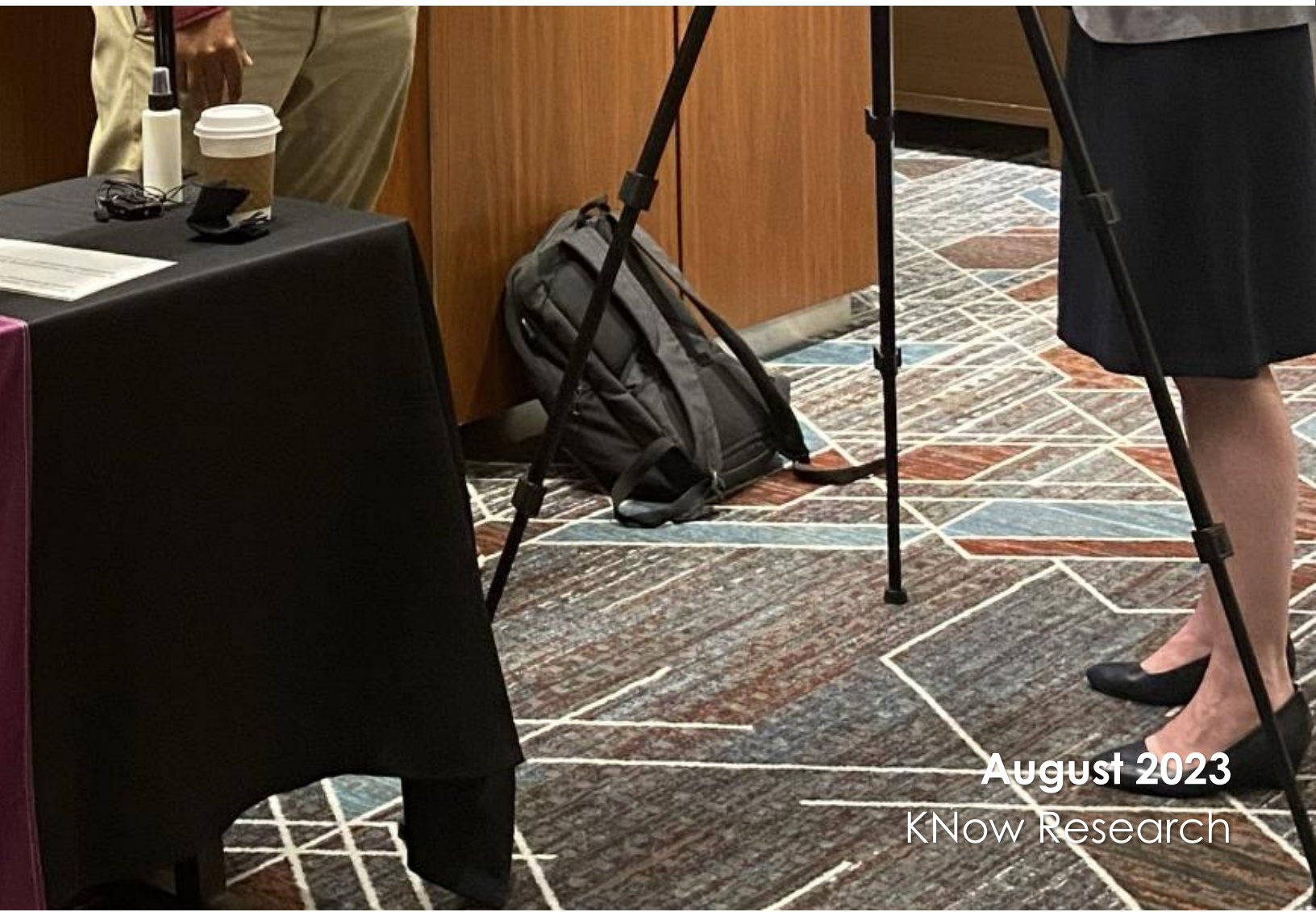




# Connecting with B2B Audiences at Industry Events



**August 2023**  
KNow Research

## Conferences and Industry Events: An Unrealized Source of Insights

Conference season is upon us, bringing a whirlwind of excitement and busyness as we immerse ourselves in the fun of traveling and expanding our knowledge and network. We're also excited about the additional opportunities these spaces afford. Beyond networking, presentations, and product showcases, they present a unique opportunity to tap into insights.

**Insights Professionals: Consider industry conferences, events, and conventions; unique environments to immerse yourself in your clients' industries and tap into B2B audiences.**

Beyond traditional learning and networking, conference and industry events offer a chance to learn:

- **Industry knowledge enhancement:** Attend talks, workshops, and networking events at the conference. This allows insight providers to learn more about their clients' needs, pain points and issues of focus.

And a chance to research:

- **Access to B2B audiences:** Conferences and trade shows provide a concentrated gathering of professionals from niche target markets. Meet them where they are; since attendees are already present, it's a convenient and efficient place to capture their insights.
- **Real-time sentiment capture:** Capture attendee perspectives as soon as they come through the door! Recruiting – or intercepting – attendees onsite eliminates the often lengthy recruiting and schedule process and the costs.
- **Eliminate fraud concerns:** The insights industry has seen an increase in fraud rates amongst B2B audiences in virtual qualitative research due to higher incentives ([Strawn, 2021](#)). Meeting with audiences in person eliminates the risk of fraudulent participants infiltrating the research. Professionals attending an

industry-specific conference often offer the ideal target audience for research studies.

- **Involve stakeholders in the research process:** By engaging stakeholders in the research during the event, you can capture their perspectives in real-time and address any questions or concerns they may have.

Pro Tip: At KNow, we harness the power of qualitative B2B research at conferences through 3 distinct approaches: **Group Discussions**, **Booth® Insights Intercepts**, and **Workshops**.

**Learn how we used industry events to tackle each goal and get tips for implementing each approach.**

### **#1 Group Discussions with Hard-to-Reach Audiences**

At KNow Research we are big fans of meeting our participants where they are. In a recent collaboration with a client in the financial research sector, we had the opportunity to engage with their target audience: wealth managers who rely on their services for improved financial forecasting. This audience is particularly difficult to recruit as they are extremely busy professionals who are not often willing to take time away or answer a recruiting call. To ensure we could reach this cohort, we organized in-person groups at our client's annual conference.



This approach allows us to tap into a gathering of individuals already interested in attending, providing us with a convenient and focused environment to interact with our target audience.

We worked collaboratively with our client to time the groups strategically around the conference schedule and in an easily found central location. We also worked together on the participant outreach and invitation strategy to ensure our invitations

coordinated with event outreach and targeted qualifying attendees. Onsite, we placed clear instructions throughout the event, making it easy for participants to find us. Additionally, our client arranged complementary food and drinks for the participants, enhancing their overall experience. At every level, the room was thoughtfully designed as a comfortable and tranquil space where the target audience could come together and find respite amidst the bustling activities of the event.

**Key Takeaway:** Conducting focus groups and interviews at conferences offers a convenient access to your hard-to-reach audiences. Create a dedicated fieldwork space to provide a peaceful haven for valuable insights amidst the conference buzz.

## #2 Intercept Conference Attendees for Bite-Sized Insights

In the hectic conference environment, it's not always possible to speak with your B2B audience in a dedicated focus group setting. Sometimes you'll need to use shorter interactions to get your insights. **While your qualitative conversations may not be as in-depth as a traditional interview or focus group, shorter intercept interactions offer an advantage: the opportunity to engage with a larger sample of participants.**

In 2019, our team at KNow Research tested and launched a new methodology, [Booth<sup>®</sup> Insights](#) that allowed us to meet participants where they were and capture their thoughts and feelings in real-time—perfect for a conference setting.

When our friends at the [Loyalty360 Expo](#) approached with a tricky research question they wished to ask their convention attendees: *'What Brand(s) Are You Most Loyal to and Why?'*, we knew this methodology would allow us to connect with as many of the 400+ event-goers as possible. Loyalty360's focuses on building a professional community for customer loyalty, seeking to enable and encourage dialogue among industry leaders. Loyalty360 is often asked about the most effective drivers of brand loyalty and how companies, knowing where they are in a continuum, can build or improve it.

*“ ‘What Brand(s) Are You Most Loyal to and Why?’ This question is foundational to the quest for true brand loyalty, a question that is top-of-mind to all who are involved in driving brand loyalty for their respective organizations, a question that was perfectly suited to ask 400 customer-focused executives who were gathered in one place.” —Loyalty Expo*

Our Pop-up Booth was centrally located at the Expo, where our moderators intercepted attendees to give feedback to the research question in a short video interview. Our Booth also featured a ‘learning wall’, which participants propagated with their favorite drivers of brand loyalty— such as quality products, excellent customer experience, meaningful company values, etc. **A total of 91 participants contributed a post-it note, creating a visually engaging element to our discussions.**



Our clients appreciated visiting the Booth, watching the ‘learning wall’ grow and receiving a [video highlight reel](#) of the key takeaways after the event. Hearing participants bring the insights to life in the video compilation was a powerful, visual way for their input to inspire the organization.

**Key Takeaway:** Intercepting attendees at an event is an effective way to connect with a large pool of participants in a short period of time. Create engaging activities to connect with participants, such as ‘learning walls’ or networking games. Visual output from these sessions, such as video reels, are a great way to meaningfully connect participant stories with your client.

Curious to learn more about what we discovered with our friends at Loyalty Expo? Download a [copy of the resulting white paper](#) or watch a [quick video of the results](#).

### #3 ‘DIY’ Customer Insights Workshops

In 2021, as part of our [annual pro-bono project](#), KNow Research collaborated with GCUC, the [Global Coworking Unconference Community](#), a network of coworking spaces hosting more than 30 conferences globally. Our research objective was to learn how professionals adapted to a post-pandemic shift to remote work and what they



wanted in a coworking space. GCUC invited our team to facilitate a workshop at the first in-person GCUC conference since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the conference, our workshop offered a collaborative environment for coworking professionals to learn how to create an efficient and effective customer feedback loop within their organization.

Coworking owners and managers were eager to learn how to tap into the voice of their customers. Here’s what one workshop attendee had to say:

***“Billed as a realistic approach to insights gathering which any organization can implement, it was a crash course in best practices for conducting, optimizing, and utilizing customer insights in order to understand target audiences and better serve them in the long run” —Carolyn Cirillo, Knoll***

### Key Takeaway:

Insight Workshops allow B2B audiences to share their perspectives and experiences with each other and learn how to integrate insights into their organization.

Workshop takeaways are actionable tools to enhance their own customer connections— the best kind of “goodie bag” to add to their growing swag collection!



### Engage in Conference Discussions to Become Better Consultants

Workshops like the one for GCUC provide our team with opportunities to engage directly with the end users of our research, enhancing our ability to serve as effective consultants. We’ve nicknamed it 360° insights because allows us to see the full picture of the issues and challenges of our clients’ industry.

In this case, the organization planned to share the findings of our study with their constituents. Spending time with them in their world allowed us to target the insights deliverables to the needs of small business owners. In addition to high level summaries used in GCUC’s social media campaigns, our team recorded a [Roundtable Podcast](#) discussing the main takeaway from the research – community is the foundation of coworking.

- Use these opportunities to deep dive into your client’s world; you have a front row ticket to the conversations and big ideas that matter to them. Tour the exhibition hall, interact with your client’s newly released gadgets and tools and talk to the other suppliers that support them.
- Take advantage of learning from the speakers and (other) workshops. Tune to listen attentively to the big ideas facing the organization and its members in the

upcoming year. Brush up on your category knowledge. Lectures and demo product offerings will give you firsthand knowledge on the industry's priorities and interests and get a wider view of what is impacting their work.

**Key Takeaway:** Actively participate in conference discussions, product demos, and keynote lectures; this will give you a deeper understanding of your client's needs and enable your team to become more effective conduits of your research endeavor!

### **Ready to Connect with Your B2B Audience?**

*The team at KNow is ready to help your team unleash the insights of your B2B audience at your next industry event. Our event experience and expertise can provide full-service research—with coordination support, methodology choice, moderation, and analysis, and more! For more information visit [knowresearch.com](https://knowresearch.com) or email [admin@knowresearch.com](mailto:admin@knowresearch.com)*