



### **MSA FORWARD Justification Toolkit**

With limited travel and training budgets, a strong justification for attending events is more important than ever. Use the tools in this kit to help explain how attending MSA FORWARD can improve your store products, expand your professional network, and provide a new perspective on the best practices in non-profit retail.

This toolkit will help you determine the full cost of attendance and identify key benefits MSA FORWARD will provide.

Creative solutions may help you get your request get approved. Consider these options:

- Before meeting with your supervisor, prepare a plan that shows who will cover your duties while you attend the conference.
- Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A session for your colleagues to share what you learned when you return. This way, your coworkers will benefit from your attendance.
- Share speaker handouts and product samples with your team.

## **Step 1: Review Talking Points for MSA FORWARD**

### **Network with Industry Professionals**

MSA FORWARD is a global gathering of professional retailers who work in non-profit cultural institutions. Through dedicated networking events, exclusive learning excursions, and an expansive expo floor, you connect with peers from diverse backgrounds, make new friendships, and expand your professional network. These connections can help you address challenges, inspire new ideas, and open up partnership possibilities for your store.

### **One-Stop Shopping**

The MSA Expo is a one-stop shop for your annual buying. With over 150 wholesale vendors, the Expo floor features a wide variety of products: apparel, books, food, jewelry, home and garden, toys and games, custom products, fair trade, made in America, recycled or green products, promotional items, store supplies and POS systems.

### **Save on Products**

MSA vendors offer attendees special show deals, which can help you offset travel expenses and save on your year-round purchases.

### **Consult with Expert Suppliers**

Through the MSA Expo, you can meet one-on-one with museum store vendors to address retail strategies, address current challenges, or identify ideas for growth. From formal meetings, to impromptu discussions, the MSA vendors are here to address your needs and provide solutions that will make a lasting impact on your business.

### **Promotional and Marketing Ideas**

MSA FORWARD offers in-depth learning opportunities where you learn best practices and new ideas for store promotions, marketing, and sales. Through the learning excursions, you can see first-hand how local museum stores conduct business and generate sales throughout the year. MSA's learning sessions follow the MSA Knowledge Standards that highlight the core knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the daily responsibilities of a nonprofit retail professional. *The full education schedule will be available on the [MSA website](#).*

### **MSA Retail Boot Camp**

This half day workshop is directed toward new managers, managers new to cultural commerce, and as a refresher course for others. The workshop provides in-depth lessons for generation of gross revenue, managing expenses that lead to the maximization of profitability, aspects of the store's impact on the visitor experience and general management fundamentals. The MSA Retail Boot Camp is designed to give you the knowledge you need to advance your career and ensure the success of your store.

## The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center: Service Excellence Culture

In this half day workshop, discover how a service excellence culture results in engaged employees and customers. You will be guided through award-winning business practices of The Ritz-Carlton Gold Standards, the foundation of our iconic, and global brand. You will also visit our key processes, such as onboarding and empowerment that lead to legendary service, sustainable success, and customer loyalty.

In addition to talking points, reference the [schedule at-a-glance](#) to learn more about the activities taking place at this year's event:

### Schedule at-a-Glance

<b>Thursday, March 28</b>	
12:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Registration Opens
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	<a href="#">Full Day Learning Excursion Option 1 San Diego Zoo*</a>
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	<a href="#">Full Day Learning Excursion Option 2 Tijuana Tour*</a>
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	<a href="#">Full Day Learning Excursion Option 3 The Globe Theater and the San Diego Art Museum Experience at Balboa Park*</a>
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Volunteer Reception (Invitation Only)
<b>Friday, March 29</b>	
7:00 am – 6:00 pm	Registration Open
7:00 am – 7:00 pm	Exhibitor Registration
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	<a href="#">MSA Boot Camp Presented by Andrew Andoniadis*</a>
9:00 am – 12:30 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 1 San Diego Zoo*</a>
9:00 am – 12:30 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 2 Fleet Science Museum*</a>
9:00 am – 12:30 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 3 Botanical Building</a>
12:45 pm – 3:45 pm	<a href="#">The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center – Service Excellence Culture*</a>
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Opening Keynote Speaker – ‘You Can Compete’ <a href="#">Bob Phibbs, the Retail Doctor®</a>
5:15 pm – 6:15 pm	Chapter Meetings
6:15 pm – 7:00 pm	Sponsorship/Leadership Reception (Invitation Only)
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	MSA Next Event & New Member Event
<b>Saturday, March 30</b>	
7:00 am – 5:30 pm	Registration Open

7:00 am – 5:30 pm	Exhibitor Registration
7:00 am – 8:00 am	Continental Breakfast
8:00 am – 9:00 am	General Session
9:00 am – 9:15 am	Networking Break
9:15 am – 10:15 am	<a href="#">Breakout Sessions 1 – 5</a>
10:15 am – 10:45 am	Networking Break
10:45 am – 11:45 am	<a href="#">Breakout Sessions 6 – 10</a>
12:00 pm – 1:20 pm	Membership Meeting & Luncheon
1:30 pm	Exhibit Floor Ribbon Cutting
1:30 pm – 5:30 pm	Exhibit Hall Open
6:30 pm – 10:30 pm	MSA Networking, Awards Gala & Silent Auction
<b>Sunday, March 31</b>	
7:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration & Exhibitor Registration
7:00 am – 8:00 am	Continental Breakfast
8:00 am – 9:00 am	The Buyer Vendor Forum with Kristen Daniels, Blue Anderson, Kelly Jones, Ari Lowenstein and Paul Stewart-Stand
9:00 am – 4:30 pm	Exhibitor Hall Open
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch on the Exhibitor Floor
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Networking Break
4:45 pm – 5:45 pm	<a href="#">Breakout Sessions 11 –15</a>
<b>Monday, April 1</b>	
7:30 am – 1:00 pm	Registration
7:00 am – 8:00 am	Continental Breakfast
8:00 am – 9:00 am	General Session
9:15 am – 10:15 am	Museum Store Discussion Groups
10:30 am – 11:30 am	<a href="#">Breakout Sessions 16 – 19</a>
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Keynote Luncheon – ‘Extreme Leadership’ Steve Farber
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 4 Birch Aquarium*</a>
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 5 Salk Institute for Biological Studies*</a>
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	<a href="#">Half Day Learning Excursion Option 6 Marston House*</a>

\*requires separate registration.

## Step 2. Determine the Cost

Expense	Cost
<p><b>Member Conference Registration</b></p> <p>Advanced Rate – \$499 (Register by October 31)            Early Rate – \$599 (Register by January 31)            Standard Rate—\$679 (Register by March 27)            Onsite Rate—\$750 (Register after March 28)  <i>Visit the MSA website for rates for additional members.</i></p>	\$
<p><b>Emeritus/Student Member</b></p> <p>Advanced Rate – \$399 (Register by October 31)            Early Rate – \$499 (Register by January 31)            Standard Rate—\$599 (Register by March 27)            Onsite Rate – \$659 (Register after March 28)</p>	
<p><b>Non Member Conference Registration</b></p> <p>Advanced Rate – \$699 (Register by October 31)            Early Rate – \$799 (Register by January 31)            Standard Rate— \$879 (Register by March 27)            Onsite Rate – \$999 (Register after March 28)</p>	\$
<p><b>One Day Registration</b></p> <p>Advanced Rate – \$199 Saturday; \$99 Sunday (Register by October 31)            Early Rate – \$249 Saturday; \$119 Sunday (Register by January 31)            Standard Rate—\$279 Saturday; \$129 Sunday (Register by March 27)            Onsite Rate – \$299 Saturday; \$139 Sunday (Register after March 28)</p>	
<p><b>Optional: Workshops</b></p> <p>MSA Retail Boot Camp – \$95            The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center – \$170</p>	\$
<p><b>Optional: Learning Excursion</b></p> <p>Learning Excursions range in price based on destination. Expected cost is \$65 for Half Day and \$95 for Full day. Visit the website for more information.</p>	\$
<p><b>Flight</b></p> <p>Visit a travel website to estimate your flight costs.</p>	\$
<p><b>Lodging</b></p> <p>Attendees receive a special rate per night at the Town &amp; Country in San Diego when booking before February 24.            Royal Palm – \$185 per night plus tax            Garden – \$145 per night plus tax</p>	\$
<p><b>Transportation</b></p> <p>San Diego International Airport has direct access to cabs and rental cars. Parking opportunities are available at the hotel.</p>	\$
<p><b>Millage Reimbursement</b></p> <p>Calculate your distance then multiply by 53.5 cents per mile (IRS standard 2018 rate).</p>	\$
<p><b>Meals</b></p> <p>Can we add what government per diem is in San Diego as reference?</p>	\$
<b>Subtotal Per Person</b>	
<b>Total number of employees attending</b>	
<b>Total cost</b>	

### **Step 3. Outline the Benefits**

**When showcasing the benefits of the MSA FORWARD, focus specifically on what you will bring back to your museum as a return on their investment. Use the schedule and the MSA FORWARD website to answer these questions.**

- What sessions have particular relevance to the work you do?
- Which sessions can teach you a skill and/or help your team overcome current or future challenges?
- Are there any speakers your organization would benefit from hearing or working with?
- Where are you looking to expand your current product collection?
- What purchases do you need to make for the rest of the year?
- Which MSA vendors can help you achieve your goals in 2019?
- Can you make partnerships with other museums in your area?
- How are others celebrating Museum Store Sunday?
- How could increasing your involvement with MSA benefit your museum's practices and growth?

**When considering these questions, keep these tips in mind:**

- List specific sessions and explain how they will impact your practices.
- Clearly make the connection between your needs and the benefits you are identifying.
- If the approver is outside of your department, don't assume they understand your goals or any technical terms. Spell out the impact for them.
- Passion is the best persuasion technique — let yours shine through in your letter.

#### Step 4: Draft Your Request

Customize this letter to show the costs and benefits you outlined above.

Dear < Approver's name >,

I would like to attend [MSA FORWARD](#) hosted by the Museum Store Association. The event is taking place March 28 – April 1, 2019 in San Diego, California. MSA FORWARD brings together professional retailers who work in non-profit institutions and hosts more than 200 wholesale vendors in their Retail Expo. I am looking forward to this event because it will give me the opportunity to network with my peers from museums across the globe and find new products and meet with vendors all in one location.

After reviewing the conference schedule and the Expo vendors who will be in this year's Expo, I am confident that what I learn will be directly applicable to my work. I have identified a few sessions I would like to attend and vendors I am going to meet within the Expo:

- Session 1 and how it will benefit you and your store
- Session 2 and how it will benefit you and your store
- Session 3 and how it will benefit you and your store

- Vendor 1 and how they will benefit your store
- Vendor 2 and how they will benefit your store
- Vendor 3 and how they will benefit your store

In order to attend the conference and achieve my goals, I am seeking sponsorship of < total amount you need > for the following expenses:

Registration (before October 31): <\$xxxx>

Round-trip Airfare: <\$xxxx>

Transportation: <\$xxxx>

Hotel: <\$xxxx>

Meals: <\$xxxx>

The opportunity for me to develop a network of contacts, gain knowledge in specific areas of retail management, and meet with retail wholesale vendors, makes my attendance at MSA FORWARD a wise investment that will benefit our museum. Please let me know if you have any questions, or would like more information on MSA FORWARD.