**HOW TO JUSTIFY CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

You are interested in attending AHRMM20 Conference & Exhibition, July 26-29, 2020, in Austin, TX. You know it is the leading health care supply chain event where you can discover peer-tested solutions and best practices, explore the latest innovation and connect with other professionals and suppliers to get equipped with tools and knowledge that will help you successfully meet the challenges and opportunities facing you and your organization.

But how do you convey the value of AHRMM20 to your supervisor in order to secure funds for your attendance?

Below are some easy-to-use tools and tips that may help you calculate the investment and identify your professional and financial return on investment.

**General Tips**

Plan early! Visit the [conference website](http://annual.ahrmm.org) to take advantage of the early bird registration discounts and review the AHRMM20 Exhibitor Scholarships opportunities to see if you qualify. Planning early will help you to secure lower airline fares and obtain a discounted room rate in a conference hotel.

Send a letter to your supervisor explaining all of the benefits you will get from attending AHRMM20, how they will improve your performance and help advance your organization. Include a list of exhibitors you intend to meet to discuss their products and how they may benefit your organization. Ask for input on which sessions and vendor information your supervisor feels would benefit the institution the most.

If you are working to obtain or maintain your CMRP designation, remind your supervisor that this is a great way to earn approximately 20 Contact Hours and is less expensive than registering for separate conferences. It also requires less time away from the office.

As an attendee, you have unlimited access to conference handouts and recordings. Offer to share them with your colleagues after the event and to deliver a short presentation on sessions that would benefit them.

Be ready with a plan that identifies who will handle your responsibilities while you are attending the conference. Ensure your employer that current technology will allow you to be accessible during your time away from the office.

**Determine 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 AHRMM20.

**EXPENSE WORKSHEET**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Expense | Guideline | Cost |
| Conference Registration | Register by April 24 to save up to $350 with Early Bird rates. | $ |
| Pre-Conference Registration | Optional | $ |
| Flight | Check AHRMM20 Travel page for airline fare discounts. | $ |
| Lodging | (Available mid-January 2020) | $ |
| Transportation | If flying: taxi? car rental? shuttle? Uber/Lyft? | $ |
| Mileage Reimbursement | Driving to conference? To the airport for your flight? Use [Google Maps](https://maps.google.com) to calculate distances, then multiply miles by 57.5 cents/mile (IRS standard for 2020). | $ |
| Parking Reimbursement | At airport for flight departure, or at hotel where conference is located. | $ |
| Food Per Diem | See [IRS guidelines](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) for conference local rates.  Note: Full Conference rate includes two luncheons, three continental breakfasts and refreshment breaks. | $ |
| **Total** | | $ |

**Understanding the Benefits**

Many benefits from conference attendance are hard to quantify. For example, many experts agree that the top benefit of conference attendance is networking. Where else can you find so many peers facing the same challenges and opportunities as your organization? Are there initiatives, methods and solutions you’re not aware of?

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. Clearly articulate the connection between your organization’s knowledge requirements and the conference program. To support this process, use the following Benefits Worksheet to help you focus on the benefits.

**BENEFITS WORKSHEET**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your Organization’s Benefits | Specific needs and the conference sessions and training that meet the need. |
| Networking Benefits | 1. This conference will allow [specific team members] to network with other health care supply chain professionals and suppliers. We will learn about the latest tools, resources and methods, and hear new ideas and best practices. |
| Teambuilding (if sending a big part of your group) | 1. This conference will help advance our team. Team members will discover and discuss new tools, best practices and processes and how we can apply them in our organization to drive clinical value, implement innovation and deliver operational efficiency. |
| Current Tools | 1.  2.  3. |
| Future Tools Exploration | 1.  2.  3. |
| Current Strategies | 1.  2.  3. |
| Future Strategies Exploration | 1.  2.  3. |
| Current Processes | 1.  2.  3. |
| Future Processes Exploration | 1.  2.  3. |
| New Products and Technologies for Your Organization | 1.  2.  3. |

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