

ATMAE Conference Planning – “Special Sessions”

Project Definition: The ATMAE Conference features membership forums and discussion panels, workshops, and tours. In recent years these sessions have been successfully planned, organized and presented by divisional leaders with assistance from the ATMAE office. Many ideas for the sessions have come directly from division members after solicitation by division leaders. Soliciting, selecting and organizing these sessions are critical tasks that are performed by division leadership and volunteers each year. Tasks involved in this process can include:

- The division leadership may decide to solicit idea for special sessions.
- The division leadership may survey members on preferred sessions.
- The division leadership must decide on specific special sessions to organize
- The division leadership must coordinate with the ATMAE office on all programmatic details for special sessions.

Responsibility: Division leaders can decide if they will attempt to organize special sessions for the next year's conference. They should decide if specific, active outreach efforts or a survey are needed for ideas. The Division President oversees that and must ensure timely completion of planning and organizing the sessions by the project leader/presenter.

Timelines: A number of timelines are involved and adherence to timelines allows timely completion of all steps in the process:

- **Decide to Pursue Special Sessions:** at Conference or by January 31.
- **Commit to Specific Sessions/ Assign Project Leader:** By earlier of February 28 or Spring Board Meeting. (This deadline is required by the need to commit room space in advance of the presentation proposal review process, as the number of rooms available plays a role in establishing maximum proposal acceptance rates.)
- **Determine Content, Costs & Presenters:** By May 31.
- **Confirm all Program Details:** By June 30
- **Confirm all Logistical Needs:** September 15

Tasks/Steps:

- **Decide to Pursue Special Sessions:** The annual conference provides leadership and members a chance to assess interest in special sessions for the subsequent conference. Special sessions can include membership forums, panel discussions, workshops and tours, demos, job fairs, new student contests - and other good ideas that have not yet been pursued.
 - **Timeline: By January 31.**
 - The following steps may help you decide if you should plan to organize a special session
 - Discussion at Executive Committee and Membership meetings – Are leaders or members suggesting new sessions? Do discussions of issues, problems, developments and opportunities lead to the conclusion that a special session on the same could be useful?
 - Direct solicitation of ideas at conference meetings
 - Email Solicitations, Surveys, ATMAE Website and *IT Insider* (December 1 deadline), with assistance of the ATMAE office.
 - Review of past conference programs and special sessions
 - Location of subsequent conference site – Does the next conference create opportunities for specific site tours or corporate-sponsored workshops? Do ATMAE-affiliated schools and their members have specific ideas about tours or corporate-sponsored workshops that take advantage of local resources?

Conference Planning – “Special Sessions” (cont.)

- **Commit to Specific Sessions/Assign Project Leader:** The division leadership should review ideas for interest and feasibility (the ATMAE office can assist with trouble-shooting if there will be significant concerns about feasibility.) The division leadership should determine if there is a volunteer to coordinate and execute all planning and organizing or seek volunteers. The division leadership should decide on the project leader and communicate “deliverables” and timelines.
 - **Timeline: By earlier of Spring Board meeting or February 28.**
 - Steps in determining feasibility and leadership could include:
 - Has a similar session been done before?
 - Is there a volunteer leader? Do they have prior experience in planning such a session?
 - Are there direct costs involved (i.e., presenter fees or expenses, software fees, transportation expense, catering expense?) Can they be handled by division projects budgets, admissions or sponsorships? Can they be waived? ATMAE Staff has experienced insight into possible costs.
 - Can you obtain a firm commitment from a corporate tour site or workshop sponsor?
 - Does the session “fit” logistically with competing ATMAE sessions and room use? Can the session be scheduled for the evening, or on Wednesday or Saturday of the Conference?
 - Does the session have enough appeal and/or does the presenter have credibility to present? Is the session marketable? Can it be successfully “sold” to potential attendees?
 - Would a presenter require compensation, for a fee or expenses?

- **Determine Content, Costs & Presenters:**
 - **Timeline: By May 31**
 - Once a commitment has been made to organize a special session, these steps are entailed:
 - **Determine the Presenter:** At this point, the presenter or project leader (i.e. tour organizer, forum leader) should be identified and have committed to organizing the session.
 - **Determine content:** The project leader/presenter should detail the session content, whether that is working with a tour host, working with leadership to plan a forum or panel discussion, or organizing the specific content and schedule of a workshop

- **Confirm All Program Details:**
 - **Timeline: By June 30**
 - These steps are entailed in ensuring that correct information is provided to the ATMAE staff for recording and publication on the web, in the program and in communications with members and attendees:
 - Establish if fees are required to participate.
 - Determine if there is an attendance limit.
 - Determine if attendees need specific qualifications or equipment/materials to participate
 - Provide full name and contact information for presenter, project leader, corporate sponsor contact person or tour host contact person.
 - Provide a title and a written description of up to 200 words; this will be used in the program “highlights” and shorter version will be used in the *IT Insider* and the conference programs daily schedule of events.
 - Obtain and submit logos and photos for corporate-sponsored workshops or tour sites. Clear descriptions and use of corporate logos and photos with the sponsor.
 - For tours, work with the ATMAE office and the tour host on scheduling and transportation issues.

- **Confirm Logistical Details:**
 - **Timeline: By September 15**
 - These steps are entailed to ensure everything goes smoothly on-site or on the tour:
 - With ATMAE staff (Monforton), determine room set-up, AV and electric needs.
 - Determine final tour details like “ATMAE tour Leader” and “Host Tour Leader” cell phones.