

Introduction to International Exhibiting

Part 1



American companies looking to expand their market share are increasing participation in overseas trade shows. An exhibit managers' first experience with foreign shows may be overwhelming. This four part series will share information to reduce stress in planning for international exhibits and events. Don't worry, there won't be any pop tests as we explore what you need to know to get started working abroad.

It may seem like a foreign language but it's just the words that are different when exhibiting overseas. Here is a list to start increasing your international trade show vocabulary:



- Stand – the booth or exhibit is a stand
- Mains connection – actual power connection to a switchboard for electrical in your stand
- Steps – is a ladder
- Perspex – is acrylic or plexiglass
- Needle punch carpet – in most countries, this is VERY thin floor covering many Americans would find so thin, they would not consider it carpet
- Underlay – padding, which is not available in all countries
- VAT/GST – this is sales tax, VAT is Value Added Tax or Goods Services Tax.
- Polystyrene – Styrofoam
- Sticker or foil cut– computer cut vinyl letter or logo
- Foil floor covering– visqueen –like material as a protection for the flooring used during install
- Flying sign – hanging sign
- Aluminum – the word is the same but sounds like al-u-min-ium
- Platform – many exhibits are built on a raised platform floor
- Fascia - header
- Space only/shell scheme –the contract for space will be for space only or shell scheme stand



Paper sizes – in the U.S. standard paper/brochure sizes are 8-1/2 x 11 or A4 A44....when ordering graphics or brochure/literature holders, these are standard measurement sizes for printed materials
<http://goo.gl/D3qNxQ>



Global Exhibit Management is a full service exhibit and event management company with capabilities throughout Europe, Asia, South America, Australia, South Africa, UAE and North America. An established international network of industry professionals gives clients access to premier service around the world.



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Part 2



This is the second part of the series introducing American exhibit managers to international trade show management. In the last edition, the terminology differences were outlined to start and this blog will explore the differences and options for overseas exhibiting. When purchasing exhibit space, the choices are raw space or space only, shell scheme or participating in a pavilion. Here is more information on the choices and what to expect.



Space only/raw space:

Raw space is exactly what it sounds like, space only. There will be no pipe and drape to separate exhibit spaces that is typical in American trade shows. There is no “line of sight” rule overseas so plan on building full height walls from the back of the space out to the aisle. If your space is in-line and you plan on taking a pop-up for your backwall, keep in mind the left and right walls of the neighboring stands may have unfinished walls facing into your space so don't forget to plan for full height sidewalls to the aisle.

Shell Scheme:

Shell scheme space will provide a basic hardwall exhibit. The organizer will outline what is included in the space in the contract, some may include options to upgrade to a package that would include more accessories. A typical shell scheme stand will include the hard walls, fascia with your company name, carpet, some lights, power outlet, reception desk, table and chairs. Be sure to read the rules or guidelines for a shell scheme stand about hanging graphics or attaching anything to the walls. Upgraded options may include a literature stand, shelving, display cases and extra furniture.

Pavilions:

Pavilions are organized by country so the exhibit space would be included in United States pavilion. In some larger shows, the pavilion may also be product or service specific. Pavilion spaces are similar to a shell scheme space that will include carpet, furniture, lights, power socket and fascia with company identification.



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Part 3

In part three of this series, you will learn about different type exhibits available for your international trade show program. It is more common for American exhibitors to own properties for trade shows in the U.S. but may need to rethink this practice when exhibiting overseas.

Several options are available from custom fabrication, modular, system or “build and burn”, renting or owning should be considered when planning an international exhibit program.



Design:

No matter where in the world you are exhibiting, design is important to integrate with your marketing objectives. What do you want attendees to learn about your company? What type of experience do you want them to have, interactive, theatre presentation? Instead of having a badge scanned so information can be sent later, visitors to your stand are interested in building a relationship, learning about your company. For this reason, it is important to have some type of meeting area with seating, either informal or private conference room. If you want the same stand design for global branding, be sure to discuss this with your builder to determine what method will be best – system, custom or hybrid of both. When discussing the options with the builder, be sure to take into consideration how many shows will be done because in most cases, rental will be more cost effective than owning and storing.

Custom Fabrication:

The design is complete, either duplicating an existing design for branding consistency or adapting a style to blend in with the country where your show is located. Custom fabrication is possible in many countries but materials may vary in availability and price different from U.S materials so be flexible and ask the builder for recommendations. Laminate can be expensive while painted surfaces look good and sometimes considerably less expensive.



System:

System built stands are very popular around the world for a number of reasons. A system exhibit breaks down for easy transport and handling. Using system structures give great flexibility in design elements. Feature elements can be created with special lighting and graphics so your stand will not look like a shell scheme structure. With tension fabrics, the framework is scarcely visible at all with some systems.

Build and burn:

Contrary to the way it sounds, this choice is built for single use then discarded, not necessarily “burned”. This type of stand would be for single use at a show so it would most likely be built using painted finishes instead of laminate.

Rent or Purchase:

For companies that exhibit several times a year in the U.S., owning and storing an exhibit in the U.S. can be cost effective but may not be the best choice overseas. For example, storing an exhibit in Europe can be expensive due to lack of storage space. In some Asian countries the exhibit would best be stored in a climate controlled environment, which can be costly. If your company will exhibit once or twice a year throughout Europe, or other countries, then renting could be the best option.

This information will help you make informed decision as to what is best for your company’s international trade show program. In the next edition, you will learn about shipping options and taxes.



Introduction to International Exhibiting

Part 4

In part four of this series, an introduction to international exhibiting, you will learn more about shipping options and overseas tax. Initially you may not think these two services have very much in common but soon you will see the correlation.

As in America, goods and services overseas can be subject to sales taxes. The good news is that you can reclaim VAT (Value Added Tax) and GST (Goods Services Tax) from Europe as well Asian countries and Australia. There are companies that can help file the claim to get the tax money returned. Some large internationals shows in Europe will provide VAT refund service so be sure to check the exhibitor manual so see if that is available. Take time to learn what the requirements are from professionals to ensure you maximize your refund. Original invoices are required to file for refunds. When you receive quotes from stand builders, be sure to inquire if your project will be charged VAT or GST taxes as this will impact your costs with tax rates ranging from 10 to 27% in Europe. The timeframe to file varies between countries as seen in the chart below:

- British - December 31st, for a reporting period of the previous July 1 through June 30th
- Other European Countries - June 30th, for expenses dated during the previous calendar year
- South Korea - June 30th, for expenses dated during the previous calendar year
- Japan - Within 2 months of the claimant's fiscal year end



Whenever you are shipping products or exhibit properties overseas, always be sure to use an exhibition freight company. Although large companies have in-house shipping departments, overseas trade show freight is different because of documentation and import/export guidelines. Working with an exhibition freight company will ensure your shipment travels, clears Customs using the most efficient import methods through to local delivery.

International exhibition shipping agents can recommend the best method of transport and importation. If you have a shipment that is traveling throughout multiple countries, a Carnet is a document that will expedite Customs clearance. Please keep in mind though that a shipment traveling on a Carnet must remain exactly as documented from start to finish, you cannot make ANY changes. For exhibit materials going to a show, ask about a Temporary Import Bond (TIB) that will have a lower cost for duty/taxes based on a percentage of the declared value. This is designed for shipments that will be imported for a short time, such as a trade show or special event, then exporting when the event is complete.

It is estimated by European tax offices, that 10% of the shipments of goods into Europe are being assessed import/customs VAT in error, due to incorrect or incomplete documentation. It is very difficult to receive a refund of this VAT, especially when an incorrect VAT identification number was associated with the transaction. This is another reason why working with exhibition freight specialist is so important. Not only will the shipment cost more than necessary if documentation is not done correctly, reclaiming excessive VAT may not be possible.



We hope this series has provided information to increase your comfort level when implementing an international trade show program or special event. The vocabulary lesson, learning about the different types of exhibits and options, tax and shipping overview should give you confidence to help your company increase their market share. For all your international trade shows and events at email us at info@globalexhibitmanagement.com or call 817-370-1400.

