How to Make the Most of Your SHRM 18 Experience

Heading to Chicago for SHRM 18? Check out our tips on how to prepare, what to do, and where to eat while you're at the SHRM 18 conference!

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Ahhhhh yes, SHRM 18 is finally here. Last year we were headed down South to NOLA; this time, we're headed West to the Windy City, Chicago. SHRM 17 was a blast. If you didn't meet us there, you can check out our unconventional concept here. It was Viventium's first time exhibiting at the conference, and we loved chatting with attendees about our message and learning more about them, as well! Now, it's onto SHRM 18 in Chicago. There are always a lot of questions when you're preparing to go to a conference. *Where will I eat? What will I do? How will I meet people? What are the fun events that I should attend?* ...and all that *jazz*. If you've found yourself asking these questions, **then you're in the right place.**

HOW TO PREPARE. Okay, so I *could* offer you the same generic advice that everyone gives whenever you attend any conference: have a phone charger on hand, wear comfy shoes, layer your clothes, drink water ...you know the drill. Instead, I'll help you out with some less generic tips that will make your experience as an attendee awesome.

- **Step it up.** Join the **SHRM Foundation's Step Challenge**!!! I'll mention this again later, but this is a great way to get involved right off the bat and you'll be logging **a lot** of steps. Register using the link above and then select your team and you're in! (**Go SHRM18 Steppin' Dream Team**)!
- **There's an app for that.** So, you already have theUber, Weather Channel, Yelp, Google Maps, Twitter, and Instagram apps on your phone. **But you probably don't have the SHRM 18 app.** Make sure you get it before you go. You'll be able to view announcements, the conference schedule, a city guide, exhibitors, and more.

Pro tip – you might even make a separate folder on your phone called SHRM 18 including all the apps you know you're going to be using frequently. This will make your life so much easier!

- **Schedule, Schedule, Schedule.** These conferences have so much going on. If you don't plan your time accordingly, you **will** miss out on something you wanted to attend! Pick your **top 3 sessions-** that you **must attend** and put them into your schedule using the **SHRM 18 app.** See, I told you it would come in handy.

Great! Now that you're prepared ahead of time, let's talk about what to do while you're there.

WHAT TO DO. *S HRM Events.* In terms of SHRM events, because I know that's the real reason why you're visiting Chicago, you're in luck – there are some pretty cool things going on, as well as plenty of chances to get to know and network with other HR pros.

- Walter Lewis Fitness Solutions is hosting a Sunday stroll – for those of you who have joined the - SHRM Foundation's Step Challenge, this is your opportunity to get a head start on the competition! If you haven't joined, you can register using this link.
- I also heard that there will be **free massages** given out at booth #3006 by Massage at Work. Better than a tchotchke? I think so.
- Interested in meeting the fabulous #SHRM18Bloggers? Then this SHRM18 Bloggers (and Friends) Happy Hour at the Tortoise Club is for you!

Culture.

You can't leave Chicago without experiencing some of the culture and history! Hop on a Chicago Crime and Mob tour, visit the Skydeck Chicago, or observe some art at the Art institute of Chicago. You might go see The Bean – or Cloud Gate, which is its official name. And if you believe in life after love (or if you wish you could turn back time), the Cher Show just opened in Chicago on June 5 th. Not enough for you? Here's a list of other things to do while you're in Chi-town.

Sporting Events.

Chicago in June means many sports have wrapped up their seasons. The Washington Capitals just won the Stanley Cup for hockey, and the Golden State Warriors snagged the basketball championship. That just leaves baseball. Unfortunately, the Chicago Cubs aren't playing at home the weekend of SHRM, but the Chicago White Sox are! Forgot that Chicago had two baseball teams, huh? Here's the Chicago White Sox schedule for the weekend of SHRM (and links if you're buying tickets):

- Detroit Tigers at Chicago White Sox Friday, 6/15, 8:10 pm CST
- Detroit Tigers at Chicago White Sox Saturday, 6/16, 2:10 pm CST
- Detroit Tigers at Chicago White Sox Sunday, 6/17, 2:10 pm CST

They're away at the Cleveland Indians the following Monday – Wednesday, so if you're interested, you'll have to catch them before the conference begins.

WHERE TO EAT.

Finally, we've arrived at the most important thing (arguably). I know what you're thinking, **deep-dish pizza**. And for the record, I'm from Jersey – **so I know good pizza when I taste it.** I'll be doing a full

review of how I felt about deep-dish after trying it. According to a Time Out article, these are the **top 5 pizza places in Chicago**:

1. Pequod's Pizza (20-minute drive from McCormick Place depending on traffic)
2. The Art of Pizza (25-minute drive from McCormick Place depending on traffic)
3. Chicago Pizza and Oven Grinder Co. (15-minute drive from McCormick Place depending on traffic)
4. Burt's Place (40-minute drive from McCormick Place depending on traffic)
5. Lou Malnati's Pizzeria (this is a chain and you'll find locations all over Chicago, but their South Loop location is just a 10-minute drive from McCormick Place)

While I'm sure all of these restaurants make fantastic deep-dish pizza, I would personally recommend going with **convenience** here. Lou Malnati's is in the top 5 and it's only 10 minutes from the convention center. We all know that our time at the SHRM conference is precious and budgeted very carefully, so grabbing dinner 10 minutes away is necessary – a necessity made easier by the opportunity for deep-dish pizza! **And an added bonus,** for those of you who are **gluten-free -** or have a food allergy, Lou Malnati's has alternate options for you. Of course, this is just a snapshot of the things going on at **SHRM 18**. Make sure you're following the hashtags **#SHRM18-** and **#SHRM18Blogger** for all the latest happenings at the show! Did we miss anything? Tweet us @viventium with your number-one suggestions for what to do while in Chicago! ...And while you're there, don't forget to give booth #3240 a visit! We'll be happy to meet you.

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