

# Trade Show Planning Checklist

Proper planning can provide a stress free successful event. When you're planning a show of any size Use this planning checklist to help you stay on top of each detail. Keep in mind that this just a guide. Feel free to add items or adapt this list to fit your needs.

## Countdown to Show Time

### 12 Months Out

- Evaluate floor plans and select space.
- Review exhibitor contract carefully: Understand terms, show rules, payment schedule, space assignment method.
- Send in space application and first payment.
- Prepare budget.

### Six Months Out

- Create show plan and set goals and exhibit objectives.
- Select any vendors needed (exhibit house, transportation company, labor company).
- If new trade show exhibit is needed begin design process.
- Plan pre-show advertising.

### Four Months Out

- Develop floor plan for exhibit.
- Select Display Booth staffers.
- Make travel reservations.
- Communicate with primary vendors (exhibit house, shipping, installation/dismantle) regarding services needed and dates.
- Finalize new exhibit design.
- Execute show-related advertising.

### Three Months Out

- Read and review exhibitor manual. Note target move-in and set-up dates.
- Create list of required services, noting deadlines for pre show discounts.
- Review show floor plan and note target dates and restrictions.
- Distribute show plan to booth staff.
- Submit authorization form if you are using an exhibitor-appointed contractor.
- Plan pre-show booth staff meeting.

### Two Months Out

- Prepare all service orders. Include drayage, electrical, cleaning, floral, etc. Take advantage of any pre-pay discounts.
- Finalize any new graphics and start production.
- Order staff badges and plan training for booth staff at show.
- Develop briefing packet for booth staff.
- Create and order lead forms.

- Prepare press kits.
- Check travel reservations.

### **One Month Out**

- Confirm shipment dates with all vendors.
- Confirm installation /dismantle schedule.
- Confirm all travel reservations.
- Preview display and graphics.
- Meet with booth staffers to present trade show plan and objectives.
- Set-up schedule for pre-arranged customers meetings at show.
- Prepare show binder. Include: copies of all orders and checks for services paid in advance, phone numbers and addresses of all vendors, booth setup instructions, shipping documents, return shipping labels.
- Confirm shipping address and ship properties to arrive to advance warehouse.

### **Upon Arrival**

- Make sure your freight has arrived undamaged.
- Review service orders. Double check setup schedule.
- Supervise booth setup.
- Meet with booth staffers for pre-show briefing and training.

### **During Show**

- Reserve booth space for next years show.
- Meet with booth staffers to check progress.
- Check out your competition. Find out what is working and what is not.
- Review plans for booth dismantle and return shipment.

### **After Show**

- Supervise dismantle and arrange return freight.
- Distribute leads to sales force. Follow Up! Follow Up! Follow Up!