

The Big Show

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If you're like most business owners, you have allotted a certain amount of your time every week to brainstorm ways to reduce overhead and cut unnecessary spending because, after all, it's not how much you make ... it's how much you keep.

When you add up the expense of attending a trade show: the room, the food, the time away from normal daily activities, it's easy to talk yourself into skipping it.

So why then, in times like these, are so many taking on the expenditure of attending a trade show?

One reason only: because what you miss out on could prove to be much more costly than not going at all. An old Japanese proverb sums it up best, "None of us can be as smart as all of us."

The opportunities that present themselves at trade shows can only exist in such a format. When trade shows first began they were the only way for merchants, artisans, inventors, scholars and consumers to make themselves known to one another. The efficiency of trade shows has never been matched or replaced by any other form of information exchange in over 2,600 years.

Surely, in your own backyard, the opportunity to network with industry professionals is laced with the fear of sharing trade secrets. When networking at a trade show, you have the opportunity to correspond with equilateral professionals who do business far enough away from you that they are not only less than threatened by your query, but glad to finally be able to showcase their means of success without worrying about their methods saturating their own local market.

With the question of cost versus value being satisfied, and the thirst of purpose being quenched, it leaves only the wonder of where we shall find the time for such an undertaking. Will Rogers once said, "Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save."

We all, on a daily basis, make time for that which we individually consider most important. More than half of the businesses that went bankrupt in the last two years could have stayed open with another \$500 in revenue per week. Where, you ask, could such an additional revenue stream have come from? That's not for me to answer, but I'll bet there will be some great new ideas at the show. Consider the following bullet points as a task list to fulfill at the show:

Conference sessions allow you to:

- Learn first hand from industry experts that have successfully implemented technology solutions
- Keep up-to-date on new and emerging technologies
- Take the opportunity to create a professional network

- Create talking points to communicate more effectively with vendors
- Get immediate answers and solutions to issues within your organization
- Discover new products that can decrease expense and increase revenue

Trade Show / Exhibition Events allow you to:

- See the latest in technology
- Hear new product announcements
- Visit all of your vendors in one location
- Get answers directly from vendors on the exhibition floor
- Do some comparison shopping
- Seek solutions and find new technologies
- Talk with others who are using or considering a product or service you are researching

This is just a small list of what can be achieved at the show, so do yourself, your customers, and your staff a great service by attending.

Do whatever you must to get there! Pack a cooler, pack a tent, carpool, share a room, sleep in your truck, cash in at coin star, close your office for a day, get a neighbor to watch your dog, whatever you have to do to be there; and bring as many people from your organization as you can.

Ninety percent of life is showing up, 90 percent of sales is product knowledge, 90 percent of construction is industry knowledge, and 90 percent of service is *current* knowledge. All this happens at The Big Show. We'll see you there.