USC Cultural Relations and University Events

19%
INCREASE IN REGISTRATIONS

29%
INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE

60%
INCREASE IN MOBILE APP ADOPTION

Trojan Family Weekend: A Family Affair

At the University of Southern California's Trojan Family Weekend, 4,000 people attend 200 different events across four days. "We like to be inclusive of whatever family means to you," explains Event Coordinator Emma Suffridge. The two-person team at the Office of Cultural Relations & University Events helps drive campus engagement and recruitment through this event.

To meet the goal of growing registration and attendance by double digits each year, the team knew they needed a seamless technology solution. "One of our ROI points is if we increase attendance, we do get more revenue and are able to provide a better event experience," notes Event Coordinator Kim Sapone.

Fostering Campus Engagement

The team found it difficult to engage their campus stakeholders and track speaker submissions via Excel. Manual processes created data gaps and a difficult workload. "Not only do we have to manage within our own department, but also within all of the other departments at USC," Emma explains.

With registration data that failed to integrate with the mobile app, few sponsorship opportunities, and a manual check-in and badge printing process, attendee and sponsor satisfaction was low. They also needed to benchmark the program to prove ROI for stakeholders. "If you don't have that data, you're kind of shooting in the dark," Kim notes.

Increasing Campus Buy-In for a Better Event Experience

In 2017, the team adopted Cvent's Abstract Management tool to solicit and house more than 200 submissions from their campus partners. "It's been a lot easier for them to be engaged using Abstract Management," explains Emma. Importantly, "submissions can transfer over to our events website, which also integrates with CrowdCompass. It's more streamlined and a lot easier to work with," she adds.

By engaging their campus partners more directly, the team increased session offerings by 50%, and 77% of schools increased attendance by double or triple digits. "It's always our goal to increase attendance to all of our different events during Trojan Family Weekend. The best part about Cvent is that it's helped us keep track of that increase," explains Emma.

To simplify the registration process, Cvent's Event Management solution offered an on-brand website with a better user experience. Automated emails targeted different attendee groups. "We love Cvent's email marketing abilities, especially with the data reporting," says Kim. "Because of the way that Cvent is set up, we have the ability to target different people. We think through pain points that would stop people from attending, and attack those directly through our email marketing." The team saw an

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impressive 19% increase in registrations as a result, with 69% of attendees learning about the event via email.

A Mobile App for a New Generation

The team adopted Cvent's CrowdCompass mobile app to cut down on paper costs and empower attendees. 99% of users built their schedules in the app and networked directly with one another. "The ease of use with the CrowdCompass schedule was night and day compared to the year before," Kim notes. "The app just has so many ways to engage! We loved the messaging feature, activity feed, and the social media pull-in. That was a very easy way to engage with people, and get them excited about sharing and marketing our event," explains Kim. The team increased adoption by over 60% as a result.

They also increased sponsorship opportunities to directly impact the revenue stream. "Sponsorship is something we rely heavily on for Trojan family weekend," notes Kim. "Having so many people in the app makes that a very big selling point for our sponsors. Now, we have data to support, so that alone gives people incentive to invest in your event."

Proving the Return on Event

Onsite, the team was able to reduce check-in time using OnArrival. Last minute changes were easy to make with on-demand badge printing, and all data was up-to-date. They used Cvent survey tools to gather attendee feedback and reports to benchmark program success. "This year, we were actually able to put together a more comprehensive report at the end. The thing that we found most difficult was actually trying to compare data from before Cvent. We're both very excited to do our report this year after using Cvent to get the accurate data profile," notes Emma.

With improved reporting, better onsite experiences, and simplified technology solutions, Emma and Kim have found the formula for a successful Trojan Family Weekend. "It's been a lot better for the user, and better for us too!" laughs Emma. "We're able to manage our time a lot better. Cvent allows us to house everything in one place so we can manage everything easily."

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