

# Exhibit like an expert

This interactive, step-by-step guide can help make your trade show exhibit experience successful — complete with exclusive insider tips.

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*Visit the FreemanOnline  
Exhibitor Portal*





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# Travel & Planning

STRATEGY / BUDGET / TRAVEL

## Strategy

- Begin planning 45-180 days from the show's move-in date.
- Align event and organizational goals.
- Define target audience.

LEARN MORE →

## Set your budget

- Exhibit Space Rental, Booth Rental, or Booth Purchase, Shipping & Material Handling
- Show Services  
(Audio Visual, Electrical, Internet, Cleaning, Labor, Sign Hanging, Carpet, Booth Furniture)
- Travel Expenses  
(Book travel early to avoid sell out and get lower rates)
- Marketing Activations & Giveaways
- Sales Training
- [Lead Retrieval and Measurement](#)

**TIP** Renting can be more cost-effective because the smaller investment doesn't depreciate and it offers flexibility.



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# The Booth

## YOUR BRAND IN 3D

### Determine your booth plan

- [Will you rent, build, or use existing materials?](#)
- Consider booth rental options.
- Envision a [custom build](#)? Work with designers to create a booth that embodies your brand.
- Remember: A small exhibit space can still make a big impact.

### Design a memorable in-booth experience.

- [No matter the size, your booth should tell a seamless brand story.](#)
- Create an interactive experience that circles back to your brand and event objectives.
- [Design the attendee journey and in-booth activations with your target audience in mind.](#)

**TIP** Order carpet padding for extra comfort during the show.

### Build and train the right team

- Align the booth staff (and their expertise) with the goals of your event.
- Choose team members who best represent your vision and have a knack for engaging visitors.
- Mix it up: Include sales, technical, customer service, and management reps.
- Ditch the hard sell: Focus on solving attendee challenges and creating opportunities.
- Designate roles and responsibilities among your team for the event.



### Go digital

- Explore the latest [event tech](#) to drive attendee traffic and electrify engagement.
- Energize your space with interactive touch screens, lighting, video screens, and digital signage. Talk to your audio-visual partner about options for your booth and budget.

### Get social

- Keep the conversation going year-round with active social media feeds.
- Post highlights, offer insights, and encourage visitor interaction and feedback.

# Show Services

PRE-SHOW

AT-SHOW

POST-SHOW

Read the exhibitor services communications from the general services contractor producing the event.



## Exhibitor Services Kit / Show Manual

- A manual listing of the show's official contractors will be located in your exhibitor services kit.
- Quick Facts, including all deadlines, are available on [FreemanOnline](#).

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## Order by Discount Deadlines

- Tip: Save costs on orders made through [FreemanOnline](#).

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## Shipping and Material Handling

- Delivery options: Advance warehouse delivery or on-site delivery. Learn the difference [here](#).
- Material handling cost: Freight is weighed and billed at the dock or advance warehouse.
- Cost-saving tips:
  - Consolidate shipments; ship in crates or shrink-wrap to skids.
  - Ship to the advance warehouse up to 30 days before move-in to avoid additional charges.

**TIP** Show security isn't responsible for guarding freight, so wait for your carrier to arrive, or hire a security guard.

[Learn more](#) about FreemanOnline and how we can help you.

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## SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

- Use carriers that specialize in trade show logistics.
- Bring a list of tracking numbers to the show.
- Ask Freeman for help. Our team specializes in transportation, including multi-event ordering, storing, and shipping solutions.

**TIP** Exhibiting at multiple shows? Talk to your carrier about potential volume discounts. Freeman offers round-trip bundle rates on most shows.

# Show Services

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PRE-SHOW

AT-SHOW

POST-SHOW



## Pre-Show Prep

- Log in to [FreemanOnline](#) to view show information, orders, and show site services.



## Set-up & Move-in Day

- Align your [set-up](#) with the show's move-in hours — many U.S. events set specific times for booth installation.

**NOTE** Air conditioning and heating may not be turned on during move-in; dress accordingly.

### Upon Arrival at Your Booth Space:

- Inventory what was shipped and delivered.
- Visit the Exhibitor Service Center if anything's missing.
- Empty and label your containers; they aren't accessible during the show. (Do not send valuables to empty storage)
- If you ordered labor to set-up and dismantle you booth, check in at the labor desk

### Reminders each day of event:

- Collect all leads, business cards, notes, and other materials you gathered during teach day of the show.
- Do not leave anything valuable in the booth ay any time including overnight unless you plan to hire booth security

### Tip! Reduce Labor Cost by:

- Ordering labor in advance to secure discount rates.
- Diagramming your setup and numbering crates accordingly. Include electrical needs and repacking instructions.
- Prewiring equipment and organizing/color-coding all wires.
- Providing a mobile contact number for any questions that arise during set-up.

### Invoicing & Payment:

- Outbound shipping information and labels are delivered to your booth the day after the show opens.
- Be prepared. Payments are due at the end of the show and must be settled before you leave the exhibit hall.
- Remember to submit your invoices and expenses from the event. Invoices from Freeman may take up to 10 business days from show close before being processed.



# Show Services

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PRE-SHOW

AT-SHOW

POST-SHOW

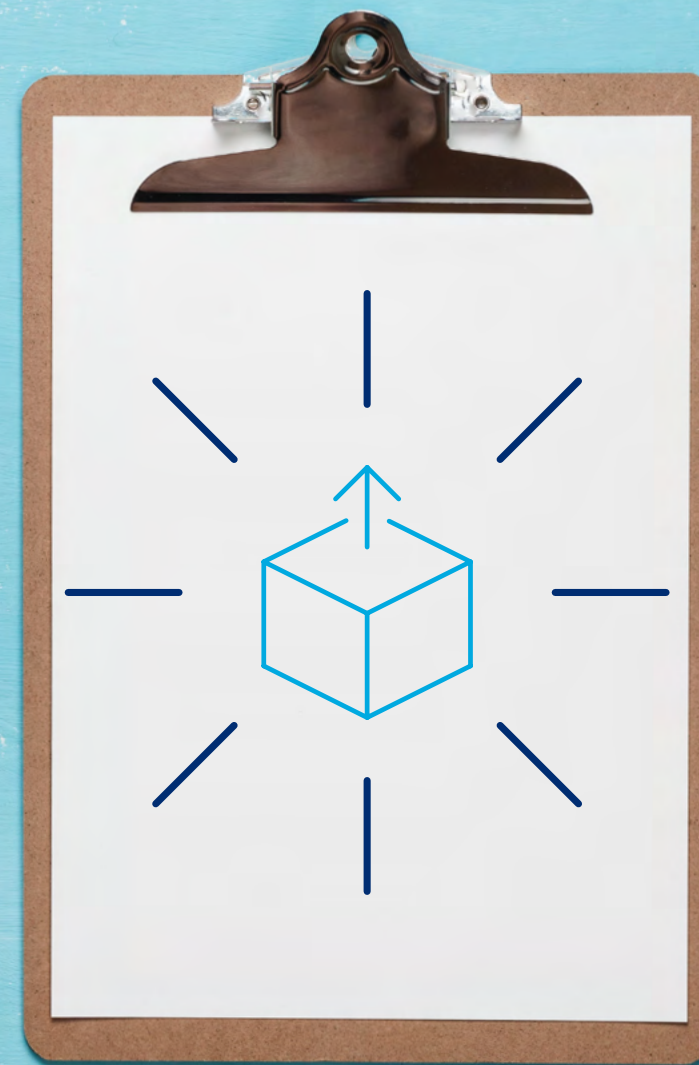
## When the expo closes, remember to:

- Confirm your dismantle labor order.
- Be patient. Depending on show size, it could take several hours for your empty containers to be returned.
- When all shipments are packed, complete the Material Handling Agreement(s) for each separate destination.
- Label every container being shipped and notify your outbound carrier for pickup.
- Go to [FreemanOnline](#) to create, save, edit, and submit MHAs from any device.
- Check the Show Quick Facts for date and time specifics.

## Don't forget to debrief!

- As soon as the show closes, follow up with leads to keep the conversation going.
- Gather feedback from booth staff and attendees to improve your next show.
- Consider an on-site survey to get immediate feedback from visitors.

**TIP** Have a post-show email ready to send that welcomes visitors home and recaps key info with an enticing call-to-action.



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# Trade Show Lingo

**Advance Order** An order for show services sent to the general contractor by the advance order (discount) deadline. Usually less expensive than orders placed on-site.

**Advance Warehouse/Receiving** Location set by show management to receive freight before start of show. Freight is stored at this location and then moved to the show at the designated time.

**Boneyard** A specific area used to store extra furniture and any equipment not being used during show hours.

**Dark Day** Terminology for a day during move-in or move-out of the facility when show site services are shut down.

**Decorating** Dressing up exhibit booths with carpet, furniture, foliage, etc.

**Double Time** Refers to a pay rate for work performed that is double the normal hourly rate.

**Exhibitor Service Center** A centralized area where representatives of various show services can be contacted or located.

**Exhibitor Service Manual** Manual containing general information, labor/service order forms, rules and regulations, as well as other important information pertaining to exhibitor participation.

**Floor Manager** Individual representing show management who is responsible for overseeing all or part of the exhibition area. He or she is also available to answer questions related to the show floor, show hours, and show services and acts as the liaison between exhibitors and the general contractor.

**Freight Desk** The area where inbound and outbound exhibit materials are handled at a trade show.

**General Contractor** A company providing services to a trade show and/or its exhibitors. The general contractor is the official contractor designated by show management for a given show (also called General Services Contractor, GSC, or Official Contractor).

**Installation/Dismantle** Also referred to as I&D. The set-up and tear down of exhibits.

**Labor** Refers to contracted workers who perform services for shows.

**Labor Desk** On-site area from which service personnel are dispatched.

**Material Handling** Unloading your shipment, transporting it to your booth, storing and returning your empty crates and cartons, and reloading your freight or shipment onto your selected carrier at the close of the show. The MHA is your material handling agreement.

**Official Contractor** Show management-appointed company providing services to a trade show and/or its exhibitors.

**On-site Order** Order for services placed by the exhibitor with the general contractor after exhibit set-up begins and is usually more expensive than an advance order.

**Overtime Labor** Work performed before 8:00 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and all hours on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays (varies by city).

**Pipe and Drape** Pipe material with fabric draped from it to make up side rails and the back wall of an exhibit booth.

**Privately Owned Vehicle** A privately owned vehicle, such as a passenger car, van, or small company vehicle, as distinguished from trucks, tractor-trailers, and other over-the-road vehicles. Exhibitors with a POV should ask the general service contractor for unloading instructions.

**Quick Facts** Essential show information at a glance, provided to exhibitors by Freeman.

**Show Management** Company responsible for all aspects of the exhibition.

**Show Office** The show management office at the event.

**Straight Time** The hours considered normal business hours.

**Target Date** The specified date and/or time to move a shipment into and/or out of an exhibit hall/show site.

**Transportation/Shipping** The transport of your exhibit materials to and from the convention or event.

**Union** An organization of workers formed to protect the interests and rights of its members. Labor unions provide venues with a pool of workers who are experts in various areas.

**Work Time** Paid time that begins as soon as the workers report to the exhibitor; stops when the exhibitor releases them from work.



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## ABOUT US

# We make exhibiting easy

## Our expertise translates to your success.

As a 90-year industry veteran, we have the insight and creativity to guide you every step of the way. No matter the venue we help you design, plan, and deliver immersive experiences for your customers.

Through comprehensive strategy, creative, digital, event technology, and logistics, we help organizations increase engagement and drive results in North America and across the world.

## Ready to design an exceptional exhibit experience?

GET IN TOUCH →



# Checklist

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## PRE-SHOW

## MOVE-IN

## POST-SHOW

Define your company’s business goals for this event and how you will measure them to ensure you maximize your ROI.

Are you trying to collect qualified leads? Drive sales? Increase your brand awareness? Increase social media engagement? Suggested measurement points include surveys, lead retrieval, number of meetings set, and more.

Designate roles and responsibilities among your team for the event.

Who will handle inbound & outbound shipments? Booking travel and accommodation? Securing badges and registration? Booth setup and tear down? Booth sales? Managing the booth at show site? Who is in charge of the booth giveaways?

Review the show’s deadlines, move-in dates & times, rules, and regulations on [FreemanOnline](#) to ensure you’re prepared for the event. And don’t forget about the discount deadline! It’s a great way to save money.

Build your budget for the event, including:

- Booth Registration & Badges
- Booth Design & Equipment  
(Carpet, Furniture, Audio Visual, Banners)
- Show Services  
(Electrical, Cleaning, Sign Installation, General Labor)
- Shipping & Material Handling
- Travel, Accommodations, and Meals

Marketing Material & Giveaways  
Brand Sponsorship Opportunities  
Lead Retrieval

Design your booth around your goals & budget. There are multiple options whether you want to set up yourself or have it ready to go when you arrive! Check out options on [FreemanOnline](#).

Order on [FreemanOnline](#) before the discount deadline to ensure you pay the lowest price on Freeman products & services! This varies from show to show, but you are safe if you order around three months prior.

Book travel and accommodation as soon as you know the team that will be attending. Accommodations at larger shows can sell out as far as six months in advance! Check your show website for hotel discounts.

Make sure you plan arrival & departure times to allow enough time to get to and from the show site for setup and tear down. Depending on the size of the show, it may take up to eight hours for your empty containers to be returned to your booth during tear down.

Set up a pre-show marketing plan across all of your channels to ensure your audience knows when and where to find your booth.

Start setting up meetings with existing clients and prospects.

Confirm your inbound and outbound shipping provider, shipping dates, and shipping addresses for the event, around two months prior to the show.

Freeman offers roundtrip discounts on select shows. Check out [FreemanOnline](#) to view the specific shipping details for your show.

If you will be selling products from your booth, you may also need to:

- Ensure you have all of the relevant federal, state, and international sales tax licenses and forms needed to sell at the event. Exhibiting outside of your home country often requires additional import paperwork, so check with your shipping provider to ensure you have all the correct documentation for importing products.
- Document and double check your inventory numbers for all products.
- Ensure your booth staff knows your refund, discount, and giveaway policies and how you plan to document all of them.
- Decide who you want to man the booth. Designate booth staff expectations — what schedules look like, scripts, meetings, etc.

# Checklist

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PRE-SHOW

MOVE-IN

POST-SHOW

Have a daily team meeting to prep for the day and debrief from the current day — share leads, best practices, etc.

Check-in at the exhibitor registration desk to gather your badges and see if there are any changes to the show you need to be aware of.

As soon as you get to your booth during exhibitor move-in, check your space to ensure your shipment and orders are correct.

If you hired labor for your event, including tear-down, check-in at the labor service desk to make sure all labor is scheduled or completed.

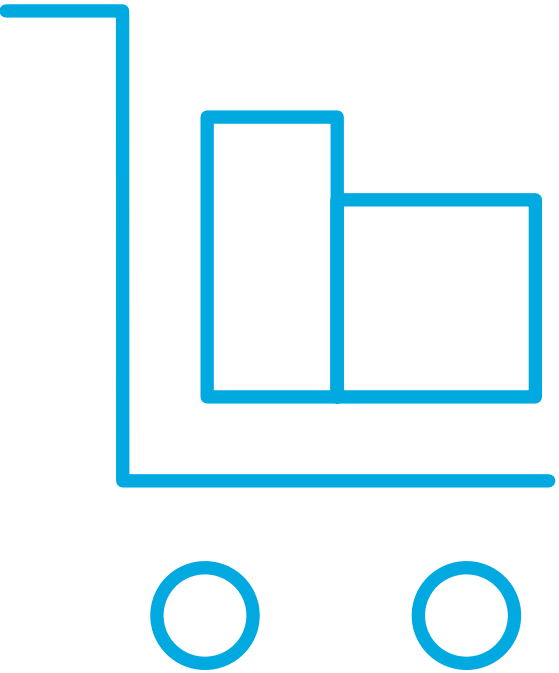
Check your equipment, internet service, electricity, and any additional items required to run your booth for your booth multiple times. Don't forget your phone, tablet, and laptop chargers.

Make sure you've removed everything you need for your exhibit from your empty shipping containers before they're taken to the warehouse.

Label all empty boxes, containers, pallets, crates, or other shipping containers with your company name and booth number to ensure you get it back at the end of the show.

At the end of each day, remove or secure any valuables at your booth before leaving the show.

Stay hydrated and take breaks when you can. A successful show is a marathon, not a race. If you're planning on being on your feet most of the day, consider ordering double padded carpeting. Your feet will thank you.





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Collect all leads, business cards, notes, and other materials you gathered during the show.

Designate who is following up with each. Do this immediately after the show.

Take inventory of all your equipment, booth material, and assets.

Complete a Material Handling Agreement (also called Out-bound Paperwork) for your exhibit and return to the Exhibitor Service Center. (Protip: you can start this paperwork prior to moveout on [FreemanOnline](#))

After your empty containers are returned and your exhibit is packed, label every container you plan to ship. You can pick up additional labels at the Exhibitor Service Center if needed.

As a best-practice, follow up with your leads and contacts within a week of the event ending. Keep up the momentum!

If you plan to exhibit at this show next year, check with show management to see if pre-registration for next year is necessary at show site.

Meet with your team and document everything they learned from the show.

- What worked and what didn't?
- Were there any takeaways that could make an impact?
- How did your show perform according to your goals?
- How can we improve our show next year?

Write out your key take aways and compare them to your goals — ROI, # of meetings, etc. Use these to set your benchmarks for next year.

Remember to submit your invoices and expenses from the event. Invoices from Freeman may take up to 10 business days from show close before being posted.

