

# ARE YOU LOOKING TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR TRADE SHOW BUDGET?

▶ An overview of custom exhibit rentals for live event marketers



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Communication Exhibits, Inc.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This white paper is for marketing professionals dealing with live event uncertainty as they return to exhibiting two years after the start of the pandemic. A lot has changed in the exhibiting world, and the exhibit strategy used pre-pandemic might not be as effective moving forward. This white paper covers **how marketers can leverage custom exhibit rentals** to get more out of their trade show budgets. The white paper details industry data and statistics that back up why the move to custom exhibit rental is worth considering.

**Issues Facing Exhibitors:** Limited budgets, aging exhibit properties, unpredictable show attendance, concerns over boring system rentals, uncertainty around trying new shows, and storage and maintenance fees.

Here are a few solutions exhibitors have tried over the last two years, along with their drawbacks:

- **Virtual Events:** Attendees prefer face-to-face live events
- **Using Old Exhibits:** Outdated marketing causes disconnect with attendees
- **Downsizing Exhibit:** Loss of preferred exhibit space and reduced brand awareness
- **Skip Exhibiting:** Not being at shows provides an opportunity for competitors
- **Boring System Rentals:** Lack of custom design blends in with other exhibitors

According to [EXHIBITOR Magazine's 2022 Economic Outlook Survey](#), here are two key takeaways regarding trade show budgets moving forward.

**23%** of survey respondents say their exhibiting **budgets have returned to pre-COVID allocations**, and 28% expect the same once COVID diminishes.

Before COVID-19, the average marketer anticipated exhibiting at 54 events with an average trade show budget of \$1.25 million. Companies now expect to exhibit at an average of **37 live events this year** with an average trade show budget of **\$805,223**.

## Custom Exhibit Rental Benefits:

- Custom exhibit look
- Branding flexibility
- Focus on experience
- Attend new shows at a lower cost compared to a new build
- Zero storage fees
- No maintenance
- Support corporate sustainability

Through the **Rental+** program, Communication Exhibits offers **client-owned custom exhibit properties for rental**, allowing their customers to **stand out with a custom booth at a fraction of the cost**. Learn how Rental+ customers take advantage of this program by calling 330.854.4040 or emailing [engage@ceilink.com](mailto:engage@ceilink.com).

# STATE OF THE EXHIBIT INDUSTRY

## IT'S BEEN OVER TWO YEARS SINCE THE PANDEMIC SHUT DOWN LIVE EVENTS.

The exhibit industry is recovering, looking, and feeling almost normal, but the following are valid concerns that many exhibitors face as they reengage their live exhibit programs.

### ISSUES:

- **Limited Budgets:** They have big plans but a smaller trade show budget.
- **Aging Exhibits:** They're stuck with an expensive custom exhibit design they can't change year after year.
- **Unpredictable Attendance:** It isn't easy to gauge show attendance as shows kick back in.
- **Boring System Rentals:** Their exhibit looks like everyone's standard rental system.
- **Risk of New Shows:** They're uncertain of new shows, meaning it's difficult to try them out, which gives their competition a potential advantage.
- **Storage and Maintenance Fees:** Paying fees for a booth they only use a couple of times creates added expense.

There is an excellent solution to help exhibitors overcome these challenges that very few marketers take advantage of, but let's first look at traditional solutions that many are using or considering utilizing right now.

**23%** of survey respondents say their exhibiting budgets have returned to pre-COVID allocations, and 28% expect the same once COVID diminishes.

- Exhibitor magazine's 2022 economic outlook survey

# TYPICAL EXHIBITOR SOLUTIONS

## RENT CUSTOM EXHIBITS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR BUDGET

Many exhibitors flexed their creative muscles and pivoted to virtual events to replace exhibiting at trade shows, which was a workable solution during the height of the pandemic. With relaxed travel and COVID regulations, using virtual events as a trade show replacement isn't as desirable as attendees return to traveling to trade shows.

Along with virtual events, here are a few other solutions along with their drawbacks that exhibitors have tried over the last two years as in-person exhibiting kicked back into gear:

- **Virtual Events:** Attendees prefer face-to-face live events.
- **Hybrid Events:** Splits the attention of their marketing staff.
- **Using Old Exhibits:** Outdated marketing causes disconnect with attendees.
- **Downsizing Exhibit:** Loss of preferred exhibit space and reduced brand awareness.
- **Skip Exhibiting:** Not being at shows provides an opportunity for competitors.
- **System Rentals:** Lack of custom design blends in with other exhibitors.

**30%** of companies plan to  
**decrease spending on virtual events.**

- Exhibitor magazine's 2022 economic outlook survey

**Special Note on Virtual Events:** Don't abandon virtual events completely. Using virtual events to replace webinars is a better fit for this technology moving forward rather than replacing or augmenting in-person trade shows.

# CUSTOM EXHIBIT RENTALS GET RESULTS

## RENT CUSTOM EXHIBITS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR BUDGET

It's time to look at a possibility that's been in the industry for quite a while but not widely used: Renting custom exhibit components is an excellent solution for exhibitors to consider. It allows marketers to overcome the drawbacks of using old exhibit properties, downsizing their booth space, or skipping exhibiting altogether. Using custom rentals also ensures they don't blend in with bland system exhibit rentals used by other exhibitors.

Communication Exhibits offers a client-owned exhibit property program named **Rental+** that allows its customers to stand out without a significant upfront expense enabling them to get more out of their marketing budgets.

### **Rental+ Customer Benefits:**

- **Custom Exhibit Look:** Make an impression with the look of a custom exhibit without the significant upfront expense and the ongoing warehouse and maintenance fees.
- **Branding Flexibility:** Change the physical structure of the exhibit show after show, ensuring it aligns with changing marketing objectives.
- **Focus on Experience:** Explore adding interactive presentations to the exhibit helping drive face-to-face engagement through fun and educational experiences.

### **Additional Benefits:**

- Attending new shows at a lower cost
- Ending storage and maintenance fees
- Increasing brand awareness
- Improving lead generation
- Supports corporate sustainability

*"Rental+ has allowed us to increase our presence on the show floor with a fresh look show after show without going over our budget."*

*"By having properties we own available to other Communication Exhibits clients, we have realized tens of thousands of dollars in rental income that helps offset our trade show expenses each year. These are properties that would have otherwise been sitting idle, but instead are being utilized by others to help stretch their custom booth budget, and we get paid."*

- Fortune 500 Communication Exhibit Customers

# BUILDING EXHIBIT PROPERTIES VS. RENTING

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN RENTING A CUSTOM EXHIBIT

Renting a custom booth is a great solution, but there are many considerations to take into account before making the decision to rent versus build.

**1 How often does the exhibitor attend trade shows?**

If big impact at one show is critical, then rental may be the perfect option. No storage fees, no booth maintenance, and no large investment. However, if the plan is to use the same configuration more than three times, building a custom booth is recommended; although there's a larger investment up front, more than three uses is typically a good guide when deciding to build versus rent.

**2 Is the exhibitor new to trade shows?**

Think about buying a new car: Unless the buyer is completely comfortable and familiar with a specific brand and model, there is likely to be a lot of vehicle research before making a purchase. There are limitless creative possibilities for custom booths, so a new company or marketing team may not know what works best for them, their products, and their brand. Renting is the perfect "test-drive" to assure comfort with what meets the company's goals and objectives.

**3 Is the goal to make a huge splash for a product launch or new service announcement?**

Maybe the company typically has a smaller presence at shows, but a greater impact for a specific show or purpose is needed. Renting a custom booth would be the perfect option.

**4 Are there multiple shows with overlapping dates?**

Inadequate inventory to meet upcoming scheduling doesn't mean having to choose between shows. Rent!

**5 Does booth footprint size change on a regular basis?**

Although new booth builds can be designed with multiple layouts in mind, owning a 20' x 40' booth, and trying to convert it to a 30' x 50' for one show might not make sense. Exhibit designers and account executives can make recommendations about rental options before making an investment for a single use.

### Special Note on Renting Exhibit Properties to Others

Depending on trade show programs and event schedules, renting custom exhibit properties is not feasible for some exhibitors. In those cases, exhibit property owners can still take advantage of Rental+ by building and renting their properties to others when their exhibits sit idle, producing rental income that helps them get even more out of their trade show budgets.

# BUYER'S GUIDE

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CUSTOM EXHIBIT RENTAL COMPANY

For marketers interested in incorporating custom exhibit rentals into their trade shows, **selecting the right exhibit house to fulfill their needs is crucial.** Below is a set of questions to consider during your evaluation.

- 1 Does the company have a large catalog of custom exhibits available for rent?
- 2 Do they also rent individual exhibit components?
- 3 Does the exhibit agency allow marketers to meet directly with their designers to discuss show's objectives and budget?
- 4 How much work do they do in-house vs. through outsourcing?
- 5 What is included in the rental price?
- 6 Who's responsible for damage incurred during shipment and at the show?
- 7 How does it work if the exhibitor wants to keep any graphics produced for the rental exhibit for future use?
- 8 Does the exhibit house offer the capability to rent custom exhibits and mix in new or owned properties?
- 9 If the exhibitor owns exhibit properties, does the exhibit agency offer ways to generate rental income to helping offset trade show expenses?

Companies now expect to exhibit at an average of **37 live events this year** with an average trade show budget of **\$805,223.**

- Exhibitor magazine's 2022 economic outlook survey

# CONCLUSION

## RENTAL+ CAN HELP YOU GET MORE OUT OF YOUR TRADE SHOW BUDGET

This white paper covered how marketers can leverage custom exhibit rentals to get more out of their trade show budgets. It's been over two years since the pandemic shut down live events. The exhibit industry is recovering, looking, and feeling almost normal as exhibitors reengage the live exhibit programs.

Through the **Rental+ program**, Communication Exhibits helps marketing professionals who have aging exhibit properties, limited budgets, concerns about brand awareness, and who are looking for cost-effective ways to try out new shows before committing to a larger booth space. **Communication Exhibits' client-owned custom exhibit rental inventory can help marketers** gain branding flexibility allowing the look of a new custom exhibit each show without the worry and expense of being locked into one custom exhibit build for several years.

Schedule a discovery call with Communication Exhibit staff to learn how their Rental+ program can help face-to-face marketers get more out of their trade show budgets. Call 330.854.4040 or email [engage@ceilink.com](mailto:engage@ceilink.com) to learn more.



## ABOUT COMMUNICATION EXHIBITS

We help businesses connect with their customers through face-to-face trade show experiences.

At Communication Exhibits, we create custom and rental exhibits that increase brand awareness and lead generation, allowing our customers to confidently approach their trade show schedules by using one-of-a-kind exhibit designs and interactive tools. We help our customers stand out and engage decision-makers attending trade shows while confidently navigating COVID and supply chain concerns and project details.

- Increase lead generation
- Build brand awareness
- Feel confident exhibiting in 2022
- Meet face-to-face with decision makers
- Generate Return on Investment (ROI)

CEI is a third-generation business with the mindset of a startup in the heart of the midwest – bringing passion and creativity as well as a gritty, do it right attitude to every single engagement.

No matter whether your audience is in store, on the floor, at the office, or on the curb, our goal is to captivate, engage, educate, and convert. From designers and developers to welders and carpenters, our eclectic team brings strategic and creative expertise to not just transform, but also transcend any space.



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