



Trade Show Planning Timeline: Key Questions to Ask at Every Phase



Trade Show Planning Timeline: Key Questions to Ask at Every Phase



PHASE 1 | STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Why are we exhibiting at this show, and what does success look like?
- Who is our target audience on the floor, and how will we reach them?
- How does this event fit into our broader marketing and sales strategy for the year?
- Are we building a new exhibit, refreshing an existing one, or renting?
- What is our realistic budget range, including design, fabrication, logistics, & on-site costs?
- Who internally owns this program and has final decision-making authority?
- Is this the right show for our goals, or are there higher-priority events this year?

PHASE 2 | DESIGN AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- What is the booth configuration and footprint, and what are the venue's requirements?
- What brand message do we want the exhibit to lead with?
- What booth display ideas are we exploring: open plan, meeting space, demo areas, interactive elements?
- What materials, finishes, and graphic approaches align with our brand and budget?
- What technology or AV elements need to be integrated from the start?
- Are there graphics from prior shows we can refresh, or are we starting from scratch?
- Has our exhibit partner been engaged to begin discovery and concept development?

PHASE 3 | PRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS

- Is the exhibit scheduled for pre-assembly in the shop before it ships?
- Has lighting been tested alongside graphics rather than evaluated separately?
- What is the shipping method: advance warehouse or direct-to-show delivery?
- Do we have confirmed utility locations, ceiling heights, & neighboring booth info?
- Who is the on-site contact at our organization during move-in hours?
- Are graphic files at the correct resolution and submitted on schedule?
- Are all AV and technology components inventoried and staged with structural elements?

PHASE 4 | INSTALLATION AND SHOW-FLOOR EXECUTION

- Is a trained site supervisor managing the build from start through final walkthrough?
- Has the installation crew reviewed drawings and participated in pre-assembly?
- Is there a communication plan so a decision-maker is reachable during move-in hours?
- Has dismantle been planned with the same care as installation?
- Is outbound freight and storage arranged for after the show closes?
- Are all lighting, AV, & interactive systems confirmed operational before the show opens?