

Product watch or job hunt?

Heading to Comdex means pacing suits, shoes and hundreds of resumes

A typical scenario in preparation for the yearly trip to Comdex. Travel plans have all been approved, hotel registration confirmed and airline tickets are in hand.

Your garment bag is packed to the gills with freshly laundered and pressed shirts and suits with your "power ties" and a couple of pairs of polished comfortable shoes.

Mentally you are reviewing the meetings you attended last year as you begin to shuffle through the stack of business cards of those you met with to determine who you'll meet with again this year.

One by one you shuffle through the cards:

- Tony Ibarguen, Entex - gone
- Chip Lacy, Ingram - gone
- Susan Bailey, IBM - gone
- Michael Norris, Compaq - gone

You marvel at all of the movement within the industry as you strategize about all of the new contacts you will need to make. Now you are ready to walk out of the door and you exclaim: "I'm out of here, Las Vegas here I come! Oh, I need to pack one more thing, my resume!"

Welcome to the computer industry in the 1990s.

Are you really interested in walking the whole exhibition floor to review the latest and greatest computer products and technology or are you on a mission to find a new job?

Some would say that the technical folks are anxious to see first-hand the new technology. They are willing to wear out a couple of pairs of shoes and ruin those freshly pressed shirts just to see all the new bells and whistles the in-dustry has to offer.

But on the other side, the sales folks are most anxious to "network." And rather than exchange business cards for follow-up meetings to do some great business further on down the road, they would rather have a power meeting where they can exchange resumes.

It's no wonder that there is so much movement within the industry.

We shudder to think of the amount of preparation, planning and rollouts that happen at Comdex each and every year.

Those attending Comdex can look at the technical side and see the products offered for the Internet or for intranet development. They can review the latest offerings from the big guys like Microsoft, IBM or Netscape. Or maybe see some of the up-and-coming players' wares.

But on the other hand, just think about the turnover this year throughout the industry.

Which is more important? Learning about the latest and greatest technology which could help me in my current job or looking for the best career opportunity for me? Hmm. Is my job secure at this point?

How was my last review? My boss didn't seem as "up" as usual. Now you start finding hidden meanings behind everything that was ever said to you. Now, you think, "Maybe I should make a couple of hundred copies of my resume. After all, work is one thing - my job, my future, my bank account and my mortgage is another.

The question asked, is attendance at Comdex really proportionate to the amount of money spent to get new products out to the public or are we funding and attending the most "social" job fair of the year?