



How to Get Management Approval to Attend an AMI or NAI Regional Workshop



Here are some tips for getting management's approval for attending the AMI or NAI Regional Workshop. We know that may be difficult in these economic times, but here are some tips you can use and adapt for your agency or organization.

Front-line staff is an important asset to any business and if you come back re-charged, you will pass along that energy and enthusiasm to those you come into contact with. This will create a better experience, and hopefully a repeat experience, for your visitors. Remember, the manager who takes care of staff is really taking care of the guests.

As an interpretation professional, you know you can find the newest trends, innovations and technologies available in the field when you attend the AMI or NAI Workshop. You also know that you must constantly fine-tune your skills, learn new interpretive techniques, network with peers, and learn about issues affecting the administration of interpretive sites or supervision of interpretive programs or personnel. You will discover how to enhance visitor experiences, learn which social, political, management or other issues or trends are affecting the field of interpretation, how to develop approaches to target various audiences, or find out how audiences can benefit from using technology in various interpretive settings. In a financial crunch, it is innovative thinking that turns the unknown into opportunities.

Be a force for change in your organization by taking your knowledge back to your peers. Everyone in your organization can benefit from your attendance. Learn successful methods and best practices from leaders in the profession and become skilled at applying these methods in multiple situations then share the Interpreters Sourcebook (proceedings) with your colleagues when you get home. This will

be your chance to bring the benefits of knowledge home to your organization!

Communicate why attendance is vital:

Interpreters who are better equipped professionally have the advantage – as do their agencies or organizations. Whether you belong to a large or small agency or organization, investments in improving interpretation will be repaid many times over when you come back with your interpretive batteries recharged and having had an opportunity to compare notes with colleagues who may have faced similar circumstances as you face in your position.

Here are just a few benefits of attendance:

- Adopt best practices and strategies in interpretation
- Analyze management trends
- Discuss hot topics with colleagues
- Network and make connections with other interpretation professionals and meet interpreters from all over the world
- Learn from skilled and interesting keynote speakers

During the AMI and NAI Workshops, you will meet the best and the brightest in interpretation and you will see what AMI and NAI have to offer. With numerous concurrent sessions, you and your organization will reap the benefits of best management practices, success stories, tools and practical solutions. You will also have the opportunity to turn your biggest challenges into your greatest accomplishments when you learn from the experts, leaders in the field and fellow practitioners.

Gain support from your supervisor: Review the schedule on the AMI and NAI websites to identify concurrent sessions, pre-workshop sessions, and networking events that address specific needs within your organization. Each session includes a short description of its contents; use these well-chosen words to justify

which of your organizational needs will be met by which activity or session.

Identify your organization's current initiatives such as cutting costs, streamlining processes, building partnerships or overcoming specific challenges and then find corresponding sessions to attend. You will meet presenters with experience in these areas and get to know fellow attendees who face the same challenges you do. You will be able to use these important contacts as sounding boards throughout the coming year.

Look at the list of off-site sessions offering behind-the-scenes overviews of local interpretation facilities. Many of these have faced challenges in interpretation and are willing to share their successes and failures with our group through behind-the-scenes tours specially tailored for AMI and NAI.

Identify current exhibitors and vendors with whom you can discuss future contracts or services. Find new vendors who you are considering adding to your bidders list or your file of interpretive services suppliers. Learn about new vendors that represent applications and technologies you had not thought of using before. Let your imagination soar as you make new connections.

Prepare a list of the benefits that can be realized by your attendance. Then, explain to your supervisor the relationship between these National Workshop activities and your professional and organizational goals. It's important to be able to logically describe the benefits to your organization and how you can make a positive impact with what you bring back with you.

Commit the funds early to make sure they are there in the fall.

Create a winning proposal: Put your ideas in writing and submit a proposal to your supervisor. Include your intended schedule of concurrent sessions and why the knowledge gained will be valuable to your operation.

List all areas where your division or department faces challenges and the sessions

you want to attend or who you plan to visit with who can help you overcome these challenges.

Provide a list of partners, exhibitors and colleagues (both current and potential) and note not only what you hope to accomplish during meetings, but also point out the efficiency associated with being able to meet with so many current and future business partners over a short time period. This can be especially true if you work for a Federal agency consisting of distant units.

Strengthen your proposal by listing division or department goals and the corresponding workshop sessions. Don't forget to include the cost of registration, travel, meals and lodging in order to make it a well-rounded proposal and let your supervisor know that it is AMI and NAI have capped early registrations to make them a great value. Mention that if you were to compare the cost of this workshop's registration with that of workshops of similar length, you would see that very few other workshops or conferences include as many meals as AMI and NAI registrations do. This dramatically offsets per diem expenses and makes AMI and NAI registration a great bargain.

Don't quit there; give feedback to

management: Follow up with your supervisor after you return from the National Workshop. They will want to know your impression of the workshop, what you gained from it and how you will be able to apply lessons learned. This is where you will refer to your original proposal and goals to achieve while at the Workshop. Let your supervisor know what you have learned and how you will implement this knowledge. Share your new knowledge with colleagues in mini-workshops back at the office. Most importantly, let your supervisor know that your participation in the AMI or NAI Regional Workshop was a worthwhile investment for your agency or organization.

So, plan your strategy, prepare your proposal and secure your approval to go. Bring the benefits of knowledge and professional growth home to your organization!