



## How to ensure you get the most out of the SRC

Well, the Service and Retail Convention '09 is getting close. Time to brush up on the latest developments, renew old acquaintances, and take in a bit of relaxation at the same time.

Ever wonder, though, whether you're getting the most out of your time commitment to attend? If so, use these handy suggestions to help you take advantage of the tremendous opportunities the SRC can offer you:

**1 Share your SRC plans with your family.** Let your family know why the SRC is important -- and what you'll be doing each day of the event. Family separation can be hard, even though it's only for a few days, so make plans to call home at least once a day. And if you've got any unresolved needs at home -- like a teacher's conference or an overdue repair job -- handle them before you leave. You don't need any extra stress items hanging over your head while you are away.

**2 Make appointments with colleagues you want to see.** If you want to talk shop with colleagues you haven't seen in a while, call them beforehand and arrange to meet for lunch or coffee sometime during the event. You can always sit together at the SRC meals.

**3 Review all transportation arrangements well in advance.** Make your travel plans carefully. Shop for the best price and the most relaxing mode of transportation. And, since your return trip may involve different arrangements than your arrival trip, be sure you plan -- and understand -- the right travel schedule.

**4 Bring "show and tell" items.** If you've had any unusual accomplishments or successes over the past year, bring "show and tell" items along: samples of manuals, yellow page or other ads, flyers, and other materials you can pass around to your colleagues.

**5 Conduct a personal "needs analysis."** Think about the problems and challenges you've faced over the last year -- and keep these in mind as you select workshops and seminars during the convention.

**6 Prepare a master convention portfolio.** Your master portfolio or folder should contain a convention schedule, a map of the facilities, notepaper, samples of items you're bringing along, and any other information you might need regularly. Carry your folder with you throughout your convention. You will get some of this when you register but bringing your own always is a good idea. Be sure to bring lots of business cards with your e-mail address on them.

**7 Read about presenters before you attend their workshops.** Read about workshop and seminar leaders on the SRC Web Site ([www.SRC07.org](http://www.SRC07.org)). Learn about their classes, and you'll better prepare yourself for their presentations.

**8 Sit in a strategic location during workshops.** Sit where you can gain a clear, unobstructed view of the speaker -- and where you can offer the speaker nonverbal feedback during the presentation. For most people, this means sitting near the front of the room. If you are hard of hearing don't forget to sit where you can hear best. That is usually NOT the back of the room.

**9 Bring a sweater to workshops and meetings.** Most convention workshops are held in "climate-controlled" rooms, which are occasionally too warm or too chilly. With a sweater, you can dress to match your personal comfort level.

**10 Ask questions.** A good workshop will always leave you brimming with new information and ideas. But remember: a workshop also gives you the opportunity to ask questions of experts and colleagues, and add even more value to the gathering.

**11 Don't take too many notes.** That's right: watch out for excess note-taking. Your natural inclination during a convention seminar might be to take notes on just about everything you hear. But notebooks overly packed with data and information will only end up in your file cabinet or closet. Take notes on key points only. These brief, power-packed notes will be useful to you when you're back at your desk. In most cases you will always be able to contact the presenter after the SRC is over.

**12 Keep an idea log.** Your idea log should be separate from your general seminar notes. In this log, enter useful "action strategies," or items to research or follow up on. Carry the log with you at all times, even when you're not in formal seminars -- and enter useful ideas as they're triggered by someone's comments. Later, you can use the log as an action resource. Often, a

very small notepad that fits in your shirt pocket will be the handiest. Don't forget to take it to meals and other social events. These are often where some of the most creative thinking is done.

**13 Meet as many speakers and presenters as possible.** Perhaps you can converse with a speaker for a few minutes after their talk. Or arrange to meet at lunch. Keep your personal "needs analysis" in mind as you discuss issues with the speaker. Listen for one or two great ideas or suggestions during these conversations.

**14 Visit exhibitors twice.** During your first visit, take casual notice of the products and services offered by exhibitors. Pick up literature. Ask a few questions. Later, study the material you pick up, make a list of more detailed questions, and plan for a return visit later -- when you'll be prepared to study specific products in greater depth.

**15 Always wear your name tag.** The more you're noticed, the more opportunities you'll have for interaction with your peers.

**16 Stand in a strategic spot during coffee breaks and receptions.** "Strategic spots" might include a location 15 or 20 feet from elevator doors, near the entrances to meetings, or near the restroom corridor -- wherever a large number of people are likely to pass or congregate. Here, you'll have the opportunity to meet and talk with a large number of people.

**17 Carry an ample supply of business cards.** You never know when you'll have the opportunity to discuss a business deal, acquire information from an acquaintance, or set up post-convention business. From your handy supply, you can hand out cards to anyone who might need or want your address and telephone number later. And don't forget: a personal note or reference you jot on a business card will be kept much longer than a note your acquaintance writes on a piece of scrap paper.

**18 Bring along your appointment calendar.** You never know, too, when you might have the opportunity to set up an important meeting with a vendor or colleague. If you do carry your appointment calendar, be sure it fits in your pocket; that's the best way to guard against its loss.

**19 Save receipts.** Most convention expenses are tax-deductible (including meals, which are partially deductible). Save all receipts to document your deductions. When you don't get a receipt, say for a taxi ride or admission fee, make a diary note of the expense and its purpose.

**20 Get enough rest and exercise.** Don't kid yourself: almost any change in your routine can be tiring, even stressful. Conventions, which are so full of stimulation and physical activity, can be doubly tiring. Try to maintain as close to a normal work schedule as possible. If your hotel offers exercise opportunities, take them. And be sure to get as close to a good night's sleep as possible each day of the convention even though Las Vegas has so much night life to tempt you.

**21 Make action notes.** When you hear a tip that you can put into practice, or a follow up suggestion from a colleague, write yourself an "action note" -- and place it in your wallet or appointment calendar. Your action notes will become an important part of your post-convention agenda.

**22 Share your knowledge and insights with others.** Before you leave for home, make a list of key insights you've gained -- and resolve to share them with colleagues back in the office. The result: you'll get an even greater return on the time and money you invested in the convention and you'll build goodwill among your colleagues.

The SRC can bring you personal and professional renewal. Seize the opportunities, and they will bring you tremendous benefits long after you return home.



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