

The transition from manual to online competition management

Three Best Practice Tips that will simplify your online competition registration administration!

Using our suggested 'best practices' will help alleviate your transitional growing efforts. Most will love it, some will resist (human nature), but if you can help them through the process they will be grateful in the end, especially when they see the numerous advantages.

Practice ONE:

Notify your past regular participants.

By being proactive with your participants it will give them time to adjust to your new procedures and processes.

Tip - Communication:

Let them know you are improving your processes by:

- Saving costs and improving your administration
- Providing teachers and participants with access to their account as soon as it's available – no need to wait for the mail
- And any other benefit

How:

Send a postcard or letter or email.

Let them know why this change is necessary and what it means for both your competition, staff volunteers and participants.

Use a pre-email sign up.

Months in advance have teachers, regular participants and newcomers sign up – the incentive can be something as simple as being notified as soon as the syllabus is available online.

Recommendation:

You can easily add a sign up to your website and collect names and emails using an email system provider that tracks and stores your data for future email notifications.

We recommend

www.icontact.com

Their customer support team offers top-notch personal support whenever you need help.

They also provide easy to use templates.

For a free version

www.mailchimp.com

You can use it forever - this is not a trial offer .

You can send emails up to 2,000 subscribers.

Practice TWO:

Provide customer service in a new way – the online way.

Your admin staff should be prepared with answers to some key common questions that will arise when you start using this new process.

Answers to Registration Sign ups

To err is human. You may get questions such as:

- My password doesn't work. (*they likely typed it in wrong*)
- It won't let me in. (*sometimes they will make an email error*)

- My teacher can't see my classes (*they probably forgot to add the teacher ID*)

Tip – The help desk.

Common questions such as these can be answered automatically by providing an online helpdesk. Having such a system in place will offer one of most time saving and energy saving methods.

How:

In the above scenarios a helpdesk can provide automatic canned responses that will in effect allow them to help themselves. It allows you to track questions and answers of each person which is much easier than trying to deal with a swell of emails. By providing a checklist they will most likely solve their own issue and realize they made an error.

Recommendation:

We highly recommend providing an online help desk that uses a ticket system.

You can use canned automated responses for the common repeat questions, such as when will the syllabus be available, or when is my schedule available.

Learn more about a Help desk – in the 'Help Desk Documen

Practice THREE:

Provide an easy way to find information.

Often questions about procedures and rules are not easy to find on websites. Frequently they are disorganized and difficult to understand. If your staff receives a lot of similar and repeated questions it's time to improve the online administration to reduce emails and phone calls.

Consider your Registration Terms, Conditions, Support and policies.

- How will you deal with refunds – what will your policy be?
- Terms and Conditions – will you charge an administration fee if someone has entered into the wrong class?
- Are the registrants having computer issues? What assistance will you provide?

Tip - FAQ:

Using an FAQ will also significantly reduce the time spent on phone calls and emails. Those that are familiar with using websites know to look for an FAQ for assistance.

Common questions can be answered, such as:

- Why was my purchase not accepted?
- Can I pay by Cheque?
- What are the Refund Policies?

How:

Common questions can be answered Educate them to use the FAQ.

Provide a step by step procedure of what they can try before contacting you.

The list can be as simple as a word document or PDF accessible from your website.

- Ask for feedback of its usability - test your descriptions with a non-savvy user.
- Use bulleted or numbered lists
- Highlight key areas in red

Recommendation:

Here's a list of suggestions

1. Create an FAQ link on the website
2. Make reference to the FAQ page from the contact page
3. Have a link at the bottom of all staff email
4. Make it a part of the festival phone message