

Guide: How to Get the Most Out of Your Events

No matter what form of event you decide upon – if you prepare well, you will benefit more from it. Preparation does not end with registration and booking your trip. There is a lot more that you can do in the days before, during and after participation.

How to Get More Out of Your Events

TIPS “TO GO”:

BEFORE THE EVENT

- Finish important to-dos → you will have a clear head
- “What is my aim for this event?” Always ask yourself this question repeatedly and knowingly!
- Follow the Twitter hashtag of the event and participate in discussions.
- Timetable: which lectures do I want to attend? Whom do I want to speak with?
- Content-based preparation: read blogs, watch videos and podcasts of preferred speakers and note down your initial questions.

1

AT THE EVENT

Examples of conversation starters

- Are you attending this event for the first time?
- What do you want to happen this year?
- How did you come to know about this event?
- Are you from Stuttgart?
- Oh, are you working on a project related to XY? I’ve heard about it...
- Which speakers can you recommend?
- Look for objects that you can talk about: “Oh, you have these great stickers too! Where can I get them?”

2

AT THE EVENT

Elevator pitch: wow your audience in just 60 seconds with an elevator pitch

Questions for the elevator pitch:

- What is your audience? Whom do you work for?
- What can you offer your counterparts?
- What is your unique selling point?
- What is your motivation and passion?
- Should your counterpart register for the newsletter, call you or take your card now? Give the direction for a “call to action”.

3

AT THE EVENT

Elevator pitch: wow your audience in just 60 seconds with an elevator pitch

How to present yourself in an elevator pitch:

- Thorough preparation: put every second to good use
- Focus on what’s essential: what should your counterparts remember?
- Emotions: narrate an anecdote, give a comparison or narrate a personal story so that they remember you
- Be authentic!
- Empathy: anyone who is interested is interesting

4

AFTER THE EVENT

- Make a note of interesting moments: share your highlights or new insights on a particular topic in a blog, picture gallery or video.
- Have you made new contacts? Connect with them via LinkedIn, Twitter and XING. When you do so, refer to the important points of your conversation with them.
- Tip: jot down points about a person or a conversation during the event itself.

5

Be prepared, have fun and make the best of it. Good communication isn’t rocket science — it is a craft that you build gradually.

[THIS IS THE PLACE FOR YOUR PERSONAL MOTIVATIONAL SLOGAN.]

6

Before the Event:

- **A Clear Head**

Ideally, complete all important projects before an event and plan your post-event tasks in such a way that you are not pressed for time. You will see that you have more mind space! A new event opens up new opportunities – focus on that and stay motivated. A positive attitude is a basic requirement for personal success and is also infectious.

- **Your Motivation: What Do I Want to Achieve?**

Know why you are participating in the event. This way, you can represent your standpoint more effectively.

Six most common motivations for attending an event:

- Acquiring new skills
- Contacting industry experts
- Connecting with potential customers
- Training
- Contacting potential employees
- Contacting potential employers

- **Research Speakers and Exhibitors**

Podcasts, blogs and videos of speakers and exhibitors are good ways of getting a first impression of the person. The information you read will help you formulate targeted questions.

- **“Up-to-Date” on Social Media**

You have just generated a lot of interest and someone happens to enter your name on XING. It would be a pity if that person clicks on an outdated profile. Update your profiles before the event. Also: make connections even before the event by mixing with the Twitter folk using the event hashtag.

- **Make a Timetable**

- In your personal timetable, make a list of the lectures and workshops you are participating in, the names of people you would like to speak with, and at what times you would like to speak with them. It is highly probable that you will not follow the timetable exactly as it is, but it will help you keep track.
- The following questions will help you choose workshops and presentations:
 - What are your project goals for the next year?
 - What subject are you currently working on professionally?
 - What subject could enrich you and your colleagues and improve your day-to-day life?
 - Which speakers have worked with similar products and services?
- Schedule small breaks in between presentations. You will be pleased to get some time off to take a deep breath and process all the new information you have acquired. Tip: keep a note pad or a “note app” handy.

At the Event:

- **Candor Is Appreciated**

Widen your horizons and make contacts with people you don't know yet and who do not belong to the same industry.

- **Conversation Starters**

Think of questions that are related to common topics and that can establish a personal connection. Questions that break the ice work like communicative catalysts.

Examples of some questions to break the ice:

- Are you attending this event for the first time?
- What has made a deep impression on you?
- What do you hope to gain from this event?
- How did you come to know about this event?
- Are you from Stuttgart?
- Oh, are you working on a project related to XY? I've heard about that ...
- Which speakers can you recommend?
- You can also try this approach:
 1. How long have you been in this profession?
 2. What did you do before that?
 3. Are you pursuing your passion?

After the second or third question, you will discover points of common interest that you can build on afterwards.

- Look for objects that you can talk about: "Oh, you have these great stickers too! Where can I get them?"
- Remember not to ask too many "why" and "how" questions. These are not always welcome in a casual conversation.

- **Putting on a Good Face**

If your interest is genuine, it will show in your facial expressions. Your counterpart can sense when you fake interest. In difficult situations, motivational counselors advise: a smile on the lips works positively on people's moods.

- **The Famous First Impression: Elevator Pitch**

Wow your audience in just 60 seconds with an elevator pitch. The idea behind an elevator pitch is to impress your customer or boss within the short duration of an elevator run. It is quite possible that you don't get into an "elevator situation" at the event. However, if someone asks you what you do professionally, you will be equipped to answer the question.

Content of the elevator pitch:

- What is your audience? Whom do you work for?
- What can you offer your counterparts?
- What is your unique selling point?
- What is your motivation and passion?
- Should your counterpart register for the newsletter, call you or take your card now? Present the direction for a "call to action".

How to convince your audience with your elevator pitch:

- Thorough preparation: put every second to good use
- Focus on what's essential: what should your counterparts remember?
- Emotions: narrate an anecdote, give a comparison or narrate a personal story so that they remember you
- Authenticity: don't play-act!
- Empathy: anyone who is interested is interesting! Questions and suggestions are always welcome.

After the Event

- **Make a Note of the Highlights and Interesting Moments**

Share your interesting moments and new insights on a particular topic in the form of an article, picture gallery or video.

- **Have You Made New Contacts?**

Connect with them via LinkedIn, Twitter and XING. While the event is fresh in their minds, write to them making references to the event; refer to the important points of your conversation with them. They will appreciate your thoughtfulness. Tip: jot down points about a person or a conversation during the event itself, so that they will be of use later.

6

At events, it is important to listen to interesting presentations and explore your field of work. But it is also necessary to get opportunities to position yourself. The opportunity to get to know new people personally is invaluable. Be prepared, have fun and make the best of it. Don't forget: no one is born a master. Good communication isn't rocket science — it is a craft that you build gradually.