

Attend a Restaurant Industry or Supplier Trade Show

When was the last time you attended a Restaurant Industry or Supplier Trade Show? I speak from experience here when I say that attending industry trade shows was not at the top of my "to do" list. It was easy for time to go by, as other priorities and travel took precedence.

I finally had reason to attend, due to a speaking engagement and was thrilled with the outcome of the visit. I hadn't realized that there have been technological advances occurring at an ever accelerating pace in our industry and the level of food and non-food products had risen considerably.

Whether it's the local restaurant industry trade shows, broad-line distribution events and shows or the [National Restaurant Association Show](#) in Chicago, there are a number of benefits to be gained:

- Get direct one-on-one contact with the manufacturers, brokers and vendors.
- Gain exposure to cutting edge new products and alternative sources.
- Become aware of new eco-friendly and sustainable products and services that are being brought to a larger stage, as greater variety and more affordable options are now available.
- Learn from industry experts in educational sessions on many relevant and up to date topics.
- Make time for networking; mingling with other restaurant company owners often allows the gathering of ideas.
- And for supplier trade shows, gain exposure to the internal structure of their operating companies (including President, VP's of the different departments and support staff). This often takes the relationship between operator and distributor to a higher level of commitment on both sides. Not to mention there are often great limited time opportunities to take advantage of discounts!

Be sure to allocate the funds necessary to keep up to date on a national, as well as local, level. This can result in tremendous opportunities for cost savings and growth.

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