



## Maximize Networking Opportunities at Trade Shows

As an exhibitor your time will be busy with set up, engaging with your booth customers and booth tear down, but let's not forget the importance of networking during the event.

### 1. Strategic networking is helping everyone you meet connect with someone.

When you meet someone new, approach the interaction as a 'giver not a getter'. Networking is not about selling and what you will get out of the meeting or conversation – but rather how you can connect this new person with whom you might know in order to help them. Practise the law of reciprocity. It all comes back tenfold in the end.

### 2. Networking isn't selling your product or service. It's selling you and who you know!

Networking is marketing **you** – your personal brand and your company brand.

### 3. To network effectively and run an effective booth at your tradeshow, be prepared:

- 1) Your booth presentation – do a mock up to scale with the booth space taped on your floor; set up and design your booth so there are no surprises during set up.
- 2) Your supplies – this goes without saying, but if you do the booth mock up and create a supply check list you won't leave anything to chance.
- 3) Your personal appearance– first impressions matter! You are representing your company brand and your personal brand so make sure it's impressive, authentic and memorable.

If you're well prepared and set up early, consider giving your booth next to you a helping hand. It gives you an opportunity to create a connection and they just might appreciate the help.

**First priority goes to the consumer so be mindful you are not interrupting consumer interactions with fellow exhibitors. When it is slow, or before and after the event day, is a great opportunity to network with other booths.**



This **checklist** will help you maximize your participation at the trade show and ensure you're prepared and presenting yourself & your company in the best possible light:

- 1) Have an abundant supply of **business cards** (order a couple of fresh boxes, you don't want to run out!). Your cards represent and reinforce your company brand. Ensure they have your *full* contact information including all social media links.
- 2) Ensure your **LinkedIn profile** is current and completed – I guarantee business people will check it! Your picture and profile will give your new connections an opportunity to learn more about you.
- 3) Ensure your **website** is up to date and your About page is fresh and current.
- 4) Work on your **handshake**; it says a lot about you. If in doubt, practise it with people you know and ask their opinion. Wimpy handshakes have no place in business and women should shake as firmly as a man.
- 5) **Perfect your pitch**. Do you have a one minute elevator pitch nailed down? If not, get one, and keep it succinct, authentic and personal.
- 6) **Don't eat** at your booth. It's distasteful and looks unprofessional. Arrange for some relief so you can take a break and get away from your booth to refuel and freshen up.
- 7) **Don't sit** at your booth. Arrange for relief so you can relax somewhere else. You're there to conduct business.
- 8) Have some good **lead questions** in your back pocket. It's always about them and not you. Ask curious questions to learn more about the other person or their business.
- 9) Set **networking goals** for yourself; ie. Aim to meet, chat and exchange cards with at least 10 exhibitors and 100 booth attendees.
- 10) **Make notes** for any follow up required (on the back of biz cards) to jog your memory. Without notes, you will not remember the specifics after talking to 100+ people.
- 11) If you are capturing leads through business cards in the fish bowl or email sign ups, ensure you are **CASL compliant** for the new Canadian anti-spam laws.

**Networking is an essential part of business and is all about building relationships.** You've no doubt heard the phrase, 'People do business with those they know, like and trust'.

There's no better way to build those attributes of 'know, like and trust' than by face-to-face networking. Enjoy your tradeshow experience!

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