

Call for Session Chairs Guidelines





Contents

SESSION CHAIR GUIDELINES	2
Role and Responsibilities	2
Timeline	2
SESSION FORMATS	3
1. Presentation Session (90 minutes).....	3
2. Panel Discussion Session (60-90 minutes).....	3
What is a Panel Discussion?	3
Your to do list before and during your panel.....	3
Recommended readings to assist in your preparation:.....	5
3. Roundtable Session (60-90 minutes).....	5
What is a Roundtable Discussion?.....	5
Purpose of a Roundtable Discussion.....	5
Description.....	6
Distribution of delegates.....	6
Visual aids	6
Preparation.....	6
Handouts	6
A successful Roundtable Has... ..	6
Recommended reading to assist in your preparation:.....	7
4. Ignite Session (60-90 minutes).....	7
Ignite slideshow tips.....	7
5. Storytelling Session (60-90 minutes).....	8
What is a Storytelling Session?	8
Performance techniques	8
Remember to... ..	8
Recommended readings to assist in your preparation:.....	8
6. Interactive Workshops (90 minutes).....	8



SESSION CHAIR GUIDELINES

Role and Responsibilities

The role of a Session Chair is fundamental to the success of the conference program, as they play a pivotal role in the smooth and timely delivery of high-quality sessions. In addition to the specific tasks mentioned below, the Session Chair must also take part in the review of abstracts.

A Session Chair is appointed to each session to develop the content of that session based on reviewed abstracts and/ or invited speakers. They are assisted in this endeavor by the Conference Co-Chairs who are responsible for overseeing all the sessions and help ensure the overall quality of the content. SCDM staff will also provide logistical support to Session Chairs and Conference Co-Chairs.

All Session Chairs are required to attend regular coordination calls with the Conference Co-Chairs and Speakers. Failure to attend such touchbases, meet the provided deadlines or assist the session Speakers as required, can lead to the session's removal from the program.

Acting as a Session Chair requires a significant commitment of time and energy but it also provides unique benefits such as:

- an unparalleled opportunity to network with key players from the industry,
- an unequalled platform to discuss the main challenges in the industry and find solutions to overcome them,
- discounted registration fees for the full conference duration,
- CEUs for renewing the CCDM® certification,
- a one-stop-shop for knowledge sharing and business development,
- an unrivalled occasion to position yourself as a thought leader in the presented topic and increase your reputation within the society/ community.

Timeline

Call for Session Chairs	November 20, 2019 – January 10, 2019
Session Chairs submissions evaluation	End January 2019
Interviews with Conference Co-Chairs (optional)	End January 2019
Session Chairs notification of acceptance	Beginning February 2019
Session Chairs confirmation of participation	End February 2019
Coordination calls with Conference Co-Chairs (mandatory)	Monthly basis
Session Chair Pack – Part I (signed agreement, disclosure forms, bio, photo and CV submission)	25 February 2019
Call for abstracts	March – April 2019
Abstract review & speaker selection	Mid-April – Mid-May 2019
Coordination calls with Speakers (mandatory) – regular basis	June – September 2019
Session Chair Pack – Part II (final session information)	July 9, 2019
Draft session documentation (PPT, agenda, etc)	September 6, 2019
Assessment questions due	September 6, 2019
PPT presentation review + feedback to be provided to speakers	Mid-August – end of August 2019
Final session documentation (PPT, agenda, etc)	September 20, 2019
SCDM 2019 Annual Conference	September 29- October 2, 2019
Session report	October 11, 2019

**subject to change*



SESSION FORMATS

As SCDM is continuously looking for ways to improve its educational offering and provide an excellent experience to its conference attendees, we are welcoming the submission of proposals for innovative session formats meant to create an outstanding learning environment. We hereby provide a selection of potential session format as a reference only.

1. Presentation Session (90 minutes)

Presentation sessions consist of 3-4 presenters per session. Each presenter is given around 20-25 minutes to make the oral presentation. The remaining time will be used for open forum to provide some time to discuss some points of the presentations together with the audience.

The speakers are encouraged to utilize a PPT presentation for supporting their presentation. All the presentations and other related materials (such as videos and pictures) should be reviewed and approved by the Session Chairs to avoid duplication/repetition.

2. Panel Discussion Session (60-90 minutes)

What is a Panel Discussion?

Important Facts:

- The panel is facilitated by the Moderator/ Session Chair who guides the panel and the audience through the topic.
- The panel format allows for a brief introduction and then discussion among the panelists and audience
- The panel, composed of 3-4 experts or practitioners in the field, shares facts, offers opinions and responds to audience questions either through questions curated by the moderator or taken from the audience directly.
- The panel aims to offer the audience a thought-provoking discussion that analyses a topic from different angles.

A Panel is not:

- A set of presentations, one after another.
- A one-on-one interview with each panelist. Many untrained moderators simply ask questions of each panelist, one after another, rather than build the dialogue into a conversation.
- Just Q&A from the audience.

Your to do list before and during your panel

Before the session:

Research the topic

Find different angles to cover the topic from and don't be afraid to bring up controversial points in the discussion.

Develop a bullet-point agenda

Choose between 3 and 5 main points that your panel discussion will cover. This should be sent to your panelists well in advance so that they can prepare. However, the discussion shouldn't be overly-rehearsed beforehand.

Don't use slides

The whole purpose of the panel discussion is to gain insight from the panel discussion and slides will only draw attention away from that.



Synchronize before the event

Make sure to meet with all your panelists a few times before the event. A conference call is always a good solution to brief your speakers and make sure that you are all on the same page. Present the points that you plan to touch on so that they can prepare their input. It could be also interesting to ask the panelists to think of one question they would like to ask their fellow panelists. Those type of questions are normally sharper or more provocative than the questions that you set to answer to your panelist. Additionally, panelists are often more candid when one of their peers asks them a question, as opposed to the “official moderator.”

Spread the word

To fill up the room, you should let people know that you’re hosting a panel discussion in the first place. A great thing about panels is that they are ALWAYS composed of several panelists and diverse speakers. The more people onboard, the wider the social media reach when they share the news. As a host, start your session campaign by using Twitter, FB, LinkedIn or the SCDM App (if applicable) well before the event to get the word out there. Make sure you tag panelists to encourage them to re-post your update or start posting on their own.

During the session:

Moderate don’t perform

“It is essential to maintain a non-judgmental approach to your presenters.”

If it is your job to moderate or manage the panel discussion, you need to take a backseat and let your panelists perform. Much like a conductor manages an orchestra, where it is his job to make sure that all the musicians work together in harmony; it is your job to manage the panel. Conductor would never start playing an instrument. He also makes sure that no one instrument dominates the music. Make sure and do the same in your panel discussion.

Introduce the panelists and break the ice

Make the introduction snappy and to-the point so the audience knows who will be talking with them. Introduce your panelist, provide their background to the topic and of course do not forget to also introduce yourself as a moderator of the session.

Try to break the ice at the start in order to bond with your audience. Live polling is a great way how to do it. Live polls don’t only allow you to entertain people but also help you to understand who sits in the audience so you can adjust your talking point accordingly.

State your objective at the outset

When introducing the session, a long introduction is not needed. It is important that you highlight why is this topic important and what do you hope to accomplish within the next hour.

Set the ideal length

“You are an airline pilot. It’s your job to land this plane on time”

According to panel discussion pioneer, Scott Kirsner, the ideal length of the panel discussion is between 45-60 minutes. It is important to have a certain structure of the discussion so you cover what you intend to within the dedicated time allotment. Check regularly how much time you have left to adjust the pace of the conversation.



Incorporate audience's questions

"Make sure attendees are learning and interacting during panel discussions"

It is highly recommended to not wait until the end of the session to start addressing questions. Once the discussion starts rolling, bring your audience into the discussion. Scott Kirsner advises to involve the participants within first 5 minutes! However, with 74% of the audience fearing public speaking, it is not the easiest task to accomplish. Use the SCDM App that allows everyone in the room to ask questions, it is up to you to select the questions that you find most relevant and can create even more discussion. In addition to this you can also allow live questions from the audience, which will allow more discussion and less Q&A.

2-3 panelists should answer the question

When you ask a question, two answers are enough, unless a third panelist wishes to intervene. Instead, ask a related question, ask for a concrete example, or simply shift gears and ask your other panelists about something else.

A sharp conclusion

Use the last minutes of your interesting session to poll one last question to the audience or for something forward-looking. Alternatively, ask your panelists to sum-up in one sentence a major "take away" from the session.

Recommended readings to assist in your preparation:

- [The Panel Report](#) (pages 8, 15, and 17–21)
- [The Moderator Role in Panel Discussion](#)
- [Make your next Panel Discussion More Compelling](#)
- [The Advantages and Disadvantages of a Panel Discussion](#)
- [Three Popular Panel Formats](#)
- [Guidelines for Great Panels](#)

3. Roundtable Session (60-90 minutes)

What is a Roundtable Discussion?

"Roundtable discussions are usually really valuable to attendees—there is a certain energy that comes alive and everyone starts talking and sharing. And they usually do!"

Roundtable presentations are among the most flexible format offered at the conference, and may look quite different from session to session. The one thing that they have in common is that each allows for extended discussion among a small group. Roundtables are an ideal forum for giving and receiving targeted feedback, engaging in in-depth discussions, and meeting colleagues with similar interests.

Purpose of a Roundtable Discussion

- To share your knowledge about an area of expertise, program, or research
- To network with colleagues who are interested in your work or research

"Roundtables are a great addition to most conference agendas, but to be successful they need planning, preparation and strong leadership when taking place"



Description

Delegates will be seated at tables of eight to ten – randomly at first. The presenters will each have five minutes at the beginning of the session to present their topic. Time for Q&A will be brief – just to clarify points of fact etc. The real discussion comes later!

Once all five presenters have pitched their idea, each table in the room will be designated to a particular presenter/project. The presenter (+/- co-presenters) goes to their table and the delegates migrate to whichever table was of interest to them in the initial presentations. The delegates will likely have questions for discussion, but the presenter should also bring with them some points for discussion, to get the ball rolling.

The front-of-room presentations, with turn-overs and minimal questions will occupy less than half of the session (max. 5 minutes per presenter), with the remainder available for rich discussions at the tables.

Distribution of delegates

The Session Chair/ Moderator may use their discretion to request that delegates chose another table if it seems that an uneven distribution of delegates is developing.

Visual aids

Roundtables do not have traditional audio-visual aids available, but most roundtable presenters bring handouts illustrating their work. If a couple of PowerPoint slides would help the presenters introduce their topic, then this can be accommodated, but the Session Chair will be running strictly to time.

Preparation

The presenters in this type of session should be ready to present their ideas in a succinct fashion, with whatever visual aid adjuncts they see fit. They should also identify some topics of conversation that could be discussed at the tables. Delegates often have plenty to contribute but sometimes conversation takes a while to warm up, so the Speaker and Session Chair/ Moderator should have some conversation-starters ready to go!

Handouts

Speakers are encouraged to bring 10-15 copies of all materials that they wish to share with session attendees. They should make sure to include their contact information on the first page to encourage follow-up. Past evaluations have clearly indicated that one frustration, in particular for new and international attendees, is the use of 'insider' language, acronyms, and abbreviations that make it difficult to comprehend readily a presentation so this should be avoided as much as possible.

NOTE: Outstanding presenters include as part of their handouts:

- Key lessons to be learned.
- A list of resources (web links, books, people) to learn more.

A successful Roundtable Has...

A clear focus

The best roundtables are always those with the clearest focus. There are aspects of every profession that are complex. Most issues faced in each profession/industry are, indeed, very challenging. The more precise the topic is the more successful it will be.

It is crucial to center your theme around industry specific topics. The participants value meeting people who share similar experiences. Knowledge shared within a session is important but sign up to meet likeminded professionals.

Comprehensive agenda



Although it is good to have a tight and clear focus for a roundtable you do need a broad and wide potential agenda for discussion. You don't know what the specific attendees are going to want to

talk about until they are all gathered in the same room. Having a wide and well researched roundtable is especially important if you have a group of individuals who take a bit of time to warm up.

A strong / knowledgeable moderator

The key role in any roundtable is the moderator. This is the person chairing and often leading the discussion. As for the panel discussion, the session chair/moderator job is to manage the roundtable discussion, you need to take a backseat and avoiding dominating the discussion. On the contrary, it is your job to:

- Tease out themes and patterns in the discussion.
- Involve less confident participants.
- Be attentive to all your speakers and try to make the discussion flow natural.
- Deter overzealous members of the roundtable and keep the discussion moving in a relaxed but purposeful way.

Recommended reading to assist in your preparation:

- [How to Run a Successful Roundtable Discussion](#)

4. Ignite Session (60-90 minutes)

"Ignite. Enlighten us, but make it quick"

Ignite sessions are fast-paced sessions designed to generate awareness and stimulate discussion. An ignite session includes 6 presentations (5-10 minutes) around the same topic or on different topics (max. 10 slides) slot to present while the speaker's PowerPoint presentation automatically advances every 15 seconds, creating a truly energetic and dynamic session, which will keep the audience on their toes.

Optional: allow time for Q&A in small groups or with full audience

Please take a moment to watch the video below featuring Scott Berkun giving a great introduction to Ignite presenting (in five minutes): [Why and how to give an Ignite talk](#)

Ignite slideshow tips

Keep it simple

Use relevant images/photos and a few key words to capture the idea you are trying to convey.

Bullets and text

Avoid using excessive text

Timing

Slides advance every 15 seconds, so avoid cramming too many topics or ideas into one slide. Instead, give yourself breathing room by spacing ideas and topics across multiple slides. You have 10 slides, so don't be afraid to use them.

Final suggestion slide

We highly recommend that your last slide be a "Next Steps" slide. It can be anything that pertains to your presentation.



5. Storytelling Session (60-90 minutes)

What is a Storytelling Session?

2-3 case studies (15 minutes each) around the same scenario/ issue. Stories should be about 15 minutes long and 10 minutes should be provided for Q&A. The case studies should reflect the authentic experience of an individual, a team, or a community. Only real-life case studies will be accepted.

Performance techniques

“Telling a story can captivate an audience; that is, with the right techniques and a little practice.”

- Map the plot as a memory technique
- Use story skeletons to help you remember the key events
- Think of the plot as a film or a series of connected images
- Tell yourself the story in your own words
- Create your own version of the story (adapt and improvise)
- Retell it numerous times until it feels like a story

Remember to...

Immerse your audience in the story

Every word and image that you present have to create a clear mental picture of the problem. Also, it has to clearly follow a golden rule of presentation-giving which is to use visuals that supplement your story rather than repeat what has already been said.

Show. Don't tell

Whenever you deliver a story, try scene-by-scene construction of events and use dialogue instead of narration.

Build up to S.T.A.R moment

Similar to a climax, a S.T.A.R. moment is a “Something They’ll Always Remember” event that is so dramatic that your audience will be talking about it weeks later. This can come in the form of a dramatization, provocative images, or shocking statistics.

End with a positive takeaway

The stories told in the session should conclude with an advice, an explanation on how the challenge was overcome and change for the better.

Recommended readings to assist in your preparation:

- [How to Tell a great Story](#)
- [The Power of Storytelling - Seven Tips for Storytelling](#)

6. Interactive Workshops (90 minutes)

The workshops are intended to allow conference participants a chance to explore topics in greater depth. Led by practitioners and leading global education organizations, these interactive workshops should provide a hands-on learning experience that will leave you with ideas, strategies and tools to use back in the community. Please include suggestions of the session objectives and concrete takeaways for attendees.