

How Do You Do...?

The Question -- How Do You "Work" a Trade Show For Maximum Results?

Answered by Bob Shumate, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Winter is the time to prepare your supply needs for the next season as well as a wish list of equipment upgrades. One of the best ways to accomplish these tasks is to attend a local or national trade show. A Sports Turf Manager at a trade show is like a kid in a toy store, but there are some very real benefits to attending. A little planning will let you get the most out of the time spent visiting with vendors. If your time is limited and you have very specific items you are looking for, a quick glance at the show program will let you map out only the booths you want to visit. A day spent perusing the aisles and stopping at many booths will allow for comparison shopping as well as maybe turning up that new product that could solve one of those pesky problems plaguing your operation. Remember that vendors are on the road most of the time and have developed relationships with many people in the industry. Ask questions and use them to expand your network of contacts. Always carry plenty of business cards to exchange with others and for dropping in fish bowls to win that great door prize. Trade shows have plenty to offer and besides, you could be back at work plowing snow or some other equally pleasant task.

Answered by Sarah K. Martin, Kane County Cougars (IL)

I have found that the key to getting the most out of a trade show is how you prepare for it.

1. Start by thinking of the companies and/or products that you would like to learn about, and have questions ready to ask the vendors.

2. Pick up a map of the trade show and pinpoint the booths that you are interested in visiting. By going to these first you can eliminate the possibility of running out of time.

3. Remember to take brief notes on the materials you are looking at. With so much happening it is easy to forget who has what prod-

uct, or the specifics of how they work.

4. Ask for the business cards of those that you speak with. After a day at a show it is easy to forget who it was that you spoke to with each company. It is also a good idea to have business cards and/or resumes with you. By being prepared you can eliminate the chances of missing the information that you need. And don't forget to talk to the other attendees as well. They are a great resource, and may know exactly what you are looking for.



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