

Title:

Avoiding Seminar Dogs: How To Pick The Right Session To Attend

Word Count:

575

Summary:

My email is overflowing with seminar information about programs at upcoming trade shows. I'm like every one else whose time is at a premium. How can I maximize my time when I am at the show? How can I stay informed with the latest innovations?

Keywords:

seminar, conference, self-promotion, education, training, visibility, credibility, personal branding, marketing

Article Body:

My email is overflowing with seminar information about programs at upcoming trade shows. I'm like every one else whose time is at a premium. How can I maximize my time when I am at the show? How can I stay informed with the latest innovations?

Almost every trade event now has a conference track that runs concurrently. These are usually well publicized in advance so have time to register and in most instances are able get a discount for early registration. In some cases the conference is in advance of the actual show so it doesn't detract from time in front of the exhibitors. In any case it's wise to plan your conference schedule as early as possible.

Look at your travel agenda and determine how much time you can set aside to attend a conference session/s. Review the program information. In most cases there will be a very diverse selection of offerings. Look to see who the session is targeting. If your title or job description is listed then it's a good bet this is something you should attend. Check out the speakers and their companies. Are these the people you want to meet? Can you benefit from their expertise? It's easy to check out your speakers by doing a GOOGLE search. Type in the presenters name in quotations and see what turns up.

Is the session presenting "fresh" material or trotting out some old "has been" that hasn't had a new thought in 20 years? Note: many of the conferences do not pay speakers; they hope that companies will provide speakers for free to promote

their products and services. So it's important to determine whether this "content" is worthy of your time or is it just a company "advertorial." In my opinion, most of the time these sessions aren't worth investing your time. Watch out for "free" sessions too. Unless this is a "paid" expert hired to increase show attendance, it's usually not worth going.

Can you access the information or material in any other way? I know in my case when I speak it's based on recent research which I turn into a report that can be purchased after the event. Many times you can find an article or report for purchase that covers the same subject also. Look for sessions with information that you can't get in any other way or ones that have a "stellar" selection of presenters. If you can't attend a particular session, find out if it will be repeated or how you can access the information after the event.

See how long the session will be and at what time of day. Can you combine a session with your lunch break? Breakfast sessions have now become very popular. Why not eat and learn at the same time? Is the information something that can benefit others in your organization? Get some brownie points by coming back with valuable insights.

If you have no reference point for any of the sessions, look to see who is a sponsor. Is it a company that has a good reputation or a trade organization that you respect? You can always call them and ask about the speakers or the event. You can even complain to them if the speaker is a "dog." So whatever seminar you decide to attend be sure and plan early and maximize your time at the event.