

If you would like to enjoy greater benefits from the conferences you attend, then I recommend you do the following **before you go**.

1. Identify the specific people (or kind of people) you want to meet or communicate with at the conference.
2. Evaluate your motives for wanting to network with them at a casual or deeper level, and then readjust your motives if they are largely selfish or dishonest.
3. Clarify your communicative goals for the time you plan to spend with each person (e.g., get updated on their research, learn about new trends in their field, hear their views on a specific project or issue, gather useful knowledge from their area of expertise, obtain some advice on a particular challenge you are facing, etc.).
4. Create a list of the appropriate English (or other language) questions that you want to ask in order to attain your goals, and then learn your questions well enough to ask them smoothly and naturally.
5. Plan how you will respond to questions (in English or another language) that you will likely be asked at the event.
6. Make sure you have an attractive business card (even if you are a student or currently unemployed), which you can give to anyone you meet whom you'd like to communicate with further.

Then, attend the event, meet your target people, and communicate with them effectively so that you can achieve your goals.

Also, make sure to contribute value to the people you meet in order to make their time with you beneficial to them as well. No one enjoys networking with selfish people who only have their own professional interests in mind.

After the event, send each of your new friends an email message or note card to tell them how much you appreciated meeting them. Also thank them for something specific they said to advise, educate, inspire, or encourage you.

If you attend conferences with clear network goals in mind and prepare yourself to achieve them, then your time at conferences will be spent much more productively and enjoyably in ways that will bring long lasting benefits to you and your new acquaintances.