



## All Proposals Are Not Equal.

You're deciding between two trade show exhibit proposals with nearly identical designs and yet their "grand totals" differ a whopping 35%.

Don't toss out that higher proposal just yet!!

Be sure you've considered these **3 commonly "hidden" budget breakers:**

### 1) MATERIAL HANDLING ("DRAYAGE"):

Often under appreciated, material handling can sometimes be as expensive as the booth itself. And yet, unscrupulous exhibit proposals will minimize (or exclude) this very important, overpriced line item.

Beware of proposals that do not mention material handling at all! Walk away, or send it back for this revision.

Almost as bad are proposals that mention a cursory estimate without freight details or without including the cost in your proposal total.

Ideally, your chosen exhibit producer should not only estimate material handling, but also include the estimate in the proposed total as part of their managed services. This has three benefits:

1. Everyone avoids post-show surprises.
2. Should the final bill outrageously exceed the proposed amount, you'll be better educated in discussing reasons for the higher costs and negotiating the culpability of these reasons.
3. Having your exhibit producer manage all of your convention center services & costs is a *huge* time-saver for you... which leads to the next point:

### 2) SHOW SERVICE MANAGEMENT:

Did the cheaper proposal include management costs for show service orders? (i.e. flooring, furniture, floral, cleaning, outbound shipping, material handling, etc.)

It is *well* worth your time (and peace of mind) to delegate the responsibility of the litany of show service order forms to your exhibit producer, even with their typical form management fee. Why?

1. You're busy. If you miss the ordering deadline, costs increase 30%.
2. You're busy. And if you make an error on a form, you're responsible for the costs to rectify those errors. If your exhibit house makes errors, *they* should jump through the hoops to make it right.
3. You'll *be* busy... at the show. If the service provider makes an error with your order, your exhibit producer can work with them to fix the problem, even from afar. Often, your exhibit producer has relationships with these on-site vendors that can help expedite the solution. Or at least, they can work "on call" with the provider to be sure it gets done, with or without you being in the booth. Otherwise, you'll wait at the service desk to speak with the provider about your issue... Then you'll need to stay in your booth and wait (and wait) for the provider's labor to arrive to resolve the issue... Speaking of labor:

### 3) LABOR:

Did the cheaper proposer do their homework regarding move in/out dates and city/state/facility-specific labor jurisdictions?

Unreliable proposals often list only "straight time" hourly rates in order to show a lower line item cost. (If the proposal is too early to know your actual move in/out dates, be sure the appropriate disclaimers are in place: "Pending floor schedule information, overtime rates may be necessary for installation or dismantle.")

Ideally, all separate labor unions required for the job should be listed, their roles described, and their estimates included in your proposal total (similar to material handling). Labor rules differ by state, city, and even facility... Missing a required labor team can be a costly surprise.

Lastly, the only way it's acceptable for a proposal to list an undefined lump sum for installation and dismantle costs is if the proposer is guaranteeing that fixed amount, regardless of on-site circumstances. (They likely have several booths on the floor and are hedging that they'll knock yours out quickly without incident.) Look for the guarantee, or at the very least, a similar disclaimer as described above.

A thorough, turn-key exhibit production proposal can easily swing 30-50% higher than a sloppy, un-researched proposal. If your competing proposals differ on any of the reasons listed above, go with the firm who did their homework. Attention to detail up front translates to impeccable attention to detail on-site.