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**communicating
with attendees:
embracing
technology
solutions**

COMMUNICATING WITH ATTENDEES: EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

The majority of your attendees will have smart devices – phones and tablets – so leveraging the online options to communicate with attendees is essential, especially in this fast-paced world of developments. Using customised technology-led platforms lets you communicate directly with individual attendees and provides personalised event-related information whilst remaining environmentally aware. You can also integrate apps and digital tools within sessions so attendees can engage in real-time with presenters.

Your event's digital communications will typically include:

- Microsites (Event Portal) with pages containing event outlines, terms and conditions, travel policies and program information and social activities.
- Registration pathways to capture important delegate information and receive payments.
- Email functionality for personalised updates and information distribution.
- Analytics to capture correct data and support reporting functions.
- Social media links and notifications for interactive communications.
- Mobile apps for program information at delegate's fingertips.
- Text messaging for reminders and alerts.
- Polling tools and Q&A interaction for use within sessions.
- Create and fun ways for sponsorship engagement through apps.
- Create a private 'social network' for each event via the app.

Your Event Portal holds the majority of the event information and should include at least:

- Easy-to-use web pages with simple layout and bullet points for ease of reading and download of program and other information.
- Event program agenda - live.
- Speaker profiles – live.
- Sponsor profiles and offers - live.
- Registration function with secure payment gateway and receipting function, including option for partner registration and participation at social or off-site events.
- Automatic email confirmation message confirming booking details.
- Business rules for delegate attendance and participation, including terms and conditions, as well as cancellation policy.
- Information about the destination and venue.

- Travel information, visa and passport requirements if necessary.
- Special requests functionality such as diet, allergies, accessibility and medical conditions.
- Contact functionality for delegate inquiries.
- App driven Social media feeds and program updates for providing information and engaging with attendees onsite.
- Analytics tools to track how the website is used and to capture data for reporting.
- Possible remarketing function to keep your message alive throughout the year.

Establish an automated contact strategy for all delegates once they have registered. This can include numerous media channels such as email, SMS, direct mail, telephone, app and social media. Encourage delegates to promote their participation via their own social channels and business networks using the event hashtag.

At a minimum create opportunities at the event, such as selfie hotspots, VIP photo sessions and more, so attendees can promote their presence at the event or with each other via their social channels using the event hashtag.

making a difference

“ We had quite a few difficult system challenges to deal with in the lead up to a large symposium dinner meeting on the Gold Coast. These were mainly relating to the large number of guests and syncing the delegate registrations with a third party system, together with multiple sponsorship entitlement variations that were all signed and returned online it was a highly specialised solution. These large meetings also have a lot of ‘moving parts’ with large scale design elements and sophisticated staging and AV requirements. In short, it was a stressful time.

However, it was worth every moment as I saw the universally positive reactions from the guests in the room. The looks of joy and appreciation as they immersed themselves in the presentations, the 3D anatomy and the live injecting - all in a stylish setting. It was a very real reminder of why we do what we do.”

IDEAS FOR ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IN ONLINE EVENTS

Where your events are taken from an ‘in-person’ to a live solution delivered online, using services like [e:volve](#), there are different options for keeping your message alive. You can engage your audience while delivering your key strategic and brand messaging via virtual exhibitions, sponsor promotions, adding variety into your sessions and using involvement devices to get your audiences taking action.

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SPONSORED GAMES

Contests and games are a great way to keep your attendees engaged and can also be tracked for event analytics. Sponsors provide the fun game break and can send a small reminder as a follow-up gift or prize.

BRANDED BREAKOUT SESSIONS

After attendees watch the main keynote, session or speaker, they can choose a breakout room app or **e:volve** experience that has the online presence consistent with that sponsor. Branded throughout with logo on screens and even pop-up advertising or chat boxes can appear throughout the session. Because the event is digital these can also be tracked so you know how many people are in each room and how many click on any of the ads or pop-up messaging.

SPONSORED SOCIAL-RESPONSIBILITY MESSAGE

Many companies will be aligned with certain social responsibility groups or activities. These can also be brought to life and used to help the wider industry or a particular group in need. A way to do this live is to include a section in the program for a performance, video, interview or activity that opens people's hearts to the need and encourages contribution in effort, time or donations appropriate to the organisation's commitment.

CUSTOMER STORIES AND INFLUENCERS

Everyone likes to hear real stories to which they can relate or from which they can learn. This is how sponsors can turn their product updates into more meaningful examples by inviting a customer to share their experience in an allocated program slot. Customer testimonials or success stories sell sponsors' messages much better and demonstrates more than just the product from a selling point of view. This also provides an educational reference for other attendees who may be experiencing the same obstacles and challenges the featured customer experienced.

GAINING VALUABLE FEEDBACK FROM YOUR ATTENDEES

Gaining feedback from attendees is vital to understanding what was meaningful for your attendees and can be used to gauge effectiveness of how the plan met the objectives.

In-session interaction between speakers and attendees ensures a high level of engagement is encouraged. This may be the introduction of gamification, quizzes, social media and Q&A. Event analytics will show the level of engagement and interest based on their session activity.

Collecting data at various points pre-, during and post-event helps to ensure the post-event evaluation is accurate and more likely to be completed promptly. You're assured of more people completing your survey if it's kept simple and to a single page. However, event reporting to assess ROI can be gleaned from so much more, so consider the meaningful insights you'd like to receive well in advance of the event, so you can plan to capture the relevant data.

When desired outcomes are reviewed through the lens of an event experience, patterns emerge revealing the moments that provided value and the ones that didn't, so you can use this data to plan better for the next event.