



Conferences & Events

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF ATTENDING



Make the most of attending conferences & events

Do you worry about giving up your time to attend a conference and worry that you won't get much out of it? Attending events can be invaluable for your career and continuing professional development plan.

Here are our top tips to make the most of the events you attend.

Before the conference

By attending events you can gain invaluable information for your career and business. You'll learn about industry trends, gain new skills, and have the opportunity to network with other industry professionals. Before the conference it might be an idea to:

- > Define why you are going
- > List 3/4 key areas you are wanting to improve or change as a result of the conference
- > Don't forget to pack some business cards to give out when you're networking.

Plan your day

At some events, there will be an array of sessions to choose from, which can be daunting! Be sure to set some time aside to plan your schedule, take a look at the event as a whole.

You know your business the best, so, at tradeshows, check what companies you would like to meet in advance so you can plan your time efficiently. All exhibitors will be listed on our website as well as in the show guide.

“ When I come back from a conference I always try to apply at least two of my learnings. If you're not changing and evolving, you're going backwards.”



The day itself

Networking is key, socialising with your peers can be one of the most useful parts of the event, is a chance to discuss business/topic needs and wants whilst finding out how other companies react to similar issues.

Great introductory questions for if you're feeling a bit shy:

- > Where have you come from?
- > What did you think of (insert presentation)?
- > What are you looking forward to seeing?

Don't be afraid of the exhibitors, they will have been handpicked to attend the event so will have useful information that could be really beneficial to your business.

At the end of each session you attend, write down the three key points that you would like to takeaway and any follow-up you want to do on the topic or with the speakers. This will help jog your memory and give you specific actions for when you get back to work and how you can most effectively implement this in the day to day running of your business.

You will have gained new information, contacts and ideas at the event, and one of the best things you can do with those resources is to share them with your colleagues.

Put a slot in your diary for 3 weeks after a conference to reflect on your learnings and how they have been applied to your business.

After the conference or event

It's important to digest what you learned after the event and think about how you can share and put your new knowledge into practice in your workplace.



Social media

We live in an online world, and our dependence on social media is such that we are often more inclined to Tweet or post about our experiences than to tell the person standing next to us. As a result, you can gain some interesting insights and opinions on events you have attended, by keeping track of what others are saying on social media.

Twitter is particularly popular at these events, so make sure you know the event hashtag and follow the conversation, this is a great way to connect with likeminded people.

Like and follow the event on Facebook and Twitter, and do the same for other brands attending. Cross-promote announcements, website links, photos, and videos from the event organiser by sharing and retweeting.

The more you engage with the hashtag, the more likely you are to get retweeted. And we know what retweets mean - maximum exposure, and a greater potential to drive traffic to your website.

If you meet someone interesting, Google them, follow them on Twitter, maybe re-tweet them, subscribe to their newsletter – it's all about showing an interest in what someone else is doing.

Feedback

At the end of most events and conferences you will be asked for your feedback. We all know that forms can be frustrating, but feedback can be crucial to the events organiser in planning and improving next year.

Be honest and constructive in your feedback so that the events can be more relevant to your needs in the future.

Put your learnings into practice

At the HTA, we send out reviews and videos to sum up the event, this content should be circulated amongst your colleagues who could not attend. Make sure that the event organisers have your email address and that you are opted in so you don't miss out.

Videos could be viewed at your next team meeting to create a conversation and debate key issues. Everyone has a different perspective, getting feedback from your staff can help brainstorm new ideas for different areas of your business. You'll spread your new skills and knowledge—and hopefully your colleagues will reciprocate the next time they go to a great event.



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