



## **The Justification Toolkit**

We know sometimes the decision to join us for an MCCA conference is not just yours. You may need to convince your employer, your manager or supervisor, or a partner at your firm. Moreover, there may be financial considerations.

We are here to help you navigate those considerations to show others the incredible value of attending MCCA's Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference ("Pathways Conference"). Expert faculty will address issues in the legal profession, practical developmental tools, best practices and resources for individual lawyers and organizations. For individuals, there are workshops to improve rainmaking and business development skills. For organizations, expert panels address areas for improved execution of a diversity and inclusion strategy. You will also have opportunities to make valuable connections with attorneys from diverse backgrounds across various practices and industries and connect with leaders in the legal profession.

With this toolkit, you will be able to convey this value to your superiors and justify the investment.

### **The Justification Toolkit includes:**

1. General Tips
2. How to calculate the return-on-investment (ROI) of the program
3. Justification letter for your supervisor
4. Returns Worksheet
5. Expenses Worksheet

## **General Tips**

Many employers' budgets for travel and training may require that you justify the expense of attending in-person programming like the Pathways Conference. Here are some things you might want to consider:

1. Focus on what you will specifically bring back to your firm or organization as a return on investment. For example, attending an MCCA conference can offer the following benefits:
  - Knowledge**—offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A to your colleagues to share what you learned. That way, others in your department or unit will get the benefits of your attendance too.
  - Valuable Resources**—share the speaker handouts and PowerPoint slides with your colleagues. As an attendee, you have access to these quality materials provided by the speakers.
  - CLE Credit**—remind your supervisor that this is a great way to earn continued legal education credit. This can be a very time-efficient way to meet your CLE requirements compared to registering for multiple seminars or webinars.
  - Networking**—by attending the Pathways Conference, you will have the opportunity to build relationships with current and potential clients and your own counsel. You will also meet with vendors that may be able to provide you with solutions for yourself or your clients.
2. Be ready with a plan that shows who will cover for you while you are attending the program.
3. Be sure to check out the registration page where all the various rates are listed to see if you qualify for any of the lower rates or member discounts.
  - Tips on Discounts**—MCCA members qualify for discounted rates and complimentary registration(s). If you are an MCCA member, please contact us at [events@mcca.com](mailto:events@mcca.com) for more information on your membership benefits.

# How to Calculate Return on Investment (“ROI”)

## How to Justify Conference Attendance

How do you propose any allocation of resources to your firm or organization? You need to understand two components to make decisions:

1. Expense (the “Investment”)
2. Return (on the Investment) (“ROI”)

This provides some easy-to-use tools to help you calculate the investment and identify your return. Program expenses are affected by several factors.

## Expenses Worksheet – Understanding Your Program Expenses

Program expenses are affected by several factors. Before you can even begin to justify expenses, you need to calculate what those expenses are. To do so, use the Expenses Worksheet below to develop a cost estimate for attending your selected program.

Expense	Guideline	Cost
Program Registration		\$
Materials Fees (if any)		\$
Flight	Try a Web travel service to get a quick estimate	\$
Lodging	Programs usually have special rates with the hotel	\$
Transportation: Airport to Hotel	If flying: taxi, rideshare, or car rental?	\$
Transportation: Hotel to Airport	If flying: taxi, rideshare or car rental?	\$
Mileage Reimbursement	Driving to program or to the airport for your flight? Use Google to calculate distances, then multiply miles by .67 cents/mile (IRS standard for 2024)	\$
Parking Reimbursement	At airport for flight departure, or at hotel where conference is located	\$
Food Per Diem	See <a href="#">IRS guidelines</a> for conference locale rates. Remember, most include breakfast, lunch, & breaks	\$
<b>Sub-total</b>		\$
Total number of employees going		
<b>= Total</b>		\$

## Understanding Your Program Return on the Investment

Many benefits from program attendance are hard to quantify. For example, experts agree that a top benefit of attendance is networking value. Where else can you find so many colleagues facing the same issues? Are there solutions you're not aware of? Although networking is undoubtedly an incredibly important aspect of a program, it is also the toughest for which to quantify any value.

## Justification Letter

Below, you'll find a "justification letter" template. This justification letter to your supervisor explains all the benefits you will receive from attending the Pathways Conference, how attendance will make you a better employee, and how the program can help advance your firm or organization. This general template will get you started while allowing you to customize it to you and your firm or organization's needs.

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Dear [Insert manager's name],

*I would like your approval to attend the Minority Corporate Counsel Association's ("MCCA") Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference ("Pathways Conference") on September 22-25 in Scottsdale, AZ. The conference will enable me to attend several educational sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of experts and colleagues from around the country. Many of the presentations are tailored to the <Insert your primary focus here, i.e., diversity and inclusion, best practices, and business development tools> and give information on how to <Insert benefits/lessons here, for example: \_\_\_\_\_>.*

*The Pathways Conference is an excellent opportunity for me to gain insights from CLOs, GCs, and legal counsel from top companies, such as Microsoft, Amazon, and Google.*

*By attending, I will:*

- *Expand my knowledge about best practices in culture and inclusion in the legal profession, business development workshops, and more.*
- *Get practical tips and best practices to bring back to the office and use immediately.*
- *Exchange ideas and issues with my peers and top legal service providers on how to be more efficient and effective.*
- *Earn CLE credit hours, including a Diversity, Inclusion, and Elimination of Bias CLE credit\*\**

*Upon my return from the Pathways Conference, I will share many of the new ideas and key takeaways with the team to help grow our success.*

*I am seeking sponsorship for the registration fee, travel expenses to the program, and lodging expenses during the conference. The full price of the program is <\$xxxx> but can be reduced <\$xxx> by registering before the early-bird and late deadline.*

*I've provided a detailed breakdown of approximate costs to attend the Pathways Conference, and I have attached a benefits worksheet that specifically targets our company's current needs and how attending this event can help provide answers for our business objectives.*

*My attendance at the Pathways Conference is an effective use of my time and will provide a meaningful return on investment for our organization. Thank you for your consideration.*

*Best regards,*

*[Your signature]*

## Quantifying the Returns – Returns Worksheet

### Quantifying the Returns

Although you might understand the benefits of the program that interests you, your supervisor may not. Therefore, to be most effective in justifying the program you need to clearly articulate the connection between your firm/organization's knowledge requirements and the program. Do not assume that your firm/organization leader will be able to automatically make those connections.

To support this process, use the Returns Worksheet below to help you focus on the benefits. Use whatever makes sense for your particular organization and program and omit the rest.

Your Firm/Organization's Benefits	Specific Needs and the Program Sessions and Training that Meet the Need
Networking Benefits	This program will allow [specific team members] to network with other experts, leaders, professionals and vendors in the industry. We will be able to take the pulse of what is happening in the legal profession and the legal marketplace and hear ideas we weren't even aware of.
Teambuilding (if sending multiple members of your group)	This program will help build our team, providing a forum for team members to discuss developments in the law, regulations, tools, and processes and how we might apply them in our firm/organization to improve our team, workflow and processes.
Current Tools	
Future Tools Exploration	
Current Technologies	
Future Technologies Exploration	
Current Processes	
Future Processes Exploration	
Vendors With Tools and Technologies Your Employer Uses	