

How to Write an Effective Program Proposal

Choosing a Program Title

The program title is your first opportunity to invite the reader to your program. An effective title encourages the reader to review the abstract; a poorly written title can cause the reader to dismiss the program. The title should spark interest and be a quick synopsis of the program.

Do not repeat the conference and program theme in your title verbatim; it is the concept of the theme, not the words which make a successful session submission.

If appropriate, a program title:

- Identifies the scope, sequence and/or level of the program content
- Identifies sponsors or specific group presenting
- Identifies potential target audiences

Tips:

- Under 150 characters (including spaces)
- Does not repeat the conference themes verbatim
- Introduces and captivates the reader

Writing the Program Abstract

The abstract is a brief description of your presentation that provides the reader with an accurate picture of what the presentation will cover. It will be included in the conference program.

Well-written abstracts identify the purpose and intent of the program, are concise, organized and specific. Additionally, effective abstracts begin with the most important information or thought. Defining unfamiliar abbreviations and acronyms is helpful to the reader.

If appropriate, an effective abstract:

- Summarizes the content and activities of the presentation
- Distinguishes the program format (e.g. group discussion)
- Explains instruments or other research or technology tools
- Clarifies special programs which may not be familiar to conference attendees
- Designates the scope, sequence and/or level of the program content
- Names the potential target audiences

Tips:

- Capture the attention of the reader
- Preview the content and what the attendee can learn
- Identify the manner of audience involvement
- Clarify the contribution of the topic to the field
- Allude to the benefits of the program content
- Under 550 characters (including spaces)

Writing Effective Learning Outcomes

Having clearly defined goals and outcomes for your presentation will clarify your expectations, will make it easier for you to check for understanding and competency achieved by your participants, and will help the participants stay focused and engaged. It will also help participants as they carry their new skills/knowledge back to their campuses to put into practice.

Tips:

- Define the intended outcomes of the presentation
- Identify the action or level of thought required of the learner (understand, comprehend, synthesize, compare and contrast, categorize, identify, apply)
- May describe the degree to which the outcome will be achieved
- Identify how the learner will achieve the outcome

Consider writing outcomes that span the full range of cognitive processes, as described in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating).

- What are the goals of your presentation?
- What specific skills and/or knowledge will the participants gain from their experience?
- Will they have some tangible evidence of their time with you?

Stuck on writing learning objectives? Try the prompts below...

- Participants will practice specific skills of...
- Participants will leave with tangible resources for future reference, including:...
- Participants will use case studies to evaluate...
- Participants will evaluate the strengths and challenges of...

Writing the Program Description

The program description provides an in-depth look at the content of the proposed presentation.

Conference attendees rely on a well-written description to enhance their understanding of the content and goals of the presentation. A complete description includes background information, an overview/outline of the presentation, and a description of the format. If the program is reporting research, a description of methods, findings and recommendations may be appropriate.

Tips:

- Summarize the content and activities of the presentation
- Describe the program format (e.g., group discussion)
- Clarify special programs which may not be familiar to conference attendees
- Designate the scope, sequence and/or level of the program content
- Name the potential target audiences