

Conference Attendance: Realizing a Return on Your Firm's Investment

Are you a first-time attendee wanting to present the value proposition of ILTA's conference to your firm's management so that you can gain approval for attendance? What's in it for you and them?

Last year, we undertook an "ROI Analysis" with our first-time attendees. We asked them to identify their key **expectations** – those factors that led to their decision to attend; and we wanted their feedback immediately following conference on how those expectations were met. Then, we followed up with them three months later to see if additional value had been gained. Did they realize a return on their firm's investment?

There are many reasons that one opts to attend an ILTA conference. From our analysis, more than half of our first-time attendees cited as key drivers a desire to:

- expand peer interactions to learn what peers are doing and validate current initiatives
- expand knowledge on current topics and research solutions for current projects
- view vendor products and service offerings

Across the board, our attendees felt their expectations had been met or exceeded, with significant numbers indicating that solid value had been realized. In particular, any area where **peer-connectivity** or **education** was a component, our attendees gave very favorable reviews. Responses from the analysis show:

	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Far Exceeded Expectations
Establishing new peer connections	24%	31%	27%
Expanding personal network in a peer group	22%	26%	15%
Expanding knowledge on a current topic	19%	40%	22%
Viewing products and services from vendors	21%	25%	22%

The follow-up survey with those same first-time attendees, with data collected three months after conference, showed an increase in values realized across all factors. The values realized at an ILTA conference are the gifts that keep on giving! Responses from the analysis show:

	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Far Exceeded Expectations
Acquiring specific knowledge on a topic	18%	53%	20%
Acquiring broad knowledge in several areas	18%	47%	33%
Putting knowledge to use:			
to resolve a problem	38%	27%	16%
to reduce the cost of a project	22%	27%	7%
to improve a project timeline	33%	20%	7%

ILTA conference attendees gain specific knowledge that benefits their firms in improved delivery of technology initiatives. And the peer connections that sustain that knowledge are beyond measure. Review the conference schedule to see the many areas in which value can be derived from ILTA '08.