

MEETING THE CHALLENGE AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE



How to Determine ROI for the Conference

Use this information, along with the handy worksheets below, to help you justify the expense of attending a conference. In order to propose any allocation of resources to a given project or program, you need to understand two components to make decisions:

1. Expense (the "investment")
2. Return on Investment (ROI)

Here are some easy-to-use tools to help you calculate the investment and identify your ROI when you attend the ASHHRA 54th Annual Conference & Exposition.

General Tips

- Focus on what you will specifically bring back to your organization as the ROI.
- Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A to your colleagues to share what you learned. That way, others in your organization will also reap the benefits of your attendance.
- Share the syllabus and speaker handouts with your colleagues. As an attendee, you have access to conference handouts and the option to access recordings on the ASHHRA Learning Portal after the conference.
- If you are working to obtain or maintain your CHHR, PHR, SPHR or other designation, remind your supervisor that this is a great way to earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and is less expensive than registering for separate conferences. It also requires less time away from the office.
- Be ready with a plan that shows how you will delegate or who will cover for you while you are attending the conference.
- Visit ASHHRA.org/ASHHRA18, where the advance registration rates are listed along with the scholarship opportunities, and see if you qualify for any of the financial aid.

Understanding Your Conference Expenses

Conference expenses are influenced by a number of factors. Before you can begin to justify conference expenses, you need to calculate what those expenses will be. Use the following *Expense Worksheet* to develop a cost estimate for attending the ASHHRA annual conference.

Expense Worksheet*

| Expense | Guideline | Cost |
|-----------------------------|---|------|
| Conference Registration | | \$ |
| Pre-Conference Registration | Optional | \$ |
| Flight | Try a web travel service to get a quick estimate | \$ |
| Lodging | \$ + tax single/double | \$ |
| Ground Transportation | If flying: taxi? car rental? shuttle? | \$ |
| Mileage Reimbursement | Driving to conference? Mapquest to calculate distances, then multiply miles by IRS standard for 2017. | \$ |
| Parking Reimbursement | At airport for flight departure, or at hotel where conference is located | \$ |
| Food Per Diem | See IRS guidelines for conference locale rates. Remember, registration includes breakfasts, lunches and Tuesday brunch. | \$ |
| Total | | \$ |

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Understanding the Benefits

Some benefits from conference attendance are hard to quantify. For example, many experts agree that the top benefit of conference attendance is networking value. Where else can you find so many industry contacts facing the same issues as your organization? Are there solutions of which you are not aware? Although networking is a key benefit of conference attendance, it is also the toughest for which to quantify a dollar value.

When you propose a conference for approval, *don't focus on how much you want to go; focus on what you will specifically bring back to the organization as payback for the investment.* Some specific details you'll need to identify include:

Session content. What sessions have particular relevance to your organization/department work? Specifically identify:

- Tools
- Technologies
- Processes
- Questions to be answered
- Roadblocks to overcome

Vendor contacts. The exposition at the ASHHRA annual conference will showcase vendors with tools and products you use or are evaluating for potential future use. This is an opportunity to compare competing products/services and learn about new resources in the market.

Best practices. There will be sessions in areas that will immediately benefit your organization. Which sessions are specifically applicable for you and your organization?

Training. There will be workshops designed to teach attendees a special skill and/or help your team overcome current or future challenges. Cite specific examples.

Quantifying the Benefits

Although you might understand the benefits of the conference that interests you, your manager may not. Therefore, to be most effective in justifying 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.

To support this process, use the *Benefits Worksheet* on the following page to help you focus on the benefits.

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Benefits Worksheet*

| Your Organization's Benefits | Specific needs and the conference sessions and trainings that meet the need |
|---|---|
| Networking Benefits | 1. This conference will allow [specific team members] to network with other professionals and vendors in the industry. We will be able to take the pulse of what is happening for tools, technologies and processes and hear new ideas. |
| Teambuilding (if sending a big part of your group) | 1. This conference will help build our team, providing a forum for team members to discuss tools, technologies and processes and how we can apply them in our company to improve our information products, workflow and processes. |
| Current Tools | 1. 2. 3. |
| Future Tools Exploration | 1. 2. 3. |
| Current Technologies | 1. 2. 3. |
| Future Technologies Exploration | 1. 2. 3. |
| Current Processes | 1. 2. 3. |
| Future Processes Exploration | 1. 2. 3. |
| Vendors With Tools & Technologies You Are Exploring | 1. 2. 3. |

*Excerpted from Mike Doyle, manager, author, teacher, conference organizer and founder of the Documentation & Training Conference.

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Show the Value in Attending the ASHHRA 54th Annual Conference & Exposition

ASHHRA knows firsthand that hospitals and health care organizations are experiencing financial difficulties. Travel and training budgets have been reduced or withheld. If you have been to an ASHHRA annual conference before, you know the price of registration does not even compare to the amount of knowledge you'll bring back to your organization. With over 50 learning sessions specific to health care HR, you will return equipped with new ideas to share, innovative strategies to implement, and strengthened connections to help streamline everyday operations.

You know the benefits of attending the ASHHRA annual conference is worth the cost, but given today's economic climate, you may need to justify the expense to your manager.

Here are some easily implementable ideas to help you demonstrate the value of your attendance in Pittsburgh for the ASHHRA 54th Annual Conference & Exposition:

- **Create an ASHHRA Annual Conference Knowledge Center**
After the conference, create a repository of knowledge to share with your colleagues. Whether you pick up vendor brochures in the exhibit hall, business cards of helpful consultants or print out presentations from each learning session, put it in a binder to share or reference when needed.
- **Host a Post Conference Idea Share**
Gather your team and provide an update on the timely education received at the conference. Share your conference experience and offer to do a presentation based on sessions that really impacted you. For example, did you learn new retention ideas to implement at your organization? Provide the session handouts and hit on the high notes from that session. Your colleagues will appreciate that you took the time to share what you've learned.
- **Assemble a Team of Attendees**
If you show the value of the education you received at the ASHHRA annual conference, you can encourage your colleagues to attend. Could you imagine if more than one person from your organization could attend the conference? You could assign specific educational sessions, networking events and/or vendors, then meet back once you return to see which items have been, or should be, acted upon. Then follow up with a note to management to describe what actions you've taken and what improvements you've made.
- **Pick One Thing You Learned and Apply It**
Execute at least one thing you learned from the conference. Does this save your organization money or make a process easier? If so, document the impact and emphasize that this would not have been realized if you had not attended the conference.
- **Be a Name Dropper**
To really drive home the value of attending the conference, the next time you have an idea or concept to share that you learned from ASHHRA, start the conversation with "One of the great speakers I saw at ASHHRA..."

When your manager sees how much you've gotten out of this conference, and how you shared it with others in your organization, they'll be more willing to fund it again next year.