

Freeman¹

Evolving the exhibitor experience

Exhibitor considerations for a post-COVID-19 world

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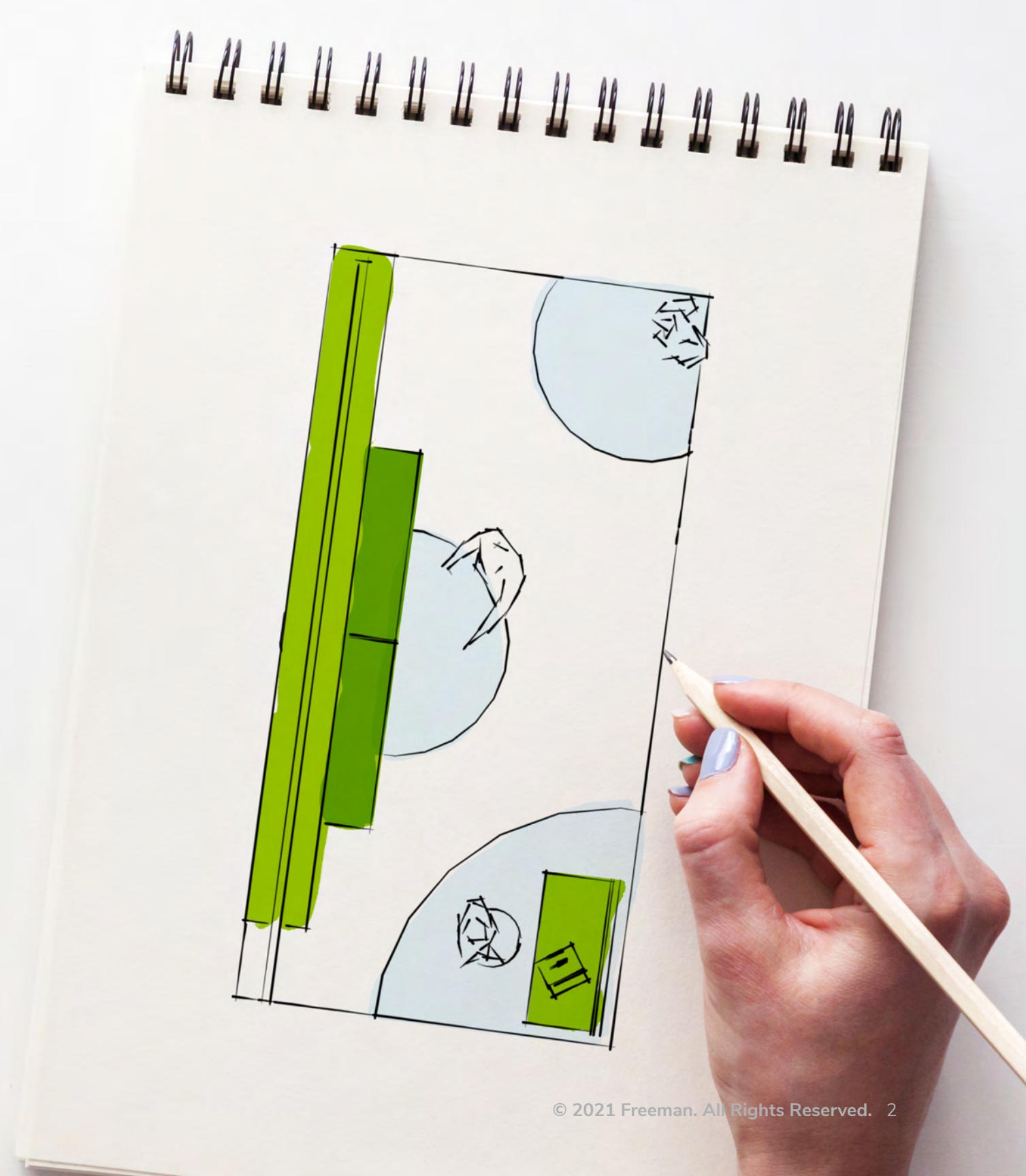
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Why this guide?

Through our relationships with both our show organizer and exhibitor clients, Freeman understands both unique views as we look to re-engage in live events. With these perspectives in mind, we've created this guide to offer ways to safely exhibit and protect both your employees and attendees from the risks of COVID-19.

As you'd expect, health and safety are the top priorities as we consider new designs and ways to connect. When those are clearly emphasized on the show floor, attendees will feel more confident re-engaging.



So, how exactly should we approach live events with health and safety as the top priorities?

Clearly, these challenging times mean we have to think creatively about what's next. And that comes down to three things: First, building health and safety into the experience by personalizing the attendee journey. Second, leveraging mobile technology for engagement and navigation. And third, re-evaluating physical spaces around the exhibit hall and on the show floor itself.

Business events and exhibitions take place in controlled environments, so show organizers can control attendance, attendee flow, and design for social distancing. The nature of our industry allows us to align with health and safety best practices — from conception.

Together, let's imagine what this new experience will look like — based on both what is possible and realistic.

We know that with challenges comes opportunities. Here are two opportunities that come with more personalized experiences for attendees.

First, you can focus on attracting more qualified prospects in smaller groups to more intimate engagements. In other words, emphasize the “quality” of your attendees over “quantity.” The other opportunity is to use online experience to not only engage attendees during the run of the show, but for weeks and months beyond.

Some recommendations may be new to you. Some, not. In all cases, we've put considerable thought into them and ask that you read them carefully so that you understand them.

The following pages break down the steps of exhibition into 7 sections — with attendee health, safety, and confidence in mind — and based on the latest information available.

However, as we all know, things can change rapidly. So please stay updated, and regularly check on state and municipal developments that may affect events where you exhibit.



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01.

**Health
and safety**

Building safe space

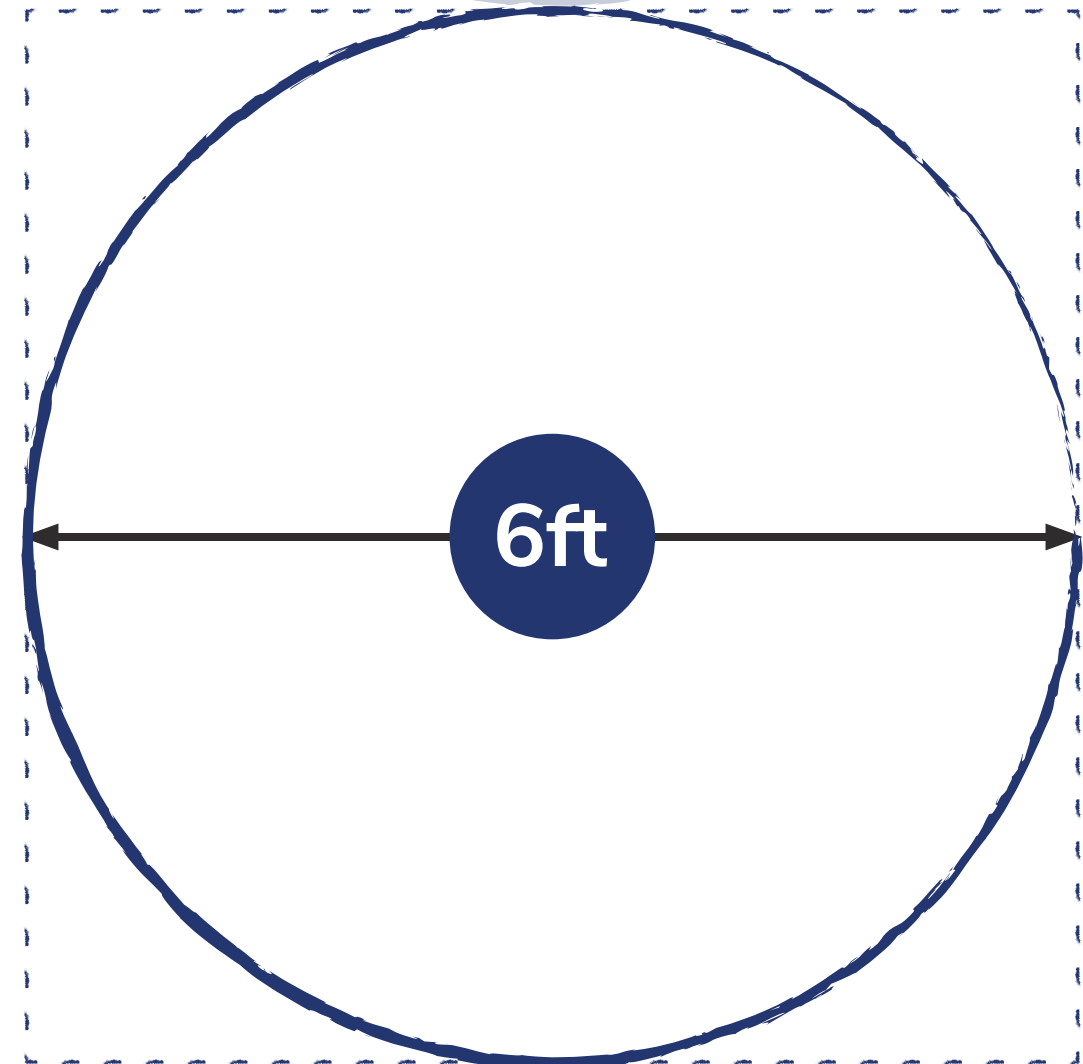
Why

Designing safe spaces around local, state, and CDC guidelines is critical.

State guidelines for re-opening vary and it is of utmost importance to understand what event guidelines look like. View those on the [US Chamber of Commerce](#) site.

Benefit

Knowing these safety standards will assure your employees and attendees that safety is your priority. This will help make them feel more comfortable and confident in an event environment.



Designing safety throughout the journey

Why

Talking health and safety is one thing, but thoughtfully designing it into your strategy is another. The key is to think through the entire attendee journey - keeping in mind both physical and digital attendees.

Benefit

By seeing measures for health and safety every step of the way, again, attendees and staff will feel better about their choice of being at a live event.



STAY SAFE
AND
KEEP YOUR
DISTANCE

Understanding your risks

This pandemic is something new to all of us in this industry. As we write this, we see events are safely taking place in Asia and Europe, and will soon in the North America. Once safe travel guidelines are set, domestic shows will begin to open safely.

Until then, we recommend taking the time to formulate a crisis management plan and consider trade show insurance. We've compiled a list of resources to help as you work through your insurance questions:

Exhibitor magazine q&a

Exhibit insurance



Exhibitor magazine

Got it covered? Insurance options



Exhibitor magazine

Cover your assets



Exhibitor Magazine

When disaster strikes





02.

**Attendee
journey**

Personlizing the attendee journey

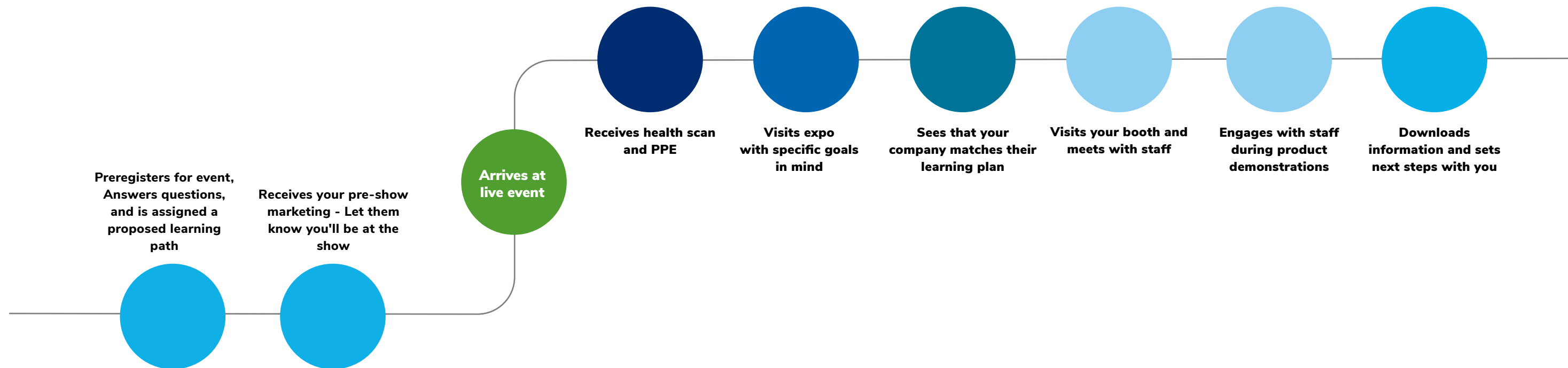
Why

We know the attendee journey will have to change. As shows work with local and state guidelines on event capacity and density management, we'll have more room to create personalized attendee "learning paths" on the show floor.

Planning the user experience — digitally and live — will be a necessary priority in your planning.

Benefit

Consciously guiding the attendee journey will only enhance engagement — increasing sales leads, brand awareness, and creating meaningful connections.





The value of quality over quantity

Why

True, smaller show attendance will be a reality, but so will the fact that people who've made the choice to attend will be more motivated to engage, learn, and do business. We expect the quality of attendee to appreciate post-COVID.

Benefit

This not only means attendees will be comfortable, but they will also be more focused on whom they want to meet. This also means better informed connections and qualified leads for you.



03.

Expo halls

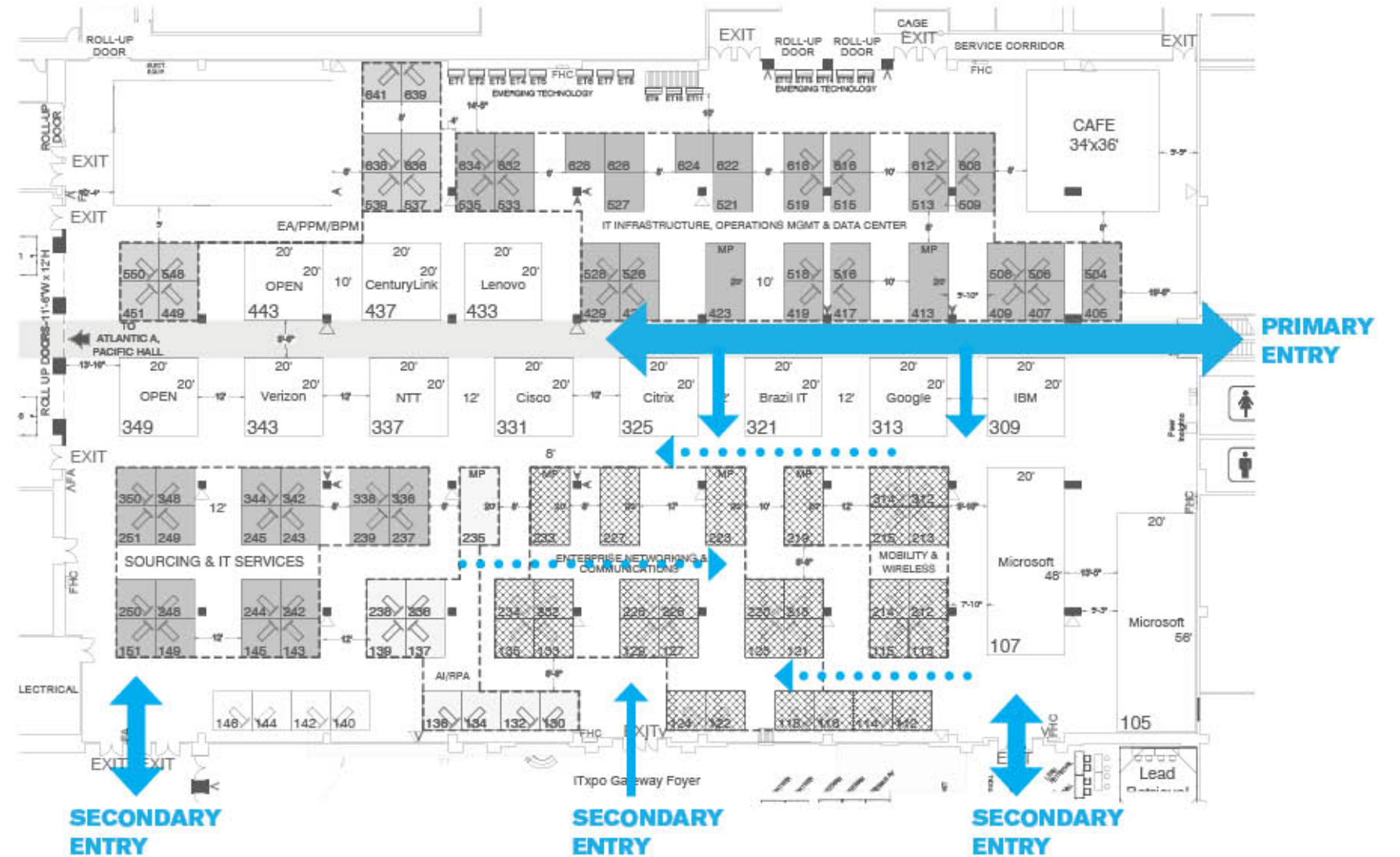
Taking advantage of the show floor

Why

Expo hall layouts will likely change - shifting to wider aisles with one-way traffic. Connect with the show organizer to see what this means for your booth space.

Benefit

Attendees will be strategic about who they visit on the show floor. Design your space around the new traffic flow to attract and engage with more attendees..





04.

Technology

Drive engagement through tech

Why

Shows will rely heavily on mobile technology to help attendees navigate the show floor. By tapping this channel, you can explore how to engage with attendees earlier and more meaningfully.

Benefit

Powerful new possibilities are opened. Tell attendees where you are and what you will be sharing in your booth. Talk with the show to see if you can message them if they are close or when you are presenting. Share your literature and scan leads where ever possible.



Touchless technology

Consider any technology that will allow attendees to interact with your content without the need for cleaning afterwards. Second screens, AR, or motion sensing LEDs are all options.

Digital content

Allow attendees to self-select product literature that matches their interest. Create QR codes for easy viewing and downloading.





05.

Exhibits

New exhibits for new expectations

Why

The big question is how to design your booth to allow booth staff and attendees to engage safely.

Benefit

With thoughtful design, we can optimize space, storage, furnishings, materials, and event tech to serve function without sacrificing safety.



10x10 exhibit

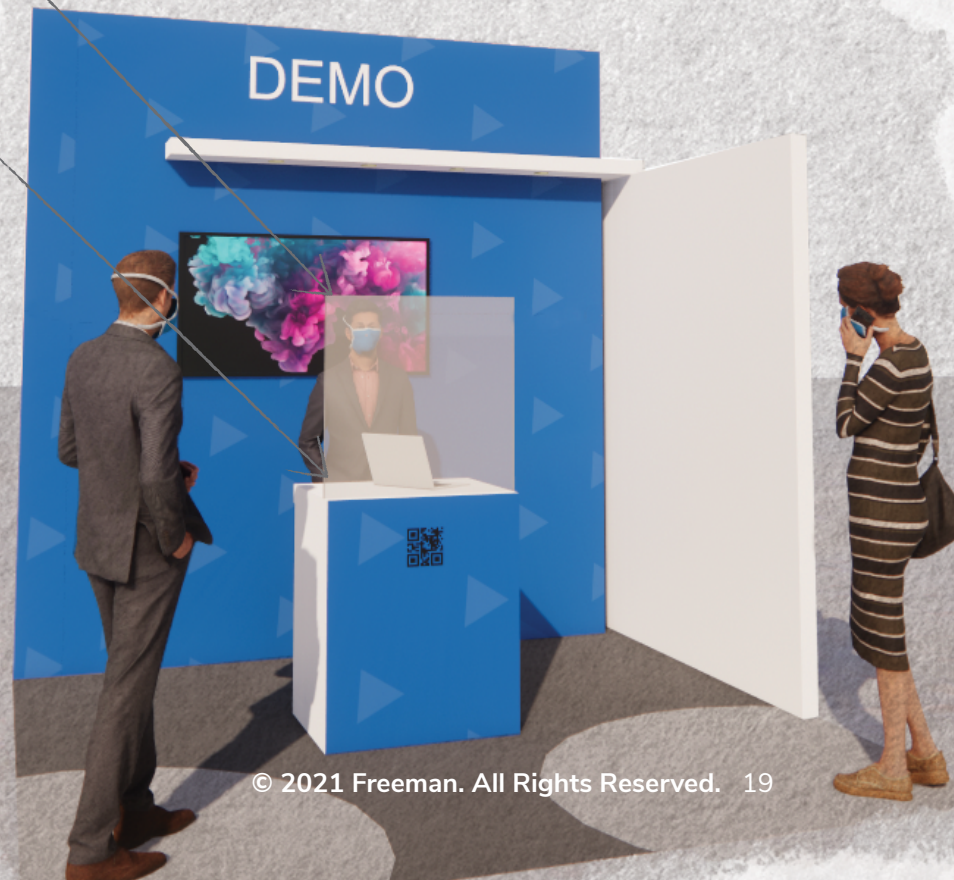
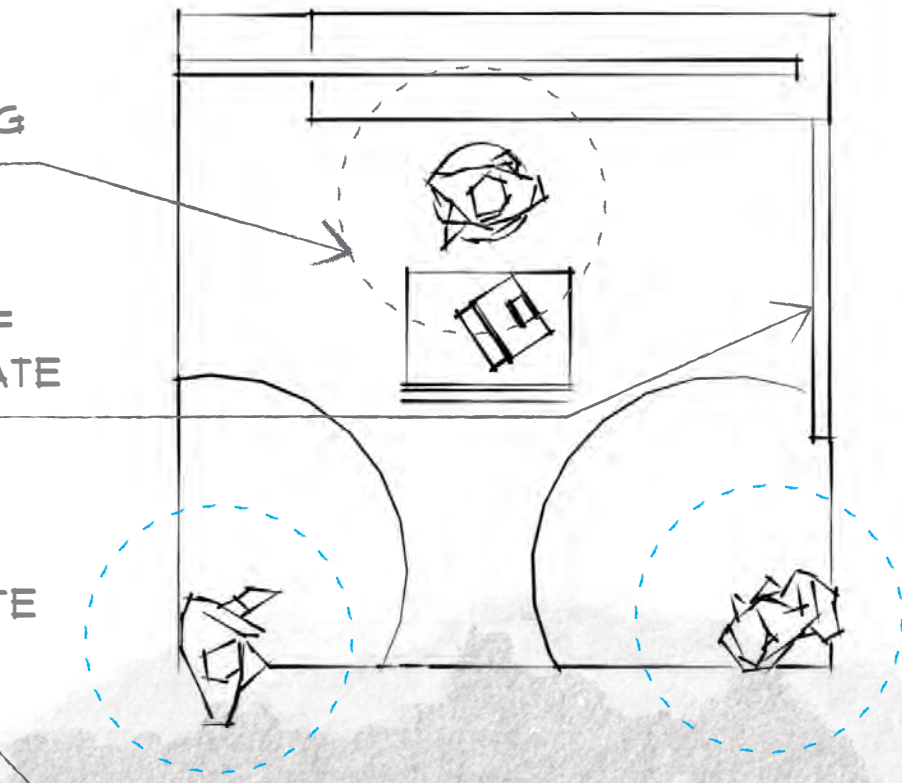
At first glance, an exhibit of this size may not seem adaptable to these new space requirements, but through the use of floor treatments, wall locations, and graphics, you will be able to guide attendees through the space easily while ensuring they, as well as your staff, remain safe.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MAINTAINED

INCREASED USE OF WALLS TO SEPARATE EXHIBITORS

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED TO SEPARATE STAFF FROM ATTENDEES

DIGITAL TOOLS TO LIMIT PHYSICAL INTERACTION



10x20 exhibit

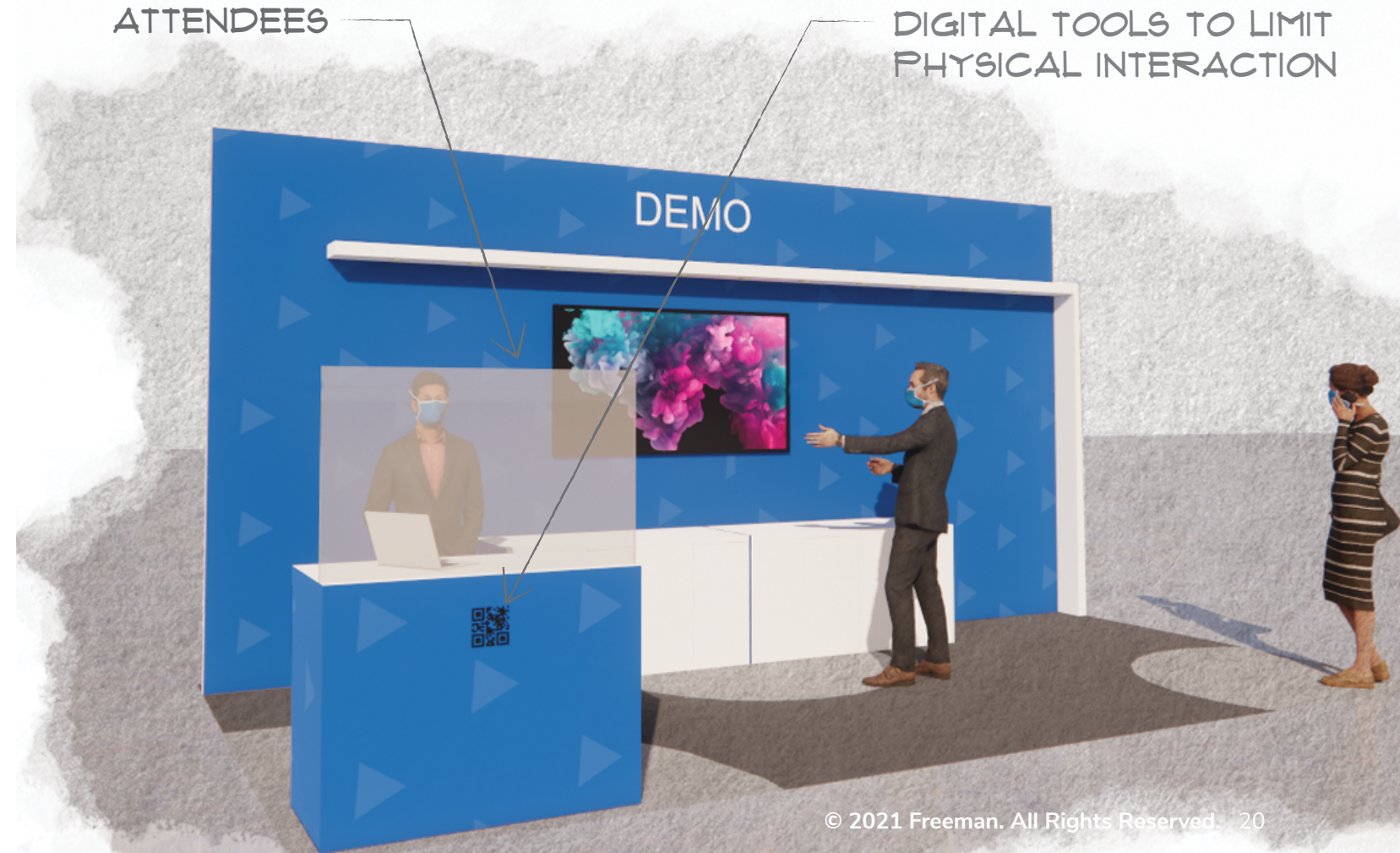
With more space comes more opportunities. Similar to the 10x10, we'll use floor treatments, graphics, and structure elements to keep attendees and your staff safe, but with a wider application due to the size of the space.

INCREASED USE OF WALLS TO SEPARATE EXHIBITORS

SOCIAL DISTANCING MAINTAINED

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DIGITAL TOOLS TO LIMIT PHYSICAL INTERACTION



20x20 exhibit

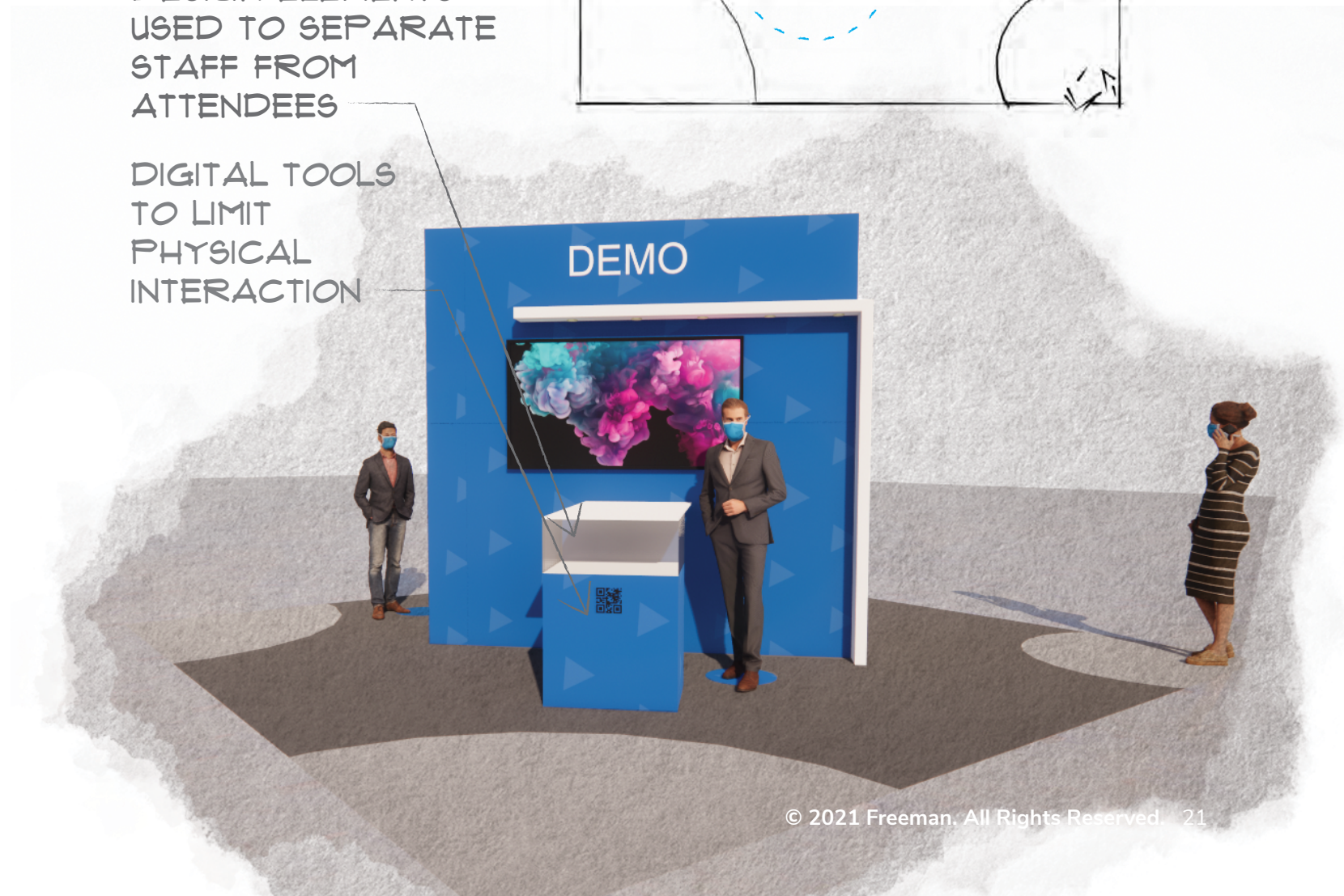
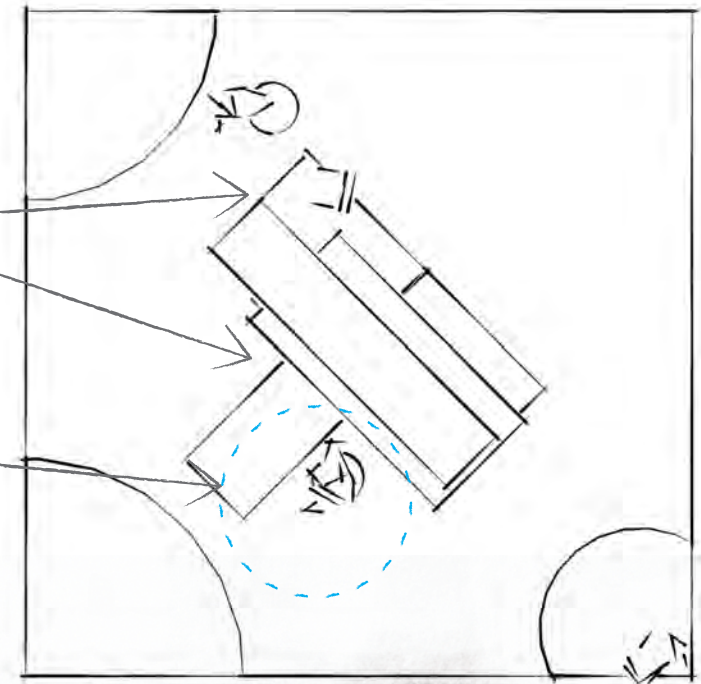
As with the 10x10 and 10x20 exhibits, we'll use floor treatments, graphics, and structure elements to keep attendees and your staff safe. The 20x20 space allows for the additional option of more viewing locations so more people can enter the exhibit physically distanced.

MULTIPLE VIEWING AREAS TO MINIMIZE CONGESTION

SOCIAL DISTANCING MAINTAINED

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED TO SEPARATE STAFF FROM ATTENDEES

DIGITAL TOOLS TO LIMIT PHYSICAL INTERACTION



Thinking big

If you have a large space, consider having hand sanitizer or hand washing stations throughout — in addition to floor treatments, graphics, and structural elements. Create open areas for attendees to engage with content while they wait for a pre-set appointment.





Exhibit considerations

One-way entry

Design your exhibit with a one-way traffic flow in mind, using floor treatments to guide the way.

Sustainability

Think through your promotional products and plexiglass use — can you incorporate them in future booth designs? Can you use them elsewhere?

Materials/cleaning

Choose easy-to-clean, laminate surfaces for any counter or meeting space. Share cleaning times with attendees or ask booth staff to clean on a regular schedule.



06.

Signage and wayfinding

Lead the way with graphics

Why

Health and safety signage sends the message to attendees that you are taking health and safety seriously. We recommend signage on your booth walls as separate stand out reminders, or even on the exhibit floor.

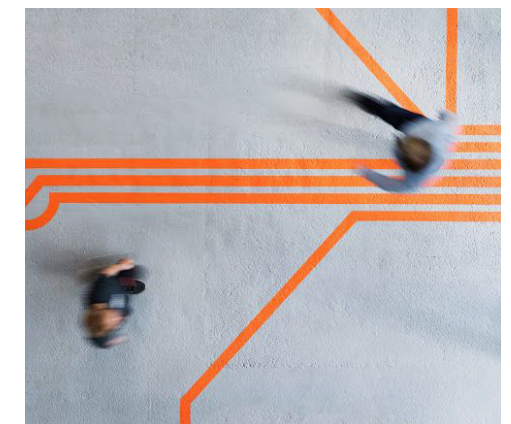
Benefit

By clearly communicating health and safety requirements to attendees, you're keeping them in step with new processes and procedures and by offering clear direction for movement and distancing in and around your exhibit, you are making it easy for everyone to stay safe so they can focus on what you are offering in your exhibit.



Be strategic with graphics

The same exhibit graphic principles apply to safety and wayfinding graphics. Make them simple and clear. This reduces the problem of attendees stopping and hesitating and will allow for more traffic to flow safely through your booth.





07.

Checklists and considerations

Exhibitor

Show specific offerings



- ☑ Utilize show matchmaking & networking opportunities. Have your booth staff split up the show floor — tell attendees where they can meet you.
- ☑ Connect with show organizers prior to the event to discuss how you might engage the most attendees.
- ☑ Utilize the show's app as much as possible. If attendees can use the event application to search the show floor using keywords, guests will be more efficient with their time and how they get from place to place.
- ☑ Check sponsorship opportunities and join in all the way from pre-event communications, online elements, to the on-site experiences. Consider promotional items and sponsorships that keep attendees safe such as hand sanitizer, face masks, or hand-washing stations. These items send a message that you not only want your attendees' business but that you're interested in their protection as well.
- ☑ See how they're handling crowd control and use this to see where attendees might be. Use beacons for crowd control and push notifications. This creates an easy snapshot of where attendees are. Make sure you are up to date with app technologies & touch base

Exhibitor

Pre-show marketing checklist

- ☑ Ensure your tone and message are authentic, honest, open, and transparent.
- ☑ Focus on personalizing your messaging to create more intimate connections. Recognize that many attendees will be balancing their desire to connect within their industry with their fear of crowds.
- ☑ Develop a show landing page to share show details including a content schedule and meeting calendar. When will attendees be able to hear presentations? Allow them to sign up before the show for presentations and meetings?
- ☑ Share your schedule with attendees prior to the show. Add in visible cleaning times before and after presentations or meetings to reassure attendees that you're taking their Health & Safety seriously.
- ☑ Consider a hybrid event. If attendees can't attend in person, make the effort to connect with them virtually. Coordinated with in-person meetings and virtual presentations, a successful hybrid event blends these elements seamlessly to expand reach and engagement.

Exhibitor

Booth staff & attendee engagements



- ☑ Prior to the show select qualified booth staff. Be mindful that you may be talking to key decision makers that want to talk to subject matter experts, not all sales staff.
- ☑ Set meetings in advance. Less booth staff may be required and this will allow you to send the right subject matter experts.
- ☑ Booth staff need to be trained on the social distancing and health and safety rules and accommodations. Treat all attendees with respect and assume that none of them are entirely comfortable in the event environment.
- ☑ Introduce a custom greeting for just your attendees that replaces the handshake.
- ☑ Have greeters to explain the new safety protocols
- ☑ Assign a dedicated team member that is identified as a cleaning/sanitization crew. Have staff on standby to wipe/sanitize key areas..
- ☑ Enable digital business card exchanges.
- ☑ Provide packaged hand-wipes for attendee use.

Exhibitor

Booth space overview checklist

Owned Booth Properties

- ✓ Get creative with your booth space layout. Changing it to maximize your space and/or sectioning it for maximum protection will be key.
- ✓ If your booth location changed, talk with the show organizer for one-way aisles and adjust your layout to ensure you are visible and approachable to attendees.
- ✓ Consider adding sneeze guards to existing reception desks.
- ✓ After set-up, ensure that all properties are wiped down. If you are not setting your exhibit up, ask for your vendors' Health & Safety protocols.
- ✓ Shows may require approval of booth layouts, so talk to them as early as possible.

Booth Rentals

- ✓ Consider modular rentals to change orientation & size as needed. Flexibility will be key.
- ✓ After set-up, ensure that all properties are wiped down. If you are not setting your exhibit up, ask for your vendors' Health & Safety protocols.
- ✓ Shows may require approval of booth layouts, so talk to them as early as possible.

Materials/Cleaning

- ✓ Rethink design for high-touch areas—(eliminating surfaces that need cleaning such as knobs on cabinets and counters). Have antibacterial surface wipes for any touchable areas visible and clean frequently.
- ✓ Consider scheduling time for cleaning—and sharing that cleaning schedule with attendees.
- ✓ Use hard surfaces that are easier to wipe down (laminates) for wall and counter infills.
- ✓ Design acrylic walls/shields and sneeze guards where applicable (reception counters, demo stations).
- ✓ Eliminate soft furnishings to make the cleaning and disinfecting process more efficient, and provide physically distanced single seats.
- ✓ Design hand sanitation stations at entrance and throughout space. Consider best ways to help them stand out while becoming a part of the design.
- ✓ Reassure your team that Freeman is creating a safe exhibiting environment. [Click here to learn about Freeman's focus on Health & Safety.](#)

Traffic flow & in-booth social distancing

- ✓ Define a clear path through your exhibit space creating a one-way journey throughout with controlled entrance and exit points.
- ✓ Consider floor decals or carpet inlays to designate social distancing areas or traffic flow.
- ✓ Use dividers or greenery to guide flow through booth.
- ✓ Place signage to gently remind attendees of social distancing throughout the booth.

Reception Area

- ✓ Protect workers and attendees with transparent barriers where appropriate. Use sneeze guard protections and other barriers for reception area where technology-based distancing isn't feasible.
- ✓ Consider touchless lead retrieval when attendees arrive at the booth. If an attendee arrives early, have waiting protocols ready.

Demo/Presentation Area

- ✓ Rethink furniture layouts. Replace shared seating like sofas and loveseats with individual club chairs carefully spaced and optimized for conversations.

- ✓ Schedule pre-set meetings to give one-on-one demos to attendees.
- ✓ Display presentations on large screens or LED walls for group demos and allow for hybrid meetings, accommodating any attendees who may want to watch on their own phone or tablet or cannot attend because of travel restrictions.
- ✓ Consider chatbot and AI-driven service. Voice-based interactive systems provide a quick and cost-effective way to answer questions and request services.
- ✓ Allow demonstrations that provide more viewing opportunities by attendees by using second screens.
- ✓ Create QR/Barcodes on personal hand-held devices for sharing content or viewing product information.

Meeting Rooms

- ✓ Design semi-private meeting spaces with high clear/frosted acrylic walls with no ceiling.
- ✓ Keep doorways and entryways open for a touch-free experience.
- ✓ Give attendees a specific meeting time and stagger those times for cleaning in the interim.





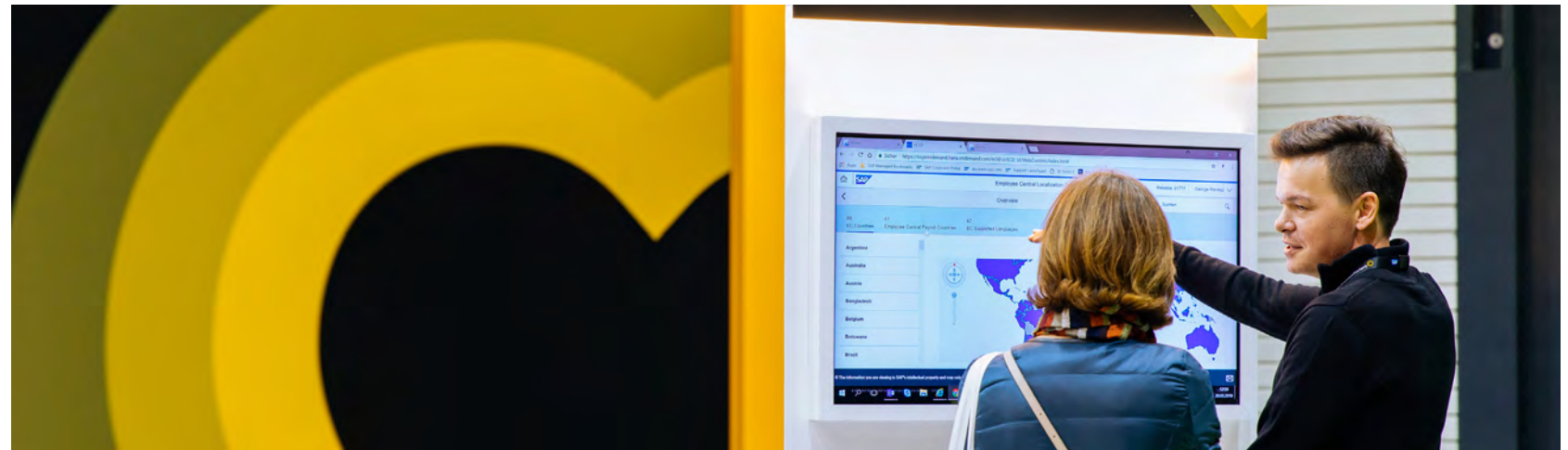
Graphic Considerations

- ☑ Graphics are key for wayfinding. Design these graphics not only so they look clean, but also so they give clear visual guidance through the space.
- ☑ Use crisp lines, symmetrical designs, and white backgrounds to give a clean look.
- ☑ Use easy-to-clean graphic materials such as laminates.
- ☑ Use large LED walls for impactful storytelling.
- ☑ Don't forget that large graphics explaining your products and services continue to be important to attract and engage attendees. This is true no matter your booth size.

Promotional Products

- ☑ Consider packaged hand-wipes to give to attendees when they exit the booth.
- ☑ Provide individually-wrapped items or pre-packaged grab-and-go bags.
- ☑ Send giveaways prior to the show to key prospects or clients so that they'll know what to expect.
- ☑ Send packages after the show to your quality leads.

Exhibitor **Content checklist**



- ☑ Content becomes entirely digital and hands-free. Use an eco-friendly alternative to printed programs and handouts. Some tools feature tracking and do-it-yourself options where you can share contact information.
- ☑ Maximize the number of attendees you can visit with through shorter, tighter presentations with a focus on a single message. Social media and other online forums have also trained people that information comes in bite-sized bit.
- ☑ Test **everything** before the start of the show.
- ☑ Create QR/Barcodes on personal hand-held devices for sharing content or viewing product information.
- ☑ Test and choose the right tech for your hybrid content. Live streams, webinars, virtual conferences — each has unique benefits to your attendees.
- ☑ Make all of your content OnDemand and in bite-sized pieces. Allow attendees and virtual attendees alike to engage after the show.
- ☑ Where appropriate, inject humor and interaction into content. Understand that your job may have evolved from simply delivering information to entertaining your audience to keep them engaged. Keep it fresh, fast-moving, and fun. Empower attendees by encouraging them to use their own mobile devices to interact with both your live and digital experiences.



Ready to evolve your experience?

Let's get started

Freeman is a global leader in events. Whether virtual, in-person, or hybrid, we are on a mission to redefine live for a new era. With a data-driven approach and the industry's largest network of experts, our insights shape exhibitions, exhibits, and events that drive audiences to action. Our integrated full-service solutions leverage a 100-year legacy in event management as well as new technologies to deliver moments that matter.

