

Carpe Conference: 3 Reasons to Attend Conferences by Lauren Zuza, Webmaster & Communications Director, Fredericksburg Area Association of REALTORS®

Knock. Knock. Who's there? *Opportunity.* The opportunity to attend business conferences, especially REALTOR® conferences is one that shouldn't be slept on. Here's why.

The old adage "real estate is local" rings true fairly often but agents have much to gain by reaching outside of their geographic circles and talking to others who have faced similar struggles and sometimes more so from those that have faced even more challenging issues. Business conferences often feature insightful speakers and subject matter experts looking to share their experiences and stories to attendees who are decidedly present to learn and grow. Conference attendees with diverse backgrounds come from far and wide, many looking for solutions to current issues or with solutions in tow, making networking a crucial component of establishing connections, building trust, and solving problems.

It's easy to stay at home. It's easy to say "I know everything I need to know." It's easy to underestimate the power of gathering with like-minded individuals.

In an industry built on filling your sales funnel, can you afford to leave stones unturned?

Forging real relationships at conferences can lead to valuable friendships and mentorships, referrals, and in the current global economy, even more opportunities.

And then there's the personal benefits of attending conferences. Have you ever felt like you were in a slump?

Camaraderie is powerful fuel for inspiration, bringing a breath of fresh air to the complexities of a business that can be emotionally draining. Exposure to new places, people, and situations can draw us out of our shells and help us find confidence in our personal lives and business decisions. Attending a conference is just one of the ways to recharge your inner battery.

It's been said, "Knowledge breeds confidence." and there's a lot of knowledge to be soaked up at business conferences.

Are you feeling the FOMO yet? Here are 3 tips for planning to attend a conference.

- Put it in your business plan, budget, and on your calendar. Note which expenses can be written off on your taxes as business expenses and keep record of your expenses during the trip.
- Register as soon as the conference registration opens. The National Association of REALTORS® Legislative Conference registration will typically open in February. This conference is held in D.C. in May and is offered at no-cost to REALTOR® attendees. In July the registration for the November NAR NXT Conference opens to prospective attendees. This conference's location changes annually. Most state REALTOR® associations offer an annual or regional conference as well.
- If flying, book plane tickets early. Flights increase in cost as the departure date approaches.

In short, plan early to attend a conference whether it's close-by or far away, you'll be glad you did.