

# Your **1 2 3** guide



## to a successful show

**Congratulations on your decision to participate in our show!**

To help ensure a successful show, we've put together this pamphlet of suggestions and handy tips.

Whether you're an old hand at shows,  
or participating in your first show,  
we think you'll find this a helpful tool.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

**Good luck at the show!**

**ACS**  
AMERICAN CONSUMER SHOWS



# BEFORE THE SHOW...

## Planning

Take some time to sit down and plan. What are my objectives for the show? Do I want to sell at the booth? Make appointments? Both? Is my brand, product or service well known, or do I need to tell consumers about my company as well as my product or service? What are my unique features? Who is my potential customer? What gives me an edge over my competitor? What is the best way to convey my “message”? Answering these questions will help you create the best possible environment for a successful show.

## What will I need?

### Making an Attractive Display

Many exhibitors visit our website [www.acsshows.com](http://www.acsshows.com) to view the photo gallery looking for ideas and insight into how companies in their industry set up their displays. Frequently, manufacturers or suppliers can assist you in putting together the best displays or have experience with dealers participating in shows in neighboring markets. Standard furnishings such as tables, chairs, and carpet are available for rent from the show decorator. In addition, depending upon the venue, booth electric hook-up, water, internet connection, and if needed, advance shipping forms are all available online approximately 5 weeks prior to the show. **Tip: Make sure you return the completed forms before they are due. Late orders, or those placed on-site, are subject to higher fees. Additionally, although the decorator will most likely bring extras of the more frequently ordered items to show site, you may not be able to get exactly what you want if you order at show site.**

### Booth Layout

The nature of your business will determine the layout of your booth. If you sell valuable or delicate products, security and access may be of concern and you might want to arrange tables as a “barrier” across the front of the booth so that entry can be limited. If you have many samples, or if your products are such that you want to encourage handling, make your space inviting by arranging your tables and props in a U-shape so that prospects have easy access to your booth. **Tip: Physically lay out your booth prior to the show. See what works, see what doesn't.**

### Lighting

Lighting is an important element that is often overlooked. Walk down any aisle at any show and notice what attracts your eye first. The most attractive and inviting booths are those that are well lit as well as nicely decorated. If you rely on just the overhead facility lighting, your booth may not stand out; particularly if those around you are using their own lights. An inexpensive option are clamp lights, available at any home improvement or discount center, which can make all the difference in the world and create an open and inviting look. Don't be afraid to invest in quality attractive lighting that you can use over and over again—it will come back to you in increased traffic at

your booth.

## Signage

A sign or banner with your company's name, logo, and contact information such as website and phone number should be prominently displayed within your booth. A standard banner is 2'x8' or 3'x8' and usually takes one week or less to produce. You can either hang the banner on the piping along the back of your booth or place a sign on an easel within your booth.

**Tip: A well-designed sign or banner can act like a magnet and attract prospects to your booth.**

## Printed Material

Whether fancy or plain; on thick coated or simple photocopy paper; color or black and white, make sure you bring plenty of it! There's nothing worse than running out of product, literature or business cards and scrambling to make copies during the show. When in doubt, bring more than you think you'll need. It's also critical to bring an appointment book, index cards, or contact info sheets so that you have a way of keeping track of your leads. Making it easy for prospects to give you their information is paramount.

**Tip: Ask your supplier for brochures to help sell their product or service. Use the show as an opportunity to upgrade or redesign your current literature. You want a fresh, relevant look and feel.**

## Product

If you are selling an actual product, make sure you have more than enough on hand of sufficient variety to cover your projected needs. If your product or service is something that can't be physically displayed in your booth, then plenty of display models and/or photos are the way to go. A picture, or several, is worth a thousand words. Hang photos of your best work on your backdrop or on easels and place an open “brag book” of pictures on your table. Whatever you do, don't bring your whole store. Bring the best selection of your products or samples, and let your literature or a follow-up appointment do the rest!

## How many people will I need to effectively staff my booth and how should I schedule them?

This is one area where many new exhibitors frequently underestimate their needs. Generally speaking, you will need two people for each 10x10 booth. However, if you are in a larger booth, the rule of thumb is one person per 200 square feet. Too much staff and your booth may look crowded and turn-off potential customers. On the other hand, if you don't schedule enough people, your staff could become overwhelmed and miss potential business. Try to have enough people to allow for restroom and meal breaks without over-taxing your remaining staff. Scheduling is sometimes more art than science, but the more shows you do, the more experienced you'll become. **Tip: When in doubt, schedule more people rather than less. If you find that you are over-staffed, have your people contact prospects who indicated an interest in your product or service. Timely follow-up on hot leads is key to making a sale. Do not crowd out your booth with your own staff.**

## Training

Make sure that everyone who works the booth knows your product and/or service, as well as the best way to sell it.

## Show Special Offer

Create a special price or product package available ONLY at and/or via an appointment made at the show. This “show special” creates a compelling reason for a prospect to act now in order to take advantage of what is perceived to be a value not available anytime or anywhere else.

## Advertise the show and your participation

Mention your participation in the show and your company’s special offer in your social media, website and advertising leading up to the show. Start promoting your participation one month before the show by telling potential customers that they should come to the show to see you.

## Giveaway samples of products or premiums with your name

Everybody loves a freebie! A giveaway with your company’s information printed onto the item is always a hit. You can use either a sample of your product or a related premium that conveys what it is you’re selling. A giveaway creates a “magnet” to draw people over to your booth. If used properly, these items can give you an opportunity to talk with people to whom you might not otherwise get the chance. **Tip: Premiums don’t have to be expensive! Inexpensive, simple things like pens, pencils and rulers are always in demand; even wrapped candy can draw people over to your booth.**

**Dress: Do!** But do it appropriately. You may want to arrive in your “work” clothes for set-up and then change into your “show” clothes for the event. Ideally, you will have shirts with your company’s logo so that you and your associates present a professional and unified identity. If not, make sure whatever you wear is clean, pressed and comfortable. It’s especially important that your shoes be suitable for standing for long periods of time.

**Reading, Talking on the Phone or Texting to pass the time: Don’t!** Eye contact is very important. A prospect looking at your booth and considering your product may need the recognition of catching your eye in order to feel comfortable enough to approach you.

**Get to the show early: Do!** Exhibitors are allowed on the show floor one hour before the doors open. Use this time to make any last minute adjustments to your booth, collect your thoughts, and prepare your team for the day.

## Gather names

Shows are an excellent way to generate leads to work throughout the year. There are two types of leads:

- Leads from appointments made at the show: People generally won’t make an appointment with a sales representative unless they have a sincere interest in the product. These appointments are your best opportunity to generate business from the show.

- Leads from free drawings: An opportunity to win something related to your product or service is an excellent way to capture the names of people with an interest in what you are selling, it also creates a reason for someone to visit your booth. Be sure to include a check-off box on the entry form so that interested prospects can indicate that they would like to be contacted with further information. Work these leads promptly, have a good sales pitch and make sure that you actually award the prize as promised. You will want to meet as many prospects as possible and leave the actual sale until after the event. A solid, concise script and literature and/or samples are very important, and keep in mind that immediate follow up is key!

## Note what your competitors did

Make some time to “walk” the show. See how your competitors and others set up and work their booths. It’s also a great way to see what the competition has to offer as well as an opportunity to network with potential partners. Someone once said that there are no new ideas, just new ways of implementing the old ones. If you see something you like, put your own spin on it and make it work even better for you.

# DURING THE SHOW...

## Booth Do’s and Don’ts

**Standing: Do!** As tempting as it might be to sit, it’s important to stand and greet prospects as they approach your booth. Standing also suggests more energy and allows you to move more quickly from prospect to prospect.

**Eating: Don’t!** There’s no greater turn-off than someone making a presentation with a mouth full of food. Prospects might also be reluctant to stop by if they think they’re disturbing someone’s meal.

**“Hawking”: Do!** But be considerate of your fellow exhibitors. You may stand inside of your booth and invite people to learn about your product or service. You may not, however, entice someone from your neighbor’s booth or roam around the exhibit floor to hand out literature.

**Looking bored: Don’t!** Put a smile on your face. If you look unhappy, prospects may be reluctant to approach you.

## POST SHOW FOLLOW-UP..

### Lead Management

Each night, at the end of the show, make sure that all of your leads are removed from the booth. Simple? Obvious? It's not that unheard of for a booth to be set-up six months later and an anguished cry heard when a box of leads, now stale, is found in one of the crates. The owner or top sales reps should immediately call every lead to set or confirm appointments. If you gave away a prize, make sure the free drawing receptacles are emptied every night and the leads recorded and assigned to a sales representative. In addition to tracking your show leads, be sure to track your results from the show by asking phone-in prospects how they heard about you. **Tip: If personal follow-up isn't possible, have a mailing prepared to go out immediately following the show as a reminder to potential customers that you met them at the show and they expressed a degree of interest. Make sure it mentions any show specific offers!**

### Evaluate your performance

Ask each person who worked the show to think about what went well, what worked, what didn't and what suggestions they have for improvement. Have a brain-storming meeting a couple of days after the show. You'll be surprised how valuable this exercise can be!

### Planning for the next show

The ACS Priority Registration process gives you an exclusive window of five weeks after the show to re-book your booth for the same show next year. This is also your opportunity to evaluate the size of your booth to determine if more or less space is needed. Discuss and offer feedback to your Account Executive!

### Most important

**Be positive! Your attitude does make a difference. The more comfortable you are working the show, the better your results will be.**

## DON'T FORGET...

- Order what you need before the deadline from your manufacturer, supplier, show decorator, or service provider
- Plan how you want your booth to look
- Have signs and/or banners made
- Print a supply of literature and business cards
- Create lead sheets or get an appointment book
- Train and schedule your staff
- Create a show special offer
- Order enough product to sell
- Order premiums or product samples for giveaways