

Which Seminar is Right for Me?

by Carolyn Merriman, FRSA, president

Are you bombarded by brochure mailings of upcoming educational conferences? How do you decide which conference will give you the most valuable information and make your job just a little bit easier?

Corporate Health Group frequently attends and participates in national conferences, seminars and educational series. Because of our exposure in this area, clients and contacts often ask us for recommendations. “*What’s the best conference for...?*” CHG has developed a series of questions to help you determine which seminar is right for you.

Questions to Consider

- What are your top two priorities for learning over the next 12 months?
- Are the priorities covered in the seminar by two or more sessions?
- Will this conference advance or assist you in meeting strategic objectives for the organization?
- Evaluate the potential or registered conference attendees. Are they going to provide good networking opportunities or relevant case studies?
- Are the presenters currently providers “living” the model or highly respected and ranked speakers on this topic?
- Have you attended the conference in the past?
- Have you heard the presenters previously? If YES, was it a positive experience?
- Do the presenters have current hands-on knowledge about the topic? If it is a case study, is there an indication that they will weave the how-tos and research into the talk in addition to talking about their marketplace?

Pointers

- Look for words like measurable outcomes, implementation tools, tactical steps, and solutions which indicate a more “hands-on” session focusing on teaching “how.”
- Terms like goal development, coordination, defined approach, indicate a more global presentation. With these, the focus is on teaching you the rationale with more emphasis on “why?”
- Conferences live and die based on their ability to screen for good presenters that leave the attendees satisfied, so check it out. If you haven’t attended any previous programs, ask the conference coordinators for their last speaker evaluation summary.

- Some case studies can only speak to their program, limiting the ability to apply their results and tactics to-your -universe.
- Set realistic expectations. A conference is not the place to go if you need support in building a customized approach around specific organizational issues. It is a great place to go if you need ideas to get started, need to re-energize yourself and your program, or if you need to gain marketplace understanding.

After reflecting on the information above, you should have a good idea if a conference will provide you with information you desire. If you decide that you should attend, getting internal approval is the next hurdle. *“How can I get my boss to approve a conference?”* Stay tuned for our next issue, or check out our website, www.corporatehealthgroup.com. We offer some sure-fire techniques for selling the idea internally and include suggestions for getting the most out of the conference.

Many of you attend several seminars as well, so we invite your thoughts and welcome additional suggestions and tips that have worked for you. Please fax us at (401) 886-5596 or send us an e-mail. We'll include your ideas on our website.



Carolyn Merriman, FRSA, President, Corporate Health Group,
www.corporatehealthgroup.com, 1-888-334-2500