

# How to Rightsize Your Exhibit for Maximum Productivity and ROI (5 min)

By [Jefferson Davis](#), Competitive Edge, LLC

How does your company decide how much floor space to rent? Can you say you use a scientific approach that helps you take full advantage of the tradeshow opportunity? Or is it based more on how much space you rented last year or how well business is going right now? The decision process you use can help or hinder your ultimate exhibiting results.

Your exhibit plays many roles in the success of your exhibiting program. It supports branding, image, positioning and messaging objectives. But most importantly, it is the primary place for interacting with show attendees. Please remember that while branding, image, positioning and messaging are important elements of a successful exhibit program, your ultimate exhibiting results will come from the quantity and quality of face-to-face interactions you execute and the resulting actions that follow.

Another thing to remember is that the size of your exhibit determines the number of staffers you can have on duty, and thereby, controls the number of attendee interactions your exhibit staff can execute.

The exhibit staffing rule of thumb is one staffer per fifty square feet of unoccupied exhibit space.

So a 10x10 booth should have a maximum of two exhibit staffers on duty. A 20x20 might have up to eight staffers. Always be sure to consider the total amount of space, less exhibit properties, furnishings and displays. Please take a moment now to see if your exhibit is properly staffed.

So what did you find? Is your exhibit under or over staffed? This is one part of the right sizing formula. The second part is about creating enough in-booth interaction capacity to take full advantage of the tradeshow opportunity.

The rest of this article will present a step-by-step process to right size your exhibit for maximum productivity and an improved ROI.

## **Step 1. Identify your Ideal Visitor Profile.**

Your Ideal Visitor Profile is a clear definition of who, out of all the show attendees, you want to visit your exhibit. It is usually a combination of a.) type of company or organization, b.) job function and/or title and c.) geography. Your Ideal Visitor Profile might also include the size of organization by number of employees or annual revenue. Finally, if available from the show organizer, it might also include product interest. To create your Ideal Visitor Profile simply look at your exhibitor prospectus and look at the show's attendee registration form. This will tell you who is attending and what type of demographic information the show organizer captures from attendees.

## **Step 2. Analyze show audience to determine the number of attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile.**

Share your Ideal Visitor Profile with your show account executive or exhibit sales person. Ask them to give you as accurate of a count as possible of the number of attendees matching the profile you shared with them. This count might be based on last year's show attendance and/or this year's attendee pre-registration data.

## **Step 3. Calculate your current Exhibit Interaction Capacity**

Exhibit Interaction Capacity is a mathematical formula exhibitors to determine their capacity for face-to-face interaction in their exhibit.

Here's the formula:

Number of show hours	18 exhibit hours
Number of exhibit staff on duty	x 6 staff on duty
Number of interactions/hour/staffer	<u>x 4 ints/hr/staffer</u>
<b>Exhibit Interaction Capacity</b>	<b>432 interactions</b>

**Step 4. Contrast current or planned Exhibit Interaction Capacity with number of attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile.**

This is the critical step in determining if your exhibit is right sized. Your goal should be to create enough face-to-face interaction capacity to take full advantage of the tradeshow opportunity.

Here's the formula:

Number of attendees matching profile:	2,342
Current Exhibit Activity Level capacity:	<u>- 432</u>
Number of <b>missed</b> opportunities	1,910

This example tells you that if you utilize 100% of your current Exhibit Interaction Capacity, you can only handle 18% of the attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile

In other words, you do not have capacity to handle 82% of the attendees who do match your profile.

*Are you OK with letting 82% of the attendees who do match your profile pass you by because you do not have capacity to interact with them?*

If so, you may be right-sized. If not, then please read on.

**Step 5. Rightsize your exhibit to create interaction capacity for 45% of attendees matching Ideal Visitor Profile.**

Ultimately, you will want to create enough interaction capacity to handle 45% of the attendees who match your profile. Why? Because there is an exhibition industry benchmark developed by Exhibit Surveys. It's called Exhibit Attraction Efficiency. In over 30 years of studies, Exhibit Surveys found that the average exhibitor attracts 45% of their profile match to their exhibit. You can use this as a reliable performance benchmark.

Here's the formula:

Number of attendees matching profile:	2,342
Exhibit Attraction Efficiency benchmark:	<u>x .45</u>
<b>Ideal Exhibit Interaction capacity</b>	<b>1,045</b>

So, how do you determine how to right size your exhibit?

Here's the formula:

	CURRENT	IDEAL
# show hours	18	18
# exhibit staff on duty	x 6	x 12
# interactions/hour/staffer	<u>x 4</u>	<u>x 4</u>
<b>Exhibit Interaction capacity</b>	<b>432 interactions</b>	<b>1,080 interactions</b>

To be right-sized, you need enough space and staff to accommodate 1,080 attendees versus 432.

This gives you capacity for 648 additional attendee interactions. To accommodate this you need twelve booth staffers versus six. And three additional 10x10 spaces to accommodate additional staff and additional attendees.

Stop now and ask yourself *“What would it mean to the success of our company and our exhibit program, if we could put our company identity, our products and services, and our exhibit staff face-to-face with an additional 648 of the right attendees?”*

If the answer excites you and your team, then it's time to use this formula to invest in the right amount of exhibit space for your company.



Jefferson Davis, President of Competitive Edge LLC is known as the “Tradeshow Turnaround Artist”. Since 1991 his exhibit marketing consulting and staff training services have helped clients improve tradeshow performance and measurable results by over \$800,000,000. For questions or more information contact Mr. Davis at 800-700-6174, email at [jdavis@compedgetrainng.com](mailto:jdavis@compedgetrainng.com)