

SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

SuccessfulMeetings.com

04.13

FULL ²⁶ DISCLOSURE

The Sunshine Act has medical and pharma meetings serious about cost-tracking

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

16

Planning The Paperless Meeting

20



ARIZONA | ORLANDO | PUERTO RICO | MONTREAL
COLUMBIA, SC | GERMANY | SCOTLAND



Lisa Keilty, vice president of pmc², says real-time cost reporting is needed to comply with new regulations

green scene

➔ Going green is good for the environment and good for your bottom line

How to Go Paperless

By Scott Mifsud, CMP

As the vice president of operations for a destination management company, I have the task of streamlining operations and increasing profitability. One of the quickest — and easiest — ways to do both is to go paperless. Here are a few steps we have taken at Just Right! Destination Management to shift to a paper-free operation.

Our company requests JPEG image files from our clients, and we use these files to create custom signage. Before we went paperless, we might have printed more than 20 copies of the logos alone for each event. Using iPads allows our business to open the logo in either the Photos app or iBooks. The result is sleek-looking signage that doesn't bend, smear, or wrinkle, and if it needs to be personalized, it can be changed on the fly. Right there, in the moment, on location.

Affordable tablets and handy apps make going paperless easy and efficient. Tablets can also improve workflow and are sure to impress clients. When we started testing the use of iPads, I borrowed them from everyone I knew, including my 11-year-old stepsons. I was lucky that they were willing to part with Angry Birds for a few hours so that we could see how and if going paperless would work.

We discovered that digital signs worked really well, but my staff found they also presented a new set of challenges. It could be cumbersome to juggle an iPad as well as a paper manifest. Before we could go entirely paperless, I had to find an app that would allow us to keep track of arrivals and departures and to check people off as my staff greeted them.

I found the solution in the app Check In

Easy. It wasn't designed specifically for airport arrivals, but it does the trick. We now upload manifests, which allow us to check passengers off as they arrive. It also keeps everyone's iPads synchronized so that if a passenger unexpectedly shows up at another area of the airport, we can still account for him. This also keeps our clients happy because they can look at the app and see what is happening in real time.

If we need to update a sign, we don't have to run around looking for somewhere to print, we just change it on the iPad. On-site staff members can make notes in the app if any issues arise so that I can see them right away. It also makes billing at the end of a program more efficient. We no longer need to pay someone to sort and distribute the manifests and signage. All we do is click and upload.

Smart Business

Going paperless makes us look cutting-edge

and makes our arrival and departure days significantly easier, and also saves us money and time. On an average 400-person program, it would take a ream of paper for signage and manifests. Between ink and paper, we estimate an annual cost savings in the thousands, which is well above our cost of investing in the technology.

Our next big push in going green is to make our collateral 100-percent digital. I'm searching for good apps to distribute electronic business cards, and we're optimizing our proposals and invoices for the web.

To wrap up this discussion, I'll leave you with my top three tips for going paperless:

- 1 **Test the waters before you invest in the technology.** If you and your staff are comfortable with using the apps and customizing the signage, it may be time to go for it.
- 2 **Remember that you don't need the newest tablets for your programs.** Purchase used or refurbished technology to save money. If you want to buy new, be aware that Apple is adding less-expensive options to their iPad portfolio, such as the iPad Mini.
- 3 **Train tech-savvy staff first and have them train those who aren't as accustomed to working with this technology.** It will help those at different operational skill levels more easily adapt.

Scott Mifsud is vice president of operations for Just Right! Destination Management. Using a specialized boutique approach, Just Right! Provides "one-stop shop" service that makes clients feel as though they have a partner in every city. Just Right! offers many services around the country including transportation, dining, hospitality, décor and entertainment, team building, and concierge services. Find out more information at <http://justrightdm.com>