

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?

Making the Most Out of Conferences

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

Why go to conferences?

- Learn
- Gain experience
- Get feedback
- Develop your network

Making the Most Out of Conferences

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?

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

Strategies to Use

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

Exhibits

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

Making the Most Out of Conferences

Free Time

- Make dinner plans
- Take part in fun activities
- Get ready for the next day
- Get some rest!

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