

LAS VEGAS

MSL SOCIETY

CONFERENCE

September 3rd - 5th, 2019

CONFERENCE NETWORKING GUIDE

Networking is one of the primary benefits to attending the Annual MSL Society Conference.

There will be a number of recently hired MSLs and those new to professional conferences, so we have created the following guide to understand what to expect, answer essential questions and help prepare you to connect and grow your network while in Las Vegas next week.

What is the conference attire?

Business Casual. Just like during a KOL meeting, the first impression (or any impression) you make is critical so select something that is professional and represents you. Your appearance and body language are important in making a positive impression. Part of this impression will be based on your attire and the manner in which you greet other attendees. Don't forget the basics which are: making eye contact, smiling, and having a firm handshake. They are all important factors in making a positive 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?

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

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

- 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 annual conference is networking with other attendees, speakers, MSLs, and the managers that will be in attendance.

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 and will help with networking.

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.

We will have:

- 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.

How should I introduce myself?

Some may feel nervous about how to introduce themselves or how to initiate conversations with other attendees 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. Introduce yourself
2. Your current role: (i.e. MSL with X company)
3. Why are you at the conference: Possibly speakers you are excited to hear from, workshops you are looking forward to, topics of particular interest, 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. Developing a professional handshake is one of the most valuable business skills you can cultivate as a MSL/ MSL Manager.

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)
- 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

Networking at the conference

As mentioned, networking is one of the primary benefits of the annual MSL Society conference and the ability to network will contribute to your success throughout your career. You want to be approachable, friendly and respectful. Having several thoughtful and relevant questions as conversation “starters” may help facilitate your networking success during the event.

Some questions that may be helpful include:

1. Why did you attend the annual MSL Society conference?
2. What are you hoping to get out of this conference?
3. How many years have you attended this conference? What keeps you coming back?
4. What sessions/speakers are you looking forward to?
5. Which workshops are you planning to attend during the conference?
6. What workshops should I add to my schedule?
7. What did you think of that speaker?
8. Which talks are you excited about this year?
9. What have been your favorite sessions/speakers so far?
10. What speaker are you looking forward to hearing from?
11. How did you get started in your career?
12. What trends do you see developing over the next few years in the MSL profession?
13. What would you say are some good “takeaways” from today’s presentations?
14. What skills have you found essential for success in your career?
15. How does your team (or company) do X (something related to a topic presented)?
16. What is the biggest challenge facing MSLs/ MSL managers in the next few years?
17. How did you break into your first MSL role?
18. What skills have you found to be essential for success as an MSL (or Manager)?
19. How can we advance the [MSL career or the pharma industry]?
20. How has the MSL career changed over the past 5/10 years?
21. What effect has [specific technology] made on the [topic/industry/field]?
22. What is the most effective way an MSL/ MSL Manager can make a substantial difference or impact?
23. What is the best career advice you’ve ever received?
24. What has helped you get to where you are and what advice would you have for others who want to pursue a similar path?
25. How long have you been in the MSL field? What has your career path been like to date?

Making a good impression

Interpersonal and communication skills are critical to the success of an MSL/ MSL Manager. 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.

Will there be any employers actively interviewing candidates?

No, but there will be other MSLs, managers and recruiters present who may ask you about your career goals etc. Your goal should be to make a positive impression on everyone you meet during the conference. 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!

I am in transition, should I bring a copy of my CV?

No. Do not bring printed copies of your CV to the conference. The primary purpose of your attendance should be primarily to network, learn from others, and share your experiences (when appropriate). If you are an MSL in transition and someone you meet during the conference requests a copy of your CV, you can easily email them an electronic version of your CV.

Should I ask questions during the general sessions or workshops?

Yes. If you feel you can add value to the conversation, feel free to ask questions. This event is designed for MSLs and MSL leaders to share best practices, experiences, and discuss issues impacting our profession.

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
- Work the room
- Turn your mobile phone off or switch the ringer to vibrate
- Be aware of your body language
- Keep your responses succinct (max 90 seconds) – don't dominate the conversation