

## **Chapter 6 Goodies >Pack Like a Pro to Visit a Trade Show...**

Have you considered how and what to pack? In the first, and best case, scenario we will assume you are arriving the day prior to the show and leaving the morning after the show concludes. In the second scenario we will assume you can only visit the show for (2) full days. So let's have a look at our packing travel check list:

### **Travel Musts:**

1. The smaller the suitcases the better, unless you want to bring home a ton of printed material from the tradeshow. In this case, having a larger suitcase that is ½ full will be helpful.
2. Buy great luggage. It should be a given that your suitcase has wheels. In addition, an easy to carry-on tote will make traveling a breeze. We recommend the Travelpro® Brand.
3. By all means visit [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and determine what other items you might need - such as a raincoat or umbrella. It pays to always carry both anyway!
4. Bring business or career apparel such as a navy pantsuit/skirt or dress for woman. The same goes for men, a navy suits say "trust me" I am a professional!
5. Fabrication should depend on the time of year and geographical location of the tradeshow. Even in Florida tropical weight wool or light-weight wool

crepes are terrific for travel. No wrinkles, no worries because the fiber breathes. Translation: it is trans-seasonal! Honest! The word Gabardine means Hebrew cloth...yes, that is what Moses wore in the desert---you know it is the right fiber that goes from the heat of the day to the cool of the night; sounds like a winner to me! While cotton is always comfortable, use discretion while purchasing - look for fabrics that will help you try to avoid the wrinkle. Also the downside to some cotton fabrics is they appear too casual ---or the “I am on vacation” look! For women, I suggest rayon fibers in crepe fabrics. They travel light, because the fiber is a cellulose combination that contains cotton linters which help the fabric feel comfortable while still looking crisp and sharp.

6. You can always pack some less structured clothes for your next day if you want to go to the trade show un-noticed or low key. Determine which days will be the busiest and which days might be slow. Dress accordingly. Sometimes dressing low key on busy days allows you to walk around and get the feel for the show -- the idea is to take in what it there and which booths you really want to visit and *then* come back the next day “dressed the part” to get the answers you need.
7. Accessories, especially for women, can help you appear more casual or trendy. Good accessories include great handbags, scarves and jewelry. For both for men and women the color of your shirt/blouse is important. I repeat: avoid the too casual vacation look. You are there to get information and the way you look counts. So if you are young and

attractive---*lucky you*---but dressing like women on TV is fantasy, you may be missing the real objective - this is real life and *your career*. There is a difference between the bedroom and the boardroom so if you want to be taken seriously, think and dress for success!

8. Did we mention to wear comfortable shoes? You do not have to look like a “school teacher”. There are several great styles that look terrific and still offer you some degree of comfort. You can’t enjoy the trade show if your feet are killing you---trust me I know that walking the shows for several hours can be grueling if you are a woman in heels.
9. Always - always bring business cards. If you are student you can still have cards made inexpensively. Cards should always have the following information:
  - a. Name
  - b. Company Name
  - c. Address
  - d. Phone numbers ( business and cell)
  - e. Email and URL
  - f. Area of expertise or job title
10. Carry a day-timer or notebook or bring a PDA if you can afford the luxury of the latter.
11. Other luxury considerations are cameras and laptops if they are appropriate to bring to the show. Otherwise leave them in the hotel, they can be cumbersome to shlep! (translation: *carry*)

12. Consider bringing a folding tote with you to carry all the print material you will be collecting. Also be sure to find out if the printed material at the booth is available online ---if it is, it will save you from carrying additional and unnecessary stuff.
13. Bring at least (2) pens in case you set one down.
14. Develop your own predetermined rating system for ranking the significance of the booths you visit ---decide who you MUST visit and the people you MUST meet.
15. Ranking and annotating business cards is also helpful
16. Annotate information on the back of each business card you collect from the show---jot down some quick data to help you remember what you need to know about the person, the booth or the company. You will thank yourself later!
17. Always—always—follow-up with the show the people in the show with a thank you email if you found the person and the information useful. Even if the person was not helpful but you wish to still deal with the company, a well-written thank you email will say a wealth of positive things about you and your professional manner.
18. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
19. Follow-up to read write-ups on the show from major trade publications or visit URLs that specialize in industry evaluations.