



**FALK** COMMUNICATIONS  
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# 25 Tips to Prepare for Your Next Conference

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A GUIDE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY  
AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND INDUSTRY EVENTS

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## *Acknowledgement*

Previous versions of this topic were published in:

The *April newsletter* of Women Owned Law (<https://womenownedlaw.org>)

*and*

*PLI Chronicle: 25 Tips to Prepare for Your Next Conference:* [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).  
(<https://plus.pli.edu>)

As in the past, I appreciate the thoughtful edits of Alyse Greer, Current Awareness Editor and Journalist at PLI.

I have lightly revised those discussions and publish them here to make them available to a wider audience of business professionals and attorneys.

# 25 Tips to Prepare for Your Next Conference

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## A GUIDE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND INDUSTRY EVENTS

Conference season is in full swing, following the hiatus and virtual events during the pandemic of 2020-2023.

Whether you are a seasoned networker and attendee, or you are new to the conference circuit, you can take actionable steps to make the most of your participation at an industry event or a professional association meeting.

In this e-book, you will get **step-by-step guidance** on:

- connecting with other attendees and speakers in advance
- opportunities for networking during the event
- follow-up with contacts to continue the conversation and cultivate these new relationships.

You're spending considerable money for conference registration, travel, hotel and meal expenses, not to mention time away from your office.

These 25 tips will help you increase the return on your time and financial investment.

“

*Conference season is in full swing.  
Make the most of your participation  
and expensive investment.*

”

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## ***Before the Conference***

### **Tip # 1: Peruse the Membership Directory**

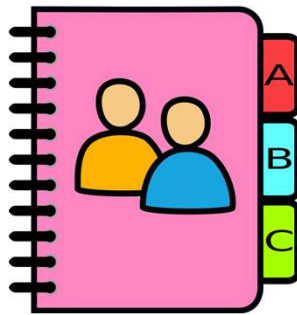
When you are a member of the host organization, peruse the membership directory to identify the people who align with your business or are potential referral sources. Locate members who are in your city or state.

Consider the categories of the people you may meet:

- current contacts
- prospective clients
- lapsed clients
- former colleagues
- reporters from industry publications
- competitors, etc.

Dash off an email to say you look forward to reconnecting with them or to meeting them, as appropriate.

Perhaps mention that you will wear a distinctive article of clothing: a green tie or a burgundy pocket square for men, and a red or patterned blazer for women. Make it easy for them to find you in the crowded gathering.



Credit: SalomeMaydron on Pixabay

“

*Peruse the membership directory to reconnect with colleagues and identify potential contacts.*

”

## Tip # 2: Assemble Your Business Cards

Bring a stack of business cards. You're naked without them.

Is there anything more embarrassing than being caught without a business card?

Perhaps it's time to redesign your business card (<https://bit.ly/2p3fdqb>), *your paper partner*. Be sure your card helps your new contacts remember you more clearly and accurately when they view it again.

Consider purchasing a business card case, to maintain the crisp feel and immaculate appearance of your cards, which are not sleeping in your wallet.

## Tip # 3: Take Your Company's Branded Item

If your business has a small branded item, bring a supply to give away.

Everyone can use a pen with your company's name on it.

I created a business-card-sized list of tips for an interview with a reporter; it also includes my contact details and website URL.

### FIVE FAST TIPS TO MAXIMIZE A MEDIA PHONE INTERVIEW

Janet Falk, Ph.D., Chief Strategist  
[www.JanetLFalk.com](http://www.JanetLFalk.com)



BONUS TIP: Plan NOW to promote the news story with your quote on your website, social media and newsletter.

**Want to practice? Contact me at**  
**[Janet@JanetLFalk.com](mailto:Janet@JanetLFalk.com) or 212-677-5770**

**Want more tips?**  
Subscribe to my monthly  
newsletter by scanning this code.



1

A reporter is NOT your friend. ANYTHING you say can be used in print and recordings. Do not consider a discussion is off the record or on background or not for attribution. Be circumspect.

2

PREPARE. Make a list of THREE important points. Print it in **16 point** type. This list will keep you focused and define the topics under discussion. Remember, it is a phone interview, so the reporter cannot see you looking at your notes.

3

DEVELOP A MEMORABLE EXAMPLE for each of the three points. Use the **four A's – Acronym, Analogy, Anecdote, Alliteration** – to catch the reporter's ear and help the reader remember what you said.

4

Get the REPORTER'S PHONE NUMBER and EMAIL ADDRESS, so you can follow-up with any material you offered; additional details that were clarified later; or thoughts that escaped you in the heat of the moment.

5

DO NOT ASK for nor expect to receive an advance look at the article or your quote.

## Tip # 4: Contact the Speakers

Contact the speakers of most interest and indicate your eagerness to hear their presentation.

Speakers report that hearing from attendees before the conference helps them refine their remarks, which then generates lively discussion.

Offer to ask a question at their session. There may be a hot topic they wish to address, but it lies beyond the scope of their remarks. I learned this trick from Arthur Levitt, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. I planted his preferred question with a reporter, so Levitt would be seen responding to a current issue.

When a reporter is the moderator of a panel, take the opportunity to introduce yourself to the journalist, especially if their focus is your industry or profession.

## Tip # 5: Rehearse Your Elevator Pitch

Update your elevator pitches: one for your target market and one for general audiences.

Rehearse them for a smooth delivery, so your new connections will remember you.

“  
*Update your elevator pitch with these tips:*  
<https://bit.ly/32KCcWN>  
”



## Tip # 6: Stay at the Conference Hotel

Make your reservation at the conference hotel.

You may run into other attendees in the lobby or at the restaurant, by design or coincidence. Take advantage of informal networking encounters with badge-wearing attendees.

Plus, you can easily decompress from information overload with a quick exit to your room upstairs.

## Tip # 7: Activate Your *Out-of-Office* Email

Set an auto-reply on your email that you are attending a conference and all urgent questions should be directed to a colleague, citing their name, email and phone number.

State that you will respond to any pending questions late in the day or upon your return.

Set the duration for the period you will be away. *Add a day*, so you can catch up on the work accumulating in the interim and follow-up with the people you met.

“

*Stay at the conference hotel to engage in informal and impromptu networking opportunities.*

”

## ***During the Conference***

### **Tip # 8: Silence Your Cellphone**

Be respectful of the speakers and attendees by silencing your electronic devices: cellphone, laptop and watch.

Do not be *that rude person* receiving reproachful glares from colleagues when your device beeps disruptively.

### **Tip # 9: Network at Breakfast**

Sit at a table with attendees you already know; learn what's new in their business, so you can catch up.

Breakfast is short; everyone wants to get to the day's keynote session, so keep the chat brief.



Credit: Dana Sohm: [www.sohmphoto.com](http://www.sohmphoto.com)

## Tip # 10: Network Informally

During the breaks between sessions, *do not peek at your email*.

Speak to the person next to you in an informal networking conversation.

## Tip # 11: Take Notes and Plan to Implement These New Ideas

Take notes during the program sessions.

Consider two action-oriented steps to implement these new ideas.

Plan to share what you've learned about:

- the state of the industry
- the outlook for legislation or regulation
- emerging opportunities or threats, etc.



Speak to the attendee seated with you.  
Credit: wavebreakmedia\_micro on Freepik

## Tip # 12: Network at Lunch

Introduce yourself to some new contacts at lunch. Actively expand your network.

## Tip # 13: Track Your Conversations

Keep track of your conversations with other attendees by writing notes on their business cards: the topics you discussed and whatever you promised to send them: an introduction to a contact, an article, a podcast and so on.

If you did not collect their business card, write a note on one of yours for a follow-up email or call.

## Tip # 14: Lead the Break-out Group's Discussion

if there is a discussion in a breakout group, volunteer to lead it and report back to the main gathering. Everyone will hear what you have to say when you stand up and address the assembled attendees.



Janet Falk presents break-out group discussion to CFA Society.

## Tip # 15: Compare Notes with Attendees

At the conference networking session, in addition to your usual questions, ask the other attendees about the various panels and sessions.

Find out what they have learned so far and the action steps they will take.

Glean ideas from the discussions at the concurrent sessions you did not attend.

## Tip # 16: Snap Some Selfies and Group Photos

Use your cellphone to snap some selfies with other attendees and in small groups.

Now you have a reason to reach out to the people in the photographs after the conference...



Credit: lookstudio on Freepik

# Follow-up After the Conference

## Tip # 17: Contact the People You Met at Mealtimes

Get in touch with the attendees with whom you shared a meal. These were longer conversations, so there is a stronger basis for connection.

Visit their website, where you can read their most recent newsletter, blog post or article. Compliment them on some aspect of what they discussed.

Ask a question, so they will be prompted to reply.

## Tip # 18: Email the People You Spoke with Casually

Assemble the business cards of the people you met in brief interactions. Compose a note along the lines of the template provided.

Be sure to include whatever you offered: an article, newsletter, name of a contact or a podcast, etc.

Don't toss their business cards in a pile. Continue the conversation.





## Tip # 19: Invite a Subscription to Your Newsletter or Blog

In advance of publishing your next newsletter or blog post, send the current one to your new contacts.

Invite them to informally keep in touch with you by subscribing.

**DO NOT** automatically subscribe people without their permission.

## Tip # 20: Share Your Photos

Identify the people in the photos you took and email them the pictures.

Tag them when you post the shots on social media



@Peter DiMarinis and Janet Falk at @IWBA

## Tip # 21: Share Insights on Social Media

Write individual posts, on LinkedIn or other social media, with the key insights gleaned from the panelists, tagging the speaker, for example, @PatLewis.

My LinkedIn posts of highlights of a two-day conference on social media issues generated *more than 3,400 views*.

## Tip # 22: Connect with the Panelists

Include the link to your social media post in an email to the panelist.

State that their ideas moved you to look at the situation in a new way and indicate how you will put that insight into practice.

A little flattery or posing a question will likely generate a response.



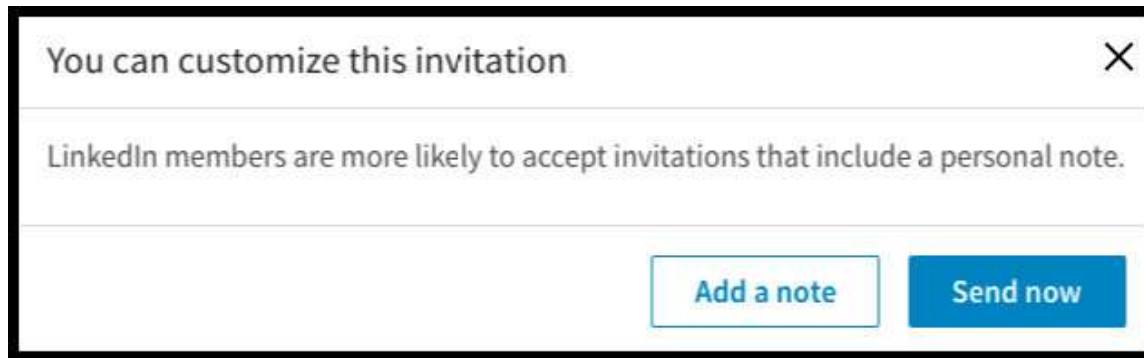
Credit: Mattia Di Tomasso



## Tip # 23: Connect on Social Media

If you're active on LinkedIn or another social media platform, invite the contacts you met to connect with you there.

Customize the connection request by mentioning your conversation at the conference.



## Tip # 24: Congratulate the Conference Organizers

Congratulate the committee members or the organization that hosted the conference.

Offer positive and/or constructive feedback, as well as some photos, if appropriate.

Mention a topic that might be discussed at a future event; maybe they'll invite you as a speaker or moderator.

## Tip # 25: Mark Your Calendar for the Next Follow-up

Set calendar reminders for the next follow-up with the new connections of greatest interest.

Remember the members you identified in your review of the membership directory in tip #1?

If you didn't meet them at the conference, add them to your calendar as well.



Credit: FinnPetersenSH on Pixabay

# Template for Email Follow-up

Here's a template with potential topics and slots to insert specific references, according to the interaction you and the contact had at the conference.

Use all or some of these suggestions as you customize your follow-up note consistent with your style and personality:

**Subject line:** Great meeting you at the Name of Conference

Name,

It was great to meet you at the **Name of Conference** and learn about your business focused on \_\_\_\_\_.

When I visited your website, I was interested to read about \_\_\_\_\_.

Reflecting on our conversation about \_\_\_\_\_, this (article, newsletter, podcast, blog post, video) discusses \_\_\_\_\_ and may be worthwhile. What do you think about it?

You mentioned your interest in \_\_\_\_\_. If you are not already acquainted with my colleague \_\_\_\_\_ (link to website), please let me know. I'll gladly introduce you and arrange a breakfast chat or a three-way Zoom call.

You can keep in touch with me on a regular basis by subscribing to my newsletter/blog here (link).

Of course, I'm happy to receive yours as well. Please sign me up.

Shall we connect on LinkedIn? (link to your profile)

Looking forward to continuing our conversation. Please let me know how I might be helpful to you.

Regards,

Signature block

Website URL

Office phone number

## Bonus

### *Bring Your Own Name Tag*

Sadly, many conference organizers create name tags that perform poorly for networkers. The font may be small and require approaching the attendee close enough to peer at a man's jacket lapel or a woman's bosom. The company name rarely indicates the service that a professional provides.

Name tags on lanyards dangle below the line of vision and turn inwards.

The solution is to ***bring your own name tag***.

With my name in 40-point font and my profession of Public Relations in 32-point font, the name tag is easy to read.

Conference attendees always notice it. My name tag often starts a conversation about why I use it, which is followed by inquiries about my work as a Public Relations professional.



Credit: Macrovector on Freepik

# IT'S TIME TO *PREPARE* FOR YOUR NEXT CONFERENCE

**Congratulations!** You've now learned 25 tips to connect with attendees and speakers at conferences and build relationships with them.

Plan now for your next conference. Contact Janet Falk for a ***Complimentary Strategic Communications (30 minutes)*** to review your:

- Business Card (Tip #2)
- Branded Giveaway (Tip #3)
- Elevator pitch (Tip #5)
- Articles, newsletters and podcast appearances for follow-up (Tips # 17-18)

Invite Janet Falk to conduct a **one-hour private workshop** on best practices to attend a conference for a minimum of six professionals, similar to a webinar given to attorneys. As host you attend for FREE; all others pay a fee. No travel expenses in the New York City area. Consider a virtual session.

Janet Falk of Falk Communications and Research provides Marketing Communications services to attorneys with a solo practice or a small firm, accountants, business owners and consultants.

Contact her at **212.677.5770** or **[Janet@JanetLFalk.com](mailto:Janet@JanetLFalk.com)**.

Find more resources on her website **[www.JanetLFalk.com](http://www.JanetLFalk.com)**, where you can also subscribe to her monthly newsletter.

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