

'It's much more than swapping business cards' – how to get the most out of your visit to RIN York

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There's so much more to networking events than turning up and swapping business cards. Antoinette Stevenson, organiser of Rail Infrastructure Networking (RIN) explains how to get the most out your visit to the renowned event which returns to York next month.

Whilst RIN events are free to attend, there are factors to consider, such as the time out of the office, travel costs and overnight stays which mean visitors need to maximise their time to justify their visit.

The renowned events which are held three times per year are designed to create new opportunities for railway infrastructure companies to meet major buyers at a low exhibitor price.

The events are organised by specialist railway insurance broker Jobson James Rail to give companies of all sizes the opportunity to meet under one roof, to explore opportunities with each other and grow their businesses.

The day provides genuine opportunities, but visitors must plan ahead to make sure they make the best of the opportunities.

The next event returns to York Racecourse on Thursday, 17th November. All exhibitor stands for RIN York are now sold out, and organisers are now inviting visitors to register, but want to help them maximise their visit.

“Networking is a skill that needs work and practice to be effective, said Antoinette Stevenson, RIN organiser.

“It is not as simple as turning up, swapping business cards, and shaking hands.

“I’ve spoken to many exhibitors and visitors and they all tell me the same thing – to get the most out of visiting these events, which offer so much potential, you have to plan and prepare in advance, to make sure there’s a return on your investment, even if your only investment on the day is your time.”

Antoinette has listed her top tips for visiting RIN York:

- Be prepared – remember business cards, a notebook and pen
- Set objectives for the event – who am I looking to meet?
- Be realistic – you will not need to meet with everyone there
- Identify prospects – know who is attending and most relevant
- Connect in advance – use LinkedIn, let people know you are attending, arrange to meet at RIN
- Prepare a conversation starter – an opening gambit
- Listen first, pitch after
- Ask open questions
- Follow up after the event – strike while the iron is hot!
- Smile – relax and enjoy yourself

Barry Aldridge, head of marketing at Flotec Industrial Limited is a regular RIN exhibitor and also advises anyone attending a RIN event to set realistic goals to maximise time and expenditure.

He said: “Preparation is the key to success, so plan ahead and make sure you have plenty of sales and marketing collateral, prior to the event.



Barry Aldridge, head of marketing at Flotec Industrial Limited

“It is a good idea to plan and write an elevator pitch well in advance.

“Whilst exhibiting, focus your efforts on relevant prospects. It can be all too easy to get distracted and caught up in lengthy conversation with people you know but the goal is to harvest relevant prospects who are most likely to convert.

“After the event, speed is a weapon. Communicate with your leads as quickly as possible to keep the dialogue alive. And of course, have fun.”

Cat Appleby, membership manager at Rail Forum and an advocate of RIN events, fully understands the business benefits that effective networking can bring. She also firmly believes that preparation is the key.

She said: “The best networking advice that I can give you is be prepared, use delegate lists to prioritise and LinkedIn to find their faces.



Cat Appleby, membership manager at Rail Forum

“I am very much looking forward to catching up with new friends and old at RIN York.”

RIN is always well attended. At the last event, RIN Derby in September, more than 400 visitors attended, with organisers describing it as the “best yet”. Derby Arena played host to 84 exhibitors and 264 railway infrastructure companies were represented.

Highlights included the RIA Meet the Buyer event which saw exhibitors given the opportunity to meet with senior buyers and advisors face-to-face in pre-arranged 15-minute procurement interviews.

RIN events are hosted nationwide three times per year - with the 2022/3 calendar featuring:

York

Thursday, 17th November 2022, 9:30am -12:30pm at York Racecourse, York

£275+VAT for exhibitors, free for visitors.

London

Thursday, 9th March 2023, 9:30am – 2pm at the Business Design Centre, Islington, just one mile from King's Cross/St Pancras.

£385 +VAT for exhibitors, free for visitors.

Derby

Thursday, 21st September 2023, 9:30am – 2pm at Derby Arena, Derby.

£320 + VAT for exhibitors, free for visitors.

Bookings for exhibitors are now open for RIN London 2023.

If you'd like to exhibit at RIN London, please [click here](#).

To register for RIN York as a visitor, please [click here](#).