

Update on Green Exhibiting Practices: More Ways to Execute a More Environmentally Friendly Exhibit

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Since authoring my first Green Exhibiting Practices article almost four years ago, a lot has changed on this important topic. In this new article, I want to keep some the best practices from the original article and add some new information and new green options.

First of all, the good news is that the early green initiatives of moving to lighter booth properties that require less-set-up and lighter shipping weights for transportation, along with more use of recycled products and recycling practices, have taken hold and are now common place for most exhibitors.

The bad news is that according to industry research, overall exhibitor interest and focus on green practices has decreased. This is due in part to tough economic times, additional cost of green practices and intense focus on budgets and the bottom line.

While our industry has certainly taken strong and decisive steps toward reducing our carbon output and footprints, based on what appears to be increasingly violent weather patterns, we all still need to remain vigilant and do all we can to protect our planet.

Below are seven additional green exhibiting practices to consider, along with 22 original practices. Cross out the ones you are already using, put a checkmark by the ones you plan to use, and get busy now on creating an even greener exhibit program.

New Green Practices:

1. Continue replacing exhibit properties with sustainable and recycled components like PVC substrates with eco-friendly substrates
2. Replace printed exhibit signs and graphics with digital signage
3. Replace bottled water with water coolers or refillable water bottles
4. Offer product information digitally by using QR codes and/or USB drives
5. Avoid using lead retrieval systems with paper printout
6. Integrate more web-based, email, text and social media into your marketing campaigns
7. If you offer in-booth hospitality, or do hospitality events use reusable plates, cups and utensils versus paper and plastic

Original Green Practices:

1. Reuse, refurbish or extend the life of your current exhibit
2. Consider renting versus buying your next exhibit to reduce material use and transportation emissions
3. Choose and use recycled materials whenever and wherever possible
4. Recycle as much as you possibly can to help avoid landfills
5. Label leftover products for donation
6. Reduce the weight of your exhibit and everything you send to the show
7. Buy locally and store locally
8. Print literature at the destination or on demand in your exhibit versus shipping and throwing it away
9. Print on at least 30% post-consumer recycled paper
10. Use vegetable or soy based inks for printing
11. Avoid PVC it takes 100 years to decompose and releases a lot of VOC's
12. Choose wood from Forestry Stewardship Council certified forests
13. Consider replacing wood with Plyboo - it renews 5 to 10x faster than trees

14. Replace fluorescent, incandescent and halogen lights with LED's
15. Use water based paints and finishes
16. Use recycled carpet made from plastic bottles – not synthetic carpet which takes 100 years to decompose
17. Pad wrap shipments versus using crates to reduce weight
18. Limit the use of Styrofoam and plastic wraps by choosing more eco-friendly packaging materials
19. Reuse packaging materials as much as possible
20. Choose freight carriers that use biodiesel fuel
21. Choose freight carriers that buy carbon offsets
22. Use local staff whenever possible