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PPAI Expo Returns to Las Vegas in 2026 as Part of Five-Year Strategic Plan

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LAS VEGAS — The PPAI (<https://www.ppai.org/>) Expo (<https://www.ppai.org/expo/>) took place Jan. 12-15, 2026, with strong attendance, a busy show floor and programming that reflected the promotional products industry’s continued shift toward experiential marketing, personalization and technology-driven solutions.

Monday’s professional development conference, which served as the official kickoff to the show, drew large crowds throughout the day. Sessions focusing on technology, digital transformation and artificial intelligence were among the most heavily attended.

The conference also marked the return of The Pitch, a live product competition featuring seven contestants. Each participant was given three minutes to present their product to a panel of judges.

Audrey Miesner, Strategic Account Manager at Sock 101 (<https://www.sock101.com/>), won the competition with concepts centered on experiential merchandise, including on-site sock, bucket-hat and shoe bars where products are customized live.

“For our association, The PPAI Expo 2026 represented the unveiling of a new five-year strategic plan, which includes, among other key pillars, a call to strengthen our community. Every year, this event brings together the world of branded merchandise like no other, but our efforts leading into 2026 were focused on ensuring that every attendee truly felt that this was the place for them, with

programming designed for all industry roles, backgrounds and perspectives. For everyone in our community across the globe, The PPAI Expo is a homecoming,” Drew Holmgreen, CAS, PPAI President and CEO, said.

Audience participation was a consistent theme across conference programming. Before the Welcome and General Session, HPG (<https://hpgbrands.com/>) Director of Sales Jenna Quaranta hosted an early-morning session titled Roll Call: Where High Performers Report for Duty, which filled the room despite the 7:30 a.m. start time.

Keynote sessions later in the day continued to draw full rooms, including a ticketed lunch keynote hosted by Leo Chan, Chief Innovation Ignitor at Abound Innovation (<https://aboundinnovation.ca/>). His session featured interactive exercises and audience participation.

The trade floor opened Tuesday morning at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center (<https://mandalaybay.mgmresorts.com/en/meetings-groups/meeting-convention-facilities.html>). The 2026 show spanned approximately one million square feet and featured nearly 1,000 exhibiting companies across more than 2,500 booths, including 70 first-time exhibitors.

Organizers expected more than 10,000 distributors to attend, with total attendance projected to exceed 16,000 professionals, representing more than 3,500 companies from North America and international markets. PPAI Expo 2026 brought in registrants from 30 different countries.

Attendees had access to hundreds of thousands of products across the show floor, with more than 400 new products featured.

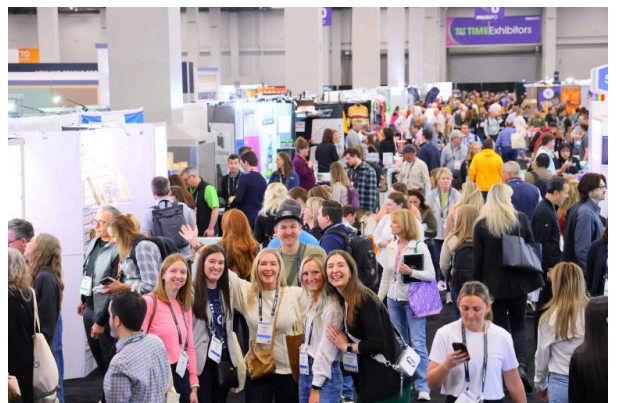
Experiential and live customization activations were prominent throughout the exhibit hall. Many suppliers offered on-site decoration, including heat-press apparel stations, patch applications, and mix-and-match product components.

AI-powered personalization was also popular, with several booths using attendee photos to generate custom artwork that was lasered onto items such as poker chips, luggage tags and drinkware.

Tech-focused products included AI translation earbuds, digital wellness tools designed to limit phone distractions and updated versions of traditional charging and power solutions.



PPAI Expo 2026 included The Pitch, a live product competition.



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