

Why You Should Attend

As a meetings industry professional, you know you can find the newest trends, innovations and technologies when you attend the PCMA 2010 Annual Meeting: *Convening Leaders*, January, 10-13, 2010 in Dallas, TX. You also know that to be competitive, you must constantly fine-tune your skills, find new ways to cut costs, streamline processes and drive innovation. You must know how to be effective and incorporate these processes into your daily operations.

Be a force for change in your organization by bringing the knowledge home. Everyone in your organization can benefit by your attendance. Learn successful methods and best practices from leaders in the meetings and convention industry and how to apply these methods in multiple situations.

Communicate Why Attendance is Vital

Professionals who are better prepared than their competition have the advantage - as do their organizations. Whether you belong to a large or small organization, investments in improving meeting management will be repaid many times over. Plan to attend. It will be your chance to bring the benefits of knowledge home to your organization!

Here are just a few benefits of attendance:

- Discover practical solutions to complex problems
- Analyze best practices and management trends
- Adopt world-class meeting management practices and strategies
- Discuss hot topics with colleagues
- Network with other meeting management professionals
- Learn from powerful keynote speakers

During the 2010 Annual Meeting, you will meet the best and the brightest in the meetings and convention industry and you will see what PCMA has to offer. With more than 60 educational sessions, you and your organization will reap the benefits of best management practices, success stories, tools and practical solutions. You will also have the opportunity to turn your biggest challenges into your greatest accomplishments when you learn from the experts, leaders in the field and fellow practitioners.

Gain Buy-In

When available, review the daily schedule on the website to identify educational sessions, continuing education opportunities and networking events that address specific needs within your organization. Identify your current initiatives such as cutting costs, streamlining processes, building relationships or overcoming specific challenges and then find corresponding sessions. Identify current suppliers with which you need to discuss future contracts or services. Find new vendors who you are considering adding to your list of meeting management suppliers. Prepare a list of the benefits that can be realized by your attendance. Then, explain the relationship between these Annual Meeting activities and your organizational goals. It's important to be able to logically describe the benefits to your organization and how you can make an impact.

Create a Winning Proposal

Put your ideas in writing and submit a formal proposal to your supervisor or board. Include your intended schedule of education sessions and why the knowledge gained will be valuable to your operation.

List all areas where your department faces challenges and the sessions you want to attend or who you plan to visit with that will help you overcome these challenges.

Provide a list of suppliers (both current and potential) and note not only what you hope to accomplish during meetings, but also point out the efficiency associated with being able to meet with so many current and future business partners over a short time period.

Strengthen your proposal by listing department goals and their corresponding sessions.

Don't forget to include the cost of registration, airfare, meals and lodging in order to make it a well-rounded proposal.

[See an example.](#)

Note: The full registration fee includes continental breakfasts, luncheons, refreshments breaks and 2 or more evening receptions (depending on your involvement in other PCMA activities, such as chapters), thus decreasing the outlays necessary for meals.

Give Feedback

Follow up with your supervisor or board after you return from the Annual Meeting. They will want to know firsthand your impression of the convention, whether you gained something from it and how you will be able to apply lessons learned. This is where you will refer to your original proposal and goals to achieve while at the PCMA Annual Meeting. Let your supervisor or board know what you have learned and how you will implement this knowledge. Most importantly, let your organization know that your participation in the PCMA Annual Meeting was a worthwhile investment.

So, plan your strategy, prepare your proposal and secure your approval to go. Registration opens in September for the 54th PCMA Annual Meeting, January 10-13, 2010 in Dallas, TX. Bring the benefits of knowledge home to your organization!

Thank you to NBTA for your tips for gaining buy-in.