CES, Prepare for Success

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It doesn’t seem possible, but it’s time for the consumer electronics industry’s annual classic – CES (Consumer Electronics Show).

It comes right after Black/Cyber November, December.

Depending on how you approach them, events like CES can be a tremendous opportunity, a waste of time, a challenge, disaster, torture or the most profitable time you've spent all year.

You--and hopefully 200,000 folks (manufacturers, dealers, corporate buyers, members of the press, hungry publicists, interested bystanders) will converge to buy, sell or just see what’s new.

It's enough to test the endurance, strength, perseverance, patience, stamina and organizational abilities of the best people in the industry.

Media folks started early feeling like Abbott and Costello in their 1949 classic **Africa Screams**.

Everyone wanted a piece of them.

After 20 plus years of barely acknowledging the holidays to prepare for the annual trek to Las Vegas, we'd like to share a few survival tricks with you.

The biggest mistake most people make is that they don't take maximum advantage of their show's attendance.

Study the CES listings and floor plan to optimize the use of your time.

At least a week before the show, develop your show calendar of meetings – people love to pressure you for a meeting early on, so they can fill their calendars; but resist and use the show on your terms.

We've seen a lot of the invites to come by for meetings and couldn't figure out why someone would want to meet with the company unless it was to get your parking ticket validated.

Prioritize the companies you're going to visit at the show.

Plan the meetings based on the show routes that are optimum for you.

Use your daily calendar and the show’s massive floor plan to plan your hours, days and evenings.

Mix and match your priorities to group your booth visits and save steps…no matter how good of a marathon runner you are, you can’t make it from the North Hall to the South Hall in 15 minutes.

Meetings held at hotels are going to consume an hour, even if they give you limo service both ways.

With all of the booths to cover, you need the most comfortable shoes possible. Forget about looking sexy, cool, sharp…your feet know who you really are.

When you walk on concrete and thin carpet all day, your feet are subjected to unbelievable punishment.

Before you go out in the evening, give yourself a 30-minute breather.

Take a shower; soak your feet in cool water for a few minutes.

You'll "almost" feel like a new person.

The only way to survive a trade show as large and as important as CES and be at your best during the show’s long hours is to get enough sleep and eat and drink in moderation.

This is especially true as you move from one event, party to another to another every evening.

Just because Las Vegas is in the desert, you can’t drink the place dry…**don’t even try**.

Oh we know, you don’t believe it but the town wasn’t built just to help overly wealthy give money back to the economy.

Play with what you can afford to lose.

If you’re ahead…walk away.

If you’re behind…walk away.

If you’re scratch…you’re ahead.

Think of your trips downstairs as an evening of entertainment.

While many feel that a drink before hitting the sack at night will help you sleep, the truth of the matter is that alcohol is actually detrimental to your sleep.

Keep a close eye on your purse or wallet when you're in a crowded elevator or waiting in one of the taxi lines.

You even have to be careful in the men’s and ladies room. Your coat or purse can disappear in seconds.

Talk to show veterans.

They've learned how to pace themselves, how to zero-in on their particular areas of interest, their assignments.

But always be on the lookout for really unique product, service ideas. You might be surprised at the new possibilities you uncover.

With a little planning and preparation, you can take advantage of the tremendous opportunities that are available, still survive and maybe even enjoy yourself.

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