PREPARE BEFORE YOU GO

- [ ] Schedule preparation time and ask for assistance from BD professionals, executive assistant, etc.
- [ ] Set clear goals (networking, learning, opportunities).
- [ ] Review event schedule; choose relevant sessions, speakers, and networking events.
- [ ] Apply for internal approvals, complete required forms (pre-event and post-event, if applicable).
- [ ] Research attendees; arrange introductions or pre-meetings if possible.
- [ ] Volunteer to help at event for added engagement.
- [ ] Prepare and practice an elevator pitch.
- [ ] Pack plenty of business cards or digital contact sharing tool.
- [ ] Download and set up the conference app (if available).
- [ ] Prepare open-ended conversation starters - not yes/no questions.
- [ ] Plan to divide team attendance across parallel sessions for broader coverage.
- [ ] Draft and schedule your "conference content strategy" (plan how and when to share learnings, tag speakers, post on LinkedIn).
- [ ] Schedule decompression time for immediately after the conference.
- [ ] Step outside your comfort zone: select at least one session in a new field or format.
- [ ] Prepare for cybersecurity: use a VPN and be mindful about sharing sensitive info.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

- [ ] Wear your name tag and bring cards each day.
- [ ] Remember that opportunities to meet new people are everywhere: on the elevator, escalator, while waiting in line, etc.
- [ ] Attend both formal and informal sessions, socials, dinners, and breaks.
- [ ] Distribute team members to parallel sessions and record/share notes afterward.
- [ ] Take notes on key points, contacts, and actionable ideas.
- [ ] Network via conference app and social media (connect with as many people in person and online as possible).
- [ ] Refer to name tags for personalized introductions.
- [ ] Approach new contacts authentically and avoid overt sales pitches.
- [ ] Offer assistance, be a giver - share session insights and start conversations.
- [ ] End conversations politely and move on as needed.
- [ ] Try new session formats for fresh insights and collaborations.
- [ ] Prioritize open-ended questions for conversations.
- [ ] Limit cell/mobile use while conversing; give full attention to others.
- [ ] Balance participation with self-care and rest; schedule decompression time to process learnings.
- [ ] Stay hydrated and take breaks as needed.

POST-CONFERENCE

- [ ] Review and organize notes right after the event while fresh.
- [ ] Summarize and share insights, key takeaways, and resources with team/network.
- [ ] Revisit the conference app (if there is one) and download relevant information and contacts.
- [ ] Follow up quickly with new contacts: connect via LinkedIn first, then via email.
- [ ] Be sure to personalize all communications and reference your conversations.
- [ ] Search and gather all new contacts to add into online contacts and CRM as appropriate.
- [ ] Reflect on initial goals versus outcomes; note improvements for future events.
- [ ] Prepare any required post-mortem summary or reimbursement forms.
- [ ] Continue to nurture, expand, and add value to relationships made at event.
- [ ] Position yourself as a thought leader by sharing learnings on social media, tagging speakers, commenting on other's posts, etc.
- [ ] Schedule time with your team for pre- and post-conference discussions to review, coordinate,set goals, connect opportunities, and follow up on next steps.
- [ ] Failing to follow-up is the #1 mistake, to avoid it use your online calendar to schedule reminders for yourself to reconnect as appropriate.
- [ ] Schedule time in 3 to 6 months to follow-up and stay in touch with those met.
- [ ] Plan ahead for the following year: search and find the even date for the next year and add it to your online calendar.