



The Importance of Distributing a Pre-Show Briefing Memo

Looking for an effective way to minimize or eliminate stress and decrease those anxious last-minute challenges on the trade show floor? The Pre-Show Briefing Memo is your answer.

This significant memo describes in detail all the pertinent trade show exhibiting information for personnel involved in the show. It shares logistical information and trade show exhibit functional details to inform, educate, and help eliminate last-minute problems. It is also designed to direct and advise anyone involved and to secure their understanding, cooperation, and positive support for the trade show program.

Throughout my years of managing trade show exhibits for clients and corporations, I have always relied on the creation and distribution of just such a comprehensive pre-show briefing memo. While functioning as Corporate Trade Show Exhibits Manager, most all trade show exhibit details, logistics, and arrangements were constantly at the top of my mind. But when it came to virtually all other employees, managers, executives, and associates who planned to attend a show or work the booth, knowledge and understanding were always limited.

And that's why a pre-show briefing memo absolutely needs to be part of your trade show plans.

The pre-show briefing memo should cover all important exhibit aspects of the event, including:

- Show name, dates, hours, and location
- Booth numbers
- Key phone numbers and important email addresses
- Hotel reservation arrangements
- Scheduled sponsored events
- Booth duty schedule
- Exhibit products and services presented
- Pre-show briefing meeting times, location, and agenda
- Hospitality suite schedule
- Technical papers presentation schedule
- Schedules for industry meetings, customer and prospect visits, and public relations activities
- Special product presentation schedule
- Shipping schedules for product and exhibit materials

- Exhibit set-up and dismantling schedule
- Booth layout and design function
- Sign copy
- Exhibit photographs, sketches or renderings
- Sales lead processing system
- Literature distribution system
- Customer care center function
- The show's goals and objectives established during planning sessions

The goal in developing and distributing a pre-show briefing memo is to confirm that the trade show exhibits department is the primary source of virtually all companywide trade show exhibiting information. It is important that this information be securely in the hands of everyone involved and that it be distributed at least four weeks before a show. This process of communication and confirmation allows enough time for questions, suggested changes, or modifications to the overall exhibit presentation.

In addition to distributing a pre-show briefing memo by whatever means works best in your company — e.g. email, fax, interoffice mail, or snail mail — you might also add it to the trade show exhibits web site to ensure that anyone who needs it will have immediate access to all the details of a particular show wherever it may be.

Other aims of the pre-show memo include eliminating questions and concerns, building confidence among fellow employees, and inspiring anyone who has management authority to make effective last-minute changes on the show floor.

While the trade show exhibit function is indeed a support service to sales and marketing, the effort should remain flexible enough to provide exemplary service at all times. A major part of this is successfully managing the entire function in good cooperative spirit, staying on or under budget, satisfying requests, and earning the respect and admiration of management as a professional service associate. All of this is much more easily accomplished when details and logistics are effectively planned well in advance of the event.

Those managers who can make late changes must be brought into the picture weeks before the show. This might be a simple matter of sharing the details of pre-show briefing memo with a requesting manager. By doing this, you begin to pave the way for improved understanding, more support, and fewer last-minute problems in future shows.

The pre-show briefing memo also allows the trade show exhibit manager to better focus on the many challenges the show floor presents instead of on issues that could have been addressed many weeks before. It also might help to eliminate some of the minor opinions or concerns offered and allow more time and energy to address important major challenges that enviably present themselves over the course of most trade shows.

Conclusion

When one takes complete responsibility and accountability for the trade show exhibit function, there exists the desire to employ every tool available to demonstrate acumen and gain the respect and support of co-workers and management alike. The pre-

show briefing memo goes a long way in presenting a level of professionalism and sophistication that will inspire all involved and help pave the way for the trade show exhibits department to enjoy greater cooperation, support, independence, and success.

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Peter LoCascio works with exhibitors who are committed to maximizing their trade show effectiveness and Bridging the Gap between Trade Shows and Sales