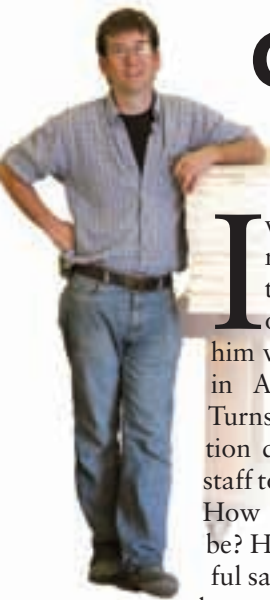


## The CNC Shop With Tom Morin

# Global Domination Plan Step One: Fly to Atlanta



trends in our industry?

I was talking to a sales rep for a major national supplier the other day. I asked him where he was staying in Atlanta during IWF. Turns out, his organization doesn't send its sales staff to trade shows. What? How on earth could this be? How can you be a useful sales rep without being up-to-date on new products and trends in our industry?

Similarly, I know lots of shops that don't attend trade shows. The excuses are plentiful: they're busy getting jobs done, can't afford to leave the shop or know the trade inside and out.

If you're one of those people, here's a short list of what IWF offers to try and tempt you away from the sawdust and lacquer fumes.

### 1. Networking

IWF is the main North American event for our industry. Every serious supplier and manufacturer is there. Local sales

reps, technicians and vice-presidents are all there to meet and answer questions. The business cards you collect at the show will come in handy all year long.

There are also lots of peers to meet. These shows attract forward-thinking business people, who are keen to share their experiences and impression of where our industry is going.

### 2. New suppliers

It's amazing how much competition there is for our business. Trade shows like IWF



are great places to find alternate sources for the products you need. The problem is usually narrowing down the field once you realize how much choice is out there.

### 3. Convenience

Tools, machines, software, sweeping compound, whatever you seek, it's there for inspection and comparison. And vendors are keen to make deals. Deals that would take weeks or months in the regular world can happen at hyper-speed at shows. Without the day-to-day distractions of running your business, you can get a lot done in three days.

### 4. Credibility

When you've taken the trouble to put up with the summer heat in Georgia, people know you mean business. You get taken seriously right away by suppliers who know you frequent this event.

### 5. Get up-to-date info

Many companies use the show as a venue to launch new products. You can be sure to see the latest laminate colour and machinery cowling re-sculptings. However, more than just trends or fads, you'll see the way how industrial technology is changing. You'll also get a good sense of changes in the business climate. How are other businesses dealing with the high dollar and the housing slowdown in the States? You can be sure to hear lots of talk and come away with valuable impressions about where things are going.

### 6. Empowerment

Bring guys from the shop floor. It's a real eye-opener for apprentices and journeymen alike to understand how intricate the woodworking business has become. It will give them a sense of pride in our industry and practical ideas for dealing with shop-floor problems.

### 7. Seminars

There is a metric ton of information available to those who can pull themselves off the exhibition floor. Organizers put together some top-notch presentations from the leaders in our industry.

### 9. Perspective

It's great to get your head out of the shop once in a while. Taking a break to step back and see your business relative to others is invaluable. I always return from these trips energized to make improvements to the way I do business.

Big shows build a strong industry. They show us our place in the global economy and get us to stop competing with the guy down the street and start competing with the whole planet. **ww**

*Tom Morin runs Morinwood Contract Millwork in Victoria BC. He's taking a short hiatus from this space to let some colleagues speak their minds.*


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