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ASHHRA
THE HUMAN SIDE OF HEALTHCARE

AHA Events



Make the case to attend the ASHHRA 55th Annual Conference & Exposition

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 decision-making components: 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 55th Annual Conference & Exposition.

General tips

- Focus on what you will specifically bring back to your organization - What are your organization's challenges and which sessions will help you find solutions?
- Make a plan to demonstrate the value of your attendance. Pick and implement an idea [from page 4](#).
- 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 in comparison to other HR conferences. Additionally, the content is focused on the health care HR field.
- Be ready with a plan that shows how you will delegate your work or who will cover for you while you are attending the conference.
- Visit ASHHRA.org/ASHHRA19, where the advance registration rates are listed along with the scholarship opportunities, and see if you qualify for any of the financial aid.

1. Calculate your conference expenses

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		\$
Preconference Registration	Optional	\$
Flight	Visit the conference travel page for airline discount codes.	\$
Lodging	\$ + tax single/double	\$
Ground Transportation	If flying: taxi? car rental? shuttle?	\$
Mileage Reimbursement	Driving to conference? Use Google Maps to calculate distances, then multiply miles by IRS standard for 2019.	\$
Parking Reimbursement	At airport for flight departure, or at conference hotel	\$
Food Per Diem	See IRS guidelines for conference locale rates. Remember, registration includes breakfasts, lunches and Tuesday brunch.	\$
Total		\$

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2. Understand 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 business partners 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.

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3. Quantify the benefits

Although you might understand the benefits of the conference that interests you, your manager may not. To be 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* below to help you focus on the benefits.

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 health care field. We will be able to take the pulse of what is happening for tools, technologies, processes and innovative ideas.
Team building (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 organization 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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4. Make a plan to show the value of conference

ASHHRA knows firsthand that health care budgets can be tight. If you have been to an ASHHRA conference before, you know the benefits are worth the cost but, you may need to justify the expense to your manager. 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.

Here are some easily implementable ideas to help you demonstrate the value of your attendance to your manager:

- **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 made an impact on 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 a group of your colleagues to attend. You could assign specific educational sessions, networking events and/or business partners, 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.