

# LVM's Annual Users' Conference

## Valuation Toolkit

More than ever, having the budget to attend industry conferences has all but disappeared. If you do happen to be fortunate enough to secure the needed funds, where should you apply them? We hope you've chosen to attend LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference.

But if you've not yet been able to secure the needed funds to attend our conference, this document can help you as it contains valuable information and strategies to convince your supervisor to allow you to attend.

Throughout LVM's 21-year history, we have continued to flourish in spite of the ongoing changes in the economy. Experience has taught us that despite current economic conditions the dollars needed to attend our conference exist if you can present a compelling financial argument for using them.

ROI has returned as the yardstick with which everything is measured today. So we have put together some materials designed to help you better communicate the value of attending LVM Systems' 2009 Annual Users' Conference.

### **LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference:**

#### **General Overview**

LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference provides comprehensive educational, program management, software use and networking opportunities for healthcare call center executives, managers and users. Learn from fellow call center managers and staff from leading hospitals and healthcare systems across the nation. These sessions equip you with real-life solutions. In addition, several opportunities exist to hear from leading healthcare consultants and integrated product vendors. Learn how your site can better utilize the E-Centaurus software to positively impact your entire healthcare system.

What's more, Dr. Barton Schmitt and Dr. David Thompson, the developers of our Triage Protocols, are back again this year to kick-off the clinical sessions. Both Drs. have agreed to remain available throughout the conference to personally answer your questions. Rounding out the program are additional tracks for Marketing and Training. Learn how the E-Centaurus software solution can be integrated throughout your organization becoming a vital part of your marketing efforts.

This is the premier healthcare call center solutions conference for 2009. In just two days, you will experience a full year of benefits in the form of new knowledge that can be applied directly to your position.

## **Why attend this conference?**

Finding meaningful training that can provide both breadth and depth in targeted disciplines is especially difficult for healthcare call center professionals. LVM's Annual Users' Conference has proven to deliver the best value for the dollar. The quality and quantity of the educational and networking sessions have been consistent and cost beneficial, year after year.

Whether you are new to the call center profession or a seasoned veteran, this conference has something for you. During the two days, attendees will trade ideas with peers while attending any of over 25 session topics. They will have the opportunity to evaluate their current call center practices against those of other providers nationwide.

In addition to the conference sessions, there are many other opportunities to discuss emerging issues and best practices with other call center managers, vendors and consultants. For example, in a single venue, attendees can discover best practices from leading healthcare institutions, investigate possible new service lines and talk one-on-one with experienced experts. In special focused networking sessions, attendees can swap implementation tips and techniques and listen to others describe their experiences implementing new ideas they might be considering. If you prefer a more comfortable setting, you are invited to join the attendees on Wednesday night for a poolside social. As past attendees have commented, the value of the networking opportunities alone exceeds the price of admission.

### **Key benefits of attending:**

- **Network** with your peers.
- **Share** your ideas and visions.
- **Learn** from leaders in the field.
- **Explore** new and innovative solutions.
- **Evaluate** the latest product enhancements.

## **Engaged Employees: Why they are so important?**

How do you keep employees engaged in what their doing? Why is it so important? Why, because engaged employees pay high dividends. When employees are excited by and loyal to their profession, both the individual and the company benefit.

How engaged an employee is in his/her job reflects an emotional bond with one's work and workplace. Business units with employees in the top half of the engagement spectrum (compared with those in the bottom half) show on the average:

- 86% higher success rate on customer metrics
- 70% higher success in lowering turnover
- 70% higher success rate in productivity
- 44% higher success rate in profitability
- 78% higher success rate in safety figures

In addition, individuals who are engaged are likely to be:

- More satisfied
- More motivated
- More committed
- Have less burnout
- Have higher morale
- And are less likely to leave their job

*From: "Workplace Engagement", Brooks & Jastrebski © 2005*

And who more than your hospital's front line communication folks do you want to display these characteristics? So if keeping your Call Center employees engaged is so important, how can employers do this? One important way is to allow them to attend conferences like LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference where they learn the latest techniques, talk to top vendors and consultants, and actively engage with their own peers. In addition, Continuing Education (CE) Credits are offered for the clinical sessions, at no extra cost to you.

### **Determining ROI**

As a call center director or manager you may often be faced either with your own need to attend a professional conference or requests from your team members to attend one. Professional conferences can be expensive. What's more, not all budget managers understand their importance or the benefits derived by conference attendees. This often occurs because the attendee does nothing with the knowledge gained at the conference. Instead they tuck it away in a drawer.

The information below helps you justify the expense of attending a conference and provides simple to use worksheets. In order to propose any allocation of resources to a given project or program, you need to understand two components to make decisions:

- Expense (the "investment")
- Return on Investment

Here are some easy-to-use tools to help you calculate the investment and identify your return by attending LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference.

### **Estimating Conference Expenses**

**In real estate, the old adage is Location, Location, Location!** That's also true when it comes to conference expenses. Is the conference being held in a location with easy access? Does it offer discounted hotel rates. Are there activities within close proximity to the conference center? These and other expenses need to be considered when looking to justify your conference expenses. To help you determine the cost to attend LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference, we've created the following *Expenses Worksheet*.

## Expenses Worksheet

<i>Expense</i>	<i>Guideline</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Conference Registration	\$645 standard fee; \$595 early registration	\$
Flight	try a Web travel service to get a quick estimate	\$
Lodging	\$169 + tax @The Plaza (conference hotel)	\$
Transportation: Airport to Hotel	if flying: hotel shuttle @ \$20/per person, or Super Shuttle? taxi? car rental?	\$
Transportation: Hotel to Airport	if flying: hotel shuttle @ \$20/per person, or Super Shuttle? taxi? car rental?	\$
Mileage Reimbursement	if driving to conference use Mapquest or Rand McNally Maps to calculate distances driven then multiply miles by current IRS standard. (LVM uses \$.585 per mile as of 2008)	\$
Parking Reimbursement	at airport for flight departure	\$
Food Per Diem	conference fee includes breakfast, lunch, and snacks - dinners are responsibility of attendees	\$
Other:		\$
<b>subtotal</b>		\$
total number of employees attending		
multiply subtotal by total # of employees = <b>total</b>		\$

## Understanding the Benefits

For many, the top benefit of a conference is its networking value. LVM understands this and has built into our program two networking breakfasts, two lunches, an evening social along with separate clinical and marketing networking roundtable sessions. We realize that although listening to a speaker talk is of value, often having that one to one dialog makes all the difference. After all, where else can you find so many industry contacts facing the same issues as your organization? Are there solutions you're not aware of?

Networking is undoubtedly the most important aspect of a conference, but how do you quantify its value. One key is to not focus on how much money you need to attend, but focus on the value you'll bring back to the organization as ROI.

Some specific details to consider include:

- **Session content.** What sessions are of particular interest to you and your organization? Specifically identify:
  - Applications
  - Technologies
  - Processes
- **Vendor contacts.** Will the conference showcase vendors with tools you use or are evaluating for potential future use?
- **Best practices.** Will there be sessions which yield immediate benefit to your organization?
- **Training.** Will there be workshops designed to teach attendees a special skill

## The Benefit Proposition

Often call center managers wrongly assume that their managers, and the hospital as a whole, understand and appreciate the workings of the call center. Without this knowledge, it is very difficult for the manager to appreciate the benefits of LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference.

So, to be most effective in justifying the purpose and value of the conference, you need to clearly explain the connection between your department's needs and the conference program. Make sure your manager understands those distinctions. They need to appreciate that attending the conference offers you more than just professional growth; it also offers personal growth, something much needed in these challenging times.

To support this process, use the *Benefits Worksheet* on the following page to help you focus on the benefits.

## **Benefits Worksheet**

<b>Your Organization's Benefits</b>	<b>Specific Needs and the Conference Sessions &amp; Training that Meet the Need</b>
Networking Benefits	1. This conference will allow [specific team members] to network with other professionals in the industry. We will be able to learn what's happening with modules, technologies, and processes we current use or are considering and hear ideas we weren't even aware of.
Teambuilding (if sending multiple attendees)	1. This conference will provide a forum for team members to discuss applications, technologies, and processes and how we might apply them in our organization.
Learning about modules currently in use	1. 2. 3.
Exploring future modules	1. 2.
Investigating technologies currently in use	1. 2. 3.
Considering Future Technologies	1. 2. 3.
Discovering was to refine current processes	1. 2. 3.
Exploring future processes	1. 2. 3.
Vendors with solutions & technologies to explore	1. 2.

## Customizable Letter to Manager

*Date*

Dear *<Manager>*:

I would like to attend LVM Systems' 2009 Annual Users' Conference, October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The conference is this year's premier vendor event for healthcare call center professionals. It provides a number of sessions that are directly applicable to my work. In addition, the conference will allow me to network with a number of healthcare experts. Many of the presentations give information on how to: *< generate/track revenue, integrate the call center throughout the organization, increase the Call Center's value through web integration, and do more with less>*. I am requesting approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference and expenses during the conference. The total costs for the conference are *<fill in blank>*. The detailed cost breakdown is listed below.

*<The numbers below will need to be adjusted to reflect the current travel costs. The full price conference fee is \$645, but can be reduced by registering early to save (\$50). The early registration price with all discounts is \$595>*.

*<You will need to insert your travel cost numbers in here>*

Here is the breakdown of conference costs:

Airfare:

Transportation:

Hotel @ \$169/night plus tax:

Meals:

Conference Fee:

Total conference cost of \_\_\_\_\_.

While in attendance, I would attend a number of presentations to strengthen my knowledge in the areas of *<fill in topic areas>* that could immediately be put to use with *<project(s) you are working on>*. The presentations are done by healthcare experts from leading hospitals and health systems and well-known consulting firms. *In addition, there are 11 clinical sessions available to obtain up to 9.5 Continuing Education Credits.* I chose each presentation because it is directly related to an issue we are dealing with in the call center right now.

What follows is a list of the sessions I plan to attend. By the way, this is only a partial list of the seminars that I will attend. Including them all would have made this letter quite lengthy.

*<You will need to add session titles from the current program to customize this for your current situation. **What is included here is just an example.**>*

*<10 Things That Keep Your CEO Awake at Night and How Your Call Center Can Help, Tess Niehaus, Vice President, Marketing and Communications, St. Anthony's Medical Center>*

*<Quality Improvement: What we learned this Year, Dr. Barton Schmitt; Kelli Massaro, Level IV RN, Children's Hospital; and Teresa Hegarty, RN, Call Center Clinical Manager, The Children's Hospital> CE Credits offered for this presentation*

*<Does Your Marketing Department Love Your Call Center? Lori Allen, AVP, Marketing and Communications and Barb Krahn, Director Call center Services and Customer Relationship Management, Rush University Medical Center>*

*<From Idea to Implementation: A Transfer Center Case Study, Julie Bruns, Director Call Center and Market research, BJC HealthCare>*

Again, attending LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference affords me the opportunity to develop better contacts with industry experts and to gain knowledge in specific areas of healthcare call center triage and marketing. The contact and knowledge gained will yield rich dividends for *<your company>*.

Sincerely,

*<your name>*

*<end of letter>*

## **Additional strategies to win approval**

History has shown that LVM's compact, 2-day, format offers the most cost-effective call center manager's development opportunity all year. You will be exposed to growth strategies that you can apply directly to your job to benefit you throughout the year.

Here are more tips to help you secure employer support for attending LVM's 2009 Annual Users' Conference:

- To enable colleagues to benefit from your attendance, offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A when you return.
- Share the executive summary and speaker handouts with your colleagues. Load the speakers' presentations from the thumb-drive you'll be provided to your internal network where they are accessible by others within your company.
- Explain in detail what you plan to get out of attending and how that will benefit your work, organization and staff/co-workers.
- Develop a coverage plan for when you are away so nothing important slips through the cracks.
- If appropriate, offer to share a room to reduce hotel expenses.

## **Start the Justification for LVM's 2010 Annual Users' Conference Now!**

I don't have to tell you that dollars remain tight. The economy continues to plod along. As a result, 2010 budgets don't look a lot better than 2009. So, now is the time to begin pushing to attend LVM's 2010 Annual Users' Conference. Remember, just like any other expenditure, it requires clear proof that the company will benefit from a positive return on investment from you attending the conference.

If you are fortunate enough to be attending this year's conference, you are already well positioned to return again next year. But it's up to you and how well you demonstrate the value gained from being here in 2009. If you hope to be granted the funds to attend again next year, you need to clearly track the sessions you attend and benefits your gain at this year's conference.

To facilitate gathering this information, we've provided an outline below of the key information you should capture. Of major importance is what you hope to gain from attending the conference as a whole as well as from the individual sessions. It also provides you with a tool to consistently capture the highlights of each session or networking opportunity. By having defined goals for each session, your management can better assess the overall value of their investment in sending you to our conference.

If you have yet to gain approval to attend this year's conference, or when seeking funds for next year, use this worksheet to demonstrate the projected value. And remember, it comes down to ROI. Will spending the dollars to send you to our conference result in tangible benefits to your organization? Use this form to project expected benefits to secure funding then record actual results to validate the investment.

## **LVM's Annual Users' Conference**

### **Sessions Value Tracking Worksheet**

Session Title:

Session Presenter:

Session Summary: {in your own words-brief}

1 or 2 major takeaways:

Action Items Identified: (How will I apply what I learn to my day-to-day activities?)

Estimated ROI: