

THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST

How to Fully Leverage
DENVER STARTUP WEEK
for Your Small Brand

20 MUST-DOs for before, during & after

Dear Denver Startup Week Attendee,

Get ready for an amazing week! Once you've registered for Denver Startup Week, follow this comprehensive checklist to make sure you get the most out of this incredible opportunity.

Below are 20 things that you MUST DO before, during and after Denver Startup Week especially when you're a smaller guy (like me) wanting to leverage your brand with fewer resources.

Here's to a fun and successful week!
I'll see you there!



Olivia Omega Wallace



BEFORE

❑ SET A CLEAR OBJECTIVE & GOAL

What do you want to accomplish while at Denver Startup Week? This Denver Startup goal should be specific and help support your overarching business or marketing goals. Make your goal S.M.A.R.T. by making sure it's actionable and has measurable metrics attached. Some ideas could be collecting consumer data for product development, finding a business partner, linking up with possible collaborators, growing brand awareness for your new product launch, connecting with someone who can help with funding, etc.

❑ PLAN TO GIVE BACK

Don't be too self-serving by going into the week focused only on what you can gain. Denver Startup Week is as much of a community as it is an event. Determine what ways you can give back, grow the community and share knowledge. When your mindset going in is one of community and collaboration, I guarantee your needs will be met in return. Do you have knowledge around a topic that other startups or individuals could benefit from? Consider sharing it via social media or connecting with those around you that need a mentor.

❑ UPDATE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

It's now or never! If you haven't updated your LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages in awhile, you definitely don't want to attend DSW without doing so. And if you only have time to tackle 3 things, here they are:

1. Profile Picture - Make sure it is current, clearly shows your face (so people can equate the real you with the online you) and is consistent across all of your platforms.

2. Contact Information - Make sure people can easily find the best way to contact you including an email that you check regularly and your website url.

3. Title/Position - Make sure the name of your company and your title/position are current. On some platforms you may even want to include what you're in the market for (clients, employees, funding, a job, etc.).

❑ CREATE INTENTIONAL COLLATERAL

Don't spend money on throw away swag. Develop something that really allows you to stand out. We may be the little guys, but even our smaller budgets can afford printing a small run of special Denver Startup Week postcards or an updated version of our business card. Reference DSW and include a specific call to action that supports your goal. Add your beautiful smiling face to your cards to make you and your conversations memorable. People remember people long before they'll remember type on a piece of cardstock.

❑ BUILD A STRATEGIC SCHEDULE

Unfortunately, you can't be in more than one place at a time. So picking the best events to meet your goals is important. Attend valuable sessions based on the information that will be shared, but more importantly, based on who will be there. With 300+ sessions to choose from, it's important to build your schedule around the people first, the content second.

❑ TAG TEAM SESSIONS & EVENTS

Plan to divide and conquer by bringing a buddy, business partner or spouse. This way you can attend important sessions that overlap and debrief later by sharing notes and takeaways.

❑ MAKE CONNECTIONS IN ADVANCE

Find out who will be speaking and attending, and make a list of people you want to meet. Even put Mark Cuban on your list! Dream big! Make a conscious effort to link up with some people you don't already know. Planning in advance gives you the opportunity to try and make plans to meet up with specific individuals throughout the week and at specific sessions. With so many people and so many events and sessions happening in a variety of locations all over downtown, don't leave things up to chance. Leveraging the hashtag **#denstartupweek** early on will help you meet people before you get there (more on this later).

❑ PLAN TO CREATE A PRESENCE

Depending on your company and your brand personality, you can have some fun with this. Sharing your message and gaining a bit of attention can be as simple as wearing a t-shirt with your company's logo on it AND a meaningful CTA of course (your logo alone does nothing for you). Better yet, grab your friends and family and have them all wear the same t-shirt to create a larger presence and more brand awareness. Make sure that whatever you do, it supports your DSW objective.

DURING

❑ MAKE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Make sure you come with plenty of business cards with a clear CTA on how you want people to connect with you. But keep in mind that the “winner” isn’t the one who collects the most business cards. Receiving is always better than giving because the power of following up will be in your hands. You only win the business card exchange game when you make meaningful connections with those people. Think quality over quantity. Remember to take a moment to jot down why you exchanged cards, what you talked about, what you have in common, what you can help them with, what they can help you with, and maybe even what they looked like or were wearing to help you remember the conversation (they won’t need to do this for you because your picture will be on your card right? wink). Tip: I keep a thin Sharpie on hand so I can write directly on the business card.

❑ JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION

The hashtag **#denstartupweek** will be one of the top trending hashtags in the country during this week! With DSW tagged tweets and Instagram posts in the millions, following it and using it will be extremely beneficial. Leverage the hashtag to make meaningful connections online and to add value to the community by sharing your own thoughts, takeaways, photos, videos and other content. Make it a point to follow and tag **@denstartupweek**, **@chasebasecampLIVEden** and **@DSWlive**. Also, don’t forget to include the handles of speakers, panelists and new friends you’ve met when appropriate.

❑ DOWNLOAD YOUR SCHEDULE

Having your DSW schedule downloaded directly to your phone (I’ll be syncing mine to my Google calendar) will be a lifesaver when coordinating to meet with people, trying to get to sessions early and coordinating how you’re going to get from venue to venue.

❑ ARRIVE EARLY

For obvious reasons! Larger sessions literally pack out before they start, leaving standing room only (if that). You’ll want to get to each session early so you can snag a seat up front (in good proximity to potentially rub elbows with a panelist or speaker afterward), grab coffee and snacks before their gone and make a couple of meaningful connections before things get started. Wear comfortable shoes so you can be comfortable (of course) and get to places quickly. All venues are in downtown Denver, but not all are within walking distance of each other. Lyft and Uber may be your best friend. And so could the app Parkifi to find quick parking if you plan on braving the traffic.

❑ TAKE NOTE...BEYOND JUST “NOTES”

We all know the importance of taking good notes during events. But how many of us actually go back to our notes, review them and make use of them after the fact? Sadly, I don't. So in addition to notes, take note! Start a running list of action items with one or two main takeaways or to-dos from each session and add a completion date next to that item. When DSW is over, that one list will contain the most important actions you need to complete to get the most results.

❑ PREPARE SMART QUESTIONS

For every session you attend, prepare a thoughtful and smart question to ask during Q&A. Before asking your question, state your name and business. For 15-20 seconds all eyes are on you! So make it count! This creates a bit of exposure for you as an individual or small business and could give you a legitimate reason to follow up with a speaker, panelist or attendee afterwards.

❑ NEVER EAT ALONE

As an introvert, I often use mealtime as the perfect opportunity to retreat, sit alone in a quiet place and recharge. So it takes some self convincing to leverage this time to connect with others around me. Basecamp is the perfect place to grab some food and pull up a chair next to someone you've never met before. Chances are you have something in common. And it's possible that they have the very connection you need to get to the next level.

❑ DON'T SKIP OUT ON THE HAPPY HOURS

DSW has a happy hour, party or event happen every evening at multiple venues. While attending happy hours may not seem to directly support your goals or grow your business, this is in fact where the most meaningful connections are made. If meeting quality, like-minded people and building your network of local entrepreneurs is one of your goals, at the parties and social gatherings is where it's gonna happen.

AFTER

- EVALUATE YOUR SUCCESS

Revisit the goal(s) you established before DSW as well as the metrics you mapped out. Did you meet your goal? If so, high five yourself! If not, evaluate. Ask yourself and write down what things did you do during DSW that worked? What did you do that didn't work? What will you do differently next year? Lastly, what do you want to have accomplished by DSW next year? Start creating a plan to get it done. Tip: As a company, we are currently reading "The 12 Week Year" by Brian P. Moran and Michael Lennington and it's giving us life!

- DIVE INTO ACTION

Remember that one single action item list you were creating throughout the week? Dive into completing what you can as soon as you can. The DSW high fades fast especially when you're forced back to reality the following week. The more you can quickly leverage the energy and momentum, the more you'll accomplish.

- FOLLOW UP & FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow up with the people you connected with immediately. Delaying this could be the difference in landing a new partnership and missing the boat. You want the meaningful conversations you had to stay top-of-mind and not fall by the wayside. Also, if you told someone you would send them a contact, make an introduction or share a resource, follow through on your promises in a timely manner. This reflects your character and shows that you care about the new relationship you've built.

- SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Continue the conversation online by sharing what you've learned and the amazing contacts you've made. Don't forget to continue to leverage the hashtags and handles. You could even create a quick recap of your DSW experience and your takeaways. This can give you some exposure after the fact, but more importantly, it allows you to provide value and give back to the community.

Lastly, visit WallaceMarketingGroup.com for ways to grow reach and revenues and let's connect online at [@oliviaomega](https://twitter.com/oliviaomega).