To propose an allocation of resources for conference attendance, you need to understand the expense and the expected return on investment for your organization.

GENERAL TIPS

Things to consider justifying the travel and training expense:

- Focus on what you will specifically bring back to the organization as return for the investment.

- Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A to your colleagues to share what you learned. Allow others on your team an opportunity to get the benefits of your attendance.

- Share the event schedule and speaker handouts with your colleagues. As an attendee, you have unlimited access to materials posted by speakers.

- If you are working to obtain or maintain a professional designation (ex: CAE), remind your supervisor that this is a great way to earn 7-10 continuing education hours.

- Have a plan that shows who will cover for you while you are attending the conference.

- Be sure to check out the registration page where all conference rates are listed and time your registration request to get the best rate possible.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONFERENCE EXPENSES

Conference expenses are affected by a number of factors and to justify conference expenses you need to calculate those expenses and develop a cost estimate for attending. Below are some expenses to include in your estimate.

- Conference Registration
- Lodging
- Transportation - airfare or mileage reimbursement

- Cab/Ride Share Fares and/or Parking
- Meal Per Diem
- Gratuity/Tips

UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS

Benefits from conference attendance are hard to quantify, but at the top is networking value. Where else can you find so many industry contacts facing the same issues as you?

When you propose a conference for approval, focus on what you will specifically bring back to the organization for the investment. Examples are listed below.

- Session content. List sessions that have particular relevance to your work. These sessions might identify tools, technologies, or processes.

- Vendor contacts. Identify vendors you wish to meet with to discuss services you use or are evaluating for future use.

- Best practices. List sessions that will discuss best practices used in the industry.

- Training. Identify sessions designed to learn a special skill and/or help you overcome current or future challenges.

QUANTIFYING THE BENEFITS

To effectively justify the conference, you need to clearly articulate the connection between your organization's knowledge requirements and the conference program. Do not assume that your manager will be able to automatically make those distinctions. Below are some conference benefits to include in your proposal.

- Networking Opportunities
- Discuss Industry Trends
- Learn Best Practices
- Discover Current Strategies
- Future Trends Exploration

- Discuss Current Processes
- Future Process Exploration
- Meet Current and Future Vendors
- Teambuilding
- Continuing Education Credit

CONCLUSION

Provide the specific knowledge benefits and expenses your manager needs to decide the value of your proposal for attending the convention. Express your desire to learn more about the industry and grow in your profession.

LETTER TO SUPERVISOR

Below, you'll find a "justification letter" template — a letter to your supervisor explaining the benefits you'll get from attending the TSAE New Ideas Annual Conference, how they will make you a better employee, and help advance your organization.

This general template will get you started while allowing you to customize it to you and your organization's particular needs.

LETTER TEMPLATE

(Date)
Dear **(supervisor's name)**,

I would like to attend the 2023 TSAE New Ideas Annual Conference, September 24–26, in Fort Worth, TX. The conference will enable me to attend a number of education sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of association industry experts and colleagues from around the state of Texas. Many of the presentations are tailored to **(insert your primary function here i.e. association professionals, professionals selling services for associations, etc.)** and give information on how to **(insert benefits/lessons here, for example: reduce costs, increase productivity, and motivate team members by using new tools and services)**. I am seeking sponsorship for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and living expenses during the conference. A detailed cost breakdown is included below.

After reviewing the conference website, I have identified a number of education sessions which will allow me to gain knowledge and understanding about how we can improve our overall processes. The presentations are facilitated by both industry experts and association colleagues who have faced similar challenges. I chose each presentation because it directly relates to an issue we currently face. Getting the information in a seminar format will greatly reduce the research time and costs that **(your organization's name)** would normally incur in researching the topics. Incidentally, I have only listed some of the seminars that I will attend. Including them all would make this memo much too long.

(You will need to insert the session descriptions which most apply to your responsibilities)

(The numbers in brackets below will need to be adjusted to reflect the current pricing. The travel costs vary as well and should be changed to reflect your costs.)

The full price conference fee is **<$xxxx>**, but can be reduced $100 by registering before the next deadline.

(You will need to insert your travel cost numbers here)

Here is the breakdown of conference costs:

Mileage/Airfare: **<$xxxx>**

Transportation: **<$xxxx>**

Hotel: **<$xxxx>**

Meals: **<$xxxx>**

Conference Fee: **<$xxxx>**

The total costs associated with attending this conference are: **<$xxxx>.**

The opportunity for me to develop better contacts and gain knowledge in specific areas of **(your area of expertise)** makes my attendance at the TSAE New Ideas Annual Conference a wise investment, which will yield rich dividends for **(name of your organization)**.

Sincerely,

(your name here)