




# INTHRIVE

## ADVOCACY SOLUTIONS

**Monthly** Digest: July 2024  
Your source for policy and advocacy guidance.

### What's inside?

-  The Good and Bad of Conferences for Advocacy & Lobbying
-  New Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less on Youtube
-  What are you looking for?

by **David Smith** on July 2, 2024

Last month I traveled to Atlanta for a conference for one of my clients. It was 4 days in another city focusing on one area of advocacy. That's a long time in today's fast paced world. I debated whether it would be worth it, both in time and money. Obviously I went but what did I learn-not about the topic but how to use conferences effectively to increase my advocacy and lobbying? Keep reading to find out!.

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

### The Do's & Don'ts of Conferences



When you're lobbying or advocating you're doing this for a group of people. It's more than just you! Going to a conference to hear ideas and meet with others can improve your advocacy tactics and skills. But, it can also be a giant suck of time & resources if you don't have a plan and set boundaries.

### 5 things to do at a conference

- **Have a plan:** The bigger the conference the more opportunities you'll have which means you'll need to make choices on how to use your time. Look at the schedule in advance to understand the daily flow and which sessions you want to be at. Make a plan so you'll know where you want to be and when. Also, identify times that you can set aside for one-on-one's with people you may meet or for meetings you set up in advance.
- **Identify people you want to meet:** Are there certain presenters you want to introduce yourself to? Have you seen people you want to connect with in real life posting about the same conference on social media? Make a list of these folks and prioritize them. If you can, reach out to some of them ahead of time to arrange a meeting.
- **Take notes:** When you're in a seminar or panel discussion be ready to take notes. Maybe it's something the speaker says or maybe they've caused you to get a new idea on one of your projects. Write it down in enough detail so that you remember it and can flesh it out later in the day or once you return home.
- **Spend time networking:** Be intentional about meeting new people. If there are group meals find folks you don't know and join their table. If there are displays, chat with the folks working the booths. Go to the breakout sessions and introduce yourself not just to the presenter but to attendees sitting around you. You never know who may be your next client or give you your next idea!
- **Have your business cards ready:** Whether it's a traditional or e-version, make sure they're easily accessible. Also, have a pen with you so you can make a note on the

card about why you want to follow up with that person. There's nothing worse than looking at 15 cards and trying to remember why you wanted to talk to follow up with someone!

## 5 things to avoid at a conference

- **Boring topics:** Not every session is a winner. Some will be on topics you already know inside and out while others will be on topics that don't impact your work and advocacy. Just because you registered for a conference doesn't mean you have to attend every session!
- **Wearing yourself out:** Breakfast starts at 7am and the gala ends at 11pm. Be realistic about your energy levels and stamina. You may want to be there for every minute but if you're a zombie by the middle of day 2 that's not helpful to your networking or your client.
- **Bad presenters:** Not everyone should be a public speaker and not every session's title matches with the presenter's topic. If you end up in a session that isn't on topic or is painful to sit through then leave. If you stay you're wasting your time and missing the opportunity to network.
- **Not following up:** If you're networking well you'll end up with lots of new contacts. Make sure you follow up with each one and remind them how you met and why you wanted to stay in touch. Some are fans of following up right away when they get to their hotel room that night but I wait until I get home. Your message won't get lost in their out-of-office auto replies this way!
- **Missed opportunities:** You've made your plan but don't be a slave to it. If you're having a great conversation with someone that is beneficial to your work then skip that next breakout session! These unplanned moments can be the most transformative if you're willing to toss your schedule and take the opportunity to listen.

## In Conclusion:


With a plan and an open mind you can leverage your next conference to advance your advocacy and expand your lobbying network!

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🤔 If you're looking for a new partnership to help achieve your policy goals email David Smith at [David@InthriveAdvocacy.com](mailto:David@InthriveAdvocacy.com) to see how we can work together to get that win! Or, if you want to catch up over coffee or Zoom....

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**What's new in "Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less"?**

 Follow Inthrive on [YouTube](#) to keep your skills fresh with *Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less*! Since the last newsletter new videos include [Picking Policy Priorities](#), [Making the Most of a Rally](#), & [Winning With Infographics](#).

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