

Informex? CPhI? ChemOutsourcing? DCAT? A Simple Guide to Vendor Shows

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A meeting like Informex or CPhI does not bring significant academic value to the scientific world, but they are not designed to do so. These meetings are specifically addressed to the industrial world of pharmaceutical and biotech companies. They allow a variety of people to interact and find the appropriate services and/or equipment to make their drug development proceed smoothly.

Whether you work for a small virtual company, a mid-sized biotech, or Big Pharma, you will find significance in these meetings. These shows have considerable importance for those who suddenly find themselves in charge of outsourcing either medicinal chemistry projects, small-scale kilo work, early stage cGMP materials, or later-stage compounds that require commercial manufacturing. This includes the potential need to have secondary suppliers.

At these meetings, you will be able to meet with numerous vendors who are looking to introduce their company to your company and help provide you with the information that you require to make an informed decision. Best of all, you can do this at one location and provide important time and financial savings for you and your company. If properly planned in advance, you will have two to three full and productive days. Bear in mind, locally scheduled meetings offer more flexibility for scheduling informational meetings that, if desired, can be stretched into more detailed discussions of a vendor's services and offerings. With that said, quick 15-25 minute meetings at these shows can be very beneficial.

Informex

Informex was originally the idea of SOCMA (Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates). It began in 1985 in Atlanta as a way to allow vendors to interact with those needing pharmaceutical services. From its humble beginnings, Informex has grown into an event that brings over 500 vendors to one location to peddle their materials and services to the pharma world (Editor's note: and the custom chemical manufacturing world *in general*) with an attendance that tops 4,000. Companies from Asia, North America and Europe are well-represented at Informex.

Typically held in early February, the event moves around the USA. Its home for numerous years was New Orleans, but recent locations have included San Francisco, Las Vegas, Charlotte, and in 2013, it will be in Anaheim (Los Angeles) on February 19-22, 2013.

Held at a convention center, Informex stretches over 375,000 sq. ft. consisting of vendor booths as small as 100 sq. ft. and up to very fancy booths with meeting rooms and elaborate signage.

Often you will find smaller companies who decide against the cost of a booth and attend the meeting in order to walk the floor to network and, perhaps, have an impromptu meeting.

A typical Informex schedule has a format where companies can purchase 30-minute blocks to present themselves in a meeting room to whoever shows up. These Monday events are called Exhibitor Showcases. There are also Technological Showcases where companies will present a basic technology they use or are looking to introduce to the pharma public.

Typically over 40 companies participate at the exhibitor Showcases. From my experience, the turnout tends to be limited when it comes to potential customers. Most attendees are other vendors trying to either sell something or find out what their competition is doing. As a person in charge of outsourcing, this is an excellent event to see many companies from afar and then decide if you want to schedule a formal meeting.

The Exhibition Hall opens Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 9AM and closes at 5PM. The hours on Thursday are from 9AM to 12noon. Usually the best meetings are held on Tuesday and Wednesday, although I have found that meetings on Thursday can be surprisingly productive. While most people are planning their departures to the airport on Thursday, I once had a meeting at 11:30AM that led to a significant project, so never underestimate the potential of a positive meeting.

Several companies have meeting rooms that are off the show floor, while some actually have meeting rooms built into their booths. Most have open meetings at their booths for less formal introductions and discussions.

Literature abounds and can weigh you down when traveling home. Regardless, it is useful to be organized and collect literature from companies and file them back at work for future reference.

There are several events that allow for networking, and these can range from formal sponsored events with a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres to vendors who host informal get-togethers at their booths. These are excellent opportunities to speak to people in a less formal setting and get a feel for personalities, as well as the capabilities of companies.

As noted earlier, Informex 2013 will be in Anaheim, California so it is always preferable to book airfare and hotels early. While your boss may not think it is wise, Informex can be used as a great tool to have meetings with current vendors to discuss current and upcoming projects, as well as search for new vendors. Informex has a registration fee for individuals of about \$450.

Website: <http://www.informex.com>

CPhI

CPhI is the European equivalent of Informex, yet much larger. The main difference between the two is that attendees do not have to pay to attend CPhI (if they register in advance). At CPhI, you

will also find significantly more drug product packaging, as well as clinical vendors (typically found at AAPS).

CPhI started in 1990 and is now the largest of all meetings. With over 29,000 attendees from 140 countries, the event now covers more than 60,000 m² (over 11 football fields!) of exhibition space, hosting over 2,200 exhibitors, and is the market leader for the global pharmaceutical ingredients industry.

CPhI is held every October, and like Informex, changes locations. CPhI has been held in Paris, Milan, and Madrid. CPhI 2013 will be held once again in Frankfurt, Germany, from October 22-24, 2013. As expected, there tends to be a larger showing of European companies, yet it is a very international event with companies from all over the world exhibiting or attending.

A well-planned visit to CPhI can result in many useful meetings with companies that do not have a presence in the US marketplace, but which sell into the US. Thus, you can meet with owners and directors of companies face-to-face for a level of comfort that a website or phone call cannot bring.

CPhI has started a franchise in which it holds other CPhI events around the globe, such as CPhI China, CPhI Japan, CPhI India, and others, but CPhI Worldwide is the crown jewel of meetings. The exhibitor booths are far more elaborate than those seen at other meetings. Some booths will have full kitchens and meeting rooms, along with sofas and tables to sit and relax. It is quite an event.

I have found it beneficial to go over to Europe early and meet with customers at our plant in Italy before attending CPhI. Thus customers can get much more out of the trip by having actual on-site visits with suppliers coupled with meetings at CPhI.

Website: <http://www.cphi.com/>

ChemOutsourcing

ChemOutsourcing started as the brainchild of Mark Alexey in 2006. It is held in September in Long Branch, NJ and was designed to be a smaller Informex. While there are exhibitors, ChemOutsourcing offers the inexperienced outsourcing person a chance to learn from experts by attending numerous panel sessions held every day. Networking events help to create a casual atmosphere to allow for conversations between people. This event is undervalued by smaller companies that could benefit from the intimacy of the conference.

While there are many CMOs (Contract Manufacturing Organizations) at the event, those in the pharma industry can take advantage of this and meet many vendors. There is a small exposition hall with vendor booths and displays. Meetings tend to be arranged on site rather than ahead of time, since there is ample time to see the same people over the course of the event, as meals and entertainment (such as the Beach Party or Casino night) are included in the cost of the registration.

There are significant discounts and opportunities for those who work for a biotech or pharma company, so take advantage of a meeting that you can drive to from the local Boston area. To inquire about discounts, contact ChemOutsourcing directly via their website. The next ChemOutsourcing will be held at the Ocean Place Resort in Long Branch, NJ, from September 16-18, 2013.

Website: <http://chemoutsourcing.com>

DCAT

DCAT is held every March at the Waldorf Astoria in NYC. Founded in 1890, the Drug, Chemical & Associated Technologies Association, Inc. (DCAT) is actually an association that many companies belong to. Although DCAT member companies represent the entire spectrum of the pharmaceutical industry, including pharmaceutical, API, and excipient manufacturers, it also includes companies that help with sales, manufacturing, and distribution, as well as support technologies and packaging products and services.

DCAT is the centerpiece meeting for those looking at generic pharmaceuticals. It is probably best known for its Gala Ball, a black tie event held in the world-famous Waldorf Astoria grand ballroom. This event has featured speakers ranging from George Bush, Sr. to Arnold Schwarzenegger. The evening is not complete without roaming around and visiting the various hospitality suites that numerous companies host throughout the Waldorf.

Most meetings are held in hotel suites or at any available space one can find near the lobby of the Waldorf. Networking takes place in and around the lobby of the Waldorf near the clock tower. While formal meetings are set in and around the numerous hotels in the area, many of them take place rather informally. This tends to be a meeting for companies involved with generics or established commercial products, rather than those with new chemical entities. DCAT 2013 is from March 11- 14, 2013.

Website: <http://www.dcat.org> and http://www.dcat.org/Pages/week_DCATWeek.aspx

AAPS

The American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) sponsors its annual meeting and exposition in the fall. In 2013, AAPS will be held in San Antonio from November 10–14, 2013. The meeting is typically referred to as AAPS and features a more clinical slant. For those looking to formulate their drug product or package it, AAPS is for you. AAPS seeks to foster the integration of those sciences related to discovery, design, analysis, development, production, quality control, safety, clinical evaluation, regulation, distribution, and utilization of drugs and drug delivery systems.

Started in 1986, AAPS has various programs that one can attend. Most visit the exposition hall to see vendor booths and collect information on a variety of scientific tools for drug development. Vendors often setup meetings around this meeting to catch up with customers. As with any other

meeting, proper planning can lead to a more productive event allowing you to meet with numerous vendors in one place.

While AAPS provides a dynamic international forum for the exchange of knowledge, it is a meeting that can be beneficial to any pharma or biotech depending on the stage of its pipeline.

Website: <http://www.aaps.org>