**General Tips & Talking Points**

Getting attendance approval from your supervisor is sometimes a challenge, as it takes time and money. In order to provide optimal patient care, you simply cannot miss the ASPEN 2018 Nutrition Science and Practice Conference (ASPEN 2018). ASPEN 2018 is the leading conference where nutrition support professionals and researchers gather to explore and tackle challenges, connect with thought leaders and content experts, and walk away with educational materials you can use to help improve patient outcomes.

When you propose attending ASPEN 2018, it is key to focus specifically on what you will bring back to your organization as a return for the investment:

* Attending ASPEN 2018 is not only an investment in you, but your organization and nutrition support team. You will return to your institution with new evidence-based research, updated best practices, new tools, and contact information for the brightest minds in nutrition support.
* The ASPEN Nutrition Science and Practice Conference Program Committee – made up of current members from every discipline – planned the conference with **you** and **your pressing issues** in mind. You cannot afford to miss the interdisciplinary education that will only be offered at ASPEN 2018.
* ASPEN 2018 provides many opportunities to network and collaborate with people who share your interests – whether you’re looking for fellow physicians, dietitians, pharmacists, nurses or want to seek advice from someone in your specific specialty.
* ASPEN 2018 is a great way to earn continuing education (CE) credits. By attending and obtaining your CE credits, you will have a hands-on opportunity to learn from industry experts. Remind your supervisor that the conference offers valuable training hours you can apply towards required continuing education.
* Plan ahead! Be ready with a plan that shows who will cover for you while you attend the conference.
* Offer to prepare and present an overview of what you learned at ASPEN 2018 with your supervisor and colleagues. Be sure to bring back speaker handouts and share with your colleagues. As a participant, you have unlimited access to materials posted by speakers.

**Understanding the Benefits of Attending**

The time you spend at the ASPEN 2018 Nutrition Science and Practice Conference will be the most cost-effective educational and training choice you will make all year. When you propose the conference for approval, don’t focus on how much you want to go; instead focus on what you will specifically bring back to the organizations as a return for the investment like:

* Session content: What sessions are relevant to your organizations work?
* Best practices: Which sessions will most positively impact your practice?
* Training: Will there be workshops designed to teach attendees special skills and/or help overcome current or future challenges?

Although you may understand the benefits of attending a conference that interests you, your administrator may not. Therefore, be effective in justifying the conference by clearly stating the connection between your institution’s knowledge requirements/needs and the conference program.

To support this process, use the following *Benefits Worksheet* to help you focus on the benefits. Use whatever makes sense for your particular organization and omit the rest.

**Benefits Worksheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Your Organization’s Needs** | **ASPEN 2018 Nutrition Science and Practice Conference Sessions & Training that Meet the Need** |
| **Networking** |  |
| **Team Building (If you are planning on going with a group)** |  |
| **Current Practices and Processes** |  |
| **Future Practices and Processes Exploration** |  |
| **Current Technologies** |  |
| **Future Technologies Exploration** |  |
| **Vendors With Tools and Technologies You Are Exploring** |  |

**Expense Worksheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expense** | **Cost** |
| **Conference Registration** |  |
| **Pre-conference Course Registration (if applicable)** |  |
| **Flight** |  |
| **Hotel** |  |
| **Other Transportation Costs (cab fare, parking, mileage reimbursement, etc.)**  **Food (per diem)** |  |
| **Subtotal** |  |
| **Total number of employees going** |  |
| **Total** |  |