



Exhibiting Dollars & Sense: 33 Ways to Save Money

By Jefferson Davis

When you compare the cost of putting a rep face to face with a customer or prospect in the field with the cost at a tradeshow, tradeshow are an extremely cost-effective channel. That being said, many exhibit managers are under pressure to do more with less. Below is a collection of 33 cost-savings practices. Cross out the ones you are using and put a checkmark by the ones you plan to use—and plan now to get more bang for your tradeshow buck!

- Membership has its advantages: Join the association
- Reuse, refurbish, or extend the life of your exhibit
- Evaluate renting versus owning your exhibit—you can save a lot here
- Replace your exhibit with a lighter-weight, easier-to-set-up/tear-down exhibit
- Get distribution-channel partners to invest in the show with you
- Take advantage of all show-vendor deadlines and discounts
- Negotiate everything
- Book travel early
- Use the same hotel chain as often as possible—negotiate room rates
- Consolidate freight shipments
- Avoid rush charges by planning ahead
- Ship to the advance warehouse
- Ship small, lightweight, carry-in items to the hotel
- Store exhibit properties in your most-exhibited show city
- Negotiate volume shipping/freight contracts—go out to bid
- Buy reusable crates
- Have freight reweighed before return shipping
- Right size your exhibit
- Evaluate the viability of a virtual product presentation
- Send fewer people—only those who need to be there
- Bring your own cleaning supplies
- Bring your own trash cans and liners
- Bring your own cordless vacuum
- Bring your own surge-suppressor power strips and flat extension cords
- Send less literature—print on demand
- Create a roommate-lodging program
- Dine with pre-set menu
- Save money on giveaways by using them properly
- Evaluate owning versus renting your lead-retrieval system
- Be sure all leads are followed up
- Audit your post-show bills
- For smaller exhibits, rather than buy electricity, bring a portable power supply.
- Measure and report savings and ROI, and you may not have to reduce costs after all!

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