



Packing One Million Net Square Feet Into the Palm of Your Hand

“We liked the fact that a2z already had all of the exhibitor data. When exhibitors or attendees make changes, the app automatically updates. Not having to update the data in more than one place makes error rates extremely low.”

—Katie Bergmann, Vice President of Administration, PMMI



CHALLENGES:

Pack Expo is the largest exhibition in North America showcasing state-of-the-art materials, machinery and methods for packaging and processing. The show ranges in size (depending on the year) from 23,000 and 1,300 exhibitors to 46,000 attendees and 1,800 exhibitors. The show organizers—PMMI—searched for a way to enhance the attendee experience, make the show easier to navigate and provide exhibitors with more visibility. With a penchant for staying abreast of technology, Pack Expo’s team turned to a2z to push the envelope once again.

SOLUTION:

In 2009, Pack Expo implemented a2z’s ChirpE Basic, a web-based mobile solution, at a time when mobile apps were very new to tradeshow. By 2011, at the urging of more mobile-savvy attendees, organizers upgraded to ChirpE Premium, a native app on the iOS (iPhone) platform. Like its mobile web companion, ChirpE Premium helped attendees navigate the show floor with maps, search for exhibitors by company name, product type and booth number and add exhibitors to a personalized expo plan.

The native app solved other problems as well. “We [previously] had connectivity issues on site and the native app can function without Wi-Fi.” PMMI’s Katie Bergmann, vice president of administration, explains. Also, because a2z had all of the exhibitor data as part of the event management solution it already provided to Pack Expo, organizers avoided having to reload any data onto the new mobile platform. And, when exhibitors made changes to the directory online, the information was automatically updated in the native app, eliminating errors and double entry.

“We have a great relationship with [a2z]. We said to them, ‘we have this dream about changing the attendee experience. Can you find a way to get us there?’”

—John Mills, Web Manager, PMMI recalls.



RESULTS:

The feedback from attendees was very positive. Despite only rolling out the native app a month and a half before the 2011 show opened, about forty percent of the users downloaded the native app before the event and the other sixty percent downloaded it on site. a2z's ChirpE solution provided the flexibility that Pack Expo organizers needed to address the fast-moving integration of mobile platforms onto the trade show floor. "When ChirpE [Mobile] was rolled out on the web, it was great and it was even before mobile apps took a stronghold at events. By the second year, savvy attendees were asking for a native app," says Bergmann.

NEXT STEPS:

For the 2012 show in late October, Pack Expo asked a2z to take the mobile platform a step further. Organizers will leverage ChirpE on multiple platforms: iPhone, Android, Web and kiosk. In previous years, attendees could use kiosks to locate exhibitors and print a copy of the exhibitor list. This year, the kiosks will be appointed with iPads pre-loaded with the ChirpE Premium native app and connected to a large monitor. The search results from the iPad will be projected onto the large screen for easy viewing. All devices and platforms throughout the show will update synchronously when new exhibitor or show information is added to the system from any entry point. Attendees will also be able to create a personalized walking map and print directly from the ChirpE native app kiosk. PMMI likes to push the envelope on technology. a2z delivered with ChirpE Premium.