



RENTAL vs PURCHASE

Considerations For Trade Show Exhibit Rental vs. Custom Exhibit Purchase

When it comes to preparing for a trade show, beginning the design process can be one of the most challenging parts of the process. There are a couple of approaches you can take. The first option is rental. You can rent off the self solutions or have a custom rental solution designed to meet some specific needs. The second option is to purchase your trade show exhibit. These can also be off the shelf solutions or customized designed elements that meet your own specific criteria. Here are a few things to consider before deciding which way to go.

When Exhibit Rental Makes Sense – A General Guideline

Budget Restraints - Small or start-up companies new to the trade show scene, exhibit at only a few shows, and/or subject to a small trade show budget, renting can achieve more bang for your buck.

Flexibility - Greater flexibility to change booth design, layout, & size as often as needed. Less commitment when adding or subtracting exhibit properties.

Concurrent Shows - Avoid schedule conflicts and/or tight deadlines when you exhibit at more than one trade show at the same time.

Unusual Booth Size or Requirements – For a significantly larger or smaller booth size which is not expected to repeat, or one-time requirements (like a big presentation stage) it may make sense to rent – at least some components .

Eliminate Fees - A rental program allows you to sidestep pull /prep and storage fees.

Maintenance - Wear & tear is almost always a certainty every time an exhibit booth is deployed. Renting gets you an exhibit that looks brand new at every show. You also avoid refurbishing & repair fees.

Organizational Changes - Easily adapt your booth in the event your company is subject to mergers, acquisitions, rebranding, and other similar occurrences.

Environmentally Conscious - Re-use of rental properties is eco friendly. Also, you avoid any potential disposal or recycling fees.

Pros and Cons of Trade Show Exhibit Rental

Trade Show Exhibit Rental - Pros

Avoid Capital Expenses - Because rental exhibits are just that, rentals, there is nothing to buy. This helps to minimize the administration and processing of a large capital expense.

No Annual Storage Costs - A major "pro" to renting your trade show booth is that once your show is over, the booth is not yours store.

Minimum Maintenance and Repair Costs - The cost to rent a trade show exhibit is approximately one-third of the cost to own. Since you are not purchasing the structure of your booth (nor paying for storage or repairs), you should have more budget to put towards a larger floor space or collateral marketing and promotional materials.

Look Different Show to Show - In a world where first impressions are everything, updating your look from show to show can be important. Renting your trade show exhibit gives you the flexibility to evolve your entire exhibit structure and design from show to show - including its size and footprint.

Trade Show Exhibit Rental - Cons

Costs Can Be Higher Over Time - If your company exhibits at several shows per year, over time renting a trade show booth year after year could cost you more money than owning one.

Rental Exhibits Can Show Wear - Depending on what company you rent your trade show exhibit from, some rental properties may show visible wear-and-tear from previous use, shipping and setup.

Availability - If you don't plan accordingly, rental availability can become an issue. Try to choose a vendor that can meet your needs, but also plan your exhibits as early as possible.

Furniture and Accessory Costs - If you don't own your furniture, rental costs for these components can be quite high; availability can also be a concern.

When a Custom-Build Exhibit Makes Sense – A General Guideline

Impact - Custom design of exhibit booths tend to achieve a much greater visual response and draw more attendee attention and foot traffic than rentals. They often appear to be of higher quality workmanship and more sophisticated design – giving an impression about your company.

Corporate/Brand Consistency/Recognition - To achieve your precise standards and recognition by show attendees, go custom. The look, feel, and colors of your exhibit booth are tailored to order and create a unique look and feel for your brand.

Return - Displaying your business with a custom booth greatly increases the chances of a return on your investment. The greater initial cost you invest in a custom exhibit can pay great dividends for years to come. Various requirements and configurations can be figured out at the front end, minimizing design and engineering costs for subsequent uses. Careful consideration goes into how the properties are built, minimizing required assembly work.

Volume - If your company has a large presence on the trade show circuit, purchasing your exhibit properties is for you. If you use an exhibit three times or more a year, you should own.

Broad use of Properties & Familiarity for Cost Savings – A custom exhibit is the better option for a large US convention program as properties are generally transshipped from one location to another, resulting in significant savings on shipping and handling. Set-up drawings are created for various configurations and re-used (or modified) saving on CAD drawings. Labor crews become very familiar with the nuances of the properties and become very efficient while shaving hours off with continued use. Graphic design and production teams know what to expect and are able to multi-purpose graphics.

Pros and Cons of Trade Show Exhibit Ownership

Trade Show Exhibit Ownership - Pros

Savings Over the Long Term - If you exhibit at several shows per year and an active trade show marketer, the cost of owning your custom trade show exhibit will very likely be less than renting.

Total Control Over Every Detail - Because this is your booth, you can have it designed and built exactly to your specifications, also having complete control over the choice of materials and finishes used.

Your Brand - Owning your trade show exhibit gives you complete control over how your brand is represented.

Trade Show Exhibit Ownership - Cons

Initial Expense - The initial cost of building and owning your trade show exhibit is typically three to four times the cost of an equivalent rental. There is no initial investment with a rental.

Lack of Flexibility - Your business and product offerings change over time. So do marketing and design trends. When you own your trade show exhibit, updating the look and feel of your exhibit properties can be quite costly and in some cases totally prohibitive.

Responsibility for Storage, Shipping & Repairs - When you own your trade show exhibit, you have additional costs over renting. The costs of storing your exhibit between shows if you don't have the space along with the repairs and maintenance of your exhibit properties that may be damaged during shipping or install/dismantle.

A Third Option -A Hybrid Exhibit

Hybrid exhibits are "flexible" exhibits. They mix custom purchase and rental parts. Many companies that have specific needs but do not have enough budget for a fully custom exhibit choose this option. In most cases only important components will be customized, for example – counters, custom branded properties and product displays that need to meet the product specifications. Other exhibit components such as walls, rooms, and identification towers will be built out of modular aluminum systems. Off the shelf hanging sign frames in a wide variety of sizes and shapes are also available for rent, requiring only graphics.