Experiential Learning Project - Theory Paper

STHM 4415

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**Chapter 12 - Bring Meetings to Life: Event Technology**

Chapter 12 of Professional Meeting Management analyzes event technology as being crucial for enhancing meetings and events, benefiting professionals, attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors throughout all event stages. It streamlines operations, improves attendee experiences, and provides valuable data for optimizing events. By leveraging technology like event-management software and audiovisual tools, organizers can increase ROI, reduce costs, and gain deeper attendee insights. Properly integrated technology facilitates seamless communication, content sharing, and collaboration, extending the event’s impact year-round. Audiovisual elements, when synchronized, create cohesive and memorable experiences, delivering messages effectively while maximizing engagement.

During the 2024 STHM Career Fair, event technology played a crucial role in enhancing the experience for both attendees and organizers. Microsoft Teams served as our main communication channel, ensuring seamless coordination among committees. In preparation for the event, we toured the venue “The Howard Gittis Student Center” to finalize logistics, including venue selection, room assignments, budgeting, promotion, and registration. Event technology streamlined these tasks by providing a centralized platform, fostering transparency and efficiency across teams. The user-friendly event website, Passport (simplicity) assisted employers and STHM students, serving as one of the primary registration and promotional tools. The website reflected the event’s branding and provided essential details, such as dates, location, employer highlights, and logos, offering attendees a professional and engaging first impression. Non-major students had an easy sign-up through a Microsoft form that was kept tracked through Excel. Social media was another key component of our strategy. We focused on engaging, communicating, and connecting with attendees through platforms like @STHMCIE, where we shared flyers, promotional videos, and updates. Weekly emails were sent leading up to the event, ensuring attendees had all the information needed to arrive prepared and on time.

During the event, technology enhanced the attendee experience. Students checked in quickly by scanning QR codes on the event iPads, which expedited the check-in process. Also, Projectors displayed key information about the career fair, while wayfinding QR codes allowed attendees to navigate the venue with ease.

After the event, we collected feedback using an online survey created through Microsoft Forms, which was emailed to all attendees. This post-event engagement provided valuable insights to improve future events and extended the impact of the career fair beyond its conclusion. These applications of event technology supported the career fair's goal of connecting students with industry professionals while ensuring a polished and impactful experience

Throughout the Experiential Learning Project, implementing event technology brought both challenges and advantages that shaped the overall experience. Microsoft Teams served as a central hub for streamlined communication and task management, promoting transparency across committees and simplifying collaboration. At the event, QR code scanning on iPads expedited check-in, reducing wait times and enhancing the attendee experience. Social media and email campaigns effectively communicated updates and generated excitement, helping to attract a diverse audience. Post-event, Microsoft Forms was used to gather valuable feedback, ensuring continuous improvement for future events.

However, challenges emerged throughout the process. Maintaining a steady flow of engaging content across social media platforms required significant time and creativity, making it difficult to balance this with other responsibilities. Opening registration earlier and closing it a few days prior to the event could have provided more time for preparation. Additionally, the chapter emphasized that projection is one of the most visible components of video services; we learned the importance of testing slides in advance and recalibrating screens, as color inconsistencies detracted from the event’s professional appearance. Despite these challenges, addressing them provided valuable learning experiences, highlighting the importance of contingency planning, adaptability, and proactive communication in event management.

In Chapter 12 of *Professional Meeting Management*, event technology is highlighted as an essential tool for enhancing events. By facilitating seamless communication, content sharing, and collaboration, event technology extends the life of events beyond their physical duration, creating memorable and impactful experiences.

This theory was effectively demonstrated during the 2024 STHM Career Fair, where event technology played a pivotal role in organizing and executing the event. From using Microsoft Teams for coordination to leveraging a user-friendly event website for promotion and registration, technology streamlined planning and improved operational efficiency. Tools like QR code check-ins, projectors, and wayfinding systems enhanced the on-site experience, while post-event feedback collected through Microsoft Forms provided actionable insights for future improvements. The Experiential Learning Project offered an opportunity to implement this concept in real-time, revealing both the strengths and challenges of using event technology. While the technology-enhanced efficiency, communication, and attendee engagement, challenges such as technical glitches, time constraints, and managing social media demands required creative problem-solving. Adjustments, like opening registration earlier and testing audiovisual equipment in advance, were key lessons learned.

In conclusion, the integration of event technology during the project reinforced its transformative potential in event management. It demonstrated how theoretical concepts can be applied to real-world scenarios, fostering valuable experiential learning and preparing students for professional success in the dynamic field of event planning.

References

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