



# Exhibiting Guide

The goal of this guide is to prepare exhibitors for the challenges of trade show marketing. At MODdisplays, we have years of experience in trade show marketing and in the portable trade show display industry, and we have a good understanding of what makes for a successful event. This guide will help you navigate your trade show with ease, and will save you time and money over the course of your exhibiting program.

## Step 1 – Choosing a Trade Show

The first step in a successful trade show marketing campaign is deciding where to exhibit. This is an important decision that should require a lot of thought and energy. Making a poor decision about which show to attend usually results in a low return on your investment no matter how well you execute the rest of your plan, so be careful to make a good decision.

When choosing where to exhibit, make sure you pick a trade show that will be flooded with people from your target audience. It is more important to exhibit at a show that is filled with your potential clients than a show that is filled with other players in your industry. If you sell leather jackets, you might do better by exhibiting at a trade show for motorcycle dealers than you would by exhibiting at a trade show for clothing design.

When choosing your show, you should also consider location. The cost of airfare, lodging, meals and other travel expenses may make exhibiting at a trade show across the country impractical. Shipping your display across the country can cost hundreds of dollars depending on the type of display you have, which can drastically increase the investment you make in a trade show. Typically exhibitors do well by choosing locations that are close to their place of business to minimize the cost of travel and shipping.

It is also important to be aware of any restrictions and hidden costs that the show may have before you decide to exhibit there. Some trade shows offer very low prices on booth registration, but then charge outrageous fees for services like electricity and internet connectivity. Before deciding to exhibit at a trade show, you should make yourself aware of all the charges that you may face so that you can accurately project what your costs will be. If you cannot project the cost of your trade show before you exhibit, how will you be able to determine whether exhibiting is a good investment?

There are a few general rules of thumb that will help you make a good choice when determining where to exhibit:

- If your competitors are exhibiting, chances are you want to have a presence there too. For the sake of brand building, you need to have a presence that is equal to or greater than that of your competitors.
- Always go where your target audience is. The more potential clients you can reach, the better your return will be.
- Always exhibit near your primary office location when possible to save travel and shipping costs.
- Don't ever exhibit at a trade show because you feel like it is your duty. Even if you're expected to exhibit, it is still important to weigh the potential costs and benefits of exhibiting in order to make a good decision.



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## Step 2 – Pre-Show Planning

The majority of your preparation for the trade show should come before you ever set foot in the exhibit hall. There are a number of important factors that must be planned for and accounted for in order to make sure your trade show experience goes smoothly. Failure to account for everything could result in gaping holes in your trade show marketing program that will hurt the return on your investment.

The most important thing you need to do before the show begins is establish a goal for the event. What do you want to achieve by exhibiting at this trade show? Your goal may be to promote a specific product, to build brand awareness, to generate new clients, or to generate traffic to your website. Whatever your goals may be, they need to be clearly defined and outlined on paper. Failure to take this step is one of the biggest reasons why exhibit marketing programs fail.

Once you have your goal outlined, you should begin thinking about the best way to achieve that goal. At this stage, you need to begin thinking about the overall feeling you want your marketing material to generate at the trade show. If you're building brand awareness, you probably want to leave visitors and attendees with a feeling of professionalism, legitimacy, and strength. If you're trying to generate interest in a new product or website, you want your potential clients to leave with a feeling of excitement and anticipation.

This is also the time to book plane tickets, reserve hotel rooms, and make other arrangements to ensure that the time surrounding the actual event is comfortable and well coordinated. Many exhibitors become overwhelmed with travel and accommodations when they put it off until the very end, so be sure to plan ahead. You will also find that prices will be much more affordable when you book flights and hotel rooms in advance.



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### Step 3 – Pre-Show Mailers

Sending pre-show mailers is one of the most effective ways to boost traffic to your exhibit at the trade show. Most trade shows will make a list of physical addresses and e-mail addresses available to all of the visitors, attendees and exhibitors at the show, which will allow you to target the people who will be at the show with e-mail or snail mail marketing.

Your pre-show mailer should be well branded with your company name and logo. If you do nothing else at a trade show, you should focus on building your brand. If you create a memorable experience that attendees and visitors can take with them, and your company lingers in their mind, then you have made a successful impact. Aside from being well branded, your pre-show mailers should give visitors something to look forward to. You need to give them a reason to come to your booth once the show is underway. If you fail to give them a good reason to stop by your trade show exhibit, then your pre-show mailer has failed.

Many attendees and visitors make detailed itineraries before the show that outline which booths they are interested in visiting and what they want to achieve by visiting each booth. It is important to get the name of your company on as many itineraries as possible. If you can make your company part of a planned schedule for visitors, you will increase your traffic dramatically.



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#### Step 4 – Design Your Trade Show Literature

Trade show literature is the only part of your marketing program that visitors and attendees will take home with them from the show. For this reason, the literature you create needs to effectively communicate your company's message in a way that spurs its readers to action. Keeping in mind your goals, your literature should drive its readers to take actions such as visiting your website, calling your sales staff, or purchasing your services.

Trade show literature should work as a part of your marketing campaign as a whole. The look and feel of your brochure should match the look and feel of your trade show display so that visitors are not confused. Your entire marketing campaign should have a consistent theme that constantly reminds visitors and attendees about your company's brand and image.

Your trade show literature should be clean and focused on a very narrow topic. Do not try to do too much with your literature. Every piece of literature you create should have a defined goal, and should not deviate from the topic at hand. Trying to cover too many areas at once can result in powerless and ineffective literature.



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### Step 5 – Shop for Trade Show Displays

At MODdisplays, we work hard to make the process of purchasing a trade show display simple and affordable. We offer free graphic design, free custom renderings that show exactly what your booth will look like before you purchase, and the lowest pricing in the industry. Before you even come to our website, we have already done most of the hard work of narrowing down your options for you. We only offer a small line of products because we believe that we have found exhibits that are high in quality with fast turnaround times and affordable prices.

The concept of custom-looking exhibits that are highly portable originated with MODdisplays. As an exhibitor in the past, you were forced to choose between the lesser of two evils. If you chose a custom trade show booth that would help your company stand out, you would be faced with long turnaround times and high shipping costs. If you chose a portable, lightweight trade show booth, you would be forced to look like everyone else by using a typical pop up display. MODdisplays offers custom-looking trade show exhibits that are configured for the specific needs of your company, but these exhibits are made from stocked exhibit hardware. This means that we can produce and ship a customized trade show booth within a very short amount of time. Because the booths we sell are compact and lightweight, they can be shipped via UPS or FedEx, which will help to keep your shipping costs low.

MODdisplays is the only portable exhibit wholesaler with truly eco-friendly trade show displays. Our Exhibit One displays and XRline displays are made from recycled and recyclable materials, and we offer an exhibit recycling program to help our clients take advantage of the value still left in their used displays.

Price is never a good enough reason to buy a display from a place other than MODdisplays, because we will match the price of any of our competitors. We guarantee that our price will always be the lowest on the market because our teams regularly research our competitor's pricing and adjust our pricing to meet the market where it is. We're not in business to squeeze extra pennies out of our customers; our goal is to provide a valuable service to exhibitors. After all, exhibitors have bigger things to worry about than their trade show display, so why not let the professionals at MODdisplays handle your exhibit system?



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## Step 6 – Train Your Booth Staffers

Selling at trade shows is much different than inside sales or field sales. Your trade show booth staffers need to be properly trained in order to maximize the return on your investment. Your sales staff needs to be educated on the goals of your company with regards to your exhibiting program so they have a good understanding of what you're trying to achieve.

Every day, thousands of exhibitors make the mistake of tossing booth staffers into an unfamiliar environment with no training. When you have spent thousands of dollars on exhibiting material and travel expenses, why waste it all by not properly training your booth staffers?

Booth staffers are a representation of your company at the trade show. How they behave and the manner they use will have a huge impact on the impression people take away when they leave your booth. If your sales personnel are kind and friendly, you will have much better results than if your sales people are lazy and difficult to communicate with.

It is also important to train your staffers in the art of lead collection. Making contacts does your company no good unless you can follow up with those contacts later. Your staff should have a systematic means for collecting and organizing leads.

There are a number of things that your sales staff could do that would leave a bad taste in visitors' mouths, and some examples are listed below:

- Talking on a cell phone. The trade show should be the most important thing going on for the sales person, and no cell phone conversation should divert his or her attention.
- Visitors and attendees never want to see a booth staffer sitting down. When your sales personnel are seated, it makes it difficult for potential clients to approach them.
- Your booth staff should make a conscious effort to look attendees in the eye when speaking to them and greeting them.
- Do not eat or drink in your trade show booth. This gives visitors the feeling that you are not a professional company.
- Your staff should be knowledgeable about the products and/or services that you offer, and should be able to offer answers to any questions that a visitor may have about your company.



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### Step 7 – Exhibit!

You've spent a lot of time planning, and now you finally get the chance to execute your plan. Be sure to get a good rest the night before and to eat a healthy breakfast, as this will help you be alert and friendly when visitors come by your exhibit. Being mentally prepared for the trade show environment will help to turn your experience into a success. Trade shows are long and grueling events, and require a lot of energy.

Get to the show early to ensure that you have plenty of time to set up and prepare your exhibiting space. Many exhibitors arrive with little time before their show is scheduled to begin, which doesn't allow them enough time to set up and prepare for the show properly. The last thing you want as an exhibitor is to feel rushed when there are only minutes left before your show. Having your booth set up hours before the scheduled show time allows you to move around the show floor and get the lay of the land before the show is underway.

While you are exhibiting, be sure that you are careful about collecting and organizing the leads you generate. Most exhibitors are shocked to learn that over 85% of leads collected at trade shows are never followed up on! This means that there is squandered opportunity at every show. If you move into the trade show environment with a plan to collect and follow up with leads, you will have a huge advantage over your competitors.





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### Step 8 – Follow Up With Your Leads

Over 85% of leads generated at trade shows are never followed up on. This is an absolutely astounding number, and the exhibitors who have contributed to this terrible rate should be ashamed of themselves. Why would you spend thousands of dollars on exhibit material, travel expenses, and wages only to squander it all by not following up with the leads you generate?

In order to follow up with your leads, you need to have a workable plan for gathering and categorizing leads. You don't want to follow up with every lead you generate because it would simply be too time consuming. You want to prioritize the leads and follow up with the most likely candidates first, followed by the less likely candidates.

Most exhibitors return to work the day after their show and resume their day to day routine as if nothing happened. Trade shows are not over when everyone has left the show floor. In fact, that is when the hard work of trade shows is just beginning. The best way to follow up is with a combination of e-mail marketing and phone calls. This helps to remind attendees about the services you offer without being overbearing.

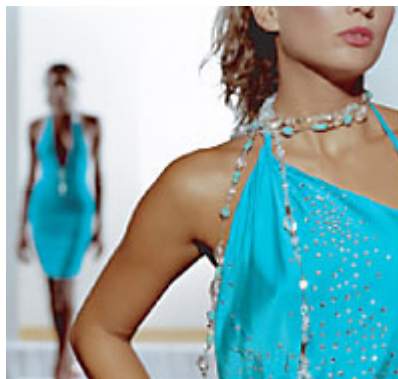
## Trade Show Models – Good or Bad?

Trade show models can be a valuable asset to any trade show marketing campaign, but they can also damage the reputation of a company when used improperly. As an exhibitor, you should carefully consider your audience before deciding to use a trade show model at your next event.

It's no secret that a beautiful woman will attract additional attention to your trade show booth, but you want to make sure you are attracting the right kind of attention. Putting your trade show model in a bikini and having her dance around your exhibit area would attract negative attention and bad word of mouth, but having her dress professionally and act as another member of your sales team could generate positive word of mouth and increased traffic.

Trade show models are used best when they blend in and become a part of your company's total marketing scheme. Some agencies allow you to hire trade show models with specific skill sets, so you could hire one that already knows a lot about your industry to enhance your sales team.

Generally speaking, trade show models can be a great asset to your exhibit marketing program when used tastefully. Your potential clients will not fall for gags and gimmicks when it comes to their money, so don't think they will be fooled by a beautiful face.



## Comfortable Trade Show Flooring

Comfortable trade show flooring is one of the most important parts of any exhibiting program. Flooring serves as a way to keep your staff members fresh, but also serves to set your trade show booth space apart from nearby exhibitors and clearly define your area.

Many trade shows last 12 hours, which can be an incredibly long time for your booth staffers to be on their feet. Trade show flooring provides a padded surface that serves to make your exhibit space that much more comfortable than your competitors. This helps to keep your sales people fresh while workers from other companies are tiring, which will result in an improved marketing campaign.

Many exhibitors have a tough time at trade shows because of overbearing neighbors. If your neighbor is using practices that do not meet with the policies of your company, you can separate yourself from them with trade show flooring. If your flooring is unique, you can define your own space and keep visitors from getting mixed messages and confusing you with your neighbors.

You will find an increase in traffic when you implement trade show flooring. Near the end of the day, weary exhibitors and attendees will make their way onto flooring space to give their tired feet a rest, which can result in a great opportunity for additional sales.



## Trade Show Lighting

One of the most important parts of any trade show environment is lighting. Well placed lighting can turn an average trade show display into a powerful trade show display. Surprisingly, most exhibits you will find at your event are poorly lit. At MODdisplays, we highly recommend leaving room in your budget for trade show lighting because we have seen the impact that it can have on your trade show marketing program.

In general, there are three types of trade show lighting. Floodlights are the most common type of trade show light. Floodlights are used to cast a broad, wide beam across a large area (usually a graphic wall or other important part of your trade show booth system). These lights are usually 200W linear halogen lights, and MODdisplays offers many different styles and colors.

Spotlights are used to highlight specific parts of your trade show display. These lights are usually 50W MR16 halogen lights, and they cast a very direct beam of intense light that will illuminate a small portion of your display. These lights are usually used in conjunction with banner stands or kiosks to make a big impact in a small space.

The Las Vegas Convention Center has very specific rules about what kind of lighting can be used within its confines. This leads us to the last kind of lighting we offer at MODdisplays. We offer lights that are specifically designed to be used at the Las Vegas Convention Center (one of the largest convention centers in the United States). The Las Vegas Convention Center made very strict lighting rules to prevent fire damage to its facility believing that other convention centers would follow suit, but none did.





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### Multimedia and Exhibiting

Every year, multimedia becomes a bigger part of trade show marketing. As companies become more technologically savvy, the need to incorporate monitor mounts and computer systems into trade show displays becomes increasingly apparent. Many companies in the portable trade show display industry have not caught on to this trend, which is why they still push pop up displays as their flagship exhibit.

Many of the displays we offer at MODdisplays are designed to incorporate multimedia. The Exhibit One displays and XRline displays both have optional monitor mounts that can be added to hold any monitor size and any monitor style. The aluminum extrusions that form the structure of the display are even designed to hide the cords from a laptop or computer tower to the main part of the display, which makes it easy to show off your technology with style.

Many of our trade show displays can be used with projector screen fabric to display videos and other promotional media directly onto the back wall of the display. Many of the entasi displays we offer use a unique rear projection system that allows you to project from behind the display onto a clear piece of material that is positioned in front of the display.

As multimedia becomes a larger and more important part of exhibiting, MODdisplays will stay ahead of the game to make it easy for exhibitors to market their companies using online presentations, videos, and other forms of media at trade shows nationwide. Visual media is one of the most powerful ways to connect with potential clients, which is why so many exhibitors have found these types of displays useful and powerful.

