A Magazine Featuring Articles from the Industry’s Most Influential Event Professionals

The 2016 eventScribe Magazine

EDITED BY MICHAEL DOANE | DESIGNED BY RACHEL VRANKIN

www.cadmiumcd.com
# Table Of Contents

1. Introduction

2. Are Speakers A Part of Your Team? | Julius Solaris

4. Onsite Data Analytics | Corbin Ball

6. Event Technology is no Longer a Choice | Michelle Bruno

8. Committee Bureaucracy | Jeff Hurt

10. Get More from Your Conference Speakers | Donna Kastner

12. Advantages of Supporting Connection | Adrian Segar

14. Why I Love the Trade Show Industry | Rachel Wimberly

16. Education is Better in Person | Stephanie S. Selesnick

18. Meeting Industry Wifi & Security | Jim Spellos

20. Your Event Can be a Hotel AND an Airport | John Federico
Introduction

Ever since I joined the events industry three years ago, one question has constantly plagued me. What does it take to be a super planner and an exceptional eventprof?

In these three years, I’ve encountered people who plan meetings and events large and small who uphold certain standards and show an amazing passion for what they do. These people are smart, quick witted, organized, fun, and really understand what it means to surprise and delight others. They are empathetic and caring and truly want to make a big difference in the lives of the people they create experiences for. I think at the essence, that’s what makes these people so amazing.

Recently I visited some of CadmiumCD’s clients to interview them as part of our Super Planner Series. The common theme was that each and every one of them cared for their coworkers, their attendees, and their vendors like they were truly part of a family. It’s an amazing quality you don’t often see in business, but it’s the quality that makes the people that stand out in our industry so exceptional. I’m proud to be a part of that.

The same can be said about the eventprofs featured in this magazine. I’ve gotten to know them all personally in the past three years — through events and online. They’re always willing to lend their wisdom and challenge your perceptions. That’s just what I’ve asked them to do for this magazine and man did they deliver!

Please enjoy these articles and share them with your colleagues. They are not an ending point, but the catalyst of discussions we ought to be having to make the business of events even better.

- Michael Doane, CadmiumCD Marketing Manager & eventScribe Magazine Editor
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A
SUPER PLANNER?

WATCH THE SUPER PLANNER VIDEO SERIES AT
WWW.CADMUIMCD.COM/SUPERPLANNERS
Why Are Speakers Considered Last?

When it comes to events there is no one that takes care of details more than we, event professionals, do.

We make sure our venue is spotless, we spend hours picking color themes, production, room layouts. What about catering? We know where to source that mini hamburger that is so hot right now. Yet when it comes to conferences we tend to forget about one of the very reasons why attendees came, our speakers.

The core of our event is often treated as the last of the details. We don’t spend enough time selecting them, we think that dedicating budget to source them has to be avoided at all costs, we don’t brief them about our attendees and what they expect. We prefer to sell speaking slots to hungry sponsors and then we complain if it all ends up in a sales pitch.
**Good Content vs. Celebrity Status**

Are speakers part of your team? Do they share your objectives? Do they feel rewarded for participating in your event? Is it business as usual for them or is it really a special occasion?

You know what? Some speakers do not deserve your audience, your budget, your attention. Of course they may have celebrity status but fantastic content wins over reputation. If I want to be close to a celebrity, I’ll go to a concert. Conferences are for networking, learning, discovering. I am not asking for much here. I am asking you to spend the same time you spend on process on your event’s content.

Innovate where you can with your meeting design. Challenge your speakers to mix with your audience. Train them for success. You are the only leader of your event. There is no client, no sponsors, no stakeholder. This is your event, your job, and your attendees. They deserve the best of the best.

---

**About the Author**

Julius Solaris the editor of Event Manager Blog. Started in 2007, Event Manager Blog is the number one blog worldwide for event professionals, covering topics such as event planning, social media for events, event technology, event trends, event inspiration but also destination management marketing, meeting planning.
The Black Hole of Data Management
The onsite meeting used to be known as the “black hole” of event data management. Planners used computers to gain insights before and after events, but during an event they were “flying blind.” For example, paper surveys were handed out, but tallying wasn’t completed until after the event – not in time to make mid-course corrections.

Emerging Data Collection Tools
Now, it is possible for every touch on a mobile event app to be tracked, scored and rated. Social media channels can be monitored and incorporated into the mix. Onsite “likes” and mobile polling and survey tools can be scored in real time. Meeting planners and event marketers can know immediately answers to the following questions:

- What are trending hot topics?
- Who are the top speakers?
- What exhibit booths have the most attendance?
- What speakers/exhibitors are “liked” the most?
- Who are the key connectors/influencers?
- What are the attendees’ ratings on specific survey and/or polling questions?

With coming advances in geo-positioning and beacon technology, it will be possible for every attendee movement to be monitored precisely (usually with permission from the attendee) to yield even more data. This includes:
What is the crowd flow through an exhibit hall? Where are the hot spots and where are they not? What are the “dwell times” of specific attendees in front of specific exhibitor booths? (For example: an attendee would be likely more interested in an exhibit if the stood at a booth for 15 minutes compared to just walking by.

This is very valuable information for exhibitors to know who specifically are interested in their product or service. It could also be useful for attendees to be able to generate a list of the exhibit booths visited and the amount of time spent with each of them.

Where are queues forming for registration, food and/or transportation in order to send reinforcements? Who is in the meeting room? (This could be useful for many purposes including automated CEU tracking or to send pop-up messages targeted only to attendees in the room to open up a room-specific mobile poll.)

This real-time collection of onsite data can be a goldmine of information to gain insights for event improvement, to make midcourse corrections, to engage participants and to provide more targeted marketing.

**The Next Step: Data Analytics**

With better onsite data collection tools than ever before, the next challenge will be finding useful, real time analytic tools to interpret these data. These “big data” tools can provide very useful business insights about what is happening at an event. ...And in time to make a mid-course correction if needed!

The field of data analytics is a rapidly growing and evolving one. The costs will continue to fall and the insights gained will be quicker and deeper. Attendees are already carrying around the sensor and engagement tools in their pockets (smart phones with mobile event apps). Now is the time for meeting planners and technology providers to take these data collection and analytic tools to the next step to more fully implement them to improve the quality of the event.

---

**About the Author**

Corbin Ball, CSP, CMP, DES, MS is an international speaker, consultant and writer helping clients worldwide use technology to save time and improve productivity. With 20 years of experience running international technology meetings, he now is a highly acclaimed speaker with the ability to make complex subjects understandable and fun. His articles have appeared in hundreds of national and international publications and he has been quoted in the U.S. News & World Report, Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, USA Today, Fast Company, PC Magazine and others.
The Brain of Your Association

It is often said that an association’s board of directors is the brain of that organization. Its committees serve as the central nervous system influencing all parts of the body. The conference planning committee is similar to our spinal cord, serving as the internal communication highway between the parts of the body and the brain.

When the brain, central nervous system and spinal cord operate well, they accurately sense the environment, process information and provide valuable insight to the brain so that the organization succeeds. However, if our spinal cord—the conference planning committee—is damaged, the entire association suffers. Unfortunately, many conference planning committees own bureaucracy, its own processes and systems, stymies your conference’s potential to transform lives.

Hat tips authors John F. Schlegel and Josh Packard.

When Conference Planning Processes Dominate

In the past few years, the most effective and successful conferences have recognized that their current structure of the conference planning committee hinders their ability to meet their participants’ needs.

Sure, no organization can exist without structure. It’s when that structure gets in the way that it seems counter to the original purpose.

More than a century of sociologists’ studies and research on organizations and organizational theory demonstrate that at some point, the organization’s structures prevent the association from success. Our structures including the traditional conference planning committee have limits.
When a conference is fully planned and executed by a centralized and top-down system—the conference planning committee—eventually the bureaucracy dominates and becomes ineffective. All conference planning efforts become inward focused, stifling change, collaboration, creativity, learning and any opposing ideas.

Eventually, in the name of the conference and the organization, the bureaucracy takes over. All conference planning activity becomes focused on the survival of that very committee.

**The Equipping Catalyst Conference Committee Embracing Empathy**

Enter the Equipping Catalyst Changing Conference Committee. They plan conferences differently. The Equipping Catalyst Changing Conference Committee focuses on improving attendees’ experience. They pivot from making speaker suggestions of who they’ve seen, their needs and their own personal experiences. Instead, they think about their target market, what makes them tick and their pain points. The target market serves as the focus point of planning, not the committee’s reactions.

*This process requires taking time to look beyond the horizon of what’s currently in place.*

*It requires taking time to listen and understand target markets.*

*It requires going deeper than the current assumptions and opinions. It requires reframing problems, asking new questions about planning behaviors.*

*It requires an empathic mindset.*

Understanding what’s going on in your conference target market’s mind is the first step to counterbalancing the current fascination of conference data and old school perspectives. It’s the first step to equilibrium with empathy.

Empathy will play a role in rebalancing your conference’s clarity of purpose. Embracing empathy for your target market will equip this committee with new lenses, new direction and new quality filters.

*For more information, read Indi Young’s *Practical Empathy*."

---

**About the Author**

Jeff Hurt joined Velvet Chainsaw Consulting in January 2010 and currently serves as Executive Vice President, Education and Engagement. In 2011, he was recognized as the PCMA Educator of the Year and one of BizBash’s top Event Innovators. In 2014, he was recognized as one of the meetings’ industry professional provocateurs and change agents by MeetingsNet and one of the top meetings professionals to follow in Twitter. In 2015, he was listed in Successful Meetings Magazine top 25 most influential people in the meetings industry. He is considered one of the leading authorities in the meetings industry on adult education, conference design, digital events and social media for events and associations. He speaks and blogs frequently about meeting and technology trends, the future of conference education, adult learning and all things meetings at velvetchainsaw.com.
Are You Ready for Automation?

If event organizers are true to the belief that meeting face to face is more efficient and effective than other marketing channels, they must also accept the reality that automating and modernizing an industry that is already behind the technology curve is the only way forward.

For some event planners, automation—using software to streamline tedious back-of-the-house processes or deploying hardware to remove friction from the attendee and exhibitor experience—evokes unsavory images of computers replacing people or added workload to learn complex applications.

The reality is that technology has and will continue to disrupt the event industry, just as automobiles unsettled the horse carriage business, telephones upset the telegraph industry, Amazon transformed bookselling, and Uber turned the taxicab industry upside down.

Apart from the inevitable automation and digitization of everything, everywhere, event organizers, leaders of organizations especially, must embrace event technology for some very specific reasons:

1. The industry must drive down the costs of producing and participating in live events in order to be competitive with digital-only marketing channels. Regardless of whether face-to-face events are superior or not, they are in danger of becoming cost prohibitive to produce, exhibit in, and attend for many participants.
2. Events must exhibit the hallmarks of modernity on the back end and the front end. People’s expectations for personalization, speed, and relevance have been radically raised. Tedium processes will not attract quality employees and archaic ways of navigating, connecting, and accessing information will no longer be of interest to attendees.

3. Events must be able to attract the next generation of exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees. The comfort level that millennials and their successors have with digital tools and smart devices will work against an industry that clings to spreadsheets and paper directories and cannot provide them with the data they need to justify their investments.

4. Event technology, when it aligns with the purpose for which it was intended, reduces costs while improving efficiency, is utilized fully and consistently, and scales with the organization, addresses many of the challenges the event industry faces today.

When it comes to believing that meeting in person provides efficiencies, an ability to produce outcomes better than other forms of marketing, and a more productive way to do business, why not use technology to grant its beneficiaries the most valuable benefit of all? Time to be creative, time to spend with customers, and time to fulfill the primary objectives of meeting in the first place.

About the Author
Michelle Bruno is a writer, blogger, and technology journalist. She develops content and content strategies for event-industry technology companies at Bruno Group Signature Services (brunogroup.com). She writes about event innovation at Fork in the Road blog (forkintheroadblog.com) and publishes Event Tech Brief (eventtechbrief.com), a weekly newsletter and website on event technology. She is a former meeting planner and has received both the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) and Certified Exhibition Manager (CEM) designations. She holds a Master of Professional Communication (MPC) degree.

Event Tech Brief is focused exclusively on the companies, products and solutions driving the global event industry. It delivers critical information to event professionals on the technology platforms, applications, and devices being developed specifically for trade shows, meetings, conferences, festivals and public exhibitions. Past issues have covered a range of topics from mobile applications to beacons to open-source approaches for addressing event-industry problems. The website is free to access. Subscribers receive weekly summaries of the content posted on the site.
How to Integrate Speakers into the Conference Experience

As digital channels multiply, expectations for conference speakers are rising fast.

While some speakers are onto this value shift, many more rely on outdated tactics that fail to engage today’s more sophisticated audiences. Chief among these offenses:

• One-way “sage on the stage” presentations that fail to tap the wisdom in the room.
• Failure to customize talks to the audience.
• Hyper-focus on their own talks, with little to no thought on how this fits within the context of the total event experience.

Alas, sometimes conference organizers are coconspirators in these transgressions. Once the contract is signed, many speakers are left to fend for themselves, with little more than a slide deck template and a registration link.

This conference value dilemma sweeps wide, from experienced keynoters to subject matter experts who speak every now and then. Our audiences are demanding richer and more relevant conference experiences and truth be told, it’s not as time intensive as you might think to deliver on this mandate.

Here are three steps you can take to ensure you’re setting the stage for speaker success:

1. Communicate More About Your Conference Mission & Target Audience

In a sentence or two, what’s your mission for this conference? Which specific titles and/or industry segments value this experience most of all? What challenges are top of mind for these executives? How is this changing from year to year? How might this speaker lock into these issues more soundly?
Keynotes often set the tone for each day – who else will be speaking that day? When you hit the finish line (e.g., closing general session), which discoveries will be valued most? This insight might be conveyed in a summary document. Even better, schedule calls with speakers to discuss this in greater detail. Do everything you can to help speakers be in a lock-step with your overarching mission and what matters most to your audience.

2. Design an Environment Where Peer-to-Peer Sharing Thrives

Most people attending conferences today are desperately seeking industry insight and connections that ultimately helps them improve, yet the word “speaker” tends to run counter to this objective. Help your speakers embrace their role as conversation and connection stewards. Give them a few examples of how this might play out in their sessions.

Stories often serve as stellar peer-to-peer discussion kindling. Get more creative with your room sets, too, so these conversations can happen more easily. Leverage technology (mobile app, second screen, social walls, etc.) as sharing accelerators. PS: Layer in more white space (open time) on your agenda, so participants can continue these conversations later.

3. Tap Speakers for Pre-Conference Teasers and Post-Conference Extenders

Add requests for pre- and post-event content to your speaker agreements. Most speakers will be happy to oblige and may have existing content that can be modified. This might include articles that whet attendee appetites for the speaker’s session OR a webinar following your event where the speaker revisits and extends key takeaways from the session.

How might participants apply the gems from this session to improve business performance? Invest heavily in this for speakers who already wield strong influence within your industry and you’ll be amazed at how this extends your conference value runway and boosts loyalty.

About the Author

Donna Kastner helps event professionals to improve revenue performance through her consultancy, Enlighten 123. Locking in on critical needs for top targeted segments, she works with clients to fine-tune their content marketing strategies, grow loyalty, and ultimately, create raving fans who appreciate how events accelerate their journey to better.
What Is the Value of Connection?

I believe that the great majority of people hunger for connection with others. Without it, our lives suffer.

In addition, the need for connection with others is becoming increasingly important as we move to a world where people’s knowledge and expertise are a function of the networks—both face-to-face and online—they possess rather than the contents of their heads. In our work lives we are now spending more time learning socially than being trained in the classroom, and our meetings should provide the same relative opportunities.

And yet, when we hold a conference—an occasion when we bring together people with a common interest in a subject—we give low priority to the potential for connection with our fellow conferees. Our sessions are mostly broadcast-style speakers, with little or no opportunity for attendees to connect with each other. This is so even though we have an ideal requisite for directly benefiting from each other’s company—sharing a common interest!

Traditional conferences leave connection time to the breaks, meals, and socials. This is why so many people report that hallway conversations during breaks are the best parts of such meetings.

Our consistent demotion of connection to second-class status must be reversed if meetings are to effectively support the social learning that’s now essential for performing our jobs well. We need to provide opportunities for participants to connect and share in the sessions themselves.
This doesn’t mean turning sessions into speed-dating or adding irritating “icebreakers.” Instead, it means taking advantage of:

- Improvements in learning that result from actively engaging with others around content rather than listening to it or watching it.
- The rich and extensive knowledge and experience of participants in the room.
- Increased opportunities to meet like-minded peers via discussion of session content, ideas, and questions.

Active learning increases the quantity, quality, accuracy, and retention of knowledge. Active learning is inextricably entangled with connection; you can’t really learn from your peers without simultaneously learning about them. Because making connections is a powerful and important motivation for attending events, providing appropriate opportunities to connect during sessions is attractive, smoothing the way for the active learning that follows.

Connecting with peers during a session allows participants to access expertise and experience beyond what an expert at the front of the room can provide. Using participative techniques that uncover and develop useful connections to those with relevant knowledge, participants can discover and take full advantage of the collective wisdom in the room.

The good news is that a rich variety of simple and powerful participative techniques have been developed that allow us to turn passive, listening-only attendees into active learners at every session. Though the meeting industry has been slow to adopt these proven methods, it’s essential we work to make their use standard practice at our meetings if we are to continue to create events that are can’t-miss for today’s attendees.

---

**About the Author**

Adrian Segar is a meeting architect and event facilitator with over thirty years experience. He is the author of “Conferences That Work: Creating Events That People Love” and “The Power of Participation: Creating Conferences That Deliver Learning, Connection, Engagement, and Action”. Adrian is an energetic champion for participation-rich and participant-led meetings that uncover and satisfy actual attendee needs for relevant content, education, answers, connections, and engagement.
Why I Love the Trade Show Industry

Rachel Wimberly
President, Editor-in-Chief at Trade Show News Network

The Excitement of Stumbling Upon an Industry

Like most people in the trade show industry, I happily stumbled into being a part of it.

I was working for Reed Business Information (the ex-publishing arm that was part of the same company as Reed Exhibitions) writing on the film business for Variety magazine when I found out there was an editor position open for Tradeshow Week magazine.

The only trade shows I had ever been to were a doll show when I was a kid in Toledo, Ohio, and I went to E3 Expo (video gaming) every year to scout for new film possibilities. In other words, I didn’t know much about trade shows.

I accepted the position at Tradeshow Week magazine and plunged into the world of net square footage, drayage, pipe and drape and other funny trade show-centric terms.

Besides seeing the excitement of an entire world popping up on a showfloor virtually overnight, and then just as quickly disappearing, I quickly fell in love with the people in the trade show industry.

What can I say, besides they are the best group of people in the world to be in the same industry with. I have met some of the kindest, smartest, most interesting, fun people working in trade shows.

I am very fortunate to count many people I have met writing on trade shows in the past 10 years, now for Trade Show News Network (TSNN), as friends, and I look forward to every event I go to.
I also look forward to seeing what’s new and exciting on showfloors, especially ways in which exhibitors and shows are engaging attendees and transforming the experience.

I recently went to the EXHIBITOR Show in Las Vegas, which is for exhibit managers, and there were some really fun things on the showfloor that definitely grabbed my attention, such as Group Delphi’s augmented reality experience in which attendees looked through Google Glasses and saw butterflies flitting around or a panda bear playing.

In another booth for Global Experience Specialists, they had a virtual reality experience in which attendees could literally walk through an entire environment and experience what GES could do for its clients.

Besides attendee engagement, other ways the trade show industry is evolving are new showfloor designs that are challenging the old straight aisle format; bringing education onto the showfloor; and creating more of a sense of play, such as giant Jenga games and food trucks, to name a few.

In other words, I believe these are really interesting times in our industry, and I am so proud and honored to be a part of it every day.

About the Author
Rachel Wimberly is president and editor-in-chief of Trade Show News Network. Follow her on Twitter - @TSNN_Rachel.
In Events, You’ve Got to Keep Learning

There’s always going to be a show or event that conflicts with industry education. Then again, there’s an awful lot of education available year-round. While online is nice, we are in the people to people business. Learning in person is a whole different animal. We all know that synergies in person are not the same as online. It’s the same with education.

Most of us work in the face-to-face, business-to-business industry. Whether it’s meetings, events, exhibitions or conventions, it’s all about the person-to-person experience. We rack our brains, survey attendees (and hopefully, those who don’t attend our events), Boards, exhibitors, trade press and colleagues for relevant topics to make sure that our visitors have a great industry-related educational experience.

Why aren’t you doing the same? It’s important as an event professional to stay up to date on trends and continue your professional education. Do you want to move on from operations? Learn about sales, marketing and management. Take classes on new technology. There is so much new stuff out there — just for the taking!

If your annual association meeting is at an inconvenient time, or too expensive for you to attend, there are so many other options! Many of our industry associations (IAEE, PCMA, MPI, ESCA for example) have regional chapter meetings that provide amazing speakers on topical subjects, with a built in networking benefit. If your association does not offer something close by, another industry association may. Do a bit of research.
If they don’t, check out classes at your local community colleges and university extension programs. You may be surprised what they offer.

Online education is fine. Many people use it and love it. However, think of the distractions – emails popping in, phone calls, texts, project deadlines. It’s hard to stay focused.

In person learning is different. Your instructor(s) are there in person. There are other students to meet. How many of us have shared notes back and forth and made new friends because we sat next to each other during an educational session or full day program? Or learned something new from someone we were in a group exercise with?

Online does not offer unplanned interactions. You don’t get to meet people with the same, shared interests and have random conversations. In person education allows us to try out different types of studying (i.e.: workshops vs. panel discussions vs. hackathons) and operational things (like varied room sets) that may work for our own events (with a tweak or two).

**Take advantage of the education that is out there. You owe it to yourself, your colleagues and your clients.**

---

**About the Author**

Stephanie is a second-generation trade show enthusiast and began working trade shows at the tender age of ten. International Trade Information, Inc. assists exhibition organizers to increase their international presence - either by bringing in exhibitors and visitors, or by geo-adapting shows and taking them offshore. She has worked on exhibitions in the agricultural, apparel, consumer electronics, energy, food and beverage, high tech construction, baby, juvenile & maternity, renewables, shoe, and travel industries all over the world. She is also the US representative for the Shanghai New International Expo Centre, the largest privately owned venue in China.

Stephanie is a frequent domestic and global speaker and trainer for associations, private companies and exhibition industry associations. She was one of few CEM faculty certified for overseas instruction, teaching accredited classes for 9 years for the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) in the US, Mexico, Canada and China and is a former PCMA Best in Class speaker.

She blogs for UFI, the Global Association for the Exhibition Industry, on occasion for InfoSalons.com, and is a founder and moderator for #ExpoChat (on Twitter). Stephanie has also blogged for Trade Show Executive (TSE), International Meetings Review, Expo Magazine.
Better Safe Than Sorry

We’re getting to a point where facilities (hotels, convention centers) have adequate Wi-Fi, and that planners have an idea of their needs (mind you, we’re by no means fully there yet, but progress is being made). That’s a good thing. However, we need to take a deeper look at this, coupled with an always looming problem...security. Let me share a recent story that pinpoints this issue.

I was speaking at a conference this spring at a major city convention center (names will be left out of this). Upon arriving, I hopped on the facility’s open internet. Lots of bandwidth...I was a happy camper. But only for a moment.

Whenever I use public Wi-Fi, my next action is to turn on my personal VPN (what, you don’t have one?). And when I did, that wonderful, full bandwidth open internet completely stopped working. Totally blocked, because I was choosing to make sure that my devices were protected. Imagine moving into the home of your dreams, only to find out after you’ve moved in that you’re not allowed to lock any door...ever.
Does that make any sense to you? It sure doesn’t to me. The issue of your, and your attendees online safety and security is going to become a bigger and bigger issue in this era of always on connectivity. Sure, you can always turn off all of your devices...but how would you get your work done?

So as you continue to learn more about the Wi-Fi needs of your group, it’s time to add onto that some security awareness. Talk to your IT folks at your organization. Learn the questions to ask on a site visit about this. And perhaps it’s time for your risk management conversations to include internet security at events.

**Hate to put another task on your plate, but do you really want all of your doors perpetually unlocked?**

---

**About the Author**

James Spellos is the President of Meeting U., whose mission is to help people become more productive and comfortable with technology. Jim delivers over 150 seminars annually on how to use technology more efficiently. In 2015, Jim was named one of the Meeting Industry’s trendsetters by Meetings Focus magazine. He is a faculty member at New York University, teaching in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies since 1990. He has been honored with both their Award for Teaching Excellence and their Outstanding Service Award.
Speed vs. Quality
Every event planner wants to provide a warm, personal experience to their attendees. That’s pretty easy when you host 10, 50 or 100 people. But what happens when you have 500, 1,000, 5,000 attendees or more?

Suddenly, concierge service can feel like a daunting task - there’s just no way you can staff up to provide a “hotel-like” experience without an enormous budget.

Then again, not everyone wants personal service - sometimes they crave speed and efficiency along with quality. (There’s a reason some people prefer to check-in for a flight the day before rather than with an agent at the airport.)

Let Technology Help
With the right set of tools, you can service both the attendee persona’s, mentioned above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR HIGHLY-CAFFEINATED SPEED DEMONS CRAVE:</th>
<th>...WHILE YOUR HIGH-TOUCH ATTENDEES WANT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fast check-in: I can’t stand lines!</td>
<td>• Fast check-in: I can’t stand lines, either!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Autonomy: I can figure this out myself.</td>
<td>• Personal Service: Do you know who I am?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information: If you give me the right data, I’ll know what to do.</td>
<td>• Appreciation: Make me feel like you care that I’m here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tools to Consider**

For fast check-in, use kiosks and networked devices. (Printers, etc.) Now that we have iPads and smartphones, the cost of this type of workflow has dropped dramatically and can service thousands of attendees an hour, with the right configuration.

To serve both personas, these kiosks can be self-service or full-service.

Your self-service speed demons can check-in themselves using a QR code or some other unique identifier, confirm their attendee record, print a badge and go.

For your high-touch attendees, the kiosks can be used as a tool to speed the full-service process - as these attendees arrive, you can ask them to visually verify their profile on the kiosk before you print a badge and provide them with all of the accoutrements of attendance. (While answering their many questions.)

They will get the full “hotel-like” experience.

But what about throughout the event? How can you provide the same level of expected service to satisfy each persona type?

First of all, ask them.

During registration, simply ask folks which they prefer. (But let them know that either are available to them.) Try this:

We’re glad that you’ll be joining us. To help us better accommodate you, which method of check-in do you prefer on arrival? (Don’t worry, you can always change your mind when you arrive.)

- Self-Service (I’ll check-in myself, *thankyouverymuch.*)
- Full-Service (I might have questions...or something.)
Now, you’ll be able to plan accordingly, but you can also use this information to service them throughout the event.

Using unique identifiers (coded badges, personal beacons, RFID) and cloud services, you can easily identify these folks and provide them with the service they expect - think of it as “on-site CRM”.

For instance, when someone has a question, your staff can scan their badge or ping their beacon using a smartphone or tablet. Staff can immediately identify the attendee by persona along with background information. You can include anything in the profile that can help deliver a better experience.

Here’s an example of data that might be displayed after a badge scan:

Mr. Harry Potter [Exhibitor]
Role: Wizard  
Organization: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

- Prefers self-service check-in
- Allergic to gluten and ogres
- Likes owls
- Dislikes confined spaces

Of course, this is a playful example - your profiles can contain any information you like, from anywhere: your registration system, your association management system, your CRM system, etc.

Don’t make every attendee go through the same mechanical experience (That’s so last century…) when you can easily tailor the experience to their preferences and make them especially glad that they decided to participate.

---

About the Author

John Federico is the CEO & Co-founder of EventHero (eventhero.io) and Host of The #EventTech Podcast (eventtech.co). Find him on the internet everywhere as Gadgetboy.