Connect/Reflect: Sleep when you get home!

In addition to being a broker-owner and Realtor at Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Lifestyle Property Partners in North Carolina, Laurie Weston Davis also heads up Inman's Ambassador Program with Boston's Joe Schutt. A long-time attendee of Inman Connect events over the years, Laurie has a unique perspective on how to grow your business and make the most of the new connections you'll find over the course of the week. We recently asked Laurie to share some of her insights.

SAVE MY SEAT

You've been coming to Inman 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?

At my first Connect, I remember thinking I had found my people! I love real estate, technology and being an early adopter … I am a geeky girl! I was like a kid in a candy shop talking to all the companies in "Startup Alley" and getting a glimpse at what the future of real estate tech looked like.

One of my favorite sessions is "New Kids On the Block," where startups get to give their pitch. I have always tried to build my business like I think it should be 5 years from now using the best new technology I can find — if I am just keeping up with current technology I am behind.

For first-time attendees, I recommend making time to really meet the folks behind the companies. This is one of the biggest reasons I go to Connect. Building relationships with the people who bring us the technology we use every day and giving them feedback helps them so they can help us.

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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?

Don’t eat dinner in your room or go to bed early! There are people to meet — you can sleep when you get home. Find someone in a session or in the lobby and invite them to lunch. I guarantee you will learn from each other.

The one thing my experiences with other agents and brokers have taught me is that no matter where you live, how much business you do, what your average sales price is or how big your company is, we all have the same basic problems. Yours may have more commas before the decimal, but there is a common thread.

I have met so many people at Connect that are willing to share their knowledge and have given me a different perspective to consider.

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

I am a broker-owner, so I look for sessions that address issues I face or discuss creative new ways to think about things related to running a brokerage.

The Connect app is a great tool for finding out what's going on and who is speaking. And I am not gonna lie … I have a lot of friends that end up on stage, and I try to get to as many of their sessions as I can.

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

Honestly, in the last few years there have been some amazing keynote speakers — some totally caught me by surprise. So don't sleep in! And the Big Bash on Thursday night is pretty fun so don't miss that either!

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

Do it! I promise it will be worth it. It is an investment in you, your company and your future business. If I had to choose one event to attend each year, Connect would be it! See you in January.

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Want to connect with Laurie? You can find her on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Email Matthew Shadbolt.

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