

Making Meaningful Connections Without a Booth

A Sponsor Playbook for Connecting with Hospital and Health System Decision Makers





The best healthcare events aren't about booth hopping. They're about shared learning, authentic conversations and relevance. When attendees come to learn and solve real problems, sponsors who stand out are the ones who show up as thought partners.

Use this checklist to ensure your event investment delivers lasting impressions and real connections with hospital and health system leaders.



BEFORE THE EVENT

Show Up with Purpose

▣ Staff for the Environment

- Send senior leaders or experienced team members who can hold their own in peer-level conversations with decision makers.
- Make sure your team can talk strategy and industry trends, not just your product line.
- Prioritize quality over headcount. One great listener beats three badge collectors.

▣ Know Who You're Sitting Next To

- Get familiar with the attendee profile (health system executives, clinical leaders, trustees, rural vs. system leaders).
- Understand what's keeping them up at night (workforce strain, cost pressures, access, care delivery, etc.).
- Shape your talking points around what attendees are trying to solve, not what you're trying to sell.

▣ Show Up as a Resource, Not a Rep

- Get the word out before you arrive. Drop a LinkedIn post or send a note that shares:
 - What you're hoping to learn
 - Who you're excited to connect with
 - Insights or questions you're bringing to the event
- Reach out to priority contacts before the event to set up a time to connect.
- Prepare a short, conversational value statement (not a pitch).

▣ Plan for Presence Beyond Sponsorship Visibility

- Pick educational sessions your team will attend.
- Get aligned internally on what success looks like (e.g., quality conversations, new peer introductions and follow-up meetings).
- Remind your team: the goal is to listen, ask smart questions and add to the conversation.



DURING THE EVENT

Learn Together, Connect Naturally

❑ Be a Participant, Not Just a Presence

- Get into the sessions — general, breakouts, workshops, all of it.
- Ask questions. Good ones. The kind that makes people want to keep talking after the session ends.
- Bring up what you heard in sessions when you're talking one-on-one. It's an instant connection point.

❑ Make the In-Between Moments Count

- Breaks, meals and receptions are where spontaneous, quality conversations can happen. Be there and be present.
- Focus on to peer-level conversations, not product explanations.
- Try questions like:
 - "What's been sticking with you today?"
 - "Is any of this landing differently given what your system is dealing with right now?"
- Play connector. Introduce people to each other when it makes sense.

❑ Add Value in Subtle, Thoughtful Ways

- Share a resource or an insight when it's genuinely relevant and useful, not just because you have one.
- Suggest continuing the conversation later, no pressure, no pitch.
- Jot down some themes and challenges you're hearing. That's gold for post-event content and follow-up.



AFTER THE EVENT

Keep the Momentum Going

❑ Personal, Prompt Follow-Up

- Send thank you emails within 24–48 hours
- Make it specific and mention:
 - A session you both attended
 - Something from your actual conversation
- Suggest a next step that fits *their* world, not a generic demo request.

❑ Stay in the Conversation

- Share a short takeaway, article or insight sparked by the event.
- Frame your follow up as picking up where you left off, not starting a sales cycle.

❑ Reflect & Refine

- Debrief with your team:
 - Which sessions sparked the best conversations?
 - Where did connections feel most natural?
- Capture what you *learned* from attendees and not just who you met.
- Use these insights to improve future sponsorship and engagement strategies.



Connection > Visibility

The organizations that gain the most from events aren't necessarily the ones that attract the most attention.

They listen more than they talk, participate in the conversations that matter and focus on building relationships that continue long after the event ends.

**Lead with insight.
Listen with intention.
Follow up with value.**



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