

Tips for Making the Most of Your Time at GRAPH EXPO®

*The annual GRAPH EXPO is one of the largest conferences and exhibitions in the country and the most comprehensive in our industry for seeing, investigating, and buying the latest technology and learning about the newest applications. We realize that, with nearly 440,000 square feet worth of exhibits to see and investigate (that's over 13 football fields!), it can be a bit overwhelming. **To help make the most of you time on the show floor and in the McCormick Place Complex, show management offers the following tips:***

Your first task is to decide why you are attending the show. Because there are so many interesting distractions on the show floor, it is far more productive to identify your reasons for attending beforehand. The following outlines some very good reasons to attend GRAPH EXPO.

- **Discover New Products, Services and Technologies**
Companies often introduce their new lines and service programs at the show.
- **Find New Suppliers**
Each year new suppliers come into the market and they are at the show. This is the best opportunity to see what is new out in the market. Trade journals can not be your only source in finding new suppliers.
- **Compare Vendor Offerings**
This is an excellent time to question representatives from different companies about their products. You can go from vendor to vendor making comparisons – this type of comparative shopping can ONLY be done at a trade show.
- **Analyze the Competition**
You have first-hand opportunity to observe new offerings, sales practices, pricing plans, product marketing techniques and overall positioning.
- **Network with Top Management and Peers**
This is an excellent opportunity for you to ask that special question, face-to-face with the CEO of a supplier. Additionally, this environment is ideal for networking with fellow professionals, exchanging information and updating yourself on industry trends, development and new applications.
- **Buy Products or Services**
This is the world's most cost-effective sales environment. Think of the value of your time saved. This is also an opportunity to take advantage of at-show price discounts, see the product “in action” talk with other users of that same product and make appointments with company reps for future purchase follow-up.

Now that you have made the decision to go to the show, the following suggestions will help you maximize your time and resources while attending GRAPH EXPO:

- **Prioritize Your Needs**

You're entering a huge market place where every type size and shape of equipment software, hardware and supply and service can be found. Figure out what specific products you need to build your business, enhance your services, make your production more efficient or achieve whatever your business goal is.

- **Do Your Homework**

There are products available from over 800 categories. The show's website offers an "Attendee Assistant" feature to help you select from among those categories, find out what's being offered by which exhibitors, and lets you get more information on the companies that manufacture and supply those items. You can make appointments with their reps at the show; get specifications on the equipment and much more. Visit www.graphexpo.com and click on Product Search to get started.

Additionally, the Attendee Assistant offers a search section called Hot Product Search, which highlights new products being introduced at the show. The EXECUTIVE OUTLOOK[®] Conference, an all-day learning experience held the day before the show opens is a great guide to the latest technology, and won't take away from your exhibit floor time. Register for this and your seminar session(s) at <http://graphexpo.gasc.org/register.cfm>.

- **Plan Your Time Carefully**

Once you decide which products you need and who offers them, plan your route over the huge show floor in the most efficient way you can, so that you'll be sure to see everything. The show's website offers a customizable Planner feature that let's you schedule your time, build in appointments, add seminars, and even map out your route on a customizable floorplan.

[FUN FACT: over 85% of exhibition attendees turn to the *right* upon entering the show floor for the first time – that's the same percentage of people in America that are right-handed!]

- **Pick Up a Directory**

The Official Show Directory and Product Reference Guide offers complete information on everything on the show floor, and includes exhibitor information, seminar schedule, show hours, a floor plan, special announcements and up-to-date information on everything you need to navigate the show floor effectively. Compare it with your prepared planner to adjust for last minute changes in exhibitor locations or product offerings, and mark your route.

- **Approach the Floor Systematically**

If you're looking for specific products and several vendors offer it and you'd like to compare them, set them up together in a block – the show floor is organized to put many vendors offering similar types of equipment together. Presses are with Presses, Prepress with prepress etc. That way you can compare more directly. Visit the most important purchases first, as these visits often take longer than anticipated. If you make specific appointments to visit a rep in their booth, be on time, and ask the nearest sales person where you can find the person with whom you have an

appointment – the staff can recognize them and find them faster than you can. Booth numbers are located on the floor in the aisles, to make it easy to reference your floorplan or directory listing by booth number. Also be sure to use the large aisle signs hanging over each of the major aisles in the hall to guide you to the booth you seek. Floorplans can be downloaded at <http://graphexpo.gasc.org/PDF/ge07fp.pdf>.

- **Collect Information**

Exhibitors supply customers with product and company information at the show – take advantage of this generosity to collect as much as you can about the equipment you're interested in. You can always ship your literature back to the office, and you have some reference materials to review back at the hotel or on the plane.

- **Have Your Badge Scanned**

Most manufacturers exhibiting at the event will have some way of collecting your contact information so they can get in touch with you later, either to follow-up on your conversation, provide you with additional information, or ask if you need anything further from them to help you make your purchase decision. It takes a few seconds for them to scan the barcode on your show badge, and it saves fumbling with and collecting business cards in the crowded booth.

- **Take a Break**

Exhibit floors are busy, crowded, noisy places with lots of sensory input and distractions. You can only absorb so much information effectively. After about 3 hours of shopping, take a 15-minute break, find a conveniently located bench, grab a cup of coffee or a soft drink, sit down and rest your feet and your ears for a few moments and collect your thoughts. Maybe take a few notes on significant findings on each item, check your e-mail at one of the convenient mail stations in the hall, call a colleague back at the office, or get something to eat. Your feet will thank you.

- **Get Educated**

Make time in your day to boost your industry or technical knowledge, by registering for one of the over 60 seminar sessions, presented by the top experts the industry has to offer in their respective fields. They only take an hour and forty-five minutes (depending upon which session you choose – see www.graphexpo.com and click on “Seminars” to get a complete listing with descriptions, times, titles, speakers and prices), and that time can be a great investment in your future success!

- **Finish Your Day Strong**

End your floor tour with the least immediate, but perhaps the most interesting, innovative, or thought-provoking exhibit – food for thought on the shuttle ride home. It will help you put the rest of the floor in perspective and provide you with some interesting questions for your next visit to the show, either the next day or next year.

For more information on Graph Expo, [click here](#).