

# LAS VEGAS

# MSL SOCIETY

# CONFERENCE

September 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## NETWORKING GUIDE FOR ASPIRING MSLs

### What should I wear? What is the conference attire?

**Dress professionally.** During **ALL** interviews for an MSL role, you should wear business attire. However, the annual conference will be business casual. Of course, you are welcome to wear business attire if you choose. Just like during an in-person MSL interview, the first impression you make is critical. Your appearance and body language are important in making a positive first impression and will contribute to your success during the interview. Part of this impression will be based on your attire and the manner in which you greet them. Making eye contact, smiling, and having a firm handshake are all important factors in making a positive first impression.

For men business casual in the pharmaceutical industry typically means a suit without a tie. For women, there is more variety.

**The following are basic guidelines for what to wear during the conference:**

#### **Men**

- Solid dark color (blue, dark gray, black) suit
- Long-sleeve shirt, wrinkle-free/dry cleaned (avoid button-down collars)
- Silk tie (OPTIONAL)
- Polished lace-up dress shoes
- Facial hair well-groomed or Clean shaven
- Well-groomed hair

- Clean and trimmed nails
- No cologne

### Women

- Solid dark color (blue, dark gray, black) conservative suit
- Conservative shirt/blouse, wrinkle-free/dry cleaned
- Skirts or dresses should be no shorter than just above the knee
- Polished closed-toe shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Light makeup
- Manicured nails
- Professional hairstyle
- No perfume

## **How should I prepare? What should I bring with me?**

Develop a brief introduction of who you are and your career experiences related to the MSL role. Rehearse the introduction enough that you have a comfortable and conversational delivery.

**There are several items you will want to bring with you including:**

- Business Cards
- Prepared Ice Breaker or introduction
- An effective networking attitude (“what you put into it is what you will get out of it!”)

## **Do I need business cards at the conference?**

**Yes.** You should bring multiple business cards with you. One of the primary benefits of the conference is networking with other attendees, speakers, MSLs, and the managers that will be in attendance. If you don't have business cards, you should have some created. **Vistaprint** and other online services are very affordable and you can often have a limited number created quickly.

## What should I include on my business card?

Keep it simple and professional: name, academic credentials, mailing address, phone number, email address, personal LinkedIn URL.

### Recommended style:

- Do not add logos or other images if you don't have a company logo (less is more for personal business cards)
- Do not add a photo

## Should I bring a copy of my CV?

**No.** Do not bring printed copies of your CV to the conference. The purpose of a conference is to learn about the MSL career and to network. If someone you meet during the conference requests a copy of your CV, you can easily email them an electronic version of your CV (after obtaining their business card or contact details).

## Will there be an opportunity to network at the conference?

**Yes.** There will be multiple opportunities to network with speakers, MSLs, and managers during the conference each full day including:

- 45-minute networking break in the morning
- 1-hour lunch
- 45-minute networking break in the afternoon

**There will also be a welcome reception and evening reception.**

## Should I ask questions during the general sessions or workshops?

**Maybe.** If you feel you can add value to the conversation, then yes, feel free to ask questions. However, please be respectful and keep in mind that this event is designed for MSL Leaders and MSLs to get together to share best practices and discuss issues impacting the profession. You should not ask questions related to breaking into the MSL career, what to include on CV's, what

managers look for in a candidate etc. Use this opportunity to learn as much as possible about the profession, understand topics impacting the career and network with MSLs and MSL leaders. One of your goals is to learn information that will allow you to speak intelligently about the role during an interview.

## How do I network?

Interpersonal and communication skills are critical to the success of an MSL. First, introduce yourself with a firm handshake, while maintaining eye contact and a smile. Try to make a connection and don't dominate the conversation. Ensure you come across as genuine and friendly with EVERYONE you engage with. It's crucial to make positive impressions.

### Two important points to keep in mind when networking:

1. Be clear and engaging while speaking: Be friendly and conversational, have a positive attitude
2. Be aware of your body language, gestures, and mannerisms: Stand up straight with correct posture, fully face the other person when speaking, don't fidget, don't chew gum.

At the end of a conversation, exchange business cards (if appropriate) and close the conversation with something like "It was nice meeting you" or "I really enjoyed our conversation" or "Thank you" before moving on. You may want to consider writing notes about your conversation on the back of the person's business card.

## Is there a correct way to wear my name badge?

**Yes!** Name badges are correctly worn on the right side so when you shake hands during an introduction or greeting the other person has direct eye contact with both you and your name badge. It's an easy and effective way to help remember your name or where you are from, etc.

After all, this is the purpose of wearing name badges in the first place and will help with networking.

## How should I introduce myself?

Some may feel nervous about how to introduce themselves or how to initiate conversations with other attendees, especially with the MSLs and MSL managers present during the conference.

Planning in advance how you will introduce yourself will help alleviate some of this anxiety. As a result, it is recommended to create and memorize a succinct 20 to 30-second introduction which is often referred to as an “elevator pitch”.

### Your introduction should include:

1. Introducing yourself and who you are: In addition to your name, mention your academic background (PhD, PharmD, MD etc.)
2. Your current role: Keep your description brief and succinct
3. Your career experiences and accomplishments: Mention those that are related to the MSL role
4. Why are you at the conference: Don't just state that you want to become an MSL. Instead, mention the specific information being covered that you are interested in learning more about (i.e. what MSLs actually do, the role of recruiters, the MSL Job search etc.)

Rehearse the introduction enough so that you have a comfortable, friendly, and conversational delivery. Practice this statement multiple times in front of a mirror (using a mirror will enable you to identify any inappropriate body language and ensure that your statement sounds conversational and not rehearsed).

## Is there a professional way to shake hands?

**Yes.** During the important first few moments of a new relationship, a handshake is usually the only body contact between two people. It can communicate a genuine interest in the other person, and an image of confidence. It can also communicate indifference and weakness. A weak handshake is a really poor form of introduction. Developing a professional handshake is one of the most valuable business skills you can cultivate as a future MSL.

Have a firm handshake and maintain eye contact. Greet everyone in a friendly tone when introducing yourself and maintain eye contact throughout the conversation.

### Some of the elements of a proper handshake that makes a positive impression include:

- Your grip should be firm and friendly

- Use a single-handed handshake (don't put your other hand on top of the other persons)
- Dry hand – bring hand sanitizer with you
- Full contact – palm to palm (avoid merely grasping fingers, which is a sign of weakness)
- When you extend your right hand, your palm faces left, not up or down
- Gender neutral. Men and women should use and receive the same techniques
- Hold for about two to three seconds
- Maintain eye contact during handshake
- Exchange verbal introduction or greeting during handshake
- Smile

## What questions should I ask MSLs or Managers during the networking sessions at the conference?

Before asking any questions, keep in mind that communication skills are essential for MSLs. You want to present yourself as friendly, respectful and appreciative.

**Prepare several thoughtful and relevant questions that might include:**

1. What specific skills or qualifications does [their company] look for in an MSL candidate?
2. What is the hiring process at [their company]?
3. What qualities and does your organization seek in candidates?
4. How can I strengthen my candidacy with your organization?
5. Can I connect with you on LinkedIn after the conference?
6. How did you set yourself apart from others who were trying to break into the MSL career?
7. What is the best career advice you've ever received?
8. What impresses you the most when you are considering an MSL candidate?
9. How did you get into the MSL / MSL Management role?
10. Did you always know that this is what you wanted to do with your career?
11. What makes a CV stand out to you?
12. What's been your biggest career struggle and how do you overcome it?
13. What's your favorite tip for preparing for interviews?
14. What's been one of your biggest career accomplishments?
15. Do you have any favorite networking tips?
16. What are some of your favorite things to do / watch / read for inspiration?
17. Is there anyone else in your network you think I should speak with?
18. What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
19. What advice would you have liked to have heard when you were starting out?
20. What is one easily avoided mistake aspiring MSLs make when interviewing with you?

## Will there be any employers actively interviewing candidates?

**No**, but there will be MSLs, managers and recruiters present who may ask you about your career goals etc. In addition to learning and networking, your other goal should be to make a positive impression on everyone you meet during the conference. Networking will likely be crucial to your success in ultimately breaking into your first MSL role. You never know who you might meet that can help you later and people tend to be willing to help those they like. Make positive impressions!

## Should I connect on LinkedIn with those I meet at the conference?

**Yes!** One of your goals for attending the conference is to begin to build your network within the MSL community. The easiest way to accomplish this is through LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a highly effective tool to search for MSL jobs and to build your network within the MSL community. During the conference, after having a meaningful conversation with someone you can ask if they would be willing to connect on LinkedIn.

## Are there any other tips for success during the annual MSL Society Conference?

**Yes:**

- Smile!
- Be Enthusiastic
- Be Confident
- Be friendly
- Be humble
- Be engaged in the conversation
- Don't be boring – it's not just about your science!
- Be prepared to answer questions about yourself
- Work the room
- Turn your mobile phone off or switch the ringer to vibrate
- Be aware of your body language
- Maintain eye contact
- Have a proper professional handshake
- Keep your responses succinct (max 90 seconds) – don't dominate the conversation
- Take notes during sessions
- DON'T BE WEIRD!