

AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION PLANNING DOCUMENT

Exhibiting Customary

Publishers participating
MorningStar Music Publishers
Selah Publishing Co., Inc.
Others: Augsburg Fortress, Concordia, GIA, Hinshaw, Hope Publishing

Introduction

Music publishers in this country are fully supportive of the work of the music organizations and denominational associations and want these organizations to thrive and succeed. But we are concerned about trends that affect the ability of publishers to attend regional and national conventions.

We believe one of the reasons that people attend a convention is to find out about new publications, or discover literature that they have not seen before. We also feel that many are looking for practical advice and help to make them more successful in their situations. Music publishers provide the resources that church musicians need in their positions. We feel that we have seen a decrease in literature sessions, reading sessions, and the kinds of events where people discover new materials.

The listed publishers are willing to talk with committees on the advisability of having exhibits, suggested locations and hours. The earlier we are involved in the process, the more successful it will be for everyone.

Planning a convention

Decide first if your event wants to have exhibitors. If there is not sufficient time in the schedule for people to browse, then it is best to not invite publishers to exhibit. Exhibitors need at least 5–6 hours of primary exhibit time during an event to allow attendees time to browse. Primary exhibit hours means exhibit hours designated as such for attendees, when no workshops or events are scheduled.

If there is sufficient time scheduled for exhibitors, then decide location of exhibits. Exhibitors should be close to workshops venues and registration (people browse during breaks and mealtime). Attendees need to have access between sessions.

If there is a convention committee, the person in charge of exhibits should also be on the program committee to make sure the needs of exhibitors are reflected in the final schedule.

Primary exhibit time: exhibit hours designated as such for attendees, when no workshops or events are scheduled (at least a three to four hours in a minimum of hour long increments)

Secondary exhibit time: when people might skip events or cut short meals, and opening registration time.

Exhibit hours should not be scheduled during plenary sessions and prayer services, but should be open during workshop periods and breaks, if reasonably accessible to attendees.

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Hours need to be posted prominently at registration, in the booklet as part of the daily schedule, as well as a separate complete listing of the complete exhibiting schedule, and mustn't change. These hours need to be communicated to exhibitors at the time of signup.

Hours

Do not open exhibits before 9 a.m. Early hours have never been well-attended.

Late night hours should not be longer than midnight at national conventions, and scheduled only when a bar is open or food is provided (and the bar/food needs to be in the exhibit area).

Minimize the number of days of exhibits, especially the number of half days. (When conventions end on a morning, exhibits do not need to be open that day: end exhibits the previous day.). If the conference is off-site for a full day, consider programming that part of the convention towards the end of the conference and ending exhibits before the group leaves the site.

Allow the publishers to advertise the exhibit hours to area musicians who are not part of the conference: it might introduce people to the organization and benefits the exhibitors.

Decorating Companies

Drayage costs, hotel fees, and union regulations (if applicable) are important for exhibitors to know upfront.

Benefits for Exhibitors

You should provide free registration for 1-2 persons per booth rented. It is helpful to participants and vendors to visit outside exhibits and learn more about the organization and its members.

Provide a bus pass to off site events with the complimentary registration.

Provide two copies of the convention program per booth.

Pricing

The cost of attending national conventions for publishers and dealers is close to the point of publishers not being able to afford such events. We make decisions every year about which conventions and conferences we are going to attend. There are several denominational and regional events that charge minimal fees to attract publishers, hence you see events around the country with multiple publishers and music dealers. Pricing regional events at national event prices will eliminate most exhibitors.

Most conventions that sell "booth" space, refer to a "booth" as being big enough to hold at least 3 tables (8' x 8', 8' x 10', or 10' x 10').

Price can be determined on a per table charge for smaller spaces, or per booth. A booth should include at least one table and chair.

If there are height limits, this should be specified up front.

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In smaller rooms, it is important to ask exhibitors if they have display systems: these rarely work well in the middle of a small room, but work fine against a wall.

If a decorating company is involved, information on rental and shipping is needed at least 3 months in advance.

Provide refund when the actual size of the booth ends up being smaller than advertised in the application.

Reading Sessions

Support the publishers and dealers by having literature sessions and reading sessions at every convention. It is important to allow the exhibiting companies to feature their products.

Provide number of expected attendees and number of people the room will hold two months prior.

Space Assignment

Exhibitors should all be in one room, unless an exhibitor requests a separate display room.

Publishers would prefer to be with other publishers and music dealers, rather than segregated with other types of vendors.

The fairest method to assign space at larger conferences is based on a combination of date reservation is received, number of booths or tables rented, the level of sponsorships and/or underwriting of convention events, and how many years the company has exhibited at the event. This rewards those companies that are your strongest supporters, and have been so over the years.

Information Needed by Exhibitors

- Exhibit Hours
- Cost of booths, size, and what is included
- Set-up and tear-down hours
- Where check and form is to be sent, and payment options (including to whom check is made out)

Security

The space must be lockable during non-exhibit hours.

Exhibitors need access to booths at least a half hour before posted exhibit hours to prepare for that period of time.