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Five Tips on How to Select a Trade Show Exhibit House

By Dick Wheeler

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When it comes to choosing the right trade show exhibit company for your next trade show display appearance, look for unique qualities that set one firm apart from the others. Seek out the trade show display firm that can help you gain the maximum impact on the show floor.

If you are new at this, start by checking out trade show exhibit companies online.

Research the trade show display company's depth of experience, creative talents and track record. Closely examine these criteria to justify making them your trade show exhibit partner. Narrow your search down to two or three qualified firms and then contact them by phone.

Here are five key questions to ask your prospective trade show display house:

1. Do they have an "A to Z" approach to managing trade show display projects? If so, you will be able to start with a design concept keyed to your company's brand image while strictly adhering to the specifications of your booth requirements. Step-by-step your display unit will be constructed, utilizing the latest trade show display structural technologies, until final approval of a fully assembled product is ready for its trade show exhibit hall appearance. You should demand an integrated, turnkey service that provides you with a flaw-free trade show exhibit building process.
2. Check the trade show exhibit house's design-to-completion success rate. A top firm can boast that the majority of their design proposals presented have become built projects. The industry average is only 30% of proposals accepted by clients for successful completion.
3. Ask if they have a seasoned management team. Find out how long their team has been together. The longer the team has worked together, the better the intellectual property they can deliver and complete a project with little or no complications. The teamwork of a good exhibit house offers a refined process of working seamlessly together. That is reassurance to both new and long-term clients

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of a successful trade show experience.

4. What is their customer satisfaction rating? Ask for client referrals; get client testimonials and client feedback. Ask about their policy for less-than-satisfied clients and how they personally address these issues and how they would rectify any concerns.

5. Do they have exclusive trade show resource relationships? This is a measure of their diligence and experience in the trade show industry. Find out their source of such suppliers as custom modular and custom portable trade show display providers. Are these first line, reliable organizations with solid track records in the trade show business?

If you like what you hear, arrange a personal meeting with the firm's sales representative, either at your office or their showroom. It is at this meeting where you will make your final assessment and selection. Then it is up to the firm's account management and design staff to guide you through the steps to

building a successful trade show display.

Dick Wheeler is President of Professional Exhibits & Graphics, headquartered in Sunnyvale, California. The firm is a full-service premiere trade show exhibit, graphics and management services company. For additional information, go to

www.proexhibits.com

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Eight Ways to Control Trade Show Display Costs

By Dick Wheeler

From time to time, clients ask how they can keep control of trade show exhibit costs without diluting their exhibit impact. Here are several suggestions to help keep trade show display expenditures in line:

1. Consider renting a trade show booth rather than buying one.

Renting a trade show exhibit applies only if you are planning a one time or occasional trade show appearance or if you have a simultaneous trade show in another part of the country that conflicts with

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your exhibit schedule. It does not make economic sense to rent a trade show display if you plan to exhibit more than three times in a given year. Be sure to rent a booth that will fit into the size of the exhibit space. Renting will save you not only on trade show booth construction costs but also the expense of warehousing your display after the trade show is over.

2. Upgrade your existing trade show booth.

If you choose not to rent, you can upgrade your older booth by changing its graphics, relaminating color panels, and redesigning structural elements. This is a much more cost-effective way than starting from scratch.

3. Invest in a pre-owned trade show display.

If you do not already have an existing trade show exhibit booth to upgrade, you can find pre-owned trade show exhibits that are greatly reduced from their original cost. Many trade show exhibit houses offer top quality pre-owned exhibits that are well maintained and easily adaptable to new signage, often affording reductions in exhibit design time and construction costs by more than half. You also have options on size, design, scope and price similar to trade show booth rentals with a variety of style and dimension options. Perhaps with little more than a customized graphics upgrade your trade show exhibit can be "out the door and on the floor" in a matter of weeks.

4. Consider a lightweight trade show exhibit.

A lightweight exhibit will reduce operating costs such as freight, drayage, and storage. Select a trade show display that packs easily and is uncomplicated to install and dismantle. A custom modular or custom portable trade show exhibit can have the look of a custom exhibit, while reducing operating costs by 50 to 90 percent.

5. Pack extra supplies.

When your installation and dismantle company installs your exhibit at your trade show, you'll find that emergency repairs and materials replacements often are costly. So keep a backup supply box filled with items that may need to be replenished at the trade show. Include power cords, tools, light bulbs, Velcro, scissors and duct tape.

6. Plan well in advance.

This will help you avoid unnecessary rush charges from not scheduling adequate lead time for the trade show display's graphic design and production requirements.

7. Set up the trade show display during pre-show week days.

Avoid costly weekend and overtime labor costs on the trade show floor. Early trade show booth

assembly also helps you to avoid last minute glitches that run up the tab.

8. Understand trade show services.

You will frequently require supplemental assistance from trade show services at the trade show exhibit hall. These are representatives and union laborers who provide such support services as installation and dismantling, carpeting, furniture, lighting, phones, drayage and security. If you are aware of the nuances of these charges for trade show services and plan in advance you can save money while

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avoiding numerous pitfalls.

Experience is the best teacher in keeping trade show exhibit costs under control. If your display team has limited know-how, tap into the wealth of knowledge available from the staff of a reputable trade show exhibit house. Also do your research on trade show exhibit company websites for industry insider tips.

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