

The True Cost of Exhibit Ownership

We break it down so you don't get blindsided by hidden charges and unforeseen fees.

-- Linda Armstrong --

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The True Cost of Exhibit Ownership

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Whether you're buying boats or booths, buyers' remorse is a common side effect. While both can certainly deliver their own kind of ROI — be it fun and sun or leads and sales — they're far from inexpensive. Plus, boaters and exhibitors assume that once they've made their initial investments, it's smooth sailing from there. But that's when unexpected ancillary costs, surprise expenditures, and ongoing maintenance and storage costs can capsize your budget.

With boats you've got everything from anchors and life jackets to bumper buoys and slip fees. With booths there's everything from furniture rental and lighting to pull-and-prepare charges

and storage. Before you know it, your yearly expenses are double or triple what you expected, and you're left wondering how all of these extra charges snuck up on you.

However, the good news, at least for exhibit buyers, is that buyers' remorse is easily avoided. All you need is a basic understanding of exhibiting costs. And that means all of the costs — not just those in your original purchase agreement — from I&D supervision to off-floor storage.

To help you get a handle on all of your exhibiting expenses, EXHIBITOR teamed up with Denver-based Condit Exhibits to create this cost analysis for a hypothetical 20-by-20-foot custom

exhibit. The detailed analysis provides a comprehensive list of potential expenses as well as cost estimates to assist you with your own budget.

The form at the right also serves as a worksheet that can be adapted to almost any program. Simply download it at www.ExhibitorWebLinks.com and input your own budget estimates plus any additional expenses specific to your program.

Stocked with a bit of pre-purchase knowledge and cost estimates, you'll sail around hidden budget busters and bypass buyers' remorse. **E**

By Linda Armstrong. Questions or comments? Email editorial@exhibitor magazine.com.

Bona-Fide Booth Costs

The form provides a line-item breakdown for everything from crates and carpet to I&D and drayage. The estimates represent yearly costs based on the same scenario: A Denver-based exhibitor has purchased a new 20-by-20-foot booth for use at 10 shows per year (with shows averaging three days in length). The booth is installed and dismantled on straight-time labor hours, no late-order penalties are assessed, and the exhibitor rents furniture and equipment at each show. The booth ships via the cheapest shipment options available and travels an average of 3,000 miles roundtrip for each show. To view cost estimates for a 10-by-10-foot booth, visit www.ExhibitorWebLinks.com.

LINE-ITEM COST ANALYSIS FOR A 20-BY-20-FOOT EXHIBIT

DESIGN/FABRICATION		ELECTRICAL/AUDIOVISUAL	
Technical drawings/setup drawings/CNC programming	\$7,500	Lighting (purchase of 20 light fixtures and replacement of bulbs for each show)	\$5,750 - \$6,000
Exhibit design	\$5,100	Sound system rental (wireless microphone, two speakers, four-channel mixer)	\$1,000
Project management (typical estimate of fabrication, material ordering, client interaction, and internal project coordination)	\$2,800	Computer purchase	\$2,500
Fabrication of display components and shipping crates	\$54,000	Plasma/LCD purchase	\$7,500
Carpet and pad	\$2,750	Lead-scanner rental	\$3,000 - \$4,300
Exhibit preview (includes setup and dismantle for pre-use viewing)	\$4,350	Internet connection	\$15,000
Structural approval certificate	\$700	Electrical (four 1,000-watt drops)	\$10,000 - \$12,000
Graphics (includes pre-flight time and coordination for two, double-sided mural graphics, along with one set of dimensional letters)	\$8,900	SUBTOTAL	\$44,750 - \$48,300
SUBTOTAL	\$86,100	LOGISTICS	
PRE-SHOW PREPARATION		Floor space	\$93,960 - \$100,000
Technical drawings/setup drawings	\$5,000	Transportation (3,000 miles roundtrip)	\$45,000 - \$55,000
Project management (typical estimate of show services, pull/prep, client interaction, and internal coordination of project)	\$3,500	Drayage	\$40,000 - \$50,000
Gang-box supplies (garbage can, electrical strips, cleaning supplies, pens, tape, staplers, labels, duct tape, first-aid kit, Velcro, etc.)	\$2,000	Show supervision	\$15,000 - \$20,000
SUBTOTAL	\$10,500	I&D (three men, 16 hours installation and 8 hours dismantle; includes rental of 16-foot ladders)	\$40,000 - \$44,000
MANAGEMENT		Booth cleaning	\$2,750
Storage (per year/cubic foot based on crates and two rolls of carpet and padding)	\$3,500	SUBTOTAL	\$236,710 - \$271,750
Maintenance (yearly replacement parts, cleaning, minor refurb, etc.)	\$5,000 - \$6,000	MISCELLANEOUS	
Graphics changes (includes pre-flight time and coordination for reproducing all graphics once a year to accommodate company or product changes)	\$8,900	Floral	\$1,000 - \$2,000
Return inspections (includes opening crates, inspecting for any visible damage, and returning to storage)	\$4,000	Literature stand and furniture rental (five bar stools)	\$6,000 - \$9,000
SUBTOTAL	\$21,400 - \$22,400	Attendee refreshments (coffee/water service purchased from show management)	\$5,000 - \$8,000
		Staff apparel (includes nine shirts for three people and nine replacement shirts halfway through the year)	\$750 - \$1,000
		Presentation talent (includes hired talent performing a 15- to 30-minute presentation several times each day)	\$15,000 - \$18,000
		SUBTOTAL	\$27,750 - \$38,000

TOTAL ANNUAL COST OF BOOTH: \$21,400 - \$22,400



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