



Keeping Inspiration Intact

How to Bring Back Excitement and Education After Industry Events

It's important to ensure time spent away from work yields a return that justifies the trip. For the independent paint dealer, time away from the store means another employee will work the open shifts, be on call and complete tasks.

Time is precious, regardless of your position. I have never met anyone who brags about all of the time they have on their hands. So once you return from a business trip like the National Hardware Show® or any other industry event, your goal should be to apply what you learned to your store.

Tips for After Your Trip

Set goals you want to achieve, and then, whatever you do, resist when real life gets in your way and tries to sideline you from achieving them! Returning to the store often means getting back into your old groove. But this time, start a new groove that involves sharing with your staff what you learned.

Here are some specific tips to get your entire team excited and to keep the momentum going.

- Share photos you took with your team. Whether it's new products, trendy colors or new promotional ideas, they will love seeing the latest the industry has to offer.
- Many speakers will send you an electronic version of their presentations if you ask. Plan store training events to teach your team what you learned at the sessions you attended.
- Tell your team about an industry representative or another independent retailer you met. Explain what impressed you about them, why they can help the business and how you might leverage that relationship in the future.
- Share "I thought about you when..." stories, and be genuine. Let your team know you value their input, and consider how the business decisions you make may affect them.



Full-Steam Ahead

Once your team is on board and enthusiastic about what you learned while you were away, focus on how to build on it.

- Follow through on connecting with people you met. Add paint retailers and industry representatives on LinkedIn. Invite them to your store or ask to visit theirs to swap ideas.
- Subscribe to industry newsletters and magazines you saw at the event to stay current on industry trends.
- Respond to emails and phone calls from the vendors you met, even if it's just to say "no, thank you" or "not right now." You won't have time or space to accommodate everything, so prioritize the opportunities that make sense.
- At the same time, be open to something new. There may not be an immediate reward, but if you begin a relationship, perhaps it will turn into a profitable opportunity later.

These tips will help you make the time you spent out of the store count. Remember: Your time is precious! ●



Sonya Ruff Jarvis

is an entrepreneur and founder of Jarvis Consultants LLC, a marketing, events and branding firm that helps businesses create innovative approaches to navigate marketing. She has been a part of the B2B retail industry, working across all types of retail formats and categories, for nearly 20 years.