



STEP – Agri-Value

Grocery and Specialty Food West 2018
April 23 & 24, 2018
Vancouver, Canada

TRIP REPORT



Overview/Mission Description

Grocery & Specialty Food West (GSFW) is a tradeshow hosted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) that annually takes place in Vancouver, Canada. The show has approximately 300 exhibitors from across Canada and attracts over 2,400 attendees from the grocery industry. Pre-qualified attendees are identified as decision makers in the grocery industry, with over 70% being grocery owners/CEO's, VP's, Sr. Category Managers and Merchandising Directors. Despite fewer traffic/attendees over other Canadian shows, qualified leads are substantial.

The tradeshow runs for two days with an opening reception taking place the day before to kick-off the show. Given the size and exclusivity of the show, two days is sufficient time to connect with all valued attendees, including the retailers, packagers, distributors, processors and other industry contacts.

Four STEP members exhibited at the show, with all products being well received. One member took advantage of the opportunity to display their product in the *New Products Showcase* display; in return for this investment, the member won *Top 10 in Grocery*. Two other members leveraged the *Retailer Connect* meetings, where both were awarded five to six meetings with various retailers such as Buy-Low, Overwaitea Food Group, HY Louie, and more. Member feedback confirmed that this program was a very beneficial and will provide an almost certain return on investment.

Summarized Agenda

The tradeshow portion of GSFW took place on April 23rd and 24th, 2018. Show hours were 11 AM – 4 PM daily. CFIG hosted informational seminars and networking events that took place outside of the show hours but were only made available by purchasing “Delegate Passes” which were separate from the cost of exhibiting.

An opening reception took place on April 22nd, inviting all qualified attendees, CFIG staff and exhibitors. The reception was very well attended and ran from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM. *Retailer Connect* meetings took place throughout the tradeshow hours and were pre-scheduled for exhibitors that opted to participate. These retailers were: Buy-Low, Overwaitea Food Group, HY Louie, Federated Co-op, Freson Bros., Island Independent Buying Group, and Distribution Canada Inc.

Market Information

Vancouver, the port city for western Canada, is the optimal place to hold this event. Many agriculture and agri-food distributors are headquartered in Vancouver, with the city being a primary inter-provincial export destination for Saskatchewan suppliers. It is important for STEP members to have relationships with service providers in Vancouver, especially if their export goals are to expand throughout Canada and internationally.

Results

In total, five STEP members participated in GSFW 2018. Four STEP members exhibited in the STEP booth and one member chose to walk the show. STEP met with numerous retailers and industry leaders at the show; these connections will be valuable to not only the members in attendance, but also valuable assets to STEP and the rest of its members when invited to participate in future incoming conferences/seminars.

Results are still being tabulated but so far 96 trade leads were reported that lead to 23 deals in market and an estimated \$50,000.00 in sales over the next 12 months (one members' expected sales still to come).

Traffic at the STEP booth was strong relative to most other booth locations at the show. The corner booth certainly helped to attract attention from attendees who likely would have missed an interior location. This is likely the result of the advanced pre-qualification that each attendee must go through in order to register for the show. Several quality contacts in the grocery industry were met at the show and follow up is already underway. Once inquiries and responses are received from buyers, STEP will disseminate the leads to members as appropriate.

Recommendations

Overall the mission to Grocery and Specialty Food West successful. This show serves as a great portal to the western Canadian grocery market for our suppliers that have a retail product available for export. Each member in attendance had positive reviews, with many stating that they would like to return next year.

An important draw to this show is the opportunity for exhibitors to meet a variety of distributors serving the western Canadian market. Many grocery store chains prefer to do business with a distributor offering a variety of products versus doing business with each individual supplier directly. For exhibitors already partnered with a distributor, the show is a great chance to schedule a meeting with them to review and discuss ongoing business.

STEP is in discussion about participating in next years show. Grocery and Innovation Canada (GIC), GSFW's larger sister show located annually in Toronto, may be an option in place of GSFW. If the leads are similar, but are in greater supply at GIC, it may be worthwhile booking space there instead.

STEP Contact for Further Information

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Pictures



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