

Beyond Attending

A toolkit for getting more out of any conference.

Most people attend conferences. A smaller number leave with something specific — a person they'll stay in touch with, a question they'll keep pursuing, a decision they'll act on.

The difference isn't luck or seniority. It's two practices: **connecting with intention**, and **reflecting on what's actually landing for you**.

These prompts are designed to help with both. Use them at the conference you're at right now. Use them at the next conference you attend. Use them between conferences when you want to think clearly about your direction.

While you're at the conference

Three questions you can come back to as many times as you want over the course of an event. Bring a notebook. Or your phone. Or the back of a name badge.

1. What's caught your attention?

A session, a conversation, an idea, a person, an organization. Anything that genuinely piqued your curiosity. Don't filter — just notice.

2. Why does it resonate with you?

Not why it's important in general. Why it matters to you specifically. Your skills, your values, your work, your direction.

3. Who will you talk to before this conference ends — and when?

By name, by role, by session they're presenting at, by company. And the specific moment when you'll find them. A break, a session, the reception, the hallway after a keynote.

Specificity is the difference between a wish and a plan.

Right after the

conference

Within 48 hours. The window for action is narrow. The week after a conference, you're still warm. Two weeks after, you're back in your inbox and the conversations start to fade. These prompts help you convert warmth into momentum.

4. Who did you meet that you want to stay in contact with — and what's the next step?

A LinkedIn connection. A coffee. A follow-up email. An introduction you want to offer. Name the person and the specific action.

5. What's one idea you encountered that you want to learn more about?

Not a vague topic. A specific question, paper, framework, or domain you're going to spend time with this month.

6. What's one thing you're going to do differently in your work as a result of being there?

Small is fine. A different question in your next 1:1. A new framing for a problem you've been stuck on. A conversation you've been avoiding.

Between conferences — the long

arc

Conferences are punctuation marks in a longer career trajectory. These questions are worth revisiting quarterly — not as a checklist, but as a way to check whether the direction you're moving is still the direction you want to be moving.

7. What kinds of conversations are you being drawn into right now? What does that tell you?

8. What are you curious about that you haven't made time for?

9. Who in your network do you want to know better — and what would it take to reach out?

The work is better when it's collective. Find people. Stay in touch. Keep going.

About InceptionU

InceptionU is a Calgary-based learning organization. We help people and workforces navigate constant change — building technical skills, MetaSkills, and the adaptive mindset that makes people perpetually indispensable, regardless of what the landscape looks like next.

If this toolkit was useful, we'd love to share more of what we do. Find us at inceptionu.com.