



Expo West

Survival Guide

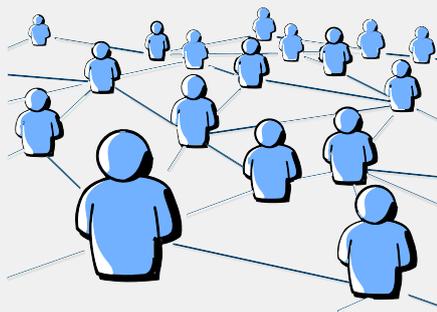


A practical guide to ensuring a successful first show

You're Not There for Everyone. You're There for 20° Right People

ROOKIE MISTAKE: TRYING TO “MEET AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.”

- Identify your Top 20 retail targets
- Identify your Top 5 distributor targets
- Identify any vendors you need: ingredients, packaging
- Pre-book meetings before you land



BUYERS ARE SCHEDULING EARLIER EVERY YEAR. IF YOU WAIT UNTIL BOOTH TRAFFIC, YOU'RE COMPETING WITH 3,000 OTHER BOOTHS.

Your Booth Needs a Stop Factor in 3 Seconds

THE AISLE TRAFFIC MOVES FAST. BUYERS SCAN. THEY DO NOT READ PARAGRAPHS.

You need:

- One bold headline (benefit-driven)
- Clean, uncluttered display
- Visible pricing tier (premium? mass?)
- Clear category cue (snack? beverage? HBA?)

If I can't understand what you sell in 5 seconds, I keep walking.



Buyers in 2026 Are Asking 4 Immediate Questions

BUYER WON'T SAY THEM OUT LOUD. BUT THEY'RE THINKING:

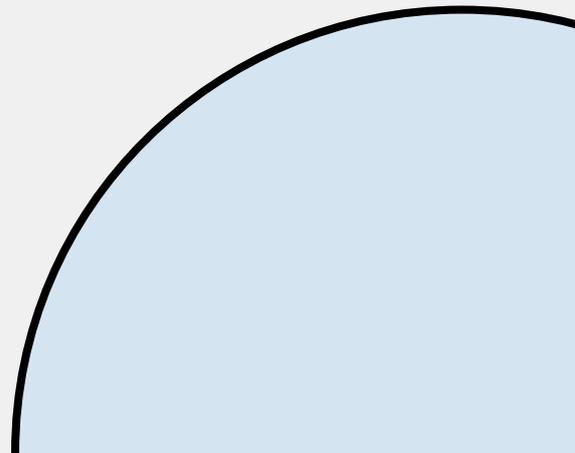
1. Is this differentiated or me-too?
2. Can this turn in my set?
3. Do they have funding + velocity plan?
4. Will this create operational headaches?

BE READY TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

- What is your SRP?
- What is your Wholesale Pricing?
- How is your Margin %?
- Are you in or ready for a Distributor?
- Current doors you are in?
- Do you have Promo plan?



IF YOU HESITATE? CONFIDENCE DROPS.



Sampling Strategy Has Changed

IN 2026, RANDOM MASS SAMPLING IS WASTEFUL.

- Qualify first (“Are you retail or distribution?”)
- Keep back stock hidden
- Have a “buyer-only” sheet behind the table
- Use QR codes for general attendees



PRO TIP: HAVE ONE TEAM MEMBER DESIGNATED AS THE “CLOSER” FOR BUYERS. NOT EVERYONE SHOULD PITCH.

Don't Overbuild Your Booth

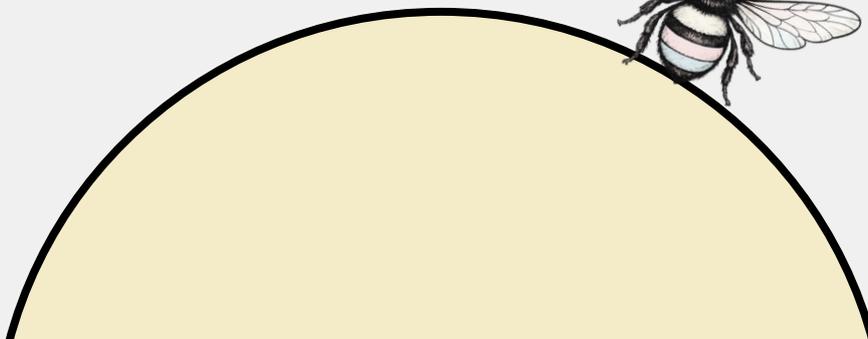
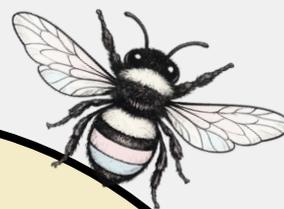


I'VE SEEN BRANDS DROP \$80K ON A BOOTH AND HAVE NO MONEY LEFT FOR

- Retail promos
- Free fills
- Demo support
- Trade spend
- Store level support

BUYERS CARE ABOUT

- Velocity support
- Promo calendar
- Margin
- Marketing plan
- Merchandising



Evening Events Are Where Real Deals Happen



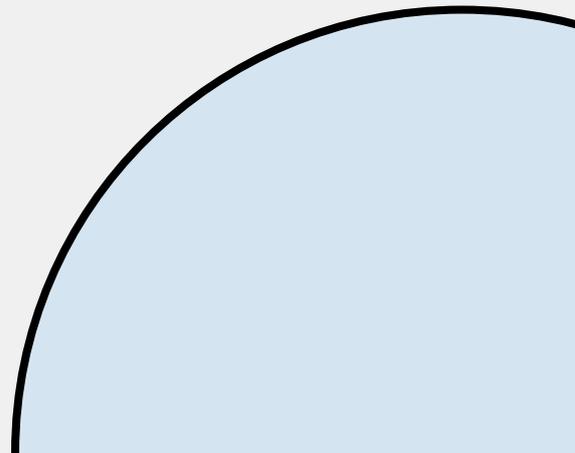
THE SHOW FLOOR IS NOISY. REAL CONVERSATIONS HAPPEN:

- Hotel lobbies
- Distributor parties
- Buyer dinners
- After-hours meetups

BRING:

- Clean one-pagers
- Digital deck ready to AirDrop
- Clear pricing structure

DO NOT GET SLOPPY. THE INDUSTRY IS SMALLER THAN IT LOOKS.



Distributor Meetings Require a Different Pitch

IF YOU MEET:

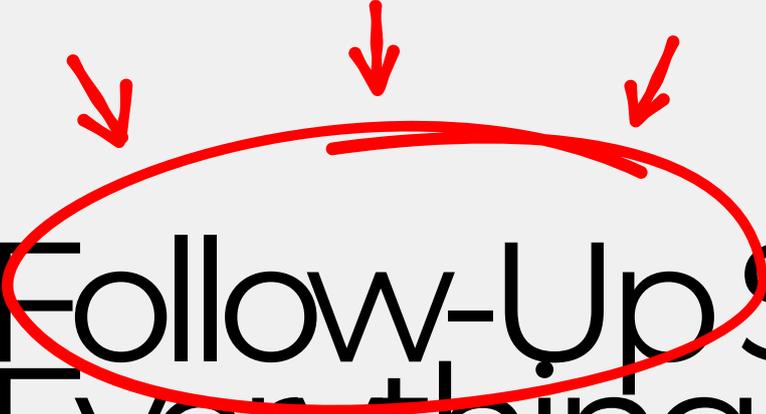
- KeHE Distributors
- UNFI
- Threshold
- AFS
- Core Mark
- Sysco



THEY CARE ABOUT:

- Slotting support
- Marketing spend
- Show deals
- Inventory plan
- Fill rate reliability
- Current retail presence
- Broker or Sales Team

**THEY ARE NOT YOUR MARKETING TEAM.
THEY ARE LOGISTICS PARTNERS.**

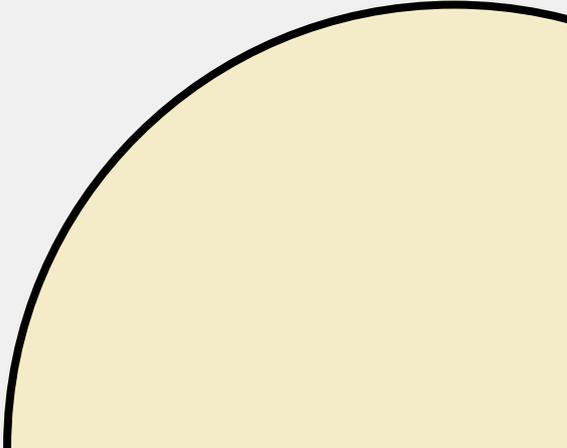


Follow-Up Speed Is Everything

WITHIN 48 HOURS:

- - Personalized email
 - Recap conversation
 - Attach sell sheet
 - Include promo offer
 - Clear call to action

BY WEEK TWO, BUYERS FORGET HALF THE BOOTHS THEY SAW.



Emotional Reality Check °

EXPO WEST CAN MESS WITH YOUR HEAD.

You'll see:

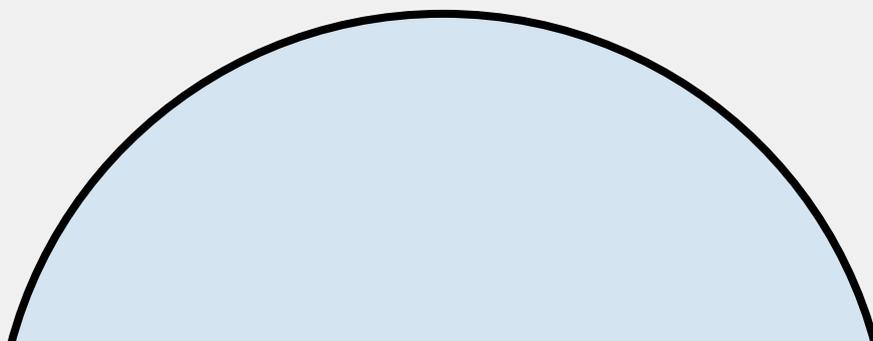
- Huge booths
- Massive funding
- Celebrity brands
- Influencer chaos

Stay focused on:

- Your lane.
- Your retailers.
- Your plan.



**THE BRANDS THAT WIN AREN'T ALWAYS THE LOUDEST.
THEY'RE THE MOST PREPARED.**



If I Were Exhibiting a new Brand at the Expo

I WOULD:

- Pre-book 15 meetings minimum
- Spend more on retail support than booth build
- Have a 12-month promo calendar printed
- Bring real data (even if it's regional or Amazon | Web sales)
- Set 3 clear goals (not 15)
- Take breaks, drink water and be present



**REMEMBER, YOU ARE
THE STAR OF THE
SHOW AND BUYERS
ARE EXCITED TO HEAR
WHY!**



Need a pep talk?



HONEY BEE
BRANDS

It takes a village so give us a call for some support!

INFO@HBABRANDS.COM