Using a Single Solution for Better Management and More Revenue: An AAPEX Case Study

"As one of the show owners, we wanted to streamline our work load and that of our show managers. The single platform interface that a2z operates within is very efficient. In 2010, AAPEX used a vendor for the on-site show kiosks and another for the mobile app in addition to a2z for the website. Each of these services had to be updated individually. It was inefficient and created an incredible workload. This past year, we selected a2z to provide us with the mobile app and the on-site digital kiosk. Both of these services operate off of the website. a2z helped us streamline our work load and offered us a tremendous solution."

— *Arlene Davis, AAIA*

4929
Booths

1
Technology Vendor

↓ Time on reporting
>95%

CHALLENGES:

The Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo (AAPEX) has always had a lot of moving parts. Because it represents the $395 billion dollar global motor vehicle aftermarket, it is mammoth in size—hosting 2,292 exhibitors with 4,929 booths.

AAPEX is part of Automotive Aftermarket Industry Week (AAIW), which also includes the SEMA Show for automotive specialty products.

Large shows often have unique requirements, but AAPEX is even more demanding. AAIA, the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association, and MEMA, the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, together own AAPEX. The show has been managed by Chicago-based W.T. Glasgow Inc. since 1992. All groups need access to a common event management platform in order to guide the decision-making. The use of multiple vendors and systems to manage the financial reporting, booth space sales and on-site navigation was reducing efficiency.

There is a further challenge on the horizon for AAPEX. It is nearly maxed out on its existing revenue base. Owners can't charge more for exhibit space and the market will not bear a higher registration fee. As trade associations dependent on revenue streams from the show, AAIA and MEMA are looking for increased functionality from their event management platform to go above and beyond execution and provide new income for the organizations.

SOLUTION:

Several years ago, AAPEX and Glasgow replaced QuickBooks accounting software and a manual floor plan management system with the a2z event management solutions including a2zShow with electronic floor plan capabilities. In 2011 they switched from a third-party kiosk company to their existing a2z solution and added ChirpE premium, which includes both web and native mobile app solutions.

The new a2z single-vendor configuration provides visibility for the show manager and the associations that own the show. It is a solution that meets the needs of all the stakeholders. "Having everything online makes analysis and forecasting so much easier. The financial data helps W.T. Glasgow keep the owners updated and enables them to provide better forecasts for the event," says Arlene Davis, senior director of meetings and events at AAIA.

RESULTS:

a2zShow and ChirpE premium brought a number of efficiencies to AAPEX:

- Streamlining a2z solutions into a single platform that can be updated through one easy-to-use interface offers more accurate and up-to-date information with less effort.

- The amount of time required to produce weekly reports has decreased from several hours to just minutes.

- The exhibit space selection process used to require that show management and association staff travel to Las Vegas to meet face-to-face with exhibitors over several days. The process is now entirely online eliminating travel and lowering costs across the board.

- In the past, information updates were broadcast on multiple platforms—Web and kiosk—requiring individual updates through multiple interfaces. Now with ChirpE premium, all systems—Web, kiosk and both web and native app mobile solutions—are updated simultaneously through a single content management system.

NEXT STEPS:

With the event logistics well in hand, AAIA and MEMA are again looking to a2z for enhanced revenue opportunities from the same single platform: sponsorship opportunities, kiosk and cross-channel (Web site and email) advertising, upgraded online exhibit packages. "As the future progresses, we have to find growth in other areas [besides exhibit space and registration]. We want more revenue streams. When I sit down with the board of directors, they hone in on sponsorship opportunities. We are looking for a2z to provide those also," Arlene Davis says.