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BUDGETING

Ballpark Budgeting



When your boss walks into your office and asks what it would cost to add a show to next month's calendar, you need numbers — and a stiff cup of coffee — and you need 'em fast. How do you dig up all the industry averages you need to pull a budget out of thin air? Simple. You grab this handy article, your calculator, and some budgets from previous shows, and within 20 minutes you'll have a ballpark budget based in reality. Here are the stats and formulas you need, including everything from the average cost to rent a forklift to the average cost per square foot for a custom exhibit. *By Linda Armstrong*

Quick Budgeting Strategies

Are you planning to add a new show to your schedule? Or maybe you simply need budget numbers — and fast. Here are two budgeting strategies to calculate some ballpark total-show figures. For more detailed estimates, consult the industry averages on the following pages.

Method 1

Average Cost-Per-Square-Foot Calculation

The most accurate way to predict future exhibiting costs is to average past exhibiting costs.

Step One: Determine the cost-per-square-foot your company spent on each trade show last year (including amortized exhibit costs where appropriate).

Step Two: Determine your company's average cost-per-square-foot by adding together the cost-per-square-foot incurred at each show and dividing by the total number of shows you attended last year.

Step Three: Multiply the average cost-per-square-foot by the square footage of the exhibit you plan to bring to the new show.

Method 2

Space-Cost Calculations

For a quicker, less accurate calculation, you can estimate the cost of exhibiting based on the cost of your exhibit space.

Option One: According to the 2003 EXHIBITOR Magazine Readership Study, exhibit-space rental accounts for roughly one-third of a typical company's total-show costs. Therefore, you can multiply the cost of your exhibit space by three for a ballpark, total-show estimate.

Option Two: If you don't know the show's exhibit-space cost, use the average square-foot cost for floor space among Tradeshow Week's top 200 shows in 2004: \$22.32. Multiply that figure by the square footage of the exhibit you plan to bring to the new show. Then, multiply that number by three.

Furniture and Equipment Rental Averages



Upholstered arm chair
\$63.95



Side chair
\$47.44



Sofa
(least-expensive
three-seat sofa)
\$363.33



Carpet
standard, 9-by-10-foot
\$111.70



4-foot green plant
\$43.30



Mums
\$21.94



Telephone line
\$225.38



Internet access
(ISDN/BRI line)
\$646.27



Cell-phone rental (per day)
\$48.92



Small sound system with
lavalier (three-day rental)
\$482.55



VHS player
(three-day rental)
\$257.92



19- to 20-inch color monitor
(three-day rental)
\$350.47



Draped video cart (48- to 52-
inches high, three-day rental)
\$111.40



Video setup
(VHS, 19- to 20-inch color
monitor and cart, three-day
rental)
\$476.59



HP laser-jet printer
(series IV or V)
\$250.01



150-watt floodlight
(rental and installation)
\$96.68



Power Macintosh
(8000 series or greater,
three-day rental)
\$669.51



PC desktop
(Pentium or compatible, 133
MHz or greater, three-day
rental)
\$387.50



PC laptop
(Pentium or compatible, least
expensive, three-day rental)
\$560.08



Lighting outlet
120-volt, 500-watt
\$80.02
120-volt, 2,000-watt
\$147.79

Staffing Rule of Thumb

Allocate for **one staff person for every 50 square feet** of open exhibit space.

SOURCE: Candy Adams, CTSM, CME, CEM, CMP, consultant, trade show consulting, Vista, CA



Floor Space



SOURCE: Tradeshow Week's 200, which surveyed the top 200 shows in 2004. Copyright 2005 Tradeshow Week and Reed Business Information. www.tradeshowweek.com

Cost Per Attendee

Exhibitors spend **\$116 per attendee** that enters an exhibit and expresses an interest in its products/services.

Exhibitors spend **\$195 per attendee** that engages in conversation with a staff member.



SOURCE: Exhibit Surveys Inc.'s Trade Show Trends Report 2004

Hourly Average Exhibit-House Charges

Construction/fabrication labor	\$72.30
Exhibit design	\$95.55
Estimating	\$77.19
Project management	\$77.12
Account management	\$77.59
Detailing/drafting	\$78.58
Graphic design	\$88.28
Prep/handling labor	\$67.84
Coordination of show services and logistics	\$65.46
Field supervision	\$64.56
(overtime)	\$97.12
(weekend)	\$107.46

Average Exhibit-House Markups

Raw materials used in construction/fabrication	70%
Subcontracted materials and special purchases	50%
Subcontracted labor	51%
Transportation	26%
Show services	27%
Installation and dismantle labor	29%

Exhibit Storage

Monthly square-foot rate	\$.58
Monthly cubic-foot rate	\$.18

SOURCE: Exhibit Designers & Producers Association 2004 Economic Survey

Custom Exhibit Costs

Average New-Exhibit Prices

Inline:
\$176/square foot
(\$1,176/linear foot)

Islands:
\$141/square foot



SOURCE: Exhibit Designers & Producers Association 2004 Economic Survey

Inline Installation Estimates

SOURCE: Melinda Stewart, founder, Laser Exhibitor Service, Napa, CA

10-by-10-foot pop-up
1 person, 2 hours



10-by-10-foot pop-up with heavy custom header or other components
2 people, 4 hours total



10-by-20-foot pop-up
1 person, 2 to 3 hours



10-by-20-foot custom or system with many parts
1 to 2 people, 4 to 12 hours total



I&D Rule of Thumb



$$\text{Total Square Feet of Exhibit Space} / 8 = \text{Total I\&D Hours}$$

$$\text{Total I\&D Hours} \times 2/3 = \text{Approximate Installation Hours}$$

$$\text{Total I\&D Hours} \times 1/3 = \text{Approximate Dismantle Hours}$$

SOURCE: Candy Adams, CTSM, CME, CEM, CMP, consultant, trade show consulting, Visa, CA

Electrical Estimate

It takes **one to two hours** to install one to four electrical drops in the average 20-by-20-foot custom exhibit.



SOURCE: Melinda Stewart, founder, Laser Exhibitor Service, Napa, CA

20-by-20-foot Installation Estimate

Let's say you're installing a 20-by-20-foot booth that involves laying carpet and pad and setting a custom 12-foot tower and four workstations. Your exhibit items are pre-assembled. Workers just pull them out of the crate and place them. Here's an estimate of the time requirements:

TASK	ESTIMATED LABOR
Verify electrical layout, locate crates, lay pad and carpet and cover it with Visqueen, install exhibit (ladders are required for the tower section), hang graphics, focus lighting, wipe down counters, and send away empty crates	2 people required for 4 to 6 hours each
Locate and unpack giveaways/products	1 person for 2 hours
Last-minute fixes	4 hours
TOTAL ESTIMATE: 14-18 hours	
<i>NOTE: Since union employees have breaks every two hours and lunch or dinner every four hours, most time increments fall into two-hour groups.</i>	
SOURCE: Melinda Stewart, founder, Laser Exhibitor Service, Napa, CA	



Labor Rates



Drayage (general labor)
 per hour \$65.24
 Overtime \$102.88
 Sunday \$119.10

Electrician
 per hour \$67.41
 Overtime \$119.43
 Sunday \$126.57

Decorator
 per hour \$64.83
 Overtime \$103.35
 Sunday \$118.45

Carpenter
 per hour \$66.29
 Overtime \$105.46
 Sunday \$120.88

Rigger
 per hour \$83.93
 Overtime \$125.63
 Sunday \$139.73



Forklift with operator
 per hour \$141.55 to \$155.26
 Overtime
 \$192.90 to \$210.96
 Sunday
 \$225.53 to \$238.18

Plumber
 per hour \$65.18
 Overtime \$118.51
 Sunday \$126.70

**AV labor
 (delivery, setup,
 and pickup)**
 per hour \$57.81

Security guard (unarmed)
 per hour \$17.27

**Booth cleaning
 (daily vacuuming per
 square foot)**
 \$.27

SOURCE: TRADESHOW WEEK'S 2004 SURVEY OF U.S. AND CANADIAN LABOR RATES, COPYRIGHT 2005 TRADESHOW WEEK AND REED BUSINESS INFORMATION, WWW.TRADESHOWWEEK.COM

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