We polled several key leaders in our industry to learn their best “tips and tricks” for getting the most out of a conference. They had a lot to say but here are their top tips:

| Review the delegate list before attending the conference and conduct research on people you want to meet | • Research those you would like to meet at the conference  
• Learn about them, and have something to say  
  • Research the cases in which they are involved  
  • Areas in which they are an expert  
  • Common interests / commonalities  
• Contact them before the conference and try to establish a specific time to introduce yourself  
• Better to go into a room with a goal of meeting three particular persons than just making random connections |
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<td>Circulate the delegate list around your firm</td>
<td>• Circulate the delegate list to your colleagues to see if they can make any introductions for you; people not attending the conference will know people who are and can make an introduction for you</td>
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| Set a goal to send out 5 or 10 emails before the conference to schedule opportunities to get to know people better at the conference | • Invite people to:  
  • breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee, or drinks  
  • meet at a break, attend a panel together  
• Conferences are fluid so leave some openings / flexibility in your calendar  
• Introduce people you know to people you meet; try to build good groups of people |
| Bring business cards but don’t hand out 100 business cards | • Handing out business cards like a Vegas dealer will not work!  
• Make and maintain eye contact, don’t look over their shoulder looking at the next person’s name tag  
• Remember, it’s a journey; a process  
• Most people will be happy to help you under three basic conditions:  
  • They like you  
  • They remember you  
  • You ask them |
|**Listen carefully when meeting people** | **Goal:** listen more than being heard  
| | Learn something about them  
| | - Personal likes, interests, opinions  
| | - Take good mental notes  
| | Contacts are good for many different things  
| | - Leads  
| | - Introductions / networking  
| | - Intelligence  
| **Follow-up** | V-card – send one within a few hours (much better than business cards)  
| | LinkedIn invitation – send within 1-3 days  
| | E-mail – following weeks  
| | Circulate articles of interest  
| | Use Google Alerts to follow and keep current on common cases / points of interest / key people  
| **The value of connectivity is enormous** | Be a good wingman  
| | Don’t assume your friends know a person… make it a point to introduce them  
| | - People appreciate this!  
| | Ask to be introduced  
| | Talk to people you don’t know  
| **Think of this as building an alumni network** | It's always about:  
| | - Building relationships  
| | - Fostering goodwill  
| | - Leaving a good impression  
| | You never know who will come through in that hour of need |