

BRANDBOOM'S 2018

# *Ultimate Guide* TRADE SHOW SUCCESS



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## Why hello there!

Participating in trade shows is not for the faint-hearted entrepreneur especially since it's one of the most challenging strategies in traditional marketing. Most businesses think twice before diving into one, not just because of the amount of work required to pull it off but also because it can be a large financial investment.

But just like any other business decision, trade show marketing, when done right, can prove to be a very effective leads and revenue-generating channel. We have put together this guide to help you navigate and succeed in the 2018 trade show season.



# GETTING STARTED

Choosing the right trade show  
and setting your goals

## Setting your goals & budget

Just like any other business decision, diving into trade show marketing starts with an objective. In fact, setting a definite goal helps in making sure you choose the right trade show to attend. Ask yourself- what do you want to achieve by the end of it all? To help you out, here are eight of the most common goals in trade show exhibiting:

- Raise awareness of your brand
- Showcase a new product
- Generate leads
- Acquire direct sales
- Meet potential partners
- Reinforce your position in the industry
- Observe and analyze competitors
- Stay updated with industry trends and market opportunities

By defining a purpose, you will find it much easier to strategize - which in return, keeps you from wasting resources and marketing budget. Investing in a trade show can be quite expensive so once you have your objective laid out, the next thing to do is to come up with a budget estimate. Of course, a cost sheet is not just something that you can think into reality so to make sure you keep your budget as accurate as possible.

Do your research. Get some basic information on the upcoming trade show- registration fee, available packages and its specific inclusions, booth sizes and design limitations; this way, you can start with the most primary costs before moving on to other elements that will ultimately complete your budget.

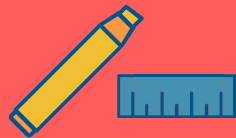
## Choose the right show for your brand

A trade show can be an ideal venue to market your brand and products but only if you choose the right show. So before you jump the gun and register for a booth space, the very first thing to do is to research. List down at least three relevant trade shows you are eyeing and discuss and evaluate with your team which trade show marketing theme is more aligned with the goal you have in mind. A good way to determine if a trade show is right for your brand, is to attend the show and **walk the floor** so you know exactly what to expect and start thinking about where you want to be placed.

## Know your booth options

At the core of any trade show marketing event is your company's booth. An expo is a battlefield where you and your competitors are fighting to win your market's attention. To make sure you can **maximize your participation** in the trade show event, go for a booth size that will enable you to truly showcase your brand and what it has to offer.

Once you have chosen your preferred booth size, ask the organizer the design and decor limitations so you can properly plan how you want to go about it without wasting time, energy, and resources. Having knowledge of the scope you are allowed to work with will enable you to come up with a more specific and creative way to build your trade show marketing booth.



# HOW TO DESIGN A TRADE SHOW BOOTH

Designing and planning your booth

**Now that you have your objective and budget, we can move onto the part of the trade show preparation that takes the *most* time- booth preparation.**

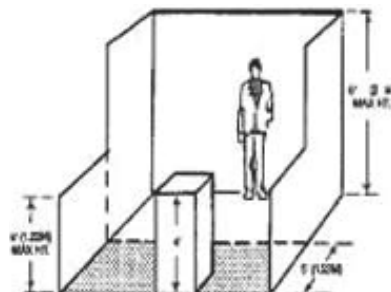


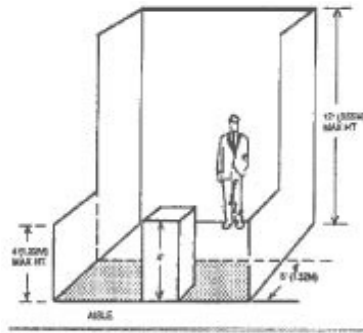
# Standard Booth Dimensions and Layout

There are four standard booth dimensions in a trade show regardless of industry-linear, perimeter, peninsula, and island.

## 1. Linear Booth

Also known as “in-line” booths, the Linear Booth is the most common trade show booth. The name came from how the booths are arranged in a straight line which means neighboring exhibitors are side by side. The structure then leaves only one side of the booth open or exposed to an aisle. However, there are linear booths that are located in corners which you can configure to have two sides open. As for its dimensions, linear booths are usually 10’ wide, 10’ deep, and 8’ high. Since this type of booth features you sharing a wall with neighboring exhibitors, hanging signs and canopies are usually not allowed.



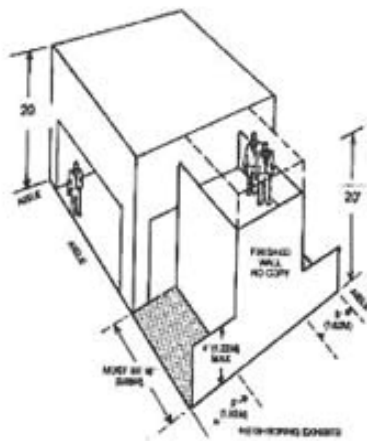


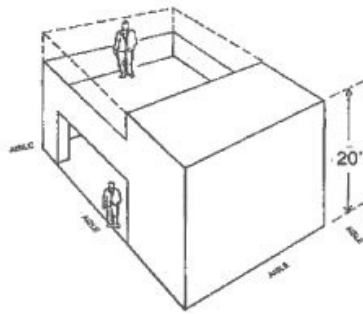
## 2. Perimeter Booth

A Perimeter Booth features the same dimensions as the Linear Booth except for two aspects- first is that instead of backing to another exhibitor, it backs to an outside wall or “perimeter” wall of the exhibit floor; and two, its maximum height can go up to 12’. Just like Linear Booths, using hanging signs and canopies are prohibited.

### 3. Peninsula Booth

Commonly composed of about four booths, the Peninsula Booth features much larger dimensions and three sides exposed to aisles. This type of booth comes in two forms- one that backs to a Linear Booth and one that backs to another Peninsula booth (also called Split Island Booth). Nevertheless, all Peninsula Booths are required to have back walls that are finished and free from any logos or advertisements. For dimensions, Peninsula Booths are usually 20' wide, 20' deep, if it backs up to Linear Booths, height is restricted to up to 5' from either side aisle (giving the exhibitor line of sight of the Linear Booths) while the center of the back wall can go as high as 20'. For Split Island Booths, a back wall with a height ranging from 16' to 20' is allowed.





## 4. Island Booth

Last but not the least is the Island Booth, called as such because the layout features all four sides of the booth exposed to aisles. This type of booth is normally 20' by 20' and a favorite among exhibitors since the entirety of the space can be utilized to the maximum allowable height (from 16' to 20'). Canopies and hanging signages are permitted.

## Maximizing and Designing Your Booth Space

The tricky part about fashion retail trade shows is that you need to be able to design your booth display in a way that it could accommodate the products you are trying to showcase without making the space look too crowded for attendees. Your booth display is pretty much your storefront for the duration of the trade show so it's important you know how to maximize the available space you have.

First, **let's talk about signage**. The biggest challenge of participating in a trade show is catching the attention of attendees. This is where signages come in. If possible, design yours while considering distance- if you want to draw crowd to the aisle you are in, then a 20' signage is a must, however, eye-level signages attract attendees to your booth.

Next thing on the list is how you **present your products**. If you are part of the clothing retail industry, then you first have to take into consideration the size of your booth. If you have a standard Linear or Perimeter Booth, then going for hanging racks would be the best approach. This layout allows attendees to browse through your products without feeling too congested in your space. Have a small table ready to serve as the cashier or counter so paying customers won't be all over the place and you have better control of what's going on. If you have a mannequin, it would be best to utilize just one to attract attendees into visiting your booth display.

If you registered for a much larger booth, then you have more design freedom. Some fashion retail exhibitors use glass walls to make their booth resemble their storefront while some use the much more open space by displaying around 5 to 10 mannequins with a little space allotted for hanging racks.

Lastly, make sure to take branding seriously. We're not just talking about placing your logos everywhere or using your brand colors to design the booth, we're talking about thinking outside the box. For example, if your line of clothing is that of boho chic fashion, then you can design your booth into something that represents the boho culture. Use dream catchers, feathers, colorful rugs, fake grass (for your booth's flooring) and other earth elements. This way, even from afar, trade show attendees will immediately get an idea on what your brand and products are all about.

**In designing the trade show booth, there are two things most exhibitors neglect to consider—lighting and walls.**

**Yes, these are the foundations of your space but you can also leverage these to make them part of your overall design vision.**

## Booth Display Lighting Ideas

Believe it or not, there are three ways to utilize lighting in an expo: as an attraction that will entice attendees to visit your booth, as an accent to highlight what you consider to be the most important elements of your booth, and as support to the human interaction you expect to have during the trade show.

**The first one** is all about being creative about LED lights, neon signs, moving lights, and uplights; basically anything that has to do with catching the eye of the people walking on the aisles surrounding your booth.

The **next** is about using lighting like spotlight. Once you have attendees in your booth, lighting can help direct their eyes on the products you want to highlight- this could be the item you have on the mannequin or singling out your best-sellers from a row of products displayed on a shelf.

**The last item**, on the other hand, is about taking your potential retail buyers into consideration. You are in the fashion industry so you want to make sure that when they try on your product, they will look and feel beautiful wearing it. Use warm lights for a more flattering effect.





## Booth Display Walls Ideas

Designing your booth's walls can be quite challenging especially due to various limitations but there are workarounds you can use to maximize these. For instance, if you are not allowed to use hanging signs or canopies, why not go for digital graphics? Portable projectors or large flat screen televisions can be used to display your logo and other media your brand has. By going digital, you actually have more flexibility in terms of content and bonus, since moving graphics are much more enticing than banners which are static displays.



# PREPARING KEY MARKETING MATERIALS

Tell your brand story effectively

## Determining the Right Collaterals to Prepare

Your marketing and promotional collaterals are just as important as your booth. Remember, you are trying to position your brand as an authority in the industry so it is crucial to have materials the attending market can see, feel, and even take home with them.

### ☐ Business Card

If there is one thing the digital world is not close to replacing, it would be business cards. This little piece of collateral is essential in building a brand's first impression not just during trade shows but in any other form of physical transaction where you are required to introduce yourself and the company you are representing.

### ☐ Company Profile

If the business card is the first impression, then the company profile is the first date. Whether it's in the form of a brochure or a booklet, a company profile is designed to give your market or potential partner a concise overview of what your fashion retail business is all about. This means that it should be able to tell your brand's story, what it stands for, and what it has to offer. If you don't want to hand this out in a very in-your-face kind of way, then putting it inside a loot bag with your trade show giveaways is a common and very effective channel for distribution.

## ☐ Sign-up Sheets

Whatever your objective is for joining a trade show, you will never go wrong with having sign-up sheets ready. Like we've mentioned in the introduction, people who attend expos are potential customers who, you can be sure, are interested in what you (and by extension, your competitors) have to offer. With this fact, it is safe to assume that you are likely to get leads from the event so a sign-up sheet will definitely come in handy. It should require attendees to share basic information such as their full name, contact number, and email address. This way, contacting them can be done in a much more personalized manner which they will better appreciate rather than a generic email.

## ☐ Laptops or Tablets

The fact of the matter is that we are in the online world so if you want your retail buyers to believe your credibility, then showing them you are adapting to the digital revolution is a must.

**However**, these units should not just be used for display purposes; like everything else you have in your booth, learn to maximize the devices you have.

**Prepare** Powerpoint or audio-visual presentations or turn your sign-up sheet into an online form attendees can easily access on the spot. We also suggest having your website up and running at all times so if a potential buyer asks to browse through your products, then can do so with a few swipes and clicks.

## **Take advantage of the trade shows marketing**

More often than not, registering to be part of an expo means having your brand or logo published on offline promotional materials like tarpaulins, posters, and flyers, as well as on their online assets like social media or email blasts. This is what we were talking about when we said you should find out what kind of other marketing efforts the trade show event organizer has to offer. Make sure your brand takes every opportunity to be included in the marketing material for the show itself.

## **Tell your buyers where your booth is located**

Finally, make sure you have a detailed map of the trade show so you can effectively and accurately inform your buyers where your booth is through any of your online and offline promotional materials. Since some trade show have a program where speakers from various industry leaders and influencers will be invited to the stage to share their knowledge and experience, you might find it helpful as well to get a copy of the program. This way, you and your team can decide which parts of the program you want to attend and participate in to learn something new.



## **Let your buyers know you'll be at the trade show**

Now that you have all the information you need to prepare for your next trade show event, the next thing to decide on is how you will be telling your market about it. Right off the bat, here are five low-cost advertising channels that come to mind:

### **1. Via the trade show organizers**

As we have mentioned earlier in this article, trade shows are great venues to market your brand and your products or services. This is not just because of how personal and physical the approach of the marketing tactic is, but also due to the fact that most trade show event organizers offer various marketing platforms to promote the expo and the brands that will be participating in it. So just like what we were saying before, make sure to ask your contact person on what kind of marketing and brand exposure you can get from and through the trade show event.

## 2. Via your website

If you have a strong search engine presence or a solid web traffic, then uploading a web banner or pop-up announce on your brand website can be a good way to update interested, potential, and existing clients about the upcoming trade show. Either add another web banner on your home page's image slider, write a short blog post announcement, or configure your website to show an image ad when a visitor enters or exits the website.

## 3. Via social media

With social media being one of the most effective online platforms to reach your market, it only makes sense to utilize it to update them on an upcoming trade show you will be participating in. If the expo has an official hashtag for the event, then you better use that on your posts. Publish teasers two weeks before the event, share posts from the organizer's page, and do not forget to upload a map of the trade show floor plan so your market will know exactly how to find and get to your booth. Here are other ways you can integrate social media on your next trade show event.



## **4. Via email blast**

If you have a significant number of newsletter subscribers, then it would be a great idea to send an email blast to them. Remember to include details of the event such as the trade show event name, theme, date, time, place, and your booth location. If your marketing budget allows it, you can even include a discount coupon for those who will be attending the trade show and visiting your booth.

## **5. Via affiliate marketing**

When it comes to marketing events like trade shows, it would not hurt to have partners. Whether it is from the media or some other affiliate companies, having partners can significantly increase market reach. Ask them to share your posts about the upcoming trade show or you can also come up with a discount coupon that the expo attendees can use not just in your store but also on the stores of your partners- that is added value for them!





# BEST TECH TOOLS TO USE

Prepare your team for maximum effectiveness



## Trade Show Apps for Logistics

Whether it is to organize your agenda on location or to make sure you have everything listed down on a quick checklist before you go, following this page you will find a few incredibly useful trade show apps for your logistics requirements.

## FOR ORGANIZING TRAVEL PLANS

### Tripit



“To bring calm to the chaos” of travelling is something the Tripit app promises to its users. Preparing for a trade show can leave you trying to handle a lot of things that it is quite normal to overlook even something as crucial as your flight. Tripit is a travel organizer app created back in 2006 and was designed to “keep all your travel plans in one place and access your itineraries anytime, on any device.” With this app, you will receive real-time alerts for anything related to your flight- be it delays, cancellations, and other changes. You can also use the app to find alternate flights and get your preferred seats since it notifies you as well once there’s an availability.

### TripAdvisor



With over 315 million members, TripAdvisor is the largest travel site in the world and was one of the first companies to heavily rely on user-generated content. But that is exactly what makes this app great- you can read about real travelers as they write honest, no-holds barred reviews on their hotel stays and restaurant dining experiences. With this app, you can choose to spend a few days before the trade show to try and learn more about the locals who are most likely the market you can expect to attend the expo. Besides reviews, TripAdvisor also provides hotel and restaurant recommendations, and allows for accommodation bookings.

## FOR ORGANIZING NOTES

### Evernote



Evernote has been available since 2008 and has only gotten better throughout time. This app was designed for taking, organizing, saving, and archiving notes. The great thing about this app is that it is so flexible that it functions more than just a trade show app. Notes can be in traditional text, a web page or web page excerpt, an image, a voice memo, or even a digitally-handwritten note. Every note you will create can be stacked, tagged, categorized, edited, annotated, shared, searched, and exported in what is called a “notebook.” The app has a paid version and free version which of course, comes with a significant number of limitations.

### One Note



OneNote is an app from tech giant Microsoft and is part of its Office family. This makes it a perfect trade show app because chances are you will not find it difficult to use even as a first-timer. Since One Note is a member of Office, you can use it together with Outlook email and even embed an Excel table if the need arises. Notes can also be created in a collaborative space so you and your team members can view and edit it simultaneously. Just like Evernote, you can also create digital handwritten notes and drawings and make your documents as creative as you want with OneNote.



## Trade Show Apps for Expenses

Budget management is a crucial cog in determining the success of your trade show marketing venture. Since participating in trade show events come with a lot of expenses, it only makes sense for you to turn to technology to better track and monitor your allocated marketing budget. To help you out, here are two trade show apps designed specifically for this purpose.

## Expensify



Founded in 2008, Expensify has been a favorite expense tracker application for both personal and company use. In fact, the app has been featured in various publications like The Wall Street Journal, Business Insider, and Forbes. Expensify is a web and mobile application that provides its users the ability to manage their expenditures and any financial transactions. Using this as a trade show app will also allow you to upload and generate receipts from any sales done online. Approval, creation, and exporting of reports can also be done through Expensify, making it a highly efficient tool from the beginning until the end of the trade show.

## Concur



Concur is another app you might find useful for trade show marketing. It is a travel and expense management application designed mainly for corporate use. With Concur, you can automate and simplify expense reporting, scan and upload receipts, submit, track, review, and approve expense records even on mobile. Besides its budget management feature, this app also has Concur Travel which can also assist you when booking flights, accommodations, and cars- quite handy for when trade shows are held out of town.



## Trade Show Apps for Sales & Orders

Okay, so you are already in the trade show event and you need all the help you can get at this very crucial part of the process. Remember, expos can be quite a handful even to the most experienced sales executive so to keep most of your energies focused on the actual trade show event, here are three trade show apps you can utilize for capturing your market's attention, capturing orders, and capturing payments.



Spotty wifi at the trades how? Use apps that work with or without wifi! Whenever wifi is spotty, the data is auto-saved locally and will be synced when wifi is much more reliable!

## Brandboom



If you are in the retail industry then time is of the essence especially if you are in a landscape as competitive as a trade show event. With Brandboom, you have the ability to generate line sheets and interactive presentations in as quick as a few minutes, right on your iPad. Not only that, but with our app, your potential buyers can place orders directly online and you can send out invoices and collect credit card payments right then and there as well. The very capability of our app to shorten the purchasing process allows for a higher chance of closing that deal and making that sale!

## Square



Square is an amazing, innovate app that could be useful for trade show events because it will allow you to accept credit card payments anywhere. It features a small magstripe credit card reader which then transmits the information on the app for the payment to be processed. It is compatible on both Android and iOS smartphones and tablets. With Square, you can easily accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and American Express cards without worrying about surprise or monthly fees. This trade show app charges only 2.75% per swipe, tap, or dip, and the same rate applies for all major credit cards. Deposits will be reflected in as soon as one to two business days.





## Trade Show Apps for Leads Generation

Now that you have the crowd going in your booth, the next step is to make sure the conversations you have with potential buyer actually become quantifiable leads. Remember, trade shows are not only good for making sales but it is also a gold mine for capturing new sales leads. With these trade show apps, we are sure you would not let opportunity slip your way.

## FOR COLLECTING CONTACTS

### Camcard



We may already be in the digital age but business card still does its mighty fine job. This is especially true for trade show events. However, with a lot of people coming and going in your booth, it may be difficult to keep track of all the physical cards so if you want something that is not as fragile as the fishbowl method, you can download the CamCard app. With CamCard, you can easily organize and store all business cards by taking photos of it on your smartphone. Don't get us wrong, though, the app doesn't just function as a photo/ scanner, you can also edit the data, add custom fields, and put important notes.

### Leadature



Most trade shows provides their own lead capture system. But in the event that they do not have this service, you can try Leadcature. With Leadcature, you can capture and qualify any leads you get from the trade show event and efficiently accelerate those through the sales pipeline. The great thing about this trade show app is that it also offers real-time data measurement and can distribute your collaterals digitally. It also works with or without internet connection and can used on a PC, tablet, or smartphone. You can find Leadature on the App Store, Google Play, and the Microsoft Windows Store.

## FOR BOOKING APPOINTMENTS & SURVEYS

### Pathable



Pathable, unlike majority of the apps stated on this list (that have other main purposes than being used on a trade show), is an actual app designed for trade show events. One of its many shining features is that it allows attendees and exhibitors to build an agreed private meeting schedule. This makes it easier for you, the exhibitor, to keep track of all the potential networks and clients you will have to follow through after the event. Need more advice on how to reach work on your leads after the trade show event? You can read all about it here in this article we wrote about trade show marketing a few weeks back.

### QuickTapSurvey



Available on both iOS and Android, QuickTapSurvey is quite a popular trade show app for its ability to conduct quick surveys. Whether it is to gather booth visitor feedback, qualify leads, or collect contact information from potential clients, this trade show apps is the way to go. With QuickTapSurvey, you do not even have to worry about internet connection because this app can be used offline. For execution, you have option to just hand out the iPad to the attendees of the trade show or if you have the budget, create a kiosk where they can go and use the app.



# POST TRADE SHOW

Best practices for follow-ups that convert

**Trade shows can generate around 30% of all wholesale revenue for most brands. So let's dive into some post-show best practices to help maximize your chances of getting those wholesale orders placed and shipped!**

## **1. Send email blast and post on social media**

As you can see, pre- during, and post-trade show marketing comes with a lot of online activity. If you were able to capture lots of photos or videos during the expo, then post an album on social media. But the most important digital step you can take after a trade show marketing event is to send out an email blast to all the leads you were able to get as well as to your existing subscribers to thank them on their support.

## **2. Evaluate your leads**

Once you are done with the social media post and email blast, it is time to meet with your team again and evaluate the leads you were able to gather during the trade show marketing event. Categorize each and every one of those leads as hot, warm, cold, or junk because doing so will allow you to customize the right follow-through strategy, and help give you a higher chance of closing a sale.

## **3. Reconnect with hot leads**

Of course, out of the four categories of leads you have, the first one you should pour your energy into are the hot leads. Find a way to reconnect with them, either have your sales contact them via phone or mobile,

or have your marketing team develop a personalized email or discount coupon that will entice them to actually make that purchase. The keyword here is “personalized”- remember, customers like to feel they are special so do not just send out generic messages.

**Tip:** We crafted a handy email template for you to use when you are following up with those hot leads! [Click here to view.](#)

## **4. Blog post about the trade show**

Another post-trade show marketing idea you can play around with is publishing a blog. Here, you can share more details on the expo you participated in- share what you learned during the process or include testimonials from happy new clients. To make it come full circle, put in a link to the social media photo album you posted so readers can have a more visual experience of what happened. You can even make the blog part of your next newsletter or email blast!

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# TRADE SHOW PREPARATION CHECKLISTS

## OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS

- ☐ **Walk the show** you are interested in attending and do your research, that way you can choose the optimal booth options and booth location on the floor.
- ☐ **Register for the show** to secure your booth.
- ☐ **Book flights and hotels.** It's always good to do this as soon as your plans are finalized so that you can get the best rates for the trade show dates.
- ☐ **Finalize your booth designs** early so that have time to make changes to things like lighting, signs or display cases especially if they have to be custom built. Remember you'll have to consider your booth dimensions and layout, so the design process might take a while.
- ☐ **Prepare a "trade show" emergency kit** with office supplies, cleaning supplies and items would you need to make repairs to your booth or display if necessary.
- ☐ **Set up appointments** with buyers that are going to be at the trade show so you can have time set aside to meet them.



# TRADE SHOW PREPARATION CHECKLISTS

## MERCHANDISING AND SALES

- ☐ **Get your product line ready.** Make sure your product samples are organized and ready to go, this will make it easier to pack and transport your products. Consider bringing a garment steamer, iron, or sewing kit if necessary, so your products look their best on display.
- ☐ **Update your line sheets!** Create custom line sheets for the trade show. Include any exclusive deals you might be offering at the trade show.
- ☐ **Update your customer information.** When you meet with your buyers, you want to spend more time selling and less time writing down billing shipping info.
- ☐ **Get your tech ready.** iPads and mobile devices are important sales tools. You want to be ready to take orders on the spot. Load all of your presentations to your Brandboom app and don't forget chargers, adapters and extension cords!

# TRADE SHOW PREPARATION CHECKLISTS

## PRE-SHOW MARKETING

- ☐ **Prepare marketing collaterals** such as business cards, post cards, or pamphlets so a potential buyer has a copy of your contact information to take with them.
- ☐ **Let your buyers know that you are attending** the trade show. Send an email or a newsletter announcing your attendance. Even if a buyer is not attending, they now know that you have a new collection worth checking out.
- ☐ **Promote your attendance on Social Media.** Grow your “social proof” and get your brand followers excited about an upcoming trade show. Tell them where your booth is located and even live stream video clips and photos day-of.

**NOTES**

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## ABOUT BRANDBOOM

Brandboom is the leading B2B e-commerce platform, making sales easier and faster for the antiquated wholesale industry. With over \$1B in orders facilitated, Brandboom helps thousands of brands reach out to more retail buyers in less time. Our unique technology allows users to quickly create line sheets and share product presentations with a seamless experience from desktop to iPad.



Made with love.  
[brandboom.com](http://brandboom.com)