

Conference Exhibitors FAQ



FAQ-040

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An exhibit is something on display for others to view. At a conference the exhibits are set up on tables in a common area and typically have information from organizations that is related to the topic of the conference. Sometimes an exhibit provides information only. Other times there might be items for sale at an exhibit. In addition to items on display, an exhibit table will typically also have a person available to talk to you about what is on display on the table. These people are referred to as exhibitors.



Why would I want to visit the exhibit tables?

- Most people go to conferences to learn about a specific topic. The exhibit tables offer an additional opportunity to learn about information, services, or products that might be available to you.
- You may have an opportunity to buy something that you like at a table.
- Many times exhibit tables will also have small free give-a-ways in exchange for learning about what the organization has to offer. It is expected that you attempt to learn something about the organization before taking a free give-a-way.

What if I get anxious about talking to the exhibitor?

Sometimes it is difficult to look at an exhibit and hold a conversation with the exhibitor at the same time.

- If an exhibitor is trying to talk to you but you would rather look at the table first, simply say, "Thank you for your interest in me but I would like to look first."
- After you are finished looking at the information or if something sparks your interest you may want to start a conversation if you have questions about what you see.
- If nothing is interesting to you and you would rather move on to the next table, simply say, "Thank you, have a good day." and walk away.

What if I don't think a table will be interesting to me?

- If you don't think a certain table will be interesting, first, use the tactics above and take a quick closer look. You never know, you may learn something you weren't expecting.
- Also, this is a great opportunity to work on social skills like introductions, handshakes, initiating conversations, maintaining a conversation, and ending a conversation appropriately.

How do I start a conversation?

When starting a conversation at an exhibit table, it is important that you have the exhibitor's attention first. If the exhibitor is talking to someone else you can look at the items on the table until he or she turns to you or stops talking to the other person. Once the exhibitor is free you can get his/her attention by saying hello and looking in his/her direction. You may want to introduce yourself and explain a little about yourself first so that the exhibitor has an idea of what you might be interested in on their table. Here are some examples of what you could say:

- "Hello, my name is _____. I have autism and I am interested in finding a job. Can your organization help me?"
- "Hi, my name is _____. I am a parent of a person with autism and I am looking for a support group. Do you have information on that?"
- "Hi, my name is _____. What does your organization do?"
- "Hello, my name is _____. Can you tell me a little more about the information you have here? "

What questions could I ask?

- "Do you think your organization will be able to help me?"
- "I am interested in this piece of information (showing the information). Can you tell me more about it?"
- "Can you suggest what information I should take from your table to read later?"

What do I say when I have heard enough or the conversation is over?

When there is a pause in the conversation about 3 seconds long and you can't think of anything else to say to the exhibitor, it is probably time to end the conversation and move on. Here are some example closing statements:

- "Thank you for your time. I'll have to take a closer look at this information when I get home."
- "Thank you for being here today. Enjoy the conference."
- "It was nice talking to you. Thank you for the information. Have a good day."