



Glossary of Trade Show Terms

A

A/V

Audio/visual support such as television monitors, VCRs, or taped music.

A/V Contractor

A supplier of audio/visual equipment and services.

Advance Order

An order for services sent to the service contractor prior to the installation date. Compare with Floor Order.

Advance Rates

Fees associated with advance orders, which typically include discounts when paid in advance.

Advance Receiving

Location set by show management to receive freight before the start of show. Freight is stored at this location and then shipped to the show at the appropriate time.

Agent

A bona fide representative with proper credentials from the party represented.

Air Freight

Goods shipped via airplane.

Aisle

A walkway intended for audience movement through an exposition or exhibit.

Aisle Carpet

Carpeting installed in trade show aisles.

Aisle Signs

Signs, usually suspended, identifying exposition aisles by number or letter.

Assembly

The process of erecting an exhibit from its components. Also called Installation, Set Up.

At-site
See On-site.

Attendees
Those persons who visit an event that are not exhibiting or connected with the event itself.

B

Back-light
A light source that illuminates translucent material from behind.

Backwall
The panels at the rear of an exhibit.

Backwall Exhibit
An exhibit that is back-to-back with another exhibit or against a building wall.

Baffle
A partition designed to control light, air, sound, or traffic flow.

Banner
A suspended panel used as a decoration or a sign, usually made of fabric or paper for temporary use.

Bill of Lading (B/L)
A document that establishes the terms between a shipper and a transportation company for the transport of goods between specified points for a specified charge. Also see Air Waybill, Inland Bill of Lading, Ocean Bill of Lading, Through Bill of Lading.

Blanket Wrap
Uncrated goods covered with blankets or other protective padding and shipped via van line. Also called Pad Wrap.

Blueprint
A scale drawing of booth space layout, construction, and specifications.

Boneyard
A storage area for empty crates and contractor materials.

Booth
An area made up of one or more standard units of exhibit space.

Booth Area
The amount of floor space assigned to an exhibitor.

Booth Number
A number assigned by show management to identify an exhibitor's floor space.

Booth Personnel
Staff members assigned by an exhibitor to work in an exhibit.

Booth Size

The dimensions of the floor space contracted by an exhibitor. Usually sold in 10' x 10' increments.

Breakpoint

The level at which a discount is given for a volume order.

Build and Burn

Booth designed and built for one-time use.

C

C.I.F. (Cost, Insurance, Freight)

A pricing term indicating that these charges are included in the stated price.

C.T.S.M.

Certified Trade Show Marketer! See www.CTSM.com

CAD/CAM

Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing.

Carpenter

A skilled worker used to uncrate, install, dismantle, and recreate exhibit properties.

Carpet Tape

Double-sided tape used to adhere the edge of a carpet to the floor.

Carrier

A transportation line moving freight. Usually a van line, common carrier, rail line, or air carrier. Also see Common Carrier.

Cartage

(1) The fee charged for transporting freight. (2) The moving of exhibit properties over a short distance.

Certificate of Inspection

A document certifying that merchandise was in good condition immediately prior to its shipment.

Cherry Picker

Equipment used to lift people to a given height.

Clean Bill of Lading

A carrier-issued receipt indicating that transported merchandise was received in apparent good condition. Compare with Foul Bill of Lading.

Collective Agreement

A contract between an employer and a union specifying the terms and conditions for employment, the status of the union, and the process for settling disputes during the contract period. Also known as Labor Agreement, Union Contract.

Column

A pillar in an exposition facility which supports the roof or other overhead structures. Usually shown on a floor plan as a solid square.

Commercial Invoice

An itemized list of shipped goods.

Common Carrier

A transportation company moving people or goods. For exhibit freight, the carrier usually accepts only crated materials and consolidates the properties of several customers into one shipment bound for the same destination.

Consignee

A person to whom goods are shipped.

Consignment

A delivery of merchandise from an exporter (the consignor) to an agent (the consignee) under the agreement that the agent will sell the merchandise, receive a commission, and remit the net proceeds to the exporter.

Consignor

A person who sends freight.

Consolidate

To ship freight to a central depot where several loads bound for the same destination are put together before being shipped to that destination.

Construction Drawing

A drawing which gives detailed diagrams and instructions for building an exhibit.

Contractor

An individual or company that provides services or materials to a trade show and/or its exhibitors. Also see Official Contractor, Exhibitor Appointed Contractor.

Corner Booth

An exhibit space with exposure on at least two aisles.

Craftsperson

A skilled worker who provides services at the exposition facility. Also called Labor.

Crating List

An itemized list of the contents of a crate.

Cross-aisle

An aisle at a right angle to a main aisle.

Cubic Content

Literally, length x width x height. With reference to booth space, the placement of exhibit properties at a height of 8 feet or more above the leased area. Also a measurement used in determining shipping costs for van lines.

Custom Exhibit

A display designed and built to meet the specific needs of an exhibitor.

Customhouse Broker

A person or company licensed to enter and clear goods through Customs.

CWT

Hundred weight. A measurement used for shipping exhibit properties. Usually 100 pounds.

D

D.O.T.

Department of Transportation.

D.T. Labor

Double Time Labor. Work performed on overtime and charged at twice the published rate.

D/B/A

Doing Business As.

Damage Report

A report submitted by an exhibitor to a freight company or drayage contractor itemizing damage to shipped goods.

Dead Man

Temporary post used during installation to help support the weight of an overhead structure.

Dead Time

Time when a worker is unable to perform duties due to factors beyond his or her control.

Declared Value

A shipper's stated dollar value for the contents of a shipment.

Decorator

An individual (skilled craftsman) or company (a contractor) providing services for a trade show and/or its exhibitors.

DIM Weight

Length x width x height divided by 194 for domestic shipments, or divided by 166 for international shipments.

Directory

A catalog of basic information about the show, including exhibitors, floor plan and schedule of events. (This is also sometimes referred to as an On-site Program or Program.)

Dismantle

To take apart an exhibit. Also known as Take-down, Teardown.

Display Builder

A company which fabricates exhibits.

Display Rules & Regulations

Exhibit construction specifications endorsed by major exhibit industry associations. Also the specific set of rules that apply to an exposition.

Dock

A platform where freight is loaded onto and removed from vehicles or vessels.

Dolly

A low, wheeled frame with a platform used for carrying heavy or cumbersome objects.

Double-decker

A two-storied exhibit. Also known as Multiple Story Exhibit.

Draper

A craftsperson who installs drapes, fabric, and special decor.

Drayage

The movement of show materials from shipping dock to booth for show set up and back to dock for return shipment at end of show.

Drayage Contractor

A company responsible for handling exhibit materials at a trade show.

Drayage Form

A form completed by an exhibitor requesting handling of materials.

Duplex Outlet

A double electrical outlet.

DW

Deadweight (tons of 2240 lbs.)

E

Easel

A stand for displaying objects.

Electrical Contractor

A company hired by show management to provide electrical services to exhibitors.

Elevations

Scaled drawings depicting front and side views of an exhibit.

End Cap

An exhibit space with aisles on three sides.

Est. Wt.

Estimated Weight.

Event Marketing

Face-to-face promotional experiences between customers and companies.

Exclusive Contractor

A contractor appointed by show management as the sole provider of specified services.

Exclusive Use

The rental of a carrier's entire cargo space by one shipper.

Exhibit Designer/Producer

Company responsible for designing and constructing exhibit booths.

Exhibit Directory

A guide for exhibition attendees which lists exhibitors and exhibit locations.

Exhibit Hall

The area(s) within an exposition center where exhibits are located.

Exhibit Manager

Person in charge of a company's exhibit program.

Exhibitor Appointed Contractor

A contractor hired by an exhibitor to perform trade show services independently of show management appointed contractors. Also called Independent Contractor, EAC.

Exhibitor Kit

A package of information which contains all rules, regulations, and forms relating to an exhibition, provided to exhibitors by show management. Also called Service Kit.

Export

To send or transport goods out of one country for sale in another.

Export Broker

An individual or company that brings together buyers and sellers for a fee.

Export Management Company

A company that transacts manufacturers' export business for a fee.

Export Merchant

A company that buys products directly from manufacturers, then packages the merchandise for resale under its own name.

Export Trading Company

A company that buys foreign merchandise for resale in its own local market.

Exposition Manager

See Show Manager.

Exposition Rules

The set of regulations which govern a given trade show.

F

Fabrication

The construction of an exhibit.

FHC

A notation on floor plans indicating the locations of fire hose cabinets.

Fiber Optics

The use of cut glass fibers to display colored light.

Finished

No unpainted or raw surfaces or edges on a delivered exhibit.

Fire Exit

A door designated for emergency egress, which must be kept clear of obstructions.

Fire Lane

An aisle that must be kept clear of obstructions to allow emergency egress.

Fire Retardant

Term used to describe a finish which coats materials with a fire-resistant (not fire proof) cover.

Floor Manager

An individual representing show management who is responsible for the exhibition area.

Floor Marking

Method used to mark booth spaces.

Floor Order

Order for services placed after exhibit installation has begun. Compare with Advance Order.

Floor Plan

A map showing the size and locations of exhibit spaces.

Floor Port

A utility box recessed in the floor containing electrical, telephone, or plumbing connections.

Foam Core

Rigid foam covered with heavy paper stock used for mounting signs, art, etc.

Forklift, Forktruck

Motorized vehicle used to load, unload, and transport heavy items.

Foul Bill of Lading

A carrier-issued receipt indicating that transported merchandise was damaged when received. Compare with Clean Bill of Lading.

Four Hour Call

Minimum work period for which union labor must be paid.

Free Trade Zone

A port designated by the government of a country for duty-free entry of any non-prohibited goods.

Freight

Exhibit properties and other materials shipped for an exhibit.

Freight Desk

The area where inbound and outbound exhibit materials are handled at a trade show.

Freight Forwarder

A shipping company which handles export shipments for a fee

G

Gangway

International term referring to the "aisle".

GATT

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. A multilateral treaty intended to reduce trade barriers between the signatory countries and to promote trade through tariff concessions.

General Contractor

Show management appointed company providing services to a trade show and/or its exhibitors. Also called Official Contractor. Compare with Exhibitor Appointed Contractor.

Graphic

A photo, copy panel, or artwork applied to an exhibit.

Grid System

A network of structural members, electrical conduits, and other support systems on a pattern of centers.

H

Hall

General term used for an exposition facility or the exhibit area within a facility.

Hand Truck

Small hand-propelled vehicle used for transporting small loads.

Hard Card

(1) Work order for labor or services. (2) Drayage contractor's record of materials received or shipped.

Hard Wire

Any electrical connection other than receptacle to receptacle.

Hardwall

A type of exhibit construction in which walls are made of a solid material, rather than fabric.

Header

A sign or other structure across the top of an exhibit.

High Jacker

Equipment used to lift people to a given height.

Hire

International term referring to "rent" a service or product.

Hold Harmless Clause

A contract clause that relieves one party of responsibility in the event of a legal claim.

I

I&D

Installation & Dismantle (of an exhibit). Also known as Set Up and Take-down.

ICC

Interstate Commerce Commission.

Independent Contractor

A contractor hired by an exhibitor to perform trade show services independently of show management appointed contractors. Also called Exhibitor Appointed Contractor, EAC.

Infringement

An exhibitor's unauthorized use of floor space outside the leased booth area.

Inland Bill of Lading

A contract between a shipper and transportation company used when transporting goods overland to an exporter's international carrier. Compare Ocean Bill of Lading, Through Bill of Lading.

In-line

An exhibit that is constructed in a continuous line along an aisle. Also called Linear Display.

Installation

The process of setting up exhibit properties according to specifications. Also called Assembly, Set Up.

Installation & Dismantle

The set up and take-down of exhibits. Also called I & D.

Installation Contractor

A company responsible for supervising and coordinating workers who install and dismantle exhibits.

Inventory

Total amount of equipment available for a show.

Island Exhibit

A display with aisles on four sides.

J

Jigged Crate

A special-purpose crate with hardware to secure exhibit properties in place to prevent shifting during shipment.

Job Foreman

A person in charge of supervising and coordinating workers.

Junction Box

A distribution point for electrical power.

K

K.D. (Knockdown)

An exhibit with separate components that must be assembled on-site.

Kit
See Service Kit.

L

Labor
Contracted workers who perform services. Also called Craftspersons.

Labor Call
(1) Method of securing union employees. (2) Time specified for labor to report (as in a 7 A.M. call). (3) Minimum amount for which labor must be paid.

Labor Desk
Exhibit hall location where exhibitors may place orders for labor.

Labor Form
The form used by exhibitors to order labor.

Laborer
See Craftsperson.

Lamination
The process of bonding two or more substances together.

Lead Tracking
A manual or automated system used to conduct follow-up activities for sales prospects resulting from a trade show.

Less Than Truckload (LTL)
The rate charged for freight weighing less than the minimum weight for a truckload.

Letter of Credit (L/C)
A document issued by a bank at the request of a buyer of goods which authorizes the payment of a specified amount of money to the seller when certain terms are met.

Liability
A legal term referring to responsibility for damages or injuries.

Light Box
An enclosure which contains lighting underneath a translucent facing material. Used to back-light signs or graphics applied to the face.

Lighting
The amount or type of illumination in an exhibit or exhibition hall.

Linear Display
An exhibit that is constructed in a continuous line along an aisle. Also called In-line.

Loading Dock
An area within an exposition facility where freight is received and shipped.

Lock-Up

A secure storage area within an exposition facility.

Logo

A specific symbol chosen to represent a company. Usually comprised of stylized type alone or in conjunction with graphic art.

Low Voltage

A term applied to electrical currents of 24 volts or less. Usually used in animation and specialty lighting.

M

Manual

See Service Kit.

Marshaling Yard

A lot where trucks gather for orderly dispatch to show site.

Mask

To cover for painting or protection.

Masking Drape

A cloth used to cover storage or other unsightly areas.

Meter

The most common width for a backwall panel. (1 Meter = 39.37 inches)

Modular Exhibit

An exhibit constructed with interchangeable components designed to be set up in various arrangements and sizes.

Move-in

The date specified by show management for beginning exhibit installation.

Move-out

The date specified by show management for dismantling exhibits.

Multimedia

Combining two or more types of audio/visual support in a presentation.

N

N.O.H.M.

Not Otherwise Herein Provided.

Net Square Footage

The total amount of leased booth space in an exposition facility.

O

O.R.
Owner's Risk.

O.T. Labor
Work performed on overtime.

Ocean Bill of Lading
A contract between a exporter and an international carrier for transport of merchandise to a specified foreign market. Compare Inland Bill of Lading, Through Bill of Lading.

Official Contractor
Show management appointed company providing services to a trade show and/or its exhibitors. Also called General Contractor. Compare with Exhibitor Appointed Contractor.

On-site
A reference to the exhibit location. Also called At-site.

On-site Order
Floor order placed at a show site.

Overtime
A designation for work performed outside the hours specified as normal working hours. Usually work performed on overtime is charged at a substantially higher rate.

P

P.D.
Per Diem.

P.W.
Packed Weight.

Packing Case
See Shipping Case.

Packing List
A document prepared by a shipper itemizing contents of shipment and including other information needed by the carrier.

Pad Wrap
See Blanket Wrap.

Padded Van Shipment
Uncrated goods covered with blankets or other protective padding and shipped via van line.

Pallet
See Skid.

Panel System

A prefabricated exhibit composed of connected rectangular panels of various sizes.

Particle Board

A panel made of compressed, glued wood chips.

Peg Board

The trade name for a type of hardboard with perforations at regular intervals. Usually used for hanging items.

Peninsula Display

An exhibit with aisles on three sides.

Perimeter Booth

A booth space on a outside wall.

Pipe & Drape

Tubing covered with draped fabric to make up the rails and backwall of a trade show.

Podium

A demonstration area, usually higher than the surrounding floor.

Portable Exhibit

A lightweight display unit that can be moved without a forklift.

Power Strip

A movable unit having multiple electrical outlets.

Prefab

A pre-built exhibit ready for installation.

Press Kit

A package of materials put together for the media. Usually a folder containing press releases, product announcements, and other materials.

Press Release

An article submitted to the media for publication. Usually announcing news about a product, company, or individual.

Pro Forma Invoice

An invoice sent to a buyer prior to the shipment of merchandise which provides detailed information about the kinds and quantities of goods to be shipped.

Producer

(1) Exhibit Producer: An individual or company which designs and/or builds exhibits. (2) Show Producer: An individual or company which manages trade shows.

Pro-number

A carrier-assigned number used to designate a specific shipment.

Q

Quad Box

Four electrical outlets in one box.

R

Raceway

Metal or insulated rubber tubing used to channel electrical wires.

Rail

A low wall used to divide exhibits.

Rear Illumination

A technique of using a light source to illuminate a translucent image from behind. Also called Back-lighting.

Rear Projection

A video technique in which images are projected on a screen positioned between the projector and the audience.

Refurbish

The process of repairing or reconditioning an exhibit to extend its life span.

Relay

An electrical device used to produce programmed effects by interrupting the flow of current.

Release Forms

Forms provided by show management to permit the removal of materials from an exhibition.

Rental Booth

A complete booth package offered to exhibitors on a rental basis.

Return Panels

Side panels joined perpendicular to the backwall.

Rheostat

A device used to regulate lighting intensity. Also known as Dimmer Switch.

Rigger

A skilled worker responsible for handling and assembly of machinery.

Right To Work State

A state where no person can be denied the right to work because of membership or non-membership in a labor union.

Riser

A platform for people or materials.

S

S.T. Labor

Straight Time Labor. Work performed during normal work hours at the standard rate. Compare with D.T. Labor, Overtime.

Schematic Model

A diagram in model form.

Scissors Lift

A motorized platform used to lift people to a given height.

Scooter

An electric or gas cart used to transport people and materials.

Scrim

Fabric which is opaque when lighted from the front and transparent when lighted from the rear.

Security Cages

Cages provided to exhibitors for locking up materials.

Self-contained Exhibit

A display which uses the shipping case as an integral part of the exhibit.

Service Desk

The location at which exhibitors order services from show management.

Service Kit

A packet of show-related information and order forms provided to exhibitors by show management. Also called Exhibitor Kit.

Set Up

The process of erecting an exhibit from its components. Also called Assembly, Installation.

Set-up Drawing

Drawings which give detailed instructions for the installation of an exhibit.

Shipping Case

A reusable container for transporting exhibit materials.

Shipping Crate

A wooden container for transporting exhibit materials, which may be designed for a single use or custom built for extended reuse.

Show Break

Time specified for the closing of an exhibition and beginning of dismantling.

Show Decorator

A company or individual responsible for providing draping, carpeting, and signage services for the trade show and its exhibitors.

Show Manager

The organizer and operator of an exposition.

Show Office

The show management office at an exposition.

Show Photographer

The show management appointed photographer for an exhibition.

Show Producer

An individual or company which manages trade shows, including leasing the exposition facility, hiring official contractors, and promoting the show.

Show Rules

The general rules and regulations governing a specific trade show.

Shrink Wrap

A process used to seal materials in transparent plastic.

Side Rail

A low divider wall, usually pipe and drape, used to divide one exhibit space from another.

Sign Standard

A frame on a stand into which a sign can be inserted for display.

Silk Screen

A method of creating graphics with a reusable stencil.

Skid

A low wooden frame used to support heavy objects or groups of materials for easier handling. Usually used as a platform for objects moved by forklift. Also called Pallet.

Skirting

Decorative covering around tables and risers.

Smoker

Ashtray stand.

Soffit

A lowered portion of a ceiling.

Space

The area occupied by an exhibitor in the exhibition hall.

Space Rate

The cost per square foot of exhibit area.

Sparky

Electrician

Special Handling

Applies to exhibit shipments requiring extra labor, equipment, or time for delivery to exhibit space.

Spotlight

A lamp that provides a defined circle of light.

Staging Area

A location used for demonstrations.

Stanchions

Posts used to support signage or other elevated objects.

Stand

European term for booth.

Stock Exhibits

A predesigned display modified for a particular use by the exhibitor.

Subcontractor

An individual or company retained by a general contractor to provide services.

Swag

Stuff We All Get, or Stuff We All Giveaway.

T

T & M

See Time & Materials.

T.L.

Truckload.

Table Top Display

An exhibit designed for use on the top of a table or similar surface.

Talent

An individual or company hired to work in an exhibit to greet visitors, demonstrate product, or stage a performance.

Target Date

A date set by show management for the arrival of freight at a trade show. Usually shipments received before or after this date are assessed a penalty charge.

Tariff Rates

Shipping charges for various types of cargo.

Teardown

The dismantling of an exhibit. Also known as Take-down.

Telescopic Pipe

Tubing in which one section slides inside another. Used to support drapes.

Terminal

Freight handling or dock area.

Three Wire

Electrical cable with a continuous ground wire in addition to a positive and a negative wire.

Time & Materials

A form of billing in which a consumer is charged for labor costs (time) and materials.

Tow Motor

See Forklift.

Trade Fair

Broadly used as the international term for an exposition.

Trade Show

An exposition related to a particular industry or group, and open only to the members of that group.

Traffic Flow

The movement of visitors through an exposition or exhibit.

Transient Space

Short-term rental space.

Truss

Structural element hung above exhibit for the purpose of hanging lighting equipment to illuminate exhibit components.

Twist Lock

A type of electrical plug that connects by twisting together.

U

U.L.

Underwriters Laboratory. An organization which grants electrical ratings.

U.S.S.G.

U.S. Standard Gauge.

U/W

Underwriter.

Union

An organization of workers formed with the purpose of protecting workers' rights and increasing bargaining power with an employer on such issues as wages, hours, and benefits.

Union Steward

An on-site union official elected by coworkers to oversee a particular union's work in a facility and resolve any disputes over union jurisdiction. Also known as Shop Steward.

V

V.A.T.

Value Added Tax. A tax that has been added to the overall price of a product reflecting the value added to the product by processing.

Valance

An overhead banner typically used as a light baffle.

Velcro

The trade name for a fabric closure with two components: hooks and loops. The two components adhere when pressed together and separate when pulled apart, allowing repeated use.

Visqueen

A clear plastic sheeting that is placed over exhibit carpeting after its laid in order to protect it until the show opens. Visqueen also allows exhibit components to slide on top of it during setup, allowing you to align various exhibit components by simply pushing them into position.

W

W/B

Waybill.

Wallboard

A construction product used for panels which are temporary.

Warehouse Receipt

A receipt issued by a warehouse for goods received for storage.

Waste Removal

The removal of trash from an area or building.

Wharfage

A charge assessed for handling cargo at a pier.

Work Rules

Regulations that specify the conditions of a craftsperson's labor, including work hours and pay structure.

Work Time

The period of paid time which begins when craftspersons are turned over to an exhibitor and ends when they are released by the exhibitor.