



by Courtney Sandora

THE LONG HAUL

Deborah Curry, senior tradeshow manager for Charles River Laboratories, receives multiple calls a week from trucking companies offering their shipping services. Her routine is simple: she politely declines their offers. Curry doesn't want to risk losing the great partnership she has with her present carrier, Exhibit Express, an Allied Van Lines Special Products agent based in Woburn, MA, to a carrier who is not familiar with her needs.

Curry, who attends more than a hundred tradeshow each year, must be selective with the carrier she chooses for her company, a large biotechnology firm based in Wilmington, MA. When Curry recently needed to break down a hi-tech 10X60 exhibit into a 10X20 and ship it from the West Coast to Florida in a matter of days, she knew Exhibit Express would get the job right and on time. Using its anytime-anyway controls and communications, Exhibit Express delivered the costly exhibit on schedule, freeing up Curry's time to handle the next

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show.

Paying attention to detail and shipping smartly is how carriers can maintain long lasting relationships with exhibitors. "We make it our mission to accommodate our exhibitors' needs no matter what the situation," said Carmela Petruzzello, operations manager at Exhibit Express. "We know they have a choice of shippers, and we know that it comes down to the details."

AGILE FOR AGILENT

Providing quality service means helping exhibitors out of the most difficult shipping situations. Agilent Technologies, a company which delivers innovative services to a wide range of customers in communications, electronics, life sciences and chemical analysis, called on Exhibit Express to solve its dilemma when a partner office transferred \$150,000 worth of lab equipment, using its own shipper, to Agilent's office in Wilmington, DE.

After two weeks, when the shipment did not arrive, Karl Hornberger, tradeshow exhibit manager for Agilent's Life Science Division in Delaware, asked

Exhibit Express to track down the precious cargo. Using its 20-plus years of industry experience, Exhibit Express located the shipment, which was sitting in a Midwest warehouse, and directed it back to Hornberger in a matter of hours.

"I made the call to Exhibit Express late Friday afternoon and it was no surprise that the shipment was sitting on our loading dock when I arrived early Monday morning," Hornberger said. "They truly are that good."

Transportation companies that offer high-tech capabilities keep exhibitors in the loop and their shipments on track. Allied's trucks are all satellite equipped, allowing for easy shipment tracking and on-line proof of delivery, so exhibit managers like Hornberger know their shipment status is always visible on the internet and will be updated upon delivery. In addition to on-line service, a 24-hour, toll-free customer line provides a human, in person solution to exhibitor needs.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

In the tradeshow business, timely delivery is everything. By combining an

HERE'S WHAT EXHIBITORS SHOULD LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER:

- **dedicated exhibit operations**
- **experienced staff for customer service, sales and operations**
- **knowledgeable tradeshow drivers**
- **dedicated show site representatives**
- **satellite-equipped trucks**
- **website shipment tracking**
- **on-line proof of delivery**
- **on-line order entry options**
- **multiple shipping options: truckload, less than truckload and airfreight**
- **predictable and reliable delivery schedules**

integrated solutions approach, technology, and Allied's network of on-site show reps, Exhibit Express is able to deliver performance. When Hornberger arrived in Orlando to set up for a tradeshow, he was pleased to see that out of the 500 trucks unloading, his exhibit was the first to arrive at the dock. "We stood out as one of the top exhibitors at the tradeshow," Hornberger said. "When everyone else was still waiting for their deliveries or unpacking, we were already preparing to meet customers. We don't view Exhibit Express as a vendor, but as a partner in our business. They understand that they look good when we look good."

Curry of Charles Rives Laboratories agrees. "I attend a hundred tradeshow a year and Exhibit Express has moved my exhibits every time without a glitch," she says. "A pretty impressive task, considering I have worked with them for the past ten years."

John Otten, vp of sales and marketing for Allied Van Lines Special Products Division, attributes Exhibit Express's timely performance to an integrated team effort. "As an Allied agent, Exhibit Express benefits from our Showcase Services, consisting of experienced salespeople and customer representatives, dependable operations staff, reliable drivers, and knowledgeable show site representatives," he said.

SHIPPING SOLUTIONS

To succeed in the tradeshow business, a carrier must provide solutions to a variety of exhibitor shipping dilemmas. Exhibit Express answered Agilent's need

for additional safety with its creation of custom-designed transportation cages. The solid steel cage proved necessary to protect Agilent's equipment and computers which were left on the tradeshow floor after hours. The cages, affixed with Agilent's logo, have secure locking features, double doors for easy access, and four handles for maneuverability.

Carriers which answer customers' problems with customized solutions keep their exhibitor customers loyal. When Hornberger recently switched exhibit houses, his first move was to pull the executive team of the new exhibit house aside and explain that he used only one shipper, Exhibit Express.

SHIP SMARTLY

To accommodate the busy schedules of tradeshow managers, a carrier needs to think proactively for its exhibitors. Exhibit Express eases Curry's hectic workday by preprinting inbound and outbound shipping labels, taking care of any logistics paperwork, such as getting a shipment through US Customs, and shipping packages economically.

Due to the high number of tradeshow Curry is involved with each year, she often has part of her exhibit in one state and another in a different state. When multiple shipments have to be combined and delivered to a larger show, Exhibit Express takes on the challenge of combining Curry's shipments at a centralized location and then shipping them to the next show.

"Exhibit Express is great at marrying two or three of our shipments, so I only have one drayage charge when they unload at the dock," Curry said. "They

are constantly taking the worry out of my hands."

A carrier that can tap into a dedicated network of agents and offices can offer its exhibitors the best service possible. When Hornberger had six tradeshow in California, which fell fairly close to one another, he dreaded shipping the materials from the West Coast to his home office in the East, and then back cross-country again for the next show. Exhibit Express provided the economical option of storing the materials in an Allied Van Lines warehouse in San Diego. The solution saved many thousands of dollars. "When I work with Exhibit Express, I don't have to keep the details in my head," Hornberger said. "They do it for me. If there's ever a problem, they fix it behind the scenes, without having to involve me. That's how I like my business done."

Providing outstanding service can have beneficial ramifications for exhibitors and carriers. Since working with Hornberger, Exhibit Express has picked up new business from other Agilent offices and broadened its services to relocating Agilent's labs. "From the agency's very inception, we have experienced steady and continuous growth," Petruzzello said. "I believe this is a result of implementing a clear marketing, exhibitor service, and operations strategy. And, of course, never compromising our commitment to exhibitors." An Allied agent since 1981, Exhibit Express is a member of Allied's Special Products Division. Last year the division was involved in nearly 70,000 shipments. ■