ConnectEXPO

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

A Compilation of Preferred Practices

Steven Hacker
Executive Director of Connect Expo
shacker@connectmeetings.com

Personalizing Exhibitor Services—From the Top and the Bottom

Submitted by Aaron Bludworth

Fern is known for highly personalized services for both show organizers and exhibitors; our level of service has always been the key differentiator between us and our competitors. However, reality demands that some exhibitors get a disproportionate amount of resources dedicated to them in the delivery of services, especially pre-show. Typically, service providers give the exhibitors who spend the most, or have the potential to spend the most, the most attention. Fern gives these exhibitors a premium level of attention BUT also applies a “white glove” experience to the first-time exhibitors who are often utilizing the smallest spaces and due to the nature of their businesses (startups, very small, etc.) are unlikely to produce high levels of revenue, if any, for Fern. In its simplest description, though more complex in application and managed through technology, the “top” 10% of exhibitors and the “bottom” 10% of exhibitors on a given show get proactive direct personal interaction before the other 80%. The objective is ensuring that the top 10% receive the premium service warranted by their extensive spending with Fern and the show organizer to address their more complex needs, AND that the bottom 10% have as smooth of experience as possible, aren’t confused by the unique trade show model or ordering processes, can focus on their sales efforts, and are more likely to return as an exhibitor on the specific show and engage with exhibitions in general.

Fern’s OneView™ exhibitor ordering platform is also designed to lead the first-time or otherwise less experienced exhibitor through a slower and more deliberate preparation process than it is for large experienced exhibitors whose orders are often being placed by professional exhibit managers and third-party providers. OneView takes exhibitors through a guided process based on exhibitors needs and complexities much like TurboTax does online or as TSA does with the “experienced traveler” and “frequent traveler” lines.

Meeting and Event Management Issues

Submitted by Ric Camacho

Digital technology is an increasingly important strategic element in the event manager’s quiver. Show managers need to have a group focused on these issues from front-of-house tech such as registration to show floor service technology and IoT and increasingly data management and generation of business insights from such data. Not having this capability and using it strategically will become a liability.

Data and privacy issues will increasingly become an issue as more IoT is deployed at shows. The patchwork of technology service providers and how they meet regulatory expectations are a headache for show managers.

Mobile-based event technology is insufficiently funded to support true innovation and to support the demands of show managers and associations. It should be used to engage our audiences beyond show days.

Room Night Metrics

Submitted by Mark White

For many years and like practically every other DMO, Visit Salt Lake's primary performance metric was the number of contracted room nights associated with conventions, meetings and tradeshows by our organization. At the time, this approach was sound and reasonably accurate because most attendees stayed in the official room block.

However, as alternative accommodation options became readily available via Travelocity, Orbitz, etc., an ever-increasing number of city-wide convention attendees chose to stay outside the block. The event planners, DMOs and contracted hotels all tried various carrot and stick approaches to coax attendees into the official room block, but the trend was irreversible. Visit Salt Lake faced a dilemma; to continue under-reporting only the room nights associated with city-wide events that occurred in the official block, or develop a method to report all room nights-- whether they'd be consumed inside or outside the block.

We determined three components determine the total number of room nights a convention or tradeshow would generate: the number of attendees, their length of stay, and their likelihood of sharing a hotel room. We then built a model dubbed the Attendance-Based Room Night Calculator which the VSL management and sales staff can easily use. It took approximately two years of discussion with Visit Salt Lake's Convention Committee and Executive Committee to ensure they understood the issue, and fully supported our proposed methodology. Before converting completely to the Attendance-Based Room Night Calculator, we ran it side by side for one year along the tradition method to give further assurances that our methodology was sound.

The number of attendees associated with an event is fairly easy to determine. We use the most recent three year average. The attendees' length of stay is also fairly easy to determine. For that, we look at the group's bell shaped hotel use pattern. We'll see for example, 10% of the attendees arrive on day one, 30% on day two, and 100% on days three / four, etc.

Ascertaining attendees' likelihood to share a hotel room was a bit more complex. Anecdotally, we know a high end health/medical convention will have primarily single occupy, whereas a youth athletic event may have four occupants in a room. Fortunately, we have contracted with the University of Utah's Bureau of Economic Business Research (now called the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute) to conduct five-ten attendee intercept surveys every year since 1988. The surveys discovered among other things, the number of attendees who shared a hotel room. Over the years, there was a remarkably consistent rate of room-sharing within each market segment.

An example of our Attendance-Based Room Night Calculator is pictured so you can see our process in action. By doing so, you'll have a reasonably good understanding of how we calculate room nights based on each group's attendance.

The Amazing Tradeshow

3 Year Average Attendance: (Fill in attendance here)		
	6,500	Year 1
	7,100	Year 2
	6,850	Year 3

(Do not enter attendance here)

Number of Attendees (3 YEAR AVERAGE): 6,817

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Arrival/Departure Pattern (% of Peak):	5%	10%	78%	100%	100%	32%	5%
Attendance per Day:	341	682	5,317	6,817	6,817	2,181	341
Projected Night-by-Night Room Block:	189	379	2,953	3,786	3,786	1,211	189

Salt Palace Meeting Space Days:	8
Decision Date:	7/30,2019
First Day of Meeting:	8/15/2024
Salt Palace Demand Score:	High Demand (June 1-Nov. 1)
Market Segment:	Trade Shows and Expositions
Total Attendee Days:	22,495
Market Segment's Propensity to Share a Room:	44.5%
Attendance-Based Room Night Projection:	**12,492**
SPCC Days:	8
Projected Room Nights/SPCC Day:	1,562
Score (RN/SPCC Day):	6
Number of Years Out:	5.0
Projected Room Nights/Year Out:	2,474
Score (RN/Years Out):	4
Total Score:	10
Minimum Required Total Score:	10
Pass/No Pass:	Pass

Various Best Practices For Our Trade Show and Association

Submitted by Kim Altoff

New Exhibitor Success Program
Provide exhibitor concierge services personal touches, webinars for the successful show, social media tools to promote booth space, match making with key attendees.

Ways to Promote Engagement
Innovation Product Showcase – innovation is the number one reason to attend our show - we provide a means of showcasing innovated products an online platform for voting and then on-site innovated product showcase for innovation of the year award.

Education areas on show floor – education is the number two reason to attend the show – provide engaging educational areas per our member class for means of finding solutions – Solve for X, Solution Center.

Housing
Aim to fill our contracted blocks and provide added value – provide a complimentary bus pass for those that book inside the housing block, provide a priority point for those exhibitors that book inside the block.

Leadership Practices
To promote women in our industry, we have a women's leadership group ISSA Hygieia Network – provide a mentoring program for women in the industry to advance their careers and provide guidance and support and leadership.

Multi-Touch Sales Prospecting Nurturing

Submitted by Liz Irving

- Post-Event: Show Recap; Website focused on Booth Inquiry and Sign-up
- Developing audience segmented communications, website landing pages by vertical
  - » Showcase relevant content
  - » Showcase who else (create some FOMO)
  - » Teaser with a CTA - Form for more info
    - ▪ Form screens customer interest and customer profile
- Thank you for interest and content follow-up
- Sales Nurture Begins – 3 - 7 Week Nurture - Combo of both sales touches and marketing
  - » Email Series Nurture – Storyteller, start big, go into strategic differentiators
  - » Watch Engagement - Not engage, pull into different medium (social, retarget)
  - » Last Message Personal – Ready to talk, pick the time that works set the appointment
- Goals for success: 2% website visitors to MQL; 13 MQL to Opportunities; 6% Opportunities to Closed WON

CS Week

Submitted By John Sild

Recognizing the challenges presented by an aging workforce is a good first step taken by many industries. Creating a tangible, meaningful and repeatable program to address knowledge transfer, experiential training, transition and succession planning is quite another. In 2017, CS Week launched LeadNext, which partners with utilities to tackle these complexities in the customer service space.

LeadNext is a 12-13 month educational and networking program bookended by annual CS Week Conferences. As a niche venue, LeadNext is led and staffed by recently retired customer service/supporting information technology professionals, willing and qualified to share their operational experiences, been-there-done-that insights and practical advice tuned to the utility industry.

Here's how LeadNext works:

- Company executives nominate coachable candidates capable of meeting the program's requirements and who will appreciate its value. Candidates may self-nominate. The nomination process is open from fall to spring annually. LeadNext is limited to 14 participants, selected by the CS Week Board to reflect a wide range of utility types, size, diversity and demographics.
- Executive support includes registration and travel expenses for two week-long CS Week conferences in back to back years. In the first year, participants select and attend a CS Week College on Monday, a CS Week Synergy Group on Tuesday and Conference on Tuesday afternoon through Friday morning. In the second Conference, participants attend Executive Summit on Monday and Tuesday and Conference events and activities for the remainder of the week.
- Between Conferences, participants make two one-day utility site visits at large utilities and engage with their coaches for eight monthly webinars to discuss and expand their understanding of the customer experience and meter-to-cash life cycles. Webinars focus on analytics, billing and payments, credit and collections, contact center, digital customer engagement, field services and best management practices.
- LeadNext coaches, retirees from large, progressive utilities, are assigned on a one-to-one basis to participants, listening actively, mentoring towards outcomes and sharing their experience and time freely.

CS Week's recent 2019 conference in Phoenix, AZ saw the graduation of its second class. Listen to the testimony of two recent graduates:

> “*For companies that don't have moving up programs, LeadNext has proven to be a great investment that my utility made in me.”*

> “*My classmates and I bonded as professionals and friends. The networking opportunities have allowed me to tap into their separate skills and bounce ideas off others in similar situations. I've captured their energy and boosted my confidence.”*

Thanks in part to their LeadNext engagement, half of this year's 2019 graduating class have received job promotions or reassignments that included enhanced responsibilities at their respective utilities. For more information about LeadNext, visit csweek.org or contact me for a tri-fold brochure.

Emergency Preparedness

Submitted by Mike Carrier

The metro Oklahoma City area receives a significant amount of annual media coverage, as do many southern/southeastern US cities, regarding violent and destructive weather. Most people in the US have never heard of Moore, Oklahoma and would not know anything about it were it not known for having suffered through one of if not the most violent tornadoes to ever hit the USA. We are constantly amazed at the number of visitors – leisure as well as group – who arrive for their visit wanting to know if they will get to witness or even experience a tornado. We often check closely to see where these folks came from.

The more serious and challenging issue involves meeting and event organizers who plan to invest significant time and financial resources in presenting their events and need to do so with the minimum amount of undue but realistic concern for weather issues. Unfortunately our overall community has become too good at (A) responding to severe weather events, (B) preparing to respond to major crises as a result of our experience with the 1995 OKC bombing, and (C) recovery efforts for those events.

Working with the City and State Emergency Preparedness experts the hospitality industry has developed guidelines and practices to help allay the preconceived notions of the likelihood of severe weather, the reality of what actually happens when an event occurs, how to help calm the fears of visitors during tornado season and the coordination of services to respond quickly and efficiently without having to reinvent the wheel every year should a major event actually happen.

The “program” simply defines who is responsible for what should an emergency occur, who leads each aspect of the response, what steps can we take in advance of an event to properly advise visitors, meeting and event planners and our own residents as to what they should be paying attention to during “bad weather” times and making sure our industry is in tune with the needed services and protocol.

Cultivating Relationships Between Clients and Hotels

Submitted by Lexi Miech

Finding the balance between the client’s needs, their contract with a venue outside of a hotel and the hotel’s contract can be a tricky one especially at a hotel that has a large amount of convention space.

There is sometimes a challenge between hotel’s contracting a large amount of guestrooms but none of their meeting space to a client that is hosting an expo in a convention center or event center. A great way to cultivate a relationship with this type of hotel can be to offer opening/closing reception, a flexible performance clause allowing the hotel to sell rooms that are not selling, encourage/advertise to vendors on hosting client events, private dinners, board meetings etc. at these specific hotels and asking the hotel to create a discount or package to encourage additional meeting space/food and beverage needs to be booked with them.

Simplifying the Educational Program Proposal Process

Submitted by Karen Francis, Gulf Energy Information

I am responsible for three "events" - a four-day trade show with up to 2,000 attendees; a two-day conference with exhibits and up to 400 attendees and a one-day conference with 250 attendees. There were several challenges that I had to overcome, a major one was changing the way we handled abstract/proposal submissions for the four-day show.

At one time, it was deemed that more is better, thus, the trade show used to have 125 educational sessions. For 24 of the 25 years of the tradeshow's existence, proposals (abstracts) were submitted in Word, or PDFs. The submissions were numerous and lengthy, making the selection process daunting and long. Keeping track of the documents was a nightmare. Notifying the presenters was a different challenge. We began offering fewer sessions, going from 125 to 100 to 90. However, the challenges still existed. What we needed was a way to streamline the process of receiving the proposals to notifying the presenters of acceptance or rejection.

Moving into the 25th year of the trade show (2020), a practice we are happily using is an abstract management system. Letting the technology do the work is great. From announcing that the call for papers is open to collecting them, using an abstract management system is changing the way we manage the educational program.

The presenters are in control as they submit the proposal online, provide a summary, make all modifications, add/remove co-authors. They can upload their bio and photo and I can run a report to see what's missing. This will eliminate my need to collect photos, create a PDF of all of the presenters and upload it to the conference website. Abstract management will populate details into the conference app, changes to the educational program and speaker line up will be much easier to manage as it will be done in one place - no more tracking down the master Word document only to discover that someone created another version of it. We can conceivably cut down on meetings to review the proposals as reviewers can log in and read and grade on their time.

Fewer sessions means fewer meeting rooms, lowers AV, staffing and signage costs, etc. Attendees will benefit by seeing program changes in the app, as they happen. No more sitting in a session for 5-10 minutes only to discover that it's been canceled or the room has changed.

The abstract management system should help in promoting the trade show as everything needed is on one place and accessible any time of day.

Abstract management will be applied across all of my events.

Experiential Areas on the Show Floor That Promote Engagement

Submitted by Usha James

We redesign the event every cycle to accomplish specific goals. Before we proceed our strategy and research teams use data to help us determine what our areas of focus should be.

Experiential areas on the show floor that promote networking is a basic requirement. We design areas for transactional business deals, crowdsourced content, first timer meet-ups etc. However, we pay special attention to areas where serendipitous connections can happen. We actively use the Beautiful Constraint Method and The Innovation Beehive's Art of the Innovation Ecosystem to bring some of our best ideas to life.

Building Community and Engagement Through Text

Submitted by Chuck Elias, EventBots by Sciensio

As we have grown our EventBots business, we have learned how powerful and important a customer's mobile number can be in building a community of passionate and loyal customers.

Most of us closely guard our mobile number and give it out to family and friends and trusted colleagues so that we can get advice and support and engage throughout our daily lives. A mobile number is one of the most personal and intimate pieces of information we can give -- a way to reach "me" anytime, anywhere. No matter how valuable and important we think our products and services may be to a customer, the ultimate sign of importance is when they are willing to trust us with their mobile number.

While a mobile number is personal and intimate, we regularly give it out to businesses when we find that we can get something of value. We provide our mobile number to our bank so they can send us fraud alerts. We give our mobile number to the airlines so they can send us important flight information. And we give our mobile number out to protect ourselves with two-factor authentication. While these are primarily one-way notification based messages, they demonstrate how text is solving important needs for customers.

From a business standpoint, having a customer's mobile number opens the door to new insights, connections and engagement. Rather than watching clickstream data or targeting banner ads to infer what customers need, we can see it in their own words. And rather than sending an email blast with low open rates and even lower read rates, text, with a 98% open rate and a <5 second read rate, cuts through the clutter. With access to each individual customer, marketers have the opportunity to more deeply understand needs and deliver more targeted, valuable, and successful offers to convert casual customers into a passionate and loyal community of followers.

No matter the situation, **a customer's willingness to provide their mobile number always begins with their desire to get something from us.** In the events industry, this most often means they get an answer to a question they have about an event. We have found that one need fulfilled, instantly, is all it takes to open the door to a deeper relationship. Every text a customer sends is customer feedback about that event or company. What the customer needed, when they needed it, and whether that need was fulfilled. And since each text is connected to a specific individual, they can be reached out to when a need isn't fulfilled.

Once the channel to a customer is open, we can do some amazing things. Because identity (mobile number) is known and can be tied back to a CRM, each customer can get the personalized response that fulfills their need (i.e. "What table am I sitting at for dinner?") or be sent a just in time high value message that gets read (i.e. "Here is your badge to speed you through check-in."). This is done automatically and at scale, providing both individualized support and lower total cost. And since each text is customer feedback, each one teaches us more about that customer so we can deliver a more targeted and personalized experience.

So if a customer is willing to trust us with their mobile number for an event, why would we stop communicating with them once the event is over? Unlike mobile apps or emails, which we regularly delete, text is persistent and never goes away (when was the last time you actually deleted a text?). This means the channel remains open for us to communicate throughout the year. Of course, **this means that marketers have to up their game, which means a paradigm shift away from blast marketing messages toward targeted messages, that are valued by the recipient, increase connection and stickiness, and create a virtuous cycle of insight and deeper connection.**

Destination Facilities and Site Selection

Submitted by Stephen Hahn

In New Orleans, our goal with each site is for customers to carefully craft sites to cover two important aspects that drive a destination's decisions.

First, demonstrate the technical capabilities that meet the need of the event, transportation, hotels, space, logistics, major event facilities, special event venues, etc.

Second, demonstrate the destinations thematic strengths, in our case... we are lucky to have quite a few...

- History for 300 years...
- Diversity of Cultures ...
- Culinary...
- Music...
- Arts...
- Festivals...
- Waterways...
- Neighborhoods
- Famous Streets...
- Architecture...
- Walkability...

Our mission in each site is to highlight and integrate live elements of each during sites. Ideally including both daytime and nighttime experience; in our city nighttime brings it all to life.

The end result is for customers to walk away with a strong impression of logistics capability and more importantly, the charm and energy of the destination for guests.

Starting a Sales Plan and Process Post Event

Submitted by Mike Carlucci

When a show ends there tends to be a lag in the sales cycle where shows can fall behind, or sales planning is not utilized fully. The lack of a proactive approach to planning the sales cycle will often leave teams scrambling to generate business while sacrificing service and consultative approach selling. Using this time is critical to setting up a plan for success.

Full Day Planning Session

- Frontloading business/Renewal—Timelines in place
- Deep Dive into Media Kit/Sponsorship opportunities and Process Plan on Outreach-Timelines defined and agreed upon
- Opportunity for Revenue Generating Opportunities while insight and experience is fresh

I am also piloting a new program I developed called Project Unplug that I can discuss with the group around sales planning and success metrics that I am putting into place at Clarion Events.

Exclusive Vendors That are Overpriced and Don't Meet Organizers' Needs

Submitted by Tom Mitchell

For our shows that we organize in the US, we use Freeman as our GC. Our oldest and most successful event is Valve World Americas, every two years in Houston. The show exhibitors are industrial valve manufacturers, and as such much of the equipment and valves themselves are large and rather heavy. This is a boon to Freeman due to the weight of what must be loaded into the facility, but of course can often result in extremely high drayage and labor costs for the exhibitors, our larger sponsors in particular.

Over the years, and reaching a peak in 2017, we experienced somewhat of a mini-revolt amongst certain exhibitors due to their high bills from Freeman. In many cases, the exhibitors were simply not following shipping rules, waiting too long to order things, or their own EAC's were not shipped properly. But in other cases, Freeman was simply not working efficiently with us to organize the process to offer the most competitive price possible to our customers. In short, both Freeman and our own staff had lost sight of who pays our bills and what service we need to offer.

For our 2019 show, we worked together successfully (so far) with Freeman to design an exhibitor outreach program to give each customer every chance possible to save as much money on shipping and drayage as they could. We were fortunate to be able to shift our show dates to get rid of a Sunday build up day, but that was not enough.

Freeman agreed to freeze rates for 2019 to the 2017 levels. And they also designed custom weight classes for exhibit booth material and for actual valves and equipment, with an aim toward making it more attractive to bring actual equipment to the show – the lifeblood of any event. We also designed a call center program with Freeman whereby they called ALL of our exhibitors, not just the large ones, to give them the chance to plan ahead with what they were planning to ship so they could structure everything properly. A customer webinar is also planned, where any of our exhibitors can join in to learn about how best to order their labor and plan their drayage costs.

We all know that drayage and union-based labor at trade shows in the US can get very expensive. This is a larger industry issue which I think continues to threaten how we do business and need to be addressed. But for now, our goal was to make sure the exhibitors would know, up front, how much their on-site bill would be, allowing them to plan and budget. When they are not surprised with an unexpected bill at the end of the show, they leave as a happier customer. And, by being proactive, if we do get unhappy customers, we can at least prove to them that we made every effort to try an alleviate this troublesome cost issue.

Preferred Practices for Preparing Your Mobile App

Submitted by Jay Tokosch

Too many times I see customers buy their mobile app and only use it for their event. Your app should not be a "seasonal business"! Why work so hard to build an audience for just the event? Instead think of it as an engagement tool that you can use to communicate with your audience year round. Less than 10% of the users will delete their event mobile app after the event is over. The first step is to promote the app for the event and also that you will be using the app to communicate throughout the year. Then, take time to plan out communications you will use throughout the year. As you begin the next cycle toward your event, release the app with your basic event info with teases about future information and possibly new features for the event and/or app coming. The app can be updated all the way up and throughout the event. So take advantage of the technology.

Solving Human Resource Challenges

Submitted by Melanie Hoover

Personal Human Resources Issues/Challenges

- Transparent on pay and benefits-Through Destination International, they send a survey every two years that we complete and share our current pay we are offering to our employees. When we have new hires, we use this as a gage, in addition, when we promote staff, we also use this as a guideline.
- Employee engagement and training:

  1. We have weekly stand-up meetings on Monday morning for all staff to share/brag about 1-2 activity that is pertinent to all, this is not mandatory.
  2. Leadership staff meets twice a month as well as Senior Leadership.
  3. Quarterly we host All Staff Off-site programming. We assign two managers from different departments who have a theme, with a new off-site venue that we meet at. We include teambuilding activities such as (Pinstripes Bowling, River Ranch with Chicken Bingo, Pace Care riding at Texas Motor Speedway. We have departmental updates (we assign a non-exec leader, utilizing our manager, coordinators and support staff).
  4. Company perks – We are now offering Flex day. All managers are allowed to work from home 1 day a week. This allows us to stay competitive in our industry and is helping with retention for loyal and valuable staff.

Customer Service Enhancement
In Fort Worth we not only have a convention center, we are unique to have an Equestrian Facility called Will Rogers. I have listed some unique things we are doing to help exhibitors feel welcomed.

- On Move-in days we hand out bottled water as well as doggy treats to those who have pets.

Monitoring Event Risks and Threats

Submitted by Mike Grant

Reed's use of the TrapWire security software is a means of monitoring risk and credible threats to our events. We engage with their platform every day to allow for a much more proactive security posture at Reed events. This is about protecting our people and assets. Promoting the tool to our competitors, venues and vendors has also allowed us to broaden our network across the country.

Time is the Currency of a Trade Show: Building an Event Around a 5-Minute Conversation

Submitted by Tom Gattuso

As Show and Event Organizers, our main purpose is to build the optimal environment to connect a buyer with a seller. At the core of this connection is an interaction or conversation that occurs when the two parties meet. The connection that ensues can have a varied time limit that ranges from just a handshake to an hour-long discussion or more. Depending on the event that is being produced a best practice is to identify the optimal amount of time that the average interaction should take and build everything around that.

For the sake of this example we will say that our optimal amount of time would be a 5-minute conversation. As we build the event, everything we do should point back to that core principle. Exhibitor training, buyer strategies, floor plans, mobile apps, networking events, signage, etc. should help facilitate an efficient connection. For examples, I will share two concepts: one that is exhibitor specific and one that is buyer specific.

Exhibitor:
Let's say an exhibitor (one person) is participating in a 3-day trade show with a 10 x 10 booth and the hours of the show are 9 – 5 each day. That would mean there are a total of 24 hours of time on the trade show floor. If you break the 24 hours up into 5-minute conversations, that exhibitor can only talk to 288 people on the show floor over the course of the three days. As a result, the exhibitor should not be concerned with a total attendance number of, say 10,000 attendees of the show but rather how to get the right 288 buyers to their booth. They then shift their focus to outreach which would include pre-event marketing, proper booth design, new product displays, sponsorship branding, advertising and directory listings, etc. all in an effort to attract the most qualified conversations. From there they can start to measure ROI and base metrics of future sales based on closing ratios of converting business from the trade show floor.

Buyer/Attendee:
The time as a commodity concept is no more important than for a buyer at a trade show especially when you consider their time on the floor is often not all hours of the event. Additionally, they must walk from appointment to appointment and lose valuable time in between. For them, the need to plan their time on the floor to the precise minute is critical. They need to use the tools at their disposal like the mobile app, floor plan, website, etc. The more prepared they are before they arrive at the event the more successful they will be. As they seek out new products they will find that they tend to do more business with exhibitors that make it easy and efficient for them to interact with.

Exhibitors and Attendees:
The time off the show floor also takes on a whole new meaning because it extends the total number of 5-minute conversations that can take place. Networking events and after-hours functions are useful tools in increasing connections and subsequently ROI of an event. The more a Show Organizer can optimize the amount of 5-minute conversations that can take place, the better the results will be for all involved.

Sellers Expositions

Submitted by Warren Sellers

1. One Preferred Practice is our ever-changing Outdoor Demonstration Area. *https://gie-expo.com/events/outdoordemoarea*

2. For 2019 we are creating a new area called Hardscape House using a facility at the Kentucky Exposition Center. It will be roofed and contain the following: *https://www.hardscapena.com/attendee/education/hna-demos*

3. My favorite "Best" Preferred Practice is to have fun: *http://bit.ly/haveexpofun*

Streamlining the Housing Process

Submitted by Steve Walker

MGM Resorts wants to be the company that is known to be easy to work with. Our City Wide team was put in place to help the major shows and conventions streamline their housing process.

For events that need 3 or more of our hotels (for guestrooms only) our City wide team serves as one point of contact to help manage multiple hotels.

Once we have a contract in place, we then have a Director of Revenue Optimization handle all of the logistics of the housing process. They work hand-in-hand with the group's housing company to make sure blocks are being utilized and make adjustments where necessary.

This is similar to the individual hotel process for in-house pieces of business where, once the sales person contracts the event, they then turn it over to the Convention services/Catering manager to handle all of the logistics.

Our rate and revenue team relies heavily on historical data as well as tendencies that are happening in the city. We need to be able to quote rates that will not be undercut and will provide value to the convention guest versus the individual leisure traveler.

We want to be able to manage the blocks long before the cut-off date and do this by communicating on a weekly basis with the housing companies.

First Time Exhibitor Experience

Submitted by Lori Jenks

Eliminate the confusion and simplify the exhibit process for the first time exhibitor.

- Assign first time exhibitors to “Experience” consultants (show management and GSC staff) with personal outreach and high touch
- Create a customized webpage on show website that includes a Chatbot feature with simple show service manual links and definitions. Includes links to GSC first time exhibitor videos and FAQs
- The web page includes a pre-populated show budget worksheet to properly calculate exhibit expenses, ROI calculator, marketing and appointment booking tools
- Link to webpage included in all email correspondence to first time exhibitors
- Develop simple “How To Exhibit” YouTube videos (max 3 minutes in length) that can be linked to email communication and added to webpage and mobile app
- Create a webinar series that can be uploaded to web page and accessed at any time

Normalize the show experience for the first time exhibitor.

- “Experience” consultants (show management and GSC staff) meet first time exhibitor during move in. A welcome email sent to company staff and show site contact card delivered to booth staff
- First time exhibitor orientations led by “Experience” consultants are conducted at show site that provides move in/out procedures, show tips, floorplan navigation and brand promotion opportunities and lead management tools to ensure a successful show
- First time exhibitor mobile Help Desk at show site to quickly resolve issues
- A survey is sent through a mobile app at close of show to gather first time exhibitor feedback. Any negative comments are immediately addressed
- Personal thank you packets that include show performance measurement tools and attendee satisfaction responses are provided by an “Experience” consultant

Driving High-Quality and Increased Attendance

Submitted by Vincent Polito

Omnichannel personas equip clients with next-practice solutions to optimize, quantify, and automate their persona-based marketing. In addition to the methodologies embraced by integrated personas, an omnichannel model leverages behavioral data to automatically assign otherwise anonymous visitors to appropriate segments based on their actions alone, enabling clients to dynamically serve persona-specific messaging and relevant content to each individual touched by the campaign. In addition, omnichannel personas allow for cross-device, cross-domain and IP campaign attribution for a seamless and fully personalized experience.

VisitDallas Preferred Practice

Submitted by Brad Kent

There are a couple of practices that have been well received by customers in the recent couple of years that I would like to share for this discussion.

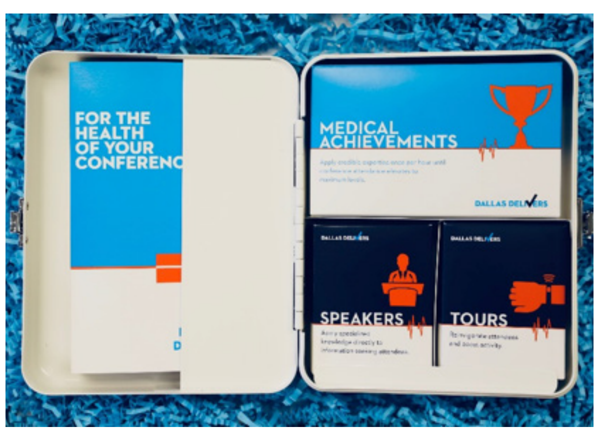
1. Engaging the community around the event:
Many destinations express wanting to partner with a show organizer, and what we have found is that it is discussed but rarely followed through upon.
For our medical meetings market…a segment that is one of our top lead sources but had historically converted at around 10%…we saw an opportunity to do a better job than most destinations to really truly connect our renowned medical community with organizers of these events.

We engaged a partner with strong ties to the major health systems in Dallas…UT Southwestern, Baylor, Methodist, Presbyterian, Children's, etc…to engage with their senior leadership; then we invited those leaders and medical event organizers to Dallas for our first medical event advisory board. Focus was on:

- Dallas has more nobel laureates working in our community than any other city in the world.
- Our medical systems are interested in attracting medical meetings to Dallas as a recruiting tool to attract "the best and brightest" to come and work here.
- The hospitality is interested in attracting medical meetings to Dallas due to the higher revenue value of each event.
- How do we make Dallas attractive to organizers and easy to connect with the venues, speakers, attendance building, volunteers, etc within the community?

From this we created a "toolkit" in a medical/first aid box with resources outlined for planners and are extending our relationship with our partner to expand into other engagements with customers around attendance building resources.

2. Exhibitor familiarization trips:
These have proven very valuable to the sponsors and exhibitors of large programs that are coming to Dallas for the first time, though we work with all groups who are interested in doing this each time they come. In conjunction with the organizer, we host a couple of food functions, tours/meetings with the convention center team (sales, service, marketing, wifi, catering, etc), top hotels, as well as venues that have proven to be popular for corporate parties during trade shows. As you can only get to so many on each day, we will also end with a lunch, where other venues can come and showcase their offerings.



Planner Promotion Checklist

Promoting and educating attendees on the My Show Planner ensures they will get the most out of their show experience. This document includes a variety of ways to promote the planner and easy instructions to on how to implement them. Consider using the checklist below to keep you engaged in the process of encouraging your attendees to utilize this complimentary tool throughout the show cycle.

Checklist for the My Show Planner Promotion Plan: *(find specific instructions for each of these items on pages 2-5)*

- [ ] Directory live
- [ ] Floor Plan live
- [ ] My Show Planner live
- [ ] Complete registration integration
- [ ] Post link to Planner login page
- [ ] Add a call to action button on website
- [ ] Promote mobile app on event home page
- [ ] Educate exhibitors on best practices for content management
- [ ] Educate attendees on My Show Planner benefits
- [ ] Place insert in eNewsletter to attendees
- [ ] Email video to attendees
- [ ] Post on social media
- [ ] Promote use of planner within mobile app*

**all references to mobile assume use of MYS mobile app*

Timeline for Directory, Floor Plan and Show Planner

We suggest making your online directory, floor plan, and show planner live to attendees at the same time attendee registration launches, or no less than three months prior to your show date.

- ☐ Directory Live
- ☐ Floor plan live
- ☐ My Show Planner Live

Registration Integration

MYS can enhance your online registration process so attendees can easily plan how they will spend their time at your show. Allow MYS to make the online agenda planner a natural extension of your registration process. This will increase engagement, improve efficiency, and promote your exhibitors. The My Show Planner can pre-populate your attendees' agendas and even match them with exhibitors who meet their needs.

Click here for the MYS best practices for setting up Registration Integration

- ☐ Complete Registration Integration

Show Website & Social Media

Post a link to the planner login page, using the title "Create a My Show Planner" and make it visible on the homepage of your website. Be sure to include a call to action button to link directly to the planner. We suggest making it live no less than three months prior to your show date.

- **HELPFUL HINT:** Use text such as:

  Create a personalized Expo schedule in advance so you don't waste time onsite. Find exhibitors to visit, education sessions to attend and create a meeting schedule with this easy-to-use tool. Anything you add will be accessible through the Expo app too!

What are the benefits of creating a planner?

- *Create a personalized show experience*
- *Save time on the show floor by focusing your approach*
- *Organize your appointments all in one place*
- *Compile a must-see list of exhibitors and bring it with you to the show*
- *Organize show-related activities using the Events Calendar*
- *Print a map of the show floor highlighting the booths you plan to visit, or download the official* ***[show name]*** *Mobile App to sync your agenda to your phone*

☐ Post link to Planner Login Page

Add a call to action button on your website such as "Justify your Trip" on page. Here you can list information about the benefits your attendees can take advantage of by using the planner to justify their travel. Let them know they can:

Share favorite exhibitors from the show with their boss or colleagues.

☐ Add a call to action button on website

Promote the mobile app on the event home page by creating a call to action graphic that links to the mobile app in stores. Be sure to include both the iOS and Android links within the graphic.

- ***Sample text:***
  By downloading the mobile app, you can access your My Show Planner enabling you to save exhibitors or products you are interested in, upload photos you capture while onsite and tag exhibitors to those photos for future reference. You may also plan for educational sessions you'd like to attend, access the floorplans, and more. Have not created your planner yet? CLICK HERE (button) to get started.

☐ Promote mobile app on event home page

Exhibitor and Attendee Education

It is important that both **exhibitors and attendees** have background knowledge on the benefits of directory and show planner for both parties to get the most out of the tool. You want your exhibitors to understand the importance of keeping their online listings up-to-date. You'll also want your attendees to understand that exhibitor information is constantly being updated, so it's important to access the planner throughout their show planning process.

- [ ] Educate exhibitors with best practices for uploading images and content to their MYS Exhibitor Dashboard so they are ready for attendees to plan.
    - Provide detailed directions for accessing the Exhibitor Dashboard so they know they need to visit the exhibitor portal after initial registration.
    - Encourage exhibitors to upload their content prior to the launch of the attendee planner and remind them to keep their information up-to-date throughout the show cycle.
    - Educate them on the benefits of having a complete listing:
        - More information means maximum exposure on the online directory
        - Additional content makes a listing more accessible in the keyword search
        - Higher lead generation

- [ ] Educate exhibitors on best practices for content management

- [ ] Educate attendees on the benefits of using the My Show Planner by providing a document outlining Show Planner features and benefits.

    Click here for the MYS Show Planner Instructions

Pre-Show Communications

- [ ] Place a blurb in an eNewsletter targeting attendees, with a focus on the benefits of creating a planner.

    - ***Sample text:***
      As a My Show user, you can create your very own personalized show agenda that will allow you to:
        - *Compile a must-see list of exhibitors and bring it with you to the show!*
        - *Organize show-related activities using the Events Calendar*
        - *Print a map of the show floor highlighting the booths you're visiting, or download the official [show name] Mobile App to sync your agenda to your phone*

- [ ] Place insert in eNewsletter to attendees

- [ ] Send an Email to attendees with a link to the MYS educational video showing how to create the planner
    - Place the link to this video on the directory (if V8) or ask your account manager to add it as a tile on the directory (if V7)
    - Embed on the show website and/or the online directory
    - Email video to attendees
    - Post on Social Media – Place the link to the video on a social media post (post two months prior to show and repeat weekly leading up to the show.) Pin it to the top of your social media platform.

Click here to access the MYS Educational Video (V7)

- [ ] Promote the use of the planner within the mobile app
    - Post mobile app promotion on your event website at least **two weeks prior to the show**
    - Post on social media at least **two weeks prior to the show**

    - ***Sample text:***

      *Carry the **[show name]** in the palm of your hands by downloading the mobile app today. **[link here]** Stay up-to-date with the latest show news and notifications pushed straight to your phone. Narrow down the list of exhibitors you'll see by performing keyword searches, product category searches, and more, all from the exhibit floor. Of course, you can also simply browse the interactive floor plan to see who's located where.*

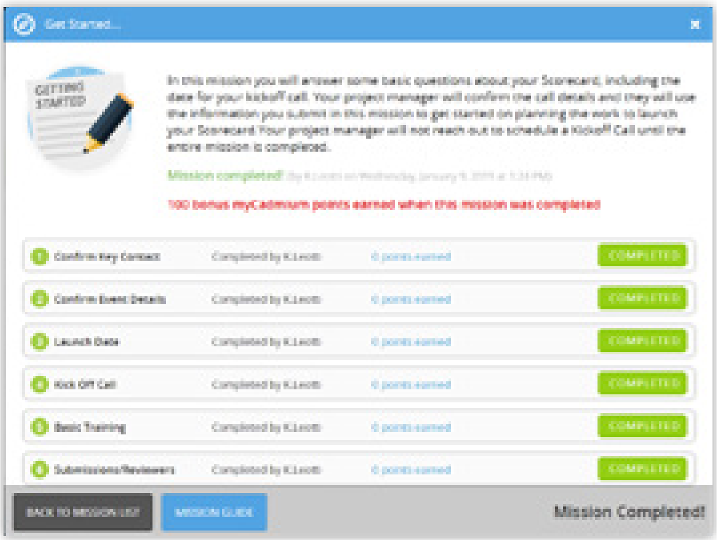
      *When you see an exhibitor you'd like to save, quickly create an agenda **[link to planner]** and add them to your digital planner.*

      If you've already created an agenda planner, simply download the app, sign in using your previously created login credentials, and your planner will load automatically on the user-friendly mobile app.

Click here to see email templates for pre-show communication

CadmiumCD Missions

Your Tool for Getting Projects Started in myCadmium



What Are Missions?

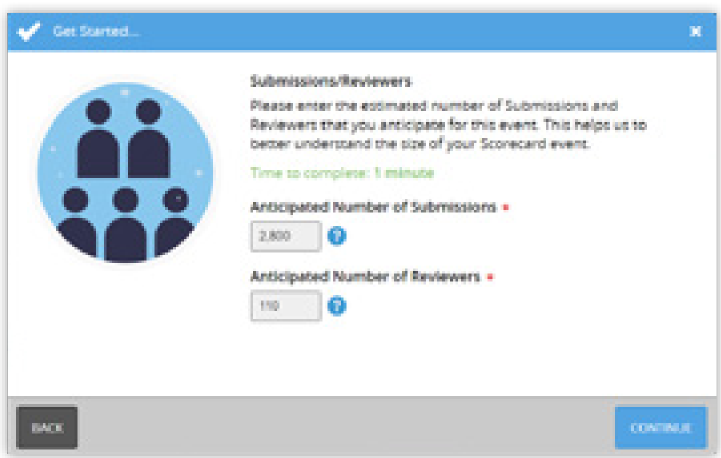
Missions are similar to the software wizards you may have used to set up a newly installed program. They help you define the foundational details of your events through a step-by-step series of instructions. Each checkpoint in the mission only takes a couple minutes to complete.

With Missions, as soon as you upload an asset or decide on something like a color, that information is instantly added to your CadmiumCD product.

How Do Missions Work?

Missions are triggered when you start a new project with CadmiumCD. The Mission for your new project will show up on the myCadmium Dashboard, and you will also be prompted to complete any relevant Mission when you launch your project.

As you complete Missions, you'll not only lay the foundation of using CadmiumCD's various software products, you will also begin to earn myCadmium points. These points can be used later to receive advanced support (via urgent Boomerangs) or to create a custom report.



Why CadmiumCD Created Missions

Missions were created to improve user experience within CadmiumCD modules. The main goal was to deliver a better onboarding experience to all clients. Many additional benefits arose during development of this system.

1. Consistency & Clarity

When a user enters the system, we want them to know exactly what to do. Missions give users a checklist to follow. They make it 100% clear what needs to be done and in which order you should do it. In the past, a CadmiumCD project manager would walk users through set up. Missions make things make each set up exactly the same, and free up project managers time for much higher level discussion.

2. Process Control

We also wanted to empower users to make choices, control their event planning process, and feel that they have the tools and know-how to successfully use the software, no matter their experience level. The goal of software is to simplify tedious processes. Missions does exactly that. No more back and forth on email. Simply complete the checklist and your software requirements are in the system instantly!

3. Quicker Start Up Time

Another goal of software is to save users time. Missions boil down setting up CadmiumCD products into simple, bite-sized steps. Most missions only take a few minutes to complete. ACG's Conference Content Manager, Kris Leotti, was able to set up the basic details for an entire year of event apps in just a few hours.

4. Easy Project Tracking & Reporting

CadmiumCD's primary purpose is to help meeting planners, trade show organizers, and other event professionals manage their projects better. The Scorecard helps collect and review submissions, Harvester helps manage speakers and exhibitors, and eventScribe is there to deliver content to attendees. We've extended this purpose into Missions by giving planners a dashboard to track all deliverables and report back to their team about what still needs to be done. Report emails can easily be forwarded or shared with your team. Plus, historical data in myCadmium allows you to track how you set up each project and make quick changes when needed.

5. More Productive Meetings

The single most important thing for us at CadmiumCD is the way we communicate with our clients. We want all interactions to be pleasant and/or productive. Our project managers are dedicated to helping clients achieve success using our products, and by extension achieving success at their events.

6. Better Service

Ultimately, all of this leads to a better client experience. CadmiumCD CEO, Michelle Wyatt, says that Missions also help project managers understand the client and their projects on a much deeper level: "This reduces the time we spend trying to discover who we will be working with on a specific aspect of the event and to make sure we meet client expectations as to when they want to start working."