

THE ART OF NETWORKING: HOW TO BUILD BETTER CONNECTIONS AT TECH EVENTS

By Savannah Shapiro

Picture this: You walk into a tech industry conference with hundreds of event attendees. The showcase floor is flooded with some of the industry's biggest names from various sectors of business. Surrounded by powerful technologies, tech luminaries and the next innovative tools, this is the one place where all resources are in one spot, ready to help you.

But perhaps the most valuable aspect of any event is arguably the chance to connect with others. And believe it or not, there's an art to networking.

So what are the keys to networking successfully?

Networking undoubtedly comes with a set of challenges—making authentic connections, finding commonalities with peers and mustering up the courage to approach high-level executives for a face-to-face conversation can feel intimidating (to say the least).

The good news is, it doesn't have to be. Before you head into some of the IT channel's biggest events, we're here to unveil some of the best strategies to build your next business connection.

1. Be your authentic self

Show up and be real. Sounds simple, right? When you are your authentic self, you are removing any barriers or roadblocks that might stand in your way—people will start to embrace and interact with you. When you are not yourself, it is tough for others to get a read on you. And if you are constantly changing how you present yourself, it makes it much harder for others to communicate with you. When you walk in as your authentic self, people will gravitate toward you, their guards drop and you will also welcome people to be themselves. Embrace who you are, what you stand for and what you are passionate about.

2. It's not about quantity, but quality

When you are surrounded by such a large group of peers and leaders, it might feel like you have to speak to everyone, everywhere, all at once. This is your opportunity to have meaningful conversations with as many new faces as you want, but remember, sometimes less is more. Remove the pressure of speaking with everyone in the room—see where each day takes you and discover the value that each conversation can bring to you and your business.

3. Confidence is key

Confidence goes hand in hand with being your authentic self. You have to strike a balance—not

overly confident and not overly timid. In a setting like a tech conference, everyone in the room is geared toward helping you grow your business. Be curious, ask questions and practice active listening. This is your opportunity to ask how vendors and a distributor can act as an extension to your business. Simply put, you are in power with the conversations. So shake the nerves and blaze forward with confidence—you are right where you need to be.

4. It's still a digital world

In-person conferences are invaluable to your business. Although we have the convenience of interacting and connecting over social media platforms, the ability to connect face to face to generate authentic connections can't be replicated over a screen. However, you can (and should) use digital platforms to network pre- and post-event. Platforms like LinkedIn and mobile apps with networking features can be a great starting point before the conference begins. Likewise, when the event concludes, you can continue to develop your connections. By connecting with peers on social media post-event, you only open the door wider to future opportunities and collaboration. The hard work is done—now it's time to close business deals with the power of your network by your side.

Build your connections and grow your network

Now that you have these networking tips by your side, it's time to put them into action at the next big event—Ingram Micro ONE 2024.

Ingram Micro ONE is the global innovation summit where top minds, tech enthusiasts and IT visionaries come together. With the best tools and knowledge to keep up with today's tech, it's a must-attend event designed to grow your business in unimaginable ways. Stay updated on the latest information about our ONE event at <https://www.ingrammicro.com/en-us/company/events>.

Since 2022, Savannah Shapiro has provided content development and copywriting support for the Ingram Micro Global Digital Marketing team. Her primary focus is Ingram Micro events and cloud technology.