



# 5 tips to help get ready for the return of tradeshow

After a very long year of lockdown and lockdown measures, we are finally at the point where we can start to see the world opening up again. That means the return of tradeshow and that, in turn, means starting to get ready for them.

Both of the industry's two giant shows, IBC and NAB, are confident they will take place in September and October respectively. IBC even has a fallback date penciled in for early December to make doubly sure it happens. Meanwhile other shows are starting to gear up too. CABSAT takes place at the end of May and we are working with several companies that are planning to attend but using a combination of local representation while shipping freight out there.

May is a pertinent date too, as we would suggest that any company looking to attend IBC or NAB need to be pressing the Go button by the end of the month at the very latest.

There is a huge amount to do. Stands need to be designed, exhibition space needs to be confirmed, travel needs to be booked, Health & Safety protection plans — including COVID protection — have to be finalised. And there is an increasingly small window of opportunity to get it done.

Looking at just one area by way of example, stand design, the industry has lost several companies specialising in this field during lockdown. And while the ones that remain are currently, as of mid April at least, not at capacity, with less companies servicing demand it won't be long before they are. Wise exhibitors should be thinking about this now, and taking advantage of the lull before what is going to be a fairly major storm hits.

So, with that in mind, here are our 5 top tips to help you plan for the return of tradeshow.

## 5 tips to help you next tradeshow go smoothly

1. **Get planning.** Understand which shows you are planning to attend and start putting in place the logistical effort to make that happen sooner rather than later. This definitely includes freight forwarding, but also will be invaluable when it comes to other key suppliers such as stand design, accommodation, travel and more. Remember this is an unusual year with a new schedule. You can, for instance, ship directly between IBC and NAB — indeed, we are already planning our service to ensure that can happen — but it will involve airfreight and planning well in advance.
2. **Watch your costs.** While some suppliers will be eager to cut deals just to get business up and running again, some things are definitely more expensive this year. Shipping is

unfortunately one of them, as the industry has contracted due to the reduced flow of goods during the pandemic and prices have risen across the board as a result. Many exhibitors we are talking to are planning smaller stands as a result, though equally we also hope to see shipping costs fall by the autumn as international trade capacity ramps up once more.

3. **Be careful with your paperwork.** Several things have changed under lockdown, with Brexit in particular ensuring there are more traps for the unwary than they used to be. While companies are used to completing shipping invoices for shows such as CABSAT and NAB, now they need to factor them in for IBC and any other European shows as well. Ensure you have an EORI number (effectively your company VAT number) that is registered for imports and exports into Europe.
4. **Consult with experts.** There are numerous other new rules and regulations that need to be accommodated. For example, all wooden pallets/crates/cases heading to Europe now need to be heat treated and have the appropriate marks on them to comply with ISPM15 regulations. This was a requirement for the US and long haul market beforehand, but, following Brexit, it now applies closer to home now as well. Expert advice can help you avoid such pitfalls.
5. **Start now!** We can't emphasise this one enough. By the time we get to the end of May, the race to be ready for IBC and NAB will be well and truly on and the efforts for them are going to overlap as the shows this year are uniquely so close together. That would be challenging in an ordinary year, but for an industry that's still moving through the gears as it returns after a year of lockdown, its going to put a huge strain on the support services that manufacturers rely on to get them to Amsterdam and Vegas. Getting a head start on everything is going to be vital as a result.

We are all looking forward to getting back to tradeshow and face to face meetings. Starting your preparation for them now will ensure your entry back on to the show floor runs as smoothly and successfully as possible, ensuring you are ready and in prime condition when the doors open once more for the first time in over a year. And, needless to say, we look forward to seeing you there.