



16 WAYS TO CUT COSTS ON YOUR NEXT TRADE SHOW

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WRITTEN

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BRYAN PECELLI

ACCOUNT SUPERVISOR

bryan@marketinggenome.com

732-432-4800

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MARKETING GENOME

ABOUT BRYAN

I'm one of the few lucky enough to wake up every day loving what I do, making "work" less of work and more of an opportunity to express myself creatively.

I bring brands face to face with consumers in highly targeted, highly concentrated unique and memorable ways. As a designer of experiences and architect of ideas, I push the creative boundary and shape the brand experience.

In both the physical and digital world, I have been fortunate enough to strategize and develop marketing campaigns for top fortune 500 brands, allowing them to make a big impact to the right people, at the right time, at the right place.

From award winning designs and experiential campaigns my approach has remained consistent. Create. Communicate. Connect.

INTRO:

Trade shows are important.

Trade shows grow your business.

Trade shows are necessary.

Trade shows allow you to connect with your audience in a personal way.

However, trade shows are expensive.

Lets take a look at how you can keep your costs low without sacrificing quality.

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Buy Used



While you may not always get exactly what you originally envisioned, purchasing a pre-owned exhibit is a great option when trying to save on upfront costs.

Research shows pre-owned exhibits cost 50-75% less than a comparable new booth. With money saved, you can have your booth refurbished or reconditioned to be more in line with your marketing messaging.

While this can seem like a difficult process, it is relatively easy to get your booth up to speed and show ready. From powder coating your aluminum framing, to applying new graphics you will end up with a high quality booth at a fraction of the cost.

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Consider Renting



Do you really need to purchase your exhibit? With so many modular exhibit options in today's market, the majority of your customers won't be able to tell the difference between a rental exhibit and a custom design.

Renting will save you the initial investment and allow you the flexibility to make changes to your design and layout at future shows. Additionally, when renting you don't incur the steep costs of repairs, maintenance and storage which can add up quickly.

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Get to Know Exhibit Materials and Make an Informed Decision



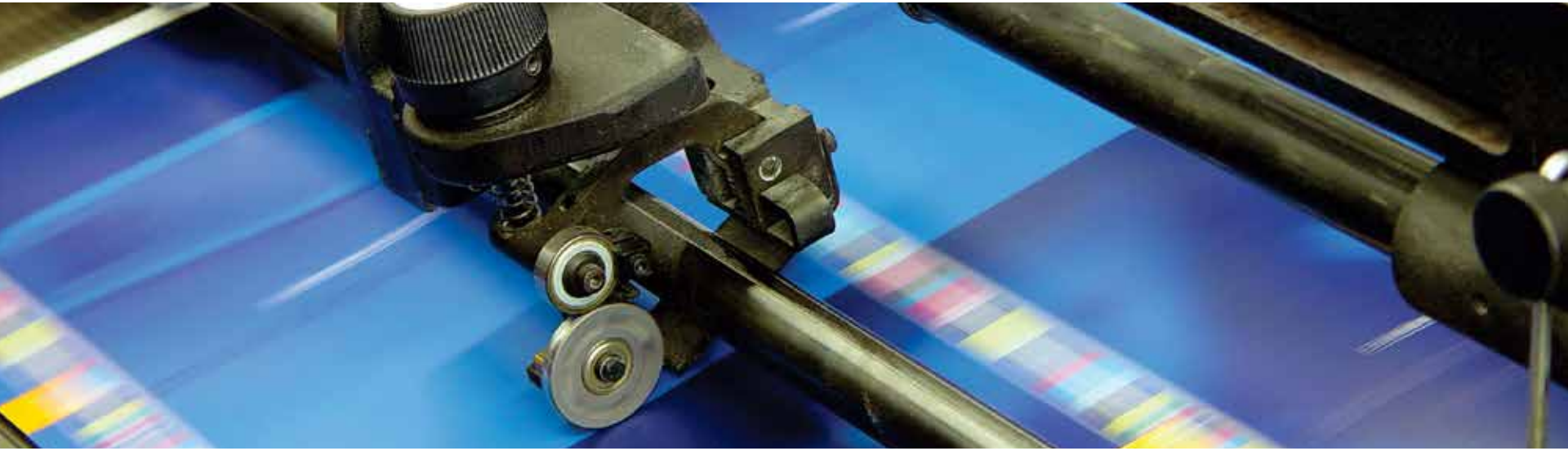
In today's exhibit industry there are a lot of options when deciding what material your booth will be constructed out of. Your decision will make a big impact on not only the execution of your first show, but subsequent shows after. For example, if your booth is made out of wood, it's going to carry a very heavy material handling charge. On the other hand, if your booth is made out of aluminum, which is an extremely lightweight and strong metal, you can achieve a similar look without breaking the bank.

The most economical exhibiting would be to use aluminum extrusion and frames when at all possible. Unless you need to use wooden walls, steer clear.

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Be Strategic with Your Graphics



Printing can be one of the most expensive line items throughout the exhibiting process. If you are strategic in your approach, you can save a considerable amount of money year after year.

Take a look at your overall branding and decide which graphics you can create as “evergreen”, meaning the logo and messaging will be relevant show after show.

While messaging does change, any graphics that won’t become outdated will save you money long term.

Typically printing on fabric is more expensive than traditional komatex or foam-core signs, so try to limit the amount of fabric graphics you create for a one time use.



While going digital may carry more of an initial upfront investment, they are a great cost saving approach in the long term. Digital graphics, whether it be displayed on a TV monitor or projector will allow you the ability to quickly create last minute messaging on the fly without rush fees from your printer.

Furthermore, this will provide you unlimited shelf life. Unlike traditional graphics that have the potential to crack, get dirty, or rip you won't run into these issues.

Throw Out or Donate Old Inventory



Exhibit storage costs can add up quickly. Often times exhibitors forget what they have in storage and can be paying for items they haven't used or will not use in the future.

Take a look at what you are storing every 12-18 months and either donate to a local charity, sell or dispose of unneeded items. Not only will this cut down on your monthly costs, but make it easier for you to manage and take care of what you do have.

Be Smart with Your Furniture



Unless your plan is to sit everyone on the floor for a meeting, furnishing your exhibit is a must. While a few tables, chairs and couches might not seem like it would be expensive the costs do add up quickly.

If you plan on purchasing furniture, a few factors come into play such as the initial price, shipping, material handling charges, and what to do with it after the show? You have unlimited design options with this route though and you could pick pieces that really tie into the rest of your booth. If you are renting through the show, you have limited design options.

Any potential exhibit provider should have some decent furniture options from you to choose from at usually lower costs than the show decorator.

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Install and Dismantle During The Week



Majority of trade shows take place over an extended weekend, where exhibitors are forced to install and dismantle their exhibit on overtime or double time.

Take a close look at your show provided exhibitor service manual. Read the fine print so see exactly your restrictions when it comes to move in and move out time. You may be able to save a considerable amount of money by strategically scheduling your labor on straight time.

Taking it a step further, negotiate with your show decorator for additional setup days or dismantle days even if your show manual does not call it out.

The decorator wants you to have the best exhibiting experience possible and at times will accommodate your request.

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Avoid Rigging



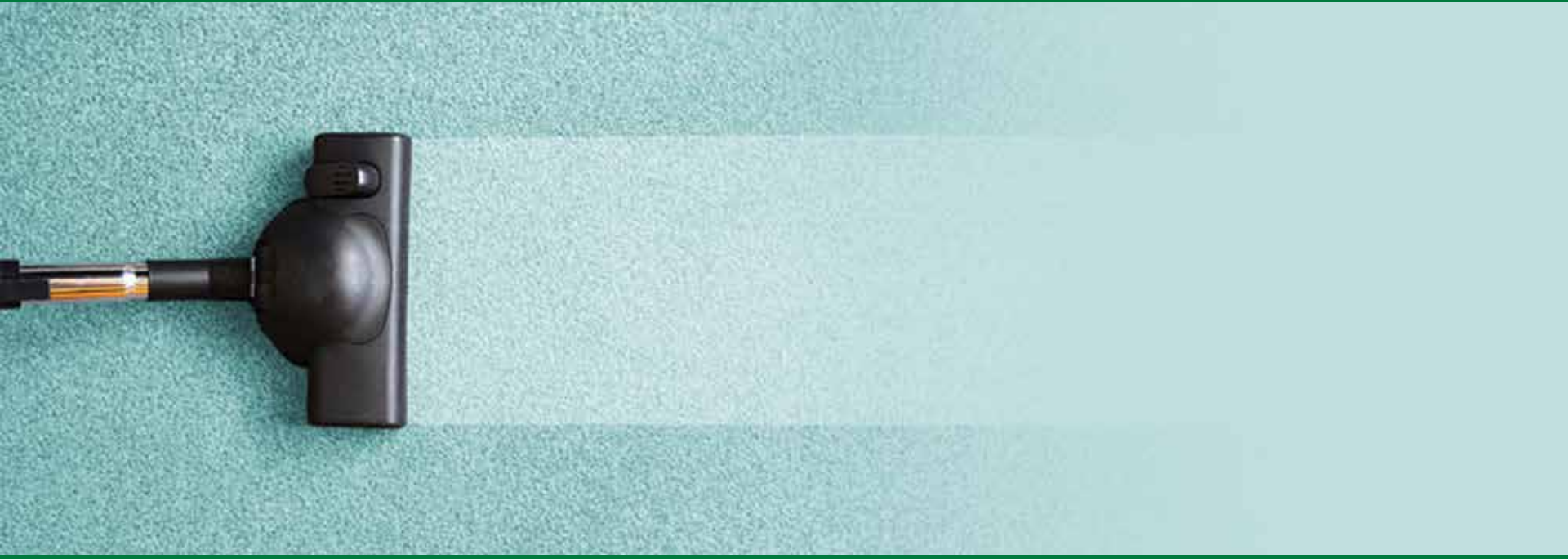
If you are trying to keep your show services cost down, skip the rigging. While hanging banners look great and draw attendees in from across the convention center, the labor required to assemble and rig them is down right expensive. Plan on spending upwards of \$1,000+ for ONE simple hanging structure to be built and “flown” at any given show across the US.

This money goes toward the hourly [minimum] rental of a boom lift and two man crew.

That is the least you are going to spend and the numbers can skyrocket if the rigging points are not easily accessible or timing requires the labor to be performed on off peak hours.

At the end of the day, you may be better off redirecting your money into taller ground supported signing with powerful LED lights.

Buy A Vacuum



Purchase a vacuum and send it along with your booth to every show. This will ensure that your booth is always clean and free of any unwanted stains caused by high foot traffic.

Having your booth professionally cleaned by show management can cost \$1,000+ if you are in a large space that requires daily treatment. Save some money and do it yourself, you will also extend the life of your carpet. Some exhibit providers, offer on-site management which includes daily vacuuming, cleaning and trash removal among other services.

Pack an “Event Kit”



Don't rely on your show service provider to supply you with odds and ends such as shrink wrap, electrical cords, trash cans, and tape. They are in the business of making money and charge incredibly high premiums when you need these on-site.

Prior to your event, prepare and source a list of common items you may need and ship it with your booth. Even if you only end up using some of these items, you will be better prepared for any curve balls thrown your way at a fraction of the cost.

Don't Overpower Your Exhibit



Before ordering your electrical drops, take a close look at exactly how much power you really need to run your exhibit. Majority of exhibitors over order their electrical outlets because of not knowing the specific wattage pulled by each component within the booth.

Take a look at the number of monitors, computers, refrigerators, etc. and find out the exact number of watts required to power everything collectively. Also, try to bundle as many drops as possible throughout your space, for example try to rent [1] 20 amp centrally located drop, rather [6] 5 amp drops throughout the space. This is not always doable based on layouts and configurations, but doing this when will save you a lot of money.

Limit Customization



Try to avoid pieces that require a great amount of customization. When you factor in planning, engineering and execution these types of projects can break the bank.

Whenever possible, try to incorporate elements into your booth that will give you a custom feel, with a standard price tag.

For example, try to avoid needing EXACT measurements on exhibit walls, more often than not you may be able to rent a wall that has similar dimensions, meet your needs, at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the price. The same goes for graphic applications, try to limit your prints to less than 48" W, any size above and beyond that requires more than one print to be combined with another.

Standard sizes, standard materials will save you money and still look great.



Make sure you take advantage of any “early-bird” discounts offered by the show decorator. This is usually offered up as an incentive price for submitting your orders in a timely manner. It all depends on the specific show, which you should refer to the show manual, but typically this offer expires 21 days prior to show opening.

A missed deadline price could easily cost 25% more in some cases. An on-site order can be even more. When factoring in a bundle of show services together, hitting these deadlines can be critical to meeting your budget.

Do-It-Yourself.....[if you can]



Take a close look at your exhibitor manual under rules and regulations for specific building guidelines. Depending on the city you are exhibiting in, you may have “the right to work” and not as many restrictions when it comes to hiring a union carded installer.

Even when exhibiting in a city that is less “DIY-friendly” like New York City, read up on your options. You may be surprised to find that if you are a full time employee of the exhibiting company, you do actually have the right to do some light building within your space. Don’t plan on climbing 16’ ladders or rigging up large walls, but bring your own set of tools and get your hands dirty. In the long run you will save yourself labor man hours.

Limit Your Drayage Bill



Take a look at your exhibitor service manual to see if they offer any “drayage assistance” programs. If you don’t know, drayage refers to your material handling fees for bringing in poundage into a convention center. It can be a significant portion of your budget.

These assistance programs will offer exhibitors the opportunity to bring in their show freight during a certain time window at a discounted or even free of charge.

Another thing to consider is bundling your items together. For example, if you ship a 14 lb package direct to show, you will be charged for 100lbs regardless.

However, if that item was shipped together with a 58 lb item, the two together would carry the same charge.

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Get the Trade Show Help You Need

If you are looking for a trade show booth design partner that has a genuine interest in your success than you have come to the right place. We truly do work with you and become a part of your team delivering the very best in trade show and convention services. We have been at it for years, so any little trick or tip we have come across we pass them along to our clients saving them time, money, and stress.

Unique Design
High Quality Material
Built to Last
Custom Exhibits
Custom Rentals



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