



Maximise The Value.

Having an understanding of how to maximise the value of your participation in any conference is an important step in demonstrating your will to attend and ability to translate that into value for the organisation.

Here are some things you can do to get the most out of the SWB conference:

1. **Ask lots of questions** learning is not only one way. If you don't make your experiences engaging for yourself, you are guaranteed to be bored. Talk to speakers, the organisers and especially the women sitting next to you. Ask for recommendations for books, websites or other references and most importantly, during the Q&A, don't be shy!
2. **Conversations are as valuable** as the sessions. One of the surprising things about most conferences is that the most interesting, informative and educational moments may not always be in the sessions themselves, but within the interactions with peers from other companies and organisations.
3. **One – one – one.** A special thing about SWB is that because it is much smaller than a northern hemisphere conference, you can easily have one-on-one conversations with the speakers. Use the coffee breaks and lunches as an opportunity to get into conversation with the speakers outside their sessions to exchange ideas – you will find that you'll develop even more insight into any issues and solutions you might be seeking.
4. **The benefits and drawbacks** of going with co-workers. It is common to attend a conference with co-workers. This can be great. You're likely to bond more, and spend time together in a way that doesn't happen at work. However, if you have 2 or 3 friends that you're at the conference with, you might find it easy to fall into a pattern where you spend most of your time with them. Odds are you're not going to meet many new people, experience other kinds of social situations or discover many more insights. You shouldn't ignore your co-workers but think about how you are using your time. Consider splitting up and re-grouping a bit later to discuss what you've discovered and how it may benefit you and your organisation.
5. **Relax and have a good time.** This is not to say that conferences should be converted into vacations. Instead, think about what the real opportunities to learn are and that they tend not to happen if you're fixated on cramming in as much knowledge in as short a time as possible. The first rule of training you learn is that most people don't learn very much when they are under stress. If you are relaxed and enjoying your time away from the office, you're more open to new ideas and approaches which can be used for when you get back.
6. **They can live without you.** As much as we like to think we're critical to our teams and companies, they can live without us for a few days. Plan your time before the conference so that while you're away, you can stay away. If you have people who work for you, set them up to cover for expected situations that might arise. They have your mobile number and will call you if they need you. Otherwise, you don't need to check in or check your email every hour. Really, you don't. You think you do, but you don't.