
Selecting Sites for the ATA Trade Show

Denise Parker, ATA Vice President and Trade Show Director,
and Jay McAninch, ATA CEO and President

The Decision-Making Process

Ever since the ATA staff began managing the trade show in 2003, we have used an open, systematic decision-making process to select show sites. Along the way, we've drawn on the expertise of many people within the archery industry. Let's review how we've all worked together in this process.

The Role of the ATA Staff

The ATA staff develops and manages each ATA Trade Show. It also collects information that helps all of us understand how and why certain events take place at the show, and it carefully evaluates data about the archery market to help guide and improve the decision about where to take each show.

The actual decision-making process for site selection begins when the ATA staff has pulled together all of the necessary information. The number of potential show sites decreases as we discuss and analyze that information, eliminating individual cities until we whittle the list to two or three sites for any given year.

ATA Membership Input

Along the way, the ATA staff listens carefully to all input on the show received from any ATA member. Such member input has frequently developed into programs and activities that have enhanced the ATA Trade Show. We hope that all show attendees and ATA members continue to offer thoughts and suggestions on how the annual ATA Trade Show can be improved. Keep that input coming into the ATA.

The ATA Trade Show Committee

The ATA Trade Show Committee consists of ATA members who want to help solve the show's problems. As members contact us with show comments and sugges-

tions, they are asked if they would like to be part of the process of fixing and improving the ATA Trade Show by volunteering to serve on the ATA Trade Show Committee.

The ATA Trade Show Committee has grown to 70 individuals, and functions largely through email communication. Committee members enjoy knowing they never need to travel to meetings. All their input and ideas are sent and received without having to leave their offices. Input from this committee is especially valuable because this diverse group includes exhibitors, sales reps, distributors and buyers.

If you attend the show and want to affect the show's future, the best place to start is by volunteering for the ATA Trade Show Committee.

The ATA Dealer Council, Sales Rep Committee and Board of Directors

The ATA's governing bodies consist of individuals elected or appointed to represent the ATA membership. These individuals make the decisions that guide the ATA's day-to-day, month-to-month and annual activities.

At meetings and on occasional conference calls, these archery industry leaders help evaluate substantial amounts of information about the show. In addition, they receive input from the rest of the industry and discuss this input with the ATA staff.

The Show Site Selection

After sifting through all the data, opinions and recommendations on potential show sites, Denise Parker and Jay McAninch select the best site candidate and present their recommendation to the ATA Board of Directors. The Board then makes the final decision on the show site. In most cases, decisions on show sites are made three to five years in advance. For example, as of



about four months ago, we had contracted for show sites for 2007, 2008 and 2010, and were nearing a decision on 2009.

How Location Affects Dealer Attendance

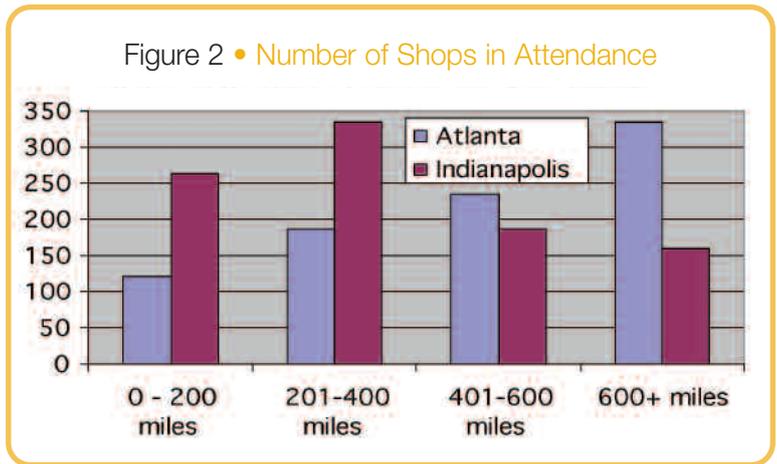
ATA surveys indicate that more than 40 percent of dealer/buyer attendees prefer to drive to the ATA Trade Show. The surveys also indicate that most Western archery dealers fly to the show. Therefore, as you increase the distance of the show from the majority of dealers, the percentage of dealers attending the show decreases (See Figure 1). Even though 40 percent of shops within 200 miles of the host city attend the show, only half of that percentage attends if they live from 201 to 400 miles away. Thus, the percentage of dealers attending the show falls by 5 percent every 200 miles.

The patterns of how dealers attended the shows in Indy and Atlanta were similar, and were directly related to the distance that dealers lived from the show site. In addition, dealers within 250 miles of the host city made up nearly half of the dealers at each show.

The Number of Nearby Dealers is Vital

If ATA Trade Shows in Indianapolis and Atlanta drew nearly identical percentages of the dealers within the same distances of each city, why was shop attendance down in Atlanta? The answer is that there are nearly twice as many dealers within any given distance of Indianapolis than there are within the same distances from Atlanta.

Within 200 miles, and up to 400 miles, at least twice as many dealer shops attended the ATA Trade Show in



Indianapolis as attended the ATA Trade Show in Atlanta. This is because nearly twice as many dealers/shops are located within 400 miles of Indy (2,279) than are located within the same distance of Atlanta (1,141) (See Figure 2).

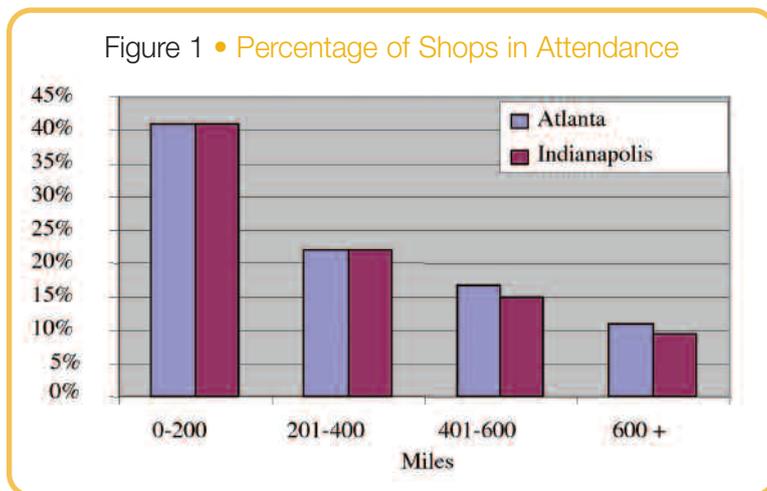
This pattern changed at 400 miles or more from each city. Between 400 and 600 miles, the number of shops attending the Atlanta show was slightly greater (235) than the number of shops attending Indy (187). Beyond 600 miles, nearly twice as many shops attended the Atlanta show (334) as attended the Indy show (159).

At first glance, those patterns seem contradictory. But the fact remains that more shops attend the Indy show when they're within 400 miles of Indy, and more shops attend the Atlanta show when they're located more than 400 miles from that city. Those results appear to be based on the way dealer shops are distributed throughout the United States (See Figure 3).

The distribution of archery dealers indicates that 17 percent of the dealers are located in the Southeast, while 61 percent are located in the Northeast, and 22 percent are located in the huge Western half of the country. That's why a Northeast show location, where so many dealers are within 400 miles of the show, has so dramatically affected dealer attendance.

This data makes two things clear. One, we must draw a high percentage of the dealers who are located within 400 miles of any show site; two, we must promote and market the show to dealers in the Northeast when the show is located in the Southeast.

We should mention that although the West is the largest sector geographically, it has only 22 percent of the nation's archery shops. From our surveys we've learned that nearly all dealers from the West fly to the trade show regardless of the



show's location. Thus, for this region, we need to market and promote the show every year as a must-attend event, and we need to work harder on discount airline tickets and inexpensive hotel rooms to keep show costs as low as possible for these attendees or any others who travel long distances.

Why Atlanta in 2007?

The ATA Trade Show is returning to Atlanta in 2007. Why? Midway through our booth-selection process at this year's trade show, we learned that the show floor in Nashville had been reduced to about 250,000 square feet. Since the ATA Trade Show requires at least 340,000 square feet, we had no choice but to terminate our contract with Nashville and begin searching for a new host city for the 2007 show.

As we began the search, we soon discovered that many cities had open dates for the first week of January 2007. Unfortunately, that would have meant holding the show January 4-6. If you thought January 5-7 was bad this year, and you had your holidays cut short because of it, you can understand why we decided it would be even worse to accept such early dates again in 2007.

The second problem we encountered was that the

SHOT Show, which a sizeable number of ATA exhibitors and dealers attend, is scheduled for January 11-14, 2007. That meant that the only viable options for the 2007 ATA Show were January 18-20, January 25-27, or February 1-3. The only cities with openings for those dates were Atlanta, St. Louis and Charlotte.

St. Louis was eliminated when it was discovered that their schedule would not allow ATA members adequate time to move out without incurring substantial overtime labor costs. Charlotte was eliminated when it was disclosed that there were not enough hotel rooms near the convention center with rates under \$100 per night. In addition, the main Charlotte show floor is only about 280,000 square feet, which would have meant locating some exhibit space in other rooms.

In fairly short order, Atlanta emerged as the very best candidate for the 2007 ATA Trade Show, with ideal January 18-20 show dates.

Please call or email the ATA office if you want to join the ATA Trade Show Committee, or if you would like to simply provide your thoughts on how the archery industry can improve the ATA Trade Show in Atlanta in 2007. This is your Archery Trade Association and your Trade Show. Call (866) 266-2776 or email ATA at info@archerytrade.org.

Figure 3 • Regional Distribution of Archery Shops in the United States

