

How to attend a SWE Conference on a Budget



Tips on How to Get Company Support:

- Include attending the conference you want to attend a part of your yearly “personal development plan” in advance of the conference.
- Negotiate who pays for what. For example, company gives you the time off to attend, covers registration, and the hotel (usually the most expensive part of the conference fees) and you pay for food and airfare.
- Seek sponsorship from the Human Resources (HR) Department If your management cannot provide financial sponsorship by using the **example support memo**. In return, you can support company’s booth at the career fair during the conference.
- Write a trip report to document what you have learned at the conference afterwards and express your appreciation to your sponsor (i.e., your boss, HR and/or upper management).



Tips on Maintaining Professional Image:

- Give yourself plenty of time to work on the funding issue.
- Plan your work/activities in advance so that you can go to the conference without delaying your assigned project needs and schedule.
- Arrange someone to take care of issues while you are gone, if needed.
- Take work along to the conference if you can be productive.



Tips on Saving Money:

- Use a web travel companies to find the best hotel and airfare rates.
 - www.hotwire.com
 - www.travelocity.com
 - www.hotels.com
 - www.priceline.com
- Typically airfare is less expensive if you stay over a Saturday night so consider going a few days earlier or staying a few days longer than the actual conference.
- See if the conference hotel has government rates/per diem rate rooms available.
- Research other hotel rates near the conference hotel. Hotels within walking distance of the conference hotel may offer better rates. Please keep in mind that SWE is responsible for paying for the block of rooms in the conference hotel whether they are full or not.
- Find a roommate for the duration of the conference.
 - See if any of your old college friends are attending - great chance to catch up especially if they are spread around the country.
 - Send out an email to your local section or local collegiate section to see if anyone is attending and if they are interested in sharing a room and splitting the cost.
 - Contact members in the region and see if anyone is interested in rooming together to save money.
- Research the cost of transportation in the conference area so you are not surprised at the cost of a round trip shuttle to and from the airport. A good source of information is the local online “convention and visitors bureau”.
 - Are restaurants close?
 - Can you walk to the conference center from your hotel?
 - How much is taxi service in this area?
 - What options are available for getting to the airport?
- Contact the people in charge of the conference and see if any volunteering opportunities exist. If they do, try negotiating a reduced or waived registration fee in exchange for volunteering.
- See if your local SWE Section Representative is attending. If not, offer to represent your section at the Council of Representative’s meeting and vote on issues for your section. Also, see if the local section is willing to help fund a portion of the trip.