

The Plain-English Trade Show Planning Checklist

How to pick the right show, avoid 30% convention center late fees, and save 40%–60% by getting your booth straight from our Southern California workshop—with zero middleman markups.

How Our 4-Step Guided Process Works (At nxtstage.biz)

[60-SECOND ONLINE PLANNER](#)

STEP 01

1. Pick Your Show

Use our AI Show Finder to see Buyer Scores & open booth space across North America.

STEP 02

2. Choose Booth

Pick a flat-rate rental (\$650–\$5,600) or a custom 20×20–50×50+ island built in California.

STEP 03

3. Setup & Add-Ons

Set it up yourself or add round-trip shipping, our full setup crew, and show paperwork help.

STEP 04

4. Total Cost

See your real all-in cost (floor space + venue fees + booth) and get a free 3D preview in 72 hrs.

Your Step-by-Step Trade Show Countdown Checklist

[PRINT & CHECK OFF](#)

Phase 1: Pick Your Show & Reserve Your Booth Space

12 – 16 WEEKS OUT

- ☐ **Check Buyer Fit & Open Space:** Run the AI Show Finder at nxtstage.biz/tradeshows to verify decision-maker attendance and open halls.
- ☐ **Book Your Floor Space With the Show Organizer:** Confirm your booth dimensions (10×10, 10×20, 20×20, or 30×30+) and check if carpet is included.
- ☐ **Select Your NXT Stage Booth Style:** Choose between our quick-assembly **Pop-Up Fabric Frame**, our **Solid Hard-Wall System (SIP)**, or a **Custom Island Build**.

Phase 2: 3D Design Preview & Graphics Approval

6 – 8 WEEKS OUT

- ☐ **Review Your Free 72-Hour 3D Preview:** Send us your logo and brand colors. Our California designers send back a full 3D booth rendering for your approval.
- ☐ **Keep Key Headlines Above Waist Height:** Place your main value proposition and logo in the top half of the wall (5ft–8ft high) so counters and people don't block it.
- ☐ **Approve Final Print Proof:** Once you sign off, we print your graphics and build your walls inside our Southern California shop.

Phase 3: Beat the 30% Convention Center Late Fee Deadlines

3 – 4 WEEKS OUT (CRITICAL)

- ☐ **Order Electricity Early (Save ~30%):** Book your standard 110V power outlet (500W–1500W) before the organizer's early-bird cutoff date.
- ☐ **Submit Independent Setup Insurance (EAC Form):** If you add the **NXT Stage Setup Crew**, we file all contractor insurance and forklift forms for you automatically.
- ☐ **Order Badge Scanner App & Exhibitor Badges:** Register your booth staff and activate the show's official lead-scanning app on your phones.

Phase 4: Show Week Move-In & Easy Teardown

SHOW WEEK

- ☐ **Ship Swag Together (Optional \$250 Consolidation):** Send your giveaways to our California warehouse ahead of time so we pack them right inside your booth crate.
- ☐ **Walk In & Sell:** With our Setup Crew add-on, your booth is built, lit, and tested before you arrive—and packed up when the show closes.

Where Your Trade Show Budget Actually Goes

First-time exhibitors are often surprised by convention center fees. Use this plain-English cheat sheet to understand every cost before you book.

1. Plain-English Guide to Show Organizer & Venue Fees

NO SURPRISE BILLS

TRADE SHOW TERM	WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS (IN PLAIN ENGLISH)	TYPICAL COST RANGE
1. Floor Space	Paid to the show host to rent your empty floor spot (usually \$38–\$74 per sq ft).	\$3,800 – \$7,400 (per 10×10)
2. "Drayage" (Freight Handling)	Paid to the venue contractor (Freeman/GES) to forklift your crate from the dock to your booth. <i>Lighter booths = lower fees!</i>	\$145 – \$225 per 100 lbs
3. Venue Power Drop	Paid to the venue electrician to run an extension cord under your carpet for lights & TVs.	\$210 – \$325 (10A Outlet)
4. Extra Show Host Fees	Badge-scanning app (\$500–\$750), mandatory directory listing, and nightly booth vacuuming.	\$1,200 – \$2,100 total

2. Standardized Flat-Rate Rental Booths (\$650 – \$5,600)

INCLUDES WALLS + CUSTOM GRAPHICS + LED LIGHTS

BOOTH PACKAGE	SIZE	WALL STYLE & WHAT'S INCLUDED	WEIGHT	OUR FLAT PRICE	TYPICAL AGENCY
The NXT PopUp	10' × 10'	Quick-assembly pop-up frame + wrinkle-free fabric wall + counter + 2 lights	65 lbs	\$650	\$1,650
The NXT Base	10' × 10'	Solid Hard-Wall System (SIP) + custom printed panels + counter + 2 lights	185 lbs	\$950	\$2,400
The NXT Plus	10' × 10'	Reinforced Solid Walls + built-in 50" TV mount + locking counter + 3 lights	210 lbs	\$1,100	\$2,850
The NXT PopUp Plus	10' × 20'	20ft quick-assembly pop-up frame + seamless fabric wall + counter + 4 lights	115 lbs	\$1,200	\$3,100
The NXT Ultra	10' × 20'	20ft Solid Walls + walk-in lockable storage closet + dual 55" TV mounts	440 lbs	\$2,500	\$6,800
The NXT Pro ★	10' × 20'	#1 Bestseller: 20ft Solid Walls + heavy product shelves + 2 TV mounts + 2 locking counters	380 lbs	\$3,200	\$8,900
The NXT Island	20' × 20'	360° Open Island + 4 corner demo stations + lounge seating + overhead sign option	920 lbs	\$5,600	\$15,500

Need a Custom 20x20 to 50x50+ Island Build?

We design, build, and 100% test-fit custom island booths, two-story double-deckers, overhead hanging signs, and giant LED video walls inside our Southern California shop—saving you 40%–50% vs. traditional brokers.

Optional Hands-Free Add-Ons (Never Forced)

- **Round-Trip Shipping:** \$450–\$1,400 est.
- **Full Setup & Teardown Crew:** \$650–\$1,800 est. (Includes all show paperwork!)
- **Live Podcast & Video Studio Kit:** \$850 / day
- **Full Event & VIP Party Planning:** Custom quote

Ready to Plan Your Show & See Your Free 3D Booth Preview?

