



## Helpful Hints to Smooth Unexpected Bumps in the Road

The world of exhibit marketing is a combination of careful planning and extreme flexibility. Rarely does anything happen exactly as planned. However, there are a few things you can do to prepare for the unexpected.

### Have a spare

Obviously you can't keep an extra exhibit booth in your pocket. However, there are some components that you can keep in a purse or pocket. Your graphic designers go to great lengths to prepare graphics and brochures for tradeshow. Ask them to put a copy of the master file on a flash drive for you—just in case. Then, if graphics get damaged in shipping or if literature gets delivered to the wrong show, you can have replicas (temporary replacements) made without having to track down your designer on the weekend.

### Minimize drayage

Drayage costs are inevitable, but you can do your part to keep the costs down and to keep your items from becoming separated. Ship smaller cases and carpet rolls on a pallet rather than separately. Wrap the pallet with industrial strength plastic to insure items stay together and are shipped as one unit.

### Take it on a test drive

If at all possible, put up your exhibit at least once before arriving at the show. This test drive can reveal missing pieces, damage, and trouble areas that may require special instruction. By discovering these minor mishaps in advance, your stress is reduced on the show floor.

### Beware the forklift

Most of the exhibit damage we hear about happens in one of two places: in shipping or as the result of a forklift. Shipping crates pierced by forklifts are fairly easy to spot. But your exhibit is not necessarily safe just because it has arrived in your booth area. The forklifts are still roaming the hall. Give them space. It would be wise to keep counters, literature racks, chairs, etc. in the center of your exhibit space until the last possible minute to allow extra room for forklifts maneuvering to deliver other exhibits.

### Pack a first-aid kit

In addition to a flash drive with your backups, you might consider keeping the following items on hand:

- extra light bulbs
- Velcro hook and loop (looks nicer than duct tape when holding things together)
- phone numbers of contacts you might need (shipper, manufacturer, exhibit house, hotel, show manager...)
- power strip
- extension cord
- basic tools (a set of allen wrenches at least)