

## The Guidelines for the first time trade show Exhibitors.

For first-time trade show exhibitors, effective planning and execution are key to a successful experience. This involves carefully selecting the right event, defining clear goals, creating a compelling booth design, training staff, and implementing a pre- and post-show marketing strategy. By focusing on these key areas, first-time exhibitors can maximize their return on investment and achieve their objectives.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

### 1. Pre-Show Planning:

#### **Choose the Right Show:**

Research and select a trade show that aligns with your target audience and industry.

#### **Set Goals:**

Define your objectives for the show, whether it's lead generation, brand awareness, or relationship building.

#### **Budget:**

Create a realistic budget that covers all costs, including booth rental, travel, marketing, and staffing.

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**Develop a Booth Plan:**

Design a booth that is visually appealing, functional, and reflects your brand.

**Recruit and Train Staff:**

Assemble a knowledgeable and engaging team to represent your company.

**Promote Your Presence:**

Utilize social media and other channels to generate buzz and attract attendees.

## 2. On-Show Execution:

**Engage Visitors:**

Approach visitors in a friendly and approachable manner, understanding their needs and offering solutions.

**Utilize Booth Features:**

Make the most of your booth space with interactive displays, promotional items, and engaging activities.

**Gather Leads:**

Implement a system for collecting visitor information and qualifying leads.

**Network:**

Make an effort to connect with other exhibitors and attendees, building relationships.

## 3. Post-Show Follow-Up:

- **Thank Attendees:** Follow up with visitors who expressed interest in your products or services.
- **Analyze Results:** Evaluate your performance against your goals and identify areas for improvement.
- **Learn and Improve:** Reflect on your experience and use the insights to plan for future events.

### Additional Tips:

- **Read the Show Manual Thoroughly:** Familiarize yourself with the rules, regulations, and deadlines of the show.
- **Utilize the Show's Official Contractors:** These companies provide services like booth setup, furniture rental, and labor.
- **Prepare for Unexpected Issues:** Have a backup plan for any unforeseen problems that may arise.

## Get trade show ready: A first-time exhibitor checklist

Before the event, create a post-show email that's ready to send once the show closes.

Determine how you will measure success at the show.

Test all equipment, event tech, and any activations BEFORE the show opens.

Designate a point person or vendor to oversee teardown, packing, and shipping.

If you're ready to go (trade show) pro, use our handy checklist of priorities and helpful tips to conquer your first exhibition.

## Pre-Show

Begin planning 3-6 months ahead of the event.

Create an action plan and designate roles and responsibilities.

Read the show manual thoroughly so you're aware of basic event information, rules and regulations, important deadlines, and necessary order forms.

Make note of the show's official contractors — these companies provide booth services at the event and can help your event experience run smoothly.

**TIP: The official service contractor is the show management's partner and exclusive provider of rigging, furniture rental, signage, labor, carpet, displays, transportation, and material handling. In some cases, official service contractors also provide audiovisual, electrical, and utilities.**

**TIP: Shipping to the advance warehouse up to 30 days before exhibitor move-in can save costs. Choosing advance shipments also ensures packages arrive in time for move-in.**

## During Show

Before show opening, check out your space to ensure all shipments have arrived and confirm all orders have been completed or are in process.

If you hired labor, check in at the service desk to ensure your work order is in process. While you're there, confirm teardown labor, too.

Test, test, test! Make sure all equipment, event tech, and any activations are working properly BEFORE show opening.

Label all empty boxes and containers you'll need for teardown before they're taken to the warehouse.

**TIP: Before containers are taken to storage, remove every item needed for the show because you won't have access to them during the event.**

## Post-Show

Collect all final leads, business cards, and notes gathered from staff during the show.

Depending on booth size and complexity, you may designate a point person or vendor to oversee teardown, material packing, and shipping.

Complete a Material Handling Agreement (MHA) for all outbound shipments (each destination requires its own MHA) and return to the Exhibitor Service Center.

Apply labels to every container and/or box you plan to ship.

Evaluate success at the show.

Follow up with leads and contacts to keep the conversation going. Make sure the correspondence happens no later than a week following the event.