



EVENT PREVIEW: KNOWSHOW

What you can gain from the massive lifestyle retail tradeshow coming to Vancouver

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Now in its eighth year, Canadian lifestyle retail tradeshow KnowShow will be at the Vancouver Convention Centre from July 30 to August 1. The bi-annual show features about 300 brands showcasing their latest goods to an estimated 2,000 retailers. And there's more to this gathering than lanyards and tote bags. KnowShow prides itself in subverting the 'stuff tradeshow' by including on-site DJs, live art installations and its own magazine, all of which contribute to the upbeat atmosphere and non-tradeshow vibe.

Retail expert Jennifer Pilkington of Toronto's Retail Assembly will be leading the only workshop at the 2013 summer show, sharing insight on how to tackle a tradeshow in a 'business-, profit-, and productivity-oriented' fashion.

"It's tips for people to really kill it at a tradeshow," says Pilkington. "To do it productively and also get a lot of really great new stuff out of it." For first-timers, or even tradeshow buffs, it can be an overwhelming experience. "There's so much to see and so much to do," says Pilkington. "It's just about prioritizing."

When considering the Vancouver retail scene, Pilkington says that incoming American giants like Target and J. Crew have been making an impact on local business. "I think in terms of local boutiques, that's where you'll see the squeeze," she says. "I think you just want to know who your customer is and how you're distinguishing yourself; make sure your product offering is different."

For retailers attending KnowShow, Pilkington says it's all about finding the opportunities to differentiate. "Every boutique has its own vision and its own loyal customer base, and I really think it's about staying true to all of that."