

Plan Ahead: A Trade Show Checklist

One of the most important components in planning for an upcoming trade show is your preparation. The simplest method to ensure that you are prepared is to use a good old-fashioned checklist. This will ensure that even the smallest detail is remembered, and that crucial deadlines are met. There are many on-line resources to help you create just such a list. Here are some recommendations to get you started.

Create a binder where you can organize all documents and forms that have been completed. A hard copy is always good to have for traveling to the show. You should always keep an electronic copy of your paperwork as well. This binder may include any contracts/agreements for the show, contact information for show staff and company staff that is planning and/or attending the show, travel information, if applicable, and the actual checklist and timeline you need to follow.

We recommend that you assign the items/tasks to a timeline, as well. This will be something that is specific to your company and to the team that you have in place to organize the trade show.

Below is a general list that will get you started on your path to the trade show. **Please note, this list is for companies who already have an exhibit. In the future we will publish a checklist for specifying, designing and fabricating your trade show exhibit.**

Also, any place where you see the initials "TRC", means that this is something that The Rogers Company can do for you, on behalf of your company.

1) Pre-Show Planning

a. Please note that some of the items shown below have deadlines for ordering so that you can receive the show discount for these services.

- Contract with Show Management for booth space and pay deposit
- Review show rules and deadlines - **TRC**
- Submit EAC (Exhibitor Appointed Contractor) Form to the show's General Services Contractor (GSC)- **TRC**
- Contact your exhibit house for floor plans, list of equipment needed to install your booth - **TRC**
- Order electrical/utility/internet orders to the show's GSC- **TRC**
- Order any specialized lighting from the show GSC - **TRC**
- Order carpet, rental furniture, bag and/or coat racks - **TRC**
- Order wastebaskets, booth cleaning service - **TRC**
- Order catering, if needed – **TRC**
- Order lead retrieval, audio visual, floral, guard service, if needed - **TRC**
- Submit drawings for booth approval to the GSC for any special handling, or rigging, such as overhead hanging signs – **TRC**
- Submit order form for material handling/drayage - **TRC**
- Get permission for anything that might not be within show rules, such as large signs - **TRC**
- Order flower/plant - **TRC**

- Order AV equipment – **TRC**
- Make inbound and outbound shipping arrangements for your booth and other materials, based on either advance drayage dates, or targeted move-in dates - **TRC**
- Schedule your Installation & Dismantle labor based on the show dates for same – **TRC**
- Arrange for booth "talent", if needed - **TRC**

2) Advertising and Promotional Activities

- Place website ads on show website, major sponsor sites, and your own company site
- Investigate sponsorship opportunities at the trade show venue, as each show will have different opportunities based on the city location and show management
- Send pre-show email to attendee list
- Run ads on trade websites and/or national trade magazine(s) the month of the event
- Explore other off-premise promotional opportunities, such as hospitality events
- Send post-show emails to everyone who visited your booth
- Have a post-show plan in place to follow-up on show leads immediately following the show
- Create a social media campaign to all your followers to know what shows you are attending, what booth activities you will have, what new products you will be showing, what speakers you will have and what they are presenting, or even what your in booth giveaways are. You want to create a buzz for attendees to visit your booth.

3) Pre-Show Prep

- Make transportation, lodging and airline reservations for your staff
- Reserve any additional rooms at the hotel or convention center needed for meeting space or special events
- Order branded apparel or any special clothing to be worn at the show
- Order booth giveaways, prizes, gifts
- Create in-booth demonstrations and/or presentations
- Schedule pre-show staff training meetings and rehearsals
- Send reminders to upper management via meeting agendas and/or itineraries
- Designate a staff member to document pre-show, at-show and post-show activities, and handle all social media posts
- Order show badges

4) Marketing Materials

- Make sure you have content for your Audio/Visual equipment to play during the show
- USB drives
- Create a digital library for presentations and real-time lead fulfillment - **TRC**
- New product brochures
- White papers
- Data sheets
- Catalogs & price lists
- Branded lanyards for your booth staff
- Bring 3x5 note cards to staple business cards to in case lead retrieval devices go down
- Business cards (take plenty!)

5) Tools/Cleaning Supplies

- Screwdrivers (Phillips and slotted)
- Hammer
- Utility knives
- Needle-nose pliers
- Measuring tape
- Spare batteries
- Super-glue
- Velcro
- Sharpies
- Hole punch
- Stapler and staples
- Paper clips
- "While-you-were-out" message pads
- Post-it Notes
- Candy bowl
- Spare extension cord or power strip
- Electrical tape and duct tape
- Glass cleaner/paper towels
- Rubbing alcohol
- Monitor screen cleaner/microfiber cloths

6) Personal Items/First Aid

- Band-aids
- Hand sanitizer
- Safety pins
- Aspirin/Tylenol etc.
- Antacid
- Cough drops
- Sewing kit
- Breath mints

We know this is quite a list, but let us here at The Rogers Company be your show service experts and help take some of this off your plate. We have an experienced team of show service coordinators that can make this process seamless for you and your company. We will prepare a show service estimate, submit and order all required show service items, and audit all your post show invoices. We can even help you come up with a marketing strategy for pre-show, during show, and post-show.

Lastly, as a reward to all that will have worked so hard on this endeavor, plan a night out for the team involved. All work and no play makes anyone dull! This will ensure that your staff knows that their dedication, hard work and stellar performance, is greatly appreciated. If you have your trade show path paved with this level of detail, you are sure to have an experience that is not only successful, but

relatively stress free. Best wishes in your trade show adventure, and I will leave you with one final thought...

“You’ve got to think about the big things while you are doing the small things, so that all of the small things go in the right direction.” -Alvin Toffler, Writer and Futurist