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In the Market for a New Booth?

Four tips to make your next booth investment last longer

By: Dr. Leslie Garrett

Consider these tips and helpful hints as you investigate ordering a new booth for your next event.

Keep graphics and text nationally, seasonally and timeline independent.

The key to keeping a booth timeless is to follow a simple design in terms of graphics and text. Do not commit real estate on your graphics area to content or messaging that can go stale after one season. You can let less costly items like banner stands call attention the latest and greatest news.

Helpful hint: Design your booth to be the little black dress that goes with everything.

Embellish with banner stands and a custom tablecloth.

With a booth that has a timeless background your opportunity to call attention to new things comes via banner stands and tablecloths. Banner stands will cost in the neighborhood of 250 to 300 dollars, which is easier on the budget than a complete booth replacement when it comes time to update or replace messaging. Placement of your banner stand(s) can help your booth space stand out and catch people's attention as they scan the exhibit hall aisle. Custom-designed tablecloths cost in the neighborhood of 200 dollars and add the finishing touch to a booth space.

Helpful hint: Design your tablecloth with a dark-colored top – beverages and ink pens can ruin a light-colored surface in a hurry.

Keep drayage costs in mind.

When buying your booth and any additional display items such as banner stands, think about drayage costs and what you can or cannot physically carry with you. Drayage costs can be the one post-show item that quickly sends you over budget. If anyone working the event has to store, haul or assemble your booth, it will cost you. When purchasing your booth, also consider the weight of each package and if you must use the events exhibit property services (i.e., Freeman). If you must use property services, consolidate shipments under 200 pounds into one shipment. Doing this keeps your packages together and minimizes additional package handling fees.

Helpful hint: For packages under 100 pounds, consider calling the hotel's package room and inquiring about having your package sent FedEx to them as a "Hold for Pick-Up" three to five days in advance of the event. When you arrive at the hotel and pick up your package, tip the package room employee who retrieves the package for you.

Expect breakage and things that need replacing.

Booth cases, lighting, collapsible booth structures, and graphics can fail. First and foremost, pack two-sided tape and duct tape in your booth case(s). Investigate replacement costs when buying your booth. If there is an option to upgrade your booth cases at a discounted rate when purchasing your booth, consider the upgrade. Know your vendor's graphic replacement policy and consider ordering a second set of graphics at the time of your initial order, especially if you know the booth



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will travel to different locations or events where messaging or branding for the company is different (i.e., if the booth travels from the United States to Canada or if the booth represents two distinct products or companies). It is common for new graphics purchased after the fact to cost nearly as much as the booth did when the initial order was placed. These graphics might be significantly reduced in price if purchased or negotiated during the initial order.

Helpful hint: For booths that ship in rolling cases, expect the wheels to break and consider throwing in a wheel replacement kit when you order your booth. The cost of wheel replacement kits should be minimal, under 20 dollars.

About the Author

Dr. Leslie Garrett serves Edge Marketing, Inc. as a marketing optimization analyst with expertise in marketing, public relations and management. She is instrumental in leading Edge's corporate consulting and search engine optimization website analytics services.



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