How to Make the Most Out of Conferences

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AAAS/Science

- International nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world
- Membership-based organization
- Publisher of Science
- Source for broad range of career advice and resources through ScienceCareers.org
- Science Careers Outreach Program

- These slides available online at sciencecareers.org/outreach
Why do you go to conferences?
What’s your favorite part of a conference?
What do you wish you knew how to do better at a conference?
A well-chosen conference will bring you up to date with the latest findings in your field. The feedback you receive on your poster or presentation will give your research a boost. Most important, probably, is the opportunity it offers to start building your scientific network, which will yield benefits in the form of scientific collaborations, recommendation letters, postdoc appointments, and so on.

- Bart Noordam, Patricia Gosling
Surviving Conferences

- Why go to conferences?
- Preparing for conferences
- Scientific sessions
- Poster sessions
- Networking
- Exhibit halls
- Following up
Why go to conferences?

- Learn
- Gain experience
- Get feedback
- Develop your network
Before a Conference

- Which ones to go to?
- Submit materials and make arrangements
- Set goals
- Plan your schedule – include breaks!
- Prepare to network
- Pack appropriately
What are your goals for this meeting?
Making the Most Out of Conferences

Scientific Sessions … in the audience
Scientific Sessions … in the audience

- Ask questions
- Think about networking
- Don’t be disruptive!
- Take notes
Scientific Sessions … presenting
Scientific Sessions … presenting

- Prepare!
- Know your audience
- Tell a story
- Watch the time
- Take notes
Poster sessions

- A networking opportunity!
- If you’re presenting:
  - Prepare
  - A legible poster
  - Brief presentation
  - Bring business cards
Places to Network at Conferences

- Breaks
- Receptions
- Poster sessions
- Evenings
- Other activities
Strategies to Use

- Think of reasons to talk to people
- Ask questions
- Name badges
- Use the buddy system
- Prepare your opening line
Meeting People

- Entering and exiting conversations
- Always have a free hand at receptions
- Practice:
  - Your handshake
  - Meeting people
  - Speaking
- “Who else should I talk to?”
Elevator Pitches

- Be prepared to introduce yourself to people
- What to include
- Having different versions
Exhibits

- Talk to companies
- Talk to funding agencies
- Discounts
- Network
Free Time

- Make dinner plans
- Take part in fun activities
- Get ready for the next day
- Get some rest!
Making the Most Out of Conferences

Afterwards

- Organize materials you bring home
- Make a to-do list based on what you’ve learned
- Follow up with people you met
Resources

- Career Forum and 4,000+ articles on ScienceCareers.org
- Webinars at ScienceCareers.org/webinar
  - Job Searches, Career Options, Lab Management, Networking, Mentoring, and more
- These slides available at ScienceCareers.org/outreach