Five Tips and Tricks for Conquering the 2026 J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference

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During the second week of January, thousands of people from companies, universities, banks, healthcare systems, insurance providers, and other service providers in the life sciences and healthcare sectors will descend on San Francisco for the annual J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference, and the many events that take place alongside it. Collectively, I will refer to the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference and the other associated activities as the Healthcare Conference. The Healthcare Conference sets the tone for the biotech and healthcare industries for the year ahead, with major deal announcements and corporate priorities being announced during the week. It also provides access to unparalleled networking and business development discussions. Attending the Healthcare Conference can be stressful and intimidating for first-time attendees and seasoned veterans alike. Through my years of attending the Healthcare Conference and surveying other long-time participants, I have developed five (5) key tips and tricks to make the experience more enjoyable and productive for attendees!

1. **Come Prepared for Any Type of Weather:** The weather in San Francisco can be extremely variable in early January, so make sure you are prepared for all weather types. When it is raining during the Healthcare Conference, it can be extremely hard to find an Uber, Lyft, or Waymo to take you from one meeting to the next, so make sure to bring raincoats and waterproof footwear in case you need to walk across the city. Oftentimes, umbrellas don't do well in the city given the wind, so there is the potential to encounter one or more umbrella cemeteries, especially if it is a particularly rainy week.
2. **Strategically Plan Your Schedule in Advance:** It is important to try to make the most of your time at the Healthcare Conference, given the cost to attend and the plethora of folks you'll have the chance to meet at this premier event. However, overbooking meetings and events may not always be in your best interest, as it can prevent the random and sporadic meetings that occur all over the city. In addition, make sure you map the location of your meetings before agreeing to specific meeting times. Many meeting sites are located quite a distance from each other, meaning that if you book meetings too close together, you might end up missing one due to the time it takes to arrive to the site from your prior meeting. Finally, make sure to be proactive in your outreach for business development meetings well in advance of the Healthcare Conference. Leveraging existing and trusted connections is still the best way to obtain introductions, but sometimes cold calls can work. If you have a public relations firm, check to see if they can help you setup a meeting, as many of the firms have space booked for meetings with their client companies.
3. **Be Well Prepared for Your Meetings:** Many attendees will be competing for meetings with the same group of investors, companies, and other stakeholders; therefore, it is very important to try to stand out from the competition. To increase your chances for success, you should come to the conference with a polished and compelling pitch,

demonstrating that you understand the objectives of your target group. Make sure to do research on the groups that you are presenting to before your pitch. It would be awkward to pitch to a group that isn't interested in investing in the indication or modality you are working on, especially if this information was readily available to you. If you are inexperienced or uncomfortable with pitches, make sure to practice your pitch a few times before the Healthcare Conference to enhance your confidence.

4. **Take Advantage of Numerous Free or Low-Cost Opportunities:** Some of the events at the Healthcare Conference require payments to attend, but there are numerous other events that you can attend for free or at a minimal cost. For example, the FreeMind Group hosts a non-dilutive funding summit, where attendees can learn more about grant funding from various governmental agencies. Several organizations maintain comprehensive lists of the events leading up to, during, and immediately after the Healthcare Conference. I have found the listings maintained by the Redefining Every Stage of Investment Conference and BIO's Guide to JPM'26 (free app from the Apple store) to be especially useful. Events range from educational panels to accelerator pitch competitions to networking dinners and cocktail receptions, so there is something for everyone!
5. **Implement a Post-Healthcare Conference Plan:** Finally, it is imperative to develop a follow-up plan for all the new connections and leads that you have obtained during the Healthcare Conference. Business development professionals and investors have told me that they expect and encourage follow-up after the Healthcare Conference. In fact, most have said that you must remain persistent in your follow-up attempts (undoubtedly more than one will be required). The week following the Healthcare Conference is typically a time to decompress and absorb everything that has been learned during the week; therefore, you may consider waiting a week or two before following up in earnest.

I hope that the above tips and tricks provide you with a useful roadmap for conquering the Healthcare Conference. Preparation and a strategic focus on deepening existing connections and developing valuable new ones are key to making the 2026 Healthcare Conference a resounding success.

If you have any additional questions on navigating the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference, contact Laurie Burlingame.