



Organise Conferences With Ease Using Event Management Software

Planning and managing a conference can be made easier from using a sophisticated event management software solution. These packages enable conference managers to effectively manage the whole process, from delegate invitations, registration and payment, to supplier management and post event reporting. Taking advantage of the benefits of technology means that conferences can be organised more efficiently, with lower cost and with an increase in delegate attendance and satisfaction.

Organising a conference can be a daunting and time consuming exercise. Whether it's a small one day event for 20 delegates or a huge three day event in Earls Court, the general process and common problems are the same.

So what are the stages of planning a conference?

1. Booking a venue
2. Sending invites to a targeted list of prospect delegates
3. Organising and booking all the resources, such as catering, collateral printing, promotional items, A&V etc
4. Dealing with presenters and guest speakers
5. Taking registrations
6. Taking payment
7. Sending reminder emails to delegates
8. Printing badges
9. Organising staff on the day
10. Managing the budget throughout

This is an extremely basic and simplified list to indicate the general check list event managers must consider. This process can start from 6 months before an event or even as long as 12-18 months before for really large, national events. Managing all these steps can be extremely complicated and it can be very easy for event managers to make major mistakes.

To avoid costly errors, and to ensure conferences are organised in an efficient manner, many event professionals are looking to employ the use of an event management software solution. These solutions have the tools and capabilities to manage and track activities throughout the whole of the event and conference planning process, as well as the activities carried out as part of the event follow up (such as post event surveys and the creation of reports for intelligent analysis).

Taking the above steps in planning an event, here is how an event software solution can help:



1. Booking a venue

Control to an event manager is key; whether it's a meeting/conference room in your own office or a larger external venue, event software can help by ensuring the allocation has been made and that payment has been taken. For more complex conferences which require multiple rooms across multiple days, event solutions include a comprehensive planning, resource and scheduling venue software tool. A highly configurable and fully customisable function sheet and a multiple calendar feature which will give you the ability to manage your resources and venue from one central and flexible application. This helps to simplify the normally complex process of booking and managing the venue.

2. Sending invites to a targeted list of prospects

The event manager may know the exact number and names of the delegates they are targeting or in some cases they might have been told to invite a certain demographic (based on relationship, job title, location etc). Managing the selection of delegates to invite is made easy with event software, since it is able to be integrated their CRM package. Meaning that all corporate records and data can be accessed easily and records automatically updated, so others looking at that record will know that the contact have been invited and whether or not they have registered and paid.

Event software also comes with sophisticated email marketing tools. Event managers are able to easily build and filter a selection of targeted delegates from their CRM and put these into a custom-made, HTML email which can be sent out. From the event management software platform, event managers will be able to track opens, clicks and other recipient activity.

3. Resource management

Event software will come with a Resource Management Module which is where event managers can track and control all the resources needed to manage an event. External suppliers can be given access to this module so that they can keep track themselves, rather than dealing with the event manager directly. For example, caterers can be given access so they can easily see current, up-to-date information on delegate numbers and any specific dietary requirements. Giving them direct access to this module in the event software means that event managers can deal with one less person and one less phonecall! Mistakes are also reduced since a layer of communication has been removed.

Resource modules also contain multiple and powerful calendars enabling conference managers to manage numerous resources on these various calendars; this is all accessible from one central location ensuring all updates/amendments/additions are recorded in real time. From the information collated through this Resource Module, event mangers can run bespoke reports providing details such as the number of pods available, number of brochures etc. Event managers will no longer have to juggle multiple spreadsheets across multiple calendars which will ensure fewer errors.



4. Dealing with presenters and guest speakers

Event software can also manage this process. Emails can be scheduled automatically to remind guest speakers about the event and to request certain information such as a bio for the marketing collateral and presentation slides for delegates. Speakers can also be given direct access to the Resource Management Module, where they can manage and update their own profile, and upload materials and other items. Again, this takes away the involvement of the event manager, freeing them up to work on more strategic activities.

5. Taking registrations

A convenient way to take registrations is online. This suits both delegates and event managers. It is a fast, effective method and is increasingly becoming the standard method of event registration. But there are good and bad ways of taking registrations online. Ideally event managers should want to direct prospect delegates to their own website, where a specially created page, with the branding of the company and the event have been included. Taking registrations on your own website plays an important part in increasing delegate sign up rates - delegates will be more trusting and more likely to sign up if it's on the same site, whereas taking them to an external site may cause trust issues. It's also important to be able to amend the information requested at the point of registration. Some events will just require a name, telephone number and email address, whereas others may require more detailed information. Event software can easily handle these changes.

6. Taking payment

Having a registration and payment process that is easy, straightforward and efficient is vitally important if event managers want to ensure a high level of delegate attendance. Event software gives event managers the ability to take payments online, via a secure web portal - giving delegates an easy, trustworthy method of payment. Since the event management software can be integrated with the back end finance application, payment can be easily accepted, records updated and receipts sent out automatically, without any intervention from the event manager or accounts payable staff. If payment isn't taken online, the event software can automatically sent out invoices to the delegate. For an even smoother payment transaction event solutions will include connectors allowing seamless integration with your internal finance system.

7. Sending reminders to delegates

The email marketing tool included in the event software can have emails created which can be scheduled to automatically be sent to all delegates. These can be reminder emails, or emails with updates or event amendments. They can be created in advance and then forgotten about as the event software will manage the rest.

8. Printing badges

The production of delegate name badges is a small part of hosting a conference, but is one that can be extremely time consuming for event managers and can cause real issues on the day of the conference if any mistakes have been made. Event software packages will come with easy to use, effective badge production tools. Not only will the creation of custom badges be easier, but the



section of delegate names will be done automatically since the event software will be integrated with the CRM - so it'll know exactly what names and details to print.

9. Organising staff on the day

The effective Resource Management Module enables all staff to be accurately managed - it will be easy for event managers to delegate activities to individuals and log it in this Resource Module. Staff can access this module anytime and from any location (via the Internet) so they will always be aware of what their responsibilities are and where they need to be.

10. Managing the budget throughout

Event software is an excellent tool for managing finances and budget. All costs can be taken via the integration with the finance system. These can then be easily tracked and monitored, with alerts to warn the event manager if there are any issues or if costs are rising fast. Reports can be instantly created, with a click of a button - useful for event update meetings and if event managers need to compile any statistics for senior management.

So we can see how event software can revolutionise the stages of planning a conference. Without event management software, a lot of these tasks would be manually created, tracked and organised via huge spreadsheets. There would be high chances of errors and mistakes and the whole process would be time consuming, stressful and ineffective for the conference manager and those associated with the event.

Resource Box

For more information on [event management software](#) solutions, talk to evocos. In the past year alone evocos event & delegate management software solution has created over 7000 events, managed approximately 75,000 delegates and has taken over 50,000 online.

Incorporating integrated reporting and analysis tools as well as social media, email marketing, website integration, registration, online payment, badge production, resource management and event surveys, evocos is one of the most comprehensive event management software solutions on the market today.

The evocos [event software](#) team ensures you are able to seamlessly manage your events; gaining huge cost and efficiency benefits.