TAPPING *Your* POTENTIAL

Identify the Benefits to Your Agency

Benefits to Your Agency	Specific Needs (and the Conference events that meet the need)
Networking	*This is a sample:* The mParks Conference & Trade Show will allow [specific team members] to network with industry experts, colleagues, fellow professionals and vendors. Attendees will learn new ideas, have a forum to discuss what is working (and what is not) for park and recreation providers throughout Michigan and beyond. *Sessions that meet the need:* [Identify and insert sessions relevant to you/your department here] General educational sessions bring together professionals for learning, many with time for discussion and Q&A at the end. Additional networking social events are available for attendees as well.
Teambuilding (if sending a group)	*This is a sample:* The Conference & Trade Show will build our team, providing a forum for team members to discuss tools, technologies, and new information. The event will allow us to processes new resources and discuss how we might apply them to improve our information, services, workflow, and efficiency. *Sessions that meet the need:* [Identify and insert sessions relevant to you/your department here]
Future Tools Exploration	*This is a sample:* The Conference & Trade Show will provide [me/our team] with the opportunity to explore potential tools for the challenges our department faces and partnership opportunities that we may now know exist. *Sessions that meet the need:* [Identify and insert sessions relevant to you/your department here]
Current/Future Technologies	*This is a sample:* The Conference & Trade Show will showcase current and future technology offerings that may allow our department to continue providing current services while operating more efficiently and effectively in the future. *Sessions that meet the need:* [Identify and insert sessions relevant to you/your department here]
Current Processes Seeking to Improve	[Fill in this category similar to above]
Future Processes Exploration	[Fill in this category similar to above]
Vendors with Tools & Technologies to Explore	[Fill in this category similar to above]
Other	[Fill in this category similar to above]

TAPPING Your POTENTIAL

Quantifying the Benefits of Conference & Trade Show Attendance

Let's face it: many 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 you're not aware of?

Although networking is undoubtedly the most important aspect of a conference, it is also the toughest for which to quantify any value.

On the other hand, if an employee came to you and said, *"I want you to fund me for $4,000 and I don't know what it'll do for you,"* then you would likely scoff at the offer…and maybe even mumble a few colorful metaphors about his/her suggestion.

When you propose a conference for approvals, 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's work? Specifically identify the sessions and track:
  - Best Practices
  - Programming
  - Professional Development
  - Communications
- **Vendor contacts.** Will the conference showcase vendors with products & services you use or are evaluating for potential future use? Is this an opportunity during which you'll be able to compare competing products?
- **Best practices.** Will there be training sessions in areas that will immediately benefit your group?
- **Training.** Will there be workshops designed to teach attendees a special skill and/or help your department overcome current or future challenges?

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.

Resources on this page provided by Mike Doyle, founder of the Documentation and Training Conference event for technical communicators.