

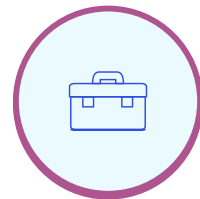


THE TOOLKIT

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women and non-binary undergraduate students.

Conference Conversation Starters

We go to conferences to network, but we still feel awkward about starting conversations with others. You look around the room and you're contemplating the best way to approach someone. How do you introduce yourself? How do you join a group or talk to the speaker? Often times, our own worries will keep us from making the connection or introduction, and we leave the conference without even giving yourself the chance. In this issue of The Toolkit, you will receive tips on how to make strong introductions that can turn into meaningful connections.



"WHILE AT A NETWORKING EVENT IN LONDON, I SAW THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET A LOT OF WOMEN IN MY FIELD WHO WERE NOT ONLY VERY SUCCESSFUL THEMSELVES, BUT ALSO LIKELY HAD A LOT TO SHARE WITH ME. I INTRODUCED MYSELF TO SOMEONE AT A TABLE NEAR ME NAMED ALEXANDRA VOSS AND WE QUICKLY GOT INTO A CONVERSATION ABOUT HER FIN-TECH STARTUP IN SWEDEN AND EVEN OFFERED FOR ME TO CONTACT HER ABOUT AN INTERNSHIP!"

**- QUANTITATIVE FINANCE
MAJOR**

Tips & Tools

1

Talk to the person next to you. Relax. Everyone is at the conference to network, so don't feel weird about introducing yourself to anyone. Turn to the person sitting next to you and say, "Are you familiar with this speaker?" or "I'm really looking forward to xyz. What compelled you to choose this session?" Always keep the conversation positive.

2

Approach someone who asked a quality question. Go up to the person that asked a question that you thought was interesting after the presentation. Try saying, "I really appreciated your question. It made me think more about xyz."

4

Get introduced. If you know someone that knows the person that you'd like to meet, ask them if they would be willing to make an introduction.

6

Be open and yourself. Watch your body language and remain open to others. Sometimes, we tend to cross our arms accidentally, closing ourselves off to others. Make sure that your body language is inviting and that you're acting as yourself. It's important to be genuine in your interactions as these will lead to more meaningful connections.

3

Spend time near the food. Many people will go near the food or drinks for networking purposes. Go up to someone nearby and start with, "The food looks great. There are more choices than I had anticipated." Then proceed to introduce yourself.

5

Pre-plan meetings. If you would like to talk with one of the speakers, send them an email ahead of time to try to schedule some one-on-one time. Refer to our resource on "Cold Emailing" more for details on this.

7

Follow-up. If you met someone briefly that you want to connect with more or didn't get the opportunity to speak to them, follow-up through an email. Being in the same room as someone else connects you to them - whether they are a speaker or an attendee. Use this to your advantage and follow-up with your connection.

Further Reading

["17 Ways to Network Like A Pro At Conferences"](#) by Goldie Chan | Forbes

["How to Make Meaningful Connections at Conferences"](#) by Bruna Martinuzzi | American Express

A note from the author

Conferences can be awkward. We put a bunch of people that care about the same thing into a room together and say: connect! My advice is to use the fact that you both care about the same thing to your advantage. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself because everyone is thinking the same thing, "how do I do this?" Go for it! The worst thing that will happen is you won't be remembered, but you can later avoid that by following up in an email. -Kaitlin Gili, CEO