

Planning your exhibit — here's how!

Many *Home & Country* readers are involved in creating exhibits either for the local fair, a mall display, or simply to promote their organization. Good planning is the basis of an effective exhibit. Here are some steps to follow when planning your next exhibit.

1. Select a Committee:

*to pool ideas and to share the work load

2. Gather Information Needed for Planning:

a) Purpose —

- *What is the goal of your exhibit?
- *What message do you want to transmit to the viewer?
- *Do you want to teach facts and give information or do you want to show the steps in a how-to-do process?

b) Analyze Audience —

- *Will your viewers be urban, or rural?
- *Will they be young, old, or all ages?
- *What are their educational levels and backgrounds?
- *How much time, if any, will they have to stop and view the exhibit?

c) Space —

- *How much space will be available? (The amount of space available will determine what you can include, i.e., pamphlet racks, etc.)
- *Where is the space located? (The location will indicate the type of display, e.g. an out-of-the-way corner may require extra signage.)

d) Hours —

- *What hours will the exhibit be open to the public?
- *How many volunteers are needed?
- *How many shifts will be required?

e) Restrictions —

- *Are you permitted to sell memberships, promotional items, food, etc.?
- *Are there any restrictions regarding signage, handing out balloons, fire regulations, etc.?



b) listing the facts in order

c) reviewing the subject matter

d) eliminating all subject matter that does not relate to the goal

e) limiting the exhibit to four major points

5. Select a Title:

*The title is the first area the viewers look at/for.

*The title often determines if they are going to stop or walk on.

*The title should —identify the exhibit

—be short; limited to four to five words

—use short, simple words

—attract attention

—include an active verb or ask a question to provoke action

—should be easily seen!

6. Create a Sketch:

*Decide on the posters, background, color schemes and activities to use. Make several rough sketches of the display to ensure that it is balanced and appealing.

7. Complete Exhibit:

*Make all necessary posters; purchase or borrow table cloths, display items and any other items; order any literature to be handed out; organize schedules for staffing, etc.

8. Have a Trial Run:

*If possible, set up the display before going to the mall, fair, etc. (This is particularly important if this is the first time you have used the exhibit.) This provides the opportunity for re-arranging items, eliminating errors and making improvements.

9. Keep a Detailed Record:

*This will help when planning future exhibits.

f) Miscellaneous —

*Do the sponsors provide tables and chairs?

*Is there a backdrop provided?

*Do you need to bring your own signs, pamphlet racks, etc.?

*Are meals/refreshments provided for staff?

*How much volunteer staff training will be required?

3. Select a Theme:

*Choose one main theme that is timely or of personal interest to the viewing public and meets your goals.

*Build the exhibit around the theme. Give it a prominent position in the display and support it with related materials.

4. Organize Ideas:

*Get ideas and suggestions from everyone on your committee.

*Look around for ideas at fairs, museums, window displays, magazines, television etc. (Store ideas in a file for future reference.)

*Limit the exhibit to a single idea. (Select a specific subject, rather than a general topic.)

*Organize your subject matter by:

a) determining your goals — what do you want the viewer to achieve?