



BOSTROM®

CONSULTING ■ OUTSOURCING ■ MANAGEMENT

An Introductory Guide to Developing an Exhibitor Prospectus

Bostrom Corporation

Chicago IL • Washington DC • Monterey CA

Introduction

The exhibitor prospectus is the cornerstone of any show's sales and marketing efforts. The prospectus needs to provide potential exhibitors with the important information necessary to evaluate your exhibition offering against their trade show marketing needs. The prospectus also provides basic operations information that will allow exhibitors to begin scheduling and managing exhibit-related arrangements prior to receiving the complete exhibitor service manual. And a well-designed prospectus will continue to serve exhibitors as a useful quick-reference throughout the show planning process.

Many shows do not achieve their full potential because show management never develops a prospectus that effectively represents the exhibition. Bostrom's goal in developing these introductory guidelines is to provide organizations with information that will help them evaluate their current print sales material. Naturally these guidelines are informational in nature and cannot insure the success of any exhibition. But this document can help you to evaluate your current exhibit marketing items and develop a clear, effective prospectus that conveys all necessary information to your potential exhibitors.

Prospectus Contents

General Rules of Thumb

- 👍 **Make it fit in.** Graphics, typefaces and type treatments should tie into your show's themes and your organization's image.
- 👍 **Make it "fax & e-mail friendly."** When a lead wants the prospectus faxed over, you'll want them to receive something legible. Watch out for very light-colored text, text on dark backgrounds or text in small point size. (Limiting the use of large areas of dark colors can also reduce fax time and long-distance charges.)
- 👍 **Make it the right length.** Some shows require a longer prospectus than others do. For example, in sectors where there is more competition among shows, greater detail might be required in order to demonstrate the value of your event over others. New exhibitions can also require more justification. You should evaluate your exhibition and target market, and determine the right amount of demographic data and sales text for your prospectus. In most cases, however, a four-page prospectus is sufficient.

Cover

The prospectus cover should quickly convey three important pieces of information about your exhibition:

1. Theme
2. Sponsoring Organization(s) and logos
3. Dates, Venue, City, Country

Prospectus Interior

The content of a typical prospectus interior can be divided into two categories: sales content and operations content. The layout and organization of each content area should follow a logical progression from general overview to detailed information.

Sales Content

Introductory Overview

The introductory overview is the primary sales narrative for the prospectus. It should provide, in inviting, clearly written prose, a description of the event, its content, and who will attend. The overview should also describe how exhibiting would help potential exhibitors meet their marketing goals. For example, does the conference bring together top-level executives, primary product users, or final decision-makers?

Benefits of Exhibiting

The introductory overview should segue into a description of the benefits companies receive by exhibiting at the exhibition. This information can be provided in a bulleted list written in active, result-oriented language.

Example:

- **Meet educators committed to excellence** – educators who attend are committed to excellence in education, and are always in search of new and innovative goods, services, and initiatives for change.
- **Connect with school district teams** – many attendees come as school district teams that include administrators, board members, and other key district decision-makers.
- **Utilize the most effective method of contacting decision-makers** – studies have proven that exhibitions are the number one source for purchasing information by decision-makers.
- **Reach a huge market** – take advantage of this opportunity to reach the people who influence the \$200 billion that school districts spend on teaching materials, maintenance and operation.

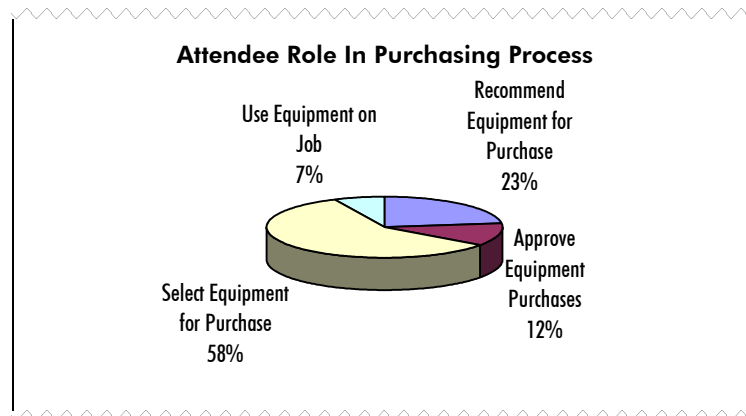
Attendee Profile

The prospectus should include a separate section that provides a summary description of who will attend the conference.

Because successful prospectuses provide the reader with quantitative data, the attendee profile section should include the total number of attendees. Ideally you should also select at least one attendee demographic and represent it with a graph. Examples of statistics that could be provided include: attendee's role in the purchasing cycle, organization's budget for the types of products displayed in the exhibition, or their objectives when visiting exhibits. If national or international representation is important to your event, geographical distribution statistics should be provided.

If you are not currently collecting these types of data, then you should develop an inventory of facts that you do know about your attendees. From this you can develop a set of positive statements about the attendees and include them in this section. And you should revise registration materials to begin collecting basic information about how your exhibition plays a part the product selection and purchasing cycles of your attendees.

Example:



Exhibitor Profile

Information on the types of companies exhibiting is also useful. In some cases it may also be useful to provide information on the number of exhibitors and the total net square feet of exhibits. If your show is experiencing strong growth, you can provide information on the number of exhibitors or net square feet over a span of years. This will provide a picture of your exhibition as dynamic, energetic, and continuing to enjoy the support of exhibitors...in short, a place where prospective exhibitors want to be.

Testimonials and Quotes

Laudatory quotes from exhibitors can reinforce a number of facts about your show, notably that it is successful for exhibitors, delivers the benefits listed and attendee profile described, and has the support of the industry or profession.

If at all possible, quotations should include the name, title, and company of the person who provided the quote. Anonymous quotations can be easily discarded as manufactured and are of little use. Quotations attributed to a known individual at a known organization, however, carry much more weight and serve as a useful endorsement of your event. Quote selection should also be considered. If you are trying to introduce or strengthen a new product sector to your exhibition, then you should try to obtain a quote from an exhibitor in that sector who has had a positive experience at your event. This will appear welcoming to others in the same sector.

In addition to exhibitor quotes, you should also include at least one testimonial from attendees who are important figures in the show's profession or industry, or who are employees of major industry organizations. Including this type of quote demonstrates the importance of the event to attendees, and can reflect the level and quality of visitors to the exhibit hall.

Depending on the length and layout of your prospectus, testimonial quotes should be distributed throughout the piece as sidebars or insets.

Recent Exhibitors

A list of recent exhibitors should be included. As a general rule, the list of recent exhibitors should only include exhibitors from the past three shows.

Description of Exhibit Package

This section should provide a detailed listing of all items of value that are included in the booth rental fee. This listing should not be limited to hardware items such as ID signs, pipe and drape backwalls and dividers, and aisle carpeting, but should include mailing lists, directory listings, free registrations for exhibit staff, VIP invitations, logo sheets or stickers, etc. While it is acceptable to list perimeter security as included in the rental fees, general utilities such as hall lighting and HVAC should not be listed.

If you plan to hold value-added events or traffic-builders, such as luncheons or receptions on the show floor, attendee/exhibitor welcome receptions after the show opening, or on-floor demonstration areas or seminars, then you should describe these events in detail. Describe them in language that will tell potential exhibitors how they will benefit.

Exhibit Space Agreement

Every prospectus should include an exhibitor contract, ideally as a separate piece. The contents of the exhibit space agreement are outside of the intended subject area of these guidelines.

Sales & Service Contact Information

A prospectus should have a text box with full contact information for the primary show manager (name, organization, address, telephone, fax, e-mail, and web site). If payment collection and processing is handled through a different organization, this should be indicated in the same box along with full contact information.

Opportunities for Additional Exposure

If you have developed additional opportunities for exposure that generate exhibition-related revenue, you should outline them in the prospectus and refer them to a specific contact for additional information.

Operations Content

Schedule of Events

Every prospectus should include a table listing the important events and times for each day of the move-in, the move-out, and the conference (if applicable). Events that are closed to exhibitors or require an additional registration fee should be indicated as such.

Floor Plan

Clearly it is important to include a floor plan in any prospectus so that exhibitors can get a sense of the size and layout of the exhibit hall, and can be made aware of other special areas (such as food stations or prize booths) that add attendee interest to areas of the floor.

All columns or other major line-of-sight obstructions should be indicated on the plan.

The floor plan should indicate booth numbers to facilitate the sales and service process.

General Service Contractor

Full contact information for the General Service Contractor (GSC) should be provided, along with a brief summary of the goods and services the GSC provides.

Facility Information

The name, address, and telephone number of the event facility should be provided, along with parking information if applicable.

Hotel and Travel Information

The prospectus should provide information on hotels where you have blocked rooms, including general rate information, cut-off dates and reservation telephone numbers.

Details of any airline discount offers should be provided, along with discount codes. If you are using a preferred travel agency, provide that contact information.

Other General Information

You should also provide any other information unique to your event that is important for exhibitors to be aware of. Naturally, this information varies from show to show, so you should use your own discretion in deciding what, if anything, you need to include.

Examples include dress code, airport shuttle services, or exhibitor education sessions.

About Bostrom Corporation

Bostrom Corporation has been providing service to non-profit organizations for over 70 years based on a simple mission:

To build successful organizations and enhance value for clients through trust, experience, personalized service and solutions.

Our history of stability, trust and success has developed a solid track record of helping organizations grow in size and scope. Since our founding Bostrom has continuously worked with trade associations. Our staff members are familiar with the particular issues of industry-based groups, including antitrust considerations. Our strategy, an optimal balance of people and systems, continues to keep us on the cutting edge of a new century.

Bostrom Exhibition Management Services

Bostrom staff has experience in working with a variety of shows in a number of different areas, including trade, professional, scientific, and medical groups. Bostrom manages exhibits within and separate from meetings.

Bostrom can provide full service (“turn-key”) trade show management, including the complete concept, design and development of the exhibit. We will conduct the marketing and sales of space, development of the prospect list, preparation and use of promotional materials, and negotiation and supervision of exhibit arrangements. Or if your needs are more specific, Bostrom can provide you with focused consulting services.

Here’s a short list of services Bostrom Corporation can provide to help you get the most from your exhibit program:

- Full-service trade show management
- Consulting services
- Exhibition Revenue Development
- Marketing Consulting
- Sponsorship Development
- Technology Development
- Facility selection and negotiation
- Additional sales help

Chicago

230 East Ohio Street, Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60611-3265
Tel. 312-644-0828 / Fax 312-644-8557

Washington, DC

1444 I Street, NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Tel. 202-216-9623 / Fax 202-216-9646

solutions@bostrom.com