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BEING A GOOD RESOURCE

Exhibitor presence at MACUHO is all about contact. Few (if any) plan to close deals or sell big items on site. Most are far more interested in making contact with you as a person, for the potential you represent now and for the future. Some important things to remember in order to help maximize the benefit for both you and the vendor are:

1) Know the limits of your position. Be honest about your role in purchasing. Remember that there are many ways to have a significant influence on purchasing:
   a) Advising a student group that has a budget
   b) Utilizing programming budgets
   c) Serving on committees that oversee major purchases/planning
   d) Providing personal opinion/advise to the person/people who do make major decisions
2) Know who in your organization is responsible for what kinds of purchases. You are here to bring information back to people on your campus. If you are not the person responsible for __ (fill in the blank), take the information back to whoever is. Tell the exhibitor the correct contact person and (if appropriate) their e-mail address or phone number.
3) Know your own potential. MACUHO is filled with examples of one-time RD’s and Grads who are now CHO’s and VP’s. Approach the exhibit area with the confidence that you are just as likely to be one of those people one day, and the vendors know it.

TAKING STUFF FROM EXHIBITORS

Exhibitors bring promotional items for two reasons. The first is to attract people to their booth so they can promote their brand(s). The second is to promote their brand(s) by having logos, phone numbers, websites, etc. on items that will be shared. Use common sense when taking promotional items.

1) Be conservative - don’t take handfuls, unless you are expressly encouraged to do so
2) Take brochures and other available information as well as the freebies
3) Take a moment to speak with the exhibitor, even if just to say "thanks!"
4) If available, be sure to complete an information/contact card

EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Not everyone is completely comfortable speaking with strangers, especially in a sales-oriented environment. Still, there are a number of things you can do to feel more comfortable and make the experience positive for everyone involved. Some of these are:

1) Approach vendors not thinking "What are they trying to sell me?", but rather thinking "What can they contribute to my program/staff/office/department/institution?"
2) Be ready to refer vendors to appropriate people. As mentioned before, a great tool to separate your self from an overzealous sales person is referring them to someone else.
3) Vendors know that entry-level/live-in staff are often in a good position to really know how the products on his/her campus stand-up and are liked by the residents. It can be good basis for exploring the vendor area and investigating the different features/options among varying companies to learn for the future.
4) Be prepared to say "no thanks", more than once. Even if you are not the purchaser, they understand that you can/may influence the purchasing process. Also, they are often (justifiably) proud of their products. Sometimes its best to just absorb the information you’re being given. Exhibitors have a relatively small amount of time to get to a large number of delegates. No sales pitch will last too long.
5) Be ready to discuss something completely unrelated. Some vendors just want to talk to see how things are going at your school or in your area of the country.