

## Top Tips to Maximize Your Black Hat Conference Experience

Attending a major conference like Black Hat can be a game-changer for early-stage cybersecurity companies. Whether setting up a booth or just attending, your face-to-face impressions can ignite growth opportunities for years.

We've compiled a list of road-tested top tips to help you navigate and make the most of your Black Hat experience. These insights will ensure you're prepared, strategic, and ready to capitalize on every opportunity the conference offers.

### Start Early! Plan your experience to maximize ROI.

#### ✓ Set Clear Goals for Success

Define your goals, such as connections, business leads, and meetings. Specific targets will keep you focused and help you measure success.

**INSIDER TIP:** Agree upon a system to track every interaction. Add notes for follow-up so you're not juggling business cards trying to remember.

#### ✓ Nail Your Pitch

It takes less than seven seconds to make a first impression. Prepare and rehearse a concise elevator pitch (or two or three for multiple personas) to make a strong impression. This will make every conversation easier.

**INSIDER TIP:** Record yourself making the pitch and watch the video, paying close attention to body language and inflection points. If you're excited, others will be, too.

#### ✓ Connect on the spot

Get a digital business card or QR code right to your LinkedIn account to make it easy to connect immediately.

**INSIDER TIP:** You can opt not to give out collateral at the show. Send it as a follow-up afterward so it doesn't get added to the 'bag.'

#### ✓ Build Connections Beforehand

Dig deep into the attendee and sponsor list to identify your ideal prospects or partners. Reach out to schedule meetings, booth conversations, or after hours meetups. Have a compelling reason to meet with you. For example, a demo, consultation, drawing, etc.

**INSIDER TIP:** Ask for cell phone numbers to reach out via text while onsite.

#### ✓ Boost Your Pre-Show Visibility

Use social media (Reddit, Slack groups, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.), email campaigns, and professional groups to announce your presence. Encourage attendees to book meetings or visit your booth.

**INSIDER TIP:** Send a personal invite to select journalists, inviting them to stop by your booth or set up a meeting. Tell them WHY your solution is the 'can't miss' one to see or leave a media kit in the press room if you are exhibiting.

#### ✓ Map Out Your Days

Schedule your day meticulously to maximize your time. Keep talking to make the most of every minute.

**INSIDER TIP:** Wear comfortable shoes and pack a good protein bar.

---

## It's Showtime! You've prepared; now make the magic happen.

---

### ✓ Divide and Conquer

Stay active and engaged with attendees. Decide who on your team handles which conversations. For example, the CEO can take prospects while the CTO seeks out technical executives. Black Hat is filled with tech-savvy attendees, so bring a member of your tech team if needed.

**INSIDER TIP:** Focus on learning rather than selling to build strong, long-term relationships.

### ✓ Expand Your Network Beyond Your Booth

Visit other booths, attend sessions, and engage with attendees and exhibitors. Focus on building connections, not just collecting leads.

**INSIDER TIP:** Attend sessions that align with your goals. Focus on speakers and companies you want to connect with and introduce yourself after sessions.

### ✓ Capitalize on After-Hours Networking

Attend dinners, parties, and partner events. Networking before or after show hours can lead to valuable connections and opportunities.

**INSIDER TIP:** Early in the day is a great time to ask for coffee or breakfast meetings before things get going.

### ✓ Schedule Meetings for Maximum Impact

Frontload your meetings early in the conference. Leaders may leave after the first day or two, so schedule early and fill the last day with opportunities that arise onsite.

**INSIDER TIP:** Be 'social' onsite. Even on your coffee break, strike up conversations with those sitting next to you. 'Live' tweet/post throughout the show. Cite an exciting discussion you just had or a session you went to—and don't forget to tag individuals or companies who you meet at the show.

---

## Get in touch! When the event closes, the opportunities begin.

---

### ✓ Turn Every Connection into Gold

Connect with everyone you met via email, calls, or meetings. Have a specific ask, such as feedback on your solution or a follow-up discussion.

**INSIDER TIP:** Craft thoughtful, human, follow-up messages about your event discussion, what you learned, and how it benefits you both.

### ✓ Grow and Nurture Your Network

Tag every connection to build your network. Follow up with everyone, asking for a meeting now or in the future.

**INSIDER TIP:** Use the network of your new connections to expand yours.

### ✓ Share Conference Insights

Compile and share key takeaways from the conference with your team and network. Highlight valuable insights and potential opportunities.

**INSIDER TIP:** Take pictures and videos of your booth and team to share on social media or the website after the show.

**By following these tips, you'll be well-prepared to maximize your Black Hat experience** and drive valuable connections and opportunities for your early-stage cybersecurity business.

*Happy networking!*