
Subject: LSAF 101

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Tue, 12 Jun 2018 13:43:37 GMT

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One of the things that dawned on me at this year's show was the relative ease at which the experienced folks handled the hurdles. They get through the obstacles so much better than the newbies.

This is an Exhibitor 101 thread to throw ideas and pointers to the folks that don't have years of experience showing off their wares at audio shows. The first posts are mine and, honestly, I've never hosted a room at an audio show. But I've been a regular at the GPAF and LSAF for a long time now and grew up working in my family's retail business. My father taught me that in retail you have to sweat the details.

So you may not agree with some of my notes. That's fine, just keep the conversation civil. Please add things you think can make it easier for newbies at the show, too.

Signs. The hotel won't allow you to put much of anything up on any surface, particularly if you might do damage to the paint. Solution? A free standing sign like Wayne has outside his room. You can always find Pi Speakers as their sign is visible from all parts of the 2nd floor.

More signs. Before you scribble something you'll hang for the weekend go downstairs to the hotel's business center and print it on the hotel's laser jet. It's free and it looks more professional than a hand written sign. Just give yourself a bit of time as the computers are sometimes cranky.

Yet more signs. Your room probably isn't going to be open every hour of the show. Put a quick, hand written note on the glass near the door (remember the paint!) with a reasonable estimate of when you'll get back. If there is no sign a lot of folks will just give up on your room but if they know you'll be back soon there is a much better chance they'll circle back for a listen.

Wifi. If you are going to run computer audio you're going to have to setup your own router/network and avoid using the hotel network. Bring your own router and be ready to set it up.

Water, soda, candy, beer. Offer your guests some hospitality. Even though many folks won't take anything it's still a nice gesture.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Tue, 12 Jun 2018 13:46:00 GMT

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Carts. If you can bring your own cart and/or dolly you'll be way ahead of the game. You'll save a lot of time and grief if you don't have to wait for others to be finished with the hotel dolly as many vendors seem to tear down at exactly the same time. At that point you'll see a bunch of vendors standing around doing nothing as they wait for the wheels. If you have own wheels you get to leave when you want.

CD player. Yes, it's old fashioned and out of date but if a potential customer can't hear a couple

of their own cuts on your gear they aren't going to be able to make any serious decisions about your gear. They'll leave thinking it was nice but won't connect the way they will with their own tunes. When you get to hear your own music and it sounds absolutely amazing you really get FAR more serious about the gear.

CD player, part 2. Tidal is a great service but it's jazz and classical selections are severely limited. You won't be able to play anything but standards and that isn't going to satisfy someone who wants to hear something a bit less mainstream. Hate to be really blunt about it but if you don't play the music a guest wants to hear you're really just sitting in a hotel room all weekend playing tunes for yourself. You may enjoy it and your guests may enjoy what they hear but your chance of selling anything shrinks dramatically.

Someone who hears a great system is likely to say "Yeah, I heard system XYZ and it sure sounded good".

Someone who hears a great system with their own tunes is more likely to say "Yeah, I heard my favorite Abba tunes on system XYZ. It sounded soooo freakin' good. Now I REALLY want it."

Perhaps I'm beating a dead horse here but you want folks to connect with your system and the best way to do that is to play their music. Dylan, Yes, Mozart, Brubeck, Thelonious Monk or Weird Al. Doesn't matter if you like it - they do. The music that makes them happy will make them happier if it sounds sensational playing in your room.

CD player, part 3. Tidal plays perfectly well before Saturday when the hotel's Internet connection isn't being taxed but come Saturday it gets a bit dicey. There are a lot of rooms trying to stream a lot of music on Saturday and there are a lot of demos where the mood gets thrown by the choppy connection. You're better off playing the music off a local music server (or CD!) and just using Tidal when a customer requests something you or they didn't bring to the show. It'll keep the mood right and the music flowing.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Tue, 12 Jun 2018 13:48:32 GMT

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But wait, there's more.

Volume. There seem to be two camps of audiophiles, those that have to listen at a million decibels and those that listen to music at a low level. Hard to figure who is who in those groups but if your room is always really, really loud the folks who want to hear your gear at a more modest volume will not enter. Change it up from time to time to give everyone a chance to come in and enjoy.

Introduction. When someone comes in the room give them one or two lines explaining what is special about your room. Dynamics? Smoothness? Price? DIY? Slam? They probably don't know what makes your room special so you should be able to express it very quickly. One or two quick lines gives folks an introduction into what makes your gear special without going into an annoying sales pitch. Do it right and it adds a bit of depth and understanding to the demo. Limit it

to 20 seconds.

Sure, the gear is supposed to speak for itself. Trouble is there are way too many rooms and it gets really confusing after you've been in a few. Honestly, you can go into some rooms, listen, leave and not remembering much. As a vendor take 20 seconds to help leave a good, long lasting impression.

Let's use Bob Brines as an example. It didn't take long being in his room for him to let you know he had great single driver speakers at a very affordable price. Quick, simple and to the point. Very low key. It also helped that he really did have great single drivers speakers at an affordable price. The bottom line is that it was always easy to remember why Bob was in the speaker business and why he was at the show. And after that very brief intro Bob would play music and let you decide for yourself if his speakers made you happy.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Tue, 12 Jun 2018 13:53:47 GMT

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Sales. You may get some and you may not. And face it, it's a lot of work to schlep the gear, set it up, try to get it to sound right in the hotel room and then do the meet and greet all weekend long. Sometimes there is an instant connection and somebody buys stuff and sometimes it takes a while for the show experience to get them motivated. Remember, even if you don't get sales while you are at the show you have gotten your word out. It's a weekend to get a lot of folks exposed to your gear, to give them the reason for your existence (great single driver speakers at an affordable price!), give out some product handouts and let folks who didn't know about you discover you. Your stuff will be discussed and considered by folks who never even knew you were around before meeting you at the show. I still make recommendations to folks who've never been to LSAF regarding things I was lucky enough to hear at the show.

Marketing. Treat the show as you would a party. Invite people. You wouldn't throw a party without inviting people and you shouldn't wander to the show thinking that all sorts of uninvited people will magically flock to your room. Let people know you're going to the time and trouble of being at the show by using email, forums and any other way you regularly communicate with them. Vendors talking about the show on their forums creates a lot more of a buzz than a few folks posting in generic event forums.

The Lone Star Audio Fest doesn't charge vendors a fee for the show. It's a big part of why it doesn't cost very much to attend the show - there isn't any overhead. All you get charged for is the standard rate for the hotel room and even that is discounted. That's a great thing for a small manufacturer or vendor as it keeps the show affordable but it also means nobody who puts the show together is being paid for their time. There is less organization than the big shows and there isn't a huge amount of hype or advertising about the show. So it becomes more important for each vendor to take the time to do some promotion to get the word out.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Tue, 12 Jun 2018 13:55:20 GMT

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Ask. There are a lot of vendors at this show that have been doing audio shows for a while. They have expertise and have made connections with many of the other vendors. If you show up to demo your speakers and your amp breaks don't throw in the towel. Start asking the other vendors and somebody will come up with something to get your room running through the weekend. Same with cables or other things. LSAF isn't an "us or them" kind of place, it's a collection of music lovers that are pretty willing to help one another through the weekend. Ask. Somebody will help.

Dinner. There are always a couple of groups that get together on Friday and/or Saturday night to explore some of the local restaurants. Join in! You may not know anyone that well before dinner but everyone at the table is going to be a music lover so you have a lot in common. You'll probably know them pretty well by the end of the meal, too.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 13 Jun 2018 17:41:49 GMT

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This is an excellent thread, Barry! Thanks so much for taking the time to write it up!

For those of you that don't know, Barry is an attendee that has been coming to the Lone Star Audiofest since the very first one in 2005. Actually back then, it was called the Great Plains Audiofest and was in Tulsa. We moved the show to Dallas in 2007 and renamed it to LSAF. So but anyway, my point is the list of suggestions from Barry comes from the view of the people that visit the rooms. It's extremely useful feedback, in my opinion.

I'll add a few things to Barry's list of suggestions. These are more from an exhibitor's perspective:

Make a list of things you intend to bring. Put on the list your obvious items like source equipment, amps and speakers. Your source media. Spare tubes. Cleaning supplies. Signage. Refreshments. Et cetera. Make the list well in advance of the show, like months ahead of time. You'll think of other things over the days to come, and add those to the list. That way, when it comes time to pack up, it's easier to be organized.

If possible, come early and setup ahead of time. In the early days, we all showed up on Friday and setup. So no rooms were open until late Friday. It was really a Saturday show. But more and more, people started opening up early Friday. I started coming Thursday night to setup so I could be open all day Friday. This has become the norm. Most exhibitors show up Thursday, and some even come on Wednesday. When you show up a day early, it gives plenty of time to load-in, setup and make any adjustments necessary.

Early in the year before the show (like January), send me your company logo and URL and ask to display it on the LSAF website. You can send it to info@lonestaraudiofest.com. You can also send photos of your equipment. I don't always upload vendor-supplied equipment photos, but I

often do and add them to rotating displays on various pages. I always upload company logos and URLs on the "exhibitors" page and on the scrolling banner at the bottom of the landing page.

Every year, usually in January or February, either me or one of the regulars here starts an "LSAF 20xx" thread. This becomes the official LSAF thread for that year. Introduce yourself on the thread and upload a photo of the equipment you plan to bring to the show. Describe it in as much detail as you'd like. This is the main source of information for other media and ezine outlets to draw from. And there are a lot of people writing reviews, so it's in your advantage to have the information conveniently available to them. It gives the the ezine reviewers an easy way to get information like exhibitor names, equipment lists, model numbers, etc.

Mention your attendance at LSAF on other audio websites too. There's a Facebook page and threads on most every popular audio messageboard. Introduce yourself on any of those you participate on regularly. Don't overdo it though - Some messageboards aren't friendly to drop-in visitors. I think it's a good rule of thumb that you can (and should) announce your intentions to be at LSAF on your company website, on the official "LSAF 20xx" thread here on ART and on any messageboards you regularly participate on but refrain from posting on sites that you rarely visit.

Each year, my wife takes photos of every exhibitor's room and uploads them to the LSAF website. This always is posted in the official LSAF thread here on ART, mentioned above. We make these available to ezine writers and other reviewers. But as I said above, it is helpful for you to also write something about your setup on the official "LSAF 20xx" thread.

Subject: Re: LSAF 101

Posted by [admin](#) on Sat, 23 Nov 2019 17:28:18 GMT

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Additional Tips for Exhibitors
