

# SEVEN PROPOSAL-WRITING TIPS THAT MAKE CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEES SMILE

Bill Pollak

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## Submitting a Proposal to SATURN

Writing a great session proposal for a practitioners' conference can be difficult, even for experienced public speakers and authors. Proposal writing is a distinct skill, different from writing great papers and giving amazing presentations. Your session proposal is what the reviewers will use to decide whether your session should be in the SATURN Conference technical program. Here are seven tips for writing a session proposal that will make reviewers go from frown to smile.

1. **Include all of the information requested in the Call for Submissions.** Whether you are proposing an experience report presentation, technical talk, DEV@SATURN talk, or tutorial, **the program committee needs this information** to give your proposal a fair and thorough review. There are two fields for conveying this information: the "Description" field and the "Notes" field. The description is the public abstract of your talk. It will be seen by reviewers of your submission and will eventually be seen by the attendees of the event. You should make the description of your talk as compelling and exciting as possible. Remember, you're selling to both the organizers of the event to select your talk and to conference attendees to come see it. The Notes section will be seen only by reviewers. This is where you should explain things such as technical requirements, why you're the best person to speak on this subject, and anything else that will help reviewers make their decision.
2. **Be as specific as possible.** The SATURN Program Committee is an experienced group and comes from a wide range of backgrounds. They are excited to hear specifics about what you want to teach us at SATURN and how you will do it.
3. **Include an outline, even if it's only tentative.** The "Notes" section is your chance to expand on your abstract. Including an outline shows that you've thought through what you plan to present and helps the reviewers better understand the concepts and lessons you want to share at SATURN. For participatory sessions and tutorials, how will you spend your time?
4. **Tell us who you are.** In a few sentences, tell us about your work history, your education, and any past work or research that will help establish your credibility. Reviewers also want to know that you can speak from first-hand experiences. The best way to demonstrate this is with a brief biography, highlighting your experience as a speaker or instructor. If you have access to a video of yourself presenting at a conference, include the link in the "Notes" section so the program committee can see you in action.
5. **Use your abstract to summarize and sell your talk.** Why should participants attend? What will they learn? What is your topic and why is it important? A great abstract will describe the topic, summarize the key lessons, and pique interest.

6. **Show how your session will have lasting appeal.** Reviewers want to see how your experience report, technical talk, DEV@SATURN talk, or tutorial will improve our overall understanding of software architecture. This could mean many different things, from sharing a completely new idea or experience to explaining a classic concept in a way that no one ever has before. Take a look at [past conference presentations](#) and [videos](#) for some great examples.
7. **Plan ahead and submit early.** Submissions close in mid-January. Do not wait until the last minute to prepare your submission. Prepare, take time to review, refine your proposal, and submit early. The SATURN review process is interactive. Be ready to answer questions from reviewers within the online submission system.

Historically, only 20–30% of submissions have been accepted. The conference chairs want to make the program committee’s job as difficult as possible by making sure there is an abundance of amazing proposals from which to choose. They don’t want any rejection to be easy. They want reviewers fighting to include your presentation, participatory session, or tutorial in the program. Arm them with the information they need to give your topic a thorough review by including all the information requested in the Call, by being as specific as possible, and by planning ahead to allow plenty of time to refine your submission.

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## Contact Us

Software Engineering Institute  
4500 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2612

**Phone:** 412/268.5800 | 888.201.4479

**Web:** [www.sei.cmu.edu](http://www.sei.cmu.edu)

**Email:** [info@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:info@sei.cmu.edu)

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