



TIPS FOR FIRST TIME CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Make a Plan

- Reflect on what you are hoping to learn. Review the conference schedule.
- Choose sessions you are interested in learning, but always make a Plan B. Sometimes sessions are full, or after a few minutes you realize it wasn't what you thought it would be about. It's okay to leave and go to another session, especially early in the session.
- Pick up a map of the facility and make a note of where events/sessions are located.
- Download any handouts to sessions that spark your interest (whether or not you plan to attend). Print copies may not be available.
- Test your Internet connections; while turning off the sound on your smartphone is appreciated, you can still use your phone to take notes.
- Ask questions. Speakers are usually happy to speak with participants after a session.
- Take notes. Write down any questions you may have or ideas that come up to you during a session.

What to Bring

- Plenty of business cards.
- A small notebook and pens/pencils; even if you are taking notes using a device, a notebook is always handy, and sometimes technology doesn't work!
- A tote or bag to carry all the handouts, posters, and all the fun swag you may receive.
- A water bottle. Filling stations will be available at the conference center.
- Wear comfortable shoes!
- Layer your clothing. Room temperatures can differ.

Exhibits

- Plan time during your day(s) to visit vendors. They want to talk with you.
- They don't expect every conversation to end in a sale. Make sure you stop by booths of vendors you already use. They love to be able to put a face with a voice!
- If you come to the conference with a list of possible purchases, you will be able to use your time to seek out vendors who can help you.
- Take the candy -- always take the candy!

Final Thoughts

- Introduce yourself to the person sitting next to you.
- Make new friends -- networking is one of the best benefits of conference attendance.
- Budget some time to check out local sites and venues, if possible.