





EYE-CATCHING EXHIBITIONS AT COLLEGE FAIRS

edited by Katelyn Forster

As colleges and universities aim to recruit students at events, they must employ creativity and skill to design attractive booths to draw prospects into their exhibit spaces. Recruiting gives colleges and universities the chance to meet face-to-face with and get to know potential candidates. To generate interest from prospective students, exhibits must be eye-catching. Full-color banners, flags, and other display options will help to attract candidates' attention.



A college recruitment display is like a blank canvas, and the creator is an artist who turns it in to a masterpiece. But what is needed to make that happen? This article provides tips for excellent recruiting experiences, addressing aspects to consider from the backdrop to the display accessories.

Design Stand-Out Recruitment Booths

College fair recruitment starts with eye-catching displays. No two displays look the same, giving each institution the opportunity to stand out from the crowd. Exhibits should be unique and reflective of the school and its message. Effectively selling a college's culture and benefits in a short period of time is a challenge. Brilliant images and text displayed on banners, backwalls, table covers, and other displays give people the information that they need in an easy-to-digest format. Some recruiters may consider keeping the display simple, using a banner stand paired with a printed table throw. Others might prefer something on a larger scale, like a

step-and-repeat backdrop featuring the school's logo. What ever layout works best is relative to each institution and the given exhibition.

Use Color Effectively

Displays should use vibrant colors to enhance the school's image and help its culture shine. A professional, visually exciting exhibit is the goal. Most schools have a color palette that represents them—an interesting color scheme draws people to the booth and helps them remember the school, long after the interaction is over. Recruiters should not be afraid to showcase their unique school brand throughout the event space.

Know the Space

Designers must plan displays around the space they are working with, keeping in mind the audience who is expected to attend. Planners should try to avoid squeezing too much into a small area, especially if one goal is to invite people into the space. Conversely, in large

spaces, display assets should not appear sparse; in such cases, designers need to make sure to have enough to fill the space. Either way, recruiters need to be able to draw prospects into the booth. Eye-catching displays can help recruiters accomplish their prospecting goals.

Provide a Visual Focus

Visual aids beyond banners, backdrops, and table throws are just as important as the display itself. Recruiters should ask themselves: What is it that my college has to offer? When creating displays, designers need to figure out where best to display each element in order to offer maximum visibility to each passerby. Recruiters should set up one or two tabletop displays to list social media, web, or contact information, along with suggested hashtags participants can use.

Make It Interactive

Planners should use technology to their advantage. In advance, designers must consider what devices they will use to show

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presentations, planning for transport and set up of TV screens, iPads, or other digital displays. Planners also need to consider how to mount the devices, including one or more iPad mounts or digital assets to create a hands-on experience to showcase the school's information. These iPads or other digital displays can be incorporated through any of the following:

- A PowerPoint slide show that answers questions about the college
- Videos featuring the school's campus
- Current student testimonials
- Email signup list

Even if the booth won't be providing a presentation or there will be no products to display, designers can try adding visual interest to the exhibit by using literature displays; traffic can also be attracted with a charging station that features a promotional poster.

Offer Promotional Items

Almost everyone loves free stuff, and planners can use this reality to their advantage. Recruiting efforts require good promo items with the logo or school information to get people to come over to the booth and to help them remember the school long after the show is over. These items could include standard items like pens, flash drives, mugs, magnets, or tote bags. Alternatively, those who looking for something a little different might consider multi-tools, first aid kits, reusable straws, or charge blocks. Countless promotional options are available.

Remember Supplies

A successful college fair experience starts with being prepared, which is why everyone who is exhibiting should pack a kit with necessary supplies. This kit should include pens, tape, rubber bands, stapler, paper clips, scissors, power strip and extension cords, zip ties, thread, and anything else that may come in handy at the event. This kit should also include refreshments for the booth staff in case they get too busy to take breaks. The supplies may even end up helping people at neighboring booths. In helping out fellow exhibitor, recruiters just might make great new connections.

Both experienced and first time college fair exhibitors need to know exactly what they need for each exhibit; such planning will put everyone on the path to an excellent experience. From the displays, graphics, and accessories to the exhibition supply kit, going into the event prepared will help each recruiter achieve their objectives and make a lasting impression on all event attendees. Each college fair presents an excellent opportunity to advance the institution's recruitment and growth objectives.



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