

HOW-TO GUIDE

VENDOR FAIRS & DENTAL CONFERENCES

ASDA
American Student Dental Association

How-To Guide: Vendor Fairs/Dental Conference

This guide provides specific insights to those interested in organizing a vendor fair. (Several supporting documents are provided at the end of this guide for your reference.)

1. **Decide on the scope of your event (8-12 months prior)**

Decide on if your chapter's vendor fair will focus on vendors or include lectures.

2. **Finding a faculty sponsor (8-12 months prior)**

It is important to have a faculty sponsor for the event. It is common for current dental educators to have been active in ASDA or a student organization while in dental school, and they can be excellent supporters of the event. Faculty support can expedite much of the administrative process and provide access to speakers and sponsors.

3. **Prepare to discuss the event with administration (8-10 months prior)**

Be ready to discuss the itinerary, expected turnout and the financial implications for your ASDA chapter. If you are proposing a vendor fair with lecture, you will most likely need to speak with your school's dean, financial dean and the heads of the clinic and curriculum committees.

Be mindful that your school also relies on sponsors for funding. Be prepared with a specific list of sponsors so the faculty is aware of who you are asking for support so you do not overburden specific sponsors. Use your faculty advisor to troubleshoot your event and propose means of communication with the administration. If you intend to receive any support from your dental school, it is imperative to impress upon them your preparedness and competence in undertaking such an event.

Be prepared to explain the advantages of holding a vendor fair at your school, such as raising money for your chapter, educating students on dental products and services, networking opportunities and gaining knowledge of dentistry that isn't provided in dental school.

a) Locating and booking a venue

Understand how much space you are going to need. Check on the availability of space at your program. Find a date that works to host the event. Follow your program's steps to secure the date and space.

Research the university calendar, dental school calendar and individual class calendars for conflicts. Additionally, check dates of national ASDA meetings, local/state dental meetings and other dental conferences for conflicts.

Check availability of venues (depending on the scope of your event this may be lecture halls, hotel lobbies, on-campus recreational facilities, bars or restaurants).

b) Finding speakers

If you plan on having a speaker, be prepared to discuss possibilities with administrators. Your faculty advisor will probably have a better idea of popular presenters on lecture circuits and will be a valuable resource for ideas. Be prepared to offer guest lecturers an “honorarium” for their participation, as well as providing transportation and lodging.

c) Itinerary

Plan your day so the maximum number of attendees can attend each portion of the day. If your vendor fair is not a full-day event, start immediately after clinic, and remember to find a time of the year that is not overburdened by exams.

4. Constructing vendor lists (6-10 months prior)

See the list of possible vendors at the end of this guide that other chapters have had exhibit at their vendor fairs.

5. Sponsorship (5-10 months prior)

Receiving sponsorship can be a great way to have money early on with which to book the venue, buy supplies, etc. Consider offering different levels of sponsorship to suit the needs of various vendors. If you have a speaker, see if the speaker is typically sponsored by a particular company, or attempt to contact companies that are related to the presentation topic.

6. Contacting vendors

At the end of this guide are samples of the following emails:

- **E1) Save-the-date (5-10 months prior):** Introduce yourself, provide the date, mention any preceding event/vendor fair, how much it costs and get them to consider placing it on their calendar.
- **E2) Official invitation (4-10 months prior):** A more official version of the save-the-date. The body of the email can be minimal, consider including a personalized **letter of invitation, vendor contract** (to be printed out and returned), and **school policy form**. **You can also use resources such as Evite**. Be sure to set a deadline for vendors to register and submit their payments.
- **E3) Call vendors (4-8 months prior):** Calling can make all the difference. The vendors appreciate the opportunity to ask questions, but more importantly, it makes the drive to register and send in the check seem much more immediate and real. Often, vendors verbally commit, but do not make any actions until you pick up the phone.
- **E4) Registration not received (2-5 months prior):** Reminder that you have not received the check. Often serves to stir a representative into action.
- **E5) Check received (TBD):** Provide a prompt reply whenever the vendor’s check is received.
- **E6) Set-up information (1-4 months prior):** Provide information about venue location, nearby hotels, address of the school/venue to ship supplies, parking information, reminder about school policies, etc. Consider holding an invitation-only

reception the night before your vendor fair reserved for companies that have donated above a certain dollar figure. This may encourage all companies to find a way to get above that level.

- **E7) Thank you (1-3 weeks after):** Thank the vendor for their support and informally invite vendor to next year's event.

7. Publicize event (3-5 months prior)

Publicity is paramount. Design posters to advertise to students, and formally invite faculty and staff to attend. Publicize any prizes you plan to give away. If you are planning a dental conference, you can speak with administration about inviting alumni to attend. If food will be served, provide a system of monitoring attendance/payment.

8. Supplies and items that may need to be acquired ahead of time

- Raffle tickets and prizes for raffles (can be donations from local businesses or dental vendors, or purchased with revenue)
- Tables and chairs
- Tablecloths
- Microphone for announcements/raffle
- PowerPoint presentations of speakers
- Nametags for vendors, speakers and attendees
- Food and drinks for attendees during the fair
- Stamps to give vendors for passport cards

9. During the event

- **ASDA table:** Provide an ASDA table for information about becoming a vendor, signing up for free life/disability insurance and getting a vendor stamp card. If you are a recruited chapter, have membership applications and brochures available for non-members attending. Make sure you check in the vendors as they arrive and cross reference that payment has been received from each company.
- **Stamp cards:** This is a way to get students to speak with everyone. Each attendee is provided a sheet with sponsors in different boxes. Vendors have stamps and stamp the attendee's card. Attendees submit completed cards to the chapter for raffle prizes.
- **Raffles:** Everyone loves prizes so be sure to ask vendors to donate items for the raffle. The stamp card/prize model used by the national ASDA dental expos is an excellent way to get students to spend more time at the vendor fair. If you are a recruited chapter, you could offer a raffle prize specifically for ASDA members to encourage students to join. If attendance is not mandatory at your vendor fair, you may want to set aside one of the larger prizes to raffle off during the event so students do not simply leave and come back only at the end for the raffle.
- **Attendance:** Picking up name tags at a lecture or using stamp-cards at the vendor fair are two ways to take attendance.
- **Take pictures:** For use as advertisements for next year and to include in your newsletter, website and social media after the event.

- Contact information: Provide a “leave-behind” sheet that each vendor can fill out regarding the best contact for next year’s event. You can distribute a survey to the vendors and attendees to see what could be improved on for the next year.

10. Send thank you letters (1-3 weeks after)

Follow up with vendors and sponsors shortly after the event to thank them for participating and to see what could be improved for the next year’s vendor fair. Send a thank you to all faculty members and administration for supporting the event. Include the president-elect’s contact for the following year in this letter.

For more information on organizing a vendor fair at your ASDA chapter, contact ASDA at Membership@ASDAnet.org.

Vendor List

Academy of Contemporary Dentistry
Academy of General Dentistry
Access Group
ADA Ins Plans (Great West)
Aftco
Amer. Academy of Implant Dent
Amer. Assoc. Oral and Max
Aspen Dental
Astra Tech
Bank of America Practice Solutions
Benco Dental
Biomet 3i
Bisco
Blue & Co., LLC
Bowman Insurance & Benefit Services
Brasseler USA
Brian L. Wetzel, Insurance Agency/Ray Insurance
Cain Watters
California Dental Association
CF Dental Group, LLC
Cincinnati Insurance Company
Clayton L. Scroggins & Associates, Inc.
Colgate
Danter Dental Lab
Darrow Dental
Delta Dental
Dental Basics
Dental Care Alliance
Dental Decks- The Flash Card Company
Dental Dynamic Staffing, LLC
Dental EZ
Dental Group Practice Assoc
Dental Services Group
DentalOne Partners
Dentrix Dental Systems
Dentsply
Dentsply Caulk, Dentsply Professional, Dentsply Prosthetics
Dentsply North America - Rinn Division
Dentsply Tulsa Dental
Dependable Dental Staffing
Designs for Vision
Digital Doc
Discus Dental
Doctor Mentor Network
Drake Dental Laboratory

Eastern Dental Insurance Company
EMA Dental Practice Sales
Forba Dental Management
Fortress Insurance Co
Garrison Dental
Gentle Dental
GL Advisor
GlaxoSmithKline
Graduate Leverage
Guardian DentalGuard Preferred
Heartland Dental Care
Heine
Heine Loupes
Henry Schein Dental
Henschen Consulting
High Q
Hu-Friedy
Hurley Associates/Hurley Insurance Brokers
Indian Health Services
Ivoclar Vivadent, Inc
Jesse & Frichtel Dental Labs
JOHNS DENTAL LABORATORY
Johnson and Johnson
Jones, Cochenour, & Co. CPA & Wealth Management
Kage Distributors Inc
Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions
Kinol Sharie Leyh & Associates
Kool Smiles
KSL Complete Dental Solutions
Lexi-Comp
Lutheran Health Care
Lutheran Medical Center
McKenzie Management & Associates
Medical Protective
Mid America Health, Inc.
Midwest Dental
Midwest Implant Institute
Military Personnel Services
National Dental Placements
National Practice Transition Network
Nobel Biocare
Northwestern Mutual
Ocean Dental
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
Ohio Dental Association
OralDNALabs, Inc.
Orascoptic

Pacific Dental Services
PAGD
Paragon – Dental Practice Transitions
Patterson Dental
Pennsylvania Dental Association
Philips Consumer Lifestyle
Philips Sonicare
PNC Bank
Practice Impact
PracticeWorks/Kodak Dental Systems
Premier Dental Products Company
Premier Financial Strategies
Procter & Gamble
Professional Practice Capital
Professional Protector Plan
Professional Solutions
Professional Solutions Insurance Company
Prudential
Q-Optics/Quality Aspirators
ROAAOMS
Rose Micro Solutions
SDP Financial Services
SheerVision
Simply Connected Dental Solutions
Sirona Dental Systems
Small Smiles
Smile Starters
SoftSense Data
Sonicare/Philips
South Carolina Office of Rural Health
St. Elizabeth Health Center
Stryker
Sullivan Dental
SurgiTel
The Dental Care Plus Group
The Dentists Insurance Company
The Medical Bureau of Pittsburgh
Treloar & Heisel, Inc
Triodent Corp
Trojan Professional Services, Inc
US Air Force
Ultralight Optics
US Army
US Education Finance Group
VOCO America, Inc.
Wachovia
Warner Lambert

Willamette Dental
Zila Pharmaceuticals, Inc

E1 – Save the Date Email

Subject: [Chapter] Hosts Dental Expo and Vendor Fair

I am a student at the [Name of Program] and the current ASDA [Chapter Leadership Position]. On behalf of our chapter, I would like to thank you for your participation in last year's Dental Expo. Your support greatly contributed to the success of the event.

We are pleased to announce that this year ASDA is holding our annual dental conference and vendor fair. [The entire student body is required to attend both the speakers and the vendor fair, and faculty is encouraged to attend as well.]

The event will take place on [DATE], and the vendor fair is being held on campus at the [Name of Event Space]. We would truly appreciate your company's participation in the vendor fair. The cost is [Amount] per vendor.

We would like to let you know that we have a limited number of openings for vendors, and we are contacting you first as you are a returning vendor. If you are interested in attending or would like more information on the event, please reply to this email, and we will send you the official letter, complete event information and a contract for you to consider. Please specify if you would prefer it sent via email or hard copy.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Provide name and relevant contact information.]

E2 – Official Letter of Invitation

Mr. X,

Enclosed is the information for the Dental Expo at the [Name of Program].

Thank you for your consideration.

[Name of chapter contact and relevant contact information.]

Attached: Letter of Invitation, Vendor Contract, School Policy

Dear Ms. X,

On behalf of the American Student Dental Association and our student body, I want to thank you for your time and interest in the [Name of Program] Dental Expo and vendor fair.

As the [Chapter Leadership Position] of our ASDA chapter at Pitt, I am excited at the opportunity to continue to organize our own annual dental conference. Last year's event was a huge success, as the students enjoyed, appreciated, and were enriched by the presentations given by the nationally-recognized speakers. They also welcomed the exposure to the products and services presented to them at the vendor fair in the afternoon. Your support and participation enables us to provide this for our students, giving them a broader understanding of their dental career after they leave the [Name of Program].

The Dental Expo will be held on [DATE]. Lectures will be held in the morning of the event, with the vendor fair being held unopposed all afternoon (tentatively 1:00-3:00) on campus at the [Event Space]. [The Dean has mandated attendance at both the conference and vendor fair for the entire student body.] The cost is [COST] per vendor. Additionally, you have the option to donate a door prize to be raffled to students at the end of the vendor fair, and information regarding door prizes is included. Upon receiving your contract, you will be sent information regarding set-up, directions, parking, and the itinerary (as soon as it becomes available).

On behalf of our student body, ASDA, and our faculty advisor and advocate, [NAME], we would like to thank you for your consideration and participation. Without your support the event would not be possible.

Sincerely,

NAME
Program
Class of xxxx
Chapter Leadership Position

*Kindly review the enclosed contract and policy and return to Student Services no later than [DATE]. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

Dental Expo
[DATE]

Yes, we would like to participate in the Steel City Dental Expo Vendor Fair:

- Participating Vendor** \$
- Power Strip for Table** \$
- Raffle donation (include item and value)**

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ payable to the ASDA [NAME] Chapter for participation in the vendor fair.

SPONSOR/COMPANY _____
(Please print your listing, as you would like it to appear in program)

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

Please mail your contract and payment by [DATE] to:

Name of Program
Contact
Phone/Email

E3 – Registration Not Received Email

Subject: Registration Not Yet Received for the [Name of Program] Dental Expo

Dear Mr./Ms. X,

We have not yet received your registration for the Dental Expo. Your company has expressed interest in our event, and we wanted to inform you that we are either awaiting your registration in the mail or are inquiring as to your further interest in the event. If you have not already done so, please use the contact information at the bottom of the email if you have any questions or to let us know if you plan to attend. We can accommodate vendors after the deadline if we have advance notice of attendance.

We are very excited to announce the details and tentative itinerary for the Dental Expo. We are pleased to announce that this year's lecturers are nationally known speakers [NAME(S)]. [Provide short bio of lecturers.] The lecture topic this year will involve both basic and advanced techniques in implant dentistry (more details included on the attached itinerary).

Please feel no hesitation to contact me if you have any questions,

NAME

Name of Program

Chapter Leadership Position

Email

Attached: Itinerary, Steel City Dental Expo Letter of Invitation, Vendor Contract, UPMC Policy

E4 – Check Received Email

Dear Mr./Ms. X,

Your check was received. The ASDA Chapter thanks you for your participation in Dental Expo. You will be receiving information regarding booth number, itinerary, set-up times, location, and parking as the information becomes finalized. We look forward to seeing you there and thank you again for your support.

NAME

Name of Program

Chapter Leadership Position

Email

E5 – Set Up Information

Vendors,

If you are receiving this email, you are registered to attend the Dental Expo at the [Name of Program] sponsored by the [Name of ASDA Chapter] and [Additional Sponsor(s)]. For example, [faculty]. Event/speaker information is included, as well as information regarding set-up times, location, local hotels, parking, and a copy of the program's policy regarding the event.

Thank you for your participation in this event. ASDA appreciates your sponsorship, and we look forward to seeing you in three weeks. Please email me at [Email] if you have any questions, or if you are interested in attending the lectures.

Thank you,

NAME

Name of Program

Chapter Leadership Position

Email

Attached: Table Numbers Excel Sheet, Set-up Times + Hotels + Google Maps, Itinerary, Events Center Shipping/Loading Information, Program Policy

E6 – Thank You Letter

Vendors,

We would like to extend our thanks for your support in the Dental Expo. This was a large undertaking for our organization, and we could not have done it without you. Thank you also for those vendors who dropped off the information sheets at our ASDA table; the contact information is appreciated. This year's event seemed to be a huge success, as the students enjoyed, appreciated, and were enriched by the presentations given by the nationally-recognized speakers. They also welcomed the exposure to the products and services presented to them at the vendor fair in the afternoon.

We are already in the planning stages of next year's Dental Expo, and early next year you will be contacted by our [Chapter Leader Position], [NAME], about how to become a part of next year's event. Hopefully you got a chance to meet him/her this past Thursday, and below is his/her contact information

NAME

Name of Program

Chapter Leadership Position

Email

Thank you,

NAME

Name of Program

Chapter Leadership Position

Email