

# FINDING THE RIGHT TRADE SHOW PARTNER

*Finding the right trade show exhibit partner* can be a daunting task, especially for the uninitiated. The goal is to find the exhibit design partner who works with you to advance your brand message, shorten your sales cycle, and create a positive return on investment through what takes place on the tradeshow floor. To accomplish this, fact-finding, communication, comparison, and relationship have to be top of mind.

## FACT-FINDING

The history, past and present clients, prior execution, and depth of services offered are important items to consider when selecting a trade show partner. Additionally, try not to focus too heavily on the size of a potential builder. Experience, capability, and attention to detail are more important points to consider.

## COMMUNICATION

As with most everything in business and in life, communication is vitally important to the process of designing and building a trade show exhibit. A clear project vision cannot develop without an open and honest dialogue between the exhibitor and the builder. The builder should view customer dialogue as a roadmap, outlining project requirements, overall brand direction, and the best route to take to achieve both.

## COMPARISON

When selecting an exhibit partner, it's important that you are able to compare apples to apples. This is especially true when bidding out a trade show production. The best way to accomplish this is to provide each bidder with the exact specifications to bid on, including all show-related services, as well as an exhibit design. While rates can be important, they are not an accurate measurement of the actual cost to the customer. By requesting suppliers to bid on an actual project, the customer will have a more accurate picture of the cost.

## RELATIONSHIP

Price alone should not be the determining factor when selecting an exhibit provider. It's extremely important that the customer be comfortable with the provider, and that there is a sense of partnership. Many times, exhibitors select an exhibit provider based solely on price only to find out the fit is not right and therefore, they do not receive the added value that comes with a solid relationship.



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