Making It Easier on Attendees
How to streamline the experience before, during and after an event

by Garrett Huddy | September 01, 2015

This should go without saying, but planners should make it easy on people to register for an event, get what they need on-site and provide feedback on their experience. To that end, heed the following advice from Garrett Huddy, content manager for Boston-based Attend, an event management software company.

**Easy Registration**
- Use online registration forms. Don't force registrants to call, mail or email an RSVP form to confirm their spot.

- Make your form simple and brief. Potential registrants might abandon a form if it is overly long or complicated. Just collect the most basic information you require.

- Allow group registrations. This will help boost registration numbers by encouraging colleagues to sign up together, rather than each individually completing the form. Group registration should be incorporated within the standard registration process.

- Be sure payment processing is integrated into your form; sending registrants to a third-party payment site might scare them away.

- Consider adding a "who's coming" list of confirmed registrants. This allows your invitees to find friends
or business contacts, which can boost registration numbers.

• Make it easy for registrants to help you promote your event and build excitement. Include social-share buttons so they can post your event to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networks.

**Smooth Check-In**

• Be sure to have enough check-in stations to accommodate the number of registered guests. A good rule of thumb is one station per 100 registrants.

• Use check-in software or an app. Using spreadsheets (either printed or on a computer) slows down the process and can compromise your attendance data.

• Test the venue's Internet connection in advance. If your venue is outdoors or the Wi-Fi connection is spotty, use a check-in app with an offline mode.

• Designate a station for special circumstances, manned by staff who can troubleshoot. This will keep lines moving quickly and prevent your regular check-in staff from having to deal with complex issues or questions.

• If your event allows walk-in attendees, be prepared for them. Make sure you can quickly and easily register and collect payment from walk-ins.

• Print name badges on-site. Preprinting wastes time in the badge-organization process and during check-in, as staff has to hunt down the right name tag for each guest. Printing on demand for each guest takes seconds and saves time and energy.

• Make it hard to get lost. Remember that your attendees might not be familiar with the venue. Be sure you have plenty of clear signage directing them to the registration station from any possible entrance.

**Fast Feedback**

• Send a post-event survey via email no more than a few days after the event. That's when the experience is still fresh in attendees' minds, and results will be more accurate.

• Keep the survey short, and make sure to let respondents know how long it should take (certainly less than 10 minutes).

• Offer an incentive for completing the survey. A small reward, such as a discount code, free trial offer or contest entry, will dramatically increase participation.
• Get additional feedback from social media. In addition to thanking your attendees on your social profiles, encourage them to discuss their thoughts on the event.