



ROGERS
WORLDWIDE

GLOBAL VIEW Notes



Online Resources

for International Exhibition Organizers

By Michelle Bruno

The participation of international buyers and exhibitors in US-based trade shows adds a level of complexity to the planning and execution of the event. Here is a list of online resources to help international trade show organizers navigate the process.

Consultants can fill a much-needed role on the trade show team. They possess specialized expertise in recruiting international attendees and exhibitors, selecting overseas partners, or making connections with venues, trade associations and government officials. Two US-based firms with this knowledge are [Creative-Expos.com](#) and [Global Event Strategies](#).

Embassies and Consulates can provide a wide variety of assistance to US trade show organizers from visas to commercial support. [The US Department of State Website](#) is a handy resource for locating offices around the world.

The **International Buyer Program** is a way for US organizers to obtain support for their foreign attendees. [Global View Notes](#) previously described the program: "As part of the package, Commercial Service

trade specialists around the world assist buyers with registering for the show, locating products, setting up meetings, arranging hotel and travel packages, and helping with VISA application procedures when necessary."

Foreign visitors, except those from the 36 countries in the Visa Waiver Program, need **visas** to enter the US. The [US Department of State Website](#) details the requirements. The CEIR Report, "[The Economic Impact of International Non-Participation in the Exhibition Industry Due to US Visa Issues](#)," offers a breakdown of the opportunities and obstacles of international buyer participation. The paper also offers recommendations and resources for show organizers.

Foreign exhibitors often need assistance understanding the differences in booth size (3 x 3 meters vs. 10 x 10 feet) or drayage charges based on pounds instead of kilos. An online [conversion guide for weights and measures](#) can be helpful during communication with exhibitor prospects, as a guide for explaining invoices, or for placing conversions in the exhibitor manual.

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Webinars, Skype, and instant messaging applications have reduced the cost and increased the volume of international communication. And, because it's easier to “talk” with customers and prospects, as well as overseas offices and partners, **time differences** play an even larger role. A Website that helps organizers ascertain the **time difference** when scheduling a call can enhance the communication process.

Counterpart trade associations—those in the same vertical market segment—can be excellent resources for finding partners and prospects, however, when those organizations are unknown, one good resource for getting general information is other **associations representing the trade show industry** in other regions of the world. UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has some excellent links to **national and international associations** related to the exhibition industry.

Although most European visitors speak English, the influx of visitors from Asia, India, and traditionally underdeveloped regions has increased the demand for **interpreters and translators** (including simultaneous translation) to accommodate non-English speaking buyers and exhibitors. A number of companies have emerged in this specialized field including **Universe Language Solutions**, **Transphoto**, and **Interprenet**.

International **PR Firms** can support audience promotion efforts, arrange media tours, and place advertising in local publications. Two of the best resources for locating specific firms are the **International Public Relations Association** and the **Public Relations Society of America**.

Global **newswires** that cater to business can help trade show organizers promote their shows overseas. **PRNewswire** is well known, but there are other services available, such as **Business Wire**, and **Marketwire**. **Mondotimes** is a Website that lists major media outlets—newspapers, TV stations, and news agencies—across the globe.

In an international exhibition, foreign exhibitors and attendees are part of the fabric of the event. Their needs and preferences should be considered when planning meals, entertainment, and seating arrangements. **Etiquette consultants** can be extremely helpful in designing an event that is “globally neutral.” Some well-known companies familiar with meetings and exhibitions include **Professional Savvy**, **The Etiquette Advocate**, and **The Develey International Group**.

The **National Export Initiative** (NEI) was designed by the Obama Administration to double the level of American exports over the subsequent five years. Some of the resources available on the **export.gov** Website can help international exhibition organizers identify export markets and potential buyers and obtain the contact information of US Commercial diplomats.

Online directories for international trade shows can provide US organizers with insight on the types of trade shows in which they can exhibit (to promote their US show) or attend (to understand the structure of overseas markets and plan the US show accordingly). Some of the popular directories include **TSNN**, **m+a Expo Database**, and **Exhibitions.co.uk**.

International exhibitors require the specialized shipping services provided by firms with expertise in **international exhibition transportation** and US Customs. **Rogers Worldwide** is one of a handful of companies with the knowledge and experience to provide these services. Global View Notes featured an article titled, “**Freight Forwarders, Customs Brokers and Why You Might Want One for Your Show**,” that provides helpful information on how forwarders can contribute to the success of the show.

Planning and executing an international trade show isn't as easy as surfing the Web and pressing a button, however, Websites and online directories can be a great place to start and stay updated on the issues that are relevant to the show. The real help comes from experienced experts. Luckily, they too are only a click away.

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