VOL. 1 *April 29, 2021*



THE RETURN TO IN-PERSON

Your guide to navigating trade shows & events in 2021 and beyond.

TRUST US, WE GET IT...

There's an abundance of information circulating about how the trade show and event industry is planning to return safely, effectively, and efficiently. The evolving regulations and changing protocols can feel overwhelming at times but rest assured, we're here to help.

We have committed an internal task force including a dedicated expert to collect and consolidate guidelines pertinent to the safe return of in-person events into this FAQ guide. The responses have been gleaned from research into the top 50 major trade shows and associations, in addition to the top 60 convention centers, globally.

While this guide provides an aggregate overview as a starting point for planning, we still recommend referencing the individual rules and regulations of each trade show and event you plan to attend, as variations do exist. If you need help accessing the respective guidelines, please connect with your Derse account team. Don't hesitate to reach out to us on our website for guidance. Also, we've included additional resources in our appendix that provide detailed safety and wellness specifications to help your organization feel comfortable and safe in your own return to in-person events.

ESSENTIAL TAKEAWAYS

Outlined below is a summarization of the key insights from the topics we have researched. For more in-depth insights and recommendations, we encourage you to jump to the section using the respective hyperlinks below.

INDUSTRY SENTIMENT Jump to Section

- Audiences are eager to get back to face-to-face engagements. Based on a recent McKinsey & Company study, approximately 70% of audiences will be comfortable gathering face to face at customer events by Q3 of 2021, with 95% ready by Q1 of 2022.
- Epistemix predicts a nearly 0% transmission rate of COVID-19 at an event hosting 20,000 people by this summer.
- 89% of event organizers say even when face-to-face meetings resume, virtual elements will remain critical to their post-pandemic event strategy.

STRATEGY & PLANNING (

Jump to Section

- To define success, we recommend focusing on the potentially higher ratio of quality interactions with qualified audiences who have the intent to connect, learn, network, and purchase
- Clarify or redefine the role that each of your trade shows and events play in supporting the larger sales and marketing process and assign metrics accordingly
- To help streamline budgeting, consider prioritizing decisions based on the core functional elements needed to engage audiences in person and build your strategies accordingly

SAFETY & WELL-BEING

Jump to Section

- At this time, industry-wide mandates for vaccines are not required for entry; however, some show organizers including AGC and CHEST are considering them as a pre-requisite for attendance
- On-site temperature checks remain a primary method of attendee screening with contract tracing being a secondary safety measure for international trade shows
- Many show organizers and onsite support staff are looking to the IAEE published guidelines for suggested protocols in required screenings, PPE, cleaning measures, and social distancing applications
- Following CDC health and safety recommendations and face mask mandates exist for the majority of show organizers. In some cases, bandannas, vented masks, face shields, and neck gaiters are not allowed, so be sure to reference each exhibitor service manual for further guidance.

S EXHIBIT DESIGN Jump to Section

- Social distancing guidelines are recommended domestically but mandated internationally. The current capacity recommendation is one person per 28 sq. ft. and your international footprints is 2.5m2.
- Limitations on audience dwell times have not been set domestically or internationally; however, some international shows have required timestamp recording of entry and exit.
- Guidelines on directional traffic, designated entrances & exits, and staggered show floor access vary among show organizer guidelines, so be sure to consult your individual exhibitor service manuals.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT Jump to Section

- The key to engaging audiences will be focusing on removing the friction from the experience by including options for touchless technologies, integrating visitors' smartphones, and ensuring adequate physical spacing between properties
- Consideration could also be made to engage at-home audiences who are not able to attend in person through the use of livestream content, digital / virtual experiences, and on-demand content

STAFFING Jump to Section

 Based on aggregate standards, proper staffing etiquette includes wearing face coverings, maintaining social distance, and respecting individual attendees' levels of comfort regarding greetings and interactions

APPENDIX Jump to Section

• List of resources we recommend staying up to date with.



INDUSTRY SENTIMENT



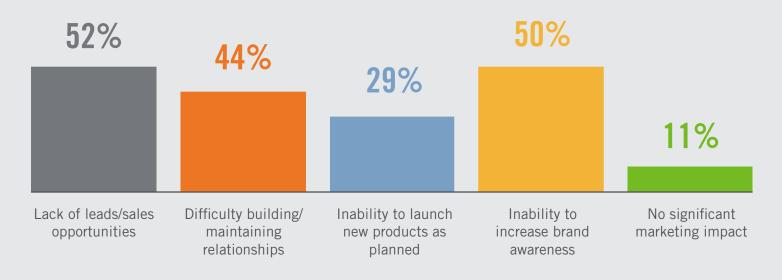
As the in-person and live event industry continues to return, many trade show professionals are facing the same question: "When will we get back to 'normal'?"

There's a number of variables that need to be considered including national vaccine distribution, state and local regulations, association safety measures, corporate travel guidelines, and stakeholders' comfortability, but the following statistics are intended to give you broad perspective from leading experts.

After more than a year with no in-person events, many companies haven't been able to drive business forward to the scale they had previously with in-person trade shows. As a result, it has become very clear how important face-to-face marketing is to achieve your goals.

EXHIBITOR INSIGHTS REPORT IMPACT OF COVID ON THE TRADE SHOW INDUSTRY - MARCH 22, 2021

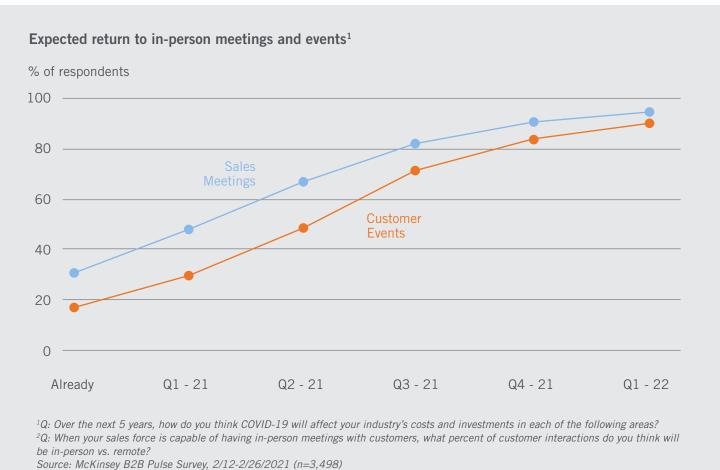
How has the cancellation and/or postponement of live trade shows impacted your company?



Source: HCEA / Exhibitor Insights Report, Impact of COVID on the Trade Show Industry

Although variability in corporate travel restrictions and attendee comfort levels still remain, there is a very positive outlook in the return of face-to-face marketing.

According to a recent study by McKinsey & Company, 70% of respondents targeted Q3 of 2021 for a return of customer events, while 95% were confident of a return by Q1 2022.





In partnership with Epistemix, a world leader in analytics, GO LIVE Together / ECA modeled out the anticipated risk levels for events in the coming year. The model was based on the following three objectives:

Forecast the potential level of immunity at a given date based on historical infection rates at a given location, different assumptions about vaccination rates, and future potential impact of new variants

Estimate the likely number of infectious people who may attend based on the size of the event and origin of attendees Calculate the number of infections we might expect at the event given the range of protective measures that could be implemented

THE CONCLUSION:

Epistemix predicts a nearly

0% TRANSMISSION RATE OF COVID-19

at an event hosting 20,000 people this summer through the safety and well-being measures adopted by the industry and the trends in vaccine rates.

Source: EDPA / Go LIVE Together



STRATEGY & PLANNING



1. How should success be defined in the coming year?

Overall, total attendance will likely be lesser than usual due to capacity limitations, corporate travel restrictions, and personal decisions to attend virtually for the time being. However, there is a unique opportunity to have a higher percentage of quality interactions with motivated audiences to drive business forward. In other words, the audiences that do attend in-person events are likely to be serious in their intent to connect, learn, network, and purchase. There is also pent-up demand for those organizations that rely on face-to-face engagement to research, demonstrate products/value, and connect decision-making teams together to complete the sales journey.

While goal setting often takes historical performance into account, no one has ever encountered an external factor that has adversely affected shows like COVID-19. With limited attendance, total engagements may be decreased from previous years, but a higher density of serious attendees should yield an increased percentage of qualified traffic/leads.

At this time, we recommend not making wholesale changes to your show schedule, but rather refocusing your efforts on how a specific trade show or event can support core step(s) in driving business forward.

To prepare and set attainable goals, we recommend:

- Clarifying the role that a specific trade show or event plays in the sales process and align KPIs accordingly
- When making staffing decisions, consider having a well-rounded selection of subject matter experts to handle pivots in the conversations. Consider formal training with staffers to hone in on the appropriate discussions to have with the various attendee groups.
- If using lead collection software, incorporate questions to help categorize and segment high-value leads more promptly for quicker follow-up.



2. How should budgets be established and aligned for the rest of the year?

As expectations for trade show and event marketing will need to be rebalanced in the coming year, budgeting and portfolio planning will also follow suit. When determining your portfolio / budget strategy for the coming year, consider the following questions to simplify and streamline your approach:

- Does this event have the ability to drive measurable value (sales potential from leads, reduction in T&E from centralized meetings, access to decision making teams / media influencers)?
- What are my core objectives per audience and per event? Then, what are the critical functional elements of the exhibit experience I need to accomplish them? Consider the exhibit, engagement, content, and calls-to-action.
- If in-person attendance will be limited, how do I plan to engage with the at-home audiences to maximize my audience and investment?



SAFETY & WELL-BEING

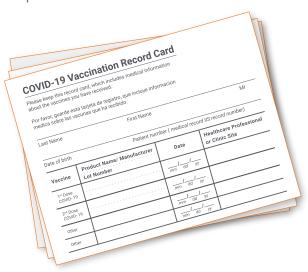


GRANTING ATTENDEE AND BOOTH STAFF ACCESS TO SHOW FLOOR

1. Will a vaccination be required to attend or exhibit?

As vaccination rollout continues, we have not seen major shows and convention centers officially indicate they will require proof of vaccination; however, proof of vaccination is under consideration by at least some show organizers including the Associated General Contractors (AGC) Convention, which is scheduled for September 21-23, 2021 and CHEST, a show scheduled for mid-October. One of the more stringent requirements for entry we have seen are negative test results within the past 72 hours and daily on-site temperature checks. In addition, we have seen that one show, the NAPA 401(k) Summit, mention they will make rapid COVID testing available on site at the convention center.

At this point we recommend staying well-informed of the any vaccination requirements your show organizers may be considering on a per-show basis, especially for healthcare shows as sentiment on this topic is likely to vary greatly. Because vaccinations are a personal decision, we recommend planning for additional / alternative staffers in case vaccinations are required and a selected staffer cannot meet the requirement.



2. What is the protocol for pre-show and/or onsite testing?

At this time we've seen very few events or convention centers require a negative COVID test as a prerequisite for attendance or entry. Nor have we seen any indication of required on-site testing for entry. As of now, the emphasis has been on temperature checks and screening for active symptoms of illness as a prerequisite for entry. This is combined with ample pre-show communications advising you not to travel and not to attend if you have been exposed to the virus or have symptoms.





TEMPERATURE CHECKS & SCREENING FOR ACTIVE SYMPTOMS



DO NOT TRAVEL IF YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED OR HAVE SYMPTOMS



3. If testing is required for admittance and a positive test result occurs during the course of the show, what actions need to be taken?

If one of your booth staffers tests positive for COVID, show management and the convention center must be notified immediately. We have found that many convention centers have medical personnel on staff and isolation rooms available to attend to COVID-19 cases. The convention center will then make sure all local reporting guidelines are followed.

We recommend being cooperative with onsite medical personnel and if the positive test was a staff member or booth visitor, you should notify all who may have been in contact with that person.

Beyond the show organizer or convention center protocols, before traveling, it is also important to understand the protocols established by your company's human resources department.



4. What are the protocols for contact tracing among attendees and staff?

We have found minimal information shared on the websites of various U.S. convention centers and show organizers addressing contact tracing. Rather, the emphasis is being placed on ensuring that potential COVID positive attendees or staff do not attend the event in the first place. This is in contrast to many of the European shows where visitor logs, badge scanning, and app technology are being deployed to track attendees throughout the conference and allow authorities to notify possible COVID-19 contacts of a positive test they may have potentially come in contact with.

Whether contact tracing is implemented or is under consideration at a domestic show, we suggest that in addition to adhering to all required safety protocols, you plan on keeping a daily log of any person who spends more than 15 minutes in your booth and if possible note the people who they spoke with so that if there is a presumptive COVID case amongst staff or booth visitors, potential close contacts can be notified. This will also be very important if you are considering utilizing pre-scheduled meetings in small groups.

For European shows, we suggest conducting ample research to understand the specific show regulations whether you're attending or exhibiting to ensure you're prepared for either scenario.





5. How does show floor access apply to I&D laborers and general contractor crews?

I&D laborers and general contractor crews are being asked to adhere to the same safety protocols as every other convention center worker and trade show attendee. These protocols include but are not limited to requiring:

- Face masks and possible additional PPE
- Health self-assessments
- Possible temperature checks
- Social distancing
- Additional (equipment) cleaning measures
- Require persons with symptoms to stay home

At this time, shows are taking place in cities and states where there are few limitations on the size of in-person gatherings.

Our preferred I&D partner, Sho-Link, has established guidelines that adhere to IAEE's suggested protocols, as well as many of the health and safety suggestions we are seeing from the CDC, show organizers, and convention centers. Leading up to your show, we recommend checking in with your onsite lead person if you have any questions or concerns.





PROTOCOLS FOR SANITATION, CLEANING, AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

6. Will hand sanitizer stations be provided to exhibitors? If so, is it at a cost?

Practically all convention centers and show organizers are making hand sanitizer stations available throughout the convention center and on the show floor. We have found that some show organizers are suggesting exhibitors provide additional hand sanitizer stations within their booths. Several of the larger general contractors have added hand sanitation stations to their rental offerings that can be ordered as a show service at the exhibitor's expense. In addition to ample hand sanitation stands, some show organizers like the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) are considering the implementation of sanitizer tunnels as an additional sanitation precaution.

Even though many areas of your event space will have ample hand sanitizer, as a safeguard, we recommend you plan accordingly and incorporate your own hand sanitation stations within your booth to reinforce safety measures for your staff and attendees. This could include simple hand-sanitizer pumps or full-size, contactless hand-sanitizer dispensers.

7. What is the expectation for overnight sanitation—will a crew sanitize the entire exhibit hall including all booth spaces? If so, would there be an additional charge? Or will exhibitors be responsible for their own proper cleaning?

Based on our research, nearly all convention centers and show organizers are instituting more frequent and enhanced cleaning of the exhibit halls and all common areas. The cleaning of the individual booth space and the costs associated with this will remain the responsibility of the exhibitor. Several organizers are requesting that exhibitors regularly disinfect their booth/stand throughout the course of the show. Several of the larger general contractors have added disinfecting services to their offerings in addition to standard cleaning.

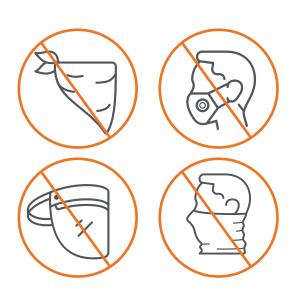
To accommodate common considerations and to bring comfort to attendees and staff, we recommend you frequently wipe down high-touch surfaces, train booth staff on proper cleaning protocols, and for larger exhibits, consider ordering enhanced cleaning services.



8. Will masks be mandated in all areas of the show floor?

Currently all event planners and convention centers are requiring masks to be worn in all indoor areas including the show floor. Many show organizers are requiring specific types of face masks and in some cases are not allowing bandannas, vented masks, face shields alone, and neck gaiters.

To abide by mask mandates and accommodate all attendees, we recommend having a supply of CDC-recommended masks available within your booth in case a staffer or attendee misplace their mask or are in need of a new one. Prior to the event, be sure to confirm the type of face covering permitted so you can plan accordingly for yourself and colleagues.



<u>IN SOME CASES</u>, SHOW ORGANIZERS ARE NOT ALLOWING BANDANNAS, VENTED MASKS, FACE SHIELDS ALONE, AND NECK GAITERS.

9. Who will enforce all of the show protocols to ensure attendee and staffer safety and wellbeing? Is this on each exhibiting company, the show organizer, convention center?

Several show organizers have indicated that they will have dedicated staff members functioning as safety ambassadors visible throughout the show to ensure health and safety protocols are followed. Others are requiring exhibitors, in advance of the show, to formally (in writing) agree to comply with all COVID-related health and safety rules. On the whole, we are seeing that the convention center staff will ensure health and safety protocols are being followed in common areas of the convention center. However, the exhibiting company is still expected to ensure visitors are in compliance when visiting their booth.

Based on our research we have not seen any convention centers or show organizers requiring special training or accreditations for exhibitors or show visitors beyond the recommended adherence to standard health and safety measures.

Acknowledgment and adherence to these protocols will greatly impact the experience visitors have at the show and can either positively or negatively impact the future of other shows. We strongly believe in the statement that Comfort is King; therefore, we recommend all staff members comply and adhere to all local health and safety protocols and ensure that their booth and its visitors are in compliance at all times.



10. Will my crates or any other show site deliveries be subject to cleaning protocols that could delay delivery timing?

We have found that several convention centers are working with show organizers to plan for possibly longer move-in periods to allow compliance with added safety measures. Most are requiring onsite and visiting logistics companies to implement enhanced cleaning protocols upon delivery.

It is important to note the concern about delivery delays is more of an effect of the overall increased volume of shipments versus any applicable cleaning protocols at convention centers. Shipping delays due to COVID-19 have been reported by providers like UPS and FedEx leading them to suspend their service guarantees.

To be sure your presence is not negatively affected by shipping delays, we recommend shipping to the advance warehouse when possible and minimize separate package shipments to the show floor.



11. What accreditations and/or groups should attendees and staffers track/follow?

We recognize that there are many groups and accreditations that are providing best practices regarding COVID-19 protocols, but at this time there is no single source that will have the exact answers and guidance you should follow. Among all the publications and information available from the CDC, IAEE, general contractors, convention centers, and associations, we consider the best approach to be a balance of information gathered from:

- Your company's policies and procedures
- Your stakeholders comfortability
- Local / state governance for where the show is located
- Show organizers regulations and protocols

We recommend you become familiar with the posted information relevant to your event and host city in advance of the show—early-on in the planning phase, but also frequently as the event grows near to be aware of any last-minute shifts. Also be sure to check what the airline requires before and during travel, especially if it pertains to international travel.



EXHIBIT DESIGN



FOOTPRINT AND FLOOR PLAN

1. How will social distancing mandates and capacity limitations affect the size and layout of my booth?

For domestic shows, we haven't found any current limitation on the size of the exhibit spaces. Physical distancing applies as a recommendation, not a rule, within individual booth spaces. For your exhibit space to provide ample room for social distancing, the current recommendation is one person per 28 square feet. For example, this would equate to 14 people within a 20' x 20' exhibit space. It is usually noted this is in accordance with local and venue regulations.

For international shows, we've seen mandated physical distance between attendees along with a guaranteed amount of open space to reduce crowd density. Mobile World Congress, scheduled for the end of June 2021 in Barcelona, is mandating a physical distance of 1.5m between attendees and crowd density of 2.5m2 per person. This includes all stand staff and attendees. For example, 100m2 of 'open space' shall have a maximum capacity of 40 people.

Based on our current understanding, we suggest you maintain your typical booth sizes to provide ample space for attendees & staff. You may also need to make adjustments within your exhibit space, rethink the way you prepare for the show, and based on exhibit size, adjust the number of booth staffers. For example:



Give adequate separation of elements within the exhibit to allow for natural physical distancing



Consider sending fewer people to staff the exhibit if attendance is expected to be lower



Pre-schedule meeting times to limit the number of people in your space at one time



Display signage in your exhibit space promoting physical distancing



If you typically display a lot of product, consider bringing only the most relevant product lines—the more open floor space the better



Anticipate areas of high traffic volume and plan to alleviate congestion through purposeful pathways



If your booth footprint is large, consider using crowd density technology (beacons / RFID) to keep an eye on the number of people in your space



2. What is the future of the conference room and in-booth meetings altogether?

From a domestic perspective, as of now, we have not seen any restrictions on conference room structures by any association or convention center. If you plan to conduct meetings within conferences rooms or standing areas, keep standard social distancing and proper hygiene protocols top of mind. When it comes to international stand limitations, we have seen exhibitions require open meeting spaces to be set back 1.5m from the aisle with more firmly enforced physical distancing in meeting areas and conference rooms. Shows such as Mobile World Congress have also stated that any enclosed space should include adequate ventilation to continually renew the air within the enclosure. We've also seen regulations for European shows that exhibitors must be able to track and trace any visitors in your booth for longer than 15 minutes.

Based on the various sentiments regarding meeting spaces, we suggest:



Conference Rooms Considerations:

- If private meetings are necessary, make sure to allocate greater space within your footprint to accommodate physical distancing
- Consider using technology in conference rooms such as air scrubbing / purification systems
- Use fewer chairs, spaced accordingly, to naturally keep occupancy numbers down
- Consider omitting a ceiling to increase airflow.
- Take meetings offsite and outside, if possible.
 This conserves valuable booth space for other materials or products.
- Keep in mind that the use of a conference room will be based on the comfort level of the attendee and the use of it shouldn't feel forced



Meeting Areas Considerations:

- Use appropriately spaced individual club chairs or ottomans, and avoid couches and loveseats
- Use larger diameter bistro tables with possible acrylic dividers
- Leave time between scheduled meetings to properly clean and sanitize the area

3. How will theatre areas and demo stations need to evolve?

It is a common recommendation to design or reconfigure your booth to allocate additional space for the gathering of people for product demonstrations and/or presentations to ensure attendees can maintain appropriate physical distancing.



Demo Station Considerations:

- Create back-to-back stations that serve as natural barriers between attendees while saving space within your overall footprint
- Incorporate 'clean' technology such as UV-C lights for keyboard and mouse interfaces
- Use a stylus on touch screens
- Consider including acrylic dividers with sound holes to separate staff and attendees

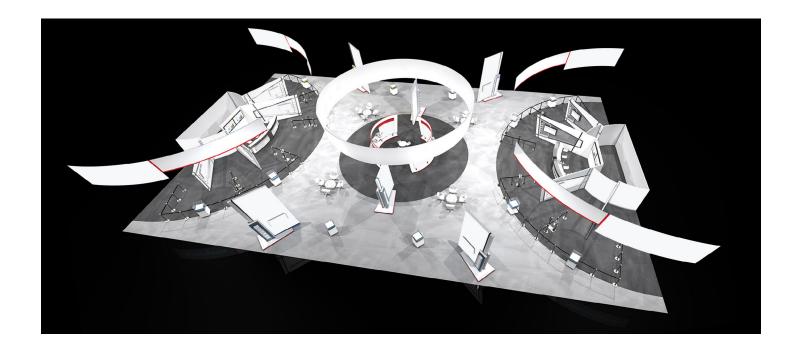


Theater Considerations:

- Encourage audience members to maintain physical distance with appropriately spaced out seating using ottomans or individual chairs
- If attendees are not seated for the presentation, use flooring inlays or decals to mark where attendees can stand
- Ensure the presenter is stationary behind a podium with acrylic shielding compared to pacing throughout the presentation

Prior to the pandemic, it was common to have large congregations of attendees in the aisle to view product demonstrations or theater presentations. To avoid these situations that don't lend to physical distancing, consider purposefully placing demo stations and presentation areas further within your exhibit space compared to right off the aisle. While we consider this a best practice, some shows like the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), are strongly advising this course of action. RSNA is also requiring the exhibiting company to manage and maintain potential crowds within their booth and the surrounding aisle space.





TRAFFIC FLOW

4. How will directional traffic affect the overall show floor pathways, main aisles, and exhibit hot corners?

Many associations, in conjunction with general service contractors and local health authorities, state they are taking into consideration the widening of aisles and regulating one-way traffic flow and will notify attendees of their final decision prior to the show. We have also consistently seen convention centers implementing designated show floor entrances and exits. Furthermore, some shows are considering staggered show floor access where attendees would be assigned to AM or PM time slots to more evenly spread out the number of attendees present at any given time.

On a regular basis, both early on in the planning phase and right before the show, check all relevant sources for updates regarding directional traffic so you can lay out your exhibit floor plan and engagements accordingly. Keep in mind that it may not be as easy as just looking at the show floor plan.

5. Will designated entrances, exits, and pathways need to be established within booths?

Each association is issuing different booth regulations when it comes to entrances, exits, and pathways. Some of what we're seeing:

- The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) is asking exhibitors to designate and control the entrance and exit points of their booth. To further direct traffic flow, they recommend exhibitors use stanchions, dividers, or greenery to guide attendees
- InfoComm and PACK EXPO are simply suggesting exhibitors have an open floor plan to accommodate physical distancing
- Mobile World Congress states that special attention should be given to: entry and exit points, routes through the stand, aisle width, and traffic direction within the stand

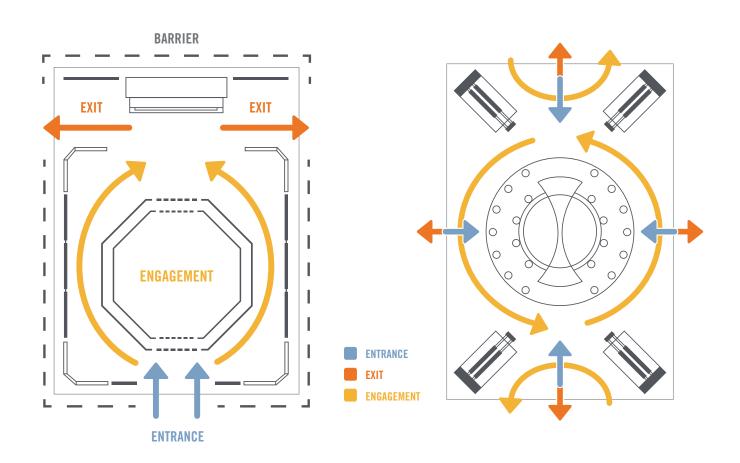


General guidelines, from multiple publications, suggest creating clear pathways through your exhibit space with the creation of a 'one-way journey,' if possible.

We recommend you take into consideration the varying regulations that may be put into effect, in addition to what your company and stakeholders are most comfortable with. The following diagrams showcase two variations of booth floor plans to control entrance and exit points.

ONE-WAY JOURNEY LAYOUT WITH CONTROLLED INGRESS AND EGRESS POINTS.

OPEN AND INVITING FLOOR PLAN LAYOUT WITH CLEAR SIGHTLINES.





CAPACITY LIMITATIONS

6. What are the expectations for tracking the number of booth visitors allowed at a time?

Among the many associations and U.S. convention centers we have researched, there are no current expectations for tracking attendees within exhibitors' individual booth spaces. At some international shows, they are implementing signage that clearly states capacity restrictions at all entrances to the show hall. In addition, some shows require exhibitors to have an access control system enabling identification of visitors and at what time(s).

The importance of this precautionary measure will need to be evaluated by your company and stakeholders to determine the level of tracking you feel most comfortable with. If limiting booth capacity is a critical precaution for your company, we recommend having one entrance and exit and designating one staffer to monitor booth occupancy. There are also several types of tracking / monitoring technologies that can be deployed within your booth space to not deter from a seamless visitor experience. When exhibiting at or attending an international trade show, be sure to do thorough research to understand the specific stand capacity regulations you'll need to abide by as an attendee or an exhibitor.

7. From a throughput standpoint, will a limit be established on amount of time spent in a booth or scheduled meeting?

Based on our findings, in the U.S. there is no current limitations on the time attendees can spend in individual booth spaces. Internationally, shows such as the European Union of Hearing Aid Acousticians (EUHA) are not necessarily limiting the time allowed in the stand; however, they are requiring that all contact details of each guest, as well as the guest's entry and exit time stamp be recorded and documented in case of a positive test result. Additionally, EUHA states special effort should be made to reduce demand at peak times by implementing an appointment booking system for the stand.

Because regulations can change frequently leading up to the show, it's important to regularly check the association website for policy and protocol updates to ensure you have the staff and technology readily available if you need to quickly implement changes before your booth ships or the show opens.



AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



1. Should we eliminate touch screens from our in-booth engagement?

Between domestic and international show organizers and convention centers we have not seen any rules strictly prohibiting touch screens from exhibitors' booths. However, many are mentioning touchless experiences or properly sanitizing equipment or surfaces before and after any use of touch screens or hands-on engagements.

With no clear mandates prohibiting hands-on engagements, your decision to incorporate them into your booth environment and experience will be based on the comfort level of your staff and visitors, as well as the importance of the experiential activation as a part of your brand and product story.

We recommend asking yourself, where and how can we <u>reduce friction</u> from attendees' in-booth interactions? "Reducing friction" is a broader, and we feel, better way to view engagement rather than focusing on the idea of eliminating touch screens altogether.





Reducing friction is about removing barriers to engagement and interaction; therefore, creating better experiences. If you are concerned that important segments of your audience may be reluctant to engage with touch screen content, then think about ways to remove that barrier by considering:

- Approaches that allow guests to use the device they trust most – the one in their pocket – their own smartphone. QR-codes offer a frictionless way for attendees to access, view, and if they want to, download web-based content. This content can range from PDFs and videos to more content-rich experiences such as augmented reality or web-based games. Custom applications can even allow attendees to use their device to interact with in-booth elements (displays, hospitality, vending, and more).
- User-friendly alternatives to touch screens such as interactive floor triggers or gesture-based engagements. As a best practice, it's important to note you should avoid technologies that require any learning curve—if attendees aren't able to intuitively engage, they likely won't.
- Recruiting your booth staff to facilitate touch screen engagements with guests. This could be an opportunity to deliver a more white-glove guest experience.



2. Should our virtual engagement strategy differ from our in-person strategy?

First, answer this question: How can we best serve our virtual audience(s)? While there should be consistency between your in-person and virtual experiences, optimizing your experience for virtual audiences requires being honest about the radically different circumstances of engaging virtually versus in-person—starting with online attention spans. After more than a year of virtual "zoom" meetings and events, screen fatigue is real and there can be a lot of distractions in the home environment – dogs, kids, doorbells, and even the refrigerator.

Where to start?

Here are two steps we recommend taking:

- 1. Start with the 'takeaway.' What do you want your audience to take with them / remember when they leave your virtual or physical space?
- 2. With all good engagement strategies, start with a strong hook that arrests attention and appetizes the audience to go further. Then develop your virtual experience with an <u>Interest Curve in mind.</u> The success of an experience (online or in-person) can be measured by how well it holds guests' interest as it unfolds as a series of moments. Intentionally designing an opening hook and seasoning peak moments throughout, and (especially) paying off a big moment at the end will yield a satisfying (and often memorable) experience.

3. How can registrants attending virtually be engaged with and feel as valued as the in-person attendees?

Whether you are strategizing for your in-person, or your online/virtual audience, ask yourself: What can we offer that the virtual audience cannot get elsewhere? How you answer the question is a good start for creating value for a particular audience, but especially virtual attendees.

One way to make virtual audiences feel special is by offering exclusive access to content or experiences.

Possibilities include:

- Stream an in-booth happening: special announcement, executive or thought-leadership presentation, or special demonstration
- Host a limited-'seating' roundtable with customers (i.e. create demand via exclusivity)
- Create novel content that can be accessed and enjoyed by both virtual and in-person audiences, such as <u>augmented reality portals</u>.

Your answer will depend on how you believe you can *best* serve your virtual audience. For example: Do you believe you can best serve them by delivering the most relevant content as efficiently as possible; i.e. grab and go? Or do you believe you can serve them best by delivering a rich immersive experience; i.e. linger awhile?



Check out our blog post that takes a deeper dive into engaging and captivating virtual event attendees effectively.

TAKE ME THERE



4. Will we be able to share printed materials or giveaways?

We have not seen any restrictions on sharing printed materials or giveaways at this point. Many show organizers are upholding standard giveaway protocols – individually wrapped items; but nothing from an increased health and safety standpoint.

While it appears exhibitors will be able to distribute these items, there was a lot of pre-pandemic data that suggested how little of the material distributed at an in-person event actually even makes it home. Unless you are distributing something truly special, to make a bigger impact, we recommend you consider digital delivery of materials.

Regarding giveaways, refer to show-specific guidelines to ensure you're in compliance with all regulations—whether they're standard or related to precautionary measures. If giveaways are permitted, we always recommend they are intentional and memorable.

5. Masks can cause communication barriers how can the noise levels and ability to communicate effectively be addressed?

We understand the noise level on the show floor can be overpowering at times, and certain shows can be louder than others. If you're concerned about sound levels and are incorporating, multiple in-booth presentations / demonstrations, consider using a mobile mic, transmitter, or ear bud system into your experience that transmits presenter audio seamlessly to attendees. For smaller group product demonstrations, consider leveraging AV media to support a guided experience with onscreen spoken/written word.

Another way to combat noise levels on the show floor? Use sound dampening materials and features within your exhibit space so you can focus on those important face-to-face conversations.



Mobile mic, transmitter, or ear bud system that transmits presenter audio to attendees



AV media for a guided experience with on-screen spoken/written word



Sound dampening materials within your exhibit space



STAFFING



1. What is the proper etiquette for booth staffers when interacting with attendees?

Based on show regulations and convention center standards, proper booth staff etiquette would include:



Always wearing a face covering



Maintain proper distance from other staffers as well as attendees



Regularly clean any surface the customer may need to touch or has touched



Point out the availability of hand sanitizing stations in the booth



Be aware of and sensitive to attendees' comfort level with greetings and interactions

We have also seen from show organizers regarding the number of recommended staffers based on booth size. For example, MRO Americas requested you do not exceed two booth personnel per 10' x 10' space at any one time. This equates to 20 staffers within a 20' x 50' space.

Overall, Comfort is King. Make sure your booth visitors feel as comfortable as possible while interacting with your staff, but that may translate differently for different people. In preparation of the show we recommend you consider having sufficient cleaning materials, hand sanitizer, and additional masks to ensure comfort, leading to positive interaction.

2. What do I do if all my booth staffers are exposed to someone who has tested positive?

If the exposure comes from one of your own booth staffers, make sure to immediately notify show management and the convention center staff so they can work with the local Department of Health and implement any recommended actions. All staffers should then be tested and follow CDC guidelines as it pertains to quarantine.

To avoid multiple positive tests among your booth staffers affecting your ability to properly engage with your audiences, if possible, we recommend you do not have all of your staffers in the booth at one time. Develop a schedule with groups of individuals on separate days and/or shifts so if a person is exposed to the virus it will not put you in a position where there will not be anyone to work the show.



APPENDIX

Among the insights we have provided in this comprehensive guide, the following are resources we recommend also staying up to date with:



Informa has partnered with industry leaders to ensure events can function safely and effectively.

Visit Website



When it comes to health and safety protocols, convention centers and show organizers are referencing the Center for Disease Control to ensure appropriate measures are being implemented and actions are taken to properly manage the well-being of event attendees and staff.

Visit Website



The International Association of Exhibitions and Events has developed a comprehensive resource with essential considerations for safely reopening exhibitions and events.

Visit Website



Many venues and facilities have taken the initiative to become GBAC STARTM certified which is the only accreditation for facilities within the cleaning industry. Visit the GBAC website to further understand what qualifications venues are held to under this certification.

Visit Website

In conclusion, ask yourself:

"What do we need to do to ensure attendees are comfortable engaging with our people, our environment, and our stories?"

Even once state, local, venue, and association guidelines are defined, this is still the question every exhibitor should ask themselves as they continue planning.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will continuously review and update the content within this guide and republish for you to reference. In the meantime, if you have specific questions or concerns about your upcoming show(s), we encourage you to reach out to your dedicated Derse contact. Also, don't hesitate to reach out to us on our website and we will align the appropriate subject matter expert to support you.

CONTACT US

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