

# February Retail Tips



Balagangroup

## Top Tips - Part Eleven

The top tips of this month are rather topically, exhibition related.....

Lets run through the preliminaries: that enable you to spend your valuable time at the show as profitably as possible:

1. Wear comfortable shoes: Yes, really this is worth writing. You will cover miles and miles of walkways, this is no fun at all, if you are wearing heels (ladies you know who you are!) or have uncomfortable shoes. Sacrifice vanity for sanity on this one please. Also, never, ever, ever wear new shoes to a trade show !
2. Layer up: Car parks are cold (You know I'm talking about the NEC here), whereas exhibition halls are warm, or cold if you're under air conditioning units.... The best idea is to wear layered clothing so you can take off, or add on layers as necessary.
3. Drink lots of water: Stay hydrated, so you make good buying decisions. And make time to eat when you get hungry. Carry snack bars with you to keep your sugar levels up, so you can stay focused.
4. Rest when you feel tired: The lighting in exhibitions can be very yellowish, which makes your eyes strain, so take plenty of rest, otherwise its no fun at all. Try to build in a small treat for yourself somewhere in the day. A mini massage, a visit to a supplier you really like, a wicked lunch – anything that keeps it fun for you
5. Gameplan: The halls at exhibitions can be massive, so having a rough gameplan will help you stay on track, and not have to run around in a panic that you'll miss something ! It goes without saying that some shows are bigger than others, some can be done in a day, some are simply too damn big - I'm thinking primarily of the NEC Spring and Autumn Fairs here – give yourself time – don't turn into a pressure cooker
6. See the companies you really need to see first, so they're off your list and you can relax and enjoy the rest of the day not under pressure
7. Allocate some specific time to look for new products: After all you can see most of your present suppliers at any time, or they'll come and visit you, whereas its new product and suppliers you really need to search out at a show.
8. Have a show budget: Work out how much money you have to spend, how much you want to spend and keep a track of each order you've placed. Your accountant will love you for this. Remember to allocate some of your budget to new suppliers / new product – we all need new product in the shop to keep us enthusiastic !
9. Keep a note of how much you've spent and what delivery date you've asked for. Immediate, next week, or delayed. This will help you to organise your schedule when you get back to your shop.
10. Wheels: if you're going to be spending some time at a show, have a bad back, or plan on picking up a lot of literature (and there's usually lots on offer) then consider taking a small suitcase on wheels with you. These are comfortable, save your back and allow you to pack away anything you don't need, such as coats and scarves. How big? No bigger than aircraft cabin luggage !
11. Pre show planning : I've put this last so you're left with this idea fresh in your mind. Most trade magazines will be posted out between one or two weeks before a show. They'll have show previews in them, with lots of new product. They'll also have sections on new trends – make the time to study these magazines as well as doing your own research, so you'll be able to spend your time effectively at the show.

Finally, if you're coming a long way, or you need to stay a couple of days? Book a hotel room, make a night of it, empty a bottle of wine or two, put the world to rights, and have some fun ! All work and no play makes for no fun!

*Rachel*