

What's a Gang Box and Why Do I Need One?



By Traci Browne

Packing Your Gang Box

It doesn't seem like much right now, while you are in the comfort of your own office. When you're on the road, running out of staples, needing extra velcro to attach your graphics to your booth, needing a little duct tape to fix, well, just about anything...it becomes a crisis and an expensive one at that. It's a simple case of supply and demand. You demand a roll of tape, it's 10 minutes before the show starts, the only supplier is show services...they can charge whatever they want.

Tip: An hour before the show starts and you realize you are missing a graphic or need a product spec sheet printed is not the time to go hunting for the nearest Kinkos. You are wasting valuable time. Before you leave for the show, look up the closest walk-in service printing outlets to the convention center (don't worry, these people are on to you, they will be very close) and stick information such as phone numbers, addresses, direction, hours of operations in your gang box.

Every seasoned exhibitor has a gang box that goes with them to every show. It is one of the most important pieces to their exhibit so it is checked and restocked after every show and double checked before it is sent with the booth. We've split the list into two, one for the basics everyone should have regardless of what kind of display you use. We've also included an optional list to cover the needs of bigger booths which involve more labor, parts and pieces.

Must Haves

Even if you are thinking I won't need that, trust me...if you don't pack it you will probably need it. You will also find yourself channeling MacGyver at a show and will come up with amazing alternative uses for some of these items. Also, keep adding to this list when things come up again over and over again.

- Roll of Velcro (this is our number one favorite/most useful item...you can hem a skirt or pants
- if need be)
- A pair of scissors
- Solar Calculator
- Super-glue
- Glue Stick
- Scotch tape and double sided tape
- Packing Tape/Gaffers Tape (doesn't leave as much sticky residue as Duct Tape)
- Mini stapler, staples, staple remover
- 5 Black Sharpies (no end to the uses, graphics touchups, shoe scuff touchup, writing things down)
- Box of pens
- Pack of assorted color felt tip markers (for graphics touchup)
- Mechanical pencil with eraser and extra lead
- Highlighter pen
- An assortment of sticky notes, message pads, and three-by-five note cards
- White Out (doubles as graphic and scuff touchup)
- Pre-printed Fed-Ex labels and envelopes
- Binder clips, paper clips, rubber bands, straight pins, safety pins
- Cable ties (black, white and booth colors)
- Paper towels and aerosol cleaner (wiping down booth counters, you can take partial roll or remove the cardboard center for easier packing, liquid cleaner spills)
- Screwdriver set (both Phillips and flathead)
- Pliers
- Wire Cutter
- Ruler (make sure it's sturdy so you can use as a straight edge for cutting and tearing too)
- Measuring tape
- Box Cutter
- Mini Flash Light (at some point you will have your head in a cabinet trying to figure out why it won't close right)
- Small level
- Fishing line
- Disposable camera (proving damage during shipping, fun candid photos of your staff)
- CD/DVD of all booth graphics, handouts and brochures (know where the closest Kinkos is before you go to the show)
- Extra copy of demo/presentation/software
- Computer/network cables (a Cat5 cable will run you about \$50 from show services)
- Blank CDs/Jump drives

Personal Items

These are things you will want to pack and keep in the booth during the show. They are all things we have found have saved the day for our staff over the years...we are still adding to the list all the time.

- Quick dissolve breath strips
- Small first aid kit
- Wet naps (we prefer these because they don't take up much room and are individually packed and can be replenished from just about any seafood restaurant or bar that serves wings)
- A fingernail clipper with file
- A small sewing kit
- Small Lint Remover
- Stain Removing Pen
- Antacid, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Tylenol (have all of them on hand, people have allergies or preferences),
- Eye drops--yes, people will inevitably stay up too late.
- Hand cream
- Tampons
- Comb
- Mini shoe buffer
- Eye drops
- Mini packs of tissues
- Over the counter allergy medicine

Optional

Read over this list and think, "would I ever find a use for this in my booth?" Even if the answer is, "only if a forklift backed into my booth and knocked it down" PACK IT. If you've never experienced a minor emergency where you needed a staple gun or battery powered screw driver you are thinking, "this is going to cost a lot of money to ship." That's nothing compared to what show services will charge for their carpenter to come over and screw or nail the corner of your booth together.

- Grounded UL-rated surge protector strip
- Staple gun with extra staples
- Adhesive remover
- Battery Powered Screw Driver
- Extra light bulbs (make sure they match the ones in your booth)
- Extra screws, nuts, bolts, etc.
- Copy of Exhibit Prints (Just in case you forget which is the front and which is the back or to prove you were right)
- Pictures of booth completely set up from all angles (makes it easy to know which graphic goes where)
- A can of artists' spray mount (this will become one of your best friends over the years)
- Strong Shipping Tape
- Double-sided carpet tape (also makes a great hem)
- Electrical tape
- Shrink wrap

Traci Browne spent the last 15 years in the trade show industry. Much of that time was spent teaching exhibitors how to get more from their trade show marketing dollars and teaching show producers how to structure their shows to make their sponsors and exhibitors happier. She is the author of "The Social Trade Show - Leveraging Social Media and Virtual Events to Connect With Your Customers." Traci now spends her time working with clients as a content marketer, captivating her clients' customers through story telling. [Click here to check out her website: Trade Show Institute – A Service of Red Cedar Marketing.](#)