

Lean Exhibiting: 31 Ways to Get More Bang for Your Tradeshow Buck

By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge

When you compare the cost of putting a rep face-to-face with a customer or prospect in the field to the cost at a tradeshow, in this economy, tradeshows are an extremely cost-effective channel. That being said, many exhibit managers face pressure to do more with less. Below is a collection of 31 cost-savings practices in a checklist format. Cross out the ones you are using, put a checkmark by the ones you plan to use, and plan to get more bang for your tradeshow buck.

- Memberships 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 and 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 night 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 - a complex topic - call me at 800-700-6174
- Evaluate the viability of a virtual product presentation
- Send less 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 meals
- 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
- Consider selling show leads to dealers and distributors
- Measure and report savings and ROI and you may not have to reduce costs after all