

Using **Relationship Management** to **Optimize Attendee Marketing** and **Grow Event Revenue**

A WHITE PAPER FROM THE THOUGHT LEADERS AT



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Table of Contents:

Executive Summary.....	3
The Challenge.....	5
The Necessary Elements	8
— Building the Essential Database	
— Reaching the Target	
— Finding the Right Tools	
— Measuring the Results	
Conclusion	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Challenge: Increasing the Acquisition of Qualified Attendees

One of an event organizer's primary roles is growing quality attendance. This role includes developing a prospecting, marketing, and evaluation system. Research indicates a direct correlation between marketing efforts and attendance growth or decline.

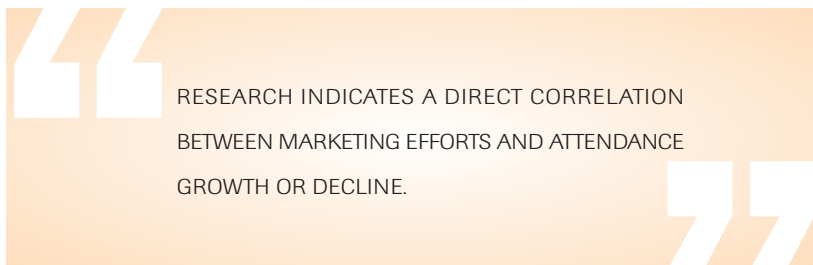
The Necessary Elements

Building the Essential Database: Understanding the Individuals

An event must provide something of value to attendees to experience growth. To successfully increase attendance, event organizers must truly understand their current attendee base — who the attendees are and what they look for before they make a decision to invest time and money to attend an event. This information is used to benchmark prospect lists. Building a comprehensive, qualified acquisition database is a necessary step in a successful attendee acquisition program.

Reaching the Target: Dynamic Marketing

Different messages appeal to different people. To effectively reach prospective attendees requires a marketing campaign that includes messages targeted to the segments identified in the event organizer's database. As the campaign unfolds, monitoring is necessary to measure effectiveness and identify the need for mid-campaign modifications.



Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data

Building and maintaining a database of highly qualified attendees and prospects and marrying this database to a dynamic, targeted marketing campaign is a huge undertaking if done manually by in-house staff. By utilizing a relationship management tool, event organizers can streamline these efforts and automate them to a large degree. These tools have the ability to organize files, query data, analyze and specify demographics, filter new data against established criteria, manage multi-tiered marketing campaigns, accommodate real-time campaign modifications, and track all results.

Measuring the Results: Vital, Value-added Benefits

A customer relationship management approach to attendance acquisition provides 360-degree results that event organizers can use to measure and to improve their events, making them even more attractive to future attendees. Some of the specific, measurable results event organizers can evaluate are attendee verification rates, new attendee acquisition, retention and repetitive business statistics, and exhibitor/sponsorship growth. Ultimately organizers gain more accurate attendee profiles, more qualified buyers, happier exhibitors, increased sponsorship dollars, more efficient data, a smoother registration process, and more time to spend on future strategies and messaging.

Conclusion

A fully integrated registration and attendee acquisition system can work from one common data element across all databases and shows. A relationship management solution integrates database qualification, warehousing, marketing campaign management, and analyses for the support of year-round attendance growth efforts.

THE CHALLENGE :

Increasing the Acquisition of Qualified Attendees

How can we grow our conference or exposition?

How do we identify target markets and reach our best prospects?

What factors influence people to attend a convention or event like ours?

What specific aspects of our event are currently driving attendance?

If our attendance is dropping, why is it happening?

Should we concentrate more on attracting new attendees or retaining past attendees?

How do we monitor our marketing campaigns and take action in real time?

These are some of the major questions that event organizers may ask on a regular basis as they try to convert prospects to attendees and encourage past attendees to return.

While event industry research shows strong or steady attendance growth over the last four years, event organizers often cite balancing the constant effort they expend and managing the costs they incur to maintain that growth as their greatest challenge. The recurring question they ask remains: What attendee marketing efforts will work to bring in more people to my programs or events without significantly increasing cost and workload?

Released in April 2007, the fifth annual AttendTrend® telephone survey of the best practices in attendance marketing¹ showed 96 percent of the 450 major event organizers surveyed in December 2006 reported their shows had consistent or growing attendance. Also, 53 percent of the shows with growing attendance said they spent more on attendee marketing. Of shows with attendance reductions, 70 percent reported they had cut their attendee marketing budgets.

Survey respondents also rated direct marketing as the most effective marketing tool. Additionally, 77 percent of growing shows reported using market research compared to 69 percent of shrinking shows.

Additional Web-only research from the fourth annual AttendTrend survey revealed strong comparative data. When event organizers were asked what tactics they emphasized in 2005 to achieve their marketing goals, the top answers were:

- Better overall strategy
- Better understanding of attendees/
audience research
- Better marketing technology/tools
- Better marketing integration
- Better e-marketing
- Better inside expertise

¹ The AttendTrend survey of trade show organizers is conducted jointly by the Frost Miller Group and Jacobs Jenner & Kent.

(Increasing the Acquisition of Qualified Attendees, continued)

In the course of marketing, managing and organizing their events, event organizers realize what a big job they have and the major responsibility entrusted to them to continually grow attendance. They know they can no longer rely on the usual marketing and recruitment methods to get the right people to their event.

But how do they get better data and a better understanding of their attendee audience? More importantly, once they have that data, how can they make it work for them?

In today's technology-dependent environment, many of those involved in attendance acquisition are searching out the products and services that can deliver the tools to get the job done. They know that to create a loyal attendee base, participants at an event must walk away feeling they have received the desired return on their investment (ROI).

“...53 PERCENT OF THE SHOWS WITH GROWING ATTENDANCE SAID THEY SPENT MORE ON ATTENDEE MARKETING.”

THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS

Building the Essential Database: Understanding the Individuals

The key to generating value for an event is better understanding the people currently attending. Identifying companies, the individuals from these companies, their interests, their decision-making capacities, their buying histories and their level of satisfaction with an event forms a basis for relationship marketing against which future prospects will be measured.

The first step to understanding attendee behavior is to understand that attendees don't see themselves as attendees at all. They see themselves as business professionals, association members, exhibitors, salespersons, speakers, buyers and decision makers. Most importantly, they see themselves as individuals making a valuable investment of their own professional time and money to attend a particular event. In doing so, they bring high expectations to their chosen meeting and they want value, benefits and a return on their investment.

“ THE FIRST STEP TO UNDERSTANDING ATTENDEE BEHAVIOR IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT ATTENDEES DON'T SEE THEMSELVES AS ATTENDEES AT ALL. ”

(Building the Essential Database: Understanding the Individuals, continued)

In a March, 2006 article for www.expoweb.com, Linda C. Chandler looked at how to create attendee-friendly shows. She wrote about offering incentives, creating special elements in the show, and using advisory panels to gain ideas and interaction. But her major point to show organizers is to “find out what attendees value.” Her advice for gaining this information included:

- Exploring all methods of gathering intelligence
- Taking pre- and post-show surveys and comparing expectations and evaluations
- Hiring a survey company to help mine your data and examine target segments
- Stressing the need to also survey no-shows and non-attendees from the previous year to find out why they didn't come

It may sound like a lot of work to build a comprehensive, qualified attendance acquisition database, and it can be. The results are well worth it. The chances are good that event organizers are already sitting on a great deal of the information needed to begin. For example, their computerized and perhaps even paper data files hold thousands of records and background information that identify the best ROI deliverables from past years of shows or events.

The key is dissecting the data to track, analyze and identify demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters and then weigh the importance of each factor. By doing this the organizer has a true picture of who these people are and what they're looking for.

By mining data, organizers can find:

- Which exhibitors received the most visitors and who they were
- What percentage of attendees and which individuals are annual attendees, every-other-year attendees or periodic participants
- What speakers or topics drew the biggest audience
- What most interested past attendees

Which, in turn, will lead the organizer to realize:

- Which exhibitors should be encouraged to return because they attract attendees
- Which attendees visited which exhibiting firms
- What topics or products, if given special promotion, could help attract returning or even new attendees
- Which individuals should see specifically targeted promotional information as a major incentive to register this year
- How this information can be used in marketing to get similar individuals to register

Reaching the Target: Dynamic Marketing

In the previous section we established that the key to building a successful marketing database is evaluating and knowing the individuals and companies currently attending an event and identifying possible new participants who share the same traits. Using this information to enhance marketing plans makes it possible to attract the right types of attendees and exhibitors; promote interaction and session attendance; drive show revenue; and generate the highest value for all participants.

While building a global database with all prospect and attendee information for all of an organizer's events is an important step to successful attendee acquisition, it is the effective marketing to this database that is the key. Once organizers understand their prospects and what matters to them, they can develop targeted marketing messages to segments of the list. For example:

- The number and quality of attendees, the relevance of the program sessions, the lead generation activities and follow up contact or sales support are important success measures for exhibitors and sponsors.
- The relevance of event sessions, the products and services of the exhibiting companies, the networking opportunities, the event's reputation, and the organizer's ability to incorporate standards and influence, are all vital measures of the show's value and success for the attendee.
- Measuring prior year's attendance through pre-registration tracking, marketing strategic results, taking inventory of session attendance, and computing show revenue determines the success levels for the event organizer.

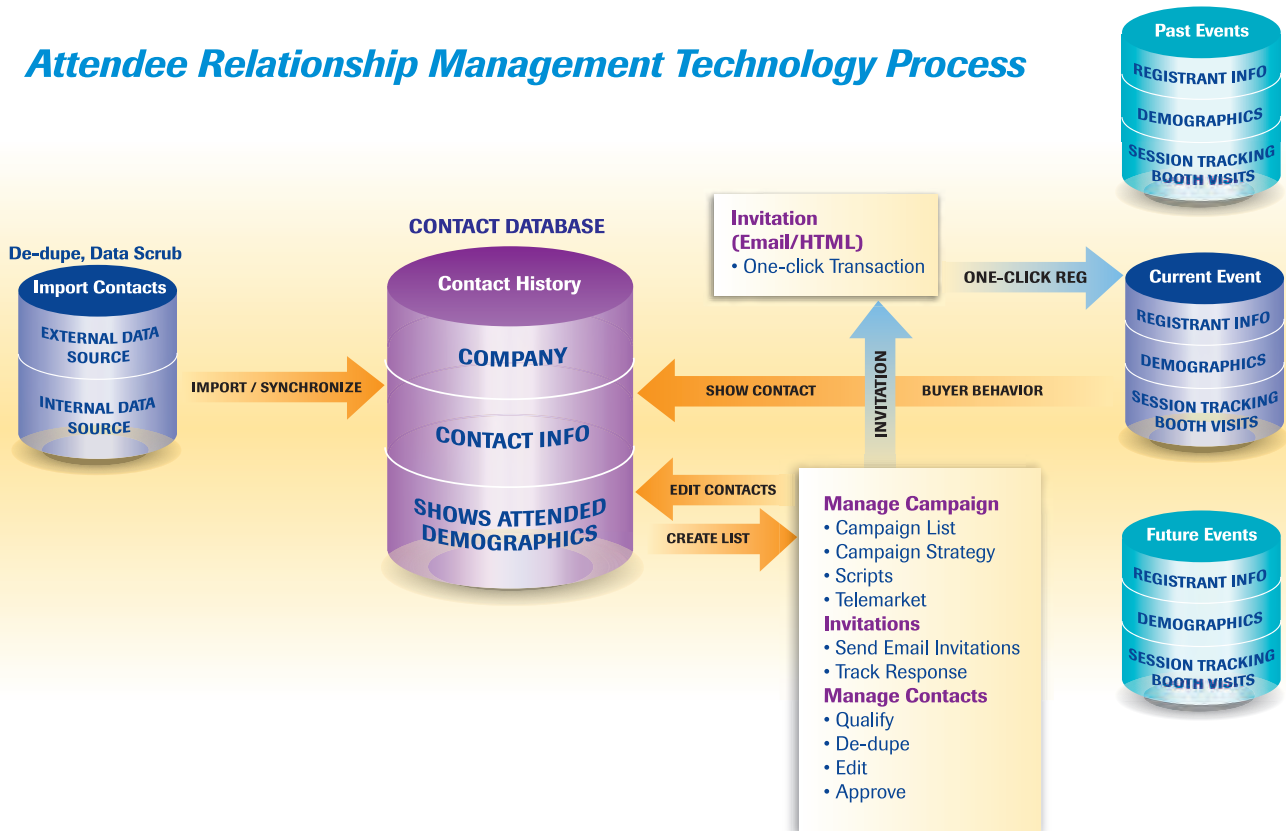
With a comprehensive, segmented prospect database and an attendance marketing campaign designed around these targeted audiences, the organizer is ready to initiate contact.

Once the campaign is launched, it's time for real-time analysis and evaluation. Are the target markets responding to the marketing messages as hoped? If not, the organizer will want to consider making modifications throughout the campaign to immediately improve results.

Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data

The role of an event marketer or organizer is to identify strong prospects, reach them with appropriate messages, and influence them to become registered attendees. To summarize, the organizer needs to truly understand their current attendance base to establish criteria for future marketing and to build a database of qualified prospects. They then compile their prospect database from various sources and measure that data against the defined criteria. Finally they build a dynamic marketing campaign targeted to the qualified segments of their attendee acquisition database. This marketing campaign may be modified throughout the marketing cycle based on continual evaluation and analysis.

Attendee Relationship Management Technology Process



(Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data, continued)

These efforts will be overwhelming if event organizers try to manually handle all of this in-house. Their jobs can be greatly simplified if they find and utilize the right technology tools to help streamline and simplify the event marketing process. In searching for those tools, they need to identify what they're looking for and what they want that product or service to provide.

When looking for help with the relationship management and event marketing process, event organizers should seek:

- A management tool to help organize and access the extensive files of data and attendee history they now have on computerized or paper records and future lists acquired
- A method of querying data files to track, analyze and specify demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters from past and current attendee databases
- The ability to filter prospect lists against these parameters to create a tightly targeted list of potential attendees who become the focus of the marketing campaign
- A multi-tiered marketing campaign with elements developed to appeal to specific targets
- A campaign management toolbox to support the organizer in identifying the appropriate campaign elements for the selected prospects which enables them to establish goals and establish target completion dates
- A tracking mechanism to gauge the effectiveness of each marketing tactic, documenting the campaign element that attracted each prospect
- The ability to make mid-campaign changes in real time to immediately improve the response rate
- A method of analyzing successes or disappointments to plan more effective future campaigns

(Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data, continued)

In addition, organizers need to focus specifically on some of the data management operations they want to accomplish by enhancing their technology capabilities. These would likely include:

Campaigns or Campaign Management: Conducting related audience acquisition activities to drive registrations or verify and retain known contacts and maintain lists for use in event marketing and promotion.

Contact Acquisition: Adding new companies or contacts to the attendance database and using de-duping and synchronization updating techniques to streamline lists and contact files.

Contact Management: Qualifying prospective attendees and companies through interviews and documentation reviews to verify and approve that they meet registration requirements.

Correlation or Decision Support: Using past buying patterns or attendance information from historical show information to offer up-sell suggestions to registrants during the purchase process.

Reporting: Determining and documenting the schedule, effectiveness and operational capabilities of the campaign in reports and analysis of past and current registration data.

Using this newly organized data, organizers have valuable information already recorded for developing future campaigns and designing new events that will be even more effective in attracting desired attendees. Finally—and most importantly—because they can attract the highest quality attendees, the organizer has a solid basis for asking and receiving top dollar from exhibitors and sponsors.

Measuring the Results: Vital, Value-added Benefits

Basically, the technology solution the event organizer is seeking would provide them with a centralized global database with all of their prospect and attendee information for all of their events and shows stored and accessible in one place. They also need to be able to measure the specific benefits and advantages they hope to receive from implementing this technology, such as:

- Increased attendee verification rates through better data analysis and scrubbing, providing cleaner, more reliable data and reducing the need to verify attendance after the event
- Increased attendance through sales and marketing efforts with messaging focused on both past attendees and new, interested prospects
- Increased attendance through the ability to change marketing messages on the fly after measuring what messaging is and isn't working
- Improved retention and repetitive business from linking attendees with events and services that closely match their interests
- Reduced registration time and effort onsite at the event because stored data is more current and accurate
- Increased income by ensuring proper registration fees are charged by attendee and type
- Reduced labor costs through more automated contact management functions
- Growth and retention of exhibitor and sponsorship base
- Premium booth rental and sponsorship rates for exhibitors and sponsors, justified through strict marketing to and acquisition of qualified attendees
- Maximized opportunities to identify and cross-market to attendees and exhibitors across multiple events
- Greater historical insights about attendees and exhibitors at all events, with attendee behavior information that covers session and purchase choices and exhibitors visited

What are the Ultimate Gains?

- More accurate attendee profiles and messaging to ensure marketing success
- More qualified buyers lead to happier exhibitors and more sponsorship dollars
- More efficient data results with less errors and smoother registration processes
- More time to spend on strategy and messaging to attendees by eliminating time spent on scrubbing and de-duping databases

“ A CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE ACQUISITION PROVIDES 360-DEGREE RESULTS THAT EVENT ORGANIZERS CAN USE TO MEASURE AND TO IMPROVE THEIR EVENTS. ”

CONCLUSION

A well-developed attendee relationship management program is a fully integrated registration and attendee acquisition system. It can work from one common data element across all databases and shows. Event management can access and analyze data from an attendee or company perspective and take real-time action with this information. Attendees can enjoy more options and experience a more efficient and error-free process in attending an event.

With an attendee relationship management program, event organizers can:

- Increase quality attendance at events
- Grow and retain exhibitor and sponsorship bases
- Justify pricing for exhibitors and sponsors through strict marketing and acceptance of qualified show attendees
- Maximize opportunities to identify and cross-market to attendees and exhibitors across multiple events
- Gain greater historical insights and trend information about attendee behavior at events within a particular industry segment with enhanced data on session and purchase choices and exhibitors visited
- Identify attendees who attend one event and match profiles with others who attend multiple events
- Collect and track attendee history annually and share findings with exhibitors to add value to the desired ROI of the exhibitors
- Access a comprehensive marketing database that supports all shows within a given show group or market
- Promote multiple products by offering up-sell selections to select attendees and/or exhibitors based upon demographics and needs

THE EXPERIENT SOLUTION :

Experient Attendee Customer Relationship Management (ACRM™)

To help with attendee management concerns, Experient provides a suite of services designed to facilitate an attendee's entire event experience — from communication through pre-event marketing to convenient advance and onsite registration to easy-to-use housing and travel arrangements and more. Experient's ACRM enables event organizers to focus their marketing efforts specifically on the prospects most interested in a given event. ACRM provides the tools needed to support effective, targeted campaigns that are immediately measurable and deliver a higher rate of return. This targeted marketing process creates greater success for all participants in a show from this year to the next and beyond.

ACRM is a freestanding, full-time online attendee customer relationship management system which:

- Tracks, analyzes and specifies demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters
- Weighs the importance of each factor
- Filters lists against specified needs to generate tightly targeted lists of potential attendees

ACRM is also your campaign management toolbox to:

- Identify appropriate campaign elements for selected prospects
- Establish goals and target completion dates
- Track effectiveness of each marketing tactic
- Document campaign elements that attract each prospect
- Make mid-campaign changes to immediately improve the response rate
- Plan more effective future campaigns

Key 24/7 System Functions of ACRM

Once event organizers start using Experient ACRM, they'll realize the tremendous value of the greater flexibility and power that this new customer relationship management system provides. For example, because ACRM is separate from the registration system, it doesn't have to be taken offline when the event goes onsite.

Rather, ACRM is available online 24/7, providing a round-the-clock prospect database and improved continuity with no delays or interruptions in active campaigns. Organizers have a reliable stream of highly interested and well-qualified event attendees with information that is scrubbed, error-checked and de-duped to ensure a higher quality of prospect information for future events.

A synopsis of these major ACRM system functions includes:

- Central attendee development and acquisition, available 365 days a year and 24 hours a day
- Complete campaign management including e-mail, direct mail, fax and telemarketing
- Powerful import, export and de-duping capabilities
- Elaborate query and data management tools organized by individual or company
- Comprehensive analytics and reporting on campaign effectiveness
- Real-time integration of new registrants into the database

ABOUT EXPERIENT:

Seamless, Memorable Event Experiences

Experient is the cutting-edge business source with the technology tools providing strategic solutions to successfully integrate meetings for the event industry. From concept to completion, Experient helps deliver exceptional experiences for attendees, exhibitors, sponsors and internal stakeholders.

With a vision to perfect the event experience and a mission to help bring people together to drive business, Experient has joined the three leading event services companies — Conferon, ExpoExchange and ITS — to form one centrally managed resource for full-service, customized registration, housing, event management and lead retrieval support.

In 2007, Experient helped create memorable experiences for more than 3,000 events ranging in size from 250 to more than 100,000 persons. Experient has the unique capability to combine knowledge, resources, processes and technologies to deliver the value-added attendee development application solutions to create a perfect total event experience.

For more information on ACRM and our other meeting and event solutions, please contact us.

Visit www.experient-inc.com

Phone 866-516-1461