

# Online matchmaking tool for visitors “Exporoute”

VNU Exhibitions organizes 50 national and international trade shows and is market leader in the Netherlands. One of its major focus points for 2008 is to connect more intensively with its trade show visitors. The visitors are most important for the success of the shows and they need incentives and guidance in their final visiting decision. One of the applications that has been developed especially for this purpose is a matchmaking module “Exporoute” first introduced for the exhibitors and visitors of the IT shows Infosecurity.be and Storage Expo Belgium.

## How it works

Exporoute is a unique matchmaking tool that uses an algorithm, to match the contents of the tradeshow’s online exhibitor directory to specific visitor profiles generated by the show’s pre-registration module. Besides more common information on products en services exhibitors are stimulated to enhance their directory listing with industry specific solutions and content such as whitepapers, casestudies or even podcasts. At the end of the pre-registration, visitors are given insight into what exhibitors match their profile concerning product and services demands and the Exporoute advises them on business cases and whitepapers they can download to gain more information on certain subjects – all based on their personal profile. When a visitor downloads a particular document, the exhibitor from whom the document originated will be notified and given the opportunity to contact that visitor to make an appointment.

The Exporoute in short:

- 1) Through the **online Exhibitor Directory application** within “Exporoute” exhibitors are asked to fill in their enhanced company profile with the products, services and solutions that they are specialized in. They can upload cases, whitepapers and press information. This process starts about 3-4 months before the show.
- 2) During **pre-registration for visitors**, which starts about 2 months before the show, visitors have to answer specific questions about their needs for and interest in products and services, their potential budget and their specific request for information.
- 3) As soon as the visitor finishes pre-registration, a new screen will pop up with all the information that will be useful for a successful show preparation. It shows a short list of exhibitors that match the demand for products and services and it shows a list of cases and whitepapers that match visitors needs and interests.
- 4) visitors can download these documents and can click through to the Exporoute site where they can make a personalized plan for an effective day at the show.
- 5) In the weeks following pre-registration, the visitor is contacted by email several times to update him/her about the changes in cases and whitepapers. Of course a visitor will be able to login to Exporoute anytime he/ she would like to have a look at the opportunities.
- 6) After the show, the visitor can continue downloading the relevant content and can therefore still be contacted by exhibitors. Even the visitors that haven’t actually visited the show can still become a lead afterwards.

## Objectives

There are basically four objectives for offering this tool to visitors. First, and most importantly the visitors will have a personalized trade show visiting plan which will enable them to manage their stay more efficiently. Time is precious for everyone and “Exporoute” gives potential visitors a new incentive to visit.

Secondly, the visitors will be more committed to the show. Through the mailings and recommendations, the visitor feels more connected to the shows and has an answer to the

question “what’s in it for me?” In addition, all the visitors that show a specific interest in a subject and download the cases and whitepapers will be matched with exhibitors. Thereby many appointments can be made on the show floor. Last but not least, the matchmaking process does not stop when the shows are over. Visitors and non attendees can continue downloading cases and whitepapers. Thereby interaction between visitors and exhibitors is prolonged for an extensive period after the shows. After a period of use included in the trade show participation, exhibitors are enabled to continuously acquire leads from the system by joining the year round paid lead generation program.

### **Actions**

Several actions were taken in the process of achieving this new successful formula. First of all, a partnership with Marqit was required. This company specializes in online decision support tools for IT professionals. Besides Marqit, the cooperation of Marvel, the registration company, was needed. They linked the registration module via a SOAP / XML webservice to the Marqit application . And most importantly, the exhibitors needed to be involved. The more comprehensive the exhibitor profiles the better the match to visitors needs. Exhibitors were informed by emailings and invited to a kick-off meeting, which was especially held for all exhibitors a few months before the show. Finally all exhibitors were followed up by telephone.

### **Results in general**

The first pilot of the Exporoute, was held during Infosecurity.be and Storage Expo Belgium in March 2008. The total number of pre-registrations was 5099 of whom 3324 actually visited the shows.

The results were beyond expectations:

- More than 72% of all the pre-registered professionals visited the Exporoute. (which meant clicking through to the site after their pre-registration and completing their membership by entering a password that allowed them to login again at a later date).
- 26% of all the visitors of the show visited the Exporoute 2 times or more.
- In total: More than 500 downloads (cases and whitepapers) were made. One fifth of the total number of exhibitors actively uploaded whitepapers and case studies. On average each exhibitor thus received over 25 qualified leads prior to the actual event.

### **Results for VNU Exhibitions:**

- The no-show numbers have decreased against a rising trend for the first time since the show’s start in 2002.
- Statistics show that the pre registered visitors that actively participated in the Exporoute were much more likely to attend the show. Against an attendance rate of 54% overall, the active users reached almost 70%.

### **Conclusion**

The “Exporoute” was a matching project itself using the help of three companies to achieve its success but it was worthwhile. We have succeeded in providing visitors with a plan specifically tailored for their needs. And we have provided our exhibitors with many more high quality visitors who new what they were looking for.

Due to its success Exporoute continues at Infosecurity.nl and Storage Expo in the Netherlands. At this moment, 2,5 months before the show, already more than 30% of the

exhibitors have uploaded their cases and whitepapers. Plan is to roll out Exporoute across the entire IT portfolio of VNU Exhibitions.

You can find a live demonstration of the “Exporoute” by following this link: <http://www.exporoute.com/ISNL08/p-login.aspx?lang=EN>. Here you can find the new and improved Exporoute that is used for Infosecurity.nl at the moment.

Please login by using the following codes and password:

Username: ufict01

Password: ufi1208

UFI ICT award 2008

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