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NOAA Administrative Order 217-100, Exhibits

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INTRODUCTION

How NOAA products and services are displayed at conferences and trade shows is important to the success of the Agency. There are many types of exhibits available, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

In order to determine which exhibit type is best for your needs, consider the following:

PURPOSE. To ensure that you are getting your money's worth, your exhibit should be adaptable to a variety of constituent needs. In addition to conferences and trade shows, a versatile exhibit can be used in a variety of meetings, presentations, and special events.

BUDGET. Beyond the initial fee for the exhibit structure and graphics, money must be allotted for shipping, drayage, setup, breakdown, and storage. These costs are significant when totaled for each conference/trade show in which your office participates.

SETUP AND BREAKDOWN. Most exhibit halls require the use of union labor for drayage and installing and dismantling of large exhibits (an added cost), except when they are small enough for your program staff to handle. If your program staff will be setting up the exhibit, you need a structure that can be set up and taken down easily and quickly.

SHIPPING. If your exhibit needs special handling because of its size, weight, and features, such as monitors or other fragile materials, additional costs will be incurred in shipping. The NOAA Form 50-5, Requisition for Visual Services, and the NOAA Form 42-15, Bill of Lading Request, are required documents for this purpose.

After considering these factors, you can make more informed decisions for the use of various exhibit systems such as:

BACKWALL DRAPERY EXHIBITS. These exhibits consist of material draped over poles to provide a backdrop for your display. These setups are usually provided by show management and are included in the cost of the booth space. Since these exhibit structures are usually provided for you, customizing is limited to such things as posters and personalized table skirts.

PORTABLE POP-UP EXHIBITS. These expandable frame structures open to form a maximum 8' x 10' wall. Fabric-covered panels are magnetically attached to the metal frame providing a decorative surface. These exhibits can be customized with graphic panels, but their shape cannot be modified or adapted to different configurations in this size range.

PORTABLE FOLDING PANEL EXHIBITS. These exhibits consist of a series of panels hinged together to form a wall. Some folding panel systems are divided into top and bottom sections for easy packing, while others are one piece.

After folding the wall to the desired configuration, graphics and accessories can be applied to the panels. Usually, panels are covered with fabrics receptive to velcro so they can be applied and removed easily.

MODULAR COMPONENT EXHIBITS. These exhibits use interlocking panel sections that fasten together on the extension concept and can be modified to fit your display needs. These exhibits are larger and heavier than the 10' portable exhibits.*

CUSTOM EXHIBITS. These exhibits are built to your specifications, usually from wood, metal, or fiberglass. A small number of these structures are available at the NOAA Wilkins Avenue facility. However, the graphics are dated and in need of replacing, and the comparative shipping cost is high. Today's trend is to move permanently toward the portable-style exhibit systems and exhibits which can be used for a variety of shows and presentations.

* The extension concept permits the connecting of 10' units to enlarge the size of the exhibit, i.e., converting a 10' linear exhibit into a 20' linear exhibit, or a 20' linear into a 20' x 30' three-dimensional exhibit.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROCEDURES FOR CREATING AND PURCHASING A SUCCESSFUL NOAA EXHIBIT

It is important for the subject matter specialist (the requester) to become familiar with design procedures and image expectations when planning to market a NOAA product for service through exhibitry. The requester should, after realizing the need and budget for the appropriate exhibit, evaluate his/her idea with the following random questions:

- A. Did you state your product/service benefits?
- B. Did you list your product/service applications?
- C. Did you clearly identify NOAA?
- D. Can the billboard approach be applied to your idea?*
- E. Can the primary image be projected bigger than life?
- F. Will the theme require special lighting, audio, or movement?
- G. Can the theme be adequately supported by brief statements?
- H. In developing your theme, did you consider using words such as new, free, or innovative?
- I. Does the exhibit conform to the Visual Communication Standards?
- J. Can you incorporate your exhibit with other NOAA exhibitors at the show?
- K. Do the physical requirements of your idea allow for the easy flow of traffic into, or around, your booth space?

* The bigger than life promotion concept with one copy line.

- L. The final factor determining the visual impact of your exhibit is the quality and size of photographs, negatives, and slides. Insist upon using only first generation reproducibles. Then observe the following reproduction guidelines:

<u>negative size</u>	<u>enlargement range</u>
35mm	8" x 10" to 16" x 20"
4" x 5"	20" x 24" to 40" x 60"
8" x 10"	50" x 60" to 96" x 120"

If you can successfully answer the above questions, then you can expect that a concept can be designed to fulfill your needs.

REQUESTER'S CONFERENCE

Fill out the NOAA Form 50-5 and schedule your first conference with the Visual Arts Section. Be prepared to discuss your idea, theme, budget, and deadline with an assigned project leader.

- A. Idea. A presentation of successful exhibits can be made available to you. This information will assist in visualizing the idea and theme for your exhibit. Additionally, it will illustrate state-of-the-art ideas in both exhibit graphics and structures.
- B. Theme. The requester presents his/her theme, selected visuals, and supporting short statements to the project leader. The theme and statements shall not exceed 75 words. The requester may also choose to use the Printing and Visual Arts photography library which contains an abundance of contemporary and historical visual information on NOAA's environmental sciences.
- C. Budget. The project leader will request the NOAA Form 50-5 from the requester, along with an estimated budget figure.
- D. Deadline. The average 10' exhibit takes 4 to 5 weeks for fabrication from the day the exhibit goes into contracting. The exhibit's concept process in preparation for the bid session requires another 4 weeks.
- E. The requester shall provide a completed CD-384, Audiovisual Production and Exhibit Request, to the NOAA Public Affairs Office prior to, or at the time of, the meeting.

PROJECT LEADER'S CONFERENCE

- A. The project leader schedules the next meeting with the requester. At this meeting, the project leader presents three visual ideas to the requester, based on information and agreements reached in the requester conference. If the purchase of an exhibit structure is part of this package, structural styles along with salient characteristics will be presented at this time.
- B. The requester will confirm or alter the presented ideas based on the product/service requirements, projected marketing needs, and budgetary considerations.
- C. The project leader will brief the requester on the Contracting Officers' Technical Representatives process, and the processes, procedures, and consequences involved in executing changes for post-bid session design.

THE TRI-CONFERENCE: THE REQUESTER, THE PROJECT LEADER, AND SELECTED MEMBERS FROM THE EXHIBIT GROUP

- A. This conference is scheduled and led by both the project leader and the requester with a trifold purpose:
 - 1. The requester presents the relationship between the theme, the product, the service, and the application of each in achieving long-range goals.
 - 2. The project leader presents the design, reproducibles of the highest quality, cost-effectiveness, and the specifications for fabrication.
 - 3. The Exhibit Group serves as an evaluation panel for the requester and the project leader. Considerations are made on:
 - a. innovations of theme and marketing strategy;
 - b. visual quality, product/service competitiveness, lighting, movement, and the maximum use of exhibit size and space;
 - c. visual conformity to NOAA's Visual Communication Standards and Public Affairs requirements;
 - d. knowledge of exhibit fabrication procedures relative to the capabilities of NOAA's most reliable contractors; and

e. exhibit space planning. The space setup should provide areas for:

- 1) a literature area or table;
- 2) a spot for watching a small TV monitor, if applicable; and
- 3) a side area with chairs and flip charts for more private discussions. This area requires careful preplanning.

B. FINAL CONFERENCE, REQUESTER AND PROJECT LEADER

1. The purpose of this final meeting is to decide whether all requirements for the exhibit are met and in general agreement. The specifications for exhibit fabrication are discussed in detail. A date is scheduled for the bid session.

C. THE BID SESSION

1. The bid session can be conducted with or without the presence of the requester. This decision is at the discretion of the project leader. It is recommended, however, that the requester be provided a color comprehensive as a part of his/her program agreement with the contractor.
2. The color comprehensive is a small-scale color visual representing the finished exhibit. Its purpose is to allow the requester, Public Affairs, Visual Arts, and the contractor to agree on the outcome of the exhibit before major work begins.

D. THE FABRICATION PROCESS AND THE FINAL REVIEW

1. The project leader can arrange for a review of the exhibit at the contractor's facility before the requester takes final delivery.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO GET THE MAXIMUM RETURN FROM YOUR NOAA EXHIBITS INVESTMENT

There are numerous self-study courses and trade show publications available to improve the skills, effectiveness, and profitability of the exhibitor. These materials will also assist in improving the image you project for NOAA and your program, thus providing substantial leads for your investment.

The following are a few simple procedures that will produce maximum returns for your exhibit and trade show investment:

- A. CHOOSE YOUR SHOWS CAREFULLY. Annual directories of business and trade shows are available to assist you in developing a preliminary selection of shows addressed to any segment of your market. Make direct contact with the show manager listed and request complete data on shows which interest you.
- B. TALK TO THE NOAA EXHIBITS GROUP, PRINTING AND VISUAL ARTS BRANCH. A project leader will be assigned to help you determine a good location within the exhibit hall, determine objectives, and determine available budget right at the start.
- C. PLAN FAR ENOUGH AHEAD, AND SET UP A WORKABLE SCHEDULE YOU CAN LIVE WITH. Allow a year's lead time for a big show.
- D. ESTABLISH WELL-DESIGNED OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR EXHIBIT.
- E. MAKE YOUR EXHIBIT SCHEDULE AN INTEGRAL NOAA FUNCTION. Get the enthusiastic support and cooperation of top management. Integrate you shows into NOAA's overall marketing, promotion, and public affairs strategy.
- F. SETTLE ON ONE MAJOR DESIGN THEME. Aggressively seek opportunities with other Line Offices for cooperative participation in projecting a unified NOAA image. Based on the aims and the agreed message, the Printing and Visual Arts Branch can custom-design and contract an exhibit that communicates this message with three-dimensional force, backed up by photographic aids and electronic and audiovisual support, if desired.
- G. MARKET AND SUPPORT THE EXHIBIT BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE SHOW. A survey of 25 attendees will determine the customer's likes, requests, and suggestions. See questionnaire section on the pre- and post-trade show evaluation procedures.

- H. MAKE PROVISIONS TO HAVE YOUR BOOTH STAFFED AT ALL TIMES. Your staffers should be friendly, well-informed, and clearly identified as NOAA representatives. Additional staffing qualities include: (A) the ability to deliver your point within 90 seconds while keeping in mind that this information must be given in parts, (B) the need for an aggressive listening style because success is more a result of listening than presenting, and (C) the ability to listen to three or four key facts before beginning your presentation. The objective is to find out your prospective customer's requirements.
- I. CONDUCT NOAA'S BUSINESS ENERGETICALLY. Actively promote show results in terms of new primary and secondary contacts. Have prospects fill out inquiry cards and literature requests, if applicable.
- J. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, COUNT ON THE PRINTING AND VISUAL ARTS BRANCH ALL THE WAY. Services include: (A) NOAA's Visual Communication Standards, (B) exhibit policy, (C) exhibit design, (D) exhibit contracting and procurement, (E) exhibit storage and repair, and (F) exhibit shipping and receiving. The Printing and Visual Arts Branch is prepared to offer helpful advice and provide you with fresh, high-quality designs and concepts.