

How to get the most out of a conference

With seemingly endless sessions, speakers, networking breaks, and tradeshow booths, conferences can seem daunting and overwhelming. That being said, conferences are an amazing knowledge building opportunity and a great way to make new friends! The pros of conferences absolutely outweigh the cons as long as you approach them in the right way and make a plan for success.

Here are 5 tips that will help you get the most out of your conference experience:

1. Set goals.

What do you want to get out of this event? Do you want to learn as much as possible from the presenters? Maybe you really want to make connections with people in your field. Whatever your goal may be, thinking about what you want to get out of the event before you go will help you get the most out of your time there.

2. Review the sessions before the event

Don't go in blind. A lot of the time, conferences will have multiple sessions going on at once. In order to maximize your experience, take a look at the program before hand, read up on the speakers, and decide which talks would be the biggest benefit to you. Create your own personalized conference schedule.

3. Network. Network. Network.

Before, during, and after the event, you have the opportunity to connect with other like-minded individuals within your field.

- Before the event, check out the conference's social platforms, get involved in online conversations, and use any conference hashtags in your related messaging.
- During the event, keep those business cards handy, take part in round-table discussions, tweet about the event with event relevant hashtags, and chat people up during those networking breaks.
- After the event, connect with people you met at the conference by email or on LinkedIn and share your conference related content on your socials.

4. Be Present

Let's be honest, you're at a conference mid-week, you're going to be on your phone, whether it be to live tweet or send important email replies for work. However, it is super important to be mindful and present while at these kinds of events, so try to put down the phone whenever possible.

5. Go in with an open mind and willingness to learn

Bring a notepad, bring a pen, and bring an open mind. You're there to learn a thing or two so take notes during sessions, put the phone away, and ask questions!