

Exhibitor Advisory

Warning against dealings with **Expo Guide/ FairGuide.com / Construct Data Verlag** and other questionable practices

Singapore Exhibition Services Pte Ltd would like to advise all exhibitors to beware of a series of scams targeted at exhibitors of major trade exhibitions.

Who are these companies?

Expo Guide / Fairguide.com / Construct Data Verlag have been carrying out this scam for several years now. They have been known to be registered in various countries including Mexico, Slovakia, Austria and Switzerland. Due to the evasive practices of these companies, similar operations may sprout from other parts of the world under different names in the future.

How the scam works

Expo Guide and FairGuide claim to offer online listing services. They use a misleading form resembling an organiser's free catalogue listing service, inviting exhibitors to sign-up and return the form for an entry in an on-line directory. Doing so contracts the purchaser into a three-year, non-retractable agreement. If the exhibitor does not cancel in writing within three months before the three year contract is up, they will be obliged to make annual payments until they cancel in writing.

The exhibitor then receives an invoice for about US\$3,600 (EUR 2,660) which, when not paid, quickly escalates into intimidatory debt recovery tactics and threats of legal action. Fairguide.com has engaged the services of two debt collection agencies, an Austrian company Gravis Inkasso GmbH and a Swiss company Premium Recovery AG to harass these exhibitors.

What to do

If you are approached by Expo Guide / Fairguide.com / Construct Data, their debt collection agencies, or similarly suspicious operations, we suggest that you follow the advice below.

1. Do not complete the listings form.
2. If you have mistakenly completed and returned the forms, the advice is to ignore demands for payment. It has been established that Expo Guide/Fairguide.com/Construct Data have never carried out their threat of legal action against non-payers. Hence, do not be intimidated. Expo Guide/Fairguide.com/Construct Data will also attempt to get companies to settle for one-year payment instead of three to "avoid prosecution". The advice here is not to be tempted.
3. Keep a written record of any communication with this company. If possible record any telephone calls and inform them that you are doing so.
4. UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, provides legal counsel advisories, media articles, letter templates for rejecting payment and other useful information at <http://www.ufi.org/industry-resources/warning-construct-data/>

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