



Selecting Shows . Planning . Cutting Costs . Graphics . Presentation . Mailings . Impressions . Audiences . Transportation . Services . Results . Questions



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Guide to Successful Exhibiting

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Selecting the Right Shows

Selecting the right show to attend can make a big difference to your success level, qualified leads and sales—versus spending money, time and energy with no return.

1. Ask Questions

The first questions you should be asking are "who do you want to reach at the show?" and "what do you want to have happen?"

2. Identify shows

There are two groups of shows you should be evaluating: the shows you are presently attending, and the shows you want to consider for future participation. Who is your target market and which shows do they attend?

3. Match your objectives

Selecting the right shows means matching your exhibiting objectives with the right target audiences, the right timing to meet buyers' purchasing patterns and the ability to show and demonstrate your products/services.

4. Do your homework

When evaluating a show's potential, gather as much information as possible—show statistics/demographics and review lists of previous participants. Verify information provided by show management. Speak to past exhibitors and attendees.

5. Visit the Show

Whenever possible, personally visit the show prior to exhibiting to assess its value. Evaluate the supporting events and/or educational seminars around the show.



6. Consider location

Take geographical location into consideration. Usually 40-60% of attendees come from a 200-mile radius of the show location. Consider your distribution area and target audience.

7. Consider timing

What other events are scheduled for the same time as the show and will they impact attendance?

8. Evaluate opportunities

What other marketing possibilities could the show offer? Are there opportunities for sponsorship, showcasing new offerings or participation in the educational seminars?

9. Play it safe

Be cautious about participating in a first time show. Promotional material may be extremely persuasive, but a show without prior history is a risky venture.

10. Choose your space wisely

Every show is unique and there are many variables affecting direction, volume and quality of traffic past your display. Be familiar with the floor plan. Consider how close you want to be to the main attractions, industry leaders, competitors, restrooms, food stations, entrances, exits, escalators/elevators/lifts, windows or seminar sites. Avoid obstructing columns, low ceilings, dead-end aisles, loading docks and freight doors, dark/poorly lit spaces, ceiling water pipes, late set-up areas or "black spots" on the floor plan.

Who is your target market and which shows do they attend?



Example of TS2 Show Floor Plan

Secrets to Trade Show

Planning and Preparing

1. Determine how trade shows can strengthen your present marketing strategy

Do you want to:

- Increase existing products/services in existing markets?
- Introduce new products/services into existing markets?
- Introduce existing products/services into new markets?
- Introduce new products/services into new markets?

2. Set measurable and realistic goals

Know what you expect from a show. Set realistic and measurable goals. Write them down and share them with your exhibiting team. Decide exactly what information you want and then set up the systems to measure your results.

3. Establish a realistic budget

There are many different expenses involved in exhibiting. When putting your budget together, consider the following:

The exhibition space; the display (estimate 60% for structure and accessories and 40% for graphics); show services including shipping, set-up and dismantling and utilities; transportation; pre-show, at-show and post-show advertising;



promotions and special events; personnel expenses including travel, accommodation, daily expenses and time value.

4. Select a display that meets your needs

Do your homework and select a display that meets the goals set for each show, portrays the right image for your company, is durable, flexible and versatile and fits your budget. Explore the ease, ability and cost-effectiveness of expanding your display over time.

5. Develop an overall message or theme

While developing your promotional plan, advertising, special events and media relations,

Planning Checklist

6 — 12 Months In Advance

- Plan budget.
- Select shows.
- Book space.

4 Months

- Determine show objectives and investigate and evaluate show audience.
- Create a marketing message.
- Obtain Exhibitor Manual and read carefully.
- Source your exhibition display supplier.

3 Months

- Establish work schedule.
- Make travel plans/ book hotel rooms.
- Set-up any needed outside suppliers.
- Plan printed materials.

6 — 8 Weeks

- Check on production of display material.
- Order product samples, literature etc., from within your company.
- Confirm pre-event advertising and press releases.
- Order necessary show services.

3 — 4 Weeks

- Write and mail customer invitation letters and finalise VIP guest events.
- Confirm shipping information and provide to suppliers.
- Prepare training materials for staff at show.

1 — 2 Weeks

- Collect supplies, tickets, and service orders sent to show in advance.
- Bring credit cards for payment on site.

At Show Before Opening

- Travel to site; pick up badges.
- Confirm arrival of display, equipment, literature and supervise set-up.
- Conduct pre-show briefing and outline goals to staff manning the stand.

you'll need to keep a consistent theme throughout each piece. This will help reinforce your message to prospects as well as enable them to better recall who you are.

6. Use graphics to enhance your message

Graphics are used to create interest, focus attention and tell visitors about your product or service. In just three to five seconds, graphics need to communicate who you are, what you do and how customers can benefit. Graphics are often the first impression an attendee has of an exhibitor, so it's important to make the "right" statement. Consider size—bigger in this instance is often times better!

7. Select the "right" staff

One of the most crucial aspects of any event is its people. The personnel you choose to represent you are your ambassadors. These people have the responsibility of making or breaking future relationships with attendees, prospects and customers. Invest time in training them so they know what to do and how to best represent your products, services, and company.

8. Plan early for transportation needs

Save money by planning for transportation needs well in advance of the show schedule. Choose a carrier that specializes in trade show transportation and will give you the service you need. Always communicate both in writing and verbally with your carrier.

9. Develop a follow-up system for new leads

One of the biggest frustrations after the exhibition is managing the leads. If leads are not distributed and managed in an organised and effective way, your overall results could be impaired. Determine how each lead will be followed up and who will implement it. If you plan to send literature or a thank you letter to attendees, have it pre-packed and ready to ship. Write and set-up email or mail merge templates to expedite personalizing correspondence. Whatever system you use, ensure follow-up is prompt, within three to five days after the show. The quickest follow-up occurs when you input lead information into a computerized system and transmit it immediately for fulfillment. If you don't follow up, your competition will! There are several good lead management software applications on the market. Find one that fits your needs or consider designing your own—the simpler the better. Decide what kind of questions you will receive and how to respond to them. Consider different follow-up methods for the various types of visitors, e.g. prospects with an immediate need, prospects interested in buying within the next six months, prospects who are only partially interested. Try varying the follow up; phone calls, faxes, emails or letters. By just extending the follow up period you will be amazed by the results and remember to measure your success.

10. Re-evaluate regularly

You should continually re-evaluate the reasons why you re-select a show. Make sure they continue to attract your target audience and get results.

Event: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Products/services you are currently using:

Level of interest High Partial Low

Purchase time frame

Within 1 month Order

3 — 6 months Appointment Request

9 — 12 months Sales Call Required

Unknown Send Literature

Comments: _____

Lead taken by: _____

Sample lead card



Budgeting Checklist

Exhibiting involves many different expenditures. Because of the numerous components involved, it is easy to overlook an area and have unexpected expenses. Use this checklist to manage your estimated exhibition costs.

The following is budgeting guideline:

Stand Space	20-30%
Display Stand	40-60%
Show Services	5-15%
Marketing and Promotions	5-10%
Other	5-10%

1. Space

2. Display Stand

- Design & construction
- Graphics
- Refurbishing
- Products for display
- Literature holders
- Tool kit
- Lighting fixtures
- Tables
- Chairs
- Rubbish bins
- Floral arrangements
- Audiovisual equipment

3. Show Services

- Set-up and breakdown
- Electricity
- Telephone/fax
- Cleaning
- Photograph
- Security
- Overnight services
- Shipping
- Storage
- Insurance

4. Advertising and Promotion

- Preshow promotion
- Onsite promotion
- Post-show promotion
- Direct mail
- Public relations activities
- Premium incentives
- Special show literature
- Telemarketing activity

5. Other

- Travel expenses
- Hotel accommodation
- Subsistence
- Uniform
- Guest entertainment
- Receptions
- Sales meetings
- Speaker meetings
- Presenters/live talent
- Training expenses
- Meeting room
- Food/drink
- Gifts
- Other

Total

Effective Ways to Cut Costs

Here are some practical, easy and creative ways to stretch your budget.

1. Proper planning

Proper planning is the most important cost-cutting tip. Planning ahead saves on expensive last minute charges. Establish a list of key dates and activities. Push due dates back a month so that you always meet your deadlines.

2. Promotional production

Produce all of your pre-show mailings at the same time to save on printing expenses rather than printing several times throughout the year.

3. Buying a display

Consider the best type of display stand for your needs. Look into one that packs compactly to save on storage, lightweight to save on shipping, portable to transport by car, courier or as airline baggage, can be quickly and easily set-up to save costs, adapts easily to different spaces by adding or removing components.

4. Display graphics

Design and produce your graphics ahead of time to avoid overtime or rush charges. Have someone proofread your copy to avoid change charges.

5. Packing supplies

Create a "show box" containing handy items that are often not available at the show site. Include a stapler, tape, Velcro®, scissors, Swiss army knife, pens, paper, extension cords, and extra light bulbs. Remember to re-stock the box after each show.

6. Literature

Take only enough literature to distribute to highly qualified leads. Offer to send prospects literature so it is on their desk when they return from the show. This saves on drayage, production costs, and cuts down on waste.

7. Transportation

When buying a display, investigate how you will ship it. Lightweight durable systems save on shipping and drayage. Keep an accurate record of actual weight, contents and number of containers. Specify the weight on your bill of lading. Consolidate materials in one tub or shrink wrap individual items onto one pallet. Don't scrimp on shipping containers. Re-doing damaged graphics can be expensive.

8. Travel

Investigate reduced rates or special deals with the airlines for ten people or more traveling to

Tool Kit

Order all the products, supplies, and services that you need in advance. Most contractors will give you a small discount for pre-payment. By ordering early, you not only save money but you can also avoid delays, costly errors and compromises.

General Supplies

- Personal Schedule
- Calendar
- Lead/Registration forms
- Inquiry/Sales lead box
- Brochures and press releases/kits
- Giveaways and promotional items
- Order forms and contracts
- Office letterhead and note paper
- Envelopes, office/express mail
- Staplers, staples and staple remover
- Scissors
- Paperclips

- Ballpoint and marker pens

- Tape
- Cleaning supplies
- Set up tools (if necessary)
- First aid kit

Individual Supplies

- Business cards
- Travel tickets
- Appointment book
- Hotel and car confirmation numbers
- Credit cards/cash for onsite payment
- Contact telephone list
- Client list
- Name badge

and from the same city. Book early and ask hotels for any specials or corporate rates. Explore Saturday night stay-over rates, an extra night at the hotel may be less than the extra airfare. Use airport shuttles instead of taxis.

9. Show services

Pre-order show services at least 10-30 days prior to the show—electrical, phones, cleaning services, etc. The floor price is often 10-20% higher. Order more wattage than needed so you don't risk an electrical breakdown and then have to pay a higher floor price.

10. Setting up

Schedule setting up during straight time and avoid weekends and overtime hours as much as possible as it can cost up to twice as much. When possible, use your own personnel to set up your display. You will need to check the regulations specified by the exhibition hall.



Techniques

For Creating Show-Stopping Graphics

1. Make them stop and look

Graphics are used to create interest, focus attention and tell visitors about your product or service. In just three to five seconds, graphics should communicate who you are, what you do and how customers can benefit. Graphics are often the first impression an attendee has of an exhibitor, so it is important to make the right statement.

2. Consider your show goals

Consider how to convey your show goals graphically. Aim to grab attention with full-blown, interesting and vibrant graphics. Make graphic images life-size for the greatest impact. Ensure your graphics can be viewed at a distance of 5-15 feet/2-5 metres or more.

3. Project the right image

Understand what image you want to project: traditional, hi-tech, dependable, etc. Your company's image will dictate choices in typefaces, artwork, colour, etc.

4. Design for the audience

Design your graphics to your target audience. Focus on customer benefits. Use your graphics to show how your company differs from the competition. Design images to stimulate your

viewer's imagination to think beyond the conventional. Avoid designing down to particular audiences, e.g. white for doctors, diagrams for engineers. Convey technical information using good design principles and carefully planned graphics.

5. Use different types of graphics

There are a variety of graphic solutions available to convey your message including front and backlit photographs, digitally printed images, murals or detachable signage.

6. Have an integrated approach

Plan to use your graphics on other collateral material for a thematic, integrated look. For greater memorability, use colour rather than black and white.

7. Use photographs

Attract more attention by using photographs instead of illustrations or other artwork. Photographs attract the eye first, are more believable and better remembered. When used, illustrations and other line art should be rendered in an easy-to-understand style. Tell a story with your pictorial elements.

Convey technical information using good design principles and carefully planned graphics.

8. Include special effects

Pull in your audience with graphics coupled with other effects. Attract attention with movement. Consider adding an LED message sign to your display or using 3-D imaging.

9. Limit copy

Limit the total amount of copy as people rarely spend time reading a mass of type on a graphic panel. Use simple language. Write copy in short sentences and keep your paragraphs short. Proofread the copy carefully. For final proofing, an impartial third party is the best way to catch errors.

10. Avoid...

Superlatives, or the "brag and boast" syndrome, clichés and overused metaphors, superimposing copy on your illustration or reversing out large amounts of copy (white type against a black background), and periods at the end of headlines as they stop the reader from reading any further.





Creating Strong Presentations

According to trade show research, live presentations are the third most important reason people remember a display stand, after display size and product interest. Any form of live presentation, for example, a staged product demonstration, theatrical skit, magician, game show, choreography, video, audio, robots or singers, can attract a throng of visitors to your stand. The key to success is using this powerful promotional tool as an integral part of your marketing plan to appropriately communicate your company or product message.

1. Consider your show objectives

Use your presentation to help achieve your objectives and to enhance your message or show theme. Find the most attractive benefit your product or service has to offer from the buyer's perspective and flaunt it.

2. Project the right image

Decide what image you want to project and the best way to convey your company and product message. Consider conveying your message through bold graphics.

3. Think about your audience

Always think about the audience you want to attract and what you want them to get from experiencing the presentation. Be careful not to get carried away with a great idea and lose sight of the objective.

4. Have a realistic budget

Your budget is going to be a primary determining factor as to the type of presentation your company could consider. Be realistic. Know when it's appropriate to be modest and when it's okay to be a little more extravagant.



5. Be professional

Whatever form of presentation you choose, always be professional. Your corporate image is being scrutinized by everyone. Seriously consider hiring a professional company to help with the conceptual ideas and implementation.

6. Grab attention and encourage action

Having a powerful and compelling pre and at-show promotional strategy will help attract your target audience. Consider the best ways to promote your presentation—a special mailing, advertising or the Internet. Give visitors an incentive to attend, such as a gift, discount or a special demonstration.

7. Focus your staff

Communicate and involve your staff. Let them know exactly what you expect of them before, during and after each presentation. Make sure they can do what you expect of them. Decide whether you want to use your own staff or hire outside talent. Consider motivating your team with a contest for rewarding the most prospects.

8. Monitor and capture leads

Design a simple and easy-to-use lead form to capture pertinent information from your prospects. Determine who should complete the card—visitors or staff—and train your booth staff accordingly.

9. Deal with logistical issues

Major issues to consider are how much space you want the presentation to fill, if it should be in an open or closed area, how visitors will come into and leave the area; will they sit or stand during the presentation, how many presentations should be conducted every day, and how long each presentation will be? Ensure that the presentation does not interfere with fellow exhibitors and respects the adjoining space.

10. Evaluate success

Plan prior to the show how you will measure the success of the presentation: will it be based on the number of people attending, or the number of leads collected?

Essential Components of Power-Packed Pre-Show Mailings



Example of a pre-show mailing

1. Plan your strategy

Planning is the key to the success of your pre-show direct mail campaign. There are many facets in the planning process including the product/service, the media, the offer, the communications format and an evaluation of the results. Your direct mail campaign should be used in conjunction with other pre-show promotional activities such as advertising, telemarketing, press relations, etc.

2. Select the product, service, or event to promote

Decide which product, service, or event is most likely to attract visitors to your display. For the best response, keep your promotion simple and easy to understand.

3. Establish objectives

Write down the objectives for your promotion. Make sure they tie into your established show objectives and marketing strategy. Think about the response you want as well as the result you can realistically hope to achieve.

4. Target your audience

Target the people you want to respond to your mailing. Think about their interests and concerns. If you are promoting to different markets, you

often have to reach multiple buying influences within each company. Consider tailoring your message to the appropriate audience.

5. Locate qualified mailing lists

Your mailing list is the most important factor in determining whether your mailing will be successful. Often, who you mail to is equally, if not, more important than what you mail. Your very best mailing list is your own house list made up of your current and past customers and interested prospects. If you consider buying a list, consider your secondary as well as your primary markets. Merge the registration list from show management with your in-house list to avoid mailing duplicates.

6. Choose a format, tone and style

Your goal should be threefold: to get your piece opened, to get it read, and to get the reader to take action. Think about using envelope teasers, attention-grabbing headlines, offers, testimonials, benefit charts or response coupons. Think about size, colour, whether it will contain a reply mechanism or be just a simple postcard. Colour improves your effectiveness.

7. Highlight your uniqueness

Successful copy focuses on one key message. Highlight your uniqueness and competitive advantage by stressing the benefit that is most important to your customer. When writing copy, go through the who, what, where, when, and how exercise. Five times as many people read

headlines as read body copy, so say something important.

8. Create an incentive

An enticing offer will give prospects a reason to visit your display. The incentive will only be meaningful and irresistible if it is linked to a direct prospect benefit and only made available at the show by redeeming the offer at your stand. Often two-part mailings entice attendees to visit your stand. This usually consists of a premium item that is sent in two parts. The first half is sent prior to the show. If the visitor wants the second half, they need to collect it at your stand.

9. Schedule your mailings

Timing is critical to your show mailings. Consider the need for a single or a series of mailings. Plan a realistic timeline for your campaign. Use pre-sorting to save on postage. Take advantage of show management's promotional materials. Purchase pre-printed postcards for pre-show mailings.

10. Track your success

The best way to measure your mailing success is to establish a tracking system. Use a code on each mailing. As part of your incentive offer, encourage visitors to bring the mailing to your display in exchange for a gift.

11. Alternatives to direct mail

Some additional ways to promote your show or event include email, web banners, and magazine advertisements.

Use Giveaways Effectively and Leave a Lasting Impression

Gift giving builds goodwill, can be an incentive, communicates a message and creates awareness. When thinking about giveaways for your next show, consider the following ten questions.

1. What do you want to achieve by giving away a premium item?

Give-away items should be designed to communicate, motivate, promote or increase recognition and memorability. The premium and the message should make an impact.

2. How will you select your premium item?

With so many items available, your challenge is to find one which will best suit your purpose and meet your objective. Do you want it to enhance a theme, convey a specific message or educate your target audience? Remember that your company's image is reflected in the choice you make.

3. Whom do you want to receive your premium?

Having a clear objective for your premium item will also help determine who should receive it. Consider having different gifts for different types of visitors – quality gifts for key customers and prospects and a lesser valued item for general customers.

4. How does your marketing giveaway tie into your marketing theme?

Look for an item that naturally complements your marketing message. Have the message clearly imprinted on the item along with your company name, logo and phone number. Remembering who the gift was from, long after the fact, is key.



Shopping cart premium to Pre-show Mailer on page 12

5. What is your budget?

Premium items vary considerably in price. Quality, quantity and special orders affect pricing. Consider using the same item for several different shows to save on quantity discounts.

6. What must visitors do to qualify for a gift item?

You can use your premium effectively in several ways. For example, as a reward for visitors participating in demonstration, presentation or contest, as a token of appreciation when visitors give you qualifying information about their specific needs, as a thank you for stopping at the display. Avoid leaving items out for anyone to take as this diminishes value and has little or no memorability factor.

7. Will your giveaways directly help your future sales?

Hand out a discount coupon or a gift certificate that requires future contact with your company for redemption. Consider premiums that will help generate frequent visits to customers and prospects, such as calling you for free refills. Make your premium work for you and it will be money well invested.

8. How does your premium item complement your exhibiting goals?

Premiums can be used to pre-qualify your prospects. One company uses playing cards.

Prior to the show, they send "kings" to key customers, "queens" to suppliers and "jacks" to new or hot prospects. They request that the cards are brought to the display in exchange for a special gift. When the cards are presented, the display staff already know certain visitor information. They then act on previous knowledge and use their time more productively.

9. How to inform your target audience about your giveaway items?

Novel or useful giveaways can actively draw prospects to your display. Send a "tickler" invitation with details of the giveaway or create a two-piece premium, sending one part out to key prospects prior to the show telling them to collect the other half at your display.

10. How will you measure the effectiveness of your premium?

Establish a tracking mechanism to measure the success of your giveaway. Code redemption items so you know they resulted from the show. Post-show follow-up could include a question about the premium, such as "did visitors remember receiving it and how useful was it?" After the show, critique the giveaway with your team. Did it draw specific prospects to the display? Was it eye-catching enough to persuade passers-by to stop? Did your customers find it useful? Did it project the right corporate image?

International Exhibitors: Know Your Audience

1. Know different forms of business etiquette

Know your audience and how to greet and address them. Formality is the norm for most cultures, using titles rather than first names. Shaking hands is customary for most Europeans. Asians usually avoid body contact – Japanese welcome guests with a bow, Chinese nod, bow or clap.

2. Treat business with respect

The business card is like a passport showing status and identity. Give the same respect to a person's card as you would the person. Study cards you are given. Never write notes on them, fold or even shove them in your pocket. Consider printing cards on the reverse in the local language using a professional translation service.

3. Understand the significance of colours and numbers

Be sensitive to the meanings of colour and symbols in different countries. To be safe, always do your research. For example, black, white, yellow and purple are often associated with funerals in Japan (purple in Brazil and yellow in Mexico). Red and yellow are considered lucky in China. In many Asian countries "four" denotes

Be sensitive to the meanings of colour and symbols in different countries.

death and should be avoided, including products packaged in fours; "seven" and "eight" are lucky numbers.

4. Make necessary modifications

Assess the suitability of your product and service in foreign markets and decide if modifications are necessary like size, design, electrical and other standards, colour or special packaging requirements. Make the necessary modifications to product literature, warranties, training materials, promotional and advertising media.

5. Using a native for translations

When translating copy or business communication always use a native speaker with technical knowledge of your products and industry.

6. Be familiar with transportation

It is best to hire a custom house broker or freight forwarder to handle moving your products overseas. They are extremely knowledgeable about import duties, documentation, credit transactions, crating services, insurance and bonding.

7. Be prepared for foreign visitors

English is the language of international business, but decide whether you need to have an interpreter available.



8. Understand the decision-making process

In **North America**, decisions move at a rapid pace with quick answers and quick solutions. Executives are often frustrated with a lengthy decision-making process.

In **Asian countries**, decision making starts from the lower levels in the organization and works its way up the ladder. Decisions are usually made collectively and the process is often slow and thorough.

In **Europe**, top-level management attends shows expecting to place orders. They want to deal with their counterparts in your company. They expect to discuss technical details and will often want to close major deals at the show.

9. Build relationships

Take time to build relationships through personal contact. It may take several appearances at trade shows before your company is taken seriously.

10. Travel smart

Make duplicates of all vital paperwork. Have names, addresses and phone numbers of important contacts, including your hotel in case you get lost. Know who can service your display overseas. Pack voltage converters.

Everything You Need to Know About Display Transportation

Making the right transportation decisions for your display, and materials will not only save you time and money, but also a lot of aggravation.

1. Plan

The more time you have to plan, the better able you are to organize the best transportation options for your specific needs. Your four main choices are common carrier, van line, air freight or courier service (DHL or FedEx). Leaving transportation to the last minute will reduce your options and raise your costs.

2. Choose what's right

To determine your right transportation option, consider the following: the packaging needs of the shipment, the origin and destination of the shipment; the amount of time set aside for transportation, and pick-up and delivery requirements.

3. Advantages and disadvantages

Common carriers are less expensive and it is easy to check with them on your shipment's location.

The *disadvantages* of common carriers are that they often make several transfers (which increases the possibility of shipment damage), little direct contact with exhibitor (because they usually work directly with the show contractor or exhibit house), load may not be able to tolerate normal road shock (not good for sensitive equipment), only accepts crated material.

Van lines / Specialist exhibition freight companies offer more specialized and personalized point-to-point service. They are equipped to handle crated or blanket-wrapped pieces, the same driver loads and unloads shipments, and trucks operate with "air-ride" (extra cushioning).

The *disadvantage* of exhibition freight companies is they can be more expensive.

Air freight offers the quickest means of transportation to show sites as they are specialized air freight forwarders. The disadvantages of air freight are that brokers don't have allegiance to any one freight or commercial airline, high costs, airline baggage handlers often use harsh handling techniques, and freight is limited to certain sized pieces.

Courier service is the quickest means of transportation to show site for last minute details. A drawback is the expense.



4. Do your homework

Select a carrier that has a dedicated exhibition services, 24-hour tracking capability and drivers who have experience delivering to show sites. Check references. Find out what procedures they take for support before, during and after the move.

5. Check for official carriers

Find out from show management if they have an official carrier for the event. A recommended carrier is likely to offer special prices as an incentive to use its services.

6. Leverage volume discounts

To get the best pricing from your carrier, consider bidding annually or consolidating all your corporate shipping needs.

7. Insure shipments

There are several insurance options available for your exhibit: corporate insurance policies, common carrier or van line insurance, and extended liability coverage. Ask your carrier what insurance coverage they carry for individual shipments, whether they offer an exhibition floater insurance policy (covers the exhibit for the entire show), and what their procedure is for taking care of damage claims. Every reputable carrier is insured against loss or delay. Check for specifics. Ask about reimbursements for loss and specific guarantees concerning inclement weather or natural disasters.

8. Label correctly

Label every box, carton or crate with the show name and booth number you are shipping even if you are creating a skid of boxes. Make sure all shipping labels are securely attached on top of old labels. Take pre-printed labels with the return address to replace in-bound ones.

9. International exhibiting

When exhibiting internationally, consider using a shipper that has a worldwide fleet or established subsidiary connections. Check what help they will give you with customs, documentation procedures, temporary import bonds, warehousing and consolidation. Ask for guarantees for quick customs clearance and the shortest, least expensive delivery route.

Get The Most Out Of Trade Show Services

Dealing with show services is probably one of the least attractive aspects of exhibiting, yet it's a real necessity.

1. Read the exhibitor service manual

The exhibitor service manual is the official guide to everything the exhibitor needs to know about the show: all the relevant information, rules and regulations, service forms, registration, show promotions, contractor and shipping information. Remember to observe all deadlines.

2. Know what services you need

Know which products you are planning to demonstrate and display, and what utilities are required (and how much), make decisions on carpeting, furniture, colour schemes, cleaning and security services. Services ordered on the show floor could result in 50% additional costs.

3. Understand the floor plan

Carefully evaluate your display layout on the floor plan in relation to traffic flow. Understand every marking, however small and insignificant, as it indicates ceiling heights, pillar locations, etc.

4. Identify utility sources

Call the electrical department to find out how much power to order and where the utility ports are located in relation to your space. Display your products where they are least affected by unsightly wires or pipes. Always order more utilities than you think you'll need so your products perform at their optimum level.

5. Understand drayage

Drayage involves delivering your display materials to the assigned space, removing empty crates, returning the crates at the end of the show and delivering the re-crated materials to the carrier loading dock. To save money, consolidate all shipments and ship one time.

6. Have enough carpeting

Make sure all your utilities are installed before laying the carpet to avoid the frustration of having to cut the carpet for electrical outlets. Order enough carpet to cover the bare concrete strip between the display and the aisle.

7. Allow extra time for customs

If your company is shipping products to overseas locations, allow extra time for various customs clearance procedures. Items will need

Always order more utilities than you think you'll need so your products perform at their optimum level.

the correct documentation and will often need to be physically inspected. Always use a customhouse broker or freight forwarder to coordinate all arrangements and keep you informed.

8. Get to know the show services representatives

The show services representatives can be your best friends. They often have the answers to many of your questions or problems. Remember, their job is to help you.

9. Work with union labour (where applicable)

Every city/country is different regarding union rules. Read the service manual carefully to familiarize yourself with what is and is not permissible. Any questions should be directed to show management or the service contractor. Consider hiring your exhibiting display house to provide set-up supervision.

10. Carry all relevant paperwork

Remember to bring copies of all relevant paperwork, especially plans, service orders, tracking numbers for all shipments, as well as important contact names, phone and fax numbers (when the original arrangements were made by another staff member).



A Motivated Staff

Guarantees Fantastic Trade Show Results

Staffing your company's display at a show is hard work and staying motivated can often be a real challenge.

1. Select people who want to be there

The key ingredient for anyone to be motivated to work a show is simple: they need to want to be there. All too often employees are told by management to "just show up" to work a particular show. However, given a choice, they would often prefer not to.

2. Leave negative attitudes behind

Sales people frequently feel that working a display stand interferes with their normal selling routine. When employees have a negative attitude about being at a show, their body language lets everyone around know they feel "this is a futile and unimportant exercise."

3. Realize everyone is an ambassador

Remember that everyone representing your company is an ambassador. By being helpful, courteous and having a professional demeanor,

they can strengthen the company's image and gain new customers. Choose your team carefully based on its excellent knowledge of the company's products and services and the many customers and prospects whom you expect to visit the stand.

4. Encourage personal goals

Each staff member should have at least one personal goal they want to achieve. This increases accountability, changes unproductive habits, increases productivity and also builds motivation. At pre-show meetings staff should be encouraged to share their goals with other staff members. Encourage contests for quality leads collected. At post-show or debriefing meetings they should report on their achievements.

5. Get top management support

When top management are supportive of the company's trade show activities and demonstrate their feelings by attending the show, helping in the stand, taking part in training sessions and pre-and post-show activities, their enthusiasm is contagious.

6. Keep the team informed

A critical element of motivational success is letting the team know what is expected of them

at the show and then providing any training necessary for them to do their job effectively. Successful people aren't born...they're trained.

7. Create a positive, fun and reinforcing environment

It is management's responsibility to create a positive, fun and reinforcing environment and to realize that it takes more than an incentive to succeed. Rewards and personal recognition provide an effective way of encouraging higher levels of performance.

8. Know your staff

Managers need to know their individual staff members and what motivates them. Studies show that more people are motivated by personal recognition than by money. The power of recognition and appreciation can create a more positive, productive and enjoyable environment while working a show.

9. Team spirit

Everyone should be working together as a team, helping each other out whenever and wherever necessary. If there is a large number of staffers, split them up into teams with technical people working alongside sales people. As a team they need to have time prior to the show to get acquainted, develop a level of trust and get to know and understand each other's strengths.

10. Review performance

Each day, conduct debriefing sessions to review performance. Team members should be encouraged to give and receive feedback from colleagues to look for ways to improve performance each day. Managers need to remember that individual achievements are worth group recognition.



Questions

That Qualify Prospects

Questions are a formidable business tool. They are the keys to unlocking many doors in any sales situation. Asking open ended questions that engage a prospect and reveal needs is a powerful way to gather buying information. Let prospects know you are interested in helping them solve their problems.

Opening questions - Find out immediately who you are talking to and where they are from. You don't want to spend unnecessary time with visitors you cannot help.

1. "What are your main objectives for attending this show and what specific products or services are you looking for?"
2. "Tell me about the project you're presently working on."
3. "What are some of the major challenges you're experiencing?"

Investigating needs - Move on to more probing, business-specific questions to create the fuel for your ultimate sale.

4. "What do you like most about the product or service you are presently using and what would you like to change?"
5. "What are your top three criteria for buying?"
6. "Are you part of the buying team and, if so, what specific information are you looking for?"

Demonstrating questions - During your demonstration, keep the prospect involved and interested.

7. "What do you think of this product's performance and how does it compare with what you are currently using?"
8. "What specific concerns do you have regarding our products, services, and doing business with us?"

Closing questions - Using well prepared closing questions can help produce appropriate follow-up action.

9. "How does your company decide which vendors to work with?"
10. "What else would be important for you to know and what would you like to see as the next step?"



exhibits & fabrication

We specialize in custom portable, modular and custom fabricated tradeshow exhibits for purchase, lease or rent in Las Vegas and all the other top U.S. trade show venues.

Our solutions are complete – from working with you to design a custom display, large or small, that meets your show objectives, to designing your trade show graphic layout to maximize the exposure of your message.

We provide a live staging of your display prior to shipping to the show and doing a live walk through via Skype or FaceTime. This enables our clients to observe their finished product completed so there are no surprises on the show floor.

Our clients exhibit in Las Vegas many times throughout the year. In fact, we consider the Las Vegas Convention Center, Sands Expo Center and the Mandalay Bay Convention Center our second homes as we have clients exhibiting at those venues year in and year out.

About the Author

Susan Friedmann, The Tradeshow Coach, works with personnel in the U.S. and Europe who want to develop skills critical to their exhibiting success now and in the future. She has been a speaker, author and business coach for over 20 years, is regularly featured at industry conferences and is a frequent contributor to major trade publications.

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