

# Budgeting & Cost Control

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It doesn't take long to become overwhelmed by the amount of variables involved in a trade show. Add the vastly different average costs of labor and services from city to city, and you'll have a first-class Excedrin experience. Tracking the costs from past shows and knowing what to expect in upcoming cities will put you back in control. This sheet provides three resources for you:

1. Become aware of the possible expenses that await you (remember that not all of these expenses will apply to your situation);
2. Record your past expenses to create priorities and seek items requiring your personal attention;
3. Estimate upcoming expenses by making copies of this sheet.

Remember that many costs are determined by union rates that vary in each city. From there, show managers and contractors add their mark-up, and usually do so on a percentage basis. By the time the final cost per hour reaches the exhibitor, it can be quite large. Preparing for these costs in advance will soften the blow later. More importantly, you may question these charges before you accept the services. Conflict is much easier to resolve during the weeks before a show as opposed to at show site or, worse yet, after the show (you'll most likely have no proof at that point).

Also be aware that virtually every service provided at a trade show must be planned for well in advance by your vendors. Contractors do not have complete inventories at the show facility and often bring only what they know will be purchased. The few products/services that remain (after those that were pre-ordered are distributed) can be purchased at show site, but for a price. The show-site rates are often 10% to 75% higher than those available in advance. Be aware of your Advance Order Deadlines!

A 1988 Trade Show Bureau statement reported average budgeting guidelines:

Booth expenses (including furnishings, equipment)	33 %
Space	24 %
Show Services (including utilities)	22 %
Transportation	13 %
Advertising, promotional & special activities	4 %
Personnel (including travel, hotel, expenses)	4 %

Certainly these are not to be interpreted as rules, but they can give you an idea as to how far away you are from the "average."

*Be sure to also see other topics in our free "How-To Be A Successful Exhibitor" series, available exclusively at <http://www.northlandcustom.com/library/>*

- *Maximize ROI On Your Exhibit*
- *Show Selection Guidelines*
- *Space Selection Guidelines*
- *Boothmanship 101*
- *Post Show Evaluation*



**Show Services:**

	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	LAST YEAR (_____) COST	UPCOMING YEAR (_____) EST. COST	ACTUAL COST
• Show Service Management (time)	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Deadline Tracking	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Furniture				
- Tables	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Chairs	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Wastebaskets	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Easels	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Stanchions	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Chain/Rope	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Other furniture	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Cleaning/Vacuuming	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Security	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Porter Service	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Floral	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Photography	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Refreshment/Hospitality				
- Catering	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Refrigerator	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Water Cooler	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Water, Cups	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Fire Marshall Approval	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Labor				
- Electrician	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Decorator	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Carpenter	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Plumber	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Rigger	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Supervision	_____	_____	_____	_____
- EAC Request	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Personnel				
- Host/Hostess	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Registration of Exhibitors/Badges	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Uniforms	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Name Tags	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Special Activities				
- Animated Displays	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Entertainment	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Receptions	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Sales Meetings	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Hospitality Suite	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Training Expenses	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Promotion/Advertising				
- Pre-Show Promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____
- On-Site Promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Post-Show Promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Public Relations	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Press Kits	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Premiums/Giveaways	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Special Show Literature	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Lead Management	_____	_____	_____	_____

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