

MODULE 1:
**Connecting with the
SPARK Audience**



iecspace.com

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SPARK Explained

Who You'll Meet

SPARK is where IEC contractor members come together to invest in the future of their businesses and the electrical industry. The audience is actively seeking ways to improve operations, develop talent, grow revenue, and stay ahead of industry change. Knowing who is in the room and what challenges they are trying to solve will help you engage more naturally and effectively.

What Makes us Different?

SPARK is focused exclusively on the electrical contracting industry — not a broad construction event where electrical is one of many trades. That focus shapes everything. Attendees share a common context, speak the same language, and bring similar challenges to the floor. Conversations tend to go deeper and move faster as a result.



Understanding Our Audience



Key Takeaway

Merit shop contractors take pride in running their business independently and making their own decisions.



Why It Matters to Exhibitors

Many SPARK attendees have direct influence over workforce, training, and purchasing decisions. Conversations that focus on solving real business challenges are more likely to resonate than broad product pitches.

Every attendee at SPARK is connected to the merit shop electrical contracting world. IEC — Independent Electrical Contractors — is the national trade association representing open-shop (non-union) electrical contractors. Understanding what that means will help your team connect more authentically.



What Is a Merit Shop Contractor?

Merit shop contractors hire and manage their own workforce on a merit basis — without union affiliation or collective bargaining agreements. They recruit independently, set their own workforce priorities, and develop their people through IEC chapter apprenticeship programs built specifically for the merit shop model.

For IEC members, the merit shop model is a point of professional pride and a business philosophy. It reflects a belief in individual achievement, open competition, and the freedom to build a business the way the owner sees fit.

For exhibitors, this means the owners and operators you'll meet at SPARK have full control over their purchasing decisions, workforce tools, and training programs — without layers of external approval.

Electrical Contractor Roles You'll Encounter at SPARK



Key Takeaway

Understanding who is in the room, and what each role is focused on, is the foundation of every productive conversation on the expo floor.



Why It Matters to Exhibitors

SPARK attendees range from business owners to field leaders, apprenticeship professionals, and future industry decision-makers. Adjusting your message to match their responsibilities can help you uncover more meaningful opportunities.

SPARK draws a focused mix of professionals from across the electrical contracting industry — from company owners with real buying authority to apprentices just starting their careers.

Attendee Role	What This Means For You
Electrical Contractor Owners & Company Leadership	The core SPARK audience and primary decision makers. Focused on business growth, profitability, workforce development, safety, and operational performance. Often arrive with specific challenges in mind and real buying authority.
Project Managers & Estimators	Influence purchasing decisions and evaluate solutions based on practical business needs. Focused on project execution, productivity, scheduling, and labor management.
Safety Professionals	Focused on compliance and risk reduction and building strong safety cultures. Responsive to solutions that improve safety performance and support field operations.
Foremen & Electricians & Field Managers	Hands-on evaluators. Their buy-in often carries weight with owners and project managers. Bring valuable jobsite perspective and often influence adoption of tools, equipment, technology, and training.
Chapter Staff & Apprenticeship Leaders	Nearly all are chapter Executive Directors — senior professionals who run IEC chapters and serve as trusted advisors to their member contractors. They are not buyers themselves, but they are influential referrers. A strong relationship with a chapter ED can open doors to the contractors in their network that you won't meet at SPARK. Apprenticeship leaders at Chapters are responsible for recruiting, training, and retaining the next generation of electricians. Interested in education, workforce, and training solutions.
Apprentices & Early-Career Tradespeople	A growing and energetic presence at SPARK - they are career-focused, skills-oriented, and highly brand-aware — more so than many exhibitors expect. They are not current decision-makers, but they are the owners, project managers, and foremen of the next decade. Brands that engage them authentically now build recognition that compounds over time. Hands-on demos, career-focused conversations, and genuine interest in their path resonate most.



Key Takeaway

SPARK 2025 attracted a highly decision-making, owner-ed audience made up primarily of small-to-mid-sized contracting businesses serving multiple markets.

SPARK 2025: Audience by the Numbers

1,000+
total attendees

31%
are business owners,
the largest single
attendee segment

100+
exhibitors

Job Title

President	51%
Vice President	15%
General Manager	7%
Project manger	4%
Other	23%

Company Size

1-15 employees	47%
16-60 employees	28%
60+ employees	26%

Company Type

Contractors often serve multiple markets:

Commercial	85%
Residential	75%
Industrial	50%
Service	35%



Key Takeaway

SPARK attendees are not browsing — they arrive with real challenges and are actively looking for solutions, partners, and ideas they can take back to their business.



Why It Matters to Exhibitors

Attendees come to SPARK seeking solutions to workforce, safety, operational, and growth challenges. The Expo Hall is a key part of that experience, where they evaluate products, see demonstrations, and connect with partners who can help them achieve their goals.

What Attendees Hope to Gain at SPARK

Why They Attend

Electrical contractors are navigating real pressure: workforce shortages, apprenticeship expansion, tighter margins, safety compliance, and the growing demands placed on their businesses and people. SPARK is where they come to address those challenges directly — through peer learning, education sessions, and conversations with industry partners who understand their world.

Attendees consistently cite three primary reasons for coming:

- Networking with peers and industry contacts
- Gaining knowledge through targeted education sessions
- Discovering products, services, and innovations relevant to their business

They arrive with specific challenges already in mind. SPARK is designed to support problem-solving and meaningful connections — not passive browsing.

Why They Visit the Expo Floor

The Expo Hall is an active part of that experience, not a separate one. Attendees come to the floor to explore solutions tied to what they're actively working through, evaluate products and services in context, connect with partners they may not encounter elsewhere, and participate in demonstrations and education hosted on the floor.

Many IEC contractors are looking for solutions they can implement immediately. They value practical application, peer recommendations, demonstrated ROI, and real-world success stories. Exhibitors who can connect their offering to a challenge the attendee is actively navigating will find the most receptive audiences.





Key Takeaways

- SPARK draws decision-makers and influencers who arrive with real challenges and genuine buying intent — not casual browsers
- The audience is IEC-specific: merit shop electrical contractors who value practical solutions, peer credibility, and direct relationships
- Attendees span multiple roles and seniority levels — owners, project managers, foremen, apprentices — often from the same company
- Apprentices and early-career tradespeople are a growing presence and worth engaging; they are brand-aware and represent the next generation of buyers and decision-makers

Check out our next module on pre-event promotions to learn how to amplify your presence and drive traffic to your booth before attendees arrive on-site!

