

TRADE SHOW ATTENDEE TIPS



Trade Show and Conference Attendance Tips

SAVE MONEY - REGISTER EARLY

Don't get caught in the hustle and bustle of late registration - Pre-Register! It will save you money and give you time to determine WHAT you want to accomplish at the event (which vendors/booths/seminars to visit, any items you need to prepare, and any additional prep work). It is recommended to make an appointment with any specific vendors you want to see or meet during the show.

BUDGET WISELY

Most trade shows and conferences will have a lot of deals, discounts, and special offers. It is easy to get caught up in the excitement and want to buy one of everything. Prepare a budget before you go and know what your top needs are so you can prioritize those deals and specials.



LODGING

Where you stay during an event is quite important. When registering, see if the show organizers have any rooms available at a discounted rate. Typically these are in the same venue as the event, which offers ease and improved networking opportunities. Also, as soon as you have booked your tickets for the show, make your reservations for your hotel and transport.

ATTIRE

Remember you are representing your business or organization when you attend a trade show or conference, so dress accordingly. Ensure your shoes will be comfortable while you are walking around and on your feet a majority of the day(s). Also, leave adequate room in your suitcase to bring back product samples, vendor literature and paraphernalia, and promotional giveaway items.

AT THE SHOW

Once you arrive, pick up a show guide/booklet. Typically these are available at the entrances. Take a few moments to review the guide and check your initial plans. If needed, now is the time to revise your plan and agenda. If the conference gives you a badge, ensure it is in plain sight.

During the show you will be getting inundated with business cards and information, so have a plan on where you will store the business cards, and where you will jot down information you receive. While some exhibitors or vendors will provide bags, it is best to be prepared and have a place to store the literature you receive during the show.

Remember the budget you made earlier? While you are at the show, get all the information for specials, discounts, and sales. Take this information and review against your budgets and priorities. Remember, keep track of orders you place so you stay within your budget. Should you wish to purchase any custom merchandise at the show it is recommended to have your organizational artwork and branding information on a flash drive so the selected vendor can handle promptly while you are there.

NETWORKING

Trade shows and conferences are great opportunities to build and expand your current network. You know that large stack of business cards you brought? Don't be afraid to give them out to others and introduce yourself. If the event has seminars or workshops, attend any and all that you can. And while you want to network, remember your time is limited, so don't spend too much time at any one booth or engaged in conversation with a company that you don't wish to do business with.



AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Take time after the show to review your objectives and goals you made prior to the event. Did you meet or exceed those goals? Also review the cost of not only attending the show, but also the cost of your time missed at work and if the show is going to offer positive long-term benefits to you and your business. Evaluate all these factors when deciding if attending the trade show or conference the following year is in you and your organization's best interest.

