

Attendee Resources: Guide for Navigating the EXPO

The ATD26 International Conference and EXPO brings together more than 300 exhibitors offering a range of L&D and talent management-related products, solutions, and services that might be useful, inspiring, or just plain awesome! We want you to have the best experience possible, so we are offering some tips and suggestions to help you navigate. Whether you are a purchasing decision maker, a strong influencer, or a front-line user, there is something for you in the EXPO!

Plan Your ATD26 EXPO Visit

1. Determine your top goals for finding and exploring products, solutions, and services.
 - a. **Active Purchaser or Explorer with an identified need or challenge-** Are you, or your organization, actively looking for a new product, service, or solution of a particular type? Do you already have companies in mind to see? Or are you exploring your options?
 - i. Use the exhibitor list to identify exhibitors who might match your needs.
 - ii. Scope out where they are on the exhibitor floor plan and make a schedule for when to explore each booth.
 - iii. Check out the Learning Stage schedule for demos and the Solutions Session schedule for companies that provide the products, services, or solutions that align with your needs and interests.
 - iv. Prioritize your time to see those exhibitors who might provide what you are looking for. If you already have a list of companies to visit, consider expanding it to see what else is out there.
 - b. **Curious Learner-** Are you interested in exploring and discovering new products and services, but don't have a specific, identified need?
 - i. Make a list of some of your common work tasks and responsibilities, and a list of the solutions and products you use in those day-to-day activities.
 - ii. Review the exhibitor list to see what companies are here, who might have products or services you might be interested in. Look especially for companies whose products you already use or have used. Next, look for other companies that offer similar products, solutions, or services, and engage with them to learn how their products work in terms of your current work. Our exhibitors can offer you perspectives on how to solve your day-to-day challenges.
 - iii. Look at the schedule to see if they are offering product demos on the Learning Stages or if they are offering Solutions Sessions, and plan to go to one or two of them to learn more about the products or service to see if there are new features, used features, or novel ways to use the product or service.
 - iv. Make a schedule to visit the companies in the EXPO. Be sure to prioritize who you want to see.

Connect with Exhibitors

Exhibitors want to connect with you, but it can be hard to do so if you aren't used to navigating a large space with many exhibitors. Here are some questions you can ask to connect with exhibitors.

The top advice for engaging and connecting with exhibitors is to focus on building relationships, not transactions. Sure, they are handing out cute swag or playing fun games, but use your time to get to know them and their product sincerely.

1. Be honest about your role and interests.
2. Let them know you are a first-time attendee.
3. Pay attention and take notes in a good conversation.
4. Note and use the name of the person you are speaking with during the conversation.
5. Consider what kind of follow-up you are hoping for, or ask them what opportunities there are to connect after the conference.
6. Use the questions below as conversation starters.

Six Questions to ask when you are seeking a particular product or solution, or have an identified need or challenge (Active Purchaser or Seeker)

- “What kind of problems does your solution solve?”
- “Who is this best suited for?”
- “Can you walk me through a typical use case?”
- “How long does it usually take to get started or set up?”
- “Is there a way I can explore this on my own later?”
- “What should someone be thinking about when evaluating options like yours?”

Six Questions to learn new or better ways to use a product or solution that you already use (Curious Learner)

- “We already use your product—are there features or updates that people often overlook?”
- “Are there any new features or functionalities we should be aware of?”
- “What are some creative or advanced ways customers are using your product?”
- “How do other teams typically integrate this with their existing tools or workflows?”
- “Have you seen any tips or configurations that really help teams work more efficiently with your product?”
- “Is there a user community, training series, or newsletter you recommend for staying in the loop?”

Six Questions to ask when you aren't actively seeking a product or solution (Curious Learner)

- “What trends are you seeing in the industry right now?”
- “What's something people often misunderstand about this type of solution?”

- “How has your product or offering evolved in the last couple of years?”
- “I’m here to learn, not purchase—would you mind giving me a quick overview?”
- “How does your solution fit into the bigger picture of [industry workflow/problem]?”
- “Are there any free resources or thought leadership pieces you recommend?”

Navigate the EXPO

1. **Make a plan** for what to see and map it out on the [exhibitor floor plan](#).
2. **Make a schedule** for who you want to visit when. Don’t try to hit everything in one visit.
3. **Take advantage** of coffee, lunch, and dessert breaks in the EXPO.
4. **Participate** in the Treasure Hunt while you make your way around visiting exhibitors.
5. **Attend** the Learning Stage and Solutions sessions on products, solutions, or companies you want to learn more about. Use the question-and-answer time to learn more about the product, solution, or service.

Suggestion: If it is really crowded, make an appointment with the exhibitor so you can come back when it is less crowded.