

Enhancing experiences: The valuable role of exhibitors at national conferences

Chris Downey

Vendors at conferences are like the sprinkles on a cupcake—they add that extra bit of magic that makes the experience truly delightful!

Imagine walking into a bustling conference hall. The air is filled with excitement, and everywhere you look, there are colourful booths and friendly faces. These vendors play a crucial role in making conferences more than informative, they are also engaging and memorable.

First and foremost, vendors bring a wealth of knowledge and innovation to the table. They showcase the latest products, services, and technologies, giving attendees a firsthand look at what's new and exciting in their field. This is especially important in fast-paced industries, such as healthcare, where staying updated is key. By interacting with vendors, attendees can discover cutting-edge solutions that can help them in their work or, for that matter, personal projects.

Moreover, vendors provide valuable networking opportunities. Their booths become hubs of conversation where people can connect, share ideas, and build relationships. Whether it's a casual chat over a demo or a deep dive into a product's features, these interactions can lead to meaningful connections and collaborations. For many, these networking moments are the highlight of the conference.

Vendors also add a fun and interactive element to conferences. Many booths feature hands-on demonstrations, games, and giveaways that draw people in and keep the energy high. These activities not only make the conference more enjoyable, but also help attendees retain information better. After all, learning is always more effective when it's fun!

Additionally, vendors often sponsor various aspects of the conference, from coffee breaks to evening receptions. Their support helps make the event possible and enhances the overall experience for everyone. It's a win-win situation: vendors get to promote their brand and attendees enjoy a well-organized, vibrant conference.

In conclusion, vendors are an essential part of any conference. They bring innovation, foster connections, add fun, and support the event in numerous ways. So, next time you attend a conference, take a moment to appreciate the vendors—they're the sprinkles that make the cupcake of your conference experience truly special!

What do you think? Have you had any memorable experiences with vendors at conferences?

Author note

Chris Downey, RN, BScN, MScN, RNFA, is an alumnus of the University of Ottawa (Magna Cum Laude), Queen's University, Kingston, and the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Chris sat on the ORNAC Board as president-elect and president for Ontario (2003–2007). From 2009 to 2011, Chris sat on the ORNAC Board prior to incorporation, as the Chair of the Registered Nurse First Assistant Network of Canada (RNFANC). She was the ORNAC Research Pillar Chair from 2013 to 2017. Chris has been a long-standing member of and contributor to the ORNAC Standards Committee and co-chaired the 2017, 13th edition. Chris took on the role of the ORNAC Executive Director (Acting) from 2020 to 2023.

As a perioperative nurse, Chris has practised in the perioperative setting as a frontline practitioner, educator, manager, and an RNFA. Chris is currently practising as Facilitator and Instructor for the Perioperative Nursing Education program at St. Lawrence College, Kingston/Brockville campuses.



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