

# ROCK THE HOME SHOW

## Tradeshhow Prep and Follow-Up Timeline

By now, you've likely identified your objectives and determined a budget. You may have already determined specific goals (maybe a goal for leads you hope to generate) and begun designing your booth layout, identified needed materials, designed literature, and placed orders. If not, it's time to take these steps! Below is a timeline to guide you through the next few months.

### 3 Months Out (You are here!)

- Wrap up all booth and display production plans.
- Order [promotional items](#).
- Confirm delivery dates with vendors.
- Determine trade show [staffing requirements](#).
- Develop booth schedules for all staff.
- Plan and schedule staff training sessions.
- Make plans to ship your booth and other materials.
- Start making travel arrangements.
- Put together follow-up packets or [follow-up plan](#) to communicate with leads post-show.
- Finalize [booth literature](#) and other marketing materials.
- Start implementing [pre-show marketing](#) strategies.

### 2 Months Out

- Continue with [pre-show marketing](#).
- Finalize intra-show and post-show marketing plans.
- Finalize all travel arrangements.
- Begin [staff training](#) to prepare for the trade show.
- Confirm the tech (*Wi-Fi and electrical included with booth*) that will be available at the show and figure out what supplies and equipment you need to provide yourself.
- Begin [testing booth-related technology](#) (tablets for lead generation, TVs for video presentations, etc.).
- Schedule [networking](#) events and meetings to take place during/after the show.
- Approve all [promotional/giveaway items](#).
- Give [final approval on booth](#) layout, design, etc.

### 1 Month Out

- Continue with [staff training](#) to prepare for the trade show (incorporate relevant tech/tools into training so staff is comfortable using them).
- Check on the shipped items to ensure plans are on track.
- Check in with all other vendors to ensure plans are on track.
- Assess results from [pre-show marketing](#) efforts and adjust as needed.

### 2 Weeks Out

- Confirm shipping arrival dates (for booths/displays and other products).
- Continue with [pre-show marketing](#).

### 1 Week Out

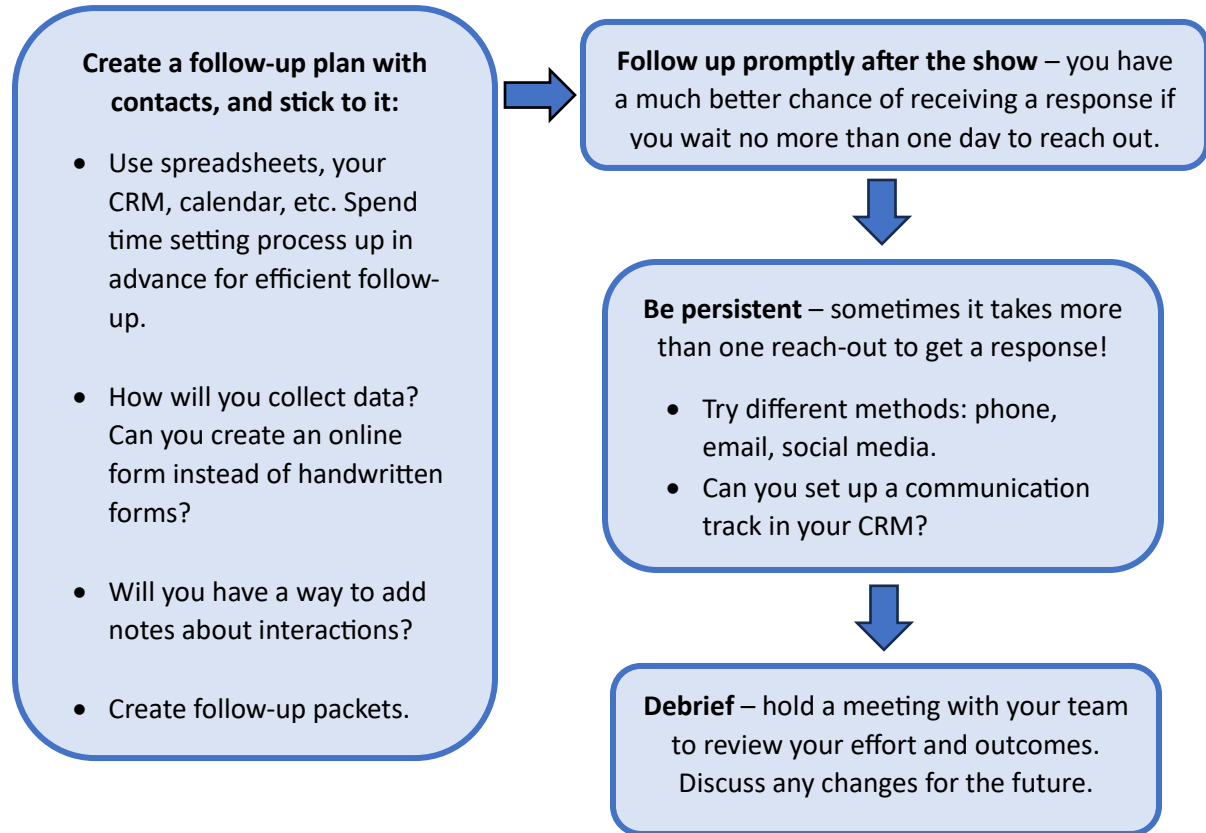
- Complete [staff training](#).
- Pack and prepare for travel (double-check tickets, itineraries, hotel reservations, etc.).
- Double-check all other action items have been taken care of. (*See checklist on page 6.*)
- Continue with pre-show marketing (one last push!).

### After the Show

- [Analyze all leads](#).
- Send out follow-up packets and contact leads via email or phone if appropriate.
- [Meet with your team](#) to discuss the success of show participation compared to your objectives.
- Review your budget and calculate your return on investment.
- Decide whether you want to participate in the show next year. (*Of course, you do!*)
- Start [brainstorming ideas](#) for changes and enhancements for the next event.

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Set clear goals – What do you want to accomplish?



Do your research – Don't go into it blind.

- **Visit other tradeshow**s and/or review your data from previous Home Shows
- Make sure you know what's going on at the show (who will be there, workshop sessions, location information)
  - Vendor information and workshop sessions can be found on Home & Outdoor Living Show page of HBA website.
  - There will be a restaurant and coffee cart on-site this year!

## Upcoming area home shows:

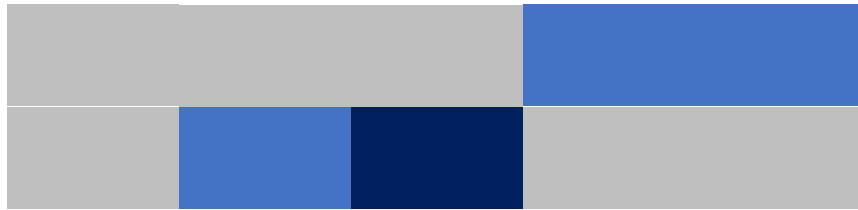
- Johnson County (Overland Park, KS): January 26-28, 2024
- Northwest (Rogers) Arkansas: February 2-4, 2024
- KC Remodel & Garden Show: February 16-18, 2024
- Tulsa, OK: March 7-10, 2024
- Columbia, MO: March 16-17, 2024
- St. Louis HBA (Fenton, MO): March 16-17, 2024
- St. Louis HBA (St. Charles): April 5-7, 2024

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Your exhibit space – Plan with your audience and your brand in mind.

## What Does Your Booth Look Like?

- Know your booth size. Put tape down on the floor in your office to map out your booth and plan the layout in advance. Test out your booth. Take photos for reference!
- Let your booth “breathe” – invite people IN rather than sitting behind a table.
  - KISS – Keep. It. Simple. St\*\*\*d. Don’t oversaturate your booth.
  - Incorporate empty space – you do not have to clutter every inch of your booth. A good rule of thumb is about 40% empty space.
- Take time on your display design. Make sure your exhibit has strong visual appeal.
  - Focus on no more than 3 colors based on your target audience, symbolism, and brand.
  - 60% - 30% - 10% Design Rule: Apply your primary color (to unify your design) to 60% of your space, your secondary color (to create contrast) to 30% of your space, and your accent color (for emphasis) to 10% of your space.



- Keep messaging above waist-height.
  - Know where focal points are located within your booth – typically the back wall for smaller booths, but there may be more than one focal point for larger booths.
  - Incorporate your products/services into your display in an original way. Could attendees look into a section of your booth through the windows you sell? Could you make artwork with your paint chips? Could you create a wall of flooring options?
  - Use different lighting to make your booth unique. Spotlights, hanging lights, accent lights, ambient lighting, neon lights, etc.
  - Consider your geography as you design your space. Your location and the neighboring booths.
  - Share your “portfolio”. People want to see your work!
  - Use humor (if that’s your style).
  - On a tight budget?
- Can you create any of the things you need to save money?
- Can you bring items from home or the office to dress up your booth?

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## *What Will Your Audience Experience?*

- Consider having a theme. Think about the emotions you want your booth to evoke, and work around that. If you choose a theme, everything in your booth should reflect that theme.
- Run a video or soft music.
- Tell a story. Create trust by sharing more about who you are as a business.
- Surprise attendees with something they wouldn't expect in your booth.



## *Your Business Representation*

- Make sure your booth coverage schedule is set in advance and build in breaks.
  - Make sure your booth is always manned.
  - Arrive early!
- Dress appropriately for your business, booth theme, target audience, etc.
- Include a mix of personalities if possible.
- Staff should be knowledgeable. Communicate the value of your products/services.
- Practice sales pitches with staff.
- Be prepared to capture information about attendees in advance and/or plan to Schedule appointments on the spot.
- Make sure you have plenty of promotional literature – consider literature specific to the event.

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## Audience Engagement

### DO



- Avoid saying, “I don’t know.” Find the answers. Worst case, get their information, and follow up with answers ASAP. Try to guide visitors to your booth back on track if the topic runs astray for too long.
- Actively engage: SMILE; make eye contact; display friendly and open body language.
- Ask engaging, open-ended questions (not, “How are you doing?”). Develop a short list of questions in advance.
- Invite employees who won’t be staffing the booth to attend the show. As they take time interacting with your booth, it encourages other attendees to interact with your booth as well.
- Use Creative stunts that grab attention (think pull-up contest at military booths)

### DON'T

- Cross your arms, spend too much time sitting behind a table, check phone/computer too often
- Speak negatively about competition – it’s tacky and reflects poorly on you.
- Do all the talking. Let the attendees talk.
- Give away pens or other common giveaway items (unless that’s all you’ve got!). Get something people will use and keep/share.



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## Other Tips for Your Booth



- Bring in a local “celeb” (could be a mascot) to visit with attendees at your booth.
- Make your booth Interactive: surveys/quizzes, a game, a scavenger hunt, a photo booth or other photo op, virtual reality, contests, prizes, scheduled demonstrations. Include promotional items.
  - Place promotional items where attendees must enter your booth or engage to receive them – give away something unusual and of good quality to stand out.
  - If giving away something that can be worn, encourage attendees to put it on immediately (take photos, create hashtags and contests, etc.).

Clothing, hats, items around wrist/neck, stickers, temporary tattoos, headbands, sunglasses, etc.

## ROCK THE HOME SHOW

Advertise in advance AND during the show – Build the hype beforehand and keep it going!

- Give a reason for attendees to come to your business after the show (contests, afterparty, discounts, etc.)
- Social media: before, during, and after the show
  - Take GOOD photos. Pay attention to lighting, resolution, and clarity.
  - Make it look fun!
  - Share images from previous years.
  - Share posts from HBA social media pages
- Email/call customer base in advance
- Consider a landing page on your website or create events on social media (use teasers, share booth location, link press releases, include contact form for leads to schedule appointments)
- Purchase advertising (Home Show Magazine, ADsmith)



Make a checklist in advance for items you want to bring so nothing will be forgotten. Here's a sample to get you started:

- Box cutter and scissors
- Zip ties, S-hooks, clips
- Way more business cards than you expect
- Plenty of pens/pencils – they walk away!
- Stapler to staple your business card to handouts
- Markers to create last-minute signs, change directions or fix mistakes
- First-aid kit for mid-day headaches and small mishaps
- Extension cords and power strip
- Clipboards if visitors need to write
- Items needed to record visitor data
- Mints or a travel toothbrush to keep your breath delightful :)
- Extra shirt and/or detergent pen in case of spills
- Cleaning wipes for spills and after-conference cleanup
- Bottles of water and easy-to-grab snacks
- A dolly or cart to help unload and pack up
- Name tags to make it easy for visitors to talk to you
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## Resources

- ✓ <https://www.mncpa.org/about/market-to-cpas/events/articles/tradeshows-exhibitor-tips/>
- ✓ <https://www.inc.com/young-entrepreneur-council/13-smart-ways-to-stand-out-at-your-next-trade-show.html>
- ✓ <https://www.btwnexhibits.com/blog/attracting-a-crowd-to-your-trade-show-exhibit>
- ✓ <https://cglife.com/blog/ten-tips-effective-trade-show-booth/>
- ✓ <https://www.btwnexhibits.com/blog/make-your-trade-show-booth-stand-out>
- ✓ <https://american-image.com/25-top-tips-success-in-your-trade-show-booth/>
- ✓ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-tips-make-your-trade-show-event-booth-stand-out-stephanie-acker/>
- ✓ <https://outsnaped.com/trade-show-marketing-methods-for-improving-roi/>
- ✓ <https://insights.ges.com/us-blog/8-design-tips>
- ✓ <https://exhibitconcepts.com/trade-show-etiquette-101-6-tips-for-working-a-booth-part-one/>
- ✓ <https://blog.skyline.com/exhibit-planning-timeline-checklist#:~:text=Most%20teams%20start%20making%20trade,regret%20getting%20a%20head%20start.>
- ✓ <https://www.tradeshowlabs.com/blog/47-interactive-trade-show-ideas>
- ✓ <https://www.tradeshowlabs.com/140-trade-show-ideas-free-playbook>