

11 Best Practices for Volunteers Organizing ITE District and Section Meetings



Plan Dedicated Time for Attendees to Visit the Exhibit Hall

At some conferences, the schedule between technical sessions is so compressed that attendees must choose between attending presentations and engaging with exhibitors. Providing these scheduled periods or longer networking breaks can increase exhibitor engagement and strengthen support from exhibitors.



Place Exhibitors in High-Traffic Areas

Whenever possible, position exhibitors along attendee pathways, near session rooms, registration areas, food and beverage stations, or even co-locate with plenary sessions. Exhibitors consistently emphasized that traffic flow has the greatest impact on exhibitor satisfaction and return on investment (ROI).



Integrate Food and Beverage into the Exhibit Area

Coffee breaks, snacks, and water stations should be located inside or adjacent to the exhibit space. Even small refreshments significantly increase attendee traffic and dwell time.



Create Structured Attendee Engagement Activities

Passport games, vendor bingo, scavenger hunts, and prize drawings help drive attendee interaction with exhibitors. Exhibitors reported these activities generated more meaningful conversations and booth visits.



Provide Clear Logistics Information Early

Share exhibitor details well in advance. Early communication reduces stress and improves exhibitor preparedness. Ideas include:

- Shipping instructions
- Loading dock access
- Parking guidance
- Setup and teardown schedules
- Hotel delivery procedures



Understand That Many Exhibitors Operate Lean

Regional meetings often involve small teams, distributors, or local representatives rather than full corporate event staff. Keep processes streamlined and avoid unnecessary complexity or excessive setup requirements.



Share Attendee Demographics and Audience Breakdown

Exhibitors value understanding who will attend the event. This allows exhibitors to tailor messaging, staffing, demonstrations, and materials to the audience.

- Public agencies
- Consultants
- Technical managers
- Engineers
- Students



Promote the Exhibit Hall Frequently

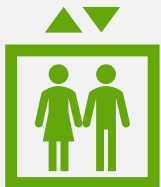
Use newsletters, emails, conference apps, opening remarks, and signage to remind attendees to visit exhibitors. Consistent promotion increases exhibitor value and attendee participation.



Help Exhibitors Make Local Connections

Consider providing optional lists. This can be especially helpful for exhibitors traveling from outside the region.

- Local print vendors
- Sign shops
- Shipping providers
- Rental companies
- Nearby supply stores



Keep the Exhibit Area on the Same Level as Sessions When Possible

Exhibitors noted that attendance drops significantly when exhibit halls are on different floors or in remote rooms. Convenience and visibility matter.



Recognize Exhibitors as Partners in the Event Experience

Exhibitors contribute financially and professionally to the success of district and section meetings. Small gestures—such as recognition during general sessions, exhibitor receptions, or thank-you messages—help strengthen long-term relationships and encourage repeat participation.