

Women in Industry: How to get the most from industry events



Inventing a game with prizes is a good way to attract visitors to your booth at industry events. Here Amy Souders of Wincongratulates a show attendee for winning a prize from Winsupply at PHCC Connect. *Photo courtesy of Winsupply.*



Think about the last industry event you attended.

September 10, 2019

*Christy Maloney and Amy
Souders*

- How did you prepare?
- How did you spend your time?
- How did you follow-up?

Having a game plan will produce ROI from every industry event you attend. Start with this list:

Before

Set goals: Check the roster for people to meet; schedule them for dinner or drinks. Decide which sessions to attend. Get familiar with the venue. (Tip: Use a packing list to remember essentials like business cards and device chargers.)

Tell vendors who is attending from your team: Vendors can then schedule your team for booth tours, dinners or receptions so you can meet their executives and talk with reps you don't see every day. (Tip: This is your chance to meet people who can help you with any customer issues in the future.)

Create a "booth magnet:" Invent a game with prizes to attract people to your booth and your vendors' booths. How about a scavenger hunt with trivia questions that kick starts meaningful conversations about products? (Tip: Create your game early so materials are included in attendee packets. At the event, use social media to share happenings at your booth.)

Set times to entertain customers: Be the first to invite top customers for golf, a reception or dinner. Customers will remember you gave them VIP treatment. (Tip: Book an extra day before or after the main event so you don't miss any last-minute opportunities.)

Gather intel before vendor speed-networking meetings: Review vendor purchase reports for trends; ask your team about vendor management changes or unresolved issues so you can use your 10-minute meetings wisely. (Tip: Organize intel in a Google Docs spreadsheet your team can update live with to-do's for follow-up.)

Set bonus meetings: Traveling to a city with a partner, customer or vendor nearby? Set up a meeting or tour while you're there.

During

Be a connector: Look for new faces. Who might need a warm welcome? Introduce yourself; then find out who else this person should know. Newcomers will be forever grateful.

Split up from your group: Resolve to sit with people you don't know and talk to them.

Meet the speakers: After a session, shake hands with the speaker, say thanks and present your business card. Connections now pave the way later if you need a speaker for internal training or another event.

Pick up the tab: Show professional courtesy. Don't be that wholesaler who always expects vendors to pay.

Round up your team for a wrap-up meeting: Before leaving the venue, get everyone to decide who's doing what by when.

After

Do your to-do's: If you used a Google Docs spreadsheet at vendor speed-networking meetings, track completed tasks there.

Say thanks: Send emails or handwritten notes to new contacts, vendors and others who helped you.

Say yes to volunteer opportunities: If you network well, plant seeds and attend industry events year after year, you'll likely be asked to help a committee, serve on a board or speak at a future event. Stepping up is your chance to build deeper relationships – and that's sure to double or triple your ROI from industry events over time.

Recent Articles By Christy Maloney

The importance of next generation leaders

Christy Maloney is vice president and director of finance and strategic planning at Coburn Supply Co.

Amy Souders is plumbing marketing manager, finished goods at Winsupply. Both are members of the Women in Industry Executive Council.

Copyright ©2019. All Rights Reserved BNP Media.

Design, CMS, Hosting & Web Development :: ePublishing