

CASE STUDY

Cvent and Duke University:
Increasing Engagement
and Efficiency

cvent

Duke is a highly selective, private research university located in Durham, North Carolina. Established in 1924 by industrialist James Buchanan Duke, it now serves more than 16,000 students (undergraduate and graduate) each year from 49 states and 50 countries. The eighth-ranked university in the United States, it has an 8.5 billion-dollar endowment and a large, growing, and active alumni community in 162 countries around the world.



Within the university, two departments have been at the forefront of event planning and fundraising: the Development Office and the Alumni Association. The Development Office supports a multitude of initiatives, including scholarships and grants, education and research programs, and infrastructure. For its part, the Alumni Association engages with over 150,000 global alumni each year through regional programs, marketing events, and the expanding and enhancing of the Duke Alumni Network. The two offices also collaborate on international and multi-year campaigns, such as the recently concluded Duke Forward, a seven-year effort that raised endowment and expendable funds to benefit of all 10 of Duke's graduate and undergraduate schools.

Before Cvent: Stuck in Silos

In the early 2000s, event planning at Duke was manual and isolated within individual departments, with a resulting unpredictability in communication and staffing needs for onsite events. In the Development Office, for example, event registrations were emailed to participants and faxed back to be entered on an Excel spreadsheet – a labor-intensive process that was vulnerable to human error. And for onsite events, such as a roadshow fundraiser for the critical Duke Forward campaign, the team spent time producing over a thousand badges by hand, a stressful task which diverted resources away from the vital process of attendee engagement.



Over at the Alumni Association, everything was also done manually, from event creation to reminder emails and reporting, to onsite registration and badging.



Cvent and Centralization



Event planning at Duke remained siloed, and largely manual, until the university's central IT organization established a master services agreement with Cvent in 2016, increasing access to broad and deep event management capabilities through a single, centralized initiative.

The result was a transformation in efficiency and time-management that has reached across the campus. "Thanks to Cvent, we've been able to introduce greater efficiency across our organizations, scale our operations, and increase the reach of our alumni engagement and fundraising initiatives," says Kim Garcia, Senior Director of development special events. "We are also much more data-centric in our approach to events for engagement and development."

One of the great successes of the new system is the revamped Duke Alumni Network. Previously, says Operations Coordinator Mark Wienants, the network was run by an outside vendor that was not equipped to support their needs. By bringing it in-house with Cvent, they were able to save on costs, and offer alumni a network that is now more dynamic, flexible, personalized, and secure, providing alumni with tools and resources they can't get anywhere else. "We use it to capture their interests and expertise in ways that can identify volunteer leaders and donors capable of contributing to key institutional priorities," says Wienants. "Cvent is a core part of the technological infrastructure to provide alumni with multiple ways to engage while simultaneously tracking their interests, professional accomplishments, and volunteer activities."

Omni-channel Assistance

Today, Cvent technology helps departments across the university engage their audiences across multiple channels – online, onsite, and mobile – in five major areas:

1

EVENT MARKETING & REGISTRATION

With Cvent, departments access event marketing tools, easy-to-build branded event websites, and the ability to support different types of registration, be it a ticket-based or multiple-session event. All relevant data is collected intuitively in a central spot, increasing overall efficiency.

2

ONSITE SOLUTIONS

Full-service attendance management for onsite registration and check-in can also be extended to include hardware rentals, badge supplies, and tech support. All data is synced back to Duke's Cvent account for post-event reporting and follow-up, eliminating the need to manually track attendance.

3

CONTACT MANAGEMENT

In addition to enhanced efficiency and the ability to support more events with fewer staff, Cvent updates the university's contacts database in real-time, providing visibility into everything from registrations and declines to the reach and impact of events. This allows decisions going forward to be based on sound data.

4

INTEGRATION WITH CORE SYSTEMS

The Cvent integration hub connects with other internal systems at the university, allowing for seamless data integration, greater visibility, and higher-value analysis, as well as more sophisticated planning, outreach, and engagement.

5

E-COMMERCE

As Cvent is PCI Level 1 compliant, it can be used for quick and secure event payment. This wraps payment collection into a single experience for event attendees while standardizing the process across the university.



Exponential Growth and Success



Thanks to Cvent, the Development Office has expanded to organizing some 140 events a year, including 25 large fundraising events, as well as managing the logistics for multiple development boards – all with a staff of just six. As for the Alumni Association, it now hosts more than 700 regional events a year with its team of 12, including only three operational staffers.

140

EVENTS A YEAR

25

LARGE FUNDRAISING
EVENTS

700

REGIONAL EVENTS A YEAR WITH
ITS TEAM OF 12 INCLUDING ONLY
THREE OPERATIONAL STAFFERS.

And the Duke Forward Campaign? It raised 3.85 billion dollars from 2010-2017, smashing its original goal of 3.25 billion. This record-breaking campaign was the result of gifts from more than 315,000 donors and foundations – a deluge of data, registrations, and contacts that was only made possible through Cvent’s systemic support.

3.85 billion

DOLLARS RAISED FROM 2010-2017

315,000

DONORS AND FOUNDATIONS



Cvent has been helping organizations leverage technology to reach more people since 1999. To find out more about how Cvent can increase efficiency and engagement at your institution, providing data-driven insights and increased ROI, please contact us [here](#).