

Checklist:

Prepare to Be *Out of Office* to Attend a Meeting or Conference

If you are quite often the problem-solver in your workplace or household, you might find that people seek you out no matter where you are in order to ask questions. If you'd like to make the most out of your meeting or conference time and decrease the probability of interruptions, consider using this handy checklist for any other event – virtual or onsite - for which you want to be fully present:

- ___ Add this meeting, seminar or conference to your calendar, verifying the date, time and location or virtual platform. If other people have access to your calendar, consider adding the notation *unavailable by phone/email* to the calendar event.
- ___ Virtual: On your calendar, give yourself a 10-minute window to get settled in and connected. Even the best-known devices, internet service providers and virtual platforms experience hiccups.
- ___ Onsite: If a commute is required (whether it's down the hallway or across the country), block the commute time on your calendar.
- ___ Before you attend an event, consider notifying applicable colleagues and customers that you will be "out of the office" on *Day, Date* for a full-day *XYZ event* (or *from X:00-Y:00* for a *partial-day event*). If you're not sure what to say in an email or text, feel free to copy/paste the following:

Please note that I'll be out of the office on Day, Date, in order to participate in an important conference. I will have limited access to phone and email at mid-day during our lunch break.

If you have a pressing issue on that day, you can contact <insert colleague or assistant name> at <phone/email>.
- ___ Block off calendar time in the afternoon *before* the event. This allows room in your schedule to handle last-minute colleague or customer requests and issues.
- ___ Block off calendar time in the afternoon *after* a morning event, or in the morning *following* an afternoon or full-day event. This allows you some time to catch up on emails and voicemails, as well as implement tactics you've just learned.
- ___ Create a list of supplies/materials you'll want to have with you at the event, so you don't forget anything during a last-minute rush.
- ___ For a full-day event, set your e-mail out-of-office autoresponder before you "leave the office" the evening before.
- ___ For a full-day event, set your voicemail out-of-office message before you "leave the office" the evening before.