

Making the Most of a Large Academic Conference

[Presented by the Institutional Success Team @ OnlineMedEd](#)

BEFORE



Create a plan: Create a plan in advance with your schedule of sessions & individual meetings. Make dinner reservations if necessary. Build in the breaks you'll need.



Create your elevator pitch: Develop your quick introduction that reflects who you are and what matters to you:

1. Who are you? Name, organization, role, expertise in med ed
2. What is your ask or What do you do? One thing you'd like to gain from the exchange or a sentence that describes what you actually do.
3. Why should they care? Make the interaction relevant for the other person
4. How will you take action? Ask to exchange business cards and/or a follow up call!

DURING



Seek informal conversations: Capitalize on the hallways and time before/after sessions, introducing yourself and exploring new ideas and people with different perspectives.



Promote a colleague: If you're more senior or more extroverted, grab a colleague and introduce them to 1-2 people at the poster session or kickoff reception, and let them lead.



Take notes + schedule reflection time: The sessions will give you good content but will also likely spark new ideas on your current experiences. Be ready when the inspiration strikes and have a notebook or iPad or some place to take your notes. Schedule some time to reflect on what you're learning and who you're meeting.



Build your social capital: Make meaningful connections by using your elevator pitch, being curious about the people you meet and the work you're learning about and asking questions more than offering opinions. Use open body language, smile, shake hands firmly, and make eye contact!



Make the most of the Exhibit Hall: Learn about new ideas and vendors and come say hi to us at OnlineMedEd!

AFTER



Post-conference follow-up: Send emails afterward to follow up on meetings and promises, send thank you notes, or 'nice to meet you' notes, and ask for 30-min meetings for additional conversation if appropriate!



Improve your practice locally: Summarize some conference findings for colleagues unable to attend and find ways to apply what you learned at the conference.

Selected References

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