

# Maximizing Your Conference Experience: A Lawyer's Guide to Before, During and After the Event

by Stefanie M. Marrone on 6/20/24; Reprinted with permission from [The Social Media Butterfly](#)



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Conferences are powerful opportunities for lawyers to expand their networks, gain valuable insights and elevate their careers. But simply attending these events isn't enough to tap into their full potential. To truly benefit, you need a strategic approach: careful planning before, active engagement during and thoughtful follow-up afterward. This guide will show you how to make the most of every conference, transforming each one into a catalyst for professional growth and success.

## Before the Conference

- **Define Your Goals:** Before you even register for a conference, it's essential to define what you want to achieve. Are you looking to network with potential clients, learn about the latest legal trends or position yourself as a thought leader, or some sort of combination of all of these? Having clear goals will not only guide your activities and interactions but will also ensure you make meaningful connections and derive maximum value from the event.
- **Research the Conference:** Familiarize yourself with the conference agenda, speakers, and attendees. Identify the sessions that align with your interests and goals. Reach out to speakers or other attendees via LinkedIn or email to set up meetings in advance. This proactive approach ensures that you make valuable connections.
- **Prepare Your Materials:** Make sure your business cards (extra points if you have an electronic one!), professional headshots and LinkedIn profile are up-to-date. Prepare an "elevator pitch" that succinctly describes who you are, what you do and what you're looking to achieve at the conference. Consider bringing along any relevant case studies or materials that showcase your expertise.
- **Plan Your Schedule:** Conference days can be hectic, so having a well-thought-out schedule is key. Highlight the must-attend sessions and note any downtime for networking or meetings. Use conference apps or tools to keep track of your schedule and make the most of your time.

## During the Conference

- **Engage Actively:** Attend sessions that align with your goals and participate actively. Ask questions, engage in discussions and connect with speakers and other attendees. Active participation not only enhances your learning but also increases your visibility.
- **Network Strategically:** Networking is a crucial part of any conference. Approach it with a strategic mindset. Attend networking events, social gatherings and use breaks to introduce yourself to new people. Remember to follow up with connections promptly, while the memory of your interaction is still fresh.
- **Utilize Social Media:** Live-tweeting or posting about the conference on LinkedIn can boost your visibility. Share key insights, quotes from speakers and your thoughts on sessions. This not only positions you as engaged and knowledgeable but also helps you connect with others attending the conference.
- **Take Notes:** Whether you prefer digital notes or a traditional notebook, document key takeaways from sessions and discussions. These notes will be invaluable for post-conference follow-ups and applying what you've learned to your practice.

## After the Conference

- **Follow Up:** Follow up with the people you met at the conference. Send personalized LinkedIn connection requests, emails or messages mentioning your conversation. This helps cement the relationship and keeps you top-of-mind for future opportunities.
- **Reflect and Implement:** Take time to reflect on what you learned and how it can be applied to your practice. Share your insights with your team and consider writing a blog post or internal memo summarizing key takeaways. Implement any new strategies or ideas you've gathered to improve your practice.



- **Share Your Experience:** Share your conference experience with your network. Write a LinkedIn post and/or article summarizing the highlights and insights you gained. This positions you as a thought leader and can spark conversations with others who attended or are interested in the conference topics.
- **Plan for the Next Conference:** Finally, use the momentum from this conference to plan for the next one. Review what worked well and what didn't and adjust your strategy accordingly. Continuous improvement will ensure that you maximize the value of every conference you attend.

### Key Takeaways

- **Set Clear Goals:** Define what you want to achieve to guide your activities and maximize conference benefits.
- **Research and Prepare:** Familiarize yourself with the conference details, update your materials and plan your schedule.

- **Engage Actively:** Participate in sessions, network strategically, use social media and take notes to enhance your experience.
- **Follow Up and Reflect:** Maintain connections, implement new insights, share your experiences with others in person and online.

Conferences provide many opportunities for professional growth, networking and learning. By strategically planning before the event, actively engaging during the conference and following up diligently afterward, you can ensure that you gain the maximum benefit from your participation. Whether you aim to expand your network, stay informed about industry trends or establish yourself as a thought leader, a well-executed conference strategy can significantly enhance your career. Remember, the effort you invest in preparing and participating will pay off in the connections you make and the knowledge you gain.