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Conference Cheat Sheet

One page for any professional working a conference: what to say walking up, while you talk, and on the way out, and what to do afterwards so the conversations turn into something.

YOUR ROLE AND MINDSET

Role: represent yourself (and your organisation, if you're there for one), and get excited about your field. Be curious, ask questions, enjoy meeting new people.

Objective: understand what's happening in the industry and where you fit, gather useful insights, and leave with a few real connections.

Mindset: approachable, helpful, confident. Go to give, not to get. It's going better than it feels: people like you more than you think.

ETIQUETTE

- Be genuine, respectful and fun. The industry is small: today's competitor could be tomorrow's collaborator.
- Nobody expects you to know everything, so ask lots of questions.
- Enjoy yourself, and remember why you came: gather information, build relationships.
- If you came with colleagues, check in with them often to compare notes and split up the room.

BEFORE YOU GO (THE 2-MINUTE VERSION)

Write **one goal** for the event · list the **5 people or organisations** you most want to meet · message **3 lapsed contacts** who'll be there ("I'll be at [event], coffee?") · send **5 "coffee?" notes** to priority targets · post that you're going and what you're interested in.

EXTROVERSION 101

The goal is to meet several people, **remember their names** (say each name three times in the first couple of minutes), make at least one connection, personal or professional, and leave them wanting more rather than wanting to get away. The key is casual, intentional and brief. If it's going well, talk longer. If you sense the conversation closing, end it first, and leave with grace. Remember the name, say you were glad to meet them, make one connection: do that all day and your network grows, and you enjoy the conference.

LINES THAT WORK

Approach

"Hi, do you mind if I join you at this table?"

"Hey, I love that swag. Where did you get it?"

"Mind if I interrupt? I saw your badge and wanted to introduce myself."

"Sorry to jump in, but where are you all from?"

"What do you think of the conference so far?"

"Have you been to this conference before?"

Mingle

"Where are you from?"

"What's your role at [organisation]? What does your team do?"

"Interesting. What's your favourite part of it?"

"What's the hardest problem you're working on right now?"

"How are you handling [that challenge] today?"

"What are you most excited about at this conference?"

"Who else should I be talking to?"

Leave

"It's been a pleasure to meet you, [name]. I hope to bump into you again. Have a great day!"

"How about we trade cards before I have to go?"

"Thanks for sharing. I have to run, but let's connect on LinkedIn."

"I've got to meet up with a colleague, but I'll see you around?"

The generous exit: introduce them to someone first ("You two should meet"), then go.

WORKING A STAND OR BOOTH

Attract → Understand → Explain → Decide

1. **Attract:** stand up, smile, greet people warmly, offer a casual opener. Never sit, scroll or huddle with your team.
2. **Understand:** ask before you pitch: their role, their biggest challenge, how they handle it today. Judge how relevant you are to each other.
3. **Explain:** give your value pitch in a sentence or two, tied to what you just heard.
4. **Decide:** deepen ("How are you solving [challenge] today?"), move on politely ("Great chatting, thanks for stopping by!"), or book a follow-up.

CALL TO ACTION: BOOK THE SIDE MEETING

"This has been a great conversation. How about a 15-minute meeting tomorrow at 10? We can dig into [their challenge]."

"Who else should join from your side?"

Send the invite on the spot (confirm name and email).

CAPTURE AND FOLLOW UP

Within **5 minutes** of each real conversation: name · organisation · the one next step · hot? "Send me something" means hot.

Afterwards: hot contacts within **24 hours**, everyone else within **48 hours**. Mention something only the two of you discussed, and end with one concrete next step. Most people never follow up; doing it puts you ahead of the room.

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