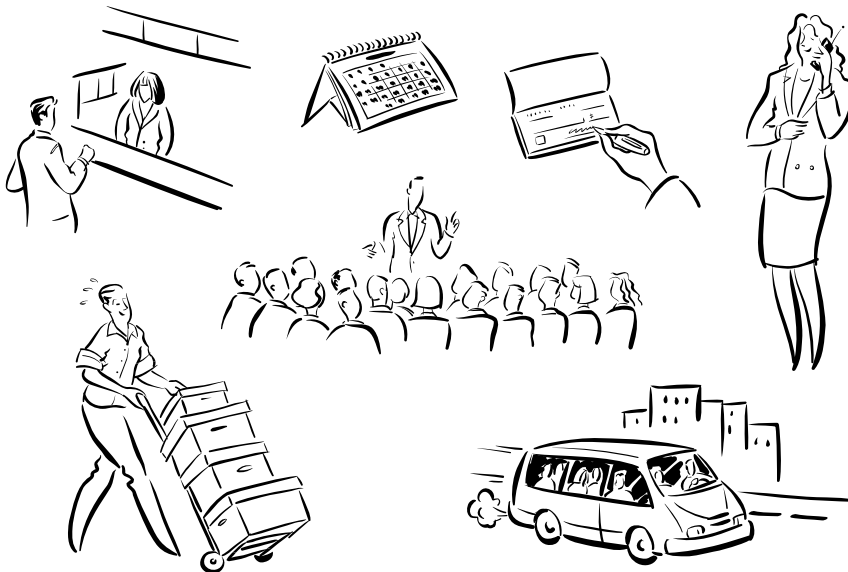


How to **Survive**



Being Your



Conference's Exhibit Coordinator

NCEE



If you have been given this booklet, then one of the following is true:

- You missed the meeting when conference assignments were made.
- Your boss volunteered you.
- You just discovered that “and other duties as assigned” on your job description means being an exhibit coordinator.
- You were not paying attention and raised your hand to indicate you would be *going to* the exhibits, not realizing the question had been who wanted to *be in charge* of the exhibits.



So, now that you are in charge of exhibits, what do you do next?

Who Are “We”?

We — the Catholic Book Publishers Association (CBPA) and the National Catholic Educational Exhibitors Association (NCEE) — have written this booklet to help you . . . and us. You will find ninety percent of your task outlined right here.

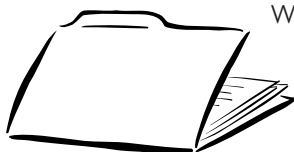
As you may have deduced by the names of our groups, we have attended conferences a time or two. What we have learned is that organizing the exhibits for a conference or convention is mostly a matter of . . . well . . . being organized. There’s that, and then there are the many, many questions about many, many details that someone — YOU — have to answer. Not to worry, though!

Usually, it is not too hard finding the answers to the questions. Too often, it can be frustrating not knowing what questions you should be asking and what questions others are going to be asking you.

Time Out: If You Lose This Booklet

You should know that all the material in this booklet can also be found on-line at www.cbpa.org.

We suggest that you write that down somewhere.



We suggest you start a file folder. **Keep copies of all correspondence, paperwork, notes, and e-mails.**

This will make your life so much simpler when need to refer back to something (and you will) .

You may be wondering what the difference is between a conference and a convention. After hosting exhibits at both for decades, we feel confident making this distinction:

At a conference, all written material associated with the gathering says it is a “conference.” At a convention, all written material associated with the gathering says it is a “convention.” Beyond that, there is no difference (at least to the exhibitor).

Therefore, we are pleased to say that the information in this booklet will work equally well at both a conference and a convention!

Step by Step

Whether you are a first-timer or a veteran coordinator, this booklet will give you step-by-step suggestions on planning, organizing, and overseeing the exhibits at your gathering. The material here makes your job as easy as can be! All you need is a bit of confidence; and everything will run smoothly.

Remember, conference planners and exhibitors are *partners*. It is beneficial to *everyone*, that the attendees visit and patronize the exhibitors. Attendees need to be reminded both **before** and **during** the conference of the exhibitors and what these companies bring to your event.

As you are well aware, on the day you were handed this job, you were already nine weeks behind schedule. Time to get crackin'!



Basic Information You Will Need to Gather

(Because SOMEONE will ask you for it)

We encourage you to write an invitation letter to send to potential exhibitors. Include as much information as is possible in this letter. Send it as early as possible. We suggest at least eight to ten months before the date of your event. The earlier you send it, the better the chances are that exhibitors will be able to fit this into their budgets.



Exhibit date(s)

As soon as you know the date, post it in your office, on your website, any place a prospective exhibitor and attendee can find it.

Name, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the person in the diocese who can answer questions for exhibitors

This might be you, but if it's not, it's best to be prepared with a name and phone number. If it is you, you are going to have to admit it and let people know.



Audience

Who is coming? How would you describe the crowd? Young, middle-aged, older? Clergy, professed, laity? Educators, parents, home-schoolers? And so on. Most exhibitors carry a variety of products but they want to be sure to bring the ones best suited for your participants' needs.

Expected attendance

Be optimistic but don't fudge. Exhibitors also need to plan how many products to bring.

Conference theme

Exhibitors may want to bring products to coordinate with your theme so this can be important.

Name(s) of keynote speaker(s)

This is especially important if the keynote person is a published author. Companies may want to bring the person's book(s).



Workshop themes

Again, exhibitors may want to bring products to coordinate with your themes.

If a company representative needs to stay overnight, what is the recommended hotel? Where is the hotel located? What is the room rate? Is there a conference rate? If so, what is the deadline to get that rate? Can an exhibitor call the hotel to ask for a discount rate on a block of rooms?

It is best to avoid places that are overly expensive.

If a company representative needs to fly to the city, what airport is the best to use?

See, some of the questions are not hard, but they are all important.

If the hotel(s) does not provide transportation between the airport and hotel, what is recommended: shuttle, taxi, or bus services?

Approximately how much should a taxi ride cost and about how long should it take? Exhibitors would prefer not to take the "scenic" route.



Booth Basics

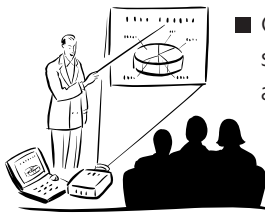
Exhibitors need to know if they are truly getting a booth “space.” Booth “space” usually consists of an area that is either 8' x 8', 8' x 10', or 10' x 10'. Anything less than this is not considered booth space. A 6' table does not constitute a booth “space.”



- Is there a fee for exhibiting?
- What is included in the exhibit fee: chairs, tables, carpet, wastebasket?
- Are there fees to rent furniture, e.g., chairs, tables, carpet, wastebasket?
- Who do we request furniture from?
 - *Is this being handled by a diocesan staff person?*
 - *Is a decorating company being used to coordinate booth furnishings? A decorating company is a professional organization that supplies conferences with furniture such as tables and chairs.*
- What size tables are available?
- Are the tables covered or do exhibitors need to bring their own covering?
- How large is the area of one exhibit spot (dimensions including the width and depth)?
- Is the exhibit area carpeted?
 - *Is the carpeting swept daily? If so, is this service free or will exhibitors be charged and at what daily fee?*
 - *You will discover exhibitors really care about this. You would, too, if you spend two or three days standing on bare concrete. If the facility you're using has no carpeting, they want to come prepared.*

Speakers and Sponsors

- Are there sponsorship opportunities available for companies?
 - *Sponsorships mean that an exhibitor is willing to pay for some part of your conference as a means of promoting their company and/or product(s). They come in many forms and include items such as:*
 - Paying for one of their authors to be your keynote speaker
 - Paying for an author to conduct a workshop
 - Paying for an ad in your conference program
 - Paying for a continental breakfast in the exhibit area before the keynote or workshops begin
 - Paying for beverages in the exhibit area during one of the breaks
 - *Pay attention to this one! This might be a way companies will cover some of your conference's expenses.*



- Can exhibitors recommend speakers? If so, by what date should an exhibitor send in the names of potential speakers and their information? To whom does this information go?

— *It may be an exhibitor knows of a speaker who is ideal for your conference (and is available at a reasonable price, too).*

- If a company sponsors a speaker, are any fees waived? If so, what ones are waived? Or, will table(s) be provided free?

— *It is recommended to offer something in exchange for sponsorship.*

- Is there an opportunity for an author book signing? If so, can books be sold at the workshop or the booth?

— *Exhibitors, authors, and participants love book signings! If you are not sure how to set this up, check with the exhibitor who has asked you about having a signing or ask any publishing house.*

- Are there any meals and/or breaks taking place in the exhibit area? If so, when? Can a company sponsor these?

— *Again, it may well be to your (financial) advantage to have a sponsored meal or a snack-time break. It brings everyone together and draws attendees to the exhibit area.*



What Is the Hall Like and Where Is My Booth?

Again, this is basic information that is easy for you to supply and makes it easier for exhibitors to plan for your event. Even a rough sketch and estimated distances help. Booths, as with all real estate, depend a great deal on location, location, location.

In addition, exhibitors also need to know if they have to hit the “mute” button, if not actually close up shop, during addresses, workshops, and Mass.

Ideally, remember the Goldilocks Principle: not too close, not too far away from the presentations and Mass, but just right.

OK, here is exactly what we want to know:

- Where are the exhibits in relation to the keynote address?
- Where are the exhibits in relation to the workshops?
- Where is Mass in relation to the exhibits?
- Where are the exhibits in relation to food vendors, e.g., restaurants in the building?
- Where are the restrooms in relation to the exhibits?

Times We Need to Know



Workshop times

Let exhibitors know when the workshops will take place. This is basic information, right?

Exhibit setup time window

This item really matters to the exhibitors coming to your conference because they need a window of time to arrange tables, haul product in, unbox it all, and display it. (And exhibitors make some noise doing it.) Consider offering at least three to four hours for this.

Exhibit times

Let attendees know when the hall will be open. This can be written into your conference program. We suggest you make announcements at the major talks encouraging the attendees to visit the exhibits. It is important to remember that exhibitors are co-sponsoring the event by the exhibit fee you charge.



If you have a late night session, consider starting the next morning's session after 9:00 a.m., so exhibitors can catch up on work and sleep. Please!

Breaks/Lunch time

Since foot traffic increases during breaks and lunchtime, exhibitors want to be ready to help as many participants as possible. If the primary exhibit time is during meals, consider hosting the meal or selling food in the exhibit space.

Attendees need sufficient time to visit the exhibits. Fifteen-minute breaks are not enough for them to go to the bathroom, say "hi" to friends, eat lunch, and visit the exhibit hall.

Be sure to tell exhibitors ALL the break times.

Is lunch provided for the exhibitors?

If so, is there a fee?

If not, are there restaurants close by with maps provided? If there is no food or drink available in the convention center or exhibit hall area, make them available to exhibitors someplace. Have a small cash sales area for items such as bottled water and box lunches. Or, ask the exhibitors to preorder and prepay for food and drinks.



Is there a Mass? If so, what time will it be held?

Some exhibitors may want to attend the conference's Mass. You'll also want to avoid having a Mass close to the exhibit area during setup tear-down due to the noise factor.

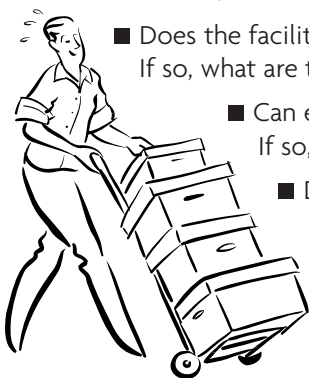


Exhibit tear-down time

Again, it can be noisy.

What We Need to Know Before We Get There

The answers to these items will take some research. We strongly recommend you get the name, position, direct phone number or extension, and e-mail address of the person who supplies you with answers. Write those down with the answers you are given for future reference! It will save you time and eliminate frustration.



- Does the facility have a dock for loading and unloading? If so, what are the restrictions?
- Can exhibitors load and unload their own materials? If so, what are the restrictions? Is there any cost?
- Does the exhibitor need his or her own dolly?
- What is the distance from the loading/unloading area to the exhibit area?
- Are there stairs to climb to get to the exhibit area from the unloading area? If so, are there elevators that could be used?
- Can boxes/materials be shipped ahead? If so, what is the shipping address? If so, what is the delivery time-table that should be used? Is there a limit to the amount of freight the facility will accept?
- Will material handlers help move freight? What is the cost for their services? How will those charges be billed to/paid by the exhibitor?
- If exhibits open early in the morning, can exhibitors choose to set up the evening before?

An important distinction you should know

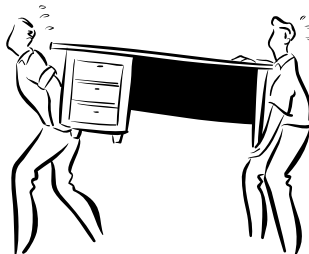
is the difference between a decorating company and a drayage company:

A decorating company supplies exhibitors with furniture such as tables, chairs, carpeting, etc.

A drayage company is responsible for moving freight into and out of an exhibit area.

It helps to make sure the decorating company has all furniture at the booths by the time setup begins; and the drayage company has moved the freight into the booths before setup begins.

Some exhibitors may need electricity to power their equipment. This is generally handled by the convention center or hotel where you are holding the function. If, however, the exhibits will be in a school or gym, please make sure there are electrical hookups for those who need them.



What We Need to Know When It's Over

Tear-down usually goes pretty quickly. In any case, again it is a matter of getting accurate information from the people who actually know what they are talking about. Here are some factors to consider:



- If the final workshop period is followed by Mass, can exhibits close during that final session rather than remain open until Mass begins?
- If exhibitors need to ship materials home, how do they go about this after tear-down?
More specifically:
 - Do they need to contact a freight carrier?

- Do you contact a freight carrier?
- Do they need to move their materials to a loading dock for freight carrier pickup?
- Do they need to supply their own shipping labels?
- Do they need to bring their own bill-of-lading?
- Are there loading dock restrictions for freight carriers?
- Does UPS or FedEx make a regular pickup at the facility? If so, when and where should materials be left for pickup? If not, where is the nearest UPS or FedEx drop-off facility?
- If a freight carrier has been assigned, which one is it?

What do I need for return shipping?

And Another Thing ...

■ Consider (seriously consider) posting the answers to all these questions on the conference's website so exhibitors can get the latest scoop and be aware of any changes. (And so they won't keep calling or e-mailing you to get that information!) Clearly mark any updates or changes on the site along with the date of the last update.

■ If you have to communicate with exhibitors within the last couple of weeks before a conference, especially about changes to booth locations, follow up to make sure every-



one receives the communication. Ask the exhibitor to respond to the exhibit coordinator to let him/her know they received the information and they understand it.

■ Have a clear method to communicate with conference participants that the exhibit hall hours are over.

Turn off the lights, have announcements, ring a bell.

Make sure the attendees know that this is the cue to leave the exhibit area.

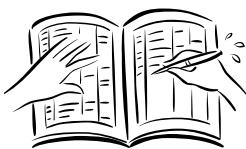
■ As the exhibits coordinator/facilitator/miracle-worker, part of your job is to keep this project moving.

■ It may help to talk to bosses and peers as early as possible in the process reminding them that they need to: make that decision, arrange that detail, complete that task!

It's Over!

The conference is over, the exhibits were a smashing success. What is next on your agenda?

- Jot down a list of, “**What I should do differently next time.**” This is very important! It really helps to listen to the exhibitors’ suggestions. If you want them to return to your event the next time, seriously consider their ideas by making a note of them.



- Provide the exhibitors, not just the attendees, with evaluation forms. Most exhibitors have attended many conferences, in many locations. They can have excellent ideas to make your conference even better the next time.
- This is even more important ... change the heading of your list to “**What the person who is in charge of this next year should do differently next time.**”
- Put all your material — all your research, contact information, and those accurate answers — into a clearly marked file folder. Include disks with any information that was on your computer. Put the file folder in a spot you will remember.

Now, was that so bad? How can we make it easier?

Please feel free to contact us with questions, comments, and concerns at:

www.cbpa.org



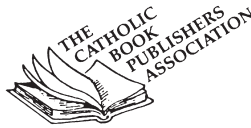
See you at the conference, convention,
congress, gathering, meeting
... whatever!

About the Catholic Book Publishers Association

The Catholic Book Publishers Association facilitates the sharing of professional information, networking, cooperation, and friendship among those involved in Catholic Book Publishing in the United States and abroad. The Association is made up of Publisher Members and Service and Individual Members. Visit our websites at www.cbpa.org and www.CatholicsRead.org to see the programs and activities sponsored by CBPA.

About the National Catholic Educational Exhibitors Association

The National Catholic Educational Exhibitors is an association of companies and individuals that exhibit their products and services at Catholic educational conventions and workshops across the country.



Catholic Book Publishers Association

8404 Jamesport Drive
Rockford, IL 61108
(815) 332-3245
www.cbpa.org
cbpa@aol.com

NCEE

National Catholic Educational Exhibitors

2621 Dryden Road, Suite 300
Dayton, OH 45439
(800) 555-8512

