

Ten Tips for a Successful Installation and Dismantle

By Mel White

The trade show floor can be like operating in a foreign country. However, if you follow a few basic tips, you can successfully and economically navigate the Installation and Dismantle waters of your next show.

1. Choose a Quality Labor Partner

- Consider national coverage so you have consistency.
- What is their reputation for integrity and performance? Ask around.
- Price – While cost per hour is important, keep in mind that comparing the rate of an independent contractor to a general contractor (GC) is not comparing apples to apples. Independent contractor labor is typically far more efficient, thereby resulting in few hours billed.

2. Complete the Exhibitor Appointed Contractor Letter (EAC Letter)

- Check your exhibitor services manual for the due date. This is typically 30 days prior to the show – but can be as much as 90 days.
- Complete the form, send it to the show contractor and send a copy to your labor contractor.
- If it is past the due date, call your labor contractor. They may be able to work it out with the show.

3. Choose the Right Shipper

- Choose an experienced trade show shipping partner.
- Price – Do not compare the price of shipping with a van line (point to point transportation) to that of a common show carrier (consolidates loads, breaks down skids, rough ride). They are not equal.
- Label each item on a skid separately. Skids sometimes get broken down

4. Pre-Plan

- Complete all service orders well in advance (electrical, carpet, hanging signs, material handling, etc.) to get best rates.
- Electrical – Be sure to include a dimensioned layout of where the electrical should go, along with an orientation for your booth (include surrounding booth numbers)
- Send copies of all service orders to your labor partner.

5. Have Set Up Instructions and Booth Renderings

- Be sure to have detailed and accurate set up instructions.
- Send a copy of the instructions to your labor partner in advance.

- Bring a copy of the instructions with you.
- Have back up copies of your booth drawings at your office.

6. Schedule Labor – Factors to consider when choosing start times

- Scheduled the move-in time for your booth # – Find this on the targeted move in plan or in your exhibitor services manual.
- Some cities and venues take longer to get the freight from the dock to the booth than others – ask your labor partner.
- Direct shipment or advanced shipment – You can generally begin set up at or close to your targeted move in time only if you send your booth to the Advanced Warehouse.
- Leave time for the electrical and carpet to be laid if you rent from the general contractor. Idle crew hours are the responsibility of the exhibitor if mis-scheduled. Independent contractors are happy to help you eliminate idle time by consulting with you in advance.

7. Union Jurisdictions -- Every City is Different

- Read the rules in your Exhibitor Services Manual.
- In some cities you can set your own booth up – in others you can do almost nothing.
- For detailed information on a city by city basis, email kmiller@momentummgmt.com and request our union jurisdiction guidelines.

8. Security Concerns

- Theft is common in convention centers.
- If it is valuable, keep it locked up. Many people have access to the show floor. Your labor partner can not be responsible for your valuables.

9. Have an Inventory List

- Have a complete list of crates and inventory for inbound and outbound.
- If the outbound shipment is split, have a detailed inventory of which items ship to each destination.
- Provide this list to your labor partner.

10. Supervision

- A supervisor who knows the details of your exhibit and also how the unions in that city operate will save you time, money, and frustration.
- The supervisor must remain at the booth throughout the entire installation and dismantle.

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