



1000 & 1 Conferences

MAK PANDIT

*If you want to learn, travel places,
make friendship with experts, and
attend conferences.*

- Marathi Proverb

In this session

- ▶ Why attend conferences
- ▶ Participating in a conference
- ▶ Speaking at a conference
- ▶ Participating as a group
- ▶ Participating in STC Summit (USA)

About me – Mak Pandit



More than 21 years in Technical Communication

STC India Conferences – 17

STC USA Summits – 5

Tekom Germany Conference – 1

Tekom India Conferences – 2

STC Singapore Conference – 1

Others – More than 10

*Founder Member – STC India, STC Associate Fellow, Former
Owner of TWIN, MD of Technowrites Pvt. Ltd.*

Why attend conferences

- ▶ Get two powerful thoughts that can change your life/thinking
- ▶ Get 4-5 good ideas that can improve your productivity
- ▶ Take a break
- ▶ See how good/bad others are
- ▶ Ask your company to pay for it, if part of CTC
- ▶ Combine pleasure with business
- ▶ Network, make friends, get clients
- ▶ Spend money wisely and claim tax deduction

STC India Annual Conference

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- ▶ Started in 1999
- ▶ Pre-conference – 1 Day (multiple tracks)
- ▶ Conference – 2 Days (multiple tracks)
- ▶ Keynote Sessions, Presentations, Workshops, Unconference Sessions, Panel Discussions, Debates, PowerTalks, Quick Bytes
- ▶ Sponsor booths, Employment booths
- ▶ Competitions, Quizzes
- ▶ Entertainment night & Gala Dinner, Group Photos
- ▶ STC India Annual Business Meeting

STC India Event Timelines

- ▶ Conference venue identified in May
- ▶ Conference committee put together in June
- ▶ Call for Papers (July/August)
- ▶ Paper Selection - September
- ▶ Keynote speakers, Pre-conf workshop speakers/trainers invited by Conference Committee
- ▶ Presentations shared within 1-2 months
- ▶ Videos shared within 3 months

If you are a participant

- ▶ **Don't over-react**
- ▶ **Do not steal someone else's show**
- ▶ *Restrict your comments to less than 20 seconds*
- ▶ Identify the sessions you want to attend (do not attend sessions with your friends)
- ▶ Identify slots for visiting booths and networking
- ▶ **Share what you learnt with your colleagues**
- ▶ **Send LinkedIn connection requests (NOT Facebook)**
- ▶ **Follow good speakers on Twitter, check if they have published videos on YouTube**
- ▶ **Meet organizers and suggest topics for presentations and workshops**

If you are a speaker

- ▶ Share your knowledge, get credit for your work
- ▶ Rub shoulders with experts
- ▶ Add value to your career and resume (and few lakhs to your salary)
- ▶ Become identified as a thought-leader/trainer
- ▶ Visit the facility and check the setup
- ▶ Prepare your presentation at least 1 month in advance and rehearse it many times
- ▶ Ask your company to pay
- ▶ Ask organizers for discounted price

Tips for speakers

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- ▶ Talk to organizers and see if you can help in any way
- ▶ Double-check your session timings
- ▶ Carry any handouts you want to give
- ▶ Share your email id
- ▶ Write articles based on your presentations
- ▶ Create videos of your presentations and share them on YouTube
- ▶ Share your presentation, articles (on SlideShare, BlogSpot, and so on)
- ▶ Check possibility of presenting again during city meetings, webinars, regional conferences
- ▶ Try to work on projects with other speakers/your colleagues

Participating as a group

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- ▶ Register together, travel together, stay together – get best rates
- ▶ Attend different tracks and update others
- ▶ Learn from reports of other sessions
- ▶ Network with people and make friends
- ▶ Show your teamwork and strength
- ▶ Have fun together

My take

- ▶ Attend about 5-7 sessions completely and 5-7 sessions partially
- ▶ Study the outline before attending sessions (sessions titles may be deceptive)
- ▶ Attend sessions of well-known speakers
- ▶ Avoid stereo-type sessions
- ▶ Spend at least 3 hours in networking
- ▶ Spend time in meetings friends, colleagues
- ▶ *Contribute as a volunteer*
- ▶ *Attend STC India Business Meeting (Members only)*

STC Summit (USA) Highlights

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- ▶ Biggest gathering of Technical Writers in the world (1000+ participants)
- ▶ Typically happens in May/June
- ▶ Preconference/Leadership – 1 day
- ▶ Conference – 3 days
- ▶ Approximately 6 – 7 Parallel Tracks
- ▶ Specially Invited speakers for inaugural session and closing session
- ▶ Exhibition lounge, Book stall, Exhibitions of Award-winning entries
- ▶ STC Annual (Musical) Jam, Leadership Day, Banquet Dinner
- ▶ Community awards are given during Leadership Day sessions
- ▶ Individual and most exquisite awards are given during Honours Banquet
- ▶ Participant badges have ribbons to indicate members, speakers, community leaders, office bearers, and so on.

What's different

- ▶ Pay additional for lunches and dinners (buy in advance while registering for conference)
- ▶ Sessions start early and end on time
- ▶ People walk in with tea/coffee/breakfast
- ▶ People leave if they don't like the session
- ▶ Prompt and correct feedback
- ▶ Tea/Coffee available all the time in the exhibition area
- ▶ Menu needs to be booked for Networking Lunches and Dinners
- ▶ Most people make plans of what to attend
- ▶ Stay nearby to save time (though a bit costly)
- ▶ Expense: Rs. 2,00,000/- at least (all inclusive)

Honour's Banquet

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- ▶ Seat needs to be booked in advance
 - ▶ Service provided at the table
 - ▶ Menu needs to be booked for in advance (limited items for Veg, Wine is served, can buy more drinks)
 - ▶ Dress-code followed
 - ▶ Starts with bar service, then dinner, then awards are announced
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- ▶ Session may be rehearsed
 - ▶ Photography not allowed during the session
 - ▶ Ends with music and dance

Participating STC Summit

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- ▶ Call for Papers – August, Selection - Dec
- ▶ Plan your trip from Dec/Jan
- ▶ Book early to get best rates at hotel and travel
- ▶ Plan your entire conference
- ▶ Formats: Presentations, Progressions, Workshops, Lightning Talks, Panel Discussions, Ninja Talk, Student Sessions, Management Tracks
- ▶ Carry tablet/PC and notebook (use tables provided)
- ▶ Look at award-winning entries
- ▶ Attend pre-conference (Leadership Day), Conference Sessions
- ▶ Attend community reception, networking lunch/banquet dinner/business meeting

On the personal side

- ▶ Try to reach two days before conference (Jet lag)
- ▶ Try to couple with business meetings/social visits
- ▶ Climate is good in May/June
- ▶ Learn Latin American Dance
- ▶ Make friends and tag along with them
- ▶ Prepare your presentation really well and rehearse at least 3 times
- ▶ Learn some social gestures (handshake, hug, drink)
- ▶ Not everyone will exchange cards with you
- ▶ Carry your conference registration papers (for immigration)
- ▶ Carry a suit/jacket/sweater

Exercises

- ▶ If you want to network and make friends, try the following exercises
- ▶ Exercise 1: Try to talk to at least 2 speakers and give feedback or ask questions. These should not be people you already know
- ▶ Exercise 2: Talk to at least 15 people you do not know (speakers/participants)
- ▶ Exercise 3: Talk to the organizers and help them (if you can)
- ▶ Exercise 4: Send your presentation for next STC India Annual Conference/STC USA Summit

Have a nice conference

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