

Makevention: Information and Tips for Exhibitors

Thanks for choosing to be a part of Makevention!

We are excited to show our community the creativity and talents you will bring to your exhibit. Below are some advice and suggestions to help you get the most out of the show; we hope you find them useful! If you have any questions, please let us know at contact@Makevention.org.

Arriving at Makevention

- The hours of Makevention are 10am-4pm
- Set up begins at 7am the day of Makevention. Please plan so that you'll be ready by the time we start at 10am.
- Please check in at the Makevention Registration Desk when you arrive on site. If you can't find the desk, look for people with Makeventions shirts on and/or rushing around 😊. You can pay money for any tables at that time.
- If you have a special exhibit that requires more set up time, please contact Makevention staff (contact@Makevention.org) as far ahead of time as is possible to arrange an earlier set up the day before.

Parking

- Parking is available in several lots near the Convention Center (adjacent to the hotel, across the B-Line Trail (west), across College Ave.) After you've finish getting set up, please leave the closest parking areas available for attendees.
- While you are unloading and getting set up, you may park as close to the entrance as you can, without blocking the way. We will have some food vendors who need to get into the lot close the building. Of course, don't use the handicap spots unless you have the appropriate hang tag or license plate. 😊

Loading and setting up

- Makevention occupies the second floor of the convention center.
- ELEVATOR: There is an elevator at the convention center (go in the entrance, turn left, past the escalators). If your materials are light and easily moved, feel free to use it or the main escalator.
- **LOADING DOCK:** Located on the southwest side of the building. <http://goo.gl/maps/1ApTy> . There is a rather long ramp leading up to it, so please don't block anyone in.
- There is ONE loading dock and MULTIPLE people who may need to use it. Please be ready to move quickly. If your vehicle is at the dock, please let a volunteer know who you are so they can track you down if you happen to forget to return and pull away from the dock. It happens.
- If you have questions or problems, one of the volunteers will be glad to help. Chances are, one of us will ask if you need anything, but look for someone with a Makevention badge or shirt if you need help.
- Volunteers will be present to coordinate, to help unload and help you find your exhibit area.
- There are TWO carts for use by exhibitors. If you have a dolly, feel free to bring it, as this will help all of us.

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Be Prepared

- Bring a tool kit, power supplies, gaffer's tape, clamps, tools, spare parts, etc. and plan to deal with some surprise setup issues and/or things not going right at some point. Though most won't get used, it's better to *have-and-not-use* than to *not-have-and-panic*.
- Bring something to snack on- food, some water. There will be food vendors, but if you can't get away from your booth, you don't want to go hungry.
- Bring some help and more than you think you need. Work in shifts. This way everyone can eat, take bathroom breaks, maybe even see a little bit of the event.
- Things may be a little hectic in the hours prior to opening, while multiple exhibitors get set up. Makevention Volunteers are available to help as best they can, but please be aware that they are busy just like you.

Feed Yourself!

- We usually partner with the convention center to have food available for purchase during the event, but you may wish to verify this with the Makevention Committee ahead of time if this is important to your plans.

Make your Booth Awesome!

- Makevention will provide small signs for each booth - either 8 1/2" x 11" or 11"x17".
- Bring decorations for your booth- think of it like a room you'd like to people to explore. Make it inviting and spark their curiosity.
- If you're a big operation with multiple people, consider matching shirts or even a costume — it helps attendees identify your crew for questions...otherwise you blend in with other. Badges can help, or have some fun with it- Science, tech or biology? Lab coat. Machinist or mechanic? Coveralls. Farming or food? Overalls. Artist? Smock.
- Signs are a force multiplier. When you are busy talking with people signs let your booth communicate to the rest of the people passing by, the more information you can present (in a clear, concise manner), the more people you can reach even if you don't directly talk to them.
- If you are making signs or instructions, think about things like handwriting, how small the print can be before other people can't read it, etc. You don't want to confuse people or turn them off with something they can't figure out.
- Be prepared for people to want to pick things up and try them- if you are worried about something getting broken that may be a problem ☺. If you do happen to have something that is fragile or that you're concerned about, then try to fashion a way to keep it protected.
- Have a way to network with people- business cards, an email list to fill out, something. It's a good way to interact with people and it may help if you're selling things or want to create new connections.
- If audio is a major part of your exhibit, be aware that the space can eat up your sound. What's ear-splitting in your living room might be a whisper in the convention center, and you may be set up alongside other noisy exhibits that will drown out your audio. You can always turn the volume down on a too-big speaker (and please do, in respect to your exhibiting neighbors), but a too-small speaker will always be too small.

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Get the most of out it - Be active and engaged

- Stand up and move around- Sure, it gets tiresome standing all day, so feel free to take a load off once in a while, but just remember, when you're not at eye level, people have an easier time passing you by.
- Greet people, talk, ask people questions. "Have you ever seen....?", "Hi, I'll bet you've never seen a....", "Hey, nice hat, want to try....?"
- Have something for participants to do- a small project or a takeaway, a quiz, anything to get them engaged with what you've spent time to bring to Makevention
- Don't make your table a barrier- think about what makes people welcome and what might make them want to pass on by. Sitting behind a table with arms crossed, or standing up, showing off a cool gadget, which one seems more inviting?
- Practice discussing your exhibit- You might *think* your idea is plain to understand...but that's only because you've been immersed in it for so long. If you haven't done a convention or an exhibition before, think about the way you will explain what you do. Try it out on a friend and ask for their feedback.
- Get to know your "booth neighbors." Most are good folks who can watch during any brief staffing gaps
- If things fall apart or your exhibit breaks, roll with it! It's a chance to do some on the fly making! Plus, there are probably others around who would love to help get it fixed.

Tear Down

- We usually need to be out of the convention center by 6pm or earlier. Please help us make that happen!
- At the same time, please don't leave early! We know it can be a long day, but waiting until the official closing time keeps the event running smoothly.
- If you would like assistance tearing down and packing up...make sure to bring someone to help! Seriously, everyone will be very busy trying to wrap things up, so we don't really know if volunteers will be able to help. Feel free to ask; if we can, we certainly will!