

Word Processing Office Technology, West Coast Exposition & Conference:

This exposition takes place annually at the San Jose Conference Center. Last year the show attracted 32,500 visitors who came to examine the latest in electronic office equipment.

Many Canadian manufacturers will be aware of the leading West Coast computer shows which we have discussed. The vital statistics for these shows are presented in Table 11.1 following. Manufacturers may, however, find that smaller or more specialized shows are more suitable for their needs. A number of companies we talked to in the market areas only attend events which relate directly to their specialized products. These companies are in the main packaged software producers or turnkey systems houses who participate in medical, agricultural, business or other conferences. Details of a number of specialized shows are contained in the Appendix and manufacturers should be aware that they can obtain further information on area trade shows and conferences from Canadian Trade Commissioner Posts in the market areas.

Selecting the Right Trade Show:

It should be noted that, while a number of trade shows mentioned previously attract national and even international exhibitors, their audiences are primarily regional and the majority of sales leads obtained will be local.

Choosing the right show can be a problem. Canadian exporters should check the trade press events calendars which usually list shows up to one year in advance to determine which shows cover their specific products in the targeted marketing area. It is also advisable to check that there will be no competition from "national" shows in the same time frame, which could affect the attendance level at the chosen show.

We advise Canadian companies to contact Canadian Consulates in the marketing area. Commercial Officers from the Consulates know the leading trade shows in their areas and can assist in selection.

The show management or organizers will provide prospective exhibitors with show profiles and attendance audits. Using the information obtained it will generally be possible to measure the approximate cost per potential visitor and the principal reason why customers attend.

It is advisable to make a space reservation as early as possible. Competition for space, particularly at the larger shows, is fierce and space is limited. Late comers often find they are allocated space away from the main show traffic.

Special Shows/User Group Meetings:

Some products may benefit from exposure at a specialist show or conference. DEC communications or database software, real estate management software, data logging equipment, and many other products fall into this category. The type of special event that Canadian manufacturers should consider includes area realtors shows, Instrument Society of America conferences, Unix User Group meetings, and many others.

Participation costs for special events are likely to be considerably lower than for trade shows. It is important, however, to have technical specialists available at these events who can discuss technical problems with specialist customers.

Costs/Getting the Most Out of Trade Shows:

It is often expensive to exhibit at a trade show. Typical costs can be in the vicinity of Cdn. \$10,000-\$12,000 (including space rental, travel, salaries, and expenses; but not including the cost of a custom stand). Trade shows are considered the single most effective way of promoting products to a large number of potential customers. In order to justify the costs, however, it is necessary to qualify the leads obtained and make the right moves to conclude business with an acceptable percentage of those potential customers. For this reason it is essential to bring the best possible sales people to the show and to be properly organized to follow up all the leads. It is important to remember that it costs a visitor on the average \$700

Table 11.1

COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCE: LEADING COMPUTER SHOWS FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN MARKET

Show/Sponsoring organization	Venue Next show	Year/Month	Total Sq. Footage	Length of show	Open to Canadians/Foreigners	Data on Last Show Exhibitors		
						Total	Canadian	Attendees
Comdex Interface Group	Las Vegas Conv. Cent.	Nov. '83	500,000	4 days	Yes \$19.50 ft ²	1500	20	70,000
	Atlanta	April '84	350,000	4 days	"	700	-	35,000
WCC Show Amer. Fed. Info. Processing Soc.	Las Vegas Location varies	May '84	370,000	5 days	Yes \$17-19 ft ²	655	9	100,000
Office Automation Show Amer. Fed. Info. Processing Soc.	L.A. Conv. Center	Feb. '84	90,000	3 days	Yes \$17-19 ft ²	150	3	20,000
Hescon Electronic Conventions Inc.	San Fran. Even years in Anaheim	Nov. '83	144,000	4 days	Yes \$1900/2000 booth	800	15	70,000
Mini/Micro West Electronic Conventions Inc.	San Fran. Even years Anaheim	"	27,000	"	"	182	3	32,000
MOCA Show National Computer Graphics Assn.	San Fran. Performing Arts Center	June '84	140,000	4 days	Yes \$15-18 ft ²	206	4	22,473
Consumer Elec- tronics Show Electronic Industries Assn.	Las Vegas Conv. Center	Jan. '84	700,000	4 days	Yes \$7-9.50 ft ²	1250	-	80,000
	Chicago McCormick Place	June '84	"	"	"	"	"	"
Word Processing Office Technology Carlsidge Assn.	San Jose Conv. Center	Oct. '84	125,000	3 days	Yes \$950 booth	150	-	32,500

Source: Show management various shows.