

32 Ways to Stretch Your Exhibiting Dollar

By Jefferson Davis

When you compare the cost of putting a rep face to face with a customer or prospect in the field with the cost at a tradeshow, tradeshows are an extremely cost-effective channel. That being said, many exhibit managers are under pressure to do more with less. Below is a collection of 32 cost-savings practices. Cross out the ones you are using and put a checkmark by the ones you plan to use—and plan now to get more bang for your tradeshow buck!



- Membership has its advantages: Join the association
- Reuse, refurbish, or extend the life of your exhibit
- Evaluate renting versus owning your exhibit—you can save a lot here
- Replace your exhibit with a lighter-weight, easier-to-set-up/tear-down exhibit
- Get distribution-channel partners to invest in the show with you
- Take advantage of all show-vendor deadlines and discounts
- Negotiate everything
- Book travel early
- Be sure to use the show's official hotels as they have negotiated group pricing
- Consolidate freight shipments
- Avoid rush charges by planning ahead
- Ship to the advance warehouse
- Ship small, lightweight, carry-in items to the hotel
- Store exhibit properties in your most-exhibited show city
- Negotiate volume shipping/freight contracts—go out to bid
- Buy reusable crates
- Have freight reweighed before return shipping
- Right size your exhibit—a complex topic—call me at 800-700-6174
- Evaluate the viability of a virtual product presentation
- Send fewer people—only those who need to be there
- Bring your own cleaning supplies
- Bring your own trash cans and liners
- Bring your own cordless vacuum
- Bring your own surge-suppressor power strips and flat extension cords
- Send less literature—print on demand
- Create a roommate-lodging program
- Dine with pre-set meals
- Save money on giveaways by using them properly
- Evaluate owning versus renting your lead-retrieval system
- Be sure all leads are followed up
- Audit your post-show bills
- Measure and report savings and ROI, and you may not have to reduce costs after all.

Jefferson Davis, President of Competitive Edge is known as the "Tradeshow Turnaround Artist". Since 1991, his consulting and training services have helped clients improve their tradeshow performance and results.