

NATM 2026 Vendor Conference Delivers Standout Performance, Showcasing the Strength of Independent Retail

Independent retail leaders and world-class brands come together to drive business and strengthen partnerships

IRVINE, CA, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Alliance of Trade Merchants](https://www.natm.com) (NATM) concluded its 2026 Vendor Conference following a standout four-day event that brought together hundreds of retail executives, buyers and leaders representing some of the world's most recognized brands at the Omni Frisco Hotel at The Star. Held July 20-23, the conference united NATM's premier independent retailers with world-class



manufacturers and vendor partners while showcasing the organization's continued expansion into strategic growth categories such as high-end audio and outdoor living, complementing its long-standing strengths in major and luxury appliances, consumer electronics and bedding.

“

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John Riddle, Head of NATM

The caliber and breadth of companies represented included industry leaders such as LG Electronics, Samsung, GE Appliances, Whirlpool, Bosch, Electrolux, Sony, TCL, Element TV and Premium Audio Company (PAC), among many others. Collectively, NATM member retailers boast approximately \$8.7 billion in buying power and reach approximately 72% of U.S. consumers, underscoring the scale and influence represented at the annual gathering.

STRONG PERFORMANCE REFLECTS GROWING MOMENTUM

The 2026 Vendor Conference delivered strong results across key measures of participation and

engagement:

- 478 registered attendees
- 100 unique participating vendors
- 500 + scheduled business meetings, including 370 Vendor Fair meetings and 163 Roundtable meetings

The Roundtable sessions included 68 Home Appliance, 60 Consumer Electronics and 35 IT meetings, demonstrating the depth of engagement across NATM's core and growing business categories.

"The results reflect continued momentum for NATM and strong engagement among manufacturers and strategic partners seeking direct access to the NATM's influential network of independent retailers," said John Riddle, Head of NATM.

A CONFERENCE DESIGNED TO DRIVE BUSINESS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Unlike a traditional trade show, the NATM Vendor Conference is intentionally focused and retailer-led, providing manufacturers and vendor partners with direct access to senior executives and buyers from some of the nation's leading independent retailers.

At the center of the conference was NATM's exclusive, appointment-only Vendor Fair, where prescheduled one-on-one meetings provided a focused environment for manufacturers to showcase products, discuss category opportunities and build strategic business relationships with NATM members.

The conference also featured private product showcases, CEO and Director meetings, Core Vendor Committee meetings and roundtables, executive interviews, and the Leadership Cocktail Reception and Dinner.

New for 2026, NATM introduced an After-Hours Cocktail Event following Wednesday evening's Leadership Dinner, creating an additional opportunity for members, vendor partners and industry executives to connect in a relaxed setting featuring entertainment, cocktails and sponsor activations.



“It’s not always the meeting that creates the greatest value,” continued Riddle. “Sometimes it’s the conversations before or after the meeting.”

EXPANDING NATM'S REACH ACROSS KEY GROWTH CATEGORIES

The 2026 Vendor Conference also reflected NATM’s continued expansion into strategic growth categories, including high-end audio and outdoor living. High-end audio was prominently represented with participation from industry players including Premium Audio Company (PAC), Cabasse and Brane Audio, among others.

The category represents a natural extension for NATM’s independent retail network, where product expertise, demonstration-driven selling and immersive in-store environments provide manufacturers with opportunities to showcase high-performance products and build their presence through the independent retail channel.

“High-end audio has to be heard to be sold,” said Riddle. “Our members have built immersive environments and expert sales teams that bring these products to life. NATM provides brands with direct access to retailers who know how to execute and drive results.”

NATM continues to build relationships with leading companies across high-end audio, outdoor living and other strategic growth categories, creating new opportunities for its members while providing manufacturers with direct access to some of the nation’s most influential independent retailers.

THE POWER OF INDEPENDENT RETAIL

The conference reinforced NATM’s longstanding focus on strengthening the competitive position of independent retailers through scale, collaboration, market intelligence and strategic relationships with leading manufacturers and vendor partners.

Data has long been an important part of that strategy. NATM has been a strong proponent of data-driven decision-making, and its established Data Dashboard provides members with visibility into performance across brands, categories and regions—helping inform strategic conversations and identify opportunities.

Combined with NATM’s collective buying power and collaborative structure, these insights give members additional intelligence to navigate changing market conditions, evaluate opportunities and make informed business decisions.

CELEBRATING INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Dinner provided one of the conference’s most memorable moments as NATM

recognized Bob Salvano, Senior Vice President, U.S. Sales at Whirlpool Corporation, as he prepares for retirement following more than three decades with Whirlpool. Salvano was recognized for his leadership, integrity, mentorship and longstanding advocacy for independent retailers, as well as the partnerships and trust he has built throughout his career.

The evening reflected one of NATM's defining principles: independent retailers are strongest when they work together.

LOOKING AHEAD

"This year's Vendor Conference demonstrated the strength of the NATM community and the tremendous value created when our members and world-class vendor partners come together," said Riddle. "The level of executive participation, quality of the conversations and collaboration throughout the week reflect what makes NATM different."

As NATM looks ahead, the organization continues to build upon its strengths through business intelligence, collaboration, strategic vendor partnerships and expansion into key growth categories—creating new opportunities for its members and vendor partners while strengthening the independent retail channel.

ABOUT NATM

Founded in 1970, the National Alliance of Trade Merchants (NATM) is a premier national buying group representing leading independent retailers across major and luxury appliances, consumer electronics, bedding, premium audio and outdoor living.

NATM member companies include Abt, ABC Warehouse, BrandsMart USA, Cowboy Maloney's Home Store, Electronic Express, Nebraska Furniture Mart (NFM), P.C. Richard & Son, RC Willey, Video Only and Walt's TV & Appliance.

Collectively, NATM members represent approximately \$8.7 billion in buying power and reach approximately 72% of U.S. consumers. Through strategic partnerships, collaborative programs, industry insights and exclusive events, NATM helps its members and vendor partners strengthen relationships, identify opportunities and drive growth.

For more information visit www.natmcorp.com or to learn more about next year's conference visit www.natmvendor.com

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