

Conference Going Tips

Conferences, expos and workshops are a wonderful resource to gather information for your personal life. However, these events are a productive business opportunity to network, meet new colleagues and perspective new clients, too.

To walk away motivated, full of grand ideas and a purse stuffed with business cards, follow these seven tips.

- 1. Before you go, consider what you want to take away from the event.** Do you want to make new contacts, promote a new business or product and/or see how other women are marketing their own businesses? If you have an idea of what you hope to gain from the event, you'll have a better chance of being satisfied with the results.
- 2. Always make it a goal to meet at least one person that you can network with afterwards.** This contact alone will more than likely be worth your admission price. Be sure to "subject" network rather than "sell" network. Subject networking is all about helping each other reach your individual goals or target audience through contacts rather than selling that new contact your services or products.
- 3. Take a stack of business cards to hand out.** (Sure, this is a given, but you can't believe how many people forget them.)You never know who might be sitting across a table from you. Freely hand out your cards. Yes, you might be put on someone's mailing list so return the favor.
- 4. Pick up business cards and contact information from every vendor and anyone you strike up a conversation.** I've turned silver relationships into golden friendships with several women entrepreneurs I met at a woman's show years ago. We have been brainstorming ideas with each other and e-mail makes it so much easier to stay in contact even if they live in another state. And you can link web sites or blogs.
- 5. Introduce yourself to vendors who interest you.** Be sure to tell them who you are and what you do. "Hi, I'm Mary Jo Rulnick and my book, *The Frantic Woman's Guide to Feeding Family and Friends*, is hot from Warner Books' oven." I hand over a postcard that consists of recipes and tips. The recipes/tips are my way of giving away something, yet, a PR tool as book and contact information are on the backside of the postcard.
- 6. File the information you've gathered.** When you get home, place the handouts, business cards, and brochures into an expandable folder with

an elastic or cloth tie. Mark the event and year on the outside of it. Six months from now when you think about the designer you've meet at the women's show, yet can't remember her name, all you have to do is open the folder and retrieve the information. I use this organizational idea for every conference or expo I attend. The folders sit neatly on the top shelf in my office closet until needed. (Note: After a designated time amount of time say when the next expo rolls around, pitch the folder.)

7. **Wear comfortable shoes.** This is a very sensible, yet important tip. Depending upon how chatty you are, you could be on your feet for hours.

With these tips in hand, you'll gather many golden nuggets that can help your business thrive.

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Mary Jo Rulnick is the author of *The Frantic Woman's Guide to Feeding Family and Friends* (Warner Books) and coauthor of *The Frantic Woman's Guide to Life* (Warner Books). An award-winning writer, she hit the number one author spot with her current book on Internet Book Database. She has been coined the Do-It-Yourself expert and has been featured or quoted in national woman's publications and she's a frequent television and radio guest on stations throughout the country. Visit Mary Jo at www.FastTrackWoman.com.