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Notes



International Exhibiting Tips Gleaned from the Top Blogs on Trade and Trade Shows

By Michelle Bruno

Although lots of U.S. companies exhibit in overseas trade shows, there are scant online resources dedicated to the issues of specific interest to international exhibitors. Nevertheless, there are a few great blogs that would be a nice addition to any library on international trade and trade shows. Below is a summary of the exhibiting advice available online.

A post on [Valerie Antoinette's Blog](#) by cross-cultural consultant and trainer, Valerie Berset-Price, lists several excellent points about research, language and cultural sensitivity that exhibitors should pay attention to:

- 1** Research the show before contracting a booth space by looking for competitors (companies often list the trade shows they will exhibit in on their websites) and reviewing the show demographics (available from the event organizer).
- 2** Translate brochures, business cards and other materials into the local language (Europe is

often the exception to the rule) and use interpreters who speak the local language to help communication in the booth.

- 3** Avoid colors and symbolism—from business cards to booth graphics—that could be regarded as offensive to attendees.
- 4** Design booths around gestures of hospitality by including areas for food and beverage or private meetings with pre-invited prospects.

[Berset-Price's blog](#) on The Huffington Post website offers some additional insight on doing business internationally. One post in particular examined the difficulty associated with doing business in the People's Republic of China:

- 5** Work with an experienced partner who has established "connections" in China. "China is not for first timers. China is a place where only savvy international businesspersons should consider dealing. Getting lost and confused is easily done in China, and the cost is steep," Berset-Price writes.

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6 Consider other countries (instead of China) where “a hungry new middle class is in the making and where U.S. products, if tweaked to fit the local taste and requirements, might be of interest: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam,” she advises.

The Trade Show Daily blog from Messe Düsseldorf North America posted an article on frequently asked questions about exhibiting in Düsseldorf. The post is a primer to help new-to-market exhibitors navigate German trade fairs:

- 7** Bring transformers to connect 110/120 Volt appliances to 220/230 Volt electrical outlets.
- 8** Use exhibitor badges for entrance to the fairgrounds and to access public transportation.
- 9** Avoid using pop-up displays and opt for modular system (hard wall) packages instead.
- 10** Bring copies of documentation for services purchased, equipment rented and freight shipped to the show.
- 11** Pay for all show services in advance or risk not having services performed.

Exhibitor Magazine has published a very informative online **International Exhibiting Guide** complete with tips on exhibiting in a number of countries and cities from China to Mexico and New Delhi to Toronto. The guide is full of interesting tips:

- 12** In China, request velour carpet and padding to avoid the standard issue (thin) needle-punch option.
- 13** In India, avoid giveaways made of leather.
- 14** In Brazil, (because labor is inexpensive and quality may vary widely) allow plenty of time for booth construction when using local labor.

15 In Spain, print brochures in English to cater to all Europeans in attendance. English is the accepted language for business across Europe.

16 In the U.A.E., avoid serving alcohol of any kind in the exhibit space.

17 In Mexico, plan for a long day. Show hours often begin in the early afternoon and end at 9:00 p.m.

All companies have to do sufficient market research to determine whether their products and services are in demand and if the degree of difficulty of doing business in a country warrants consideration. For trade and export information, there are a number of excellent blogs maintained by the US government:

- **Tradeology**, the official blog of the International Trade Administration, is a wealth of information on exporting.
- **Global Reach** from the Foreign Trade Division of the U.S. Census Bureau is an excellent resource on foreign trade data and regulations.

Once the decision to exhibit is made and the competitive research has been completed, **Trade Show News Network** is a comprehensive resource for locating international trade shows. Its news section often includes articles on international trade shows.

Most of the advice available online is straight forward and easily obtained from a number of sources. Nevertheless, it’s advisable to ask companies (show management, exhibit houses and freight forwarders) accustomed to working in the venues, countries and regions where shows are taking place for advice on work practices, regulations and cultural nuances that could make exhibiting there a painful experience.

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