

Space Selection Guidelines

There are many concerns to address when selecting floor space. As simple as these appear when reading them from a publication such as this, they are difficult to recall all at once and even more impossible to solve. Let's review them, as well as the common types of booths found on trade show floors.

TYPES OF BOOTH CONFIGURATIONS:

- In-Line/Aisle/Linear
 - has three enclosed sides (surrounded by other booths) and only one aisle
 - usually is 10' deep and ranges between 10' and 50' in length
 - usually has a height limitation of 8'
- Peninsula
 - has three aisles on its sides and only one side is enclosed
 - is found on the end of rows of in-line booths
 - has higher height limits than an in-line, but can not go to the ceiling
- Island
 - has an aisle on all four sides
 - minimum size is 20' x 20', and can become as large as money can buy
 - in many instances, can build as high as the ceiling allows
- Block
 - has two aisles at a 90° angle
 - is like an in-line in many ways, but is deeper than 10'
- Cross-Aisle
 - has two aisles on opposite sides
 - usually is 10' deep and ranges between 30' to 60' in length

HOW TO ESTIMATE YOUR SPACE REQUIREMENTS:

Although there is no magic rule for predicting the precise amount of floorspace you will need, many have tried to create guidelines. Here's a guideline from the International Exhibitor's Association:

INSTRUCTIONS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Know how many visitors you want to see during the show: | <u>EXAMPLES</u>
500 |
| 2. Know the total number of show hours | 20 |
| 3. Divide # of visitors by total show hours (= avg # of visitors/hr) | $500/20 = 25$ |
| 4. On average, each staffer can interact with 10 to 15 visitors per hour | 2-3 |
| 5. Allow 50 sq. ft. per staffer | 100-150 sq ft |
| 6. Know how much space your display and demonstration require | 100 sq ft |
| 7. Add step (5) and step (6) | 200-250 sq ft |
| 8. Divide step (8) by 10 for an in-line... | 10'x20' or 10'x25' space |
| ...and by 20 or more for a peninsula or island | 20'x10' or 20'x12.5' space |
| 9. Check the floorplan. You'll most likely find that, in the above example, you'll need an in-line. Minimum islands are usually 20'x20' or larger, so the second half of step (8) is not a realistic option. | |

CONSIDER THE FLOORPLAN OF THE FACILITY:

- note the entrances, exits
 - from there calculate the traffic flow
- find the registration area
- locate common destinations of attendees:
 - restrooms
 - restaurants/snack areas
 - pay phones
- check for escalators, elevators
- will windows affect your exhibit in either a positive or a negative way (i.e., will the sun wash out your monitors intended for presentations?)

LOOK AT THE FLOORPLAN OF THE SHOW:

- where are prime corner locations as well as poor corner locations
- see where the press office will be
- how about seminar sites?
- is your intended booth within close proximity to electrical, air, and water sources? If so, will you also have to provide access for neighboring booths?
- where are your competitors?

AREAS TO AVOID:

- column/pillars
- low ceilings
- dark or poorly lit areas
- overhead pipes, esp. water pipes
- dead-end aisles
- loading docks and freight doors that will allow the wind to carry dirt into your exhibit and blow away your wall
- late set-up areas
- fire boxes mounted in the facility's floor
- other "black spots" on the floorplan

OTHER ITEMS TO ADDRESS BEFORE SIGNING THE SPACE CONTRACT:

- How close do you want to be to your competitors?
- Should you be near an industry leader?
- Are any exhibitors planning noisy/dramatic crowd-drawing activities?
- Is show management providing a hospitality area on your floor?
- What is the typical traffic flow pattern from the entrances?
- Are exhibits located on more than one level?
- Where are the most frequently used accesses to each level?
- Are seminars a major attraction for attendees?
- Which show hall exits & entrances are used most frequently?
- What is the average time visitors spend on the show floor?
- What areas will be carpeted?
- Is the show floor divided into specific product categories?
- What are the height restrictions?
- Is there a ceiling structure for hanging signs? Are they permitted?
- Have any exhibitors had special permission to deviate from the show rules?
- Can you store boxes behind your space, if needed?
- Are there any exhibitors with complimentary products?
- If there are windows in the exhibit hall, which side is the west side of the hall?

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*
- *Budget & Cost Control*
- *Show Selection Guidelines*
- *Boothmanship 101*
- *Post Show Evaluation*

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