

Are you Ready? Preparing and Planning to Make the Most of your Conference Experience

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ABSTRACT

Whether you are first time conference attendee or a long-time conference attendee, this paper can help you in getting the most out of your conference experience. As long-time conference attendees and volunteers, we have found that there are some things that people just don't think about when planning their conference attendance. In this paper we will discuss helpful tips such as making the appropriate travel arrangements, what to bring, networking and meeting up with friends and colleagues, and how to prepare for your role at the conference. We will also discuss maintaining a workplace presence with your paying job while at the conference.

INTRODUCTION

To be added

MAKING APPROPRIATE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- Know the start time and end time of conference to make sure you plan arrival and departure so you can be present at the ENTIRE conference.
- Find out from the conference committee if you need to be there early (i.e., if you have volunteer / conference duties that require you on site early or to stay late).
- See if anyone you know is coming to the conference and arriving around the same time so you can carshare to and from airport, train station, or nearby locations. Think about creating a shared Google spreadsheet to keep track of friends' and colleagues' travel schedule.
- Consider sharing a hotel room with a friend/colleague(s).
- Research and make land transportation arrangements ahead of time instead of when arriving at airport (i.e., book SuperShuttle, Uber or the like in advance.)

WHAT TO PACK

- Multi-prong adapter especially if you are sharing a room. In some hotels only a few outlets may really work so having a multi-prong adapter is beneficial.
- Extension cord or 15'+ charging cables are a plus in case there is not a plug near the bed or the work area.
- First-aid kit.
- Medications – prescription and OTC (e.g., Airborne, emergen-C, allergy meds).
- Food/snacks – this is essential if you have any dietary restrictions. Even conferences that may accommodate special diets at dedicated conference meals (i.e. a dinner) may not provide special diets for other meals.
- Swimsuit and athletic gear if you want down time at the pool or hot tub (provided there is one in hotel), work out at the gym or go for a run. This is a great way to unwind especially if you were on your feet all day.

ENGAGING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CONFERENCE

- Announce your attendance, presentations, leadership at the conference on your social media channels and encourage your followers to participate.
- Take advantage of resources such as SAS Communities to announce your attendance, ask questions, provide answers, and share information before, during and after the conference.
- If presenting, take advantage of Github at SAS to share your code, and share your concepts on SAS Communities, LinkedIn, your own blog, etc.
- Attend “meetups” or “Birds of a Feather” sessions at the conference.
- Participate in extracurricular conference events, such as the charity events or photo booths, even if you are shy!

NETWORKING AND MEETING FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

- If planning on arriving early and staying late to have a mini vacation with your conference friends, this is where the shared Google spreadsheet comes in handy.
- Even if not planning a mini vacation, coordinating arrival and departure times can help save on land transportation costs.
- Research and discuss what there is to do ahead of time, see if special reservations are needed, and BOOK EARLY.

PREPARE FOR YOUR ROLE AT THE CONFERENCE

Whether you are attending, presenting or working on the committee you need to prepare yourself.

- If you are on the Executive committee
- If you are a Sponsor / Exhibitor
- If you are a Section Chair
- If you are a Presenter
- If you are a Volunteer
 - Registration
 - Session Coordinator
 - Code Doctor
- If you are an Attendee
 - First Time
 - Old Hand

WORK NEVER ENDS

Some companies may require that you keep up with the demands of your paying job while you are attending the conference.

- Be prepared for spotty wireless / internet – make arrangements for a hotspot or upgraded internet access early.
- Consider where you will be able to take calls, etc.

CONCLUSION

To be written

REFERENCES

To be written (if applicable)

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To be written

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APPENDIX

Checklist to make sure you have everything