

8 Ways to Improve Your Registration Process



8 Simple Ways to Improve Your Registration Process.

Simple, yet little-known techniques that will revolutionize your registration process and impress your attendees.

Did you know that your registration process can dramatically impact your attendees? A smooth, comfortable registration process can change the way they look at your organization. It can decrease complications and complaints at your events. It can even lead to higher attendance and lower no show rates. Over the past several years Active Network, Events has invested hundreds of hours into studying how attendees flow through the registration process. We've identified what they like and what confuses them.

Use this report to uncover the simple things that make life easier for your attendees – while greatly reducing your own workload.

1. Get Rid of Paper-Based Processes

Event organizers often worry that high-tech registration options will alienate a portion of their target audience. Yet you'll be surprised how quickly even your most traditional users will adapt to online registration. In fact, many event organizers have found that removing paper registration all together has led to higher attendance, happier attendees and much fewer complications at events.

Case in Point: The Religious Conference Management Association worried that its traditional, faith-based group would struggle with online registration. Yet it knew that its lengthy and arduous paper registration process was frustrating for attendees and costly for the organization. Last year, however, more than 85% of its annual conference attendees registered online – and the organization was flooded with compliments on the new, easier registration process. In addition, RCMA chose to eliminate paper surveys after its event and move all post-show follow up online, which increased its response rate from 5% to 32%.

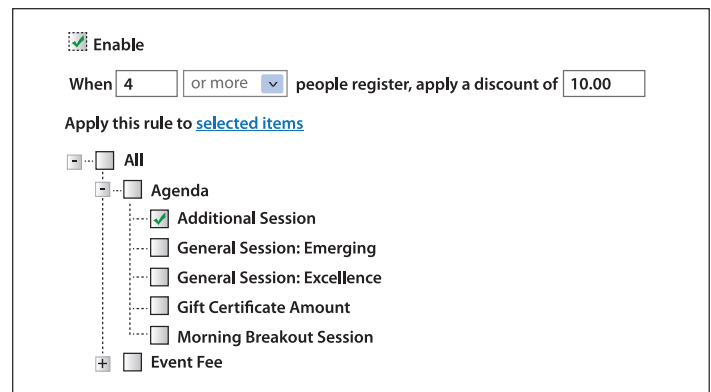


2. Encourage Groups

More than 30% of attendees register as a group, and research shows that attending events in a group improves the experience. Yet most event organizers fail to encourage groups. In fact, most registration systems fail to even automate group registration, leading to lost opportunities and frustrated group leaders.

There are two important things you should be doing to encourage group registrations:

- Provide discounts for people who register as part of a group. This practice not only increases attendance, but increases attendees' satisfaction at your events.
- Second, make group registration as easy as possible by handling it within your standard registration process. Make sure it's easy to add group members by streamlining the process and auto-inserting information where possible. Also, don't make the mistake of failing to communicate with individual group members. Make sure your system is set up to send confirmations and reminders to the group leader and every member of the group.



3. Put Your Attendees in the Driver's Seat

A single miscommunication can destroy an attendee's experience at an event. So, why do 80% of event organizers still rely on manual processes to manage things like meal preferences, room blocks and nearly every attendee preference?

Take the time to set up a way for your attendees to choose their own preferences and make self-service changes to those preferences before the event. The best registration systems will make this process easy for attendees, and a select few will even provide reports that can be shared with hotels, caterers and event organizers in real time. These shared reports ensure that all preferences are updated and accurate at all times, leading to happier attendees and smoother events.

Case in Point: Washington State University's extension office coordinates five large events each year for its Area Health Education program. Each year the university handled more than 1,500 registrations with varying payment options and preferences—and each year there would be a long line of confused attendees at the registration table. In 2008 Washington State moved its registration process online. In so doing, it shaved more than 400 work hours from its process and nearly eliminated the customer service issues that had plagued its events for years.

4. Do the Work for Your Registrants

Many event registrants are frustrated by the length of time it takes to fill out a registration form. Yet many of these same registrants are previous customers of the organization holding the event. That means there's no reason these event organizers should require them to re-submit every piece of personal information.

Instead, all event organizers should be using auto-recall to pre-populate personal and business information whenever possible. Not only does this practice dramatically reduce time spent in the registration process, but it also decreases the number of people who abandon the process and reduces errors in your reporting. This simple feature can improve the attendee experience while making sure you always have accurate contact information for follow-ups and promotions.

5. Re-Confirm to Eliminate No Shows

Are you sick of dealing with no-shows at every event? If you're like most event organizers, seeing a stack of unused name badges at the end of an event is frustrating. But in many cases, it's not the attendee's fault. Instead, the failure to recognize no-shows before events falls on the shoulders of the event organizer.

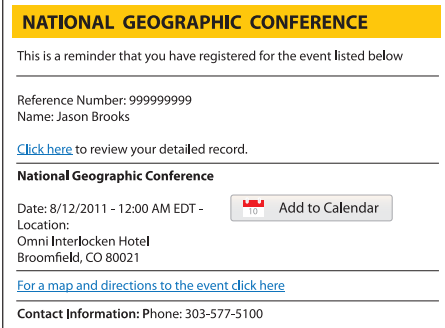
The good news is there is a way to identify no-shows before your events—yet it's one of the least-used features in event registration. It's called "click-to-confirm" reminders, and it allows event organizers to send a series of triggered email reminders leading up to an event, asking attendees to confirm that they will be attending the event. This practice allows organizers to weed out people who have changed their minds and open up spaces for sold out events. In addition, the extra action taken by your attendees reminds them about the event and reaffirms their commitment to attend.

Case in Point: Grant Writing USA, a leading provider of workshops and educational materials that focus on grant writing and grant management, had a big problem with excessive no shows at its workshops. The organization now sends click-to-confirm emails for all events, and that practice has reduced its no show rate to nearly zero.

6. Make Networking Easier with Directories

As social networking becomes more important to attendees both before and after events, event organizers increasingly depend on good networking opportunities to make their events stand out. Those opportunities start during the registration process.

Make sure you're providing a quick link to a directory of event attendees both during your registration process and in your confirmation email. The kind of information you provide on that directory will vary, but many organizers include names of attendees, email addresses and even a list of sessions people are attending. This technique immediately engages your attendee with your event, allowing her to reach out to friends or set up meetings.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE

This is a reminder that you have registered for the event listed below

Reference Number: 999999999
Name: Jason Brooks

[Click here](#) to review your detailed record.

National Geographic Conference

Date: 8/12/2011 - 12:00 AM EDT -

Location:
Omni Interlocken Hotel
Broomfield, CO 80021

[For a map and directions to the event click here](#)

Contact Information: Phone: 303-577-5100

7. Build Better Badges

A badge is a badge, right? Nope. Not anymore. In fact, top event organizers are realizing that badges can play a crucial role in tying registration information to the event. Most sophisticated registration platforms will allow you to enhance your badges with group information, color coding and even an agenda.

Make sure you're branding your badges, agendas and signage to match your registration form. In addition, provide your attendees with a complete list of their session selections and preferences when they receive their badge. This practice will immediately address any issues before confusion sets in, and it will remind your attendees of the selections they made during the registration process.



8. Make Every Question Relevant

If you confuse attendees, you lose them. Usability studies show that attendees struggle with long registration forms, particularly when those forms contain information that isn't relevant to the attendee. More and more event organizers are using something called conditional logic to avoid that pitfall.

Conditional logic is based on statements, which use triggers within the registration form to dynamically display appropriate information. So, for example, if I have a golf networking event, I may ask an attendee if they would like to attend. If that attendee answers "no," they will never see information on tee times, t-shirt sizes or transportation. On the other hand, if that attendee chooses "yes" he will automatically see the appropriate questions.

Very complicated events are using conditional logic to dramatically streamline the registration process, but even small events can use this technology to greatly reduce registration headaches for attendees while reducing workload for event organizers.

Field	Limit	Visible	Actions
1 Rare		Yes	Yes X
2 Medium Rare		Yes	Yes X
3 Medium		Yes	Yes X
4 Well Done		Yes	Yes X

Use drag-and-drop to move items in the list above

Spaces available: [Options](#)

Visible Required: **Registrant Type** **Visible To** **Required By** **Admin Only**

[Show All Registrant Types](#)

Conditional Logic: Show current item only when registrant selects item(s) below:

- The Amount of Sales
- Are you a member?
- What is your meal preference
- Beef

[Clear all items](#)