

# EXPO SURE TIPS TO GAIN THE MOST FROM TRADESHOW AND EXPO ATTENDANCE

The emcee of choice for platform presentations at numerous tradeshow and exhibitions across Asia, Australia and Europe, master emcee (MC) and Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) **Rob Salisbury** shares 13 tips and insights to help you make the most of the next tradeshow or expo that you attend.

**A**ttending product shows and expos stimulates creativity by learning, first hand, about new innovations from industry experts. The environment places a higher value on learning and networking than on selling, and is usually in conference venues, hotels or convention centres.

We are a society of consumers. All things being equal, each of us have personal and professional interests that motivate us. In an era of high tech and low touch, we are consuming products, services and information at an exponential rate.

The good news is that with this progress, we can shape our process to leverage time, earn more revenue, and help grow the companies we work with and improve the sustainability of our own communities.

The bad news is that many business people have become so digitally connected, that 'click and view' consumes the major portion of their productive days or evenings. We need to get out more but do it effectively.

Attending expositions or industry trade shows is an excellent way for you or your team to obtain new knowledge, meet industry experts and learn about leading edge developments with clients or trends in your own industry or trade.

Here are quick tips to ensure attending local or overseas events are successful and worthwhile.

## Know before you go

**Plan ahead:** Take advantage of free tickets or cheaper "early bird" rates by booking early. Many events are announced a year in advance with preferred rates or free VIP sessions for those that book early.

**Register:** Confirm your reservation or attendance with the organiser. By registering you will receive advance information and have your name badge waiting for you as well as be notified of future events.

**Research:** Review ahead of time the companies showcasing or the conference partners involved so you can make the most of your time at their booths or in meeting them as opposed to just wandering around.

**Schedule:** List who you want to see and any products or services you are interested in ahead of time. Find out in advance if there will be educational forums, seminars, breakout

resources. Find out what new products and services are available to help grow your business or increase productivity, profitability and alliances in your profession.

**Network:** Talk to show managers, association executives, seminar leaders, industry experts for awareness and perspectives on trends.

**Contact:** Your name badge may introduce you, however a contact or business card will ensure (if you want) that you are contactable via e-mail or phone after the event.



## After you go

**Follow up:** Contact those you met or found potentially valuable. The expense of tradeshow and expos are always being judged by the vendors. They will continue to participate when they see a return on their investment.

**K.I.T.:** Keep in touch with tradeshow exhibitors or organisers. Let them know that you appreciated their efforts with an e-mail or phone call if relevant.

**Alliances:** Where an opportunity presents itself, a strategic alliance or new agency or partnership can be a win-win.

sessions, early bird breakfasts or lunches offered, and plan your schedule.

## Attend on purpose

**Arrange one-to-one meetings with managers or suppliers:** Ask good, open questions about what they are doing in their companies to make the most of their time at the trade show or expo. Qualify the opportunity for yourself and always get a business card.

**Arrive early:** Avoid the crowds. Move through the site of the show quickly and see as many exhibitors as possible. Exhibitors are ready and willing to chat more in the early hours of the first day.

**Content is King:** Gather information and

**Review:** Make a date with yourself over a coffee or tea and note some of the main things you learned from attending the trade show or people you meet at the expo.

In an era of voicemail, out-of-office auto replies, and digital disconnection, attending trade shows and expos can be an excellent way to leverage your time and power up your learning and earning curve through connecting with, and building relationships with, people face-to-face.

Worst case scenario: you will get exercise from walking around for a few hours, engage your people skills by talking to decision-makers as a consumer or potential buyer, and you will build your contact list in a meaningful way. 🍷



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