

Freeman¹

Evolving the exhibitor experience

Exhibitor checklists & considerations for a post-COVID-19 world

Visit us at freeman.com

© 2021 Freeman. All Rights Reserved.



Exhibitor

Strategy checklist

- ☑ Talk to the show organizer to see what they are planning for the show. Everything is changing rapidly, so it will make sense to align with them for expectations.
- ☑ Analyze the show's demographics. What are attendees' travel restrictions? Are there typically many international attendees? Think through how you can still reach all of your audiences even if they can't be in attendance. You may decide that digital plays a much bigger role in your event strategy than in past shows.
- ☑ Think of different things you can measure. Think quality over quantity, and educate those in the C-suite on this shift. Consider counting the number of meetings with key decision-makers or the number of follow-up meetings made.
- ☑ Each city and state is different. Check with local, state, and CDC guidelines to ensure you know the health and safety regulations.
- ☑ Face to face has depth and virtual has reach. Set some digital goals. Amount of traffic to a show landing page is a start, but it's the repeated online engagement that counts. Find ways to build out that experience online to make truly engaging content. Online appointments, whitepapers, and chatbots are a great place to start.
- ☑ Has your booth location changed? Talk to the show organizer to see how they plan to handle traffic flow. What side of the booth will see the most organic traffic?
- ☑ Has your booth size changed? If your booth size has been reduced, review your successes from past shows. What presentations, demos, or meetings were most successful? You may need to tap into one of those in your booth design to get the most out of your space while still meeting your goals.
- ☑ Establish your hybrid event goals and objectives.

Exhibitor **Show-specific offerings**



- ☑ Utilize show matchmaking and networking opportunities. Have your booth staff split up the show floor — tell attendees where they can meet you.
- ☑ Connect with show organizers prior to the event to discuss how you might engage the most attendees.
- ☑ Utilize the show's app as much as possible. If attendees can use the event application to search the show floor using keywords, guests will be more efficient with their time and how they get from place to place.
- ☑ Check sponsorship opportunities and join in everything from pre-event communications to online elements to the on-site experiences. Consider promotional items and sponsorships that keep attendees safe, such as hand sanitizer, face masks, or hand-washing stations. These items send a message that you not only want your attendees' business but that you're interested in their protection as well.
- ☑ See how crowd control is being handled and use this to see where attendees might be. Use beacons for crowd control and push notifications. This creates an easy snapshot of where attendees are. Make sure you are up to date with app technologies.

Exhibitor

Pre-show marketing checklist

- ☑ Ensure your tone and message are authentic, honest, open, and transparent.
- ☑ Focus on personalizing your messaging to create more intimate connections. Recognize that many attendees will be balancing their desire to connect within their industry with their fear of crowds.
- ☑ Develop a show landing page to share show details, including a content schedule and meeting calendar. When will attendees be able to hear presentations? Allow them to sign up before the show for presentations and meetings.
- ☑ Share your schedule with attendees prior to the show. Add in visible cleaning times before and after presentations or meetings to reassure attendees that you're taking their health and safety seriously.
- ☑ Consider a hybrid event. If attendees can't attend in person, make the effort to connect with them virtually. Coordinated with in-person meetings and virtual presentations, a successful hybrid event blends these elements seamlessly to expand reach and engagement.

Exhibitor

Booth staff & attendee engagements



- ☑ Prior to the show, select qualified booth staff. Be mindful that you may be talking to key decision-makers who want to talk to subject matter experts, not all sales staff.
- ☑ Set meetings in advance. Fewer booth staff may be required, and this will allow you to send the right subject matter experts.
- ☑ Booth staff need to be trained on the social distancing and health and safety rules and accommodations. Treat all attendees with respect and assume that none of them are entirely comfortable in the event environment.
- ☑ Introduce a custom greeting for just your attendees that replaces the handshake.
- ☑ Have greeters to explain the new safety protocols
- ☑ Assign a dedicated team member who is identified as a cleaning/sanitization crew. Have staff on standby to wipe/sanitize key areas.
- ☑ Enable digital business card exchanges.
- ☑ Provide packaged hand wipes for attendee use.

Exhibitor

Booth space overview checklist

Owned booth properties

- ✓ Get creative with your booth space layout. Changing it to maximize your space and/or sectioning it for maximum protection will be key.
- ✓ If your booth location changed, talk with the show organizer about one-way aisles and adjust your layout to ensure you are visible and approachable to attendees.
- ✓ Consider adding sneeze guards to existing reception desks.
- ✓ After setup, ensure that all properties are wiped down. If you are not setting your exhibit up, ask for your vendors' health and safety protocols.
- ✓ Shows may require approval of booth layouts, so talk to them as early as possible.

Booth rentals

- ✓ Consider modular rentals to change orientation and size as needed. Flexibility will be key.
- ✓ After setup, ensure that all properties are wiped down. If you are not setting your exhibit up, ask for your vendors' health and safety protocols.
- ✓ Shows may require approval of booth layouts, so talk to them as early as possible.

Materials/cleaning

- ✓ Rethink design for high-touch areas and eliminate surfaces that need cleaning, such as knobs on cabinets and counters. Have antibacterial surface wipes for any touchable areas visible and clean frequently.
- ✓ Consider scheduling time for cleaning — and sharing that cleaning schedule with attendees.
- ✓ Use hard surfaces that are easier to wipe down (laminates) for wall and counter infills.
- ✓ Design acrylic walls/shields and sneeze guards where applicable (reception counters, demo stations).
- ✓ Eliminate soft furnishings to make the cleaning and disinfecting process more efficient, and provide physically distanced single seats.
- ✓ Design hand sanitation stations at the entrance and throughout the space. Consider the best ways to help them stand out while becoming a part of the design.
- ✓ Reassure your team that Freeman is creating a safe exhibiting environment. [Click here to learn about Freeman's focus on health and safety.](#)

Traffic flow & in-booth social distancing

- ✓ Define a clear path through your exhibit space, creating a one-way journey throughout with controlled entrance and exit points.
- ✓ Consider floor decals or carpet inlays to designate social distancing areas or traffic flow.
- ✓ Use dividers or greenery to guide flow through booth.
- ✓ Place signage to gently remind attendees of social distancing throughout the booth.

Reception area

- ✓ Protect workers and attendees with transparent barriers where appropriate. Use sneeze guard protections and other barriers for the reception area where technology-based distancing isn't feasible.
- ✓ Consider touchless lead retrieval when attendees arrive at the booth. If an attendee arrives early, have waiting protocols ready.

Demo/presentation area

- ✓ Rethink furniture layouts. Replace shared seating like sofas and loveseats with individual club chairs carefully spaced and optimized for conversations.

- ✓ Schedule preset meetings to give one-on-one demos to attendees.
- ✓ Display presentations on large screens or LED walls for group demos and allow for hybrid meetings, accommodating any attendees who may want to watch on their own phone or tablet or cannot attend because of travel restrictions.
- ✓ Consider chatbot and AI-driven service. Voice-based interactive systems provide a quick and cost-effective way to answer questions and request services.
- ✓ Allow demonstrations that provide more viewing opportunities by attendees by using second screens.
- ✓ Create QR/barcodes on personal hand-held devices for sharing content or viewing product information.

Meeting rooms

- ✓ Design semi-private meeting spaces with high clear/frosted acrylic walls and no ceiling.
- ✓ Keep doorways and entryways open for a touch-free experience.
- ✓ Give attendees a specific meeting time and stagger those times for cleaning in the interim.





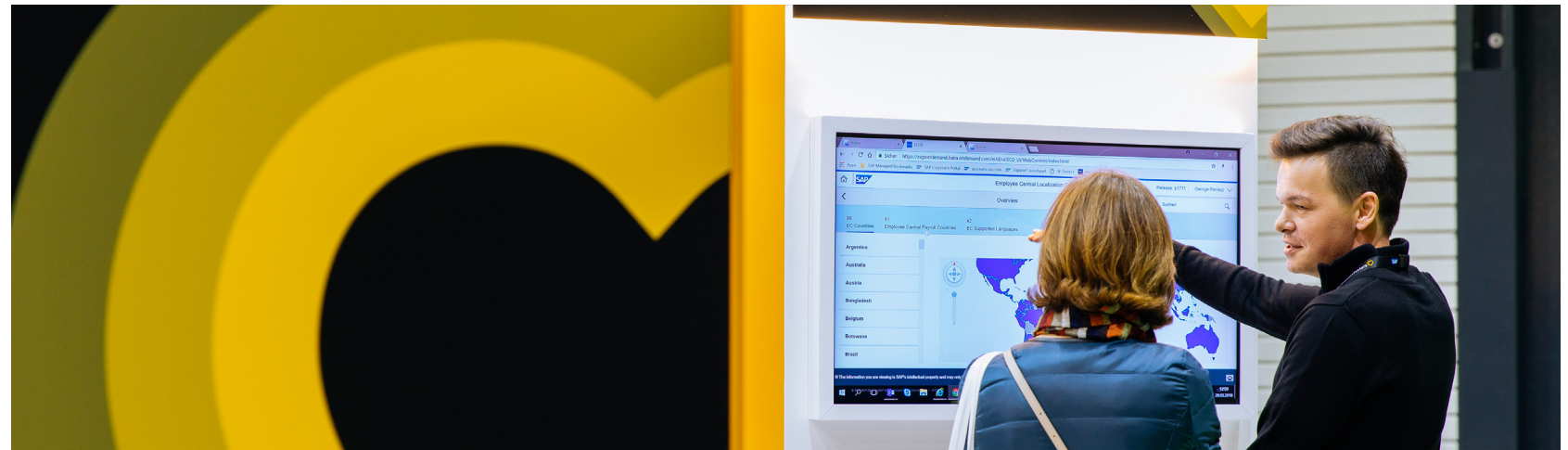
Graphic considerations

- ☑ Graphics are key for wayfinding. Design these graphics not only so they look clean, but also so they give clear visual guidance through the space.
- ☑ Use crisp lines, symmetrical designs, and white backgrounds to give a clean look.
- ☑ Use easy-to-clean graphic materials such as laminates.
- ☑ Use large LED walls for impactful storytelling.
- ☑ Don't forget that large graphics explaining your products and services continue to be important to attract and engage attendees. This is true no matter your booth size.

Promotional products

- ☑ Consider packaged hand wipes to give to attendees when they exit the booth.
- ☑ Provide individually wrapped items or pre-packaged grab-and-go bags.
- ☑ Send giveaways prior to the show to key prospects or clients so that they'll know what to expect.
- ☑ Send packages after the show to your quality leads.

Exhibitor **Content checklist**



- ☑ Content becomes entirely digital and hands-free. Use an eco-friendly alternative to printed programs and handouts. Some tools feature tracking and do-it-yourself options where you can share contact information.
- ☑ Maximize the number of attendees you can visit with through shorter, tighter presentations with a focus on a single message. Social media and other online forums have also trained people that information comes in bite-sized bits.
- ☑ Test **everything** before the start of the show.
- ☑ Create QR/barcodes on personal hand-held devices for sharing content or viewing product information.
- ☑ Test and choose the right tech for your hybrid content. Livestreams, webinars, virtual conferences — each has unique benefits for your attendees.
- ☑ Make all of your content on demand and in bite-sized pieces. Allow attendees and virtual attendees alike to engage after the show.
- ☑ Where appropriate, inject humor and interaction into content. Understand that your job may have evolved from simply delivering information to entertaining your audience to keep them engaged. Keep it fresh, fast-moving, and fun. Empower attendees by encouraging them to use their own mobile devices to interact with both your live and digital experiences.

Freeman¹

What's next?

Contact Us

