

Exhibiting at Trade Show Checklist and Guide

Learn how to be profitable and productive.

A trade show is one of the best ways to make face-to-face connections with potential customers and ultimately gain new business. In addition, by exhibiting you can promote your brand to increase recognition in a specific market and quickly build credibility with your target audience.

Below is a checklist you can use to make sure you are producing the results you want from the event you are attending. Exhibit planning for trade shows will ensure that your booth looks great, your brand is well represented, and you come away with strong return on your investment.

☐ 1. Set Goals

It's important to set goals and estimate the number of sales leads you want to attract to obtain the most effective ROI (return on investment). Do your homework. What other companies will be exhibiting and attending? Who are the speakers? Are there side events and activities you can participate in? For many companies, trade shows are the only time each year they contact directly with buyers.

☐ 2. Engage People at Your Booth and Tell Your Story

Putting in more effort will definitely pay off. When someone walks by your booth and you are smiling, friendly, warm, welcoming, or even funny, it will make a bigger impact than if you were sitting there quietly and not engaging with visitors. If you are not the outgoing type, then bring along a coworker who is!

DO NOT SIT ON YOUR PHONE or COMPUTER AT YOUR BOOTH! DO NOT TEAR DOWN EARLY!

☐ 3. Connect with Exhibitors Next to You

Keep in mind that engaging with the crowd is not the only way to promote yourself at these events. Networking with other vendors helps create brand awareness, cultivates new avenues of opportunity, and can help develop lasting connections. We have seen many companies that complement each other form partnerships and drive business if the opportunity arises.

☐ 4. Time to Budget

Once you have decided to exhibit at a trade show, discuss your goals and objectives with your sales team. Consider how important the show is to your business, what competitors are attending, and how many people from your company need to be there and in what capacity. Set a budget for travel, accommodations, sponsorships, exhibit space, booth/stand rental and enhancements, shipping, promotional items and include some padding in case unforeseen expenses arise. By the way, all food and drinks are included at our events for all registered attendees. Something to keep in mind when budgeting.

☐ 5. How Big is Your Exhibit?

For each of our events, we provide a floor plan for all exhibitors specific to the venue. Plan your exhibit according to the space you contracted and determine if a package is included, or if you need to rent an exhibit, carpet, furniture, or other items. Place your reception area or front of your booth where the most traffic will pass by. Walk the show floor and take note of competitors' locations to determine if another location might be better for next year.

☐ 6. Estimate Attendance

Research the number of attendees from previous years; the trade show planners should have a projection of how many people plan to attend closer to the show date. Use that number to set a goal for how many customers you want to attract to your booth. Even a small number of the "perfect" customer for your business can make a big impact on sales.

☐ 7. Signage or Banners

Do you have a hanging sign you can use for display over your exhibit space? A sign or banner is a great way to display your company name and logo in your booth. There are some rules and regulations, so remember to check with us if you plan to hang a sign.

Signs or retractable banners can be displayed on a table, placed on an easel, or in the back of your booth for easy viewing.

☐ 8. Leave No Room for Doubt

When someone walks by your booth there should be no doubt about what product your company is selling or what service you are providing. Brand recognition plays a major part in trade shows. This comes from displaying your logo or company name tastefully, but as visually impactful as possible.

☐ 9. Tables & Furniture

Tables help fill the void and can be utilized in many ways, including displaying promotional items and information on your products or brand. Depending on the size of your exhibit space, a skirted table might be all you have room for, but if you have space, an additional table and chairs can offer a designated meeting area for important conversations with customers. A high-top table with stools makes for a convenient gathering spot if space is limited.

Specialty furniture can enhance the look of the space by adding a pop of color or a sleek seating area that invites attendees to gather for rest or conversation.

☐ 10. Floor Coverings

BBI International events require carpeting or a finished floor covering in all exhibit booths. You can find detailed information inside our exhibitor kit on the conference website. The addition of carpet padding (or even double padding) makes a noticeable difference in your staff's comfort level during the show. There are many options to review to make your booth look sharp and feel comfortable for your team and customers.

☐ 11. Electrical & Lighting

Electricity must be ordered prior to move-in and installed before carpet is laid or an exhibit is built. Review the exhibitor kit on our conference website for options. Include a layout of your booth so the electrician can place the outlets in the correct location before you arrive. Adding lighting to an exhibit can draw attention to your space and make it easier for attendees to find your company in a convention center or hotel ballroom. Spotlighting products attracts customers and makes viewing product features easier.

☐ 12. Decorations & Displays

Placing printed information and products haphazardly on the table will not look very professional. For a more polished look, use organization displays racks with some decorative items such as plants or balloons that complement your theme or color scheme. Additional decorations can be ordered via exhibitor services. Take a look at the exhibitor kit on our website.

☐ 13. Promotional Items

Consider bringing popular promotional items, bags, or backpacks with a company logo to distribute to attendees to create brand awareness for your company. Trendy items such as stylus pens, fidget spinners, USB drives, and water bottles drive traffic and delight both coworkers back at the office and kids at home. We also recommend that you have a giveaway to collect contact information and generate leads at your booth.

☐ 14. Interactive Exhibits

If you really want to captivate attendees, offer an interactive element to your booth to catch their attention and keep them in your booth for a longer period of time. Some exhibitors rent photo booths or video games. You can also keep them busy with a raffle wheel to spin, games to play, or short films to watch.

☐ 15. Trade Show Shipping

Once everything is ordered and ready for the show, determining the best method of shipping and when it should arrive is imperative to having a successful show. You can find additional shipping information in the exhibitor kit on our conference website. You can also contact service@bbiinternational.com for more details.

☐ 16. Use the Conference Mobile App and Increase Interaction

With our conference mobile app, you'll be able to network with other attendees, virtually. Connect and get contact information, send out promotions to attendees, and drive people to your booth. This has become an industry standard, and you need to make sure you are familiar with all of the conference app features available to you.

☐ **17. Order Lead Retrieval and Gain More Leads**

Generate more leads from the event and create more face-to-face conversations by adding lead retrieval services.

Lead Retrieval is a simple, intuitive mobile app that lets you scan attendee badge QR codes to collect leads for your organization. After you scan a badge, you can add notes, pictures, and more contact info to the lead's profile, and rate the lead.

When the event wraps up, you can easily view metrics and export all your leads to a CSV for import into your CRM.

☐ **18. Become a Bingo Participant and Drive Traffic to Your Booth**

We've developed a unique BLACKOUT BINGO game to help move conference attendees around the exhibit hall. Each attendee will receive a BLACKOUT BINGO card upon check-in and must visit and receive a stamp from all participating exhibit booths to be entered in the cash prize drawing. As an exhibitor, you have the opportunity to purchase a BINGO square and increase traffic to your booth.

☐ **19. Advertising in the Conference Program Guide**

Statistics show that attendees come to an exposition with a set agenda of exhibits to visit. Make this your most successful conference by inviting attendees to your booth through the use of an advertisement in the conference program guide. The program guide is given to all attendees at registration desk and includes the conference schedule and a complete list of all speakers with bios, the poster presentations, and the exhibit hall map. Attendees refer to the guide often, not only on site at the meeting but throughout the year, which gives your advertisement repeated exposure. Exclusive only to exhibitors, sponsors, and supporting organizations.

☐ **20. Promote Yourself Before the Event on Social Media**

Use your company's social media audience to your advantage and let people know you are attending, so they can plan to meet you at the event. Promoting before the show is a great way to show your involvement and expertise to the industry. Start discussions and networking before the show even starts. Use the conference as a place to meet up.

Conference Graphics for social media can be downloaded here and help you "Spread the Word" about the FEW.

Questions? Contact: service@bbiinternational.com or 866-746-8385.