



Make Your Case

Every year SWB offers a program that is bursting with sessions, pinnacle speakers and networking events, all geared to engaging and developing the potential of women leaders. This year is no exception. But, you may have to convince your boss that it is more than worth the cost in time and money to attend.

The 2009 SWB Conference is an opportunity to expand your understanding by investing attention and energy into building a repertoire of insights both practical and inspirational to help you stay focused on experiencing your greatest success.

We know that SWB yields a high return on your investment and want to help you make the case to your management as well.

Steps to make your SWB case

Here are eight steps you can use to build a business case for attending the SWB conference:

1. **Write down** the three to five most important strategies or issues connected to leadership 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 strategy or mission? Make a list of these "personal contributions to strategy."
3. **Review the program** for the conference and highlight sessions of particular interest that relate to your list of personal development goals and contributions to strategy. Also make a note of speakers or other people at the event who you would like to meet.
4. **Connect the value** of the conference to your business goals. If developing better business systems or project controls are company, department or group goals, you can connect those to subject matter that will help pull in more expertise and knowledge towards helping the business reach these goals. *This argument puts less of the focus on your professional goals, and more on the organisation.*
5. **Professional development** - If you have career discussions with you manager, tie your career goals and future development to specific kinds of training or growth opportunities that you need. Often these are found and developed at conferences like SWB.
6. **Write a short business case** describing how attending SWB and meeting the other delegates will help you with your professional development goals and contribute to the organisation's strategy. *Use this business case to make your request for attending the meeting.*
7. **Offer to share with others** what you will have learned when you return to your workplace. You can pitch your participation as a way to bring back skills and knowledge to the rest of the organisation.
8. **PER (post event report)**. One form of sharing with others is to write up a report of the sessions you attended, written for other women in your group. The best PER reports make it easy for others to find the right reference, or trigger people to come and ask you questions. There's rarely value in a 10 page report, no one reads them. Instead, a 2 or 3 page summary, with URLs and pointers gets much more mileage. SWB recommend rewriting portions of your summary as a blog or Twitter post.

Business Case Example

Part of a business case might read as follows:

"At present, our organisation is highly focused on cost savings and maximising the effectiveness of people. My personal contribution to this organisational strategy is to be responsible for finding ways to keep my team focused on the big picture. The 2009 SWB conference has a session entitled, 'The Science of Thriving' using positive psychology tools and techniques for maintaining focus and building resilience to maximize self efficiencies. Dr Suzy Green – from the Positive Psychology Institute, will be running the session. I would like to attend the session and also meet with her privately in order to get ideas about maximizing the efficiencies and focus of my team."