

# Tradeshaw Tip Sheet

This month: Tradeshaw Networking

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## Power Networking at Tradeshaws and Conferences

Okay, so you are on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, MySpace and a half dozen other social media sites. You're meeting people, exchanging notes, postings, e-mails, photos, URL's, phone numbers and who-knows-what. Nothing wrong with social media, it's a great way to start a communication. Picking up the phone is a terrific

extension of that initial reaching out. Putting a voice to a name and a photo is great. You're really starting to connect.

But meeting face-to-face is the best. You pick up nuances you didn't get on a phone call. You find out more than you could have ever uncovered on the phone or online. Shaking hands, sharing a smile or a drink, ideas, family tidbits and more helps you build a real relationship.

So there's nothing quite as powerful as 'face time.' And to get a lot of face time with a lot of people in one place - well, tradeshaws and conferences are the best. You can meet CEOs, marketing experts, up-and-comers, the wacky and the wild - all in one place over a short period of time.



## Reaching Out for a Thousand Reasons

If you are going to a tradeshow or conference to do some heavy networking, it helps to know what you really want out of it. Are you a sales person looking for more business? Are you a marketing manager interested in coming up with new ideas? Are you a CEO doing a little investigating for an open position? Are you looking to shed your job and find new digs?

Having a definable objective with a specific goal will shape your approach. If, for instance, you want to see ten specific tradeshow booths and meet the marketing managers or their reps - that's a very specific task. If you're just scouting for a job opening, your search is going to be defined by your job requirements. You can narrow your search based on type of company, geo-

graphic location, size of company and other criteria that you define. A look through the exhibitor list - and some of your own legwork - will let you know the best companies to approach. You may even be able to go so far as to uncover department head names, then make contact to find out if they're going to the show, and finally set up a meeting to briefly meet them face to face.

Rich Frishman, author of "Networking Magic," says "Anytime people together I consider it a networking event. I use the term loosely, and don't restrict it to conventions, conferences, workshops and the usual stuff. The thing is you always have to be ready, otherwise you may overlook terrific networking opportunities."

Always be ready to network, otherwise you may overlook terrific networking opportunities.



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**Follow up after the show with a card or an invitation to meet for coffee if convenient.**

## You Are Your Network. You Are What You Publish.

It doesn't matter what the status of your network is today. Your network will only expand, as long as you work at it and let it. How fast it expands and how far it eventually reaches depends on you. Are you online at places such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter? Do you blog or podcast? Do you post informational videos with your company name (and your name) on YouTube on your own channel?

People may know you and like you upon first meeting you at an event, but after you've handed them a business card, they may actually go looking for you! If they Google your name, what do they find? If your name is common, such as David Scott, you might avoid getting mixed in with a thousand other David Scotts. Or, use your middle

name, which is exactly what (and why) David Meerman Scott did. Now when you Google him, he's easy to find.

In fact, it was Scott who made the observation awhile back that 'you are what you publish.' When people look for you online and find blog postings, podcasts, Facebook pages, LinkedIn connections, YouTube channels, Twitter handles and more – and they like what they see – it simply solidifies your credibility in their mind. It's a digitally connected world. Are you a part of it? If so, can you extend those branches even farther?

## Solidifying Connections After the Show

All right, you've returned from the big show. You've collected a couple of handfuls of business cards, made some notes on them and are ready to solidify those initial connections. What next? Send an e-mail? A brochure? A postcard? Make a phone call a couple of weeks later to check in?

Your next action will likely be precipitated by how your original interaction took place. Maybe a personal card is the right thing. Or send that follow up brochure if your connection is expecting it. If it's a local connection, perhaps inviting the person to join you for a cup of coffee is appropriate.

Whatever your action, it should be appropriate to your original intention. Don't over-do it, but don't shrug it off or send something that's ultimately meaningless either.



## Bottom Line

Networking at events comes natural to some people – and is a tough nut to crack for others. No matter which end of the spectrum you're on, you can and should always look to improve your networking performance. Look at it objectively,

define your goals, write down the steps you'll need to accomplish those goals, and go for it. No matter how good you are at online interaction, nothing beats the up-front-and-personal face-to-face meeting to learn who that person really is.