

Laura Monroe shares what not to miss at Inman Connect New York

[Inman Connect New York](#) is right around the corner, taking place at [The Marriot Marquis Hotel](#) in Times Square, January 28-February 1, 2019.

With so much on the agenda for this event, how do you make sure you're making the best use of your time, attending the right sessions and leveraging all the networking opportunities? [Laura Monroe](#), Head of Industry and Brand Engagement at Real Estate Webmasters, shares her thoughts on how best to approach the event, with her unique perspective from both being on stage, and from behind the curtain.

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You've been coming to Connect New York for several years now. What do you remember about your first experience, and what advice would you give a first-time attendee?

My first Inman Connect New York experience was a launching pad from a unique perspective — from backstage. Although I had been an Inman Connect San Francisco attendee since 2010, 2012 was the year that quite frankly changed my career trajectory, as it was my first year on the Inman team as the Inman Social Media Director, and MC for Agent Reboot, the prequel to Agent Connect.

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Quite simply, there is no way to describe how Connect is an experience that unfolds and creates a momentum for relationships and strategies that last an entire year. While the content from the stage and exhibit area give you the AH-HA moments — the people you meet and have conversations with, are your gut-checkers, your encouragers, and memory makers. Come with a tentative plan for sessions and who you would like to meet — but stay flexible and go and do with as many new people as you can reach.

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Connect is very well known for its ability to create long-lasting, meaningful networking opportunities. What would your advice be to those looking to grow their business through new connections in January?

My number 1 tip: Start following the [#ICNY](#) hashtag on social media to see what conversations are happening early. Connect with friends and potential new strategic partners way before the event. Reach out to them on social media and [make some plans](#) to meet or have lunch in a group or private meeting. If that isn't your cup of tea- hit Cocktails at Connect, or the [lobby bar to make casual rounds](#), introduce yourself and just hang out and recap the day. If you have a tribe you're attending with – bring a new friend or a new attendee, so no one feels left out. I've had my best conversations having room service with friends, having a milkshake across the street, in quick cab rides and Uber shares, and even long walks around Time Square. But, always, always stay in touch after the event. :)

**How do you pick which sessions to attend, and why?**

I pick [sessions](#) based on my goals for the year. There is always a blend of MUST see speakers in the General Sessions, but the afternoon tracks can be gold. What is it that you want to learn? What aspect of your business needs your focus? Try to go to sessions that you wouldn't find at any other conference for the year. [Hacker Connect](#), Agent Connect and Broker Connect are great events that can also help you narrow down your session focus before [mainstage Connect](#) begins.

What's the single biggest thing not to miss at every Connect?

I'd say there are two things not to miss: The exhibitor area, and a night out on the town away from the event. The exhibitor area is where the new, fresh companies go first to launch innovations into the industry – or old favorites can show off new products and features. It's also entertaining and memorable to experience a New York night. Get out of Times Square, or go to a Broadway play-but make sure you do something you've never done before.

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For those still on the fence about attending, what's the one piece of advice you'd give them?

Like anything in real estate, we have a vast variety of conferences to choose to attend. But RARELY are they an investment in your year and your future business the way [Connect](#) is — from the people to new business strategies, technology and marketing ideas, and memories that last a lifetime. So my advice? Invest. This event is about business, personal growth, your relationships. You won't be sorry.

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