



The Trade Show Budget

To successfully analyze the value or Return On Investment of any trade you need to know your costs. You can add all the costs up at the end of the show but do not be surprised if you spent a lot more than you wanted. Before you go to a show you should prepare a Budget.

When you attend a show you basically fall into 3 categories, first time, repeat exhibitor or experienced exhibitor testing a new show. If you are the repeat exhibitor you will have last years cost to assist you with this years Budget. You will also know the cost breakdown. Simply go through last years numbers and adjust as required to establish the new Budget.

It is much more difficult for the first time exhibitor. Here are some standard costs to expect: design/production of booth, booth space cost, other space-related costs, travel costs to and from the show, additional things to rent or buy at the show (tables, power, etc.), accommodation costs for booth staff, shipping costs for booth display and materials, vehicle rentals required. Other costs could include product literature, promotions or hand outs, staff training, advertising prior to and during the show.

A Custom booth averages \$125 per square foot. A Pop Up booth for a 10'x10' show can cost \$50 to \$70 per square foot. Studies have shown that your floor space represents one third of the exhibit budget. This assumes an amortized booth cost. When calculating the cost for your first show, although the money is spent today for the booth, you will use the booth more than once. If you spend \$12,000 on the booth, use it twice a year and assume it will last four years, your amortized cost is \$12,000 over 4 years = \$3,000 per year over 2 shows or \$1,500 per show. When calculating your booth cost you may wish to divide it up into cost of hardware and cost of graphics. Although the booth structure may last 4 years most people want a fresh look from year to year especially if you have grown or introduced a new product or service.

The main key to establishing the budget is to start early. List all of the known costs, estimate the costs you know will come up but pricing is not yet available and store the information in an organized fashion. Using software such as Excel works well because when you change or add numbers the math is done for you. Do a search on the Internet under "Preparing a Trade show Budget" and view some sites. Many places offer templates you can download at a reasonable cost.

As always planning, preparation and research will assist you in having a Successful Trade Show.