

If it feels daunting to ask your leadership for support to attend the [Women in Manufacturing Symposium](#) this January, then one of the most important reasons for you to attend is to sharpen your negotiation skills. In the meantime, here are three tips to help you ask your supervisor for approval, from conference speaker and women's negotiation expert Joanne Zuk.

1. POSITION YOUR REQUEST

Think about the benefits the conference will have for you to become even more effective at your job. What are the specific topics that you will learn? What are the skills you will develop, which will help you in your workplace? Consider impacts that will help you strengthen your specific work or the important relationships within your team environment. By presenting your request as an opportunity for leadership to support your professional development and help you be a stronger member of the team, you'll make it easy for them to say yes.

2. PICK YOUR TIME

Asking for support is not a Monday morning or Friday afternoon thing. It's also not a quick request while your supervisor is doing a walk-through of your work area. Ask for a 15-minute conversation, during a time of day when you know that your supervisor tends to be most relaxed and receptive to a conversation.

3. PRACTICE YOUR PITCH

Make a few notes for yourself and take the time to practice the words you'll use. Practice with someone else – a friend or family member – or prop up your phone and shoot a video of yourself practicing to help you smooth out the bumps. Here's a script to get you started (make sure to edit it to use the words that you'd actually use in conversation):

Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I know it's important for you to support your team, and so I want to talk to you about a professional development opportunity that I'd love to participate in.

On January 17, there is a full-day Women in Manufacturing Symposium in Winnipeg. It includes some great sessions geared towards women but also has opportunities for everyone, including how to improve equity in the workplace, how to manage stress and wellness using metrics, and how to negotiate a career in manufacturing.

The symposium is aligned with a lot of the learning areas I'm focused on – and I know I'll be able to bring a wealth of new ideas back here to work. Specifically, I know our company is really trying to find ways to attract and retain skilled employees. Having me attend is a great opportunity to showcase the company's support for personal development, and it's also an opportunity for me to learn about strategies that work well in other companies.

Is this something you would support?