s.t.e.p.
2025
SALES/TRAINING/EDUCATION/PURCHASING

Frequently Asked Questions for S.T.E.P.

What is S.T.E.P.?
S.T.E.P. is the National Marine Distributors Association's Sales, Training, Education and Purchasing event. It has been held annually since 1992, except for 2020 due to Covid.

Who can participate in S.T.E.P.?
Formerly it was NMDA members ONLY. It will be open to members ONLY on Tuesday and to both members and non-members on Wednesday and Thursday. Participants are distributors, manufacturers, and manufacturer's reps.

When is S.T.E.P.?
S.T.E.P. will be held July 21-24, 2025 . The Annual Meeting & Reception will be Monday July 21st NMDA Members can hold meetings July 22-24, 2025 and non-members can hold meetings July 23-24, 2025. Tuesday meetings are NMDA members only.

I'm a buyer, how do I get appointments with vendors?
You will be provided with a list of invited vendors. You contact them and make your own appointment. As long as they register to attend S.T.E.P., you can hold a meeting with them. The meetings are a minimum of 40 minutes long, except for the "mini-meetings" scheduled on Wednesday, and can be longer if both parties agree.

I'm a vendor, how do I get appointments with buyers?
You will be provided with a list of invited buyers; as long as they register to attend S.T.E.P., you can have meetings with them. You contact them and make your own appointment. The meetings are a minimum of 40 minutes long, except for the "mini-meetings" scheduled on Wednesday, and can be longer if both parties agree.

Can I book a meeting that is longer than the 40 minutes noted above?
Yes, if both you and the company you are meeting with agree to longer than 40 minute meetings, you are more than welcome to choose the length of the meeting.

How much does it cost?
The registration fee is different for member buyers, vendors and manufacturers reps compared to non-member buyers, vendors and manufacturers reps. Please see registration information for specifics.

What is included in the registration fee?
For NMDA members, the registration fee includes lunch on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and two evening receptions as well as all the meetings you schedule. For non-members it includes lunch on Wednesday and Thursday as well as the reception on Tuesday evening.

How do I become a "hosted buyer"?
There are NO hosted buyers. Each participant (Buyer, Supplier and Manufacturers Rep) pays to be a part of S.T.E.P.

What is the website for registration?
There is NO online registration. All registration will be done via fax or mail on the NMDA forms. **Checks are preferred but credit cards are accepted.** The hotel form requires a credit card to hold your room.

How much does it cost per meeting?
There is no per meeting cost. There is ONE price for the whole event.

Where are the meetings held?
The meetings are held in the manufacturers' suites. The buyers go from meeting room to meeting room.

Do I have to stay for the whole week?
You only have to stay for the time you have meetings.

How do I get a booth?
There are no booths. This is not a show; this is a purchasing event. If you are a manufacturer, the living room portion of your suite will be your showroom.

How do I show my product if I am a manufacturer/vendor/supplier?
You will be assigned a room where you can set up a "mini-showroom". The buyers will be provided with your room number and will come to YOUR room for the meetings. This is the way S.T.E.P. has been run in the past and has worked well for the vendors.

Do I have to stay at the host hotel?
Yes. In order to participate in S.T.E.P. you MUST register with NMDA and you must stay at the host hotel. In the event of a hotel sell out, NMDA will have an overflow hotel.

What if there are buyers I want to see but they are not on the invited list?
Please contact the NMDA office; if the buyer is on the approved list, they will send the buyer information and an invitation to participate. Not all buyers are eligible to participate in S.T.E.P.

How do I know where my meetings are?
NMDA will provide a list of the suites once they are assigned.

Can I make appointments with non-NMDA members if I'm an NMDA manufacturing member?
Yes, you can meet with them Wednesday – Thursday. Tuesday is for NMDA members only.

What if my NMDA member has no open times on Tuesday – can I meet with them Wednesday – Thursday?
Yes, an NMDA member can meet with another NMDA member any day from Tuesday – Thursday.

I'm not an NMDA member and I'm a buyer. How do I get appointments?
Contact the NMDA office and if you are on the approved list, they will provide you with registration materials including a list of invited manufacturers. Contact the companies you would like to meet with and make your appointments. Then make sure you register for S.T.E.P.

I am not a member of NMDA but I will be participating in S.T.E.P. Why should I join?
For information regarding the benefits of membership please contact the NMDA office (865.518.6257) or visit the NMDA website at www.nmdaonline.com. The benefits are many - including increased availability of meeting times, financial reports, networking, and affinity programs with credit card processors, and more.

How many appointments am I guaranteed if I register for S.T.E.P.?
None; it is up to YOU to contact the buyer or the vendor and set up your own appointments. This event provides you the opportunity to meet current and potential customers. NMDA provides the venue and meeting space; it is up to you to take advantage of the event. Meetings may be difficult to obtain the first year but there are numerous social venues where conversations can be started.

When is my schedule due to the NMDA office?
Your schedule must be sent to the NMDA office by **Wednesday, June 25, 2025**.

How do I contact the NMDA office?
The phone number is 865.518.6257, email contact is info@nmdaonline.com, and the website is www.nmdaonline.com.