Freelance Exchange

Portfolio Showcase

How to Prepare

Blog Post

The Freelance Exchange’s annual Portfolio Showcase is coming up on September 12th. Are you ready??

FX puts on this annual B2B trade show to give you, the freelancers, a prime opportunity to get yourself and your work in front of the very people who are looking for you, including ad agencies, design shops, large corporations, small businesses, non-profits, and more.

For those looking for freelance talent, it’s a one-stop shop. They can find the one freelancer they need or put together an entire virtual agency. The possibilities are endless!

**When / Where / What**

First, the logistics:

Thursday, Sept. 12th

**9:30-10:30 a.m.** Exhibitor Setup\*

**10:30-11:30 a.m.** Panel—Hiring Freelancers? What to Expect *(explain panel)*

**11:30-2 p.m.** Portfolio Show/Open House, *lunch & drinks*

**2:30 p.m. – ??:**After Hours at [Maloney’s](http://maloneyssportsbar.com/) , 7201 W. 79th St., Overland Park, KS 66204

Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center (the old King Louie building)

8788 Metcalf Ave.

Overland Park, KS

We start out the event with a panel discussion. This is designed to be a super informative session for our attendees (the folks looking to hire freelancers), as we address details they may not be familiar with, such as: what to look for when shopping for a freelancer, what to expect when engaging with one (contracts, deposits, etc.), and more.

*Note: This is NOT the time for freelancers to ask questions about how to run a business. Please bring those to the FX of KC Freelance Focus in the spring, or simply ask your peers at any one of our other events throughout the year.*

Portfolio displays and tables are to be set up prior to the panel. This room will be closed off during the discussion so that exhibitors can attend and late-coming attendees don’t go through the exhibit hall without exhibitors at their booths.

Beverages will be on hand throughout the day and a light lunch will be available. After the event, we’ll be hosting an after party happy hour just a few blocks away at Maloney’s in downtown Overland Park. Look for us upstairs, come take a load off, and grab a drink and/or snack to celebrate the day’s successes.

**Best Practices for the Best Exhibits**

You’ll be provided with 4 feet of an 8-foot table (member sponsors get a 6 to 8 foot table) covered with a black tablecloth. You can customize your display as much or as little as you want. For examples of table displays from past Showcases, view the slideshow below.

Things to keep in mind:

* Think visually.

The more visually appealing the display, the better chances of results.

* Don’t just think flat table display.

Utilize vertical and get crafty! That said, don’t get too ambitious and have a huge display that blocks your – or your neighbor’s! – view. Also, no floor displays are allowed.

* Showcase your brand.

Have your logo prominently on display, use signage, and bring plenty of business cards. Consider brochures, sample books, giveaways, raffle prizes, promotional items, etc.

* Have an array of work available to view:

Different mediums, industries, one-off projects, complete campaigns, etc. Not a creative type and no portfolio to show? No problem! Consider having testimonials, case studies, and more available. Use this opportunity as a meet-and-greet to share your services.

* Be organized.

Utilize a flipbook, brochure stand, or any other piece that will help accomplish this goal. Laptops and monitors are commonplace as well.

* Need electricity?

Let us know when you sign up so that we can place your table near an outlet.

**Be Prepared**

Aside from getting your portfolio and table display ready, there are a few things you can do to prepare, such as:

* Determine your USP.

Figure out what makes you unique/different/better, and highlight that.

* Write up your elevator speech.

And practice it so it comes across naturally.

* Bring a note pad and pen.

Use this to take notes of what you spoke about and with whom so you can remember when you follow up.

* See the big picture.

Figure out how you can best communicate value to your prospects. Remember, you are not just a writer, designer, etc. You are part of this amazing collective in which you can partner with others on projects, form a virtual agency, and refer other members who may be perfect for a job.

* Don’t just hand out your card.

Have a conversation. Engage with your visitors! And get any prospect’s card as well.

* Prepare for all types of questions.

You may be asked about your capabilities, availability, and rates. While you get to determine how you want to answer these questions, FX suggests – in particular – you deflect any questions about your rate. Communicate your value, and ask for the opportunity to put together a formal project estimate instead.

* Don’t be surprised.

While we target heavily those looking to hire freelancers in our promotional efforts, we can’t prevent others (i.e., vendors, other freelancers, students) from coming to the trade show. We’ll do our best to point these out by color on their nametag so you can decide if you want to give them your concentrated efforts or not.

* And, after the event?

Follow up. Follow up. Follow up! Don’t miss out on a great opportunity. Make yourself memorable and begin a great relationship with your best prospects. Connect on LinkedIn, follow on other social media channels, send articles, emails, invitations for a coffee meeting, etc. (But not too much or too often. You don’t want to be a pest!)

Also, remember, results may vary. Some years may generate some amazing hot leads. Others not so much. But it’s all about brand awareness and recognition. Meeting your peers. Getting referred and offering referrals. And who knows? You may end up with an amazing project from someone you met years ago. So, do your best to have a successful show, and keep the hope alive!

**What You Can Do to Help**

We promote this event far and wide through the use of direct mail, email, web, social media, PR, posters, outreach, media interviews and more. (See more about our efforts in the FAQs *<link to FAQs pg.>* section.)

Please help us spread the word and invite your contacts as well! Forward emails, share on social media, and help us hang posters around town.

**No Excuses**

Every year, we hear from freelancers who aren’t exhibiting. And the reason why? Because they say they didn’t know what to expect.

Well, that’s what we’re tackling here. No more excuses.

Between July’s luncheon program, this post and slideshow, the FAQs section *<link to pg.>*, and being able to ask questions via social media or email, *<link to* *events@fxofkc.com**>* you’ll no what to expect.

This is a HUGE, once-a-year opportunity!

So, what are you waiting for? Don’t miss out. Sign up today!

*<big pink Register button>*