



## FAQ's for Exhibitors

**MANTS 2021 Updated: October 12, 2020**

### **Is MANTS 2021 going to happen?**

YES, MANTS 2021 is going to happen. In late September we launched the 2021 MANTS online Business Hub; exhibiting companies are currently building their online presence in preparation for our January 6-8, 2021 show dates.

We are deeply disappointed not to be able to meet in Baltimore this coming January, but we are fortunate to be amongst those who are in a unique position to provide our exhibiting and buying companies the opportunity to conduct business this coming January.

### **What is the MANTS 2021 Online Business Hub exactly?**

The MANTS 2021 online Business Hub is a marketplace where attendees from buying companies can come to **SEARCH, SHOP, LEARN, CONNECT, BUY**. Exhibiting companies create a profile which includes a company description, logo, and a list of product categories. Their profile can include press releases, show specials, product pictures, and videos to enhance their visibility. The **unique feature** that sets the MANTS HUB apart from other online platforms is its intelligent matchmaking component that will connect exhibitors and buyers with like interests (see details below). Once matched, the profile has a scheduling system whereby attendees may request, or exhibitors may invite customers, to meet at a designated time during the MANTS show dates, January 6 – 8.

### **How does the company match feature work?**

The Business Hub has an intelligent product matching algorithm which allows exhibitors and buying companies to be matched based on 150 pre-determined product and service categories. When completing their respective profiles, exhibiting companies and individual attendees will indicate which products or services they offer and are looking for. Using this criteria, exhibitors and attendees are “matched” based on areas of compatible interest. Exhibitors may reach out to their “matched” companies and attending companies may use the appointment scheduling and e-mail contact features to request information and set appointments to reach exhibitors directly.

Exhibitors are encouraged to add a link to the web-based meeting platform of their choice (Zoom, Go To Meeting, Skype, WebEx ...etc.) to their profile, so that they may host customers one-on-one, in small groups, or hold larger gatherings during the show dates.

### **Does my “booth” have to be manned or staffed during show hours, January 6 – 8?**

No – there is no requirement to man or staff your company’s online profile. The system is designed so that attendees and exhibitors link using the intelligent matching feature or through your own personal search and connection. Exhibitors may and are encouraged to schedule

real-time meetings (via Zoom, WebEx, etc.), for a specific time, or host drop-in hours to foster engagement. These meeting times are set by exhibitors so there is no need to “man a booth” and randomly wait for someone to stop by. MANTS will publish for attendees a master list of scheduled public meetings.

### **What is the deadline to set up my company’s online profile?**

Exhibitors should, at minimum, complete their Basic Profile by October 30<sup>th</sup>. Profiles may be edited and updated any time you want. This date has been set for initial set up so we can offer attendees the option to begin looking at exhibitor content in November.

### **What does setting up a Basic Profile entail?**

Setting up a Basic Profile includes adding your company logo and a written description of what your company sells to your profile page. The profile may also contain a link to live meetings you may want to hold on January 6-8. These links may be added any time prior to January 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Where do I begin?**

A company begins by completing the online application which consists of two simple questions. Once the application is finished, you may begin your Basic Profile. A link to the profile page is included in the confirmation of your application. MANTS has provided an [Exhibitor Checklist](#), found in the [Exhibitor Manual](#), to help you through the process.

### **What is the cost of participating in the MANTS.com Online Business Hub?**

The base cost to participate and establish a presence on the Business Hub is \$250 per exhibiting company. Every company receives a Basic Profile package for participating and has the option of upgrading their company’s profile if they wish.

### **What if my company has already made their payment for 2021?**

For those who have already paid, several options are available:

1. You may request a full refund.
2. You may roll your 2021 payment over to the 2022 show .
3. You may apply a portion of your 2021 payment to the online platform with the option of refunding the balance or rolling over the balance to the 2022 show.

### **What can we expect from the MANTS.com Online Business Hub?**

Everyone knows that MANTS means business and while there is no perfect substitution for an in-person show, we believe that providing the Business Hub will help keep commerce within our industry accessible, alive, and healthy.

We have put a plan in place to help ensure that MANTS can continue to serve as a catalyst for connecting exhibitors who have products to sell with buyers ready to make purchases.

***MANTS means business*** is not just a slogan ... it is the driving force behind the show. MANTS is exhibitor focused, attendee driven, and business centered. We look forward to continuing our long tradition of helping our exhibitors get business done.

### **How does a buying company learn about and access the Business Hub?**

MANTS has access to over 11,000 buying companies with over 17,500 unique e-mail addresses and we are reaching out to all of them. In addition to print and e-mail communications, MANTS has committed its advertising resources to driving business to the 2021 online Business Hub. And we will continue to utilize our ever-expanding @mantsbaltimore social media network.

Attendee registration opens on October 20 and the Hub will be available before December 1, during our January 6-8, 2021 show dates, and 90 days post-show.

### **May companies currently on the wait list participate in 2021?**

MANTS has an exhibitor wait list of around 125 companies and it continues to grow each week. We will continue to add companies to the show from the wait list as long as space is available.

### **What if my company does not participate in the online platform for 2021?**

We certainly hope you will consider joining us for 2021 as we genuinely believe we can help to foster ongoing business relationships despite not being able to gather in-person in January.

Exhibitors choosing not to participate will not have a presence in the online floor plan or have an individual exhibitor profile. And they will not receive any seniority credit for 2021.

Regarding 2022 exhibit space, assuming the floor plan is the same, exhibitors on record as of August 4, 2020 have the right to retain the exhibit space(s) they were assigned for 2021. If there are future changes to the floor plan for our in-person show, these changes will be based on seniority.

### **What is the status of the Baltimore Convention Center?**

The Baltimore Convention Center, home to our show for the last 40 years, is closed as it remains a COVID-19 field hospital. Many Baltimore hotels remain closed or are operating at limited capacity and restrictions remain in place for indoor gatherings, restaurants, and all public spaces. There are just too many unknowns to proceed with an in-person show. What we do know for certain is that prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being of all our constituencies and allied business partners takes precedence above all else.

### **Why not just cancel the show and wait until January 2022?**

Every association that sponsors a show must make the decision that is best for their respective memberships and constituencies. In our case, we thought about canceling the show for about 10 seconds and then turned our attention to how we can best serve the needs of our exhibitors and attendee buying companies.

The mission of MANTS is to foster commerce in the horticulture industry, while supporting our sponsors, the state nursery and landscape associations of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Ours is not an industry that blinks when challenged, so we are using this as an opportunity to find alternative ways to sustain the meaningful connections between our exhibitors and attendees.

MANTS will use its vast database and available resources to drive attendees to the online platform which will host a searchable product and service directory featuring everything our exhibitors choose to present and offer.

We know that our exhibitors still have products and services to sell and our buying companies have inventories to refill, equipment, and services to buy and shelves to restock. MANTS has meant business to the green industry for 50 years, and we plan to continue this tradition into 2021 and beyond.

**And one more thing ...**

At MANTS we recognize that you have choices as to where and how you can do business, and as always, we thank you for thinking of MANTS, where your business comes first.

Stay safe, stay well, and stay strong!

###