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## INTRODUCTION

You've decided to host a car show. It may be to promote a business or a benefit fundraiser for an individual or service organization, or simply an opportunity to gather like-minded individuals, and give them an opportunity to show off their vehicles.

Several months in advance (hopefully), you've decided what type vehicles you'll be catering to, if the event will have a *theme* (and if so, what that theme will be), found a suitable location, determined if any permits are required, and learned whether or not you will have to purchase an insurance policy.

If insurance is required, do an internet search for Car Show Liability Insurance, and you'll find several companies that can provide it.

You've also checked to ensure the date you've selected doesn't interfere with other events...there's nothing worse than having three or four different shows on the same day, only to find out that on the following weekend, no events are scheduled!

You've decided what time the show will start, and what time it will end, keeping in mind that the show should not last longer than eight hours (six or seven hours is long enough), unless there are factors that necessitate it being longer.

The preliminary part is done, and now the real work begins. What do you do next?

Whether you're an event promoter, or you've hosted events in the past, or especially if this is your first time, the *Car Show In A Box*, created by FlaCarShows.com, has been prepared to help guide you through your event pre-planning, then right through the day of the show.

Keep in mind that this is merely a *guide*, and can and should be modified to suit your specific needs.

Although some manufacturers and businesses have been referred to specifically, they are in no way endorsed by FlaCarShows.com, and are used only for reference.

A well-planned and executed event will function smoothly, the participants and spectators will appreciate your efforts, and if it's to be an annual event, participants will continue to return year after year.

## **THE EVENT BUDGET**

Unless you really like surprises, it's important to know the cost of your event BEFORE you host it.

Here are some of the most popular expenses you might incur:

- Event permits and insurance
- Awards
- Advertising
- Entertainment
- Door and raffle prizes
- Postage

Show income is largely dependent on the amount of the registration fee, and the number of vehicles that attend the show. Additional income may come from these sources:

- Sponsorships
- Vendor fees
- Raffle ticket sales
- 50/50 ticket sales

Create your budget realistically, and stick to it. If you're computer savvy, there are several budget templates available on the internet...do a search, and make use of one of them, or create your own.

Creating your own budget template is as simple as taking a sheet of paper, creating income and expense columns, then adding the various budgeted items and amounts. At the conclusion of the event, you can fill in the actual expenses, and compare.

## **EVENT COMMITTEES**

Planning and executing a car show is more work than one person can handle, and during the planning process, you'll need some help, and then even more help on the day of the event. Here are some committee suggestions:

- Promoting and Advertising
- Registration
- Event Parking
- Awards and Judging
- Vendors
- Food and Beverage
- Door and Raffle Prizes

**The Promotion and Advertising committee** is responsible for creation of the event flyer, and ensuring that it reaches as many potential registrants as possible.

The committee is responsible for contacting those who will advertise the show for you at no charge (internet, magazines, and the local newspapers), and decide if there should be any paid advertising from the same sources.

The best way to promote your event is by personal contact...passing out event flyers at other local car shows. Put one in each car (if the windows are rolled up, skip that car), and you'll also be able to answer any questions in person...its good public relations!

Make certain you give some event flyers to the show DJ, who will usually announce your upcoming event, and will have flyers available for those who may be interested.

You should also contact the local car clubs, and invite their members to attend. Ask if they'll provide your event flyers at their monthly meeting, and if so, find out how many they'll require, then either deliver them personally, or send them in the mail.

**The Registration committee** will receive the pre-registrations and record them into a master log. You should also send out an acknowledgement, which can be done by e-mail or postcard.

On the day of the event, they'll be responsible for processing day of show registrations, and providing the registrants with their event packets, goody bags, dash plaques, etc.

**The Parking committee** will create a site map of the event, and determine how the vehicles will be parked. On the day of show, they'll be on hand to direct registrants to their parking space.

**The Awards and Judging committee** is responsible for the creation of the awards to be presented, and the judging of the vehicles at the show.

**The Vendor committee** seeks out and invites appropriate vendors for the event. On the day of the event, the committee will direct them to their proper set-up location.

**The Food and Beverage committee** arranges for the food vendors, and makes certain they comply with all local and state ordinances. On event day, they'll be available to direct them to their specified location.

**The Door and Raffle Prize committee** will obtain the door and raffle prizes. Some of the major auto-related manufacturers and suppliers will donate an item or two to be used as door prizes.

You can also purchase door prizes, depending on what your budget will allow, from auto parts stores and through companies such as Harbor Freight (especially when those items are on sale).

But your door prizes do not have to be auto-related. By visiting other events, and seeing what is offered, you'll have a better idea of what it is that you should be giving away.



You'll also have to determine how the prizes will be given out, which usually begins with a random drawing of the registration numbers.

Be creative, and make the door prize drawings a fun part of the event.

When FlaCarShows.com hosted *WinterFest*, we numbered all the door prizes, and then filled a small bucket with poker chips that had the corresponding prize numbers written on them.

The registration numbers were drawn randomly throughout the day, and when the winner came to collect their door prize, they pulled a chip from the bucket, and received the prize that corresponded to the number they had drawn.

If you're holding both raffle prize and 50/50 drawings, be sure to get different color tickets, and use each color for a specific drawing.

Also, purchase more tickets than you think you'll need...there's nothing worse than running out!

Raffle prizes are considered *big-ticket* items, and are rarely donated to events other than those that are benefits, or for charity.

Based on your budget, you can purchase a few raffle items, taking time to consider items that will appeal to all the event participants.

The committee will also be responsible for selling the raffle prize and 50/50 tickets during the event.

The committee will have to purchase rolls of two-part tickets, and they can be found locally, including office supply stores, as well as Walmart. You can also search for them on the internet, and you'll find that it's usually less expensive than purchasing them locally.

## **THE EVENT FLYER**

This is most important, since it's your advertisement of the upcoming event. An event flyer doesn't have to be professionally created, but should contain ALL of this information:

- The name of the event and who is hosting it
- The type vehicles you want to attend
- The location of the event
- The date(s) and times of the event
- The entry fees, and what they include
- Any extras being offered
- Give credit to your sponsor(s)
- A contact name and telephone number
- A registration form, including where the payment is to be sent (for pre-registering)
- A disclaimer (if required)
- Anything else you feel might benefit participants

You can find many examples of event flyers on the Event Listing pages of FlaCarShows.com. Look for the Flyer/Register icon at the bottom of each listing.

A *disclaimer* is often included so that the host location, sponsors, and event staff will not be held responsible for any damages. They're often required by the property owner or sponsors, and the language varies depending on who wrote it.

Attorneys continue to debate the usefulness of the disclaimer, most agreeing it means little or nothing, since event insurance is in place to deal with most incidents.

Should a participant's vehicle be damaged, or if there's personal injury, and your event insurance policy does not cover the loss, you can be certain there will be a lawsuit in the immediate future!

If you haven't been provided with specific language for your disclaimer, take a look at other event flyers to get an idea of what should be included.

## **PRE-REGISTRATION AND REGISTRATION**

Why is there event pre-registration, and why does it cost less than the day of show registration?

Allowing attendees to pre-register accomplishes several things...it saves the registrant some money by paying in advance, it provides the host with some working capital, it gives the host an idea of how many (and who) will be attending, and it saves both the registrant and the host valuable time at the show registration.

Pre-registrations generally account for a third to two-thirds of the total registrations, but don't use these numbers as *fact*, since based on many factors, they may vary considerably.

You should select a pre-registration cutoff date; usually a week or so before the event, to ensure all your mailed-in pre-registrations are received before the event.

Pre-registration also creates some additional advance work, in that the registration forms and fees will be mailed from the attendee, and once received, they need to be recorded, the money needs to be deposited in the bank, and a registration acknowledgement should be sent to the registrant.

However, allowing pre-registration will make registration go much faster on the day of show, as you'll have already prepared the registration window card, have the goody bag and dash plaque attached, and all the registrant will have to do is come to the registration area, identify themselves, and pick up their event package.

ONE person should be responsible for and handle ALL the pre-registrations, as it will eliminate any financial confusion.

*Day of show* registrations are just that; payment is made on the day of the show.

Both methods are acceptable, and regardless of which one you select, on the day of the event, you'll need a registration area set up close to the show field. This is usually a pop-up type shelter with a table, and a few chairs for the staff.

It's also a good idea to have a cooler with water and soda for the staff, especially in the heat of summer.

You'll need registration forms (excess flyers will do fine, provided they have the registration form on them), a few clipboards, and lots of pens.

And you'll need the log prepared from pre-registered vehicles, so you can continue to number it with the day of show registrants.

Each vehicle will receive a window card, with their name, vehicle info, and most importantly, their registration number.

You can create custom-designed window cards, and print them at home, or use one that several auto-related businesses offer for free.

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

The most popular form of entertainment at a show is a disc jockey, and you'll never appreciate how important it is to have one there until the music stops! There are several DJ's that specialize in auto-related events, and in addition to playing the background music, if you provide them with the necessary information, and they'll take care of all the announcing duties.

DJ fees vary, and depend on several factors. Be sure to discuss their fee with them.

If you don't already know an event DJ, you can find one for your event by attending other local events, and talking with the DJ there.

Be sure to discuss DJ's event duties with them. Have the DJ arrive and set up at least an hour before event registration begins.

If electrical service is not available, a generator will be needed, so again, check with your DJ.

You may be able to arrange for local bands to donate their services (especially if this is a charity or benefit event), but if so, you'll need to provide a suitable stage or performing area, as well as electric service.

## **EVENT JUDGING**

Judging may be the most difficult part of your day-of-show responsibilities, since most events offer awards to the participants. There are many forms of event judging (the most popular are listed below), and there are pros and cons with each:

- Participant or Spectator judging
- Points' judging
- Team judging
- Favorites' judging

**Participant or spectator judging** is easiest for the host, as you're handing off the responsibility to others. Each participant or spectator is provided with a ballot. They walk the show field, and depending on the number of choices on the ballot (three choices is sufficient), they select their favorite vehicle(s). You'll need a ballot box at the registration area to collect the completed ballots, and the results will need to be compiled.

**Points' judging** is usually reserved for concours or national events, and the judging is handled by individuals that have been trained to judge vehicles in that particular show.

**Team judging** is the most time consuming and labor-intensive of all, but it's also the most popular.

Judging criteria is established in advance, and judging forms are created. It's best to have a judge's meeting prior to judging the vehicles, so everyone handles the judging in the same manner.

A team of two (or three) judges visits each vehicle, and scores them according to the criteria you've established. Expect to spend five to ten minutes judging each vehicle; you'll effectively be able to judge less than ten cars an hour.

All show judging should be accomplished in three hours or less, so several judging teams will most likely be needed.

**Favorites' judging** isn't judging *per se*, because those vehicles receiving an award are selected simply because they're favorites of whoever is selecting them.

The award-winners can be selected by a local celebrity, the mayor of the town, or business owners, sponsors, or even the kids in attendance.

Regardless of how the award-recipients' are selected, at the conclusion of the balloting or judging, you'll need to tally the results, and prepare a list of those who will receive them.



## AWARDS

Most events offer awards to participants, which usually come in the form of trophies or plaques, either of which can be purchased from several national or local companies that can be found doing an internet search. Depending on the quality of the award, prices range from under \$10 to more than \$40 each.

However, awards are not limited to just trophies or plaques, and there are many other options available. When searching for a company to supply your awards, explore the other options that are available.

Another option is to create your own awards, which become unique to your event, and are appreciated more than those that have been purchased.

About twenty years ago, I attended a benefit show at a special needs school. There were no awards, but each participant received a framed, full-color drawing of a vehicle that one of the students had drawn and colored from scratch. The school logo was superimposed in the corner, as well as the date of the event. I still have mine!

The first step is to determine the number of awards that will be presented (example: Top Ten or Top 40 awards, or however many you plan to offer), and then decide if you'll be presenting any *specialty* awards.

Here are some specialty award examples:

- Best of Show
- Best Of award in each judging category
- Best Paint or Best Interior or Best Engine
- Longest Distance Traveled
- Club Participation
- Choice awards, such as Sponsor's Choice

You might also want to acknowledge show sponsors and others by providing them with a *Thank You* plaque or other token of your appreciation

If you're ordering awards for your event, be sure to ask how much lead time (often two to three weeks) they need to ensure you have them before the event.

## THE EXTRAS

It's time to decide what extras you'll be offering at your event. Some extras to consider are:

- Dash plaques
- Participant gifts
- Goody Bags
- Food and Beverage
- Auction
- Vendors
- Event shirts

**Dash plaques** are collectible, and custom-designed for your event. They're either small metal plates that have an adhesive or magnetic backing on them, or they're created on magnetic rubber.

They can usually be purchased from the same company that's providing your awards, and the price starts at about \$2 each. Rubber dash plaques are considerably more expensive. You can handle the design yourself, or have the company design it for you, although there's usually a design charge.

But because dash plaques are collectible, ordering a limited number, and making note of that number in your flyer (the first however many registered will receive a dash plaque) tends to increase the number of pre-registrations.



**Participant gifts** are usually a small novelty item given to all the participants, and often provided instead of a dash plaque. It could be a mug, tire pressure gauge, or other personalized item. Keep in mind that most event budgets will not allow for both.

**Goody bags** are suffering a slow death. Once very popular at events, it's becoming more and more difficult to find suitable goody bag items. However, some auto-related manufacturers and suppliers are still willing to provide samples, trinkets, and informational literature. Most of those companies can be e-mailed, so there's little cost involved.

But don't limit yourself to just auto-related *goodies*. Be creative, and think outside the box. Consider items that YOU would like to receive in a goody bag, and contact those businesses and manufacturers.

You can also invite car clubs and organizations that are hosting future events to send you their flyers, which can be inserted into your goody bags, and can also be displayed in the registration area.

If you're hosting your event in a unique area, such as a resort city or town, and there are amusements and attractions nearby, the local chamber of commerce is a good source for goody bag material.

Also consider the state tourism bureau. They often have worthwhile goody bag items.

Several auto-related companies will provide you with the bags themselves; sources include (but are not limited to) Summit Racing, Jegs, and Edelbrock.

**Food and beverage** is a BIG plus if your event is being held further than a one-block walk from a couple restaurants.

Simple fare, such as hamburgers and hot dogs, along with sodas and chips is sufficient, and your Food and Beverage Committee can do the cooking on the grill,

or you can arrange for others to handle the food concession.

There are event caterers that specialize in outdoor events, or you can use the services of one of the local service organizations, such as the Moose, Elks, VFW, or the local Boy Scout chapter. They'll earn some money for their organization, and there will be no cost to you.

The latest rage is food trucks. These popular, sophisticated vehicles are not the *roach coaches* we once knew. They're self-contained, and each specializes in a particular food. Invite a couple (or more), depending on available space. Because they're mobile, they can adapt to most any space that you have available.

**Auctions** are especially popular at charity and benefit events, and help keep participants and spectators occupied.

The committee handling the prizes can set up a *silent auction*, where donated items are displayed on a table, with a bidding page in front of each item.

On each bidding sheet, you should include the actual value of the item (sometimes they're *priceless*), the minimum opening bid, and how much each consecutive bid will have to increase by.

Bidders add their name and the amount they're bidding on the list, and the highest bid receives that particular item.

You should close the auction about an hour before the awards ceremony, so the winning bidders can be notified, you can collect the payments, and deliver the merchandise.

**Games** also help pass the time for both adults and kids, but unless you have access to the props used to host the more complicated games, stick with easy-

to-do games such as a Poker Walk, hubcap toss, or guessing the number pieces of candy in a large jar.

**Vendors** also help keep participants occupied at an event, and hopefully, generate sales and/or contacts for them. You can limit invitations to auto-related vendors only, or with sufficient space, you can also include arts and crafts vendors.

Vendor spaces are usually 10' x 10', and the vendor fee should be decided by the committee. Often, vendor spaces are provided at no charge if the vendor will provide an event door prize.

**Event shirts** are also popular, and at an event, you'll find that most of the participants are wearing one from a previous event.

Unless you're a graphic arts designer, you should leave the T-shirt artwork to the pros, keeping in mind that the more attractive the shirts are, the better your sales will be.

They're also a method of advertising your event in the future, as they'll be worn frequently at other events.

## SUPPLIES CHECK LIST

A couple days before the event, you should have everything organized, and ready to take to the show field. Here's a check list...adjust it to your needs:

### REGISTRATION AREA AND MORE:

- ☐ Copies of insurance and permits
- ☐ Pre-registrations and sign up list
- ☐ Day of show registration forms
- ☐ Day of show sign up list
- ☐ Blank window cards
- ☐ Filled goody bags
- ☐ Dash plaques
- ☐ Awards
- ☐ Door and raffle prizes
- ☐ Raffle and 50/50 tickets
- ☐ Scissors, sign paper, etc.
- ☐ Roll (or two) of duct tape
- ☐ Pop up tent(s)
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Sharpies (for window cards)
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Two-way radios to communicate
- ☐ The Event Schedule (several copies)
- ☐ Cooler with cold drinks for the staff
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### PARKING STAFF:

- ☐ Traffic vests
- ☐ Parking cones
- ☐ Show field layout
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### JUDGING CREW:

- ☐ Judging forms
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Small dot stickers
- ☐ Judging tally form
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE (if you're doing the cooking):

- ☐ Permits and insurance (if required for food)
- ☐ Grill
- ☐ Charcoal or propane
- ☐ Cooking tools
- ☐ The food and beverage
- ☐ Condiments
- ☐ Pop up tent
- ☐ Plates, napkins and utensils
- ☐ Tables
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR THE DJ:

- ☐ Your event flyer
- ☐ Other upcoming event flyers
- ☐ The event schedule
- ☐ Announcements to be made
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## **THE DAY OF THE EVENT**

The staff should arrive a couple hours early, and using their pre-prepared site plan, set up the show field and registration area.

Display the awards and the door and raffle prizes adjacent to or within the registration area.

If you have roadside signs, post them. Otherwise, have the parking crew ready to direct the participants into the show field.

You'll also want the food and other vendors arriving early, so they'll be in place before the show vehicles arrive. The DJ should also arrive early enough to be set up and ready to play when the vehicles begin arriving.

If you have a large number of pre-registrations, you might want to form two (or more) lines at the registration area...one for pre-registered, and as many more as are needed for day of show registrations.

Provide the DJ with a show Schedule of Events, so that it can be announced frequently during the day.

And most importantly, whatever your schedule is, adhere to it. After a long day on the show field, nothing is more frustrating for the participants than to know the awards will be presented at 2:00 PM, and then not have them begin until a half-hour (or more) later.

There should be one person in overall charge of the event, and that individual should be available on the show field from start to finish. Among other duties, they may be required to:

- Coordinate with committee chairpersons
- Answer event-related questions
- Settle conflicts
- Speak with the media

- Maintain contact with the sponsors

The judging can begin immediately after the vehicles begin arriving, or you can wait until registration closes.

After judging a vehicle, a colored dot sticker should be placed on the windshield, as an indication that the vehicle has been judged, and won't be judged twice.

Frequently during the event, the registration fees and other monies should be collected, and placed in a secure location.

Although it's your decision for the order in which the awards are presented, the most popular format is to have the door prize drawings (if they weren't distributed during the day) first, followed by:

- Raffle prize drawings
- Awards presentation
- Specialty awards presentation
- Sponsor and other awards
- 50/50 drawing

At the conclusion of the event, it's a nice touch to have the event staff at the exit, thanking the participants for attending.

Now it's time to disassemble the registration tents, box everything up, and begin planning next year's event! With the names and addresses of this year's participants recorded, you've already got next year's event mailing list!

Have a staff meeting, and talk about what might be done to improve the event. Discuss any input you received from the sponsors, participants, spectators, vendors and others, and add your own input.

At the meeting, work towards the goal of making your next event even better, and if your meeting is productive, it probably will be!