



Lord Somers Camp and Power House (LSC&PH) is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to create a stronger, more inclusive society through service to others. They hold various camps, programs and activities in inner and outer Melbourne and Somers campsite in Victoria, Australia. LSC&PH, through its diverse membership of volunteers, runs several programs and camps to provide support for leadership development, empowerment, engagement, well-being, and personal and community development.

Exploring New Avenues in Times of Crisis

LSC&PH run several popular camps and programs for youth development, community development, life-long learning, and positive ageing. In the 12 months before the global pandemic began, they had 1,500 people, from the ages 15 to 80, attend their camps and programs.

However, things changed abruptly and LSC&PH was not immune to this unprecedented crisis, which had forced organisations across the world to cancel or postpone their events. LSC&PH found themselves in a position where they had to cancel all their in-person events overnight as government restrictions set in and they were unable to host their programs.

The not-for-profit organisation decided it was time to reassess their events strategy but knew they had to do so while keeping their vision intact. "Our vision is to create a stronger, more inclusive society through service to others — so we want to continue keeping our members and program participants engaged. This vision is more important than ever right now, in a world where we are physically distanced and have more of a need to remain connected to one another" says Vikki Deak, Programs and Activities Manager. She adds, "Ultimately, we are all in this together, and in creating online events we see members engaged and continuing to explore creativity through program design."

LSC&PH had been using Cvent as their one-stop centralised event management platform to handle their in-person events. Keeping in mind the functionalities that Cvent's tech offered, the organisation decided to move some of their existing events, such as camps, luncheons, and social gatherings, to the virtual space.

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- Vikki Deak, Programs and Activities Manager,
Lord Somers Camp and Power House



Technology to the Rescue

LSC&PH's first order of business was to ensure their event cancellations (and the subsequent communication with members) were handled smoothly. This is where Cvent's sophisticated registration platform proved to be the saviour. "Once the reality set in, the practicality of closing events, notifying attendees and offering refunds was a smooth and streamlined activity. We could easily check in to see that the messages were sent out, and track refunds and conversions to donations," states Deak. It also ensured a hassle-free experience for members.

Making that switch to virtual turned out to be another fuss-free process. LSC&PH's events program was already plugged into the Cvent system, so the only additional step they had to take was to host their events on a virtual conferencing platform and they were ready to go.

With the help of their member database and Cvent's email marketing tool, LSC&PH began to connect and reengage with their community of members

and volunteers, chiefly those who had attended programs in the past. Doing their activities digitally allowed them to reach more members — especially those who weren't living close by to their facilities so weren't as engaged with their face to face programs.

LSC&PH also used Cvent's Inquisition survey module to get quick feedback and identify the elements that worked for their online activities and programs. It easily enabled them to readjust each event/session as it came up.

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Shift to virtual
accomplished
within days

Increased
re-engagement
with members

Road to Re-Engagement

The shift to online was a successful move, with LSC&PH seeing positive responses and increased levels of re-engagement from their members and volunteers. This was largely because people, who earlier couldn't dedicate a whole weekend or week to participate or volunteer, now had alternate, more accessible options to choose from.

Having their programs online also helped LSC&PH strengthen their connection with their members. Members who did not live close to either Albert Park or Somers, could now access their online programs and participate.. One attendee, recalls Deak fondly, even remarked that the online events were "just like being at camp, having fun with friends old and new" and requested LSC&PH to continue doing these virtual sessions for all programs that got cancelled.

LSC&PH was pleasantly surprised to see elderly members of their program quickly and enthusiastically adapt to the virtual shift. Any fears about them being tech resistant was alleviated by the fact that members could also join events via phone. LSC&PH noted that they now connected much more frequently compared to when the meetups were in person.

Perhaps one of the best things to come out of this virtual shift is that LSC&PH are now geared up to explore more options to bring some of their creative and innovate ideas — such as online performances, virtual



trainings, digital fundraisers — to life. “Taking on the challenge of an online world has further expanded the opportunities for our programs to go forward, we can now offer more programs and alter them further depending on the ongoing interest of those who attend them,” says Deak.

Improving Outreach using Event Tech

The success of their online events, combined with the ease with which they transitioned their programs digitally, has made LSC&PH realise the true potential of going virtual. They are now confident that some (if not all) of their virtual programs will likely end up sticking as a regular event and are excited to continue using Cvent as a centralised platform for all their virtual and in-person events.

The next phase in LSC&PH’s plan is to launch internal trainings for their members. They plan to continue leveraging Cvent’s event registration and survey tools to get people to sign up for the trainings, test their knowledge awareness and get relevant pre-reading and resources.

LSC&PH also wants to continue to give back to the community during this time by bringing more of their community development programs to the digital space. In fact, they already have a global fundraiser in the pipeline that they are launching with the help of Cvent.

“As we look into the future and society returning to ‘normal’, we hope that people continue to connect in these newfound ways,” concludes Deak, adding, “This period has truly been a blessing in disguise. Moving to an online world has completely shifted the way that we think about how we create moments for people to connect in a positive way and to break down barriers that prevent this. We have no uncertainty now — Cvent has helped open our ability to connect with people better than before, our calendar has grown and is moving forward, and our members are now reaping the benefits of being involved with Lord Somers Camp and Power House.”

Products used

Event Management

Inquisium





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