Exhibit Manual

SETTING OBJECTIVES AND MEASURING RESULTS

Objectives

Setting objectives is the first activity necessary in order to measure the effectiveness of exhibiting. The following may be totally or in part objectives for a meeting NLM attends:

- Provide education on products and services
- Introduce new users to products and services
- Increase usage of products and service
- Introduce new products and services
- Perform market research
- Project an image and increase NLM name recognition
- Produce an effective pre-show promotion
- Obtain exposure in other areas
- Promote the National Network of Libraries of Medicine

Measurements

Effective measurement tools can be as simple as they are or far more sophisticated than is presently implemented. At present the following is utilized:

- Total number of people visiting booth
- Total number of demos done
- User comments

Should also include in the post-show report:

- Any evidence that a pre-show promotional campaign was effective
- Comments on the at-show literature and promotional efforts.
- Comments on products and services of other vendors exhibited or discussed during the meeting
- Other activities such as demos in technology areas, program presentations, pre or post-conference or other training done, facilitation of speakers on the program, etc.
- Evaluation of NLM's booth in relationship to others in the exhibit hall. What type of image was presented?
- Comments on whether new &/or existing customers visited the booth.
- Description of the hotel and exhibition facilities.
- Your recommendation as to whether we should exhibit at this meeting in the future.

Selecting an Exhibit Space

Once you have decided to go to a meeting, the next most important decision is the selection of space. Sometimes you may not have a choice where you are located. Associations use a point system to rate exhibitors. For instance, if you have exhibited previously and if you sponsor events you gain more points. When possible to select your space, the following are the things that should be considered:

- Find the main entry door and position your space so that your booth is either visible from the entrance or in a main artery off of the entrance.
- Consider a high traffic area such as the food service, Internet/email workstations, restrooms, or poster sessions.
- A corner booth gives you visibility from two approaches.
- Avoid locations where walls, columns, power sources, near loading docks & freight doors or in dead end aisles, would hide you.
- Frequently booth space for the following year is reserved immediately following the current show. After checking with the National Network Office, a reservation may possibly be made immediately.
- Every effort should be made to reserve space early for the best possible location.
- Other locations may be strategically beneficial. These would include being near a large and high traffic vendor like a pharmaceutical company or the Association's booth.
- Occasionally it is possible to exhibit in another company's booth (e.g. pharmaceutical company), an Association's technology center or in the Association's booth. There is a big advantage to doing both our own booth and staffing one of these locations.
- If training were to occur in the booth, it would be beneficial for the trainer to use a microphone. Some meetings specify exhibitors cannot use audio enhancement systems or at least need clearance to do so. If allowed, it is recommended that a location be found that is the least obtrusive to other vendors. This might be with one side exposed to the food service or a wall.
- Typically the exhibit booth cannot be higher than 8 feet nor can it wrap more than 4 feet to the sidewall. The side panels cannot be higher than three feet. Check floor plan for height of ceiling.
- Refer to previous reports about the hotel/convention exhibit area for special notes.

PLANNING GUIDE

Knowing why attendees visit exhibits is the first knowledge needed for effective planning. Consider the following reasons:

- To be educated
- To find solutions to known problems
- To decide on or finalize vendor selection of post-meeting purchases
- To identify new products, services, or methods
- To meet technical experts

- To assess industry directions
- To obtain information

At the Exposition, Before Opening

- Confirm arrivals of exhibit, equipment, services, and supervise setup of the booth.
- Conduct pre-event training meeting and rehearsal at the booth as needed.

During the Exhibit

- Think of your customer contact as a reference interview. Use your detective-like abilities to determine what his/her needs are and demo NLM products that will specifically meet their needs. In the case of consumers this is a new frontier. They may not even know they have a need. This is your opportunity to teach them about who NLM is and how NLM's products might be of assistance to them.
- Observe the person's name, title and institution on their name badge. It can frequently give you helpful information on tailoring your responses to their specific needs.
- Exhibit hours vary and may fall on evenings and weekends. Two individuals should staff the booth at all times to allow for breaks, lunch and heavy traffic times.
- Watch the convention schedule and staff appropriately. Both staff members should be in the booth during the convention lunch period (unless there is a keynote address), during breaks and during exhibit hall activities such as the opening of exhibits and receptions.
- Restock literature and giveaways as needed.
- Whenever possible, conduct daily meetings with booth personnel to assess progress, process paperwork and adjust promotion needs.
- Reserve next year's space if possible.
- When exhibiting alone exceptions will need to be made on food and beverage in the booth. For the brief moments you must be away from the booth, try to get help from a neighbor to watch equipment.

After the Exposition

- Supervise the dismantling process.
- Send thank you emails both inside and outside of the library, immediately.
- Complete paperwork and send to NN/LM SCR with quarterly report

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING

A campaign might include:

- Writing a vendor description. Most exhibit applications allow a 50-100 word description which will appear in the final program &/or exhibits brochure. These are required for many meetings. See previous descriptions for format. Also see if it is possible to be listed in electronic or paper guides under other names such as PubMed, MEDLINE, or MEDLINEplus.
- In the case of a more local effort, such as a community fair for MEDLINEplus, local TV and radio spots may be possible.
- If attending a library meeting, place an "ad" in your own paper and electronic publications.
- In all cases, Public Relations, Publicity, Pre and At-Show promotions, there must be a consistent message. This means to use logos on all materials and have a consistent "look and feel" (branding) to all printed materials and if a catchy subtitle can be envisioned, use it on all materials. This is something such as "Rehabilitate Your Information Needs" used on a pre-show mailing for the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

EXHIBIT ORDERING, INSTALLATION & DISMANTLE

Exhibit Ordering and Installation

The following information will provide the necessary guidelines for ordering and subsequently setting up the exhibit. On the day of the installation, plan to wear comfortable shoes and "working clothes". This is a dirty job. So much of what one must negotiate and do requires the knowledge that only comes with experience.

You will pick up your registration badge and packet then go to the exhibit hall to locate your booth and check on delivery of shipments. Three unions begin work without your instruction. They include the Teamsters who unload and load trucks and vans, the Exposition Workers who will bring the Teamster-unloaded shipment to your booth and the Decorators union who set up the booth spaces. Nothing can be done until these three unions have done their work.

Electricity: Of all the forms you complete prior to the meeting, this is the one that is the most complicated. Keep in mind that options are offered for exhibitors requiring large amounts of electrical output for specialized equipment and may be of no interest to you.

You should have a booth drawing and electrical requirements mapped prior to ordering electric. Determine what measurement of electricity the show vendor requires (amps or watts). Convert with the following formula: WATTS=VOLTS (120 in US) x AMPS. Check the equipment that is to be used.

Carpet: Either the Carpet Installers or Decorators union generally installs the carpeting. You should order carpeting when in an area already carpeted for two reasons. Carpeting that already exists in the convention area may clash with your booth and the

added comfort provided by a double layer of carpeting can be very useful. A critical point to consider when you juggle times and schedules is that the carpet has to go down before any exhibit booth construction can begin but after the electrician if you have cables to be run.

Telephone/Internet: Telephone and Internet connections are ordered on the exhibit form. A telephone/modem connection is generally ordered. NLM will provide an 800 dial-up to the Internet. If ordering an Internet connection, obtain in advance the Internet configuration information from the source. If using your own hardware, the IP addresses can be configured in advance. If you are renting equipment, it is general configured by the rental company.

If you are using two or more PC's hooked to the Internet, you will need to split the signal. You will need to rent a "hub". The hub splits the one signal to your two or more PC workstations. Installation generally occurs without your knowledge.

Furniture: Furniture can be anything from fancy padded comfortable chairs to wastebaskets. Tables can be rented to hold equipment and literature. The standard size is two by six feet but is available in eight-foot lengths. You can order risers to get the table to an easier height to view a monitor when standing (which most customers are doing). Don't forget to order draping or skirting. The Decorators union usually puts this on and the Exposition Workers union delivers the table. Order a single counter-height color coordinated chair or none. They take up valuable space in the booth. The only practical use of this chair is for staff when there is no traffic in the exhibit hall or for a staff member who is disabled. These items, rented equipment and other specialty items are generally delivered at random during the general hours of set up.

Miscellaneous items: Order a wastebasket, possibly a literature stand (although we should try to get away from excessive literature in the booth), and cleaning. The booth should be vacuumed after set-up and during the evening if excessively dirty. If a raffle is to be done, a fishbowl or other receptacle for cards should be ordered.

Literature is the last thing to be unpacked. Arrange literature neatly avoiding a cluttered appearance in the booth. Restock periodically rather than put excessive amounts out on the counter tops. Giveaways should remain concealed until personnel are in the booth. Even with the most careful planning and timely ordering of labor, you may find that things do not run smoothly. Generally, anything can be fixed. The carpeting can be cut to run cable after it has been laid the carpenters will come back when a crate is missing, etc. etc. Don't panic. It somehow miraculously all gets done, even if only shortly before opening of the exhibits. Sometimes payment will be due immediately for these quick fixes so carry some form of payment with you, cash, check or credit card.

Resources for Assistance

All national exhibitions and many regional ones have an onsite exhibit contractor. Telecommunication, electrical, booth cleaning, equipment (rented), and shipping

problems and questions should be reported to these onsite exhibition management desks. On occasion, it is more productive/expedient to determine (at set up) the names and numbers of individuals for specific functions and go right to them. This is particularly true in the case of telecommunications and equipment problems. Of course, they have no responsibility for our equipment (computer & plasma screens) but if needed their services can be contracted to troubleshoot problems.

THE DOs AND DON'Ts OF EXHIBITING

DOs	DON’Ts
Present an outgoing, positive and professional manner combined with an eagerness to engage visitors in conversation, to listen and be responsive to customer questions.	Do not leave the booth unattended.
Designate a person to arrive 30 minutes early at the start of the exhibit each day to turn on all lights and hardware.	Do not sit in the booth if there is any traffic in the exhibit hall.
Arrive at the exhibit 15 minutes before scheduled time and to complete paperwork before leaving.	Do not eat or drink in the booth. (Inconspicuous beverages to countermand continuous talking or excessively hot exhibit hall are OK.)
Take a 15-minute break every two hours and a 30-minute lunch break if working the full day.	Do not store excessive amounts of personal or other individual's things in the booth.
Promote NLM products only.	Never say anything negative about another vendor's product.
Be alert to traffic and engage those standing in the aisles in conversation.	Do not close the exhibit early.
Listen and be empathetic to your customer's needs. Listen 80% of the time and talk about your products 20% of the time.	Do not cross your arms when talking to visitors.
Smile and maintain eye contact.	Do not spend the booth time chatting with each other.
Ask open-ended questions beginning with who, what, where, when, why and how.	Avoid, whenever possible, giving lengthy product demos to the other vendors.
Keep the booth stocked with promotional items.	Do not call people by their first names unless you know them.

Clean up the booth throughout the day and at the end of the day.	Do not leave PCs unattended in booth and do not leave in booth overnight.
Take time at the beginning or the end of your time in the booth to evaluate other vendor's products and promotions.	
When you do not know the answer to a question, take a person's name and offer to send them the answer to their question.	
Dress in conservative business attire. Less formal attire is acceptable if attendees dress informally.	
Wear comfortable shoes.	
Relax, have fun and enjoy the conference. The positive feedback you get from attendees is a real boost to morale. Share it with your colleagues.	