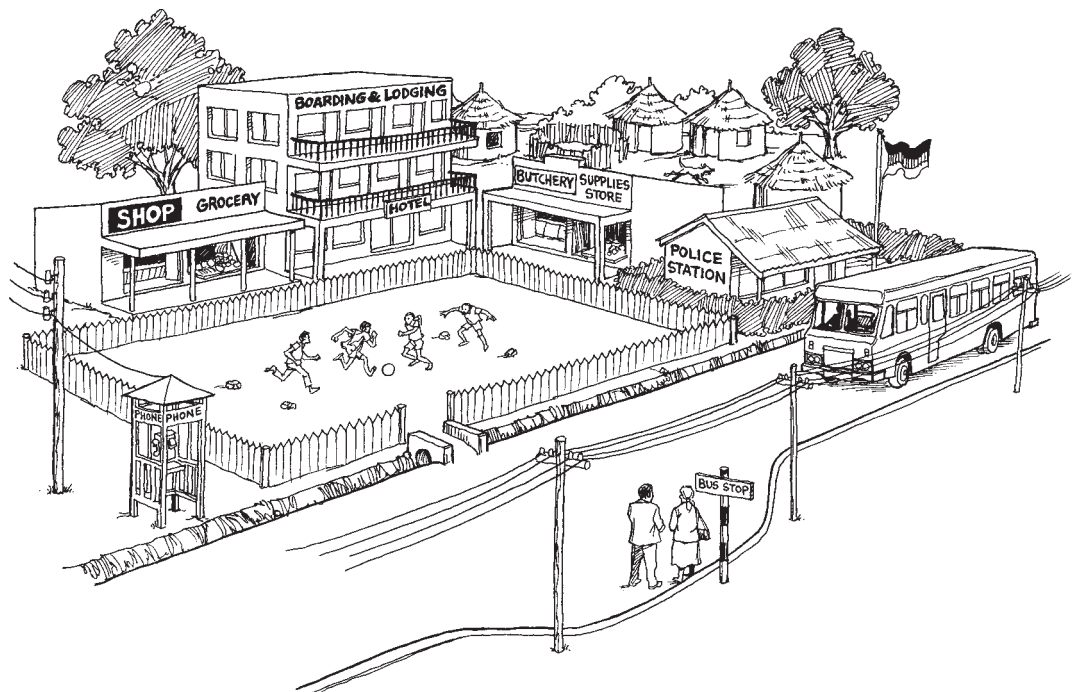
Local leaders

Political, social, or religious leaders can be invited to the show. If they are popular enough, they may help draw a crowd. It is traditional in many African countries for honoured guests to officially open and

close ceremonies, and this is a useful means of getting the event started and providing a formal closing. Who should be invited will depend on where the event is held. Be sure to give adequate notice to invited guests. In addition, a certain amount of the budget will need to be set aside to provide refreshment and possibly transportation for the guests. One person will need to be assigned to ensure the guests' comfort during the event.

Venue selection

The size of the venue will depend on the number of exhibitors and the size of their exhibits. A site near the market place, and no more than 1 km from the town centre in smaller towns, is ideal. The site should be serviced by a main road, if possible. Ideally, it should be possible to arrange for electricity to be provided. Another consideration is access to a telephone, public toilets and water. Holding the show near a market area usually means most of these amenities can easily be provided. If the show is large, it may be necessary to consider parking requirements. Usually the local Ministry of Planning can help with such arrangements. In most smaller urban centres, visitors will arrive



on foot.

The actual site should be on ground that is as flat as possible. A football field or parking lot of about 50 m² would be ideal. If there is a public address system, prize giving, and honoured guests, some sort of tent or shelter will need to be erected. Often a small platform, tents, umbrellas and chairs can be rented for a reasonable fee. Consider

purchasing sawdust to mark off an area and reduce dust. Otherwise, consider purchasing mats and constructing the necessary shelter. If this option is used, the construction will need to be at the last possible moment and security will need to be provided until after the event. Another option might be renting or borrowing the use of a school, sports facility or church.

Attention needs to be paid to basic amenities such as water and toilets. A site should be selected that has access to these. If not, portable toilets can sometimes be rented or constructed, and temporary water tanks or water points can be erected. Drainage and problems with mud will need to be considered. Ballast and sawdust can reduce problems with mud. The cost of providing water, toilets and electricity should be carefully considered before planning is finalized. Bringing water and electricity to the site will need to be organized at least three weeks before the actual event and may require cooperation from the public authorities.

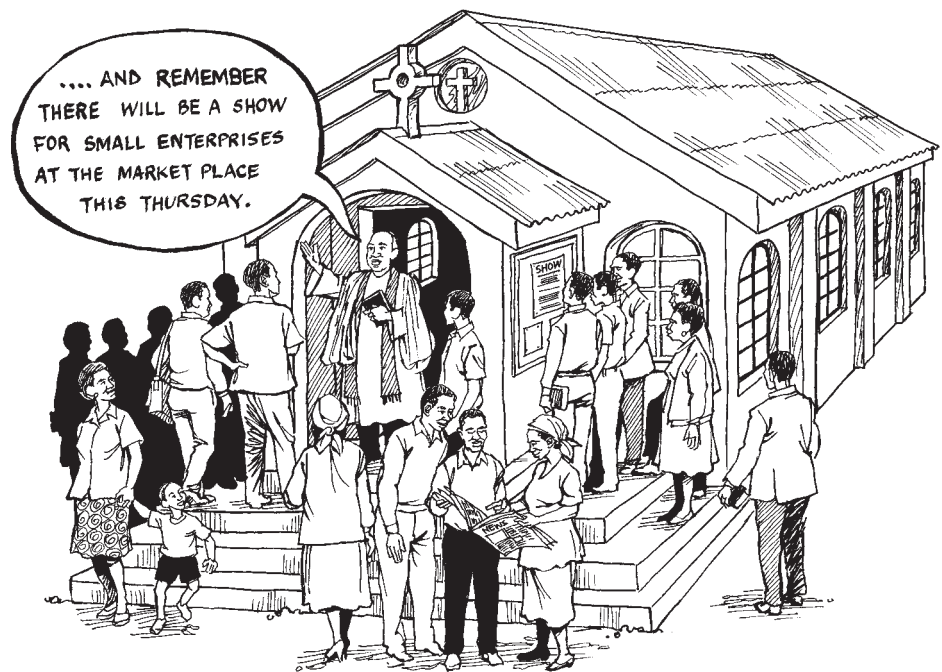
The easiest way to provide electricity is to use extension cords from a neighbouring establishment that is willing to rent electricity for the day. In some countries this will require permission from the local authorities.

Fencing off the whole ground is an option for seclusion and security. It also limits the chances of interference from trespassers and helps to create a festive mood. The fence can be made of barbed wire, chain link, offcuts, tin roof sheets, twine rope or live fencing (plants). Chain link and metal sheets are very expensive. Consultation with local authorities may help the committee decide whether or not to invest in fencing. It may not be necessary.

Even if fencing is used, it will be important to provide security during and just before the event. As stated above, consultation with the local or provincial administration can help facilitate security.

Advertising and sponsorship

The easiest way to secure sponsorship for a show is to develop a good marketing plan and sell some of the advertising. Sponsors may also be interested in providing their own advertising on posters and in magazines, newspapers and radio. Posters, flyers, newspaper and radio announcements can include mention of the corporate sponsors. Other methods of advertising the show can include public meetings, church announcements, and personal invitations. The advertising task force should be prepared to do some leg work and make personal announcements at public gatherings. This gives the public a chance to ask questions about the event and can help generate interest and enthusiasm.



FIT's experience with advertising shows in rural areas of Kenya is that generally posters are not very effective but that church announcements, newspapers, and radio are. Radio shows in local languages often have bulletin board services. In addition, the day before and the day of the show, a mobile public address system (a truck equipped with a loud speaker) can be used to announce the event.

It is also very important to personally invite the press to the event. If the press covers the show, it provides free publicity for future events. The local authorities can put you in contact with the local information officers, or you can notify specific newspapers and radio shows. Be sure to provide them with a summary of the show, detailing the theme, timetable, any special events or competitions, and who will be the guest speaker. If you provide a photograph, it might be printed in the newspaper. This information should be provided about two weeks before the event and no later than one week before the show.

Before the exhibition day, potential exhibitors need to confirm their participation and the items/products (in numbers) they have ready. This confirmation can be given at least one month before the exhibition date. Members of the exhibitors' force can help ensure that fees have been paid and arrangements finalized. The transport of the exhibits and the construction of stands will be the main tasks required. Although ultimately responsibility for both rests with the exhibitors, some assistance by the show's organizers will probably be required and appreciated.

Transport

Transport costs can be reduced if they are organized on a large scale. Once the organizers have information on the transport requirements of the exhibitors, they can try to help facilitate cost-effective means of transport. It is important that the providers of transport be reliable and that a certain amount of emergency money be budgeted for unexpected costs. It is also important to enter into a written agreement with the transporters and include in the agreement letter clauses that will protect the exhibitors. For example, if a transporter fails to perform his service due to mechanical problems he will be liable for any expenses incurred by the organizers.

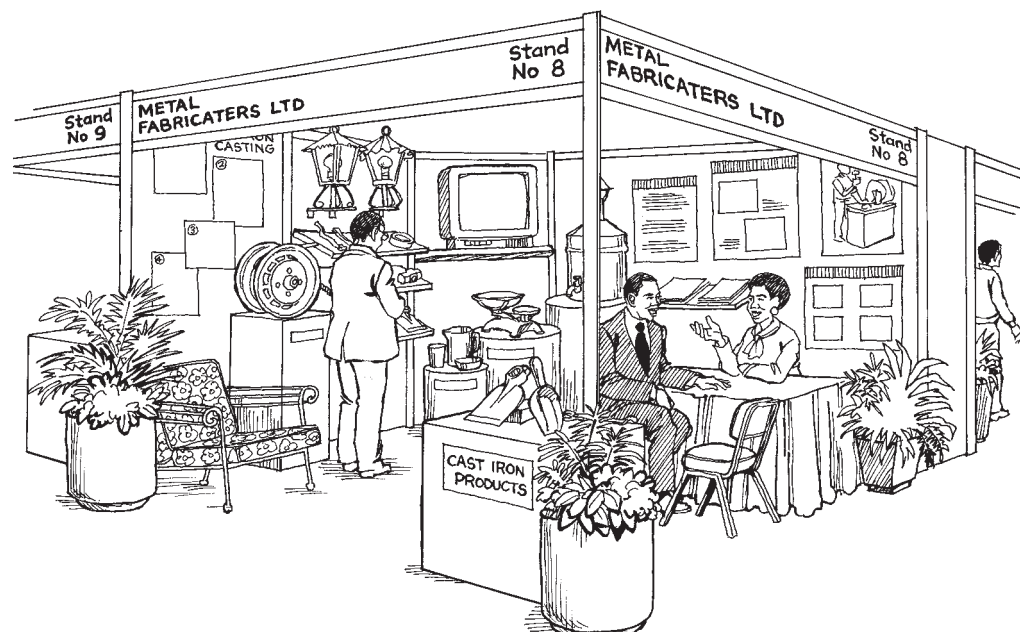
Stands

It is important that the stands exhibit the products well. Canvas sheets strung between four poles with sawdust to minimize dust have been used successfully by exhibitors. Tables or displays should be easy to transport or construct on the spot. Racks and shelves that exhibit products at different heights can help display them attractively. Stands should be decorated attractively. (See the box below for more hints on effective marketing during the event.)

Make sure that exhibitors understand how important it is that their displays are tended by someone who knows the products, services, and prices on offer. It is also important that the person who manages the stand be presentable, personable, and happy to talk extensively to the customers, answering any and all questions they may have. If possible, the MSEs themselves should be encouraged to manage their stands.

Facilitators

If a public address system is used or if there are to be events during the show such as opening and closing speeches, competitions, processions,



For exhibitors: Attracting customers to your stand

It is important to decorate your stand. Bright and contrasting colours attract attention. The name of your firm written large in bright colours and displayed at the front of your stand can also attract people, as well as flashing lights or signs, music or noise, particularly if it is associated with your product.

Too many objects crowded on a table or within a small space look messy, and it is even difficult to identify individual products. If you have a large number of items to display, try putting them at different heights, using the space around you. Items can even be displayed behind you on a display board or on individual stands, as well as in front of you on a stand. If your product is something that is used with another item, for example a bed, try where possible to make it look like the finished product by putting a mattress on the bed and making it up with sheets, blankets and pillows. You can also display photographs, catalogues and data on paper. The data can include technical drawings of the products, giving specific details of manufacturing.

People do not visit every stand at an exhibition; instead they visit stands that attract and interest them. It is much more interesting to watch something happening like blacksmithing, food processing, ploughing, etc. than it is to simply see a cluster of finished products. It is good to give people the opportunity to see the product actually working, because this makes them more likely to buy it if they are impressed with what it can do. They are even more likely to buy the product if they can use it themselves. If you are exhibiting tools, you should show how they work, show the advantages of your tools as compared to alternative ones, try to tell visitors why they should buy your tools and spell out any other after-sales services you will offer.

You must know the price of everything that is on display. Either put price tags on each item, have a price list displayed somewhere prominent or have a book available with prices written in it. There will be no time for extensive bartering, and it looks more professional to have established prices.

For exhibitors: Marketing materials

Make sure you have enough "marketing materials". Marketing materials are the papers that help you to promote your products and may lead to a sale at a later date. If you make products that are not on display, have a brochure describing them as well as one that covers the items on display. Brochures or leaflets are very useful and need not be expensive to make. A brochure should contain the following information about a product:

- the name of the product, in bold letters (if there are many, include a reference number);
- a description of the product, ideally with a picture (the picture can be a drawing); the description should include reasons to buy the product;
- the sizes, colours, or types of the product that are available.

The brochure should also state the name, address and contact details of the business and the business owner's name. You may also want to include a map or directions to the business. The brochure should contain any necessary price information and what is required for a minimum order. It should include a disclaimer, explaining that prices are subject to change.

and prize giving, there will need to be a facilitator of the show. You may want to hire a facilitator who has good public speaking skills and experience, or you may want to select someone from among the organizers who can do the job.

The facilitator will need to rehearse his lines and give adequate time to their preparation. The organizing committee will probably want to review what will be said and will want to be make sure that each event is given adequate coverage.

Competitions

FIT-sponsored shows often included a contest for the best product - based on design, function, and craftsmanship. The public can participate in judging the products, or a committee of judges can be organized. The contest and the announcing of prizes provide a focus of attention for the crowd and encourage competition among exhibitors. Likewise, raffle prizes or contests can be held for the visitors. Contests that involve the use of MSE products are best, such as races between bicycle ambulances or a test of competing tools.

If MSEs are encouraged to compete for a prize, there will need to be a formal statement that explains the rules and conditions of the competitions and how the winners will be evaluated. Judges should be selected with care, and exactly what criteria each judge is voting on should be established in advance. It is also possible to ask visitors to vote on their favourite product through a ballot system. In either event, prize giving should happen close to the end of the show.

After the show clean-up

After the show is over and exhibitors have removed their stands, it will be necessary to clean up. There should be adequate budget and staff to ensure a responsible clean-up operation. Exhibitors are likely to be too busy and organizers too tired to pay attention to this important aspect of the event. It is also a good idea to have one or two people hired to clean up during the event, ensuring that there are containers for litter which are kept available to the public.

Follow-up

It is important that all the invited guests and sponsors give their feedback and suggestions for future improvement immediately after the event. One person should be given the task of recording any comments made during the event, compiling any press clippings, and asking guests, selected organizers, and visitors to give their feedback. Visitors should be asked what they liked most and least about the event and how they heard about it. The monitor should also try to estimate the size of the crowd. (He or she may want to consult the local authorities on methods of doing so.) Exhibitors should also give feedback, but it may be more effective to formally evaluate the activity



from their perspective after a month or so, when enough time has passed for any increased sales to be visible.

After an evaluation has been conducted, it is important to compile all the available information and provide it to sponsors or potential future sponsors. People who have contributed to the event will want to know what sort of impact their contribution made.

Evaluation

For adequate evaluation, the show itself must be well monitored. The organizing committee should maintain good records of all costs, but estimates of increased sales or profits will need to come from the exhibitors themselves and may be more difficult to obtain. When budgeting for the show, it is a good idea to include some budget for evaluation. For assistance in evaluating FIT activities, see the separate FIT manuals on this subject.

In addition to the person who monitors the crowd and feedback from selected visitors, one or two members of the exhibitors' task force should have the responsibility of monitoring the event itself: recording how many people exhibited and what products were displayed. This information can be gathered from the entry form required for exhibitors to participate. Which products proved most popular may also be important information to gather, but will be less straightforward. A simple questionnaire sampled among the visitors is one method. Another is to ask the exhibitors to estimate which products proved most popular and profitable.

While it is not always practical, exhibitors can at least be requested to monitor their sales during the event and to monitor how many new customers or business contacts they gain after the event. Exact

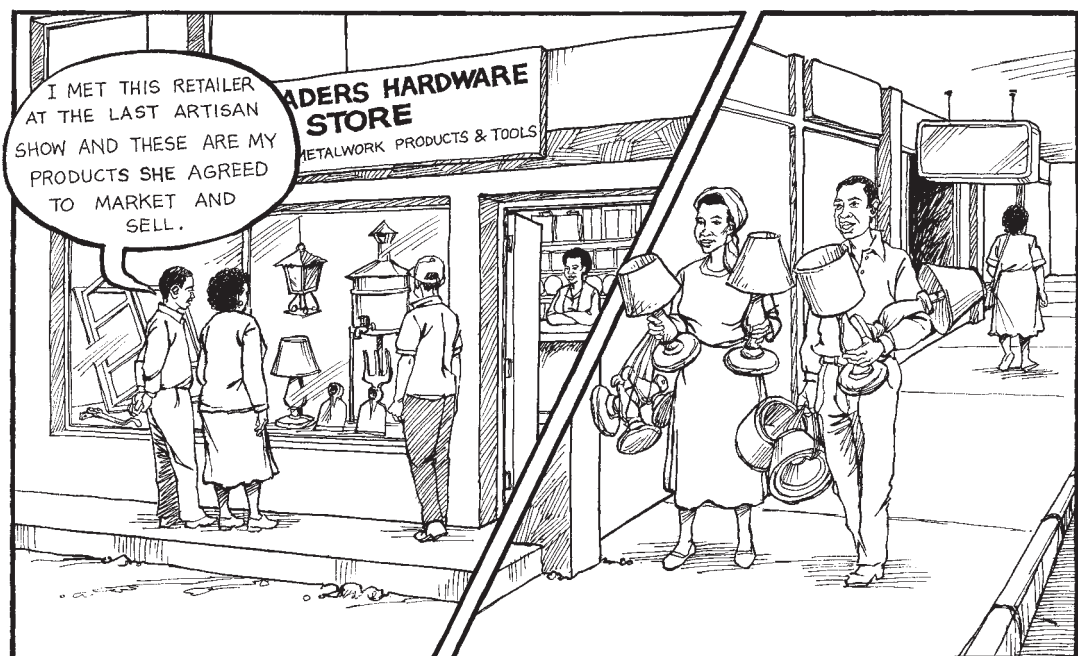
quantification of profits that can be attributed to the show is difficult to measure, however, as seasonal fluctuations and other factors within the local economy need to be accounted for. It is difficult to separate external factors from the impact of the show. Nevertheless, evaluators can make an attempt to gather this information. The MSE's own perceptions is one fairly valid indicator. Another is asking how much MSEs would be willing to pay to participate in another show.

A brief checklist of information to be collected is given below.

- the participant's name, location, and type of business;
- present number of employees (full-time/part-time, paid/unpaid);
- approximate monthly income and expenses;
- what the participant has gained from the show, specifically:
 - sales or new customers,
 - ideas for new/improved products,
 - ideas for new/improved methods of production,
 - new information on where to find tools, spare parts, raw materials or other services,
 - new marketing ideas,
 - increase in enthusiasm and self-confidence,
 - new relationships - opportunities to share tools, markets, or sources of inputs.

In addition, the following questions should be included:

- Of the above, what is the participant actually using today and



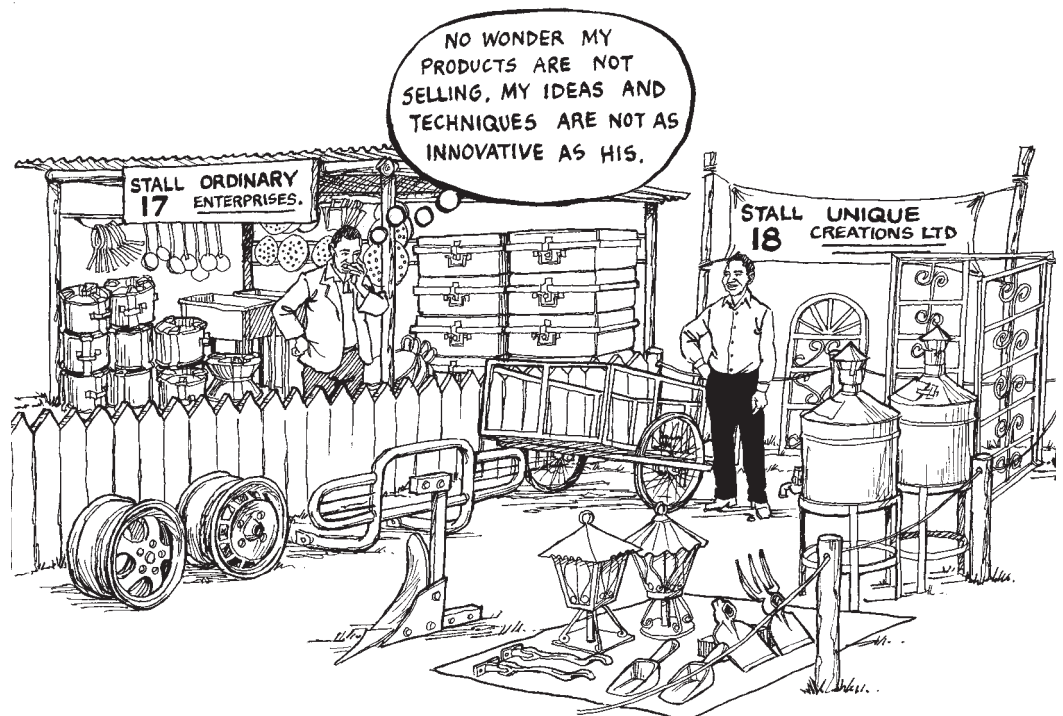
how have these changes benefited the business?

- What was the most valuable lesson learned?
- Would the participant like to attend another show?
- Would the participant recommend his colleagues to do the same?
- What is the most the participant would be willing to pay to enter a show? (Provide a range of figures.)
- What would the participant suggest be done differently in the future?

A form listing these questions may be too leading to be valid, particularly when describing the benefits of the visit. Instead, sensitive interviewing, asking clients what they gained from the visit or how they have changed since the visit, with careful probing, is more likely to generate accurate responses. You may also want to include at least one case study of an exhibitor so that all the benefits of the show can be illustrated easily.

Making shows a tradition

It might be useful to consider holding an MSE show regularly, at least once a year. No matter who sponsors the show, during the first show organized efforts can be made to gather support for the next one. The show can be a means of promoting itself. MSEs can be encouraged to participate in the next show by learning about, for example, contests for the most original or most useful product. Entry forms and rules for the contests, as well as details on how to enter the next show, can be provided. Visitors can learn when the next show will be. If the show is



held at the same time every year, it can be an event that everyone is familiar with. Part of the job of advertising the show will be automatically covered.

By making the show an annual event, people will have plenty of time to plan, organize and prepare their products. An annual event can build on the enthusiasm of the previous event, and once people have attended one show they are likely to attend others. If the show is held on a day that is easy to remember, there is a better chance people will be reminded of it each year, for example the week before or after a public holiday.

4. Toward privatization

Marketing shows

If the show is an event that will be repeated, many of the materials and planning that have gone into the first show can simply be recycled the next year. Sponsors are also likely to consider repeating their past support, and advertisements and announcements can just be reprinted with new dates and details. Consider developing a symbol or a mascot or a theme for the show. Repeat the colours, symbols and phrases each year, so that the show develops its own easily recognized identity.

As shows become more familiar, MSEs are likely to consider marketing as a normal part of their business practice. They may be more willing to spend time and effort marketing their products in other ways. As FIT evaluations have indicated, shows demonstrate the importance of paying attention to customers and making them aware of the products being sold. Shows also allow MSEs to see what the competition is doing and to recognize the importance of offering something that beats the competition. In the follow-up evaluation of the show, MSEs have a chance to record just how much sales and other business aspects improve or change. It becomes clear that marketing is an investment worth making.

There are a number of ways that shows can be financed and organized, i.e. by:

MSE support agencies, such as NGOs or the government.

FIT-sponsored shows all fell into this category, as they were supported by both FIT and a collaborating NGO. Kenya's Ministry of Research, Technology and Training has also been active in organizing MSE shows annually.

A coalition of MSEs and the private sector, where MSEs organize the shows and seek funding from the private sector through advertising and sponsorship that provide a public relations opportunity for large companies. This is the method advocated in this manual - it does not depend on the presence of donors for success. Furthermore, it empowers MSEs and forges networks and collaborative relationships between small and large businesses.

A private marketing firm hired by MSEs. The firm would organize the show and MSEs would finance it. Some finance may also be garnered from sponsorship from large companies. This could be a way that shows might be conducted in the future. A firm could realize economies of scale and could make a profit on the shows. MSEs would only have to pay for the service and leave the work of organizing and promoting the show to professionals. They could concentrate on preparing their products and their displays for the show.

In order to progress away from dependency on donors and NGOs and move toward the more sustainable methods of organizing and funding shows with private sector input, it is important to document the benefits of MSE shows. It is also important to try to reach a significant number of MSEs so that they may experience the benefits of the exercise and so that a greater demand for shows can be obtained.

If the MSE show proves to be as effective and useful as those FIT has organized, it is important that this information gets back to the private sector sponsors so that they see how worthwhile their investment was. Attendance figures and sales figures can be useful to persuade other potential sponsors to invest in shows. If shows can market both informal and formal sector products together, the formal businesses may be willing to cover the bulk of the costs.

In addition, if there is good information available on how many sales or new customers the show generated, it may be possible to interest marketing firms in organizing MSE shows on a commercial basis. Also, MSEs may realize how profitable it is to invest in a show and may be willing to make a larger investment.

If a formal evaluation is conducted, the results should be summarized in one or two pages and distributed to past sponsors or potential future sponsors. Case studies can also be a persuasive means of illustrating benefits.

In general, the shows should more than pay for their costs in increased revenues for the exhibitors. Once MSEs realize the value of using shows to market their products, they can organize the shows themselves, seeking funding for advertising from large companies and seeking sponsorship from both the public and the private sector.

The first step is for MSEs to organize themselves. A show necessarily involves a number of people to do the work of organizing, if it features many MSEs. Unfortunately, MSEs are often not formally organized, and MSE associations are often weak. In the long run, the most sustainable method of facilitating shows may be entirely through the private sector. If a professional marketing firm sells the concept of shows to MSEs and can organize shows on behalf of MSEs profitably, they will become an established feature and a well-known means of marketing new products.

NOTES