

# Considering a Career in Exhibitions and Events?



International  
Association of  
Exhibitions and Events®

[www.exhibitionindustryjobs.com](http://www.exhibitionindustryjobs.com)

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# Exhibitions and Events Industry Careers

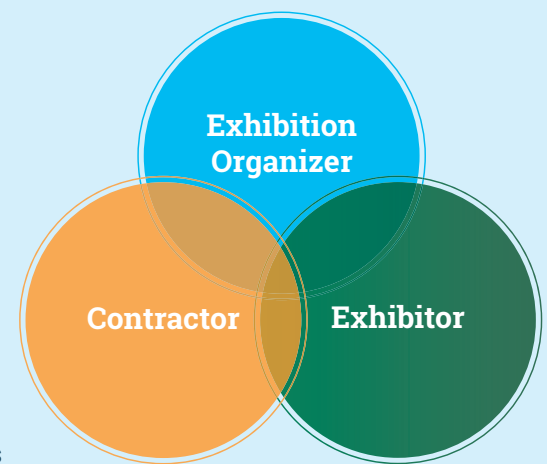
For a business sometimes called an “invisible industry,” exhibitions and events play an extraordinarily large role in the global economy. Since the launch of the world's first niche trade fair, which many believe was the Leipzig (Germany) Book Fair in the middle 15th century, exhibitions and events have served as remarkably reliable mirrors of the industries and market sectors they serve. **The fundamental purpose of exhibitions and events is to bring the buyer and seller together.** Whether you are dealing in a corporate or non-profit environment, or with a public event/consumer show, you will most likely have some kind of product/service to offer, and people who are interested in it or people whose interest you want to attract. Careers in the exhibitions and events industry can be simply placed into three categories: Exhibition Organizer, Supplier/Contractor and Exhibitor.

## Exhibition Organizer

Exhibition Organizers create, produce and manage the exhibition.

## Supplier/Contractor

Supplier is a term used for a company that provides products and services to support the exhibition or event. Contractors that serve exhibitions and events include convention centers and other exhibition venues, hotels, housing and registration service providers, transportation companies, general service contractors, technology providers, etc. Entry-level opportunities include sales, account management and operations. Some common titles include operations director/manager, account executive, exhibit service manager and sales director/manager. Some industry professionals begin their careers in the industry on the contractor/supplier side, gaining valuable experience, and then move into a position as an exhibition organizer.



## Exhibitor

Exhibitor is a term used for a company that exhibits at an exhibition or event. Common job titles often include the words marketing/communications/advertising manager, specialist or administrator. These people, depending on their position within the company, may manage trade show logistics and operations, handle the advertising, or administer the public relations program for a few or a large number of events.

## 14 Market Sectors

- > Business Services
- > Consumer Goods
- > Discretionary Consumer Services
- > Education
- > Food
- > Financial, Legal and Real Estate
- > Government
- > Building, Construction, Home and Repair
- > Industrial/Heavy Machinery and Finished Business Inputs
- > Communications and Information Technology
- > Medical and Health Care
- > Raw Materials and Science
- > Sporting Goods, Travel and Entertainment
- > Transportation

# Function, Titles and Average Salaries

A career in the exhibitions and events industry can be rewarding, challenging and ever-changing. There are opportunities for world travel and working with different people and cultures, which can be very exciting. But it is certainly not a normal nine-to-five position as show organizers often work long hours in advance of an event and at the show site, and it does not stop there.

Each year, organizers must reinvent their exhibitions and events to stay ahead of the competition and strategically position their shows to grow. In his book, *The World is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman points to technological advances and the increased competitiveness of emerging markets. For the exhibitions and events industry, this means that there will be ongoing opportunities for the industry and the people employed in it. As the saying goes, "You are only as good as your last show."

## Base Salary by Title

Manager  
**\$74,900**

Coordinator/Specialist/Assistant  
**\$49,300**

## Did You Know?

**\$66,974**

Base salary for those with 0-5 Years Experience

Average salary figures represent base salary\*

# Skills Needed

Opportunities abound for individuals seeking a dynamic and challenging career in the exhibitions and events industry. Employers are looking for individuals who are enthusiastic, creative, have a good attitude and are team players. Having an entrepreneurial mindset, as well as the ability and interest to constantly look for opportunities in the marketplace for the organization, is also helpful. By their very nature, all jobs in the exhibitions and events industry require that the people employed in the industry:

- > be detail-oriented
- > have the ability to develop and follow timelines
- > be able to effectively manage multiple tasks
- > be customer-focused
- > be enthusiastic
- > have a good attitude and “can-do” spirit
- > be team-oriented
- > be a strategic planner
- > have knowledge in finance (i.e. budgeting, invoicing and collecting)
- > have an understanding of social media marketing

## Background and Education

The professional backgrounds of those involved in the industry are as varied as the individuals themselves. Some enter the industry through a direct route with a degree in convention management or hospitality. Others enter through related fields such as sales, marketing/communications/public relations, business administration, legal, information

technologies, etc. Yet many come from completely unrelated careers such as teaching and human resources. It all depends on the needs of the company doing the hiring and the position being filled. Usually, these individuals start their careers at an entry-level and progress with hands-on experience.

## Exhibitions and Events Industry Research

Exhibitions and events generate global commerce and greatly impact the overall economy. The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), [www.ceir.org](http://www.ceir.org), reports on the growth of business-to-business exhibitions in its annual CEIR Index. The CEIR Index provides exhibition industry performance across 14 key industry sectors. In the United States alone, according to CEIR research, the business-to-business exhibition

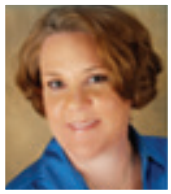
industry's direct and indirect contribution to U.S. GDP in 2018 was \$97 billion. Every five years, CEIR produces the CEIR Census, which reports on the number of business-to-business and business-to-consumer shows that take place in North America. The next Census will be released in 2020.

# How to Get Started

Exhibitionindustryjobs.com lists positions ranging from entry-level to experienced, mid-management positions. IAEE also lists opportunities for internships to obtain hands-on experience and to help determine if the exhibitions and events industry is a good fit for you. Finding a rewarding career in the exhibitions and events industry is just like any other industry. Visit IAEE's Job Board at [www.exhibitionindustryjobs.com](http://www.exhibitionindustryjobs.com).

IAEE has student membership rates and student chapters. Get involved and become engaged in the workings of the association. Sixty to seventy percent of all jobs are found by networking.

## How Current Professionals Started



*"I started my career in the exhibitions industry planning an annual conference for Special Olympics and now manage an international association's exhibition that travels all over the world. The exhibition industry is an exciting career ... and the opportunities for continuing education and networking with colleagues through IAEE make it continuously energetic."*

**Kristin Barranger, CEM**

Manager, Expositions & Communications  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)



*"After graduating college with a degree in management and marketing I had no idea where to start my job search, but I knew my passion for people and sales would lead me to the proper company. A friend of a friend offered me an interview with a supplier company named Freeman and away I went. Every day is different with a new client, new event, new opportunity and even a new office. This industry is the perfect spot for those of us who like innovation and variation! We see new technology, new trends and old tricks every day. New opportunities are around every corner, the opportunities for growth are never ending. You can't explain events, exhibitions and face-to-face, you have to experience it."*

**Brad Hobson, CEM**

Sr. Business Development Manager  
Freeman



*"The amount of experience and industry knowledge found at an average IAEE meeting is almost staggering. I'm fortunate to have a great group of resources, and most importantly friends that I've gained through my time as a member."*

**Alex Land, CEM**

Sales Executive, Eastern Region – Trade Show Corporate & Association  
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority

Workforce Ready  
Assessment



0 Years of  
Experience

CEM  
Certified



3-5 Years of  
Experience

CEM Advanced  
Professional



CEM + 10 Years  
of Experience

CEM  
Fellow



CEM-AP + 20 Years  
of Experience

CEM  
Emeritus



61+ Years  
in Age

IAEE is committed to every step of your career development in the exhibitions and events industry. From workforce ready assessments to professional designations, we've got you covered.

IAEE offers a wide range of information to help you get started in the exhibitions and events industry. We offer a career path regardless of where you are starting from when looking at a career in exhibitions and events management. Starting a career in the exhibitions and events industry is exciting and has a defined career path. IAEE offers several resources available to help navigate the various avenues to jump-start your career in exhibitions and events.

## Laying the Foundation for a Career in Exhibitions and Events

We have known for some time that the exhibitions industry is a viable and long-lasting career path with numerous avenues for growth. Annually, there are more than 20,000 trade shows worldwide with an economic impact of more than \$300 billion U.S.

In 2014 the U.S. Department of Labor formally recognized the Events and Exhibitions Management sector, further validating the exhibitions management as a "career of choice". Competencies were built from all industry associations and their bodies of knowledge including *IAEE's Art of the Show: An Introduction to Exhibition Management* textbook.



# Certified in Exhibition Management

The Certified in Exhibition Management® (CEM) designation is a globally recognized designation that demonstrates the highest professional standard throughout the exhibitions and events management arena. It was first created in 1975 to raise professional standards in the event industry and it continues to be the premier mark of professional achievement.

## About IAEE

Organized in 1928 as the National Association of Exposition Managers to represent the interests of trade show and exposition managers, the International Association of Exhibitions and Events® (IAEE) is today the leading association for the global exhibition industry. Today IAEE represents more than 12,000 individuals in over 50 countries who conduct and support exhibitions around the world.

**Vision:** To be the global exhibition and event industry voice, thought leader and connector of commerce, learning and innovation.

**Mission:** IAEE globally promotes the unique value of exhibitions and events and is the principal resource for those who plan, produce and service the industry.

## Young Professionals

As a young professional starting your career in the exhibitions and events industry, IAEE provides a strong sense of community, leadership and professionalism. Our goal as an organization is to provide quality educational programs, resources and opportunities to ensure the next generation of leaders will be ready to take over as their boomer bosses retire.

IAEE offers the ability to collaborate with other young professionals through involvement with regional chapter activities and IAEE's international committee efforts.



### What is an association?

A trade association is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry. An industry trade association participates in public relations activities such as advertising, education, political donations, lobbying and publishing, but its focus is collaboration between companies. Associations may offer other services, such as producing conferences, networking or charitable events or offering classes or educational materials.

### Why Should I Join an Association?

Joining an association provides members with a competitive advantage because they become active, informed members of their industry. Many association members look to their associations for industry trends, government actions, advances in technology, networking and certification.

### Apply for a Student Membership today!

Interested in learning more?

Visit [www.iaee.com](http://www.iaee.com)

or contact [membership@iaee.com](mailto:membership@iaee.com)



Individuals engage through volunteer efforts with local chapter leadership positions and foster relationships through local community networking to build a platform for further advancement with your career.

Through IAEE's mentoring program, young professionals gain insight into the experiences and skill set of some of the industry's leading professionals. Pair up with a seasoned professional to build your knowledge and network with industry experts.