

BUSINESS CONFERENCES



con-fer-ence

/ˈkɒnf(ə)rəns/

NOUN

A formal meeting for discussion.

VERB

To take part in a conference or conference call: "video conferencing".

Different types of conferences include (but are not limited to):

- Academic conferences
- Conference calls
- News conferences
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Peace conferences
- Settlement conferences
- Trade conferences
- Business conferences

Business conferences bring together professionals from a specific industry and allow them to discuss current issues and changes in one central place.

THE CONFERENCES THAT WE'LL BE TALKING ABOUT

There is a lot that goes into making a decision to attend a business conference and that's what we're here to help with. We promise if you keep reading, you will get answers to all the questions we're sure you're thinking of right now.

WHY ATTEND A CONFERENCE

This may seem like a basic question, but it is an extremely valid one.

Different people go to different conferences for different reasons. There is no single answer as to why someone should attend a conference. What conference you choose can depend on a number of factors, ranging from what industry you work in to where you are in your career.

To help you out a bit, we're going to introduce you to three prime examples of people who attend conferences...

VIRTUAL/PHONE CONFERENCE

Pros: Easy to attend – you just need internet and/or phone access and you're good to go! No travel time, no hotel stay and nasty airport food!

Cons: No networking – when you're participating in a virtual conference, you will lose that face-to-face interaction that you would get if you were to go onsite to a conference.

VS.

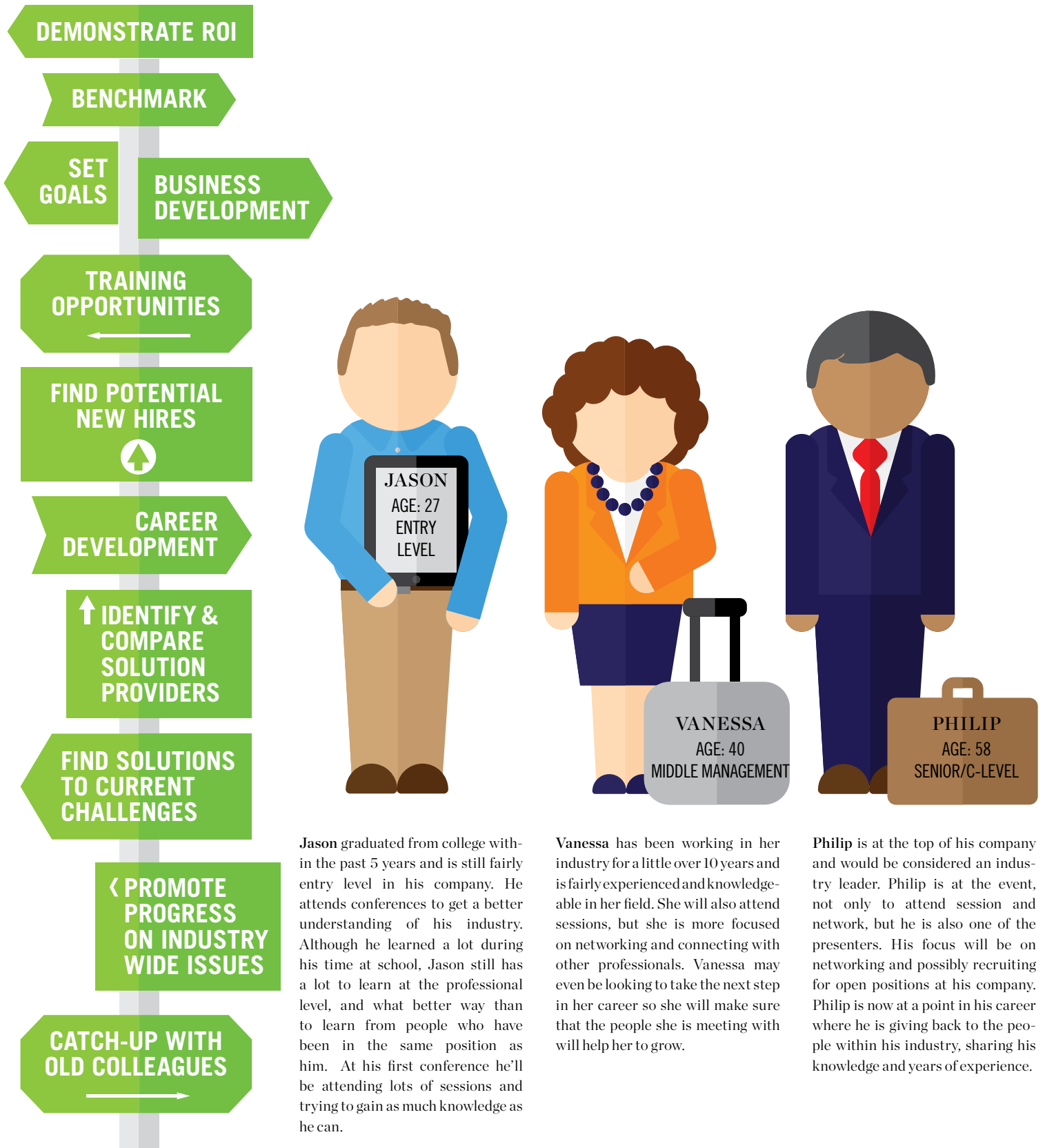
ONSITE CONFERENCE

Pros: You're making real connections – it's always easier to talk and connect with someone when you're face to face.

Cons: Planning and cost – going onsite to an event or conference means time spent away from work, time traveling and with that the cost of travel



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF A CONFERENCE?



HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT CONFERENCE

Options. It's the 21st century, we have tons of them! And that is still true when it comes to choosing a conference. So it's important you take time to factor in all the different aspects of a conference in order to find the right one for you.

How to Pick the Right Conference



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The location of a conference plays an important part for most people in the decision to attend or not, for different reasons. Some organizations have travel limitations, so it is necessary that they find the conference that is closest to them. Others may have more flexibility and can choose a conference that involves a bit more travel and more time out of the office. But the important thing to remember is that any traveling will be worth it.



BREAKING INTO THE PIGGY BANK

Another important factor is the price of the conference. Usually, it is possible to find an event that is within a reasonable travel distance from your office and within your training or professional development budget. Remember, we want to help you achieve a solid value return on your conference investment.



ARE THESE MY PEERS?

Different conferences are geared towards different career levels, so when it comes time to choose the right conference make sure you're not just focusing on industry. If a senior level executive is at an entry level conference, they are going to end up just wasting their time and money. Vice versa, if someone entry level is at a senior level conference, they're not going to learn anything...they'll probably leave more confused than when they came.



ROI

Everyone wants to see a pay back on an investment. A conference is an investment. You are paying to attend a conference where you will be able to come back to the office the next week with new practices and ways for you to improve your organization.

How to Get Yourself to a Conference



FINDING ROOM IN THE CALENDAR

No one has spare time in today's business environment. We're never far from our laptops or smart-phones and managers often have calendars busting at the seams. Taking some time away from your regular work schedule may seem almost impossible. But it's important to remember that the conversations and knowledge that happen at conferences will ultimately benefit not only yourself, but your company as well.



BUDGET VS. BENEFIT

Budgets are shrinking. And when there are funds available, chances are they have several different excellent business cases trying to get a piece. Leaving the office during business hours, especially when there is travel and event cost involved, can sometimes be hard to justify. Many individuals attending a conference face this challenge, but they find that the knowledge sharing and networking that they experience at conferences is a value far beyond the cost of the conference.

Your conference investment may allow you to save or generate \$500,000 to \$1,000,000+ in the first two years alone by:

- Discovering and implementing strategies executive management will love and that few other people know of
 - Idea sharing with a VP over a coffee break, luncheon or reception, or even an elevator ride
 - Benchmarking with your peers during intimate round-table sessions
 - Picking up the phone and calling that SVP you met after the keynote session to discuss a great idea you have
 - Building your LinkedIn connections and career possibilities
-

CONFERENCE TIPS

GROUPS – DIVIDE & CONQUER

Coming to a conference in a group is a good idea, especially if the conference format has sessions that run concurrently. But just because you come in a group doesn't mean you should stick together the entire time. Make sure everyone is attending different sessions, asking different questions and networking with different people. If you want to check in with your team at a conference, pick a time to come together and discuss what you have learned and shared.

BUSINESS CARDS

If you come to a conference with only one thing it should be your business card! Since you are networking and talking to many new people, you want to have a way to share your contact information quickly and in a professional manner.

BONUS TIP

Make sure you are collecting other people's business cards too-the more new cards the better!

ASK QUESTIONS!

More often than not, at the end of every discussion there will be time for questions and answers. Don't clam up if you have something to ask! You came to the conference to learn and to get information that you wouldn't have access to otherwise, so questions are important.

DON'T NEGLECT THE VENDORS

We all know that no one likes to be pitched to 1000 times in a day, but the vendors at business conferences are there for a reason! They have experience working with other organizations in the industry and could be the exact people that you are looking to speak to. Make sure you schedule some time to walk around the exhibit booths, plus, chances are you'll be able to leave with some free stuff too.

ATTEND THE SESSIONS

There are many aspects to a conference, but don't forget the core of the event are the sessions. When you get the conference agenda, plan out your day. Find what sessions you want to attend, which are the most relevant to your company and ones that seem like they could be beneficial to you as an individual.

STAND OUT

Don't allow yourself to just kind of blend into your surroundings. Make sure you are differentiating yourself and your company. Don't be afraid to discuss things that your team is doing really well. Just because you are there to learn, doesn't mean that you can't give insight. Everyone and every company have things they do well and you want to make sure you are discussing these in your conversations.

MEET NEW PEOPLE

Whether you came to a conference by yourself, with a team or have established relationships with other people at the conference, you should always be meeting new people. Some of the most valuable conversations are ones that come from the networking opportunities that you will get throughout the entire course of the conference.

COMPONENTS OF A CONFERENCE

There is a pretty common mental image of what a conference looks like. I bet you're imagining it taking place in a big room, with rows and rows of chairs. There is a big stage at the front of the room with a podium and everyone just stares straight forward all day long and soaks in all they can from whoever is speaking.

Well...that isn't always the case. There are various formats that a conference could follow.



GENERAL SESSION/KEYNOTE

The general session and keynote portions of a conference are more of what one would stereotypically assume they would see at an event. Usually a conference will not consist of only general session and keynote presentations. These presentations usually feature a high profile speaker or touch on an extremely relevant topic that will be of interest for mainly everyone in attendance.

Although the format is not the most engaging, the speaker or topic holds enough interest in itself that it doesn't matter what your surroundings look like.



PANEL DISCUSSIONS

A panel discussion is exactly what it sounds like. A panel of professionals will all get together to discuss a specific topic and give the listener a variety of insights from multiple perspectives. There is usually a lot of time for questions and answers in a panel discussion format. These professionals aren't on the panel to tell their story; they are there to help give you real life examples to help you to improve your organization.



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Roundtable discussions are one of the more intimate (and less formal portions) of a conference. Roundtables are exactly what they sounds like, a handful of industry professionals sitting around a table and discussing different issues that they are facing. Usually, multiple roundtables run at the same time, and more often than not, the participants are given a chance to visit more than one table in an allotted time slot. These roundtable discussions really give the event attendees a chance to meet other people facing the same challenges and really discuss their issues in a smaller group. The roundtables can also be used an opportunity to kick-start your networking.



WORKSHOPS

Workshops may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of a conference but they are definitely something that you don't want to miss out on. The workshop format helps a small group of people to really dive deep into a case study, whether it is hypothetical or factual. This gives the attendee a chance to have discussions focused on real life situations and will ultimately help them take away specific examples of how best practices can be translated to their own organization.



THINK-TANKS

A think-tank session is similar to a workshop session, but focuses less on case studies and more on a specific subject. In a think-tank, the participants are able to have a broader discussion around a theme that is of current concern in an industry.



SOCIAL EVENTS

After a long day of presentations, note-taking, networking, etc., who wouldn't want a nice cocktail reception? Or a sit-down lunch break halfway through a busy day? Social events at a conference are a great way to break up a day packed full of sessions and can have as much value as the session content. The social events give attendees a chance to network with other attendees, talk to sponsors and just have a chance to mentally digest the information they receive throughout the day.

KEEP IN MIND: these may not be the ONLY conference components. . .these are just what we, at WBR, try to make sure are incorporated into our events.

ABOUT WORLDWIDE BUSINESS RESEARCH

WBR is the world's biggest large-scale conference company and part of the PLS group, one of the world's leading providers of strategic business intelligence with 16 offices worldwide. Our conference divisions consistently out-perform their industry sector competitors on the quality of the events we produce and the relationships we nurture with both attendees and sponsors.

For more information visit www.wbresearch.com.



- 1 NEW YORK
- 2 SAN FRANCISCO
- 3 DALLAS
- 4 CHICAGO
- 5 TORONTO
- 6 MEXICO CITY

- 7 MIAMI
- 8 SAO PAULO
- 9 JOHANNESBURG
- 10 LONDON
- 11 PARIS
- 12 MADRID

- 13 MUNICH
- 14 ISTANBUL
- 15 AMSTERDAM
- 16 STOCKHOLM
- 17 ZURICH
- 18 SINGAPORE

- 19 TOKYO
- 20 OTTAWA
- 21 SAN DIEGO
- 22 RIO DE JANEIRO
- 23 PHOENIX
- 24 ANTWERP

CONFERENCE PROPOSAL

Hi _____,

I'M WRITING TO ASK FOR APPROVAL TO ATTEND THE FOLLOWING CONFERENCE:

NAME _____

VENUE _____

DATES _____

This conference will feature industry leaders.

SOME OF THE TOPICS COVERED AT THE CONFERENCE WILL BE:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

I FORESEE ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE BENEFITTING US AS AN ORGANIZATION IN THE FOLLOW WAYS:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

In addition to presentations and breakout sessions with industry leaders and vendors, the conference offers the chance to problem solve with solution providers based on our needs; it's the ideal place to pick up new ideas to drive more productivity from our implementation and maximize the return on our conference investment.

HERE'S AN APPROXIMATE BREAKDOWN OF CONFERENCE COSTS:

Airfare/Transportation:	\$
Hotel: (_____ nights at \$_____)	\$
Registration Fee:	\$
Total:	\$

Just so you know, the earlier I can register, the cheaper it will be. I hope you'll see the value in attending this conference and sharing the relevant information throughout the company.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Regards,