

Trade Show Timeline Plan



📍 Strategy and Booth Booking



It's always best to plan ahead when preparing for a trade show. While it's still early, this is the perfect time to lock in your event space, start setting goals, and gather your team to strategize for the big event.

Tasks this week:

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- ✓ Choose the right trade show for your brand. Before you register as an exhibitor, research about the audience, past attendance, potential ROI, and participating competitors.
 - ✓ Secure booth location and size early. Prime spots get taken fast, so the sooner you reserve, the better the placement and pricing. Check the floor plan to know which areas have high foot traffic so you can be easily seen.
 - ✓ Define your goals and top priorities: Is it to generate leads, get more sales, establish connections, or boost brand visibility?
 - ✓ Set your budget by category: Booth rental, print materials, swag, travel, and lodging. Doing this will help you save time and prepare you for what to expect when it comes to expenses. It's also better to overestimate your budget than not have enough funds.
 - ✓ Read venue rules about height limits, electric access, freight rules, artwork specs, deadlines, and other booth regulations.
 - ✓ Create a project folder or spreadsheet to track deadlines. Trade show preparations can be fast-paced, and following a timeline ensures that you won't overlook important tasks.
 - ✓ Begin asset inventory: Reuse vs. Reorder. If you're not a first timer, find out which marketing essentials from your previous trade show can be reused and which ones need to be reordered to save on costs.

 *Tip:* Check social media hashtags or ask previous exhibitors to get an idea on what worked and what didn't at the trade show.

5 Design and Planning



By this week, your creative gears should be turning. Think of your booth design and print materials. This is also where you'll finalize messaging and any giveaways.

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Define your booth look and feel. Do you want a minimalist look, something budget-friendly, or a premium booth? Think of what kind of messaging and impression you want to convey to your audience.
- ✓ Sketch the layout zones and plan where everything will go like the back wall, table, floor, and giveaway area.
- ✓ Create a print asset list to get quotes from print providers.
- ✓ Start designing your trade show products: Backdrop, banners, table cover, flyers, postcards, business cards, pop-up displays, QR signs — everything you need to make your booth stand out
- ✓ Plan your branded giveaways. Choose practical and memorable items like tote bags, sticker sheets, pens, notepads, and custom apparel.
- ✓ Decide on a pre-show outreach like e-mail blasts, direct mail campaigns, or social media announcements. This way, you can evoke excitement in your target audience

 *Tip: If you're unsure how to get started with your design, choose a printing company like UPrinting. We offer a selection of design templates that you can use for your print marketing materials.*

Order Print Materials



Now that your designs are done, it's time to print your trade show essentials. Ordering print materials by this week means avoiding rush fees or delays and having enough room for reprints.

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Order booth signage – Retractable banners, backdrops, step-and-repeat banners, foam board signs, tabletop signs.
- ✓ Place orders for print marketing materials – Flyers, brochures, booklets, rack cards, booklets, catalogs, and business cards.
- ✓ Order 6-ft branded table cover (fitted or stretch).
- ✓ Order floor decals or directionals (optional).
- ✓ Order promo giveaways like stickers, pens, notebooks, bags, drinkware.
- ✓ Order branded apparel like T-shirts, hats, or polos for your team for a professional look.

 *Tip: Bundle your orders to qualify for discounts. Don't forget to also consider the turnaround time of the print products and allow time for shipping.*

Confirm Logistics and Packing List



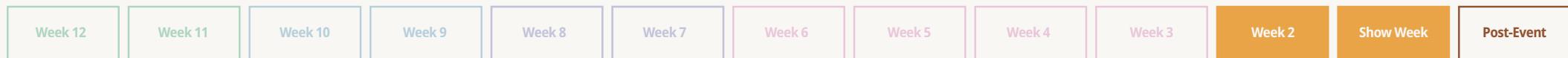
With materials on the way, now is the time to think about logistics. Finalize travel, booth shipments, hotel accommodations, and confirm who's doing what. Start your packing list to stay ahead of any last-minute scrambles.

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Decide if you'll build your booth yourself, hire help, or if you'll have all your items shipped.
- ✓ Confirm shipping address and delivery windows with the venue. Some venues have strict shipping policies, so make sure to check with the organizer before you start shipping items.
- ✓ Create your master packing list. Jot down everything you need for the event, from display items and print materials to tech and accessories.
- ✓ Prepare your setup kit. Include tape, zip ties, scissors, Velcro, charger, wipes, and trash bags.
- ✓ Book hotel, flights, car rental for the team. Opt for lodging that's near the venue to reduce stress.
- ✓ Finalize staffing schedule (daily booth coverage). Make sure to keep everyone in the loop when delegating tasks.
- ✓ Have a contingency plan. Print backup signage or setup instructions in case some things don't go according to plan.

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Ship, Prep, and Reconfirm



We're almost there! Ship your booth materials by this week and monitor your items' tracking numbers: Double-check checklists, meeting schedules, and booth setup essentials.

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Ship all booth gear (with tracking) to the venue, warehouse, or hotel.
- ✓ Confirm receipts with hotel/show services.
- ✓ Schedule meetings with your team to finalize tasks and presentations.
- ✓ Pack lead capture tools (tablet, clipboard, pens).
- ✓ Print copies of lead forms and pricing sheets.
- ✓ Verify booth number, electric service, carpet/flooring, and access times.
- ✓ Load USB/SD card with backup logos, product slides, and video loop.

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Setup and Go



Finally, it's D-day! It's time to shine because here's where all your planning will pay off. Once you've set up your booth and settled in, focus on interacting with attendees, collecting leads, and leaving a lasting impression

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Arrive early to the venue to unpack and set up the booth.
- ✓ Install backdrop, banners, table display, and prepare giveaways.
- ✓ Test electronics, lighting, signage alignment, booth flow, and visibility from the aisle.
- ✓ Place QR code and product signs at eye level.
- ✓ Wear branded apparel, stay engaged, and be approachable.
- ✓ Restock flyers and giveaways daily.
- ✓ Keep the booth clean, friendly, and on-brand.
- ✓ If you have time, walk around the show floor to check out your competitors, take note of trends, and think of possible collaboration opportunities.

 *Tip: Take photos/videos of booth setup and visitor engagement for post-show reference and for social media content.*

Follow Up and Evaluate



The show might be over, but it doesn't mean that the opportunities stop. Use this time to turn leads into results while you're still fresh in their minds.

Tasks this week:

- ✓ Export your lead list and tag them on social media.
- ✓ Send thank-you emails or special offers within 24-48 hours to keep your brand top of mind.
- ✓ Debrief your team and discuss what worked and what didn't.
- ✓ List products to restock or redesign.
- ✓ Save photos, print results, and booth layout for future use, and update your timeline for the next trade show.

 *Tip: Jot down what you need to improve or want to do again. Use these takeaways to prepare for your next event.*