

Preparing for the Upcoming TiECON Conference

Top 10 Tips to Maximize the Value of Your Time at the TieCON Conference

1. **“Dumb-down” your elevator pitch.** Since conference attendees often represent many different industries, make sure that you are able to convey concisely and in laymen’s terms, what you do, what your company does and why the listener should be interested so that they could easily repeat it to someone else effectively. Remember, it’s not what you know, or even who you know – but whom THEY know!
2. **Contact event speakers.** Review the conference web site, read the bios, subscribe to the blogs and review the web sites of the keynote speaker(s), panel discussion moderators and other event speakers. For example, if you're interested in blogs, plan to check out the track called, *"Emerging Trends in Social Software and Online Networks"* and make plans to connect with Torsten Jacobi, CEO of Creative-Webblogging.
3. **Create a target list.** Then, get to know them! Get the conference agenda, list of attendees, exhibitors and event committee list prior to attending and plan your schedule ahead of time. Plan to attend the panel discussions that will help you achieve your goals at the conference. For example, if you are interested in the areas that investors consider most attractive in the overall software market, be sure to go to the *"State of the Software Industry 2006"* track on Friday morning.
4. **Offer a little self-promoting Q&A.** One of the greatest and most efficient ways to let an entire group of people know who you are, is to ask insightful questions aloud at the individual sessions. If you are interested in outsourcing, for example, attend the track on *"Global Sourcing in a Flat World"* and ask, “As the founder of ABC Company, a developer of network security products for the financial services industry, what are the key areas of my business that I should outsource to reduce costs without impacting our excellent customer service?”
5. **Become the all-knowing conference czar.** Where are the big meetings? ...the private parties? ...the after-hours events? Review the agenda at www.tieconeast.org, contact the event coordinators prior to attending, and learn the details of the “behind-the-scenes” so that everyone will look to contact you as their information source.
6. **Coordinate your own meeting.** Do you know other people or companies that will be attending TieCON East 2006? Plan ahead of time to meet at lunch or dinner to facilitate introductions and offer to help each other. Looking for people who share similar interests that may want to meet with you at the conference? Check out the TiECON East Blog at tieboston.blogspot.com for some great discussions, comments and contributors.
7. **Volunteer.** Contact the event coordinator(s) ahead of time and offer to help out at the conference in anyway that you can. Whether making calls to confirm attendance, helping guide people as they are attending or simply letting someone know that you’re available if you need them, offering to help is the greatest way to meet people, learn and build relationships – remember, you have to give to get!
8. **Prepare your questions.** Once you have set up meetings with the event speakers, exhibitors and other attendees, research their background and prepare at least 5 questions that you want to ask each person while meeting with them to make the interaction as productive as possible. If you're interested in hedge funds and investment research, visit www.NitronAdvisors.com and make sure to connect with David Teten, CEO of Nitron Advisors, to learn more about these fast growing industries.
9. **Join industry-related organizations.** By joining local organizations, sites and associations that are aligned with the conference focus, you can gain access to other members, as well as invite them to attend with you while building a relationship. Most organizations can be joined online and can lead to great new avenues and discussions when attending a conference.
10. **Become a virtual private detective.** If you want to get to know someone, start gathering intelligence online. Google them, review their web sites, go to online social networking sites and don't hesitate to let them know that you've been doing your research on them to explore ways that you could help each other. Curious what others might find out about you? Google yourself and see what you find!

Attending the TieCON Conference

Top 10 Tips to Maximize the Value of Your Time at TieCON

- 1. It's all about sales.** Remember that you are not there to simply ask people for help; you are there to drive for a close. Does your company develop or sell wireless technologies such as 3G and WiFi/ WiMAX? If so, check out the track on "Emerging Trends in Wireless," and remember, quoting *Glengarry Glen Ross*, to "Always be Closing".
- 2. Be memorable.** Why is it that so many of our new contacts never get back to us after we think we've connected at a conference? Often, it's because we're simply not remembered. Connect on a personal level, common interest, or a common goal so that your new contacts will remember you. Of course, one way to be remembered is to develop an awareness and take an interest in broader social issues and problems, which will be discussed in detail at the "Social Entrepreneurship" track on Saturday.
- 3. Take notes.** Since business cards typically do not have photos or professional bios on them, it is important that you write down notes shortly after receiving business cards to jog your memory later. For example, "Private equity firm in MA; looking for local due-diligence contacts" or "Founder of healthcare startup; met at *Bootstrap or Venture Capital* track – call Wednesday"
- 4. Focus on what's in it for them.** To build a relationship and establish a reason for setting up future meetings and generating new business, remember to emphasize the benefits of your company, your offerings and how you can help your new contact. For example, if you are looking to connect with a company that develops Lithium-Ion batteries that revolutionize the way manufacturers design high power products, be sure to sit in on "Best Practices for Doing Business in Emerging Markets" - and don't forget to tell Dave Vieau, CEO of A123 Systems, what you could do for him.
- 5. Start helping others now.** Now that you've met some new people at the conference, introduce them to others that you've met at the conference to demonstrate your willingness to help. "That's really interesting! So you invest in software companies? Let me introduce you to Joe, who is the founder of an emerging software company right in your area."
- 6. Don't wait in line for the speakers.** Unless you have already established contact with a speaker and set up a meeting prior to attending a conference, standing in line to meet a speaker after his or her discussion along with several other people will only result in lost networking time and leave you with a 10-second discussion that will most likely be forgotten. Look to contact those individuals at the conference that will have more time to engage in a memorable dialogue. That said, TieCON is one of very few opportunities you will have to meet in person such luminaries as Ray Kurzweil, one of the leading inventors of our time and TieCON East 2006 Key Note speaker on, "*The Acceleration of Information Technology in the 21st Century*".
- 7. Always keep networking.** Whether you're in an elevator, manning your booth, eating a meal, or walking to the next panel discussion, there's always an opportunity to meet someone new. Look to initiate conversation and break the ice to create a comfortable atmosphere for others. Go to "*Networking as an Advanced Marketing Tool*" workshop to learn why networking isn't accidental, but a skill to be honed.
- 8. Secure the next step.** Most of us walk around all day with our organizers, palm pilots or calendars and could easily check our schedules to see when we're available in the coming weeks. Once you've met someone and established a reason for a follow-up, simply ask, "Are you available at 10:00 am on Tuesday of next week for a call or a coffee so that we could continue this conversation and further explore ways that we could help each other?"
- 9. Don't be a follower.** So you've met some great new people and have started to develop a rapport. Just remember that you've spent too much money and time not to leverage the opportunity to meet other people. So be a leader, hunter, and initiator, and go out there and meet new people as you'll have plenty of time after the conference to continue building relationships with the people you met earlier.

10. Follow-up and connect! Search for your new contacts on popular online social networking sites to connect with them and further develop your relationship while learning more about them. Send an email or letter as soon as possible with a simple thank you that will remind them of your conversation at the conference while securing the next steps towards your goal.

For more insights on how to use blogs, social network sites, virtual communities, and other online networks, read *The Virtual Handshake: Opening Doors and Closing Deals Online*, by David Teten and Scott Allen. You can download the entire book for free at www.TheVirtualHandshake.com.

About the author:



Michael Weinstein is a 15-year high-tech industry veteran and entrepreneur as well as a Consultant with Nitron Advisors (www.NitronAdvisors.com), an investment research firm which provides hedge funds, venture capitalists, and others with direct access to a network of frontline industry experts. To participate in paid consulting opportunities with Nitron Advisors, at no cost to you, join the Nitron Advisors Circle of Experts (www.CircleofExperts.com).

Michael is also the founder and CEO of the Technology Ventures Advisory Council (www.TVAcouncil.com), an online network that connects talented professionals in search of opportunities with high-tech companies in search of talent. Most recently, as the CEO of Primary Systems, Inc. (www.PrimarySystems.com), a management consulting firm, Michael raised over \$50 million in capital and generated millions of dollars in revenue for new business ventures by providing leadership in their product development, business development and operational stages of growth.