

MODULE 3: On-Site Engagement

What Engagement Resonates at SPARK

By this point you've learned who is walking the floor and how to amplify your presence in the weeks leading up to SPARK through Modules 1 & 2. This module is about the two days themselves: the moments where a passerby either stops or keeps walking. It's what we've observed, year over year, about how the SPARK expo hall specifically behaves once the doors open.

★ Key Takeaway

SPARK attendees reward conversation and hands-on proof over passive signage and scripted pitches.

★ Why It Matters to Exhibitors

This audience is largely owners, project managers, and estimators evaluating tools they'll actually put in front of their own crews. Many of them are shopping and purchase buyers. A passive display asks them to take your word for it; a demo or a real conversation lets them see for themselves, which is what actually moves them toward a decision. With a condensed schedule, attendees also make a stop-or-walk decision in seconds, so knowing what to lead with matters as much as knowing what to avoid.



Feedback

The SPARK audience is small enough, and intent-driven enough, that generic trade-show tactics tend to underperform. Attendees told us directly what stood out to them in 2025 — the wording below is drawn from their own after-event feedback.

"Overall it was a great experience, well organized with good engagement — good to see a lot of participants and interactive activities."

- Business Owner, 2025 Attendee Survey

A few patterns showed up consistently across roles:

- Live demonstrations beat static displays. Attendees said seeing a product perform in a real-world scenario, rather than reading about it, was what moved a conversation forward.
- Two-way conversation beats scripted pitches. They engage when they can ask a pointed question and get a direct answer, not when they're walked through a script.
- Try-it-yourself moments beat staffed explanations. Letting a contractor hold the tool, run the software, or test the material themselves builds more confidence than watching someone else demonstrate it.
- Short, informal expertise beats long-form presentations. A 5-10 minute floor conversation that solves one real problem (a labor shortage workaround, a compliance question) lands better than a long-form sales script attendees have to stand through.
- Prize and visit mechanics beat passive drop-in booths. Giveaway mechanics that require a visit — not just a drop-in — kept people at the booth longer and gave staff a natural opening line.

One theme that came up more than once: attendees can tell within a few seconds whether a booth is worth a longer look. Booths that lead with a question or a visible demo win that first-glance decision more often than booths that lead with literature.

Matching Your Conversation to Who's In Front of You

The chart below gives one opener and one follow-up angle per role. Use these as starting points, not scripts — pair them with a live demo or hands-on moment wherever you can, since that's what Section 1 shows resonates most regardless of role.

Role	Lead With	Follow-Up Angle
Owner/ Business Leadership	"What's standing between you and winning more work next year?"	Tie your product to competitive differentiation, scaling capacity, or margin growth — Owners are shopping for an edge, not just a fix.
Project Manager	"How are you handling scheduling and coordination across subs right now?"	Time savings on execution, budgeting, or risk management.
Construction Estimator	"What's costing you the most guesswork on a bid right now?"	Speed and accuracy in estimating, or material pricing volatility.
Safety Manager	"What's the hardest part of keeping compliance consistent across your crews?"	Hazard reduction, incident tracking, or training tools.
Foreman / Field Leader	"What's one thing that would make your crew's day faster on-site?"	Hand them the product -- this group responds to hands-on trial, not a staffed explanation.
Electrician	"What's a tool or process that's been a pain point on recent jobs?"	Pair the practical fix with a career-growth angle.
Chapter Staff & Apprenticeship Leaders	"What are your contractors asking you for help with lately?"	Treat as a referral relationship, not a sales conversation - a strong relationship with a chapter ED opens doors to contractors you won't meet at SPARK.
Apprentice / Early-Career Tradesperson	"Want to try it yourself?"	Lead with the hands-on moment and a genuine career-path conversation -- this group is brand-aware and will be making buying decisions within the decade.

★ Key Takeaway

Every role on the floor is evaluating something different — leading with a question tied to their actual pain point gets past the small talk faster than a general pitch.

★ Why It Matters to Exhibitors

An Owner and a Foreman standing at your booth back-to-back are evaluating completely different things, and one generic opener won't land with both. Matching your first question to their role signals you understand their world — which is what turns a passerby into a real conversation, faster.

★ Key Takeaway

SPARK's floor traffic moves in waves tied to the session and meal schedule — it is not distributed evenly across the day.

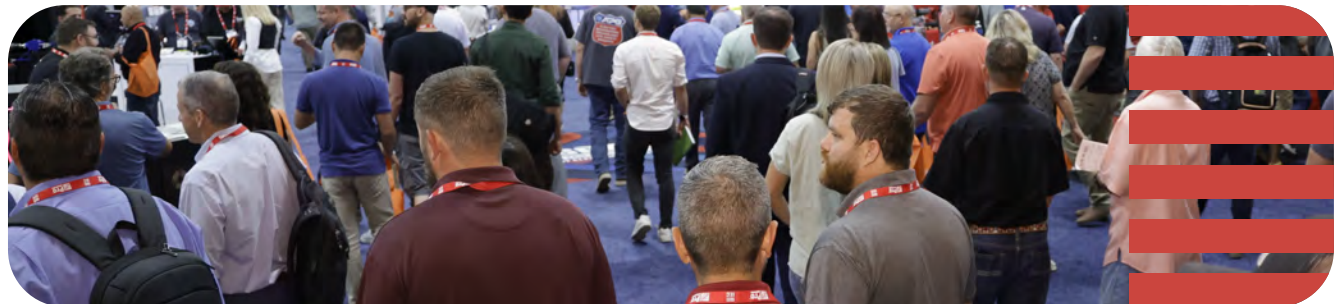
★ Why It Matters to Exhibitors

Treating every hour on the floor the same way means missing the windows when the most people are actually walking by, and burning energy during the lulls when almost no one is. Matching your team's best moments to the real traffic pattern — rather than to a fixed schedule — makes the same staff and budget go further.

Working With the Traffic Patterns of the Floor

How Traffic Moves

- Traffic surges around session breaks, meal service, and other scheduled floor activities — these are the windows to have your most engaging team member and your demo ready to go.
- Lulls happen mid-session, when most attendees are in education rooms. Use this time for internal team resets, restocking, or reaching out to scheduled meetings rather than waiting idle.
- Booths along main aisles and near the entrance naturally catch more walk-by traffic simply by virtue of location. Booths in perimeter or side locations tend to do just as well when staff take a more proactive approach — stepping toward the aisle, running a visible demo, and initiating conversation rather than waiting for attendees to come to them.



New for SPARK 2026

- Meals will be hosted on the show floor whenever possible, keeping more attendees in the Expo Hall for longer stretches throughout the day.
- Thursday night features an extended Tailgate Happy Hour on the expo floor from 4:30 – 6:30! This tailgate-themed networking event is designed to maximize attendee engagement, so we encourage exhibitors to embrace the theme with tailgate-inspired booth activities, giveaways, raffles, games, food, or other interactive experiences that draw attendees in and create memorable conversations.
- F&B activations are now open to all exhibitors. Sponsorship is no longer required to host a food or beverage activation at your booth. Exhibitors can order directly through the venue, making it a more affordable and accessible way to draw attendees to your space. Reach out to KPitroff@levyrestaurants.com to place your orders.
- Together, these changes are designed to keep energy and foot traffic on the floor for more of the event, benefiting exhibitors across all booth locations.

Practical Adjustments

- Anchor high-energy activities (demos, competitions, giveaways) to the surge windows around session breaks, meals, and floor activities.
- If your booth is off the main aisle, lean into visible, in-motion engagement — movement and activity draw eyes further down a row than a quiet table can.
- Coordinate staffing so your most conversational team members are on the floor during peak windows, not on break.

Extending Your Reach Beyond the Booth

The 2026 Prospectus outlines several ways to extend reach; a few that connect directly to on-site engagement are below.

- **PowerUp Product Showcase**— Dedicated visibility for a product launch or highlight, outside your booth footprint.
- **Demo Add-On**— A hands-on experience for attendees, directly aligned with what resonates on the floor. Limited availability.
- **Bright Ideas Theater**— A 20-minute session on the floor itself, practical tips in an intimate setting, without competing with the main education track.
- **Passport to Prizes**— Structured reason for attendees to visit your booth specifically, driving traffic rather than waiting for it.
- **Floor Stickers**— Signage guiding attendees to your booth from high-traffic pathways.
- **Booth Drivers & Engagements**— Interactive activations that spark conversation and increase visibility in the moment.
- **Tailgate Expo Hall Happy Hour**— High-traffic, high-energy networking window built specifically for floor engagement.



★ Key Takeaway

Booth space earns you a spot on the floor. Sponsorships put your brand in front of the room even when an attendee isn't standing in front of you.

★ Why It Matters to Exhibitors

A booth is a fixed location — attendees have to come to you. Sponsorships flip that: your brand reaches attendees on the pathways, in the lounges, and in the sessions they're already headed to, extending your visibility well beyond your physical footprint.

Sponsorships are a great option for any exhibitor who wants to give attendees an additional reason to seek them out, beyond their booth alone. For current availability and pricing, contact Kevin Davoren (kdavoren@ieci.org).



Key Takeaways

- Interaction beats observation — demos, hands-on trial, and real conversation outperform passive display and scripted pitches.
- Floor traffic moves in waves around the session schedule; plan your best moments around those windows, not the whole day evenly.
- Booth location matters, but sponsorships let you extend reach and visibility well beyond your physical footprint.

Check out our next module on prepping your teams for SPARK to learn how to set your booth staff up for these on-site conversations!

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