

## LIBERTY TRADE SHOW'S FIRST EDITION IN LAS VEGAS

By [Kelsey Smith](#)

Tue, Aug 20 2013 9:21 pm

### Liberty Trade Show In Las Vegas

< PREVIOUS | NEXT > (Image 1 of 37)

VIEW: 



The entrance to Liberty Fairs.

By [Rhea Cortado](#)

The first Las Vegas edition of the new trade show Liberty had a lot to live up to. Founder Sam Ben-Avraham is famous for his tastemaker store Atrium in New York and founding Project in 2003, which was sold to Advanstar, owner of MAGIC International two years later. Indeed, walking into Liberty inside the Sands Expo and Convention Center at the Venetian Hotel felt similar to what Project started as—yet evolved in aesthetic and services for today's rapidly-changing world.

With only five aisles and a green park-like lounge in the middle, the booths—framed by brown cardboard walls—had a warmer and more welcoming feel than the usual sterile white walls and silver steel hardware booth systems. The show was primarily focused on the men's premium contemporary market and many of the brands that showed at Liberty made the switch from Project.

Stylish accessory brand Hex chose to exhibit at Liberty because of the "like-minded" brands and its size. "As a little brand you can get lost at big trade-shows," said Hex National Sales Manager Marshall Graves. Kevin Flanagan of People's Movement agreed that Liberty was about "better brands in a smaller space."

Action sports lifestyle brands that exhibited at Liberty such as Raen Optics, Shwood Eyewear, Hex, Deus Ex Machina, Kr3w, Zanerobe and Vanguard may be considered the top tier price point in most core surf shops. But next to Nudie jeans they fit in as the opening price point for boutiques such as American Rag, Revolve Clothing, and Azalea in San Francisco, who were all shopping the show. Majors such as Bloomingdales, Nordstrom, Zappos, and Neiman Marcus were also present. Because of the clientele at Liberty, the surf and skate brands stood on the strength of the product's quality and cool factor. The surf/skate/biking aspect was more about recreation and lifestyle, as opposed to famous athlete names.

In addition to the usual exhibitor booths, Liberty highlighted relevant and curated B2B services. Financial services, a logistics company, and technology companies offered solutions for vendors and retailers alike. A "Made in America" section featured American manufacturing resources, such as Cone White Oak denim.

As part of Modern Assembly, Liberty was connected to Agenda and shared registration and wristband access. Capsule, known for the most progressive and directional designers, was a quick elevator ride up to the fifth floor. Deus Ex Machina has previously showed at Capsule and Stefan Wigand of the brand said that Liberty was a natural transition for brands that may have outgrown Capsule's niche, but are still too special for a show like Project. "This is the next step," Wigand said.