

Leverage Your 2010 Conferences!

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Make CLE and Industry Conferences Work for You!



You probably have your eye on a big conference or multi-day CLE program coming up in the new year.

The event is still months away, yet you're concerned about how long it will keep you away from the office....AND you may be wondering how you can squeeze some business development benefit out of the deal.

YOU CAN MAKE CONFERENCES WORK FOR YOU!

Sara Holtz, author of *Bringin' in the Rain*, offers this step-by-step approach for professionals who want to leverage conferences for networking and marketing pay-off .

Before the event:

Find out who might be attending.

Try to get a list of attendees in advance.

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If your potential clients or referral sources plan to be there, set up specific times to get together.

Organize a get-together.

Invite a number of people you know or would like to know. They'll enjoy getting to meet each other and you, and you'll receive kudos as the organizer.

Take advantage of travel.

If the conference is in a city other than your hometown, use it as an opportunity to reconnect with clients, colleagues, and referral sources.

Tap into your contact management system to identify the people you know in the city where the conference is being held. Invite them to have a meal or drink with you.

During the event:

Be prepared to NETWORK!

Have a game plan for [effective networking](#). Go to the conference with the goal of having one or two meaningful conversations.

Be sure to have some good ["sure fire" networking questions](#) in your back pocket at all times.

Organize an event on the spot.

If you haven't arranged to get together with people before the conference, organize a group to have dinner or drinks with during the event.

Take advantage of breaks.

Use time in-between sessions to connect with other attendees. Do not spend this time on your BlackBerry.

After the event:

Load your new contact information into your database.

Include a notation about how you met them, their interests, and other pertinent data.

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Follow up with people you met.

Ping your network to stay in touch, focusing on those who seem like high-potential opportunities.

Remember, attending a conference is one thing - *working it* is another.

Networking should begin the moment the event is booked and carry on *indefinitely* with every new contact you make.

Follow these steps and you'll watch your list of contacts grow and your book of business get even BIGGER!

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