

Session Etiquette – Best Practices

Here are a few tips for conference. By implementing these best practices, your conference experience will be more enjoyable and educational!

- **Arrive Early.** If this is not possible, arrive at the scheduled time at the latest— but never late. Do not assume that the beginning of a session will be delayed until all those planning to attend are present. If you arrive late, you risk missing valuable information and lose the chance to provide your input. Also, you should not expect others to fill you in during or after the session; everyone is busy, and those who were conscientious enough to arrive on time should not have to recap the session for you.
- **Come Prepared.** Always bring something to write on as well as to write with. It is disruptive to ask others for paper and pen if you decide to take notes.
- **Do Not Interrupt.** Hold your comments to the speaker until the session has adjourned or until the speaker asks for comments, unless, of course, the speaker has encouraged open discourse throughout the session. Also, do not interrupt other attendees. Hold your comments to others in the session until after the session is adjourned. Conversation during a session is disruptive to other attendees and inconsiderate of the speaker.
- **Abstain from Electronics.** “Please silence cell phones. “ Activate voice mail if you have it, or forward messages to another phone. In general, stay off of your cell phone – don’t be texting, playing games, or typing on your laptop.
- **Speak in Turn.** When asking a question, it usually is more appropriate to raise your hand than to blurt out your question. Other attendees may have questions, and the speaker needs to acknowledge everyone.
- **Keep Your Questions Brief.** When asking questions, be succinct and clear. If your question is detailed, break it into parts or several questions. But be sure to ask only one question at a time; others may have questions as well.
- **Pay Attention.** Listen to the issues the speaker addresses, the questions from the attendees, and the answers provided. You do not want to waste session time asking a question that has already been asked.
- **Be Patient and Calm.** Do not engage in side-bar conversations, fidget, drum your fingers, tap your pen, flip through or read materials not concerning the session, or otherwise act in a disruptive manner.
- **Attend the Entire Session.** Leave only when the session is adjourned. Leaving before the end of the session— unless absolutely necessary—can be disruptive to other attendees and inconsiderate of the speaker.

