

Competitive  
Edge   
*“exhibiting excellence”*

# Managing Show Logistics





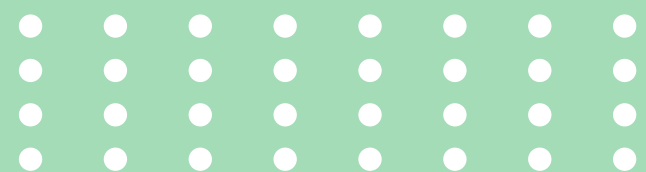
- **Purpose**
- **Essential Learning Components (ELCs)**

### **Purpose:**

Develop a process for managing show logistics and operations, so everything you need to execute the show is created, ordered and arrives and returns on time, safely, in budget and with minimum hassle and stress.

### **Essential Learning Components:**

1. How to identify everything you will need to execute your exhibit program.
2. Overview typical services you may need with insights and tips for selecting and managing.
3. Overview primary contractors involved in a show.
4. The critical importance of reading the Exhibitor Service Kit end to end, especially rules and regulations.
5. How to manage logistics with our week-by-week planning and control tool.
6. Why you must have a Plan B and three areas you must think about.



# Insights on Managing Show Logistics

1. Most cost overruns, headaches and hassles come from ineffectively managing logistics.
2. You must be well-organized, detail-oriented, a crystal-clear communicator, and adept at managing multiple tasks, schedules and deadlines, while dealing with multiple people and companies.
3. You must have a robust control tool and calendar with key milestones, tasks and dates for each show.
4. The Exhibitor Service Kit is one of the most critical documents you must spend time with - especially show rules and regulations.
5. Because of Murphy's Law, it's important to have a Plan B for times when things go wrong.
6. If you don't know, ask! Refer to the [Glossary of Tradeshow Terms](#) document in this course.



# 5 Keys to Show Logistical Success



1. Plan ahead and plan thoroughly.
2. Know exactly what you need, when you need it and how you need it to execute your program.
3. Identify the best sources for what you need, some are exclusive and required, others are optional.
4. Order and track everything to make sure it arrives on time, correctly, securely and on budget.
5. Audit all order forms and invoices for accuracy – especially at-show invoices.

# Typical Things You Will Need...

1. Floor Space
2. Booth Property
3. Graphics & A/V
4. Products to Display
5. Furnishings
6. Flooring
7. Event Insurance
8. Electric
9. Internet
10. Lead Retrieval
11. Literature
12. Freight: Shipping to and from Show
13. Drayage: Loading Dock to Booth and Back
14. Booth Installation & Dismantle
15. Booth Staff



# Various Show Contractors

1. **Show Organizer:** Company or association that produces and manages the event.
2. **Show Manager:** Outsourced company who manages event for the organizer.
3. **General Service Contractor: (GSC)** Hired by show organizer. Oversees show site, exhibit hall, set up and tear down of show. Manages freight through advance warehouse marshalling yard, freight docks, storage of empty crates. Manages labor and cleaning. Some services are exclusive like material handling and rigging.
4. **Exclusive Contractors:** You have no choice. Typically, electrical, plumbing, compressed air/gas, telecommunications, internet, and catering.
5. **Official Contractors:** Others listed in Exhibitor Service Kit. May include shipping/carriers, customs brokers, furniture, exhibit rental, lead retrieval, plant/floral, A/V and security.
6. **Exhibitor Appointed Contractor: (EAC)** Any subcontractor selected by exhibitor other than GSC or official contractors in exhibitor services manual. You must complete EAC form with show manager. EAC must submit certificate of insurance for liability and workers' compensation, which also names venue, show organizer, show manager, and general services contractor as additional insured parties. Must complete before show!!!



# Floor Space

## 1. There is no perfect booth space!

a. Try to get what you believe to be the best space available for you.

## 2. Location selection concepts:

a. Inside the triangle.

b. Majority of people go right when entering the hall.

c. Near main aisle.

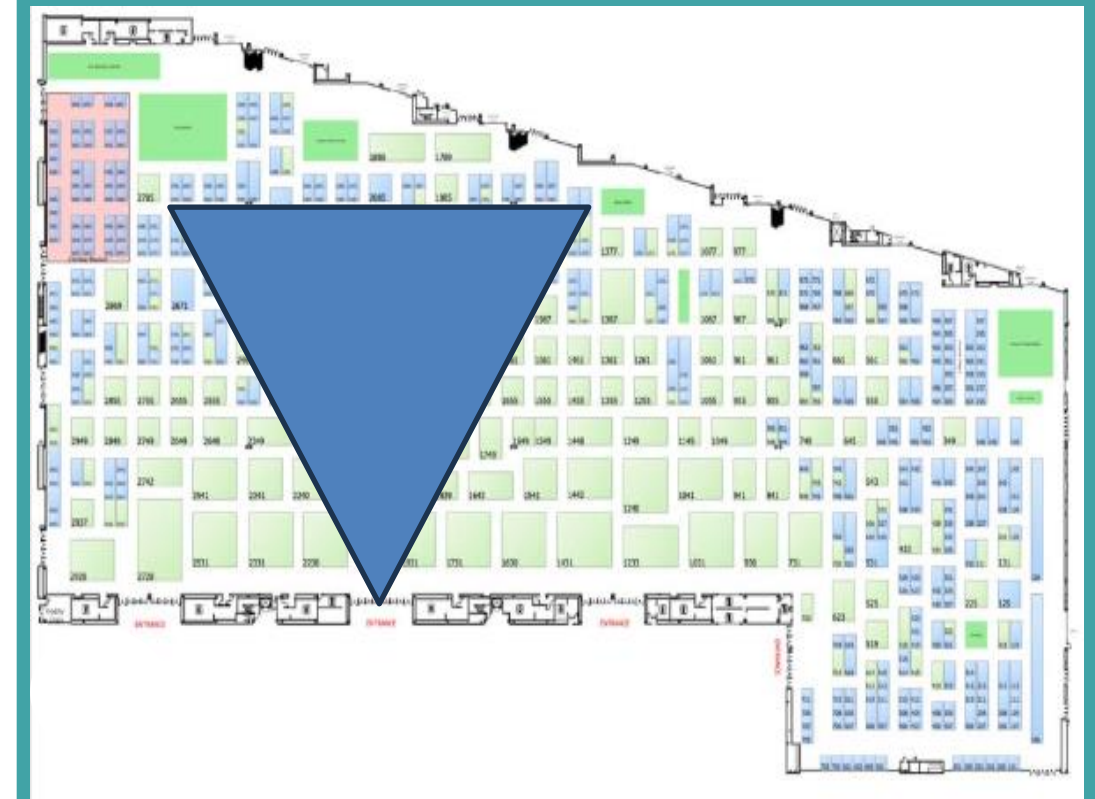
d. Corner booths always worth the extra money.

e. Avoid dead-end aisles and back of the hall, as much as possible.

f. Near large anchors and exhibitors that serve similar customers - be careful of large booths that may block visibility of your booth.

g. Near entrances/exits provides multiple exposures over a show but may also be considered "zoom zones".

h. Secondary exhibit halls may experience less traffic - ask what the show is doing to drive traffic to secondary halls.



# Floor Space (continued)

- i) If you're a new exhibitor, New Exhibitor Pavilions are always a great location.
- j) Look at online floor plan for proximity to columns, fire hose cabinets and anything that can obstruct site lines in your booth.
- k) Don't rely on your location to be the reason you win and don't let it be the reason you lose!
- l) Have enough space!
- m) When you go from a single space to a double space you'll never go back!
- n) 20 x 20 booth might be the perfect size for companies who want to look like players without spending big bucks!





# Booth Property

1. Booth quality should align with and reinforce your brand identity.
2. Lightweight to reduce shipping and drayage costs.
3. Easy to set-up and tear down to reduce labor costs.
4. Fabric back-lit booths pack a lot of punch for the price.
5. Must be easy to enter navigate and exit.
6. Consider a rental booth.
7. Keep an updated exhibit property inventory list.



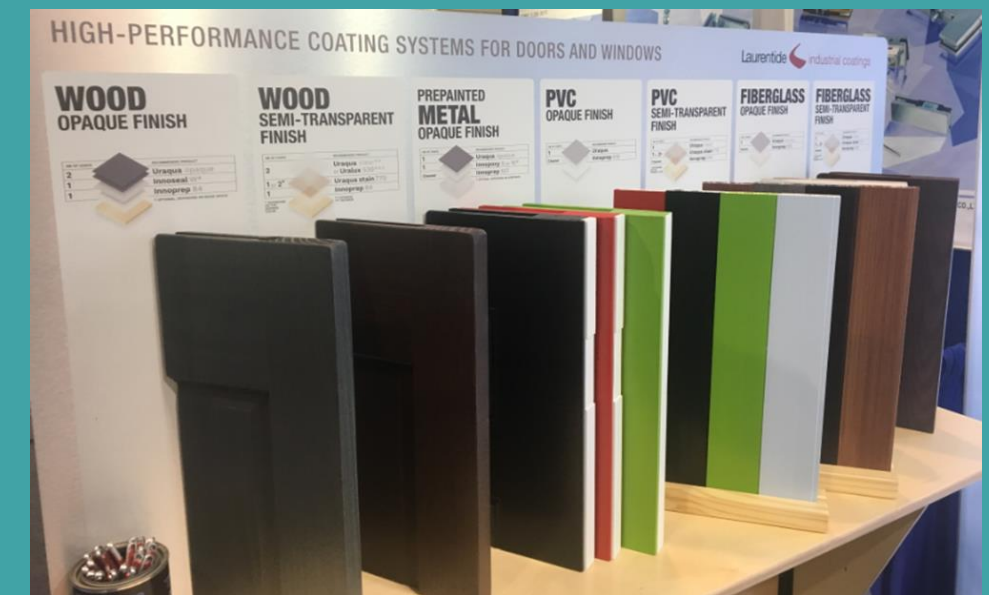
# Graphics and A/V

1. Small booths are like a billboard on a freeway!
2. Must demand attention and answer three questions in the mind of attendees: 1. what you do 2. why they should care 3. who are you?
3. When it comes to images and copy - less is more!
4. Fabric booth graphics are easy to change, although cost can be expensive relative to the cost of the booth.
5. Extend back wall graphics with pull-up banners.
6. Increase visual impact by using well-placed flat panels.
7. When not presenting products and services, use flat panels to callout target audience.
8. LED holographic fans are a creative technique to draw attention.
9. LED video backwalls are becoming more affordable and provide flexibility and attention-grabbing power.



# Product Displays

1. What should you bring and feature?
  - a. If you have multiple products do not try to feature them all.
  - b. NEW is a magnet – if you have something new always lead with it!
  - c. Lead with products/services that address current top of mind issues and concerns of your customers.
2. Determine if your products require special arrangements to get them to and into your booth space.
3. If you have a large product, sometimes video or A/V demonstration may be a better option in terms of reducing cost.
4. Product staging is important!
5. Ask what the show does for hall/booth security and determine if your products need to be physically secured at the end of each day.



# Furnishings

1. Exhibit shipping cases can double as counters and stands. Be sure to professionally wrap them.
2. Consider pros and cons of renting versus bringing your own furnishing.
3. Buying and assembling furniture on site may save money, but not always time.
4. Seating can be valuable, but not for just for your booth staff.



# Flooring

1. Most shows require some form of floor covering.
2. Consider pros and cons of renting versus bringing your own flooring.
3. Flooring can be a big attention grabber - if it is unique and stands out.
4. Snap together foam flooring that can be branded may be a smart play but consider shipping, storage and maintenance.
5. Padded and comfortable to stand on flooring increases visitor dwell time and is good for your booth staff too.



# Event Insurance

1. Many shows require you to provide event insurance to cover the investigation and defense of claims as well as pay for damages if you are held liable for things like bodily injury, property damage and personal and advertising injury.
2. Event organizers usually offer insurance through a preferred carrier.
3. If time is the issue, it's probably easier to go with the preferred carrier.
4. If the cost feels high, look into alternative event insurance providers.



# Electricity

1. Electrical service is usually ordered through an exclusive contractor, and you do not have an option.
2. Determine how much electric power you need with this tool.
3. Have enough electrical, but not too much!
4. If in a small booth and only powering computers and low voltage LED lighting, you may be able to get by with a battery power source versus running electric.
  - a. Consider cost of buying and shipping compared to the show electric source
  - b. You will typically need to recharge your battery each day - which may create a little bit of a hassle factor.



# Internet

1. Determine if you really need internet in the booth at all, and if so, how much bandwidth.
2. All convention centers have some form of free Wi-Fi, but with thousands of mobile devices competing for limited capacity, accessibility can be a problem.
3. Dedicated Wi-Fi access can be very expensive, depending on the convention center.
4. Some convention centers may scramble personal hotspots and require an access fee to be able to use it.





# Literature

1. Consider the age of your target customers when determining what type and how much literature to bring:
  - a. Baby-Boomers tend to prefer printed documents.
  - b. Gen X and beyond tend to lean toward digital.
2. Don't bring too much literature.
3. Avoid displaying it where unknown people can grab it and go.
4. Offer digital literature access with QR codes.
5. Consider the cost/benefit of a print on demand option to avoid bringing printed literature.



# Freight & Shipping

1. Freight costs have increased dramatically over the last several years.
2. Try to make your exhibit shipment as lightweight as possible.
3. Determine what type of carrier is best for your needs UPS FedEx, common carrier.
4. Consolidate shipments as much as possible to reduce cost, risk of loss and complexity.
5. Shows typically provide a preferred freight/shipping company but be sure to compare their cost versus other sources.
6. If doing multiple shows, try to work with the same freight company and negotiate some form of volume discount.



# Freight & Shipping (continued)

7. If the show has targeted move in and move out dates, be sure to pay careful attention to these.
8. Consider the cost/benefit of shipping to advance warehouse versus directly to show site.
9. You cannot over-label shipments, unless you're using old shipping labels.
10. If using a small exhibit and within driving distance of the show, driving can save you a lot of money.



# Drayage

1. Drayage can destroy a show budget!
2. Drayage is always an exclusive contractor, except when you are allowed to carry items in on your own. Be sure to review rules and regulations.
3. Drayage weight is calculated as CWT – which means Hundred weight, usually 100 pounds.
4. Review the Exhibit Service Kit carefully to accurately determine drayage costs to avoid at and post show surprises.
5. Have your exhibit re-weighed before removal to ensure consistency or save money if outbound weight is less.



# Installation & Dismantle (I&D)

1. If DIY, know rules and regulations on booth set up and tear down, what you can and cannot do on your own, and have a comprehensive toolkit.
2. Plan twice as long to set up as to tear down.
3. Practice setting up exhibit in advance to save time and problems on site.
4. If using exhibit house, ask them to do a complete set up and take down before the show to provide clear instructions and avoid hassles.
5. When using show labor, watch for straight time versus overtime.
6. Pay attention to zoned move in dates and times.
7. Schedule labor well in advance.
8. Provide accurate, easy-to-understand set up and tear down instructions.
9. Always have someone there to observe and guide union labor.
10. In most cases, you're not allowed to tip union labor.



# Booth Staff

1. Travel costs have increased dramatically over the last few years.
2. Require anyone attending the show to have an important business reason for attending.
3. Send enough people, but not too many. Rule of thumb is 1 person per 50 square feet.
4. Send a good mix of staff type: Sales, Marketing, Technical, Management, etc.
5. Consider renting local staff to play a meet, greet, qualify and handoff role - this could be significant savings on staff travel costs.
6. Branded staff apparel is an additional investment but can offer benefit that outweighs the cost. Staff wearing branded apparel are easier for attendees to find!



# Booth Staff (Continued)

7. Book air early. Try to fly same airline to acquire points. Watch for specials. Sometimes certain days of the week are lower than others for booking.
8. Try to have staff arrive at the airport around the same time to save money on ground transportation.
9. Use show shuttle buses when available!
10. Hotel room blocks may or may not be a better deal - be sure to check!
11. Try to stay in the same hotel chains to maximize reward points.
12. Look into VRBO/AirBnB for a multi-bedroom house or condo – this could be a big money saver.
13. Consider having your staff on a per diem versus expense account.
14. If having customer and/or group dinners, book restaurants well in advance and consider a limited menu offering.



# Tradeshaw Planning & Productivity Management Tool



## **Robust Expandable Planning and Control Tool**

Has a planning form organized week-by-week with key action areas. Instruction tab walks you through how to use the tool. Can be edited to suit your needs!

## **Keep Important Tasks and Timelines in One Place**

Track important actions, who is involved, due dates, budgets and completions.

## **Quick Access to Key Contacts and Competitor Analysis**

List all your key contacts with supporting information. Includes a tab for doing competitive analysis.



# You Must Have a Plan B for...

## 1. Booth doesn't arrive?

- Bring a preprinted fabric backdrop you can hang over the pipe and drape.
- Have graphics you can get a quick printer to produce at the show site.

## 2. Products don't arrive?

- Have digital images, information and video you can show on a laptop computer.
- Have a flat panel, notebook computer and use your website.

## 3. Staff doesn't arrive?

- Have a list of temp staffing agencies in the area and contact them quickly.



# Top 5 Logistical Pitfalls

- 01 Not carefully reviewing the show's Exhibitor Service Kit.
- 02 Not carefully tracking order details and deadlines.
- 03 Under-communicating with contractors and suppliers.
- 04 Assuming versus asking questions.
- 05 Not having a Plan B for key areas of exhibit program.

# 5 Big Action Items

1. Identify the next show on your calendar. Access and review the Exhibitor Service Kit carefully.
2. Download and begin customizing the Tradeshow Planning & Productivity Management Tool for that show.
3. Identify all the products and services you will need and review the slides in this course for insights and tips.
4. Create your week-by-week schedule with key tasks and deadlines.
5. Continually refer to and keep the tool updated as you move through the show execution process.



**Got Questions?**

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**Congratulations!!!**

You've Completed Managing  
Show Logistics

***Which Course is Next???***

