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Newsletter

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Risk or Reward: The Double Edged Sword of Event Information Security

by David Jacobs



Aaron Elliott Named a Millennial to Watch

MeetGreen Project Manager, Aaron Elliott, has been named by *Meetings and Conventions Magazine* as a "Millennial to Watch". Congratulations to all, and we look forward to seeing what Aaron and his fellow Millennials can accomplish in the years ahead!

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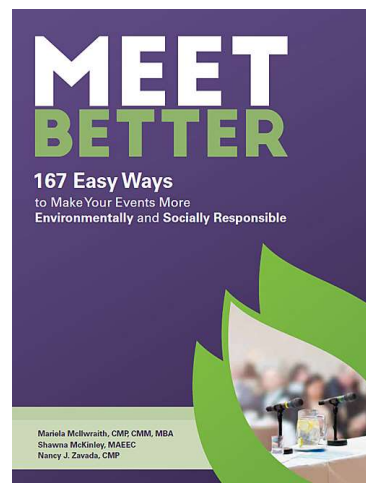
In the MeetGreen [GreenStorming Hangout](#) last December, I talked with Event Hero's [John Federico](#) about the future of technology and events. One of the most interesting things to come out of the conversation was the idea of how data is impacting events. John said, from his viewpoint, "Events are about data." With more attendee data, he said, planners can create a better, more customized experience. Collecting data on attendees is increasing with electronic registration systems, conference apps, and sophisticated tracking systems. Soon, we will be able to know exactly where attendees go and how long they stay there. What food did they buy and which vendors did they spend the most time with? But what are planners doing with all this data and what are the inherent risks in possessing it?

Even apart from meetings, the world is at an inflection point with regard to so-called big data and personal privacy. Information is being collected on all of us by government and corporations in a variety of ways. The government says it's trying to keep us safe and corporations are trying to relate to us in a more personal way. As with everything, there is a tradeoff to be made. How much information and privacy are we willing to give up for increased safety, customized experiences and better deals?

From the meetings and events perspective, planners have an opportunity to create more tailored experiences for attendees using the data collected. If we know more about our attendees and keep learning over time, we can serve individuals better and even anticipate their needs. But there is always inherent risk as any digital system is vulnerable to hacking and at what point do attendees become resistant to too much information gathering? I think the answer to this last question is in direct relation to the value you are providing.

A Better Experience for Attendees

Attendees install an event app, then delete it. What about data about attendees like their hotel preferences, meal needs and other feedback? Too often this data is not retained or is disconnected and un-cohesive. If planners and organizations could get a better handle on attendee data and really understand it, a better experience could be provided. In fact, every year, we should be getting smarter about our attendees as we learn more about them. If the experience doesn't get



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What are the Secrets of Effective Event CSR?

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better and there isn't a real payoff for the attendee, this is when they will start to push back on all the information they share.

produced by students in the British Columbia Institute of Technology's Sustainable Event Management Program. Hint: make a human connection.



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