

Conference Justification Toolkit

By now you already know that at The Payments Academy Conference you can discover peer-tested ideas, learn to innovate, and make valuable connections with other practitioners and suppliers to successfully tackle the challenges and opportunities facing you and your campus. But how do you share the value of this event with your supervisor to help justify your attendance? Below is some helpful information.

GENERAL TIPS

Here are things to consider to justify the travel and training expense:

- Focus on what you will specifically bring back to your 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. That way others in your unit will get the benefits of your attendance, too.
 - Share the program and speaker handouts with your colleagues. As an attendee, you have access to materials posted by speakers.
 - If you are working to obtain or maintain a professional designation remind your supervisor that this is a great way to earn CEUs.
 - Be ready with a plan that shows who will cover for you while you are attending the conference.
- * The conference is focused on the following topics among others:
- Shopping for Shopping Carts (or Auction Software, Event Management Software, etc.)
 - RFP Writing for Financial Services
 - Establishing Your Compliance Program
 - Deep Dive into PCI Scoping
 - GLBA Compliance: What Higher Ed Needs to Know
 - Alternative Payments and the College Campus
 - Contactless Payments on Campus
 - Optimizing your Payment Acceptance Strategy
 - Tips for Developing In-house Training (PCI, Payment Acceptance, Cash handling, etc.)

EXPENSES AND BENEFITS / JUSTIFY YOUR ATTENDANCE

To propose an allocation of resources for attendance, you should understand the expense and the expected return on investment.

Understanding Your Expenses*

Expenses are affected by several factors and to justify expenses you need to calculate what those expenses are and develop a cost estimate for attending. Below are some expenses to include in your estimate.

- Registration
- Lodging
- Transportation - airfare, train, driving
- Local ground transportation and/or Parking
- Meals
- Gratuity/Tips

**University practitioners who are Conference faculty will receive a complimentary registration and travel expense reimbursement as outlined in their speaker agreement.*

Understanding The Benefits

Many benefits from attendance are hard to quantify and experts agree that the top benefit of conference attendance is networking value. Where else can you find so many contacts facing the same issues? When you propose the conference for approval, it's best to focus on what you will specifically bring back to the organization as payback 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 products or technologies you use or are evaluating for future purchase.

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

- Networking Opportunities
- Discuss Industry Trends
- Learn Best Practices
- Discover Current Technologies
- Future Technology Exploration
- Discuss Current Processes
- Future Process Exploration
- Meet Current and Future Vendors
- Teambuilding
- Continuing Education Credit

Provide the specific knowledge benefits and expenses your manager needs to decide the value of your proposal for attending The Payments Academy Conference. 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 all the benefits you'll get from attending the Payments Academy Conference, how they will make you a more valuable 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.

(Date)

DEAR (SUPERVISOR'S NAME),

I would like to attend The Payments Academy Conference **(insert program dates and location)**. The conference will enable me to attend several education sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of payments industry experts and colleagues from higher education. Many of the presentations are tailored to **(insert your primary function here i.e., finance professional, technology professional, etc.)** and provide information on how to **(insert benefits/lessons here, for example: reduce costs, increase productivity, and achieve and maintain PCI compliance)**. I am seeking sponsorship for the registration fee, travel expenses, and living expenses during the conference. A detailed cost breakdown is included below.

After reviewing the program, I have identified several 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 college/university colleagues who have faced similar challenges. Getting information in a collaborative conference/workshop format will greatly reduce the research time and costs that **(your organization's name)** would normally incur in researching the topics.

VALUES IN BRACKETS BELOW WILL NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO REFLECT CURRENT PRICING. TRAVEL COSTS VARY AS WELL AND SHOULD BE CHANGED TO REFLECT YOUR COSTS.

Here is the breakdown of anticipated conference costs:

Roundtrip Airfare: <\$xxxx>

Transportation: <\$xxxx>

Hotel: <\$xxxx>

Meals: <\$xxxx>

Conference Fee: <\$xxxx>

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

(remember to include TPA faculty expense reimbursement if applicable!)

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

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME HERE)