

A checklist for exhibiting overseas

After you have made your first exploratory overseas sales trip and have observed an international trade fair yourself, you may well decide that your company should exhibit its products and services at such a fair.

Allow yourself a full 12 months lead time to plan and implement your decision to participate as an exhibitor at a trade fair.

Info Export can provide you with general information on all upcoming international trade fairs and the trade commissioner in the host country is your best source for detail, on-site information and a professional appraisal of the scope, quality and track record of any fairs in his or her territory. The planning and logistics of exhibiting at a trade fair demand careful advance planning. Allow yourself a full 12 months lead time to plan and implement your decision to participate as an exhibitor at a trade fair.

The following checklist summarizes the sequence of the main activities an exhibitor must undertake in the 12 months prior to the fair.

Twelve months in advance

Obtain current literature and information on the fair and catalogues and statistics from previous years which will provide answers to the following questions:

- How large an area does the fair cover?
- What is the range of products covered?
- How many visitors attended last year? How many countries did they come from and are attendance trends on the increase or the decrease?
- How many companies exhibited last year, where were they from and is the trend up or down?
- What is the cost of booth space and what services are included in the cost?
- What is the cost of services not supplied?
- What is the space reservation deadline?
- What are the customs and import regulations for products being exhibited? Are special licences required? Can the goods be easily taken back to Canada?
- Are there other exhibit or business opportunities available in conjunction with the fair?
- What is the cost of clearing samples?
- What is the cost of an interpreter, if one is needed?

Nine months in advance

- Mail contracts for trade fair and send reservation deposits.
- Inform Canadian trade commissioner of your exhibit plans and keep on-going information and relevant correspondence flowing.
- Select your overseas exhibit team and make all travel and accommodation reservations.
- Plan your exhibit and booth space and make sure it includes an "office space" in which to conduct business. (The Canadian Government Expositions and Audio-Visual Centre [CGEAVC] of the Department of Supply and Services or the trade commissioner in the country concerned can offer valuable help on all aspects of exhibiting. Contact CGEAVC at 440 Coventry Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T1, (613) 993-9730.)

Select your overseas exhibit team and make all travel and accommodation reservations.

- Decide whether you will design, construct and set up your own exhibit or employ consultants. Finalize arrangements for this. (Make sure fair doors, elevators, etc. will accommodate your exhibit.)