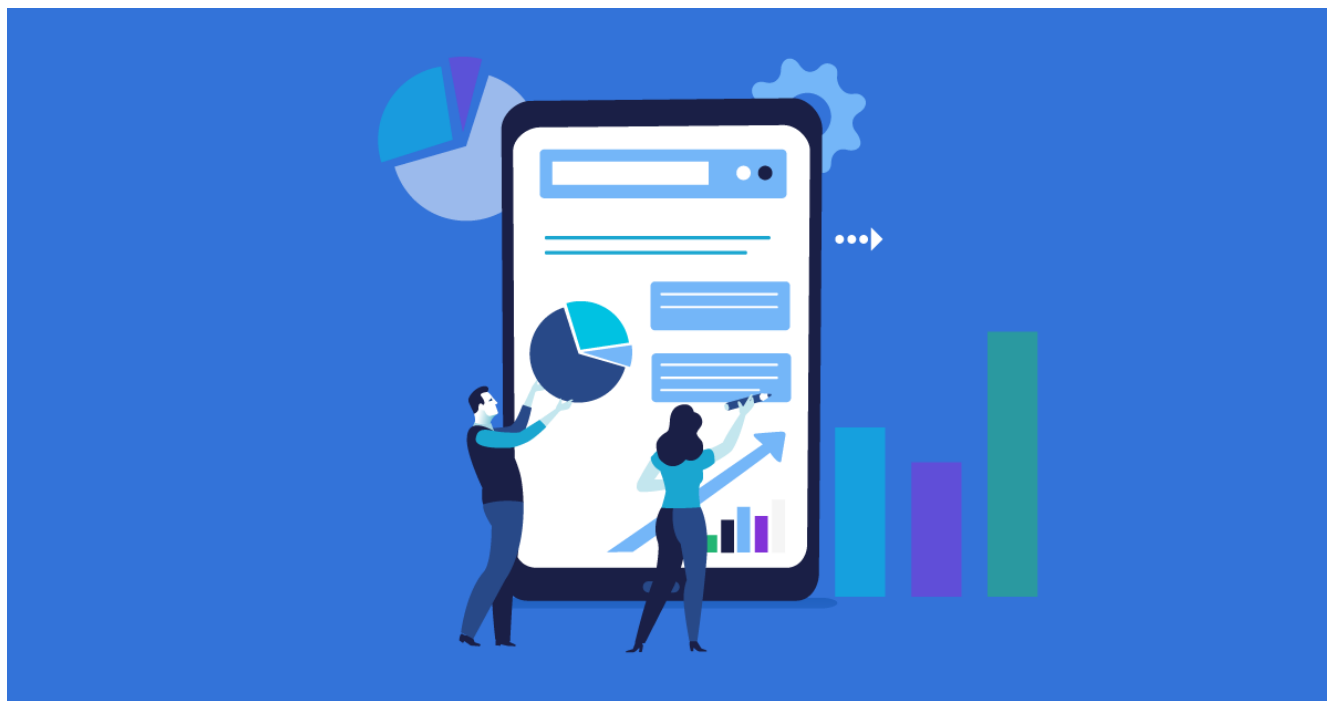


The Ultimate Guide To Attending a Legal Industry Conference



legal-industry-conference

It's the biggest legal industry conference of the year.

According to their website, the ABA Techshow is the place where lawyers, legal professionals and technology all come together. It's an incredible opportunity for solo, small and medium firms.

Here's why.

It's a chance for firms to identify the people, tools and resources that will help their firm pull ahead.

Here's the problem.

Most firms aren't using this.

They don't supply their team with a specific plan or framework. As a result, they fail to extract the value they urgently need.

Why?

There's a common retort among legal industry conference attendees

"I hate conferences."

Regular conference attendees cite a variety of reasons outlining why they hate attending conferences.

- **Irrelevant content.** Taglines, slogans and value propositions that do nothing to show how they can help you improve your practice. The trendy or theoretical technology (VR goggles) that may be helpful in a few years time but isn't helpful right now.
- **The booths are terrible.** You know what I'm talking about. The campy booths with magicians, jugglers or candy peddlers. They're doing everything they can to disguise the fact that their competitive advantage is non-existent and their ability to provide value is low.
- **There's too much selling.** There's nothing worse than attending a conference where you're accosted by each and every presenter there. The booth that hits you with the hard sales pitch and refuses to let go. *Maybe* their product is good, but *probably* they're just pushy and aggressive.
- **It's really boring.** The adjectives vary. It could be *drawn out*, *exhausting*, *tedious* or *overwhelming*. The point is there's an unpleasant experience at play here. It's something attendees prefer to avoid.
- **A lack of** Attendees often cite the lack of value as a serious problem. That's an issue because attendees (or their firms) typically pay a tremendous amount of money for their tickets. They often arrive with specific goals or an agenda of things to accomplish.

These reasons **are** pretty unpleasant.

There's another way to look at these downsides though. How? You treat these downsides as a blessing in disguise.

Whaaat?

It's true. Here's why these downsides are actually *benefits in waiting*. Use these negative experiences you've heard about (or experienced yourself) to maximize the amount of value your firm receives from this year's conference.

1. Ignore worthless or irrelevant content

Here's the wonderful thing about this year's Techshow. The two-day event comes with [a schedule](#).

abatechshow schedule - best legal industry conference

This is fantastic because it enables you to specify and prioritize the goals you have in mind for your firm.

Are you looking for:

- Information and education (i.e. CLE related content)?
- A chance to connect with key influencers and potential partners?
- A software or technology solution to a specific set of problems?
- A list of ideas you can use to brainstorm with your team?
- Important information, training or data you can bring back to your team?

It's important to iron out these details ahead of time. Doing so means you're far more likely to identify content that's relevant to your needs and valuable to your firm.

Create a plan.

Make sure your plan has the right amount of flexibility and structure. Then, stick to your plan.

2. Outline preferred booths, venues and events

The Techshow has an alternate website for sponsors. This is significant because it gives you the chance to look at the previous year's [exhibitors and sponsors](#). They also provide additional details on the layout, format and expectations.

Here's why this matters.

You can create a sales framework that outlines specific details for you ahead of time.

- The problems you're looking to solve (e.g. improving productivity, utilization, realization etc.)
- The types of software or technology you're looking to acquire

- Your preferred terms and conditions (e.g. buy now, request a discount or special terms, a specific budget)
- Your non-negotiable anchor points (e.g. cannot buy now, monthly fee only, upfront pricing, etc.)
- How you'll say no (e.g. no thanks, not this time, I'm happy with what I have, not interested)
- What you will/won't share (e.g. email address, phone number, business cards)

These details are important.

They give you the confidence you need to browse through exhibitor booths confidently. When you have a plan and you know what you're looking for there's no need to worry about pushy or aggressive exhibitors.

3. Focus on value + entertainment

You want to maximize the amount of value you receive as an attendee. It's easy to do that if you have the checklist. Here's a list of checklists you can use to maximize your tech show experience.

The learner's checklist

it's important to prioritize your learning. If you have a specific educational goal (i.e. CLE) you can use this checklist to prepare.

Before:

- Create a list of the problems or questions you'd like to solve.
- Use your list of questions to identify the sessions, events or panels you'd like to attend. Identify the speakers or attendees you'd like to talk with.
- Add the session, events or panels to your calendar.

During:

- Jot down one to three takeaways from each of the sessions you've attended. Make sure it's helpful and/or actionable so others gain value from your notes.
- Be an active participant in each session or panel. Ask questions, share thoughtful feedback so the learning sinks in.

- If you're attending with co-workers or friends ask them to take helpful notes as well. Share your list of questions ahead of time to maximize the value gained from each session.

After:

- Go over the notes from that session. Segment the wisdom from experience, theory from action. You'll want to head back to work with a long list of solutions and answers to your problems.
- Cement your learning by teaching. Teach what you've learned to the company, co-workers, friends and the outside world via the content you create (e.g. blog post, video, podcast, etc.)

The networker's checklist

Industry conferences are wonderful opportunities for you to connect with key influencers, potential allies and key supporters. Here's a checklist you can use to find and connect with important people and organizations.

Before:

- Create a list of the people (e.g. strategic alliances, partners, influencers, etc.) you'd like to connect with ahead of time.
- Strike up a conversation and connect with these people ahead of time before the conference starts. If appropriate, set a time and place to meet ahead of time. Use tools like [Calendly](#), [Google calendar](#) or [Stanza](#) to send an invite.
- Bring business cards, a [binder](#) and thank you cards so you're able to thank the people on your list properly.

During:

- Break the ice with strangers during [deadtime](#), [downtime](#) or happy hour. Use these [three strategies](#) to start a conversation confidently with anyone, anytime and anywhere.
- Now's the time to use your business cards! Exchange cards with people you've had a conversation with. Write a personal note on the back of their card to help you remember. Then, add their card to your binder.

After:

- Follow up with each and every person afterward. Use online (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook) and offline (e.g. thank you cards, phone call) methods to thank them personally. Reference the personal note you made about them on the back of your card.
- If applicable, create and share the list of the people you met at the conference with others at your firm.
- Look for ways to serve (e.g. interviews, quotes for a guest post, referrals) the people you've met to nurture the relationship.

The competitor checklist

Have you ever wondered what your competitors are doing? How they run their firm, the strategies they're using? The ABA Techshow is filled with attorneys. Join the right conversations, ask the right questions and you may end up with a significant amount of competitive intelligence.

Here's a checklist you can use to spy on your competitors.

Before:

- If applicable, make a list of the competitors who will be attending the Techshow.
- Take notes (you + co-workers) on the comings and goings, conversations and details you see.

During:

- Be a fly on the wall. Listen more than you speak a good ratio would be 80/20 or 90/10.
- Capture everything. Write down everything you hear and observe, anything that pertains to your competitors, during the course of the conference.

After:

- Segment fact from fiction, wisdom from experience and theory from action. Take it all back so it can be validated and studied by your team.
- Don't allow your biases to dictate what you save. If it applies to your competitors go ahead and jot it down.

With these checklists, you'll have a solid plan you can use to maximize the value you gain from this year's conference.

Wait a minute.

What can you do at this year's legal industry conference?

Quite a lot actually.

You can...

- The vast majority of attendees come to learn. They're interested in learning about how to use software and technology to attract more clients and improve the performance of their practice.
- There's a significant amount of panels, speakers, influencers and thought leaders. It's a great place to meet an incredible array of lawyers, technologists, writers, CEOs and thought leaders.
- There are hundreds of vendors in the Expo Hall. It's a chance for attendees to talk shop with the providers who keep thousands of firms like yours afloat.
- There are dinners, a variety of happy hours, and lavish after parties. There are also tangential events in and around the conference.

Can you see it?

The values there if you know what you're looking for. It's an incredible opportunity for attendees. If you're looking for a way to take your firm to the next level legal industry conferences are a fantastic way to do it.

It's the biggest legal industry conference event of the year

The ABA Techshow is the place where lawyers, legal professionals and technology all come together. It's an incredible opportunity for solo, small and medium firms.

Why?

It's an opportunity for your firm to pull ahead. Most firms aren't doing this. It's the reason why they struggle to see the value.

Want to maximize the amount of value receive as an attendee? Start with a plan. Create the right structure. Add in a few important checklists and you'll have everything you need to gain the competitive advantage you're looking for, no

hate required.

If you already have plans to attend the ABA Techshow at the end of February, come find the [Bill4Time team at Booth 930!](#)

[Try Bill4Time for free.](#)