



AEC has a five-step plan on how to get the education you need to make you a success in your career, while also showing your supervisor and other workgroups how it will benefit them and the company. Attending a live conference is the most important thing you can do to enhance continuing education and increase your professional network.

1. **List the Benefits.** Take a few minutes and write down all the benefits you are seeking from the conference and all the benefits the event can provide you. Are you looking for certification? Exploring networking opportunities for your company? Want to improve productivity and quality? Are you looking for professional development or personal growth? These are the kind of questions you want to ask yourself as you brainstorm all the possible benefits of attending. If you have attended the same conference a previous year, and it led to cost savings for the company, explain this to your manager. Review the conference website for program content and look for objectives and the “what you will learn” section of the session descriptions to use in your outline.
2. **Create a Proposal** Explain all the benefits you plan on gaining from this event. Clearly lay out the tools and strategies you expect to learn and show how this AEC conference will improve your performance. Also, explain how many days that you will be away, and how your work will be completed while you are gone.
3. **Develop a Budget** Calculate the amount the conference will cost and all the related expenditures you will incur while you are at the conference; include travel, food, hotel, transportation and registration fees. Look for the AEC-recommended lodging and early registration for discounts.
4. **Arrange a Meeting Time** Arrange a meeting time with your supervisor to discuss your proposal and budget.
5. **Follow up** After the conference, organize your thoughts on all the tools and techniques you learned along with all the benefits you gained by attending this conference. Schedule a time to meet with your supervisor to discuss some of the conference highlights and how you plan to implement your training to benefit your company. Prepare a presentation to share with your workgroup and others, either in person or via your company's intranet. Remember to express your appreciation for approving your involvement in the conference.