

3 June 2020

# #ExhibitionsDay

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## Exhibitions Day Tip Sheet

**Topic:** Share Your Story  
**Presenter(s):** Christina Jensen, Client Content Manager, CNTV  
Jessica Finnerty, CEM, Manager, Meetings and Events, Auto Care Association  
Sue McCart, President, HFI Event Services  
Carrie Ferenac, President & Co-Founder, CNTV  
Josh Kagan, Exhibits Manager, ASIS International

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In this video titled “Sharing Your Story,” CNTV’s Christina Jensen spoke to attendees about how to best communicate with elected officials on those issues that matter the most. Your work is important. Your voice matters, and what matters to you should also matter to Congress. In order for legislators to understand the issues, they need to hear it from people in our industry experiencing it firsthand. But what makes a good story and how can you effectively share it? Two industry professionals shared some advice.

### Virtual Exhibitions Day (Tell Your Story)

#### Jessica Finnerty, CEM

2020 will mark her sixth year attending Exhibitions Day. Through her years of participation, she has been able to foster meaningful relationships with elected officials. One year, she extended an invitation to U.S. House Representative Dina Titus to see the impact of trade shows in person. Titus did just that. She attended the Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo, which is co-owned by the Auto Care Association.

“We went in and laid the foundation. We talked about the show, we stressed why it was important, and then I did a follow up and included my government affairs team on the follow-up and they were able to continue to foster that relationship and help make it happen...Exhibitions Day is a great day to plant the seed and it helps you talk a little more in depth about what the issues are.”

**Jessica’s Tip:** When it comes to sharing your story to legislators, keep it brief and come in with talking points.

- “Stress the importance of exhibitions and events, not just to the city, but to the people that work there...It’s not even just about the kind of money that we can bring to the city, it’s about the people that we’re helping keep employed and that we’re helping to keep insured.”

#### Sue McCart

Sue will also be in attendance for Exhibitions Day and is IAEE’s first Exhibitions Mean Business Ambassador.

#### **How to Engage and Follow Up with Elected Officials**

- “I think what is really impactful is follow up emails. I know that each time I have had an Exhibitions Day experience, we make sure to get all of their business cards...we follow up thanking them for their time... But also, re-outline the points we were making in their conversations.”

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## Social Media

- Social media is another great tool to use during and after Exhibitions Day. IAEE's social media toolkit contains messaging and useful tips. The toolkit is available on [www.exhibitionsday.org](http://www.exhibitionsday.org) and in the attendee dashboard after you register.
- "The IAEE social media toolkit is great. And it is easy to follow, it is easy to use, there are suggested posts in there. It's important to just take one of those posts and add your particular perspective to it so you can personalize it. Be sure to include the lawmakers' Twitter handle, tag them on Facebook and whatever social network they are on."

## Year- Round Advocacy

- "Our industry is so important and we touch so many aspects of the hospitality industry. We aren't just hotels and we aren't just convention centers. We collectively bring thousands of people together that can generate millions and millions of dollars to an economy and it's really important for us to educate those lawmakers."

### Additional Tips

- Decide what you want to accomplish and answer the questions: What is your goal and who is your audience?
- Keep your story brief and concise.
- Answer the main question: who, what, when, where and why.
- Use photos to help bring a story to life and share that story on social media.

### Communication Strategies from Former Congressional Staffer

Josh Kagan with ASIS International shares tips on how to communicate effectively with lawmakers.

### **What are a few effective communication strategies to help get your point across to elected officials?**

It's important to remember when you are going to speak with a member or member staff to come in with a specific task in mind or a specific request. I like to say it's easier to secure a more obtainable request such as cosponsoring legislation. I would say signing a letter is the best way to communicate their message to them.

### **Are there things we specifically should or shouldn't say when talking to members of Congress?**

I would say don't get too political. This is not a political issue. We are talking to members of Congress and our representatives. Remember that they are here to listen to you, to listen to your concerns, hear your message and **this is not about whether you are Republican or Democrat**. We all have a message to send to them about our industry and it's important to remember that. I wouldn't recommend commenting on how young the staffers are. They are still going to bring your message to members of Congress. It's better to meet the congressional staffers than the members of Congress because the staffers do all of the research and deliver the message.

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**Tell me about building a relationship. We are going to be advocates throughout the year so what is a good way to build a relationship?**

Keep those lines of communications open. We are going to spend time during Exhibitions Day to get our message across. Reminding them that our industry is important and we have a lot to give to our economy. Also, remember that we will come back next year in a physical space and that we are bringing it back year after year. That will definitely help.

**How is it different working in the exhibitions industry than being a congressional staffer?**

I think the craziness of working in events and working in Congress is similar. When you are in Congress, we walk just as much as you walk in a convention center. It's probably very similar in that respect.

You can be an advocate throughout the year. For more information, visit [www.exhibitionsmeanbusiness.org](http://www.exhibitionsmeanbusiness.org)