

How To Organize And Run A Car Show

By NewJerseyCarShows.com

Over the past several years, there have been more and more car shows being organized by local antique, classic and street rod car clubs, non-profit groups and others. Car shows are a great way to drive awareness to your organization, cause or local business. But before you get started, here are some tips and suggestions to help you organize and run your show.

Venue: With many first time car shows, you don't know how many vehicles to expect. We recommend a good size parking lot with easy access to restrooms or portable restroom facilities. Weather always plays a big factor in your turnout since car show owners like to take their vehicles out in nice weather - so always have a rain date. Check online sources and automotive related publications to make sure that there are no other car shows in your immediate area on the Saturday or Sunday that you choose.

Vendors: if you have the room and your town or municipality allows it, a swap meet or flea market can also be a good draw and an opportunity to increase your event revenue. We suggest a mix of vendors selling both automotive related - (new and used) and new general merchandise.

Car Corral: a designated area away from the show vehicles for people to sell their cars or trucks for a fee. Many car shows do not allow for sale signs on vehicles being displayed - so this is a good option and a draw for people.

Advertising: Plan your event out as much as possible. We recommend at least 6 months. Have a nice professional flyer created with all of the show information - (including a map), e-mail address, contact number and website. Design a free website with an online website builder like Wix. Design a press release and submit it to all local newspapers and publications. Contact websites that post [car show events](#). Create an event page on Facebook and share it on your own page and on the pages of others in your group. You can create an 8.5" x 11" car show flyer for free online using an easy to use software program such as Canva. Also have a pre-registration form on the bottom of the flyer that can be mailed in with the payment - or encourage using a free online service such as Jotform to collect and organize all of your pre-registration show information. Payments can be collected online using services such as Paypal, Venmo or Zelle to streamline the pre-registration process.

Sponsors: find a local business to sponsor your event and include their business information in all of your print & digital advertising and marketing. You can also have levels such as gold, silver and platinum as an example. Auto dealers may be a good fit as they can bring some new cars to display.

Food: you can have a local group cook and sell food - (burgers, hot dogs, fries, etc..) or have a local business sell pizza, wraps, sandwiches or have a food truck. Ice cream is also a big hit in the summer months. Charge a nominal fee if you want to have someone other than your organization sell food. This is an easy way to generate additional revenue.

50/50 & Tricky Trays: 50/50 raffles usually require a permit from your town or local municipality - so check with them first. Tricky trays are a great way to generate income with donation of goods and services from local business owners.

Windshield Cards: This is usually an 8.5" x 11" card that contains your event name and logo along with the year, make and model of the show car along with name of the owner and the town they are from. To download a sample, [click here](#).

Traffic: make sure you choose a venue that is easily accessible to all major roads and has a good flow of getting cars in and out during the day. To help with this, we suggest having 2 incoming lanes: one for pre-registered vehicles - (also known as the "fast lane") and a 2nd lane for those who need to register their vehicles on the day of show. Make sure you have plenty of people on hand with change for large bills and clipboards with black markers to fill out registration form in order to prepare their windshield cards. Nothing upsets a car owner more than long lines because there are not enough workers processing day of show registrations. Once they have their windshield card and packet, make sure you have people directing them to the designated area for their class.

Judging: to make things easy, encourage people's choice judging. Unless you have qualified judges for a particular class of vehicles like the [AACA](#) does, people's choice is much easier. You hand a ballot to all spectators when they enter the show and have them choose the vehicles they like by the number indicated on the windshield card of each vehicle.

Trophies: have different types of trophies available depending on how you set up the car show classes. Ideas could be by decade, oldest vehicle, all original vehicle, furthest driven, etc.. Many groups often have special trophies in memory of someone that was actively involved in their group or organization. Try and find local sponsors to sponsor your trophies to reduce your show operating costs.

Goody Bags: this is usually a folder of bag of small incentives from local business owners and banks given to show vehicle owners as they enter your show. You can reach out to different businesses that have advertising promotional items and see if they want to donate to your show. Items such as pens, pads, mini flashlights, coupons, hats, t-shirts, USB drives, etc.. are some examples of popular giveaways.

Dash Plaques: many shows have custom dash plaques created. They contain your organization or business logo, show name and relevant information and are distributed in the goody bags. Many vehicle owners create wooden boards displaying the many dash plaques they have received over the years from various car shows and display them in front of their vehicles at shows.

Show Hours: this varies a lot but from experience, we suggest a show time from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Many shows also offer free bagels or doughnuts and coffee to all vehicles being shown as an added incentive to arrive early before a designated time.

Entertainment: a [DJ](#) playing a variety of music or band is a great way to keep everyone entertained.

We hope that this information has helped you and wish you much success with your car show!