

Show Selection Guidelines

"Why do I go where I go when I go there?" Have you ever asked yourself this or a similar question? After establishing general trade show marketing goals, you need to shape the rest of your strategy to fit around those goals. Ask yourself the following questions to select the right venue for your display to be shown to the world.

ASK YOURSELF:

What do you want to achieve by exhibiting?
Who is your target audience?
Which industries cater to your target audience?
At which shows do your major competitors exhibit?
Which shows do your existing customers attend?
Which shows do your existing suppliers attend?
Which are your major industry shows?
What is your budget?

REGARDING EACH SHOW:

What is the official name, date, and location of the event?
What is the name & address of the show organizer?
What is the nearest airport?
What transportation is available to the show site?
Which hotels are within easy access to the show site?

ASK SHOW MANAGEMENT ABOUT THE SHOW:

How long has the show been running?
What trends exist for the last three to five years?
What is special/unique about the show (differentiate it from competing industry shows)?
How do the attendance and exhibitor figures compare for the last 3 to 5 years?
Has the show been growing or shrinking as measured in ...
... professional attendance?
... square footage?
... exhibiting firms?
Is this a local, regional, national, or international show?
How narrow/broad are the markets served?
What are the markets served?
What are the show hours? Do they vary from day to day?
What educational programs are held?
When are the programs held?
Do they conflict with or encourage show hours?
What is show management's marketing program for this show?
How far in advance of the show does the marketing program begin?
Where is the upcoming show located (note: approximately 40% of attendees come from a 200 mile radius of the show site)?
Will the show attract visitors from areas of the country you do, or want to do, business with?
Do they coincide with another major event, locally, regionally, or nationally?
What is the installation & dismantling timeline? Does it allow sufficient time to erect and pack your display?

ASK SHOW MANAGEMENT ABOUT ATTENDEES:

What are the show attendance figures for the past 3 to 5 years?
Are the figures independently verified?
Are exhibit personnel, press, spouses, and other non-buyers included?
If so, what percentage do they represent?
What percentage of attendance is pre-registered?
What percentage of pre-registered attendees are no-shows?
What visitor profile information is available?
What industry segments do visitors represent?
What is the geographic visitor breakdown?
What percentage of visitors are from overseas?
What accommodations exist for overseas visitors?
What is the average amount of time visitors spend on the show floor?
Which other shows do attendees visit?
Are there any attendee admission restrictions?
Is the show open to the public?
Is there an on-site press room and how is it run?
Are there any other media relations activities?

The best supplement to these questions and their respective answers is to actually attend the show yourself once before buying space in it. Doing so will allow you an opportunity to answer these questions personally to avoid any bias that might be added by other sources. Once you have selected a show, be sure to read our "Space Selection Guidelines" for tips on maximizing the value of your space. Topics in our free "How-To Be A Successful Exhibitor" series, available exclusively at <http://www.northlandcustom.com/library/>

- *Maximize ROI On Your Exhibit*
- *Budget & Cost Control*
- *Show Selection Guidelines*
- *Space Selection Guidelines*
- *Boothmanship 101*
- *Post Show Evaluation*

ASK SHOW MANAGEMENT ABOUT EXHIBITORS:

What type of companies currently exhibit at the show?
How many of these companies are industry leaders?
How many of these companies are your competitors?
What size booth space do your major competitors take?
Are exhibiting companies divided into product/service categories?
What after-hour events are organized so that exhibitors can meet attendees?
What on-site facilities are there for exhibitors?
What opportunities exist for exhibitors to be included in the educational programming?
What exhibitor sponsorship opportunities exist?

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Northland Custom Woodworking has built award winning trade show exhibits for leading design firms since 1986. Our carpenters have constructed displays for Wrigley, Abbott Labs, Maybelline, TDK, Swiss Army, Gatorade, Focal Communications, Zurich Insurance, Peerless, Brother, and hundreds more. For more information and to see our latest portfolio, please visit www.northlandcustom.com
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