

Chapter 19

Get the Most Out of Industry Trade Shows

■■■ Learn how to use trade shows to your advantage *and* avoid sore feet at the end of the day. My secrets for getting the most out of industry trade shows are all in this chapter – ready to help you make more money - as soon as you get home from the show!

Then and now

I went to my first industry trade show in the mid-80s. I remember how excited I was attending my first show and the overwhelming number of items available. I spent all day collecting catalogs and samples, and shipping them back to my office. In those days (and I know I'm dating myself), there was no Internet, laptops and very few fax machines - so information could be obtained only through direct contact or by phone.

Quality connections, unusual items and preferred vendors

Today I go to industry trade shows with a different goal in mind, making the whole process more productive and much easier (not to mention less stressful on my arms and legs.) My goal now is to make **a few quality connections, look for new or unusual items and acquaint myself with my preferred vendors.**

Which ones to attend?

Attending industry trade shows are a great way to increase your income. With so many to choose from, talk to your favorite suppliers and see where they will be exhibiting. Pick at least **one national trade show** to attend every year. Also, take advantage of the **regional trade shows** held in your local area.

Want to get the most from industry trade shows?

Use my **Trade Show Quick Tips** to stay 'ahead of the crowd' and get the most out of the time and money you spend to attend shows throughout the year.

Trade Show Quick Tips

- **Go with a goal in mind**

I call all my best prospects and customers before I go to a show to see what I can find at the trade show that would be of help to them. It's a great way to stay 'top of the mind' with them and find out what's happening in their businesses. Plus, it gives me a ready-made shopping list.

- **Carry a small voice-activated tape recorder**

When I see something interesting or want to remember a contact's name or a particular product line, I simply speak into my recorder. When I get home, all my ideas are in one place and I review them without fumbling through notebooks full of handwritten notes.

- **Make a list ahead of time**

It's almost impossible to see everything, so make sure you **prioritize**. Make a list of who and what you absolutely must see and the related booth numbers.

- **Take advantage of the free workshops**

This is a tremendous value offered by trade shows and a great opportunity to meet others in the same field from all over the world. (You can never learn too much.)

The best-educated professionals earn the most money. And make sure to plan who you want to see ahead of time, since many popular speakers fill up quickly in free sessions.

- **Wear comfortable shoes!**

This sounds obvious, but I can't stress it enough. **You'll be doing more walking than you can imagine.** Today there are so many great looking (comfortable) shoes to choose from, that finding a fashionable pair shouldn't be a problem.

- **Carry a small amount of money**

Keep the amount of things you carry to a minimum. Carry only a small amount of money around with you and leave the rest of your valuables locked in your room or in a safe place.

- **Wear (really) comfortable shoes!** Oops, I already mentioned that!

INSIDER Information

Getting in on the secret

Judith Peacock, principal of **JHT Associates**, a successful distributorship in Massachusetts, says that one of the things that contributed to her success was attending regional shows and meeting as many suppliers and line reps as possible. She adds that: *They are more than willing to share information and secrets with you.*

► *What Can You Do Now?* ◀

- Make a list of **all the available trade shows**. Decide which ones you would benefit from the most, and book your travel early for the best discounts.
- Find out which shows your **favorite suppliers** will be participating in.
- Start an **idea journal**. When you go to the trade shows take it with you and look for products that fit your most creative ideas.