

Achieving Better Attendee Acquisition for Your Events

A WHITE PAPER ON

**Growing Event Revenue through
Optimized Attendee Marketing**



experient[™]

2500 Enterprise Parkway East
Twinsburg, OH 44087
866-516-1461

DECEMBER 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS :

The Challenge: Increasing the Acquisition of Qualified Attendees	3
The Necessary Elements:	5
• Building the Essential Database: Understanding the Individuals	
• Reaching the Target: Dynamic Marketing	
• Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data	
• Measuring the Results: Vital, Value-added Benefits	
The Solution: Experient ACRM	9
About Experient	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY :

The Challenge: Increasing the Acquisition of Qualified Attendees

As an event organizer, one of your principle roles is growing quality attendance at your events. 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

Your event must offer something of value to attendees to experience growth. To successfully increase attendance, you must truly understand your current attendee base—who they are and what they look for before making 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 your database. As the campaign unfolds, monitoring is necessary to measure effectiveness and reveal 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, you 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 you can measure and use to improve your event, making it even more attractive to future attendees. Some of the specific, measurable results you can look at are attendee verification rates, new attendee acquisition, retention and repetitive business statistics, and exhibitor/sponsorship growth. Ultimately you 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.

The Solution: Experient ACRM

Experient offers a technology solution that performs the functions necessary to build a customer relationship management solution to attendee acquisition. Experient ACRM™ is a fully integrated registration and attendee acquisition system that can work from one common data element across all databases and shows. Experient ACRM integrates database qualification, warehousing, marketing campaign management, and analyses for 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?

Do these questions seem familiar to you?

As an event organizer, these are some of the major questions that you may ask yourself on a regular basis as you 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, show organizers often cite the constant efforts they expend and costs they incur to maintain that growth as their greatest challenges. The recurring question asked by event organizers remains: What attendee marketing efforts will work to bring in more people to my program or event?

Released in April 2007, the fifth annual AttendTrend telephone survey of the best practices in attendance marketing showed 96 percent of the 450 major show 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. Market research was used more among growing shows with 77 percent of growing shows citing market research compared to 69 percent of shrinking shows¹.

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

If you market, manage and organize events, you already realize what a big job you have and the major responsibility entrusted to you to continually grow attendance. You know you can no longer rely on the usual marketing and recruitment methods to get the right people to your show.

But how do you get better data and better understanding of your attendee audience? And once you have that data, how can you make it work for you?

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

The Necessary Elements:

Building the Essential Database: Understanding the Individuals

The key to generating value for your event is better understanding the people currently attending. Identifying companies, the individuals from these companies, their interests, their decision-making capacities and their buying histories and their level of satisfaction with your event forms a base for relationship marketing against 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—yours. In doing so, they bring high expectations to your meeting and they want value, benefits and a return on their investment.

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. But the results are well worth it. The chances are good that you are already sitting on a great deal of the information you need to begin. For example, your computerized and perhaps even paper data files hold thousands of records and background information that identify the best ROI deliverables from past years of your shows or events.

The key is dissecting the data to track, analyze and specify demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters and then weigh the importance of each factor. By doing this you truly understand who these people are and what they're looking for.

By mining your data, you 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 you 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 the event and identifying possible new participants who share the same traits. Using this information to enhance your 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 of your prospect and attendee information for all of your events stored in one place is an important step to successful attendee acquisition, effectively marketing to this database is vital. Once you understand your prospects and what matters to them, you can develop targeted marketing messages to segments of your 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 mark the success levels for the event organizer.

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

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

Finding the Right Tools: Relationship Management Technology and Actionable Data

Your job as an event marketer or manager is to identify strong prospects, reach them with appropriate messages, and influence them to become registered attendees. So far we've talked about the need to truly understand your current attendance base to establish criteria for future marketing and to build a database of qualified prospects. We've talked about compiling the database from various sources available to you and measuring that data against the defined criteria. Finally we talked about building a dynamic marketing campaign targeted to the qualified segments of your attendee acquisition database. This marketing campaign may be modified throughout the marketing cycle based on continual evaluation and analysis.

These efforts will be overwhelming if you try to manually handle all of this in-house. Your job can be greatly simplified if you find and utilize the right technology tools to help streamline and simplify your event marketing process. In searching for those tools, you need to identify what you're looking for and what you want that product or service to provide. You basically are seeking:

- A management tool to help you organize and access the extensive files of data and attendee history you now have on computerized or paper records and future lists acquired
- A method of querying your data files to track, analyze and specify demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters from your past and current attendee database
- The ability to filter your prospect lists against these parameters to create a tightly targeted list of potential attendees who become the focus of your campaign.
- A multi-tiered marketing campaign with elements developed to appeal to specific targets

- A campaign management toolbox to support you in identifying the appropriate campaign elements for the selected prospects and enable you to establish goals and 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
- Analysis capabilities to plan more effective future campaigns

In addition, you need to focus specifically on some of the data management operations you want to accomplish by enhancing your 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 utilizing 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, you have valuable information already recorded for making future campaigns and designing new events that will be even more effective in attracting desired attendees. Finally—and most importantly—because you can attract the highest quality attendees, you have a solid basis for asking and receiving top dollar from speakers, exhibitors and sponsors.

Measuring the Results: Vital, Value-added Benefits

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

- Increased attendee verification rate through better data analysis and scrubbing, giving you cleaner, more reliable data and reducing the need to verify attendance after your 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 message 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 your 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 your 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 your 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

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 to:

- Track, analyze and specify demographic, psychographic and behavioral parameters
- Weigh the importance of each factor
- Filter 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 you start using Experient ACRM, you'll realize the tremendous value of the greater flexibility and power of this new customer relationship management system. For example, because ACRM is separate from your registration system, it doesn't have to be taken offline when your event goes onsite.

Rather, ACRM is available online 24/7, providing a round-the-clock prospect database with improved continuity and no delays or interruptions in your active campaigns. You'll 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 email, 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

Conclusion

With a large menu of value-added features, ACRM is a fully integrated registration and attendee acquisition system. It can work from one common data element across all databases and shows. Show management can access and analyze data on an attendee or company perspective and take real-time action with this information. Attendees can be presented more options and experience a more efficient and error-free process in transacting with a show management group having multiple products of interest. While Experient hosts and stores all data, it's Experient's customers who solely own the data and transactions.

Our customers gain a variety of benefits and practical data gathering and event marketing capabilities through purchase, implementation and use of Experient ACRM. With ACRM, you can:

- Increase quality attendance at events
- Grow and retain your exhibitor and sponsorship base
- 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

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 your 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 25 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 you.

Experient views its mission as helping bring people together to drive business. Our values make a difference in our solutions. We provide our clients with leadership, excellence, responsibility, respect and integrity. These are the values we incorporate into our products and services.

For more information on ACRM or any of our products or services, please contact your Experient representative or

Visit www.experient-inc.com/ACRM

Email amy.munn@experient-inc.com

Phone Amy Munn 866-516-1461