

The National Conference Center Presents Seven Ways to Save Money with Social Media at Your Conference

18 January 2011 – The National Conference Center (NCC) has compiled a list of seven ways to save money at a meeting or conference by utilizing social media. In compiling the list, Sarah Vining in the NCC marketing department defined social media as “Internet-based applications that build and support social interaction by blending with new technology.” Vining notes, “aside from the cost of owning a laptop or smart phone – which will make up 31% of the mobile population this year, using social media helps to eliminate pricey conference costs.”



- **#1. Virtual Conferences** – every conference should consider hosting a live web conference. If it's not an option – suggest it to the meeting organizer. This can cut-down on traveling expenses, but still allow the conference to earn money.
- **#2. Attend via Twitter** – it's not the same attending a conference in person as it is cross country, but you can closely follow the hot topics and speaker's information via #twitterhashtag (of course, assuming the conference has their own hashtag – which it should!). It's completely free to participate, saving your company hotel room, conference fees, and more.
- **#3. Well-Known Blogger?** - it doesn't hurt to ask but if you're a well-known blogger with a large audience – some conferences will allow you attend for free or little nominal value as “press” if you use your blog influence and write about the events of conference.
- **#4. Research the Area** – if you know where the conference is located and you're content with planning your meals ahead of time – you can encourage other attendees to purchase restaurant Groupon or Living Social coupons with you. You can save up to 60% on your meal bills or entertainment.
- **#5. Break-off into different forums** – if the conference requires you or your company to pay for each individual forum – team up with other attendees or colleagues and divvy up who will attend which forum and blog about it (or take notes). You'll get to attend your top choice forum and save money while reading about the others later.
- **#6. Online surveys** - the increased use of online surveys help event professionals better organize the results and feedback from conferences which can drastically improve an event from one year to the next – saving money and increasing participation.
- **#7. Unlock deals** – using location based apps such as FourSquare and Facebook can unlock deals for you while at your conference. Check-in and save money with your new money saving app!

According to Eric Whitson, Director of Sales & Marketing, “we look to blend technology with social media to [create] [begin] build a community and effectively engage with others. This helps us establish the initial connection online and can serve to strengthen the professional, face-to-face relationship.”

Sarah Vining authors the 'blog for The National Conference Center. Visit the blog at: www.conferencecenterblog.com/

The National Conference Center, located in Northern Virginia 12 miles from Dulles International Airport and 35 miles from Washington, D.C., is one of the largest and most comprehensive conference centers in

the nation. With 917 guest rooms and over 250,000 square feet of meeting space, The National Conference Center has become a hub for productive meetings and is on the GSA schedule. NCC is also home to West Belmont Place, Northern Virginia's largest ballroom with 16,500 square feet for holding an elegant wedding or accommodating a large trade show or special event. For information call 800-640-2684 or visit www.conferencecenter.com, or www.westbelmontplace.com.

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