



In the current economic climate, securing approval and time off from work to attend conference may be more challenging than it has been in the past. One way is to make a strong business case outlining how your organisation will benefit from you attending conference. If you haven't produced a business case, here are some simple steps you can follow:

1. Write down the three to five most important strategies or issues being addressed in your organisation right now.
2. Think about how you personally contribute to those strategies. How is your work aligned with the organisation's overall strategy? Make a list of your personal contribution to the strategy.
3. Identify skills and knowledge that you need to help your service users and manage your caseload.
4. Read The Occupational Therapy Show Conference Programme on website to identify the sessions that will help you to contribute to your organisation's strategy.
5. Make a note of speakers or other people at the Annual Conference you would like to meet.

For example, your business case might read as follows:

“At present, our organisation is highly focused on cost savings. My contribution to our strategy is to help reduce service costs without compromising the needs of our service users. At the conference there are a number of sessions that will provide valuable information on maximising cost savings whilst providing guidance on delivering a high quality service, despite these challenging financial times.....

xx as it will help our dept/organisation to xxxxxxxxxx
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Make sure you include sessions that address your organisation's most important strategic issues.

Include in your business case:

- A list of exhibitors you intend to meet at the conference
- The cost of conference including registration, accommodation travel expenses and meals.

Preparing for The Occupational Therapy Show

Once you receive approval, do plan your show attendance:

1. Refer to your list of people and factor in time to meet them in your personal conference schedule. Don't be shy about approaching presenters and other "luminaries." They are more accessible than you might think, especially if you make plans with them in advance.
2. Two weeks prior to the conference, contact the people you wish to meet. You may find them on Facebook or other social networking sites, so you can send a message about meeting at conference. Make a specific appointment to meet during refreshment breaks, lunch or evening.
3. One week prior to the conference, complete your personal programme. Include the people you're meeting as well as the sessions you'll be attending.

After the show

1. After the conference write a summary of what you have learnt and how you will use the information and contacts you made to contribute to your organisation's business aims.
2. Submit the summary to your manager. The purpose of this summary is to make your next conference request easier than the first. Once your line manager understands that you and your organisation can benefit from the conference, they'll be more likely to quickly approve future attendance.
3. If the knowledge you gained is useful to others in your organisation, do share it with your colleagues