



MAXIMIZING ENGAGEMENT AT ICSC EVENTS

ICSC TRADE SHOW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES



The member organization for industry advancement, ICSC promotes and elevates the marketplaces and spaces where people shop, dine, work, play, and gather as foundational and vital ingredients of communities and economies.



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ADVANCING RETAIL IN COMMUNITIES

Benefits of Attending ICSC Events



ICSC dealmaking events, designed to facilitate deals and connections across all aspects of retail real estate, are a prime opportunity to expand your network. Dealmaking show floors feature exhibitor booths, tables and/or kiosks. Professionals can make connections, explore new business opportunities and create on-the-spot deals on the show floor.

ICSC events give cities and economic development professionals a chance to:

- Showcase development-ready sites
- Engage retailers, brokers and developers
- Attract investors and tenants
- Elevate visibility and your city's brand and reputation
- Stay on top of market and retail as well as market trends

This guide provides a comprehensive roadmap to help municipal leaders and economic development organizations (EDOs) make the most of their time at ICSC events. Access the best prospects and resources and make a viable impression by showing up with a clear strategy for getting what you want from the event.

At large ICSC events, you're competing for attention alongside hundreds of booths, pitches and panels. Retailers, brokers and developers are being courted by dozens of cities, all offering incentives and sites. A strategic approach is what sets the high-performing cities apart from the rest.

A strong trade show plan allows your city to:

Generate High-Quality Leads	Identify your target retail categories, then tailor your messaging, materials and visuals to attract them.
Boost Brand Awareness	A unified visual identity, clear value proposition and pre-show promotion ensures your city is recognized and remembered.
Position as a Retail-Ready Location	Showcasing zoning readiness, incentives and dealmaking experience helps establish your city as a serious player.
Ensure a Seamless Experience	Advance planning—travel logistics, staffing, collateral, booth setup—frees your team to focus on relationship-building.



Choosing the Right ICSC Event

Selecting which ICSC event to attend is as strategic as what you do once you’re there. Start by reviewing shows based on your city’s goals, target industries and available assets. Evaluate each event based on how it fits your overall retail attraction strategy and marketing goals.

National

ICSC LAS VEGAS
ICSC NEW YORK



The ICSC Premier event series is our must-attend annual global gatherings of the Marketplaces Industry’s networked community of dealmakers, negotiators and moneymakers.

Regional

ICSC@WHISTLER
ICSC@RED RIVER
ICSC@MID-ATLANTIC
ICSC@MONTEREY
ICSC@CAROLINAS
ICSC@NEW ENGLAND
ICSC@FLORIDA
ICSC@WESTERN
ICSC@CANADA
ICSC@MIDWEST
ICSC@SOUTHEAST



The ICSC@ event series is our signature regional two- to three-day gatherings of innovators and dealmakers, who are dedicated to strengthening communities and economies by bringing the spaces where consumers shop, dine, work, play, and gather to life.

Specialty

ICSC+CENTERBUILD
ICSC+PROPTECH



The ICSC+ event series delivers discipline-specific, forward-thinking content for the creators, designers, builders and thinkers who define contemporary marketplaces and spaces where people shop, dine, work, play, and gather.

Retail

ICSC RETAIL
FORWARD



Limited to one day and built for high-ROI, ICSC RETAIL FORWARD events are accessible regional gatherings bringing together owners and brokers with retailers and tenants to fill spaces, grow businesses and strengthen connections in record time.

Planning Isn’t Just Big Picture—It’s Details Too

Success isn’t just about having the right talking points. It’s about execution:

- Book your hotel early
- Print your materials in time
- Confirm who is staffing your booth and at what times
- Pack cables, chargers and signage
- Create a lead tracking process in advance

By covering these details up front, your team can show up confident, composed and focused on what really matters—building relationships and landing deals.

STEP-BY-STEP FOR SUCCESS

1

Prepare With Strategy

Before you even register, define your goals, audience and success metrics. Start with projects or sites that you are looking to promote. Understand how the event will fit into your broader economic development strategy.

Define Goals and KPIs

- Set clear, measurable objectives (e.g., secure 10 retailer meetings, promote five development sites, capture 200 qualified leads).
- Identify your target audience and focus on those aligned with your city's retail growth strategy: retailers, brokers, developers or investors.
- Clarify your unique value proposition (e.g., development-ready sites, incentive programs, retail leakage data).

Set Your Budget

- Align goals with your budget, including booth costs, travel, collateral, marketing and a 10–15% contingency.



2

Plan With Precision

Once your strategy is set, create a detailed timeline to ensure a high-level presence at the event. Advance planning prevents last-minute stress and maximizes impact.

Event Selection

- Select the right ICSC event(s) based on your target audience.
- Secure booth or table space and coordinate with event organizers. Your event contacts will always be listed on the related event pages on www.ICSC.com.

Marketing & Pre-Show Promotion

- Develop and update marketing collateral (informational sheet, slide decks, maps).
- Schedule meetings in advance using ICSC's Networking Platform, accessible via the My ICSC link on the ICSC website.
- Engage prospects before the show via email campaigns, social media and direct outreach.
- Partner with industry groups and regional allies to amplify your reach.

3

Design Your On-Site Presence

Your booth is more than a backdrop—it's a storytelling tool. Make it inviting, memorable and functional for conversations.

Booth Design

- Create a clean, branded display with strong visuals, large site renderings and simple messaging.
- Incorporate interactive elements such as touchscreens, demos or VR site tours.

Collateral & Marketing Materials

- Both digital and print materials with QR codes for quick access
- Development-ready site sheets (maps, specs, ownership)
- Community profiles (demographics, trade area stats)
- Incentives overview (TIF, tax credits, fee waivers)
- Retail trade area summary
- QR codes linking to digital versions

4

Maximize Engagement on the Floor

Every minute counts—be proactive, strategic and approachable. Engagement drives results.

Staff Engagement

- Prepare your team on talking points, engagement strategies and lead capture tools.
- Stick to your meeting schedule while staying flexible for walk-ins.
- Use quick pitches and qualifying questions to identify high-value leads.

Offer Value

- Host micro-events or presentations to draw traffic to your booth.
- Capture contact information and detailed notes immediately after interactions.
- Attend panels, receptions and networking events for additional visibility.

Schedule Ahead	Tailor Your Pitch	Prepare Questions That Resolve Issues	Designate Lead Staff	Attend Panels	Join Networking Receptions
Use ICSC Networking Platform to schedule key meetings.	Focus on how your city aligns with that retailer’s model.	What makes a city easy to open a business in? What tenant mix works best?	Decide which team member will connect with each type of prospect: retailers, developers, brokers, etc.	Join learning sessions on zoning, redevelopment and P3s.	Increase visibility and build connections beyond the show floor.



5 Follow Through for Results

The show may end, but your ROI is determined by what you do afterward.

After the Show

- Enter leads into your CRM and prioritize hot prospects.
- Send personalized follow-up emails within 3–5 business days, referencing your conversations.
- Share requested materials and schedule site visits or calls.
- Debrief with your team to evaluate what worked and identify areas for improvement.

Evaluate ROI

Measure against KPIs: Gather information on leads generated, meetings booked, deals progressed, etc., and calculate ROI to refine your next trade show strategy.

- Did you meet your objectives?
- How many leads became active prospects?
- How many follow-ups were completed?
- What collateral worked best?

CHECKLIST FOR TRADE SHOW SUCCESS

Pre-Event Planning

Laying the groundwork ensures your city stands out and your investment yields results.

- ❑ Define goals and success metrics (e.g., number of retailer meetings, development site pitches and qualified leads captured).
- ❑ Set budget and allocate resources: Include booth fees, travel, collateral, marketing and contingency (10–15%).
- ❑ Select the right ICSC event(s): Match event audience to your city’s retail attraction priorities.
- ❑ Register and secure booth space: Coordinate with ICSC to choose optimal booth/table location.
- ❑ Design booth layout and branding: Incorporate large visuals of sites, clear messaging and interactive elements.
- ❑ Develop pre-show marketing campaign: Use email, social media, and press releases to promote your presence.
- ❑ Train staff: Focus on talking points, qualifying questions, demos and lead capture process.
- ❑ Ship booth materials and collateral: Ensure timely delivery to the venue with tracking in place.

Event Day Execution

Once on-site, every interaction is a chance to tell your city’s story.

- ❑ Set up booth and test technology: Confirm lead capture tools displays and lighting are functional.
- ❑ Hold a team huddle: Review daily goals, key prospects and assignments.
- ❑ Engage strategically: Greet attendees, ask qualifying questions and capture contact details in real time.
- ❑ Attend scheduled meetings: Arrive prepared with site data and tailored pitches.
- ❑ Host presentations or demos: Showcase your city’s sites, incentives and success stories.
- ❑ Monitor and restock: Keep collateral, giveaways and water stocked.
- ❑ End the day with a debrief: Review progress, note new opportunities and adjust for the next day.

Post-Event Follow-Up

The real ROI happens after you return home.

- ❑ Break down and ship booth materials: Ensure safe return of all assets.
- ❑ Import leads into CRM: Categorize by priority and assign follow-up owners.
- ❑ Follow up: Send personalized thank-you emails within 3–5 days and reference specific conversations or materials promised.
- ❑ Share event highlights: Post on your city’s website and social channels.
- ❑ Analyze results vs. goals: Measure leads, meetings and opportunities generated.
- ❑ Hold post-show debrief: Involve all stakeholders to identify wins and areas to improve.
- ❑ Refine future trade show strategy: Apply lessons learned to the next ICSC event cycle.

The best trade show presence is not just about showing up—it's about showing up prepared. With clear messaging, measurable goals and strategic follow-through, your city can stand out, generate real opportunities and leave a lasting impression on the retail real estate world.

RESOURCES



VISIT OUR COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT WEBPAGE

Access resources for public
sector professionals.

MEMBERSHIP

membership@ICSC.com

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED OR LEARNING MORE?



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