

# Tradeshow Success: VISITOR VICTORIES

**I**f you are going to a tradeshow primarily to get vendors' free giveaways, stop wasting your time, go to the Dollar Store. Tradeshows are serious events for you to attend to find new products, to learn and to network. The following will help you maximize your time at a tradeshow.

## Name Tag

Let people know who you are. You should wear a name tag that has your company name, your name and possibly your company logo and slogan. Better yet, make permanent professional name tags for you and your employees.

Since you shake hands with your right hand, you will naturally turn your right side toward your prospect. Your name tag should be worn high on your right side. A vendor can read your name tag better here than if it's on your left shoulder, lower on your torso, on your belt or some other place. As you shake a hand, introduce yourself with your name and ask for the exhibitor's name.

## Wants and Needs List

Make a "Wants And Needs List" of what you would like to see at the tradeshow including:

- Products
- Services
- Specific Companies & Individuals

## Products

What products are you missing? Do you need a new FHA lender? Do you need to find several niche lenders? Write down all the products that you want or need to learn about.

## Services

What services do you need? Do you need a new closing agent or appraiser? Do you need a website designer? Do you need to find out about some new technology?

## Specific Companies

What companies and individuals do you want to meet? Who have you dealt with during the last year that you would finally like to meet in person? What companies or individuals would you like to explore doing business?

Now that you have an extensive list of what you want to get out of the exhibitors, you know exactly what you want to do at the tradeshow. Take a copy of the tradeshow exhibitor list and simply mark the vendors and their locations that correspond to your Wants and Needs List.

Next, reorganize the list in aisle order or mark a map, so when you walk down a particular aisle at the tradeshow you will know exactly what vendor to see. Write down your questions or comments for each exhibitor so you will be prepared. At the show, your mission is to visit all the exhibits that you have marked.

## Fresh Talk

You should keep your breath fresh throughout the day with breath spray. Try not to chew gum or mints since they interfere with your speech. If you don't have breath spray, a few minutes with a mint or gum in your mouth should freshen your breath. In addition to having fresh breath to talk to your prospect, it will freshen you up during the day.

## Attire

You cannot over dress for a tradeshow. You should wear clothes that are appropriate for the subject tradeshow. Business attire would be appropriate for a local tradeshow opening in the evening after work. Casual clothes would be appropriate for a tradeshow at a resort. Regardless of the setting, dress professionally. Differentiate yourself from your competition with your dress.

## By Gary Oppen

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*Editor's Note: This article will help new mortgage professionals get the most out of a tradeshow and will help experienced mortgage professionals take a fresh look at how to have a successful tradeshow excursion.*

**Courtesies**

Give your undivided attention to the exhibitors. Do not eat or drink during your excursion. If you must drink, do not drink alcohol, you are at work just as much as if you were at the office. Turn off your cell telephone.

**Time is Precious**

Many times, you realize that an exhibitor has no products or services that interest you. Thank the exhibitor and proceed. Don't waste his and your time. Eat or drink before or after you have accomplished your mission. Don't waste your time talking with friends and employees. You are on a mission.

**Current Vendors**

Spend some time talking with your current account reps. Learn what new products they may have and neglected to tell you. Introduce yourself to the other employees of your current vendors. Get to know the "decision makers" and the people in the organization "who can get things done."

**Literature**

Gather literature. Read the material as soon as possible. Contact the vendors that you want to follow up with. Throw out the literature that is useless to you. File the literature that you may want to follow up later.

**Set Appointments**

Bring your appointment book and set appointments for the vendors that you think you would like to pursue a relationship.

**Networking**

Tradeshows are a good place to network. You primarily will be networking with the exhibitors—newly found exhibitors and your current vendors. Do not forget to meet with your colleagues. They are good sources of information and knowledge.

**Education**

Many tradeshows offer educational courses and seminars. You should take advantage of these excellent opportunities.

**Post Tradeshow**

Hospitality suites are a good way to socialize and learn more about a company. Food and drinks will be available. Try to keep your alcoholic drinking to a minimum so that you will be in control. The hospitality suite provides a good controlled environment for networking.

**Advance Reservations**

You may want to stay overnight at the tradeshow. Make reservations at your hotel long in advance. To avoid the hassles of finding somewhere to eat in a town that might be overrun with tradeshows and other exhibits, you should make advance dinner reservations. If you will need a car, those reservations should also be made far in advance. If you are planning to host a dinner, those reservations should be arranged in advance.

These tradeshow attendee success tips will help you have a very successful tradeshow experience. Following these tips will help you enjoy the tradeshow to its fullest. See you at the next tradeshow with your Wants and Needs List.



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