

Overview

Country/Region: Canada
Industry: Non-profit

Customer Profile

The BCNPHA advocates to the government and the public on behalf of the non-profit housing sector. The organization has approximately 450 members, predominantly non-profit societies.

Challenge

The Association needed a solution to reduce the costs and workload associated with hosting its large conferences and seminars.

Solution

The BCNPHA selected the adaptable and affordable **GiftTool Event Registrar** solution to bring its registration process in-house and automate registration tasks.

Benefits

Using the Event Registrar, the BCNPHA:

- Reduced conference costs
- Increased control and transparency
- Decreased workload compared to the manual system
- Increased profitability without sacrificing professionalism

“The GiftTool Event Registrar definitely works for us!”

– Alice Sundberg
Executive Director, BCNPHA



The British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), an organization that represents the interests of the non-profit housing sector in BC, hosts several events each year including a three-day conference with more than 650 registrants and 70 different workshops and events.

The Association had been using an external consultant to manage the events and their complex registration processes but wanted to reduce costs and increase transparency by bringing the work in-house.

Realizing that the registration process would require excessive effort unless an automated solution was deployed, the Association reviewed a number of options and selected the GiftTool Event Registrar system because it provided several benefits:

- increased control and transparency in the registration process,
- decreased event administration workload, and
- reduced conference costs

The Event Registrar is hosted by GiftTool so the only IT infrastructure the BCNPHA required was its existing Internet connection. The Event Registrar was quickly linked to and branded to look like BCNPHA's website, as well as configured to its event management requirements.

Using the GiftTool Event Registrar, the BCNPHA was not only able to meet its key business objectives within the first year of adoption; it has also received positive feedback about the registration process from its members.



“ It would be difficult to imagine what this process would be like without the use of the GiftTool Event Registrar—sorting through 600 faxes and e-mails to pull out the registrations and then entering the data into an Excel spreadsheet. ”

– David Stark

Office Assistant, BCNPHA

Situation

The BCNPHA is an incorporated non-profit organization that was formed in 1993 to represent the interests of the non-profit housing sector. It participates in housing policy and program development in collaboration with all levels of government.

The Association has approximately 450 members, consisting mostly of non-profit societies, but its membership also includes organizations involved in the non-profit housing community such as building supply and property management companies.

The BCNPHA organizes a three-day conference each fall, as well as a regional spring seminar series that includes half-day events in many jurisdictions across the province.

Challenges

The large fall conference hosted by the BCNPHA usually involves more than 650 registrants and over 70 workshops and events.

Conference participants can select one-, two-, or three-day packages, individual workshops, and optional social events such as tours of local social housing communities and banquet evenings.

The Association provides early bird registration discounts as well as discounts for groups with more than five participants.

For many years, the BCNPHA used an external consultant to manage the conferences and the registration process.

To reduce costs, the Association wanted to carry out more of the conference management work in-house but administrators recognized that the labour associated with the registration process would be overwhelming unless an automated solution could be deployed.

GiftTool Event Registrar

After interviewing three vendors in the event management space, the BCNPHA selected the GiftTool Event Registrar as it offered the best fit and value for the organization.

Although the Association did consider hosting a registration system itself, as a small organization without an internal IT department it could not afford to have the system shut down during critical registration periods—frustrating members and slowing the registration process.

With its complex membership and conference package structure, the BCNPHA engaged the GiftTool team to assist in setting up the first campaign, which required only about half a day to implement. Now that the BCNPHA team is familiar with the solution, team members no longer rely on GiftTool except to answer the occasional technical question.

The GiftTool Event Registrar is linked from and branded to match the core BCNPHA website.

During registration, conference participants select the package and sessions that they would like to purchase, including organized social events. Once the package is selected, participants have a choice of paying by VISA, MasterCard, American Express, or cheque.

Using the Event Registrar, the BCNPHA processes credit card payments automatically through GiftTool's partner, IATS TicketMaster. Cheque payments must be received by a specified cutoff date, after which the BCNPHA can easily change the online process so that participants can pay only by credit card in the last few days prior to an event.

The BCNPHA uses the same administrative interface to manually register participants who do not have Internet access. Of the more than 650 annual conference participants, only about 50 registrations actually required manual processing.



" We have found the GiftTool team to be very collaborative, cooperative, and responsive. If we have a question or an issue, we can always reach someone right away and their technical people are always on the ball. "

– Alice Sundberg

Executive Director, BCNPHA

The conference registration window is typically open for about two months. During that time, the BCNPHA uses GiftTool's up-to-the-minute registrant reporting to track registration. If there are fewer purchases than expected, efforts can be made to step up conference marketing.

If particular workshops fill up quickly, capacity tracking provides sufficient notice to change rooms or make other arrangements as necessary. The GiftTool system allows for easy and instant modifications.

In addition, using the survey capabilities provided by the GiftTool Event Registrar, the BCNPHA collects information regarding food allergies and mobility requirements so that arrangements for accommodating specific participants can be made early and conveniently.

The Event Registrar solution provides event statistics such as weekly numbers of registrants and dollar amounts. This report is compared to that of the previous year in order to guide conference marketing.

The solution also features Export-to-Excel, which allows the Association to create any number of additional reports including an individualized itinerary for each participant. The itinerary is then printed on the back of the participant's name badge as a handy reference.

Client Benefits

During its first year of using the GiftTool Event Registrar, the BCNPHA was able to meet its key business objectives:

- increased process transparency,
- cost reduction, and
- efficient automation.

The BCNPHA has also received positive feedback about the registration process from its members.

Increased Transparency and Control

By bringing its conference and event management in-house, the BCNPHA has achieved more transparency and control over its registration process with:

- automated registration tasks,
- seamless electronic payments processing,
- better transparency into registration activities, and
- improved ability to act proactively with marketing or logistical changes.

Cost Reduction without Quality Reduction

With the GiftTool Event Registrar, the BCNPHA was able to:

- leverage its existing internal resources and
- reduce conference costs

while

- maintaining high-quality membership support.

Reusable Processes

An additional benefit of the GiftTool Event Registrar became obvious in the second year when the BCNPHA was able to reuse its existing conference template.

By simply copying and adapting the original conference template, the BCNPHA was able to leverage the effort spent developing the previous year's program to support other hosted events. ■■■

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