

CONVENTIONS AND EXHIBITION

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Introduction

Exhibitions are events where the *artistic items, art forms* or *creatively designed items* are kept for display, to allow the visitors to see and enjoy the exhibit (Xuan and Jianhua, 2014.). These are mainly held in museums, art galleries and fairs. This is also the place where, sometimes, the skills of the non-reputed individuals are kept on show, for appreciation. The ‘fair’ refers to a congregation of people for entertainment and commercial purposes. In the exhibitions, the main aim is the display of the items while in fairs; the main aim is the sales of the products. The KL International Halal Expo is an initiative for spreading knowledge about the Halal brands, products, awareness among the people about the correct ways to utilize and the benefits received from the usage of the Halal brands.

History and Background of the exhibition

The popularity of the Halal product among the Muslim population is not new; however, its increasing favouritism among the non-Muslim population as well is a recent trend on the market. There were a lot of exhibitions and fairs that dealt with Halal food products, held in Kuala Lumpur but the KL International Halal Expo had been started recently, with the notion of popularizing the Halal food products and cosmetics among the other products and for popularizing the brands and companies that deals in the same (Frost and Laing, 2018). The expo is also targeted to create awareness among the public regarding the benefits of and the proper ways for utilizing the Halal products.

Major Exhibitors

The major exhibitors for the KL International Halal Expo consisted of around 500 companies from over 30 countries, globally. About 21,500 visitors visited the expo for either enjoying the exhibits, the demonstrations, gaining knowledge about the brands present and their associated benefits of availing the halal products. Of all the participants, around 62% belonged to the trade backgrounds while 38% were the common people and the youth who were interested in studying the benefits and the variety of the halal products that are available in the market for utility ().

Details of the exhibition

Venue, facilities and accessibility

Venue- The Mid Valley Exhibition Centre is located at one of the prime locations of the city, which is well connected by means of rail and road ways.

Facilities- The enormous floor space available for utilization at the convention centre helps in organizing the fairs and the conventions in a plush manner, spreading out all the stalls and allowing for ample space for the tourists and visitors to move around, without excessive congestion. The **three massive halls** are made available to the exhibitors and the organizers to plan the layout of their exhibitions and fairs accordingly. Apart from these, **hospitality and VIP suites, media rooms, audio-visual rooms, medical rooms and luggage rooms** are few other amenities are made available to the visitors. **3G wireless internet facilities and digital audio-visual boards** are available for both security purposes as well as for enabling the visitors to enjoy the views of the exhibitions, while moving or idling in the waiting halls. The technological facilities are ample and ensure to support all through the exhibitions, effectively. The internet, telecommunication and audio-visual facilities are world-class and meet the requirements of the exhibitions and fairs effectively.

Besides the above-mentioned facilities, the **Mid Valley exhibition centre also possesses support facilities for the differently able people**. There are care attendants who cater to the needs of the differently able persons and provide automated wheel chairs to their disposal, in order to enable them to move about through the halls and enjoy the exhibits. The floors are effectively designed to enable unhindered movement of the wheel chairs. Apart from the elevators and the stairs, **slants specially designed for the movement of the wheel chairs are also present**, which connects the halls to each other and allows the differently able individuals to move about easily. The facilities for counteracting the accidental occurrences of fire and other mishaps are also present in the centre. A small medical centre, for catering to the first-aid requirements of the exhibitors and the visitors is also present.

Arrangements for the **on-site payment services, exchange of currencies and catering to other financial needs of the visitors are also present at the MVEC**. KLCC also provides the freight services to the exhibitors, for carrying the exhibits and the associated machineries and products from the shops of the exhibitors to the convention centre and back to their shops, after the completion of the exhibition. **The management at MVEC carries out the decoration of the venue, appropriately for the purposes**. The electrical requirements, furniture rentals and construction of the exhibit stands are also handled by MVEC. The convention centre also offers **strict security systems 24x7**, for all the days the exhibitions are held at the venue and

one day before and after that. The security systems rely on both the digital technologies and human resources, to provide all-round and efficient protection.

Accessibility- MVEC is accessible by both the railways and the roadways. The convention centre is located in close proximity to the airport as well and requires mere 50 minutes for the travel; this makes it easy for the tourists to access the centre. The centre is also surrounded by reputed and quality hotels, which makes the area more accessible for tourists, exhibitors and visitors from different parts of the world.

The venue is well connected by the roadways and the railways as well. The chauffeured cars can also be availed for the transportation. Adequate parking facilities for the cars of the exhibitors as well as the visitors are present at the venue, which makes the accessibility with the private cars even easier. The registration area being located at the centre of the exhibition halls, entry by any entrance would bring the visitors and the exhibitors to the registration area itself, without them going astray or getting lost in the vast expanse of the convention centre

Floor layout of the exhibition

The floor layout refers to the arrangement of the stalls and the other facilities in the main convention centre, in order to enable the visitors to move from one stall to another, freely, without any hindrance. The floor plan of the KL International Halal Expo encompasses the usage of the three exhibition halls and one linking hall, apart from the plenary theatre and the conference room. These would be utilized by the exhibitors to introduce the audience about their exhibits and its specialty, the innovative processes and technologies that are used in their designing and manufacture of the products. The benefits of the halal products and the process of manufacture of the cosmetics, non-cosmetics, food products and the other allied products from the halal meat or skins were shared with the visitors (Klihe.my., 2018). The stalls were arranged as per the names of the participating countries and the separate kiosks of the countries were arranged back to back, in rows. The counters offering refreshments to the visitors were located at one corner of the halls. Each of the halls had a separate counter for helping the customers with exchange of currency, online fund transfers and card payments. The enquiry counters were set up at all the entrances, in order to guide the visitors effectively, towards the venue of the exhibitions.

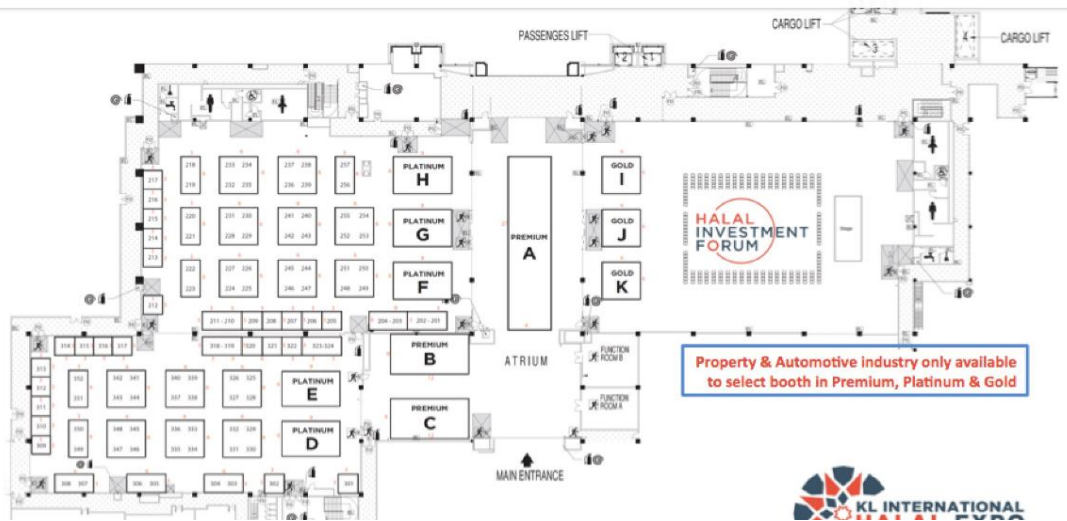


Fig 1: The floor layout plan at The Halal Expo

Program

The exhibition continued for three days, from 13th and 14th January 2018. There were different programs organized for the visitors, so that they could enjoy their visit at the exhibition. There were arrangements for the introductory speeches by the exhibitors, about their product details and the processes used by them for their product processing and manufacturing.. The working mechanisms of the machineries that were displayed at the exhibit counters were also explained to the visitors, in order to impress the young minds and encourage them to study further on these lines. There were fixed refreshment breaks arranged during the speech sessions, while during the exhibition sessions, there were no fixed refreshment breaks and the visitors were free to avail any kind of refreshments available in the stalls located in the event halls.

Exhibit Profile

<i>Food</i>	<i>Non-Food</i>	<i>Sevices</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dessert • Western restaurants • Confectionaries • Carbon infested foods and beverages • Coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halal cosmetic • Halal medical centre • Halal skin care and baby products • Halal practices and medicines • Halal supplements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics and warehousing services • Services to the e-competence • Islamic finance companies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frozen food • Snacks • Halal Ingredients • Dairy products • Canned foods 	<p>(McKenna-Cress and Kamien, 2013)</p>	
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Advertising and promotion

The advertising and promotions for the event were carried out on the social media platforms, the television channels and the newspapers. Dedicated blogs by the organizers and the exhibitors on the social media and the newspapers also helped in the promotional processes for the event. The reviews of the previous KL International Halal expo events, by the attendees and the exhibitors, on the designated web pages, helped in promoting the event and attracting newer clients (Klihe.my., 2018).

Major sponsors

The event has been mainly organized and supported Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM).

The ***major sponsors*** for the event are:

- Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia
- Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau
- Hong Kong Jewellery and Jade Manufacturers Association
- Malaysia-Truly Asia

The ***official banking partner*** is Public Bank

The ***official freight-forwarding partner*** is Ferrari

Media

The arrangements for the involvement of the media had been planned in such a way so that the audiences could be effectively reached out and for ensuring that the event becomes a huge success. In Malaysia, the number of ardent newspaper readers is significantly high and so, the

newspapers served as an effective tool for reaching out to the customers. Direct advertisements of the Halal Exhibition and dedicated articles covering the event would help in its promotion (Velarde, 2017).

The popular trade magazines were utilized for promoting the news of the Halal expo to the international delegates and participants. The trade magazines are popular among the bureaucrats and among the youth; these two sections of the society could be easily and effectively informed and attracted to the event by this promotional stunt

TV is another way for reaching out to the customers effectively since the advertisements in the TV immediately conveys the news regarding the fairs and the exhibitions to all those potent delegates and with the retailers and wholesalers, who interacts on trade shows.

The outdoor advertising techniques like putting up posters and flexes at different community places and halls, attract the local audience, the tourists and the other interested individuals and plays a great role in making the events successful. This was carried out for the promotion of the International Jewellery exhibition in Malaysia too; the posters and the flexes were put up at all the major crossings and junctions of the city roads.

Target audience

The target audience mostly belonged to the age group of 25 to 35 years, in the KL International Halaal Expo. Around 12% of the visitors belonged to the age group of above 44 years. The target audience was chosen in a way to ensure that the visitors had full understanding of the processes and the benefits of the halal products

Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat analysis

SWOT analysis of the exhibition (venue and exhibition)

<p><i>Strength</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growing popularity of the halal products • The chances of bringing all the associated business organizations • The benefits of the halal products • The resultant increase in sales of the products, by participating in this exhibition (Klihe.my. , 2018) 	<p><i>Weakness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high prices of the halal products • Ecologically unsustainable products • Prone to damage
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chances of earning sponsors and partners for their business processes • The opportunity of showcasing the talents of the employees and the craftsmen 	<p><i>Threat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some other exhibitions on the same dates as that of the International halal exports • Security malfunctions in the exhibition might lead to the loss of substantial property to the exhibitors and the organizers would be defaced

Potential problems and recommendation

All the arrangements for the exhibition had been carried out efficiently, in order to ensure that there are no hindrances in its execution. However, few probable problems that could have occurred and affected the execution of the exhibition can be enlisted as follows:

The spoilage of the perishable items like the halal food products due to presence of insufficient refrigeration and cooling systems

The exhibition halls are quite spacious and owing to a number of stalls being present in the halls, the visitors needed to be guided on their directions efficiently.

The food counters were located in the exhibition halls itself; this increased the risks of the exhibits and the decorations of the halls being damaged by inappropriate handling of the food items and beverages, by the visitors.

The exhibition stalls also sold the items directly to the customers, which increased the chances of manhandling of the products. Instead of this system and relying on the Close Circuit Cameras, the systems for selling the items could have been improved.

The registration fees of the exhibition were quite high, which prohibited the small-scale but very efficient halal manufacturers to exhibit their products in the exhibition and to reach out to the customers effectively.

Recommendations for improvements

To address the first problem effectively, efficient cooling systems needs to be installed and modified. The Halaal systems would utilize technologies for the operations of the management.

Instead of relying on the enquiry counters and the volunteers, direction indicators set up at appropriate locations, could have helped the visitors in finding their ways through the exhibition, more efficiently

For catering to the problem of casing damage to the exhibits by the food and beverage items, the food counters could have been placed at a separate room or section and bringing in food inside the exhibition halls could have been prohibited

The customers could have been given a token for the confirmation of the order of their chosen Halaal products and then, they could have been supplied their desired products from another section, located at a distance from the main exhibition hall. This could have nullified the chances of shoplifting in the stalls.

The registration fees either could have been fixed at a lower rate or could have been significantly lowered for the small-scale exhibitors, so that they could have been provided with a chance to exhibit their talents and their products and designs that they deal in. The presence of the small exhibitors in the exhibitions could have boosted their sales and their reputation in the global market, which could have proved to be an asset for them.

Conclusion

The Halal expo provided the exhibitors and the visitors the opportunities to exhibit their designs, which boosted their brand image and their sales, globally. The popular trade magazines, newspapers, social media and television channels were utilized for promoting the event effectively among the citizens and also the global tourists and visitors. The exhibitors participated from all across the world.

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