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## The Trade Show: A Living Marketing Phenomenon

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THE TRADE SHOW: A LIVING MARKETING PHENOMENON

by

Russell F. Fjeldsted

Report No. 2 submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Plan B

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1969

## PREFACE

The information available on Trade Shows and their function in the marketing field is very limited. In researching this paper the author reviewed many marketing and financial publications, marketing publications and readings, but found little information in these publications.

At this point I wrote Dr. Stanley Johnson, Chairman, Department of Marketing, San Francisco State College; Dr. Alfred Gross, Chairman, Department of Business Administration, New York University; Theodore D. Ellsworth, Professor of Retail Management, New York University; and Dr. Gene Grape, Professor of Business Administration, Northern Arizona State College, Flagstaff, Arizona. These gentlemen provided me with the data I was seeking. The best source of information is the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, New York. This organization provided several pamphlets which they have edited on the subject of Trade Shows. Their knowledge of the Trade Show function ought to be available to more students of marketing and business administration, since these shows are becoming increasingly important as a sales and promotion medium. My purpose in writing this paper is to further expand the information available on this subject.

Russell F. Fjeldsted

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## A HISTORY OF THE TRADE SHOW

In the first chapter of the Book of Esther, we are told of an exhibition created by King Ahasuerus. In the third year of his reign he staged a huge fair to display "the riches of his glorious Kingdom and the honor of his excellent Majesty." This event was a forerunner of today's world fair. It lasted "many days, even an hundred and fourscore days." Interestingly enough, that span equals exactly a current world's fair season.<sup>1</sup>

Prophet Ezekiel in the ancient city of Tyre makes mention of its markets where wares were displayed--silver, iron, tin, horses, mules, precious stones, gold and fine linens. Traders came from all over the Biblical world to examine the products on display and buy the wares.<sup>2</sup>

### Early industrial fairs

In 1268, in Venice, there is a record of trade and industrial displays in a grand procession along the canals. Leipzig, Germany, has had a trade fair regularly for eight hundred years.<sup>3</sup>

Originally, products on display at Biblical and ancient fairs were sold

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<sup>1</sup> Education Committee, Opportunities in the World of Exhibits (New York: Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, 1966), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

right at the stall where they were displayed. Little attempt was made to make the products especially appealing. However, soon the advantages of taking products off the ground and hanging them up at eye level was seen as a stimulus to sales.<sup>4</sup>

All ancient fairs grew up in the large commercial centers--seaports or where caravan routes crossed. They were timed to the seasons. Most were at harvest time.<sup>5</sup>

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, commercial fairs took on a new dimension. Instead of exhibitors' showing only the actual products to be sold or traded on the spot, they showed samples of products to be delivered at a later date. Because only samples were shown, these events became known as "sample fairs." Many present-day trade fairs in Europe still retain "sample fairs" in their titles.<sup>6</sup>

#### New objective

Biblical and ancient fairs were developed for trade. A new objective was given to fairs with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. The first industrial exposition opened in Paris in 1798. An exhibition was held in Philadelphia when the United States was less than half a century old, to show off its new industry to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

the world. About 30 years later, 1851, the British Empire staged what is considered to be the first world's fair. It was held in London in a handsome "Crystal Palace" and displayed the products of the far-flung British colonies.<sup>7</sup>

Not to be outdone, a world's fair was produced in New York City two years later. It, too, was staged in a crystal palace, almost an exact replica of the British site. Dublin, also, was site of a world's fair in 1853.<sup>8</sup>

These world's fairs were a long way from the fairs of King Ahasuerus in his Shushan Palace, but the way products were exhibited probably was not vastly different.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. , p. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. , p. 21

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. , p. 6.



## A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MARKETING DEVICE

We live in a three-dimensional world. We perceive the world around us through our senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

And yet, most media we use to communicate with each other transmit to only one or two senses. Radio-television, movies, newspapers, magazines, books--these tools use only a part of the communications spectrum. None offers a realistic three-dimensional look at our world.

The ideal medium to transmit facts and ideas would be one that uses all three dimensions and that can stimulate all five senses.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until late in the Nineteenth Century that imagination was applied to the way products were shown. New technologies in construction and materials, plus experimentation in the arts, congealed into a new discipline--three-dimensional presentation. It started in 1876 at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia and picked up momentum in Paris in 1889 where symbolic architecture--the Eiffel Tower--was added to international exhibitions.<sup>2</sup>

Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis, 1904, may be remembered today for the song, "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louie," and for the "observation wheel" created by an engineer named Ferris. But, it presented one of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

finest industrial exhibits ever developed up to that time. For instance, a complete textile manufacturing machine was in operation at the fair. This new dimension--operating factory equipment--was a forerunner of what is a common and productive exhibit technique today: demonstration of actual equipment in operation.<sup>3</sup>

Display design took a leap forward at the first world's fair on the West Coast--San Francisco, 1915. For instance, a display of fresh fruit was arranged in the shape of a windmill. Artistry was being applied to the presentation of products--an advance from the pile of produce on the bare grounds of ancient bazaars.<sup>4</sup>

Chicago was the site of the first of the modern world's fairs. Its "Century of Progress" (1933) saw the substantial participation of industry in the construction of pavilions. Heretofore, pavilions were built by governments. Now, private industry started to compete with national pavilions for the interest of fair visitors.<sup>5</sup>

In 1939, the New York World's Fair saw industry take over as dominant attention-getter. It was at this fair that most of today's exhibit skills and talents were developed. This was a testing grounds for new ideas and techniques in display design and construction. It was the basis for a giant stride in exhibit

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. , p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. , p. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. , p. 8.

progress. It proved the power of three-dimensional presentation to impart knowledge and to involve audiences with an idea.

With each new world's fair, the exhibit field attained new stature, explored new techniques, and acquired new skills. Brussels in 1958 saw experimentation in audio-visual equipment designed into exhibits. The world's fair in Seattle in 1962 saw further experimentation in creative use of films combined with live demonstration. New York World's Fair, 1964, saw still more advances: electronic controls of demonstrations, exhibits that involved all five senses at once, new light refracting plastic materials in display, spectacular movement of audiences en masse.<sup>6</sup>

While world's fairs are the big, glamorous exhibit events that capture the public imagination, they do not rival the impact of smaller annual fairs in many communities throughout America.<sup>7</sup>

Almost every state in the Union has a state fair and within each state there are many annual county fairs. Over 1,000 fairs are staged each year with attendance at the larger state fairs in excess of 1,000,000 persons. State Fair of Texas in Dallas annually attracts over 2,000,000 attendance.<sup>8</sup>

Fairs have a long and honorable history in America. Some fairs predate our Constitution--actually were held before the 13 colonies became

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. , p. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. , p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

a nation. Originally designed to stimulate agricultural progress, fairs have taken on the flavor of commerce as more and more mechanization has been applied to the farm.<sup>9</sup>

Today, many of the nation's farmers visit these fairs to see and compare the hundreds of products they use--from tractors and implements to feed grains and veterinary supplies. For the farmers, fairs have become business shows. For farm housewives, fairs have become shopping centers for homemaking. For the children and the entire family, fairs are annual fun outings.<sup>10</sup>

For industry, fairs are an opportunity to present new supplies, stimulate interest in a complete line of products and strengthen markets. The biggest opportunity for industrial exhibitors at fairs is to demonstrate product uses, and special product features.<sup>11</sup>

More than farmers attend fairs in America today. These events appeal to all the interests of the localities in which they are held. Their value in stimulating agriculture and commerce has been recognized by state governments which usually make cash appropriations to state fairs for facilities.<sup>12</sup>

From the ancient fairs, through the trade fairs in Europe, to the world's fairs, one similar element remained. All these events were opened

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

to the general public. Their attendances were huge, and gaiety and a pleasurable atmosphere were created. A visit to these fairs was primarily a fun experience for the public.<sup>13</sup>

The fun, however, interfered with the scientists and businessmen who came to these fairs to further their studies and advance their trades. So, parallel to the public events, a new kind of exhibit event developed. It was the trade or industrial show. It usually was sponsored by an association of professional people (physicians, architects, geologists, engineers) or an organization of businessmen (wholesale dry goods companies, automotive supplies jobbers, retail grocers).<sup>14</sup>

One big difference between these events and the fairs was that they were closed to the public. They were created to advance the arts, sciences, or business interests of a particular group. Usually they were held in conjunction with a convention--and this dual-event relationship still exists.<sup>15</sup>

From a few dozen shows in the United States for particular professions and industries at the turn of the century, the number of closed-to-the-public exhibitions grew to several hundred in the 1930's. By 1940 there were almost 500 such events.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> ibid.

<sup>14</sup> ibid., p. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> ibid., p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> ibid.

Following World War II, with the sudden burst of new sciences and technologies, and pent-up desires for products unavailable during the war, trade and industrial shows proliferated. By the 1950's there were 1,500 shows in the United States and in the 1960's there were 4,000 independent expositions or small exhibits connected to conventions of industrial, business or professional groups.<sup>17</sup>

### Exhibiting

Exhibiting is a unique medium. Its primary objective is to bring buyers and sellers together. At the average trade or industrial show are gathered the leading companies that manufacture or supply products in a particular industry. They show their wares to the most prominent users of these products. This concentration of interests in a particular field (business, industry or profession) at one place at the same time, is what gives the exhibit medium its great potential. It allows manufacturers to show their wares under the most favorable conditions, and it allows users to see, examine and compare the newest and best products within a short span of hours or days.<sup>18</sup>

Exhibit events serve a vital function for American industry and the thousands of scientists, technicians, physicians, engineers and businessmen who attend them. Exhibitions serve as huge "supermarkets" for industry

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<sup>17</sup> ibid., p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> ibid.

where products are not only displayed but also demonstrated. And trade and industrial shows are "supermarkets" where the customer can talk directly to the producer of the product. The physician can talk to the research scientists on the staff of the pharmaceutical company who developed the new drug. The electronics engineer can question the inventor of the new test equipment on display. The wholesaler can discuss terms and product promotion directly with the manufacturer's director of marketing. This ability to negotiate directly with the manufacturer is a prime value of exhibit events.<sup>19</sup>

No other communications medium provides the kind of comparison between products that can be made at a trade or industrial show. At a show, a buyer can try out a variety of products. He can look over the actual products, compare features, and get technical information directly from the producers while he is making his comparisons. This two-way communications is an invaluable asset to industry in its effort to better serve customers.<sup>20</sup>

#### Research "laboratory"

An exhibit event can be a ready-made research "laboratory." Because the leading individuals in an industry or profession attend their respective shows, their reactions to ideas, products or processes can be evaluated quickly--and comparatively inexpensively. By sampling opinions of show visitors, exhibiting

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 12-13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

companies learn many things.<sup>21</sup>

Great potential exists in the field of research in connection with exhibit events.

At a trade show a manufacturer might learn what products to produce in greater quantity because of interest expressed by show visitors. He might learn what products are no longer in favor and should be withdrawn from active promotion. Often a manufacturer learns new uses for his product through the discussions held in exhibit booths with show visitors. Trends in buying or product interests can be estimated by the sampling of an audience at a show.<sup>22</sup>

#### A new product "launching site"

Of the many values of trade and industrial shows, probably none is more important to industry than a show's capacity as "launching site" for new products. New products are speeded into use faster through introduction at a trade show than through any other marketing technique. Manufacturers of pharmaceuticals estimate that new drugs can get distribution throughout the medical profession three to six months faster when they are introduced at medical shows.<sup>23</sup>

While the life-saving capacities of new drugs in the hands of physicians six months earlier is dramatic, other new product introductions are also

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 13-14.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



important to the other professions and industries. For instance, new products in building and construction fields are often speeded through channels of distribution by not months but by years through trade show introductions.<sup>24</sup>

Thousands of architects and civil engineers may examine new materials and discuss their qualities at a show. It might take months of these same architects and engineers to see these materials if they did not attend a show. And, away from a show, they might never have an opportunity to talk to the executives of the companies that produce the new materials.<sup>25</sup>

Another advantage for manufacturers who exhibit at shows is that of publicity. Business publications and technical journals send editors and reporters to shows to seek out new products, new ideas and new trends. Probably no other events in industry attract so heavy a concentration of business press coverage. Thus, a manufacturer has an opportunity to talk to editors and reporters about newsworthy products or new developments. This opportunity for publicity is not an inconsiderable fringe benefit for exhibitors at shows.<sup>26</sup>

#### Live demonstration as a marketing technique

For whom does the exhibit producer of today work? He designs and creates three-dimensional presentations for every conceivable kind of company or organization. He develops exhibits to explain nuclear reactors to managers

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<sup>24</sup> ibid.

<sup>25</sup> ibid., p. 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> ibid., p. 14.

of utilities; he creates displays to show hardware dealers the newest line of doorknobs and hinges; he designs exhibits to instruct physicians in the use of advanced x-ray equipment or the applications of new drugs; he produces exhibits to stimulate the imagination of electronic engineers in the use of new circuitry components; or he might develop an exhibit at a country fair to teach school children the value of dental hygiene.<sup>27</sup>

Industry today uses the exhibit medium to further its marketing objectives. Some \$2 billion a year is spent in the field of exhibits. This includes the rental of huge auditoriums by managers of expositions. It includes the costs to design and construct exhibits. It includes the costs of transport exhibits, products and literature to shows, and the charges to erect the exhibits on the show floor and remove them after the show. It also includes the costs to staff exhibits with sales and technical personnel.<sup>28</sup>

For every industry or profession in the United States there is usually one or more trade or industrial shows. Most of these exhibitions are held on an annual basis. In addition to annual national shows, there are regional or state shows in many fields.<sup>29</sup>

Large companies that have wide lines of products may exhibit in several hundred trade shows a year. Some companies have complete departments

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 16-17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

to plan and schedule exhibits. In most companies, exhibits are the responsibility of the marketing staff and may be handled in the advertising, sales promotion or sales departments.<sup>30</sup>

The average number of shows in which the "average" company exhibits each year is seven. A few companies may be seen in as many as 400 shows. Some book publishers may have exhibits in almost 1,000 shows each year.

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<sup>30</sup> ibid.

## ORGANIZATION OF AN EFFECTIVE TRADE SHOW PARTICIPATION

Marketing through Trade Shows

Before embarking on any Trade Show program, management must have a clear objective in mind and make certain it is integrated with the total marketing program.<sup>1</sup> The aim of an exhibit may be to introduce a new product, or to demonstrate new uses of an old product, or to show the wide range of products in a line, or to attract new distributors or dealers, or to strengthen sales in a particular geographic market, or to open a new market. Often an exhibitor may have two or more objectives for his participation in a single show.<sup>2</sup>

The purchase of space in many national Trade Shows is organized to give priority to past exhibitors relative to the years they have exhibited. In any show, early application for space assures a better chance of securing choice of location.<sup>3</sup>

Size of space will be determined by the expected attendance, size and/or number of products and importance of the particular market represented

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<sup>1</sup>Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, "Quick Hints to Help You Get Good Results in the Trade Show." New York: Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, n.p. (Brochure.)

<sup>2</sup>Education Committee, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Exhibit Designers and Producers Association.

to your company. Size of staff is also relative.

The location of space will be influenced by traffic flow in the hall, location of utility outlets, ceiling heights, and the location of competitors. Show management will be glad to advise where competitors have reserved space. Traffic flow depends on entrances, location of meeting rooms, and location of major exhibitors. In many shows, saturation of entire show areas by exhibitors minimizes the importance of the large majority of locations.<sup>4</sup>

### Scheduling

A time schedule is imperative for a competent organization of Trade show participation. One should allow as much time as possible to avoid last-minute rushes.

The following is a time schedule used by successful exhibitors:

Opening date of the show.

Begin installation (avoid costly weekend double time).

Shipping date (allow enough time for unexpected delays).

Viewing date (allow enough time before shipping date for possible changes).

Date for start of construction.

Date for final okay of exhibit design and completion of copy.

Date(s) for consultation with your designer/producer.

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<sup>4</sup> bid.

Date for corporate theme.

An exhibit designed and built on a well-planned schedule will be effective for the exhibitor and the exhibit builder and will generally insure better results.<sup>5</sup>

### Product

What products should be displayed? The answer to this question should be: Only products of interest to the market represented at the particular show.

Products should be displayed in an uncluttered way with enough space around each one so that it can be readily examined by prospective customers. The Trade Show visitor may have seen many exhibits before. He is more likely to remember a few well-displayed products than a whole exhibit crowded with product samples. Products should be identified clearly to avoid wasting the visitor's time and possibly easing his interest by suggesting too much information.<sup>6</sup>

A new product, model or service can be a big attraction. It is good showmanship to give these new items top consideration.

Demonstration of the product is always effective salesmanship. The activity of the demonstration, whether it is live, mechanical or participation by

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<sup>5</sup> ibid.

<sup>6</sup> ibid.

the visitor will provide an additional attraction and focal point for the space.<sup>7</sup>

### Developing the exhibit

Designing the exhibit is a job for the specialist; these are professional exhibit designers in the marketing area. These people know the techniques of the exhibit medium that can best tell a product and a company story. They are constantly involved with the materials, current methods, and problems of exhibit production. They are aware of individual show regulations and size limitations, and know how to plan an exhibit for economical shipping and installation.<sup>8</sup>

Information needed for designing an exhibit will be the corporate theme, description of the products, their number and sizes, and the sales features that will appeal to the particular Trade show audience. A thorough understanding of the market is also necessary.<sup>9</sup>

Clearly defined objectives will save design costs and assure a plan well-organized for sales results.

### Types of exhibits

There are four basic types of exhibits. These are summarized as follows:

1. Architectural units. These units feature and allow the designer

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

maximum freedom with form and materials and are likely to be most effective visually. Packing cases can be engineered for fast packing and maximum protection during shipment with individual felt-lined spaces for exhibit components. Exhibit and cases can be counted on to give service for many shows with minimal maintenance.<sup>10</sup>

2. Single use exhibits. These exhibits are similar to architectural units except that they are made of less permanent materials and with simpler details and finish. They can be shipped in crates that are often lined with corrugated board, or they can be shipped by van lines, or even built on the site.<sup>11</sup>

3. Modular exhibits. These units are designed to provide the utmost flexibility for varied space size and for change of featured products. They can be architecturally attractive as well as practical, while being designed for itinerant use.<sup>12</sup>

4. Self-contained exhibits. These are a means of participating in a Trade Show program with a minimum of space and installation costs. The design possibilities are usually very limited.<sup>13</sup>

The reason for participating in a Trade show is to convey a product story. The cost of the exhibit is only a fraction of the total cost of participation;

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<sup>10</sup> ibid.

<sup>11</sup> ibid.

<sup>12</sup> ibid.

<sup>13</sup> ibid.



often a small increase in the investment will greatly increase the ultimate effectiveness of Trade Show participation in terms of valuable contracts, sales leads, and in reduction of cost per lead.<sup>14</sup>

### Personnel

Choice of booth personnel is one of the most important phases of trade shows participation. They should have these qualities:

1. Knowledge of product and product application.
2. Ability to impart that knowledge to others.
3. Ability to demonstrate products or services.
4. Willingness to work the long trade show hours.

If local men do not qualify, it is a good investment to bring in the best men possible. Trainees must be backed by professionals.

An expert is necessary when there are apt to be technical questions-- especially in an engineering type of Trade Show.

Supervision of personnel keeps the sales activity running smoothly. One man should be in charge. He should be responsible for:

- Manning schedule
- Punctuality of personnel
- Neatness in men's appearance
- Keeping the salesmen active

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<sup>14</sup>bid.

Tabulating the number of leads

Keeping the exhibit clean and operating properly

Written instructions or a pre-show meeting can make every man aware of what to do and how to do it. A Trade Show participation should be organized like any well-run sales campaign.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> ibid.

## ORGANIZING THE SERVICES

### Shipping

A show management organization can provide an Exhibitor's Manual which contains detailed information for addressing shipments. These instructions have to be followed carefully. Shipping labels are generally marked: "Show Material: Do Not Delay."<sup>1</sup>

Packing cases are generally color coded so that they can be easily recognized among other cases.

Carrier selection is important. Each type of service has qualities for a particular requirement of size, speed or cost: truck, railroad, railway express, air freight, air express or van line. A traffic department within the exhibitor's company can best advise on carrier selection.

Scheduling shipment should leave ample time for unforeseen delays in loading, transfer and receipt of material at the exhibit hall.

Shipping information (way bill or bill of lading) should be sent immediately after the shipment leaves the receiving agent, to the installation contractor and the representative at the Trade Show site.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

### Installation and dismantling

The scheduling of installation should be taken care of at the earliest possible time so that labor will be available at straight time charges.

Qualified installation service can be obtained through the exhibit producer. He will employ his own men or will suggest a reliable associated contractor. These men know their way around the hall, they can take responsibility for the details, and give a worry-free installation.

Official service organizations who can furnish carpenters, labor, electricians, etc., are listed in the Exhibitor's Manual.

Use of salesmen as installation men is found to be uneconomical by most companies. The salesman's time should be most valuable in making sales. He will not approach Trade Shows with a positive sales point of view if he is saddled with this responsibility, and is tired before starting his main job--that of sales.

### Services

Carpet and Floor Tile	Furniture
Decoration	Labor Services
Drayage	Photography
Electrical	Signs
Florist	Telephone

Show management's Exhibitor's Manual usually includes order forms for these services. The suggestion is made that you order any service weeks in

advance so that the contractors can schedule their work. A check on arrival at the hall to make sure that the work you have ordered is on schedule is essential.

Furniture may be necessary for visitors. However, a seated, relaxed salesman repels inquiry. There is a need for waste baskets and smokers if you want a tidy exhibit. Cost racks detract from the appearance of the space; exhibitors can have their exhibit producers construct a closet for coats and hats as well as for literature and inquiry card storage.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>ibid.

## THE PLUS POSSIBILITIES

### Use of literature

Product literature is sometimes a good supplement to Trade show activity because it gives the visitor something to remind him of the features and benefits of the product you have shown him in the exhibit. Frequently he can use the literature to tell the story to the person in his company who has the buying power.

Methods of literature distribution vary with different exhibitors.

Free access to literature makes for waste distribution.

Literature request cards with subsequent mailing get the literature to the interested visitor's desk where it will do the most good.

Special show literature, accessible to salesmen for distribution on request, makes for economical use.<sup>1</sup>

### Publicity

The Trade Show management frequently employs a firm to help publicize the trade show and the product that will be displayed. Prompt compliance with any request for product information or news release is important.

Trade paper publicity can be had before the show; news oriented to the product and its presentation at the show can be published in a related trade

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

paper that describes your company's participation and the product presented.

The external house organ is a sure-fire way of getting more mileage out of Trade Show activity.

Publicity in only one paper or magazine will easily justify the cost of publicity preparation.

Trade paper advertising ties in the exhibit with preshow trade paper advertising for greater attendance and interest at the show.<sup>2</sup>

### Reports

Evaluation reports are necessary to assess the worth of Trade Show participation. The report on each show should take into consideration the following:

Each trade show as an effective market--if not, why not.

Effectiveness of the exhibit.

Performance of the personnel.

It should include opinions and recommendations of the salesmen and the sales manager. A file of reports such as these will furnish direction toward a continuous and effective trade show program.

Intra-company reports help make company officers and personnel in general aware of the Trade Show program and its place in the total marketing plan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

HOW A TEXTILE MANUFACTURER USES FASHION TRADE SHOWS  
AS A MARKETING DEVICE

Monsanto Chemical and fashion Trade Shows

Mr. Charles A. Hix, Projects Publicity Manager for Monsanto Chemical, Textiles Division, provides some insight as to how his company utilizes fashion Trade Show..

The number of Trade Shows in the textile field has proliferated in recent years. In fact, a conservative estimate is that the quantity has more than doubled in the last decade.<sup>1</sup>

This situation places the manufacturer or the ingredient supplier in the textile industry in a rather paradoxical position: there is a greater demand to enter industry events, but because of the large expenditures required for display and labor costs, a company must be more selective about which show to participate in.<sup>2</sup>

At Monsanto Company, the Textiles Division determines its involvement in trade shows by their importance to specific markets.

For example, during 1968, the fashion segment of Monsanto's Textiles Division participated in twelve trade exhibitions.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles A. Hix, Projects Publicity Manager, Monsanto Chemical, Textile Division, New York, personal communication, February 6, 1969.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.



Of course, the significance of these varies greatly.

One of the major prerequisites for Monsanto's choosing to enter an industry event is the size of the show. If it attracts an important segment of our distribution, participation is obviously more attractive.

Three shows of special interest to Monsanto are the Knitting Arts, the Men's Retail Association and the National Outerwear Shows.<sup>3</sup>

At such events Monsanto generally displays fashions made of fabrics manufactured of fiber produced by Monsanto.<sup>4</sup>

Knit goods, for example, represent a highly profitable area for Monsanto.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the Knitting Arts Show is an important showcase for Monsanto to show developments in this very sizable market. The same is true of the other shows mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

It is estimated that 5 to 10 per cent of Monsanto's merchandising effort goes into Trade Shows.<sup>7</sup>

While at first this figure might seem minimal, it must be remembered the trade show is fundamentally an indirect and passive way of conducting

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<sup>3</sup> ibid.

<sup>4</sup> ibid.

<sup>5</sup> ibid.

<sup>6</sup> ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ibid.

business.<sup>8</sup>

While such events are important to the retailer and manufacturer in establishing an overview of a whole industry, most shows in the fashion area do not result in any immediate sales activity.

On the other hand, the traffic at a successful Trade Show is usually very heavy. And such exposure is invaluable.

No merchandising program would be complete or well-rounded without participation in Trade Shows.<sup>9</sup>

#### Celanese Fibers Marketing Company uses Trade Shows

Celanese Fibers' Manager of Public Relations and Advertising Projects, William R. Cox, provides the following information on their use of Trade Shows.<sup>10</sup>

As a fiber producer, Celanese must market its branded fibers through the entire textile distribution chain: spinner and throwster to mill, to converter and his dyers and finishers, to the apparel and home furnishings manufacturers, to the retailer, to the consumer.<sup>11</sup>

Their marketing tools consist of expertise in fashion forecasting, fabric development, customer service in all fabric processing, merchandising,

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<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ibid.

<sup>10</sup> William R. Cox, Manager, Public Relations and Advertising Projects, Celanese Fibers Marketing Company, New York, personal communication, February 6, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> ibid.

and promotion. These are all provided under the umbrellas of their licensed trademarks, Arnel for triacetate, Fortrel for polyester, Celara for textured acetate knits, Celabond for fabrics bonded to the Celanese acetate in tricot backing fabrics, textured Celanese nylon, Cedilla nylon, et al.<sup>12</sup>

Licensed trademarks are provided only to those fabrics that meet the tests for performance based upon their intended end use.

With the above as a preamble, the author's inquiry of January 23, 1969, regarding their use of Trade Shows, was answered. They use the Trade Shows as a means of exhibiting the above services in the booth and providing the services in the conference sessions. They attempt to have personnel present who hold expertise in all those areas mentioned. In this way they gain the maximum benefit of a Trade Show--a concentrated audience of those now using their fibers or potential users of their fibers. They are able to supply those services "on the spot" and thereby promote a better understanding of why companies should be using their fibers--because of the great array of aid they supply them in (1) creating saleable products, and (2) selling those products profitably.<sup>13</sup>

Manufacturers attending the shows gain the most from them in the area of fashion forecasting and new fabric resources. Retailers gain the same but also receive traffic-building advertising and in-store promotions they create and adapt for them. Celanese gains by attracting new business, firming old business,

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<sup>12</sup> ibid.

<sup>13</sup> ibid.

and gathering trade information.<sup>14</sup>

The retailer utilizes Trade Shows

Department stores, discount stores, specialty stores, chain stores, etc., all receive frequent invitations from suppliers to attend Trade Shows. A retailer, therefore, has to limit his use and/or attendance of the shows to those which will be most profitable to him.

The general manager of a specialty store selling men's, women's, and children's skis and ski clothing recently received the following schedule of Trade shows which will be held in 1968 and 1969. He would receive some beneficial knowledge from most of them, and would be required to attend several of them to buy merchandise and stay abreast of the market.

The Trade Shows are calendered as follows:

1. International Ski and Winter Sports Show  
The Cow Palace  
Geneva Ave., San Francisco, California  
October 3-6
2. Portland Ski Fair  
Memorial Coliseum--Convention Hall  
Portland, Oregon  
October 18-20
3. Spoga International Trade Fair  
Cologne, Germany  
October 20-22
4. National Sporting Goods Association Annual Show  
The Astro Hall  
Houston, Texas  
February 2-6

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<sup>14</sup> ibid.

5. Ski Industries of America  
Ambassador Hotel and Statler Hilton  
New York, N. Y.  
April 19-24
6. Ski Council of America Snow Shows  
The Palmer House  
Chicago, Illinois  
April 19-23
7. Western Winter Sports Market Week  
Albany Hotel  
Denver, Colorado  
April 13-17<sup>15</sup>

A post-show survey conducted by the Ski Industries of America among exhibitors at its New York and Los Angeles Trade Shows indicated that a majority of the exhibitors recorded sales increases over the previous year's shows. Eighty per cent of the New York exhibitors reported increases; 73 per cent of the Los Angeles exhibitors showed increases. Twenty-two per cent of the responders said sales at the New York show were 25 to 49 per cent higher than at last year's event. Twelve per cent of the Los Angeles exhibitors reported increases of 10 to 24 per cent. The responders suggested lengthening both shows by a day, a move already taken by the membership.<sup>16</sup>

It is obvious from the recorded sales increases above that exhibitors are properly and effectively utilizing this Trade Show as a sales medium for retailers. At the retail level, buyers are involved in looking, comparing,

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<sup>15</sup>Editorial, Skiing Trade News, September, 1968, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup>ibid.

screening and buying products.

Retail buyers will also write "Hold for Confirmation" orders at Trade Shows. That is, the buyer attends the show, sees merchandise he wants and writes orders on certain items. On a "Hold for Confirmation" basis, he takes descriptions of the merchandise, compares and selects. He then may attend another Trade Show to compare items with those he has observed previously. The buyer now decides to confirm or cancel the orders after "shopping" the markets available to him. He can make more effective buying decisions by utilizing this method of buying.

Department stores, sporting good stores, furniture dealers, and nearly all retailers have Trade Show Associations, providing buying, shopping or comparing shows. The retailer in today's highly competitive market has to "hunt and peck" for the best values in the market place.

The importance of holding Trade Shows as a basic selling medium for retail buyers cannot be overemphasized. The retailer has an opportunity to "shop the market" in making buying determinations and decisions.

#### Manufacturers as Trade Show participants

Clothing apparel manufacturers hold annual Trade Shows in conjunction with their conventions. These shows are also "shopping and buying" shows.

A news release from the American Textile Reporter, February 6, 1969, related this information:

The American Apparel Manufacturers Association held its 1969 "Panorama for Progress at Convention Hall in Miami Beach, Florida,

June 18-21.

The most complete Trade Show for apparel manufacturers, the Panorama featured eleven management seminars by leading consultant firms, promising apparel manufacturers practical new ideas and procedures for more efficient, profitable operations.<sup>17</sup>

Apparel industry suppliers, the exhibitors in this show, offered a look at the latest automated equipment, machinery and services available to the apparel manufacturer. Convention Hall offered exhibitors 70,000 net square feet of exhibit space.<sup>18</sup>

The management seminars, designed for executives at every level of company structure, ran concurrently on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday mornings. Four were held on Thursday, three on Friday and four on Saturday.

A. A. M. A. 's (American Apparel Manufacturer's Association) Technical Advisory Committee presented its 1969 paper entitled "Raw Material Management--A Systems Approach" at its luncheon on Saturday. The Annual Presidential Gala was held Friday evening at the Fontainebleau Hotel.<sup>19</sup>

We thus see how Trade Shows are utilized on nearly all phases of the marketing distribution system.

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<sup>17</sup> Editorial, American Textile Reporter, February 6, 1969.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## THE TRADE SHOW: A WORLD OF IDEAS

The world of exhibits is a creative field. It is an area where ideas are translated into three-dimension. It is a field where many talents and skills are blended. It is a combination of marketing accumen, artistic inventiveness, craftsmanship and managerial skills. These skills and talents are found in the professional organizations that design and produce exhibits.<sup>1</sup>

Exhibits come in all sizes--for they must match the space assigned at a show. Exhibitors rent space at a show by the square foot--usually in multiples of 80 or 100 square feet. A single-space unit--usually 8 feet by 10 feet or 10 feet by 10 feet--is called a booth. (In shows abroad, the unit is called a stall.) An exhibitor may rent one, two or many booths at a show, depending on his marketing needs, the kinds of products he has to offer and his relative position in the industry. Space costs at shows vary from approximately \$2.50 to \$5.40 per square foot. Some exhibit events charge a little less and some charge more.<sup>2</sup>

Cost of space rental for an exhibitor seldom represents more than 25 per cent of his total cost to exhibit. For an average exhibitor, space rental is a small part of the total investment in time, money, and personnel.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Education Committee, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



Costs of professionally designed and constructed exhibits may be amortized--and usually are--over many show uses. Designers consider multiple uses for exhibits, and they plan exhibit components that will serve in many different kinds of shows and in a variety of spaces with simple and inexpensive changes. Thus, cost per use of a professionally designed and used exhibit may be relatively low compared to an exhibitor's investment in booth personnel and other associated costs of exhibiting.<sup>4</sup>

While the exhibit design and production organization combines most of the skills in communications in three dimensions, there are also exhibit specialists in other organizations. Giant corporations have complete exhibit departments or sections within marketing departments. Almost every manufacturer must have someone within the company with knowledge of the exhibit medium--for the average company participates in a trade or industrial show on an average of one every eight weeks.<sup>5</sup>

Special managerial skills in the exhibit medium are required in the organizations that plan and stage trade and industrial shows, expositions and fairs. Show managements may be independent producers or may be staff members or associations that sponsor exhibitions. Sometimes trade or professional associations will plan and manage shows themselves; sometimes they hire professional exposition management companies. Some management

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

companies create industrial shows independent of sponsorship (or profit participation) by associations in the fields covered by the shows.<sup>6</sup>

Knowledge of the exhibit medium may be found in still other areas: in convention and exposition hall managements, large hotels, convention bureaus in major cities and transportation lines that handle exhibit shipments.<sup>7</sup>

In the field of exhibits there are needs for a great variety of talents and skills which can be acquired in colleges and universities and industrial schools. In addition to the professional careers in engineering (mechanical, electrical and electronics) and architecture these other courses supply valuable backgrounds for exhibit work: marketing, statistics, psychology, industrial design, fine arts, communications (audio-visual presentation), advertising and journalism.<sup>8</sup>

The exhibit field combines many rewards for those involved in it. They enjoy the kind of excitement you might find in the theater; and the sense of helping to transmit knowledge for the growth and improvement of our nation's health, economy, and well-being.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. , p. 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. , p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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