



Bring an “A” Game to the Planning Process

“a2zFloorplan cut the booth allocation process down to 1/8 the time we previously spent on it. We didn’t have to chase exhibitors down. We didn’t have to scrub the database and we didn’t have to answer many questions.”

—Anita Jentzen, CMP, CMM, president, Detail Planners

168

exhibitor management man hours eliminated

93% ↓

time on compiling directory

88% ↓

time on booth allocation

CHALLENGES:

Detail Planners handles the conference and trade show logistics for a government client. The client’s event attracts about 1,400 attendees and over 200 exhibitors. For years, a volunteer committee managed the annual event in addition to their “day” jobs. Allocating exhibit space and collecting information for the exhibitor directory were particularly arduous tasks. Booths were assigned during a 3 to 5 day marathon session immediately prior to the event using a PDF document passed from exhibitor to exhibitor. Staff spent countless hours collecting exhibitor information and editing it for the directory.

SOLUTION:

A year after beginning her firm’s tenure as the management company and experiencing a full event cycle, Anita Jentzen, CMP CMM and president of Detail Planners, began searching for ways to streamline the event management process. She selected a2zFloorplan, a real-time (online) floor plan management tool, to reduce the amount of time spent on booth space allocation and make the procedure more exhibitor-friendly. She also used a2z’s solution to automate the information collection process for the exhibitor directory. Rather than scrambling to chase down the exhibitor profile details from the exhibitor contacts themselves, Jentzen made the exhibitor profile mandatory in the a2z tool. Exhibitors were required to enter their company description into the a2z content management system, leaving only the polishing process to Jentzen’s team.

RESULTS:

The adoption of the a2z software platform resulted in measurable gains for the event management team as well as the exhibitors:

- **Improved customer experience:**

Exhibitors who frequently complained about the previous booth allocation procedure as being unfair, time-consuming and lacking in transparency were pleased with the changes. a2z’s solution provided exhibitors with a new level of

confidence in the management organization. It also placed more control over the processes into their hands—a benefit they much appreciated.

- ***Increased productivity:***

The time required to manage the booth allocation and selection process—approximately 180 man-hours—was reduced to 12 hours. The time devoted to compiling the exhibitor directory, an estimated 300 man-hours for obtaining, editing and scrubbing the data, was reduced to 40 to 50 hours. “The a2z platform is like a human being doing the work of 1 or 2 people and giving accurate information every time,” Jentzen says.

- ***Efficient reporting:***

As with most government engagements, the management contract for the event required that Jentzen’s team provide a number of post-event reports including exhibitor descriptions, booth sizes, booth locations, price paid per booth and classifications of exhibiting companies (women-owned businesses, etc.). Using a2z’s reporting capabilities, the information was compiled quickly, easily and correctly.

- ***Reallocation of management resources:***

The Detail Planners team was less concerned about the amount of time they spent on managing the event and more concerned with the use of the time. “It’s not about the man hours. We will spend as many man hours as necessary to get the job done,” Jentzen says. However, “the time we saved on the floor plan was used to make any last minute conference agenda changes. If we hadn’t had that additional time, we never would have been ready when the event opened,” she adds.

NEXT STEPS:

a2z’s platform allowed Detail Planners, a third-party event management company, to perform more efficiently and provide more value to their client. They have designated a2z as a preferred partner when their events involve exhibits and they recommend the platform to other planners and government agencies. Floor plan automation is listed as one of Detail Planner’s best practices when applying for new contracts with other government agencies—an ongoing process for the firm. **“a2z made us look like rock stars. In this industry, you have to bring your ‘A’ game, including your best tools,” Jentzen says.**