

# REASONS TO USE ONLINE REGISTRATION

- **Eliminate Data Entry.** Traditional forms of registration rely on fax or mail in paper form. Event organisers must then manually enter all the data from paper into a computer spreadsheet or database. The potential for errors is significant and the time it takes to manually organise the data can be excessive. With online registration, the registrant enters their information into an online form. When the registration is submitted through this form, it is automatically organised and stored in an online database that the organiser can immediately access, anywhere, anytime.
- **No deciphering messy handwriting or distorted faxes.** Most faxes are hand-written and can sometimes be messy or illegible, especially if several different registration forms must be completed by the registrant. Deciphering them can lead to errors or wasted time following up with registrant to ensure information is correct. Online registration eliminates this problem. Responses are typed in to the online form and submitted instantly into the database.
- **Less printing.** Online registration means that you can present your entire event information package online. There is no need to pay for the printing of registration forms or expensive information packages whilst still presenting a professional and marketable product.
- **Reduce errors.** Fax or mail registrations have the potential risk of errors when data is manually transferred from one form to another. Such errors can happen either inadvertently or due to illegible or inconsistent registrations. With online the registrant is empowered to complete their registration form which is then submitted and stored directly within the database. There is no opportunity for someone else along the line to misread the data and enter it incorrectly.
- **Automatic event confirmation.** Once a registrant submits their information through the online registration form, the system automatically generates a confirmation email that confirms the registration to both the registrant and the organiser. This email can also contain other important information the organiser may want registrants to know once they have registered. Fax and mail registration confirmations are delayed as the organiser must manually process the registration, check availability and then manually create a confirmation email or letter. This is a highly inefficient use of an event organiser's time.
- **Manage event capacity by applying automatic registration limits.** Often, you want to limit the number of attendees to an event. With the traditional paper method there was no easy way to do this. Faxes might still be coming in when you had reached your event limit and then you would have to contact those registrants to let them know that you couldn't process their registration because the event was full. With online registration, however, you can set the online form so that it limits the number of registrants to a particular event, or even to seminars and workshops within an event. Once the limit has been reached the form will not allow any more registrations and it will notify potential registrants that the registration limit has been reached. Obviously, you can also build some leeway into your limit to allow for your estimate of no-shows.
- **Real-time credit card processing gives certainty.** When you use real-time online credit card processing, you get more of a commitment from participants. Within a few seconds they know if the transaction has been approved and you have the security of knowing you have the fees. Otherwise you may be waiting for a cheque and, in the meantime, you may have to put other registrants on a wait list until you know for sure that a registrant is attending.

- **Data inconsistencies are eliminated.** With manual registration systems, information may be spread around in different folders, filing systems or different people may have different versions of attendee lists on their computers or database. This creates a real potential for inconsistencies, errors and headaches for both you and your customers. With online registration the information is held in one central database that can be accessed by authorised organisers from anywhere and at anytime. Any changes or updates to the system are done automatically. Everyone sees and has access to the same information.
- **Built in logic.** An online registration form can prevent people from making invalid or conflicting selections, and results in more accurate and complete data. For example, if someone leaves an important section blank and tries to submit the form, the built in logic of the form can create a message asking the person to fill that section in before continuing. Similarly, if a registrant must choose between one option or another, the form can eliminate the possibility of the registrant choosing both options. This is not possible with fax or mail registrations.
- **Totals are always correct.** Online forms automatically total all costs and fees associated with each individual registrant and with the registered group as a whole. You can be assured of getting the correct total for every registration.
- **Better Data integrity.** A common challenge in event planning is maintaining your data so that what you need is stored in one place, not on several different computers, in filing cabinets or on various desks throughout the office. Online registration means all your data is located in one database, making it consistent and up-to-date at all times.
- **Increased productivity.** Since your data is consistent and automatically updated all the time, your resources (people) are free to work on other important tasks in the planning and implementation of your event rather than spending time on manually entering data or following up on incomplete registrations and payments.
- **Lower printing costs.** Instead of paying for a detailed glossy event brochure and mailing it out, online registration provides an effective marketing tool that will direct potential participants to register immediately and include the information they need about the event.
- **Growing acceptance of online registration.** Online registration is an increasingly popular way of registering for all kinds of events. More and more, people are beginning to expect it as an alternative, if not the primary method of registering for an event.
- **Easy of access to sort and store information in one online database.** You can access and sort the information online, or you can automatically download it to a spreadsheet, making it easy to create mailing lists or print name tags or whatever you need.
- **Credit cards can be processed online.** Online credit card processing allows people registering for an event to process their own transactions. This eliminates the need for organisers to individually process each transaction and following up on declined or insufficient payments.
- **Keep stakeholders up to date.** Event organisers can easily keep event suppliers and other stakeholders up to date by using online reports. Specific online reports can be created for caterers, DJ's, badge printers etc. As an example, when participants have special dietary or seating requests, an online report can provide the venue with the exact requirements for each registrant to ensure catering and seating is fully accurate.

- **Online registration is always open.** With online registration attendees are able to register anytime, day or night. This is especially important when dealing with people from different time zones or for international events. Information is available online and participants can make payment and receive their confirmation email anywhere and at anytime.
- **Easily notify participants of changes.** Online registration forms require an email address from the participant. As soon as they submit their information they are sent a confirmation email. If there are any changes or important announcements it is easy to send out group email broadcasts or SMS messages to notify participants of changes and updates.
- **Reduce labour costs.** Online registration requires much less manual labour than conventional registration methods. Less phone calls, faxes, data entry, copying, mailing etc.
- **Data can be imported into other software packages.** You are able to download the data from an online registration system into a format that is easy to read and compatible with your requirements. This means that you will not have to re-enter the data to merge it with your current database or to manage it in other programs.
- **Status reports to clients.** Event organisers often need to prepare reports for their clients to keep them informed of what is happening with registration and revenue. This information is easily accessible and always current with online registration. The event organiser can even give their client a secure login and password with read only access so they can view the status of the event without interfering with the system.
- **No design/programming required.** There is no need to be able to design your own database, spreadsheet or online form as the online system provides a simple to use facility to create your event. Your account manager will provide you with all the training and support required to ensure your registration system meets all your requirements and you may also use the online training manual at any time for assistance.
- **Changes on-the-fly.** Changes such as dates, times, prices or other details can be made to the online form after registration has begun. With a printed form, once it's printed and mailed you can't change it.
- **Send data to other suppliers.** Since registration data is stored in a database, it can be exported to a file and suppliers such as printing companies can then utilise the information in their systems to print name tags and lists.
- **Easily keep track of collected and outstanding revenue.** With real time online reporting you always know how much revenue has been collected, if any credit cards were declined and which participants still need to mail their cheques. The event reconciliation report provides you with an online report showing income and expenditure that is accessible at any time.
- **Data can be more secure.** When you are using an online registration system, you can be assured that the data is safely stored and backed up to remain secure. The data is stored and accessible for up to 7 years.
- **Ability to ask survey questions or gather additional data.** With online registration you can include additional survey type questions during the registration process to provide useful information about registrants for future planning and marketing. Such data can be used to provide demographic information to sponsors or to help with post event evaluation and follow-up.
- **Drive traffic to your website.** Many organisations spend a lot of time and money trying to get people to go to their website. Online registration is a perfect way to get people familiar with your site. Once they are there, they can register and access all of the other information you have.

- ◆ **To keep up with your competitors.** To remain competitive it is important to meet and exceed the expectations of participants and other competitors. Almost everyone is using online registration and event participants are becoming more and more time poor and need a fast and effective solution.
- ◆ **Empower registrants to take control.** It is possible for event participants to change their registration details after making their original registration without having to contact the event organiser. This makes things easier for both the participant and the organiser.
- ◆ **Build an email database of participants.** Using online registration will automatically build an email and contact information database. You can use this information for marketing your business or your next event.
- ◆ **Build your brand.** Online forms can be branded to exactly match your website and corporate presentation. To build a strong brand, you need exposure to the market and online registration makes that possible.
- ◆ **Stay in control.** Online registration is the solution to managing your registrations and ensuring the accuracy and integrity of information. Organisers have better control of the registration process and can focus their attention and productivity on ensuring the event is a success.
- ◆ **Post event evaluation.** Following up at the conclusion of the event is an important task for event organisers. Online systems store important information for research and evaluation for future planning and marketing.