

## **So you want to attend SUGI ... (Con't)**

Whenever Kuligowski received management approval to attend SUGI, he always promised to write up a trip report within 30 days of his return or within two weeks if his "to do" list wasn't stacked up. "That trip report contained a standard set of topics, including 'most useful papers attended,' 'major announcements,' 'contacts made/renewed' and 'most valuable tip learned.' I made sure I planned my time in such a way that I would have something significant to put in each category. This trip report was then routed to management, as well as all interested SAS users," he notes.

Kuligowski offers another tidbit of advice. "Whenever I 'borrow' a coding tip that I learn at a SAS conference, I put a note in the comment section crediting the author and referencing the appropriate proceedings, paper number and page number. This way, folks who look at the code after me will know where to go for further reference. It also ensures there will be something tangible to show a corporate resource...proving valuable information is learned at SAS conferences."

"I justified a SAS training course by costing the issue the employer faced. I conservatively estimated the impact my work might have and balanced that against the airfares and accommodations. It was persuasive in reversing a previous negative decision," states Johnson.

Johnson also notes that SUGI papers can be used to support a travel argument. "If your SUGI paper has been accepted, this can also be used as a persuasive tool. Presenting a paper casts a positive light on your employer and provides valuable market visibility."

As this year's chair and president of ThotWave Technologies, Nelson is, of course, a big advocate of SUGI. But he also has to justify his employees' attendance. "SUGI is the single best place to get the training you need. You also come away with an outstanding overview of new SAS technologies, SAS product- and solution-specific information – not to mention the networking opportunities with other SAS users," he says.

"If you're really having a hard time getting your manager's approval, try being proactive. Look for opportunities to share accommodations with your co-workers. Also check into alternative booking sources. Places like Expedia and Priceline may offer affordable lodging," notes Nelson.

If you are fortunate enough to be able to attend SUGI, be sure to show the value of the experience to your employer upon your return. In addition to the suggestions above, be sure to:

Train others. Give a presentation on what you learned to your co-workers.

Implement at least one change or technique immediately upon returning to work.  
Document the savings (time or monetary) for management.

Create a logbook with code samples and fixes you learned, so it can be shared with co-workers.

Good luck, and we hope to see you at SUGI!