



White paper

Choosing the right Event Management Software for your event.

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1. Choosing the right Event Management Software for your event

Organizing an event of any type is a challenging and sometimes exhausting task.

Of course preparing the content of the event itself is of utmost importance, but one mustn't forget about all the other tasks that will make your event a success.

Preparing and sending out invitations, launching a dedicated event website, collecting registrations and guest choices, collecting and managing payments, invoicing, producing individual badges, monitoring and analyzing event results, remarketing... the list is long!

Luckily, event management software solutions exist to make your life easier. They are especially designed to make you save money, spare time, and increase efficiency in your event organization journey.

However, when looking at the multitude of available solutions, it is not an easy task to choose the solution that suits your particular needs best.

The first part of this paper will help you understand the broad families of solutions available today, based on a few key differentiators.

The main angle with which the industry is going to be looked at here is the actors' targeting, or the fact that all solutions do not address the same audience.

The second part of the document is going to consist in a discussion, topic by topic, of the main aspects of event management that you'll need to consider in order to make an informed decision when choosing the event management software you will use.

Finally, we will end this paper with a short description of idloom-events®' offering, and how it differs from existing event management solutions.

2. Understanding event management software categories

Ticketing platforms

Although it has become sometimes difficult to distinguish the one from the other, the event management software industry can be categorized in three broad families of solutions, differing in their fundamental approach to event management.

The most widely known solutions are primarily what we could call ticketing platforms, in the sense that they mainly focus on the selling of one or more tickets to attendees, which are or are not identified depending on the solutions and events. Most of the existing ticketing solutions remain simple and easy to use, which is great for many events such as concerts or shows.

There is also the possibility of making your event public (published on the event management software's website), which can be a powerful tool for event promotion to the public.

On the other hand, these solutions most of the time lack the versatility required to organize more complex events, and are mostly used in B2C.

Indeed, customization is very limited and these solutions can be considered as one-size-fits-all products.

In terms of pricing, these solutions typically charge a percentage of event revenues (free events can be organized for free). On top of this percentage, some may apply additional percentages on the transactions that actually take place on their website, or sometimes charge an additional flat fee per registrant. Others, though less frequently, base their prices on the number of users that can access the platform, or on the features used by these users.

Event-specific solutions

The second broad category, which I will refer to as the event-specific solutions, regroups all private and public events that may require an event management

software to be efficiently organized. This category might for example include weddings and parties, but also trade fairs and shows. It entails thus both B2C and B2B uses.

The particularity of this category is that event-specific solutions often offer more than simply a registrations platform. Indeed, many of the actors of this segment are historically event planners or agencies, and therefore offer a wide range of services. Event management software is just one of these services, which go from venue selection to catering and hostesses. One might see these solutions as somewhat hybrid, because they offer a whole range of features around your event's organization.

The downside however is that, if you consider the event management software individually (which is the purpose of this paper...), they often underperform compared to their first category alternatives. Indeed, their software isn't always as easy to use and powerful. Because of the broad offering, these solutions haven't always pushed the software development as far as online-only competitors.

Regarding pricing, actors in this segment typically make proposals on a per event basis. It depends on the event and the resources required, as well as the software features and additional services or modules needed. Overall these actors tend to be more expensive than their competitors.

Client-focused solutions

The third broad family of event management software suppliers can be referred to as the client-focused category. The key aspects here are the client and its needs.

Actors in this category know their clients and their specific requirements when it comes to event management, and adapt their offerings accordingly. As a result, most actors specialize in a type of clientèle or industry and offer tailor-made software and service solutions. This category is almost entirely B2B-oriented.

Offerings in this third category may vary greatly between actors, ranging from specialized ticketing platforms to solutions specifically designed for one type of event, with or without additional on- or off-site services.

In terms of pricing, it is difficult to identify a pattern for this category. Some may offer very clear features at clearly defined prices while others will proceed through an RFP process.

Actors in this category go one step beyond simple ticketing platforms and offer more features and options.

3. Choosing the appropriate solution for your event

The purpose of this second part is not to influence your choice in any direction. To the contrary, the goal here is to give you an overview of every detail you need to consider when deciding what type of solution or which provider would suit you best.

Topic by topic, we will help you understand the ins and outs of every aspect of online event management.

Free vs. paid events

Your event is free for your attendees, but you have a budget to spend for event organization and management (i.e.: corporate events, award ceremonies, etc.). In this case, you could use either regular ticketing platforms for free ("freemium" formulas), which will provide you with the basic tools for registering your guests, or you could consider going with specialized event management software, which will cost you some money if you want more advanced features but will give you an overall better quality of service and event image.

Your event is free, and you're limited in budget (i.e.: private parties or any event where the budget is limited but you still need an event management software). Most of the time typical ticketing platforms will do the trick for this type of events. However, other more specialized providers also offer freemium offerings, and you might want to do a bit of research to find the solution that best suits you.

If your event is a paid event, in the sense that guests pay a ticket to participate, you will most probably need to pay a certain amount of money for the event management software you use, that is if you wish to have registrants pay online.

Indeed, many well-known platforms will charge you either a percentage on transactions, a fixed price per participant, or a combination of both. Others will charge a fixed price for your event, regardless of the number of participants or the amounts transferred.

If you are in this case, we recommend you to first clearly determine the type of software you need, and which are the options that are in line with your event's requirements. Only then, taking into account the number of participants, the amounts, and the characteristics required, will you be able to compare the costs and make an informed decision.

Prices may vary greatly from one provider to the other. If your event is a high ticket event with many participants, providers applying a percentage on prices might become very expensive very quickly, in which case you might want to consider other solutions with different pricing models.

To the contrary, if your event is a lower ticket event, these providers' prices will most likely not be prohibitive.

Event website

One of the key aspects of many events is promotion. The image your event gives away has an important impact on its overall attractiveness and success.

Most solutions out there provide you with some sort of online presence for your event. It ranges from a simple online registration form to a complete website with multiple tabs and pages.

If most providers only supply you with a standard registration form, many well-known solutions offer you the possibility to automatically create an event page where you can display basic event information.

From this page, you have the possibility to click on a register button to start your registration process.

However, these event pages are still quite limited in design and functionalities. If you want to add more pages (speakers, partners, program, etc.) and information about your event on a dedicated website, you will need to turn to more advanced (not more expensive) solutions.

In your choice of event management software, the quality of the event website you are provided with is an attribute we strongly advise you to factor in, as it might have a significant impact on the success of your event promotion.

Choose a platform that is in line with the event promotion you want to roll out.

Registration form

All providers provide registration forms, as it is after all the core of the offering. There are however some differences, mainly in terms of personalization of the fields and versatility of the display.

When you plan your event, you need to think about what you will ask your registrants in the registration form. Some of you will only require the most basic information, such as name, email address, etc. If this is your case, almost all event management software will work for you.

On the other hand, if you need to add special fields (dietary requirements, allergies, accompanying person...), or even ask information that requires multi-line answers, you will need to do your research and find the providers which will offer you these types of features.

Confirmation emails

Almost all event management software providers offer confirmation and alert emails. However, the quality of these messages might differ between softwares.

Do participants receive the right messages when they need it? Do they receive last minute emails to remember them of the event? Do they receive attachments with their emails...?

Another aspect of email notifications you might want to analyze is the level of personalization that you are allowed. Do the emails display the software company logo, or your own, ...

e-ticketing

Do you need to give away tickets to your guests? Do they have to be nominative? This is another important factor to consider when making your event management software decisions.

Some providers don't offer this service, some offer only standard ticketing, some offer nominative tickets with barcodes or QR codes on them to serve as e-tickets.

Depending on your event and your guests, you need to assess which type of tickets would work best.

On site check-in

To build on the ticketing topic, another important aspect of your event is on site check-in. Indeed, having hundreds of people line up in queues at the event venue can quickly become a nightmare for an event organizer if he/she hasn't planned a way to rapidly check-in guests. Of course this depends on the type of event as well as the number of attendants.

One should also consider the time at which participants will arrive: are they split up over several hours, in which case long queues are less frequent, or do they all arrive at the same time (as for most events), in which case you better be ready to check them in as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Most providers don't cover the on-site aspect of event management. However, some offer you the possibility to check-in guests via their platforms, either manually or with a QR or barcode reading. This can be done via a browser or from a (dedicated or not) mobile application.

Invoicing

For most corporate paid events, invoicing participants after the event is mandatory. If you are in this position, and especially if you organize events with large numbers of participants, you will want to choose an event management software that handles the invoicing for you. It will make you save huge amounts of time and headaches! Just imagine having to invoice each participant individually...

On this front again, not all solutions offer the same features. While many basic providers don't cover invoicing at all, some well-known ticketing platforms offer some sort of invoicing features, though most of the time in the form of a simple summary of purchases.

If you want a tool that allows you to automate invoicing in a professional way (as if you did it yourself), we recommend you look for more advanced solutions,

mainly amongst the B2B-specific, specialized event management softwares (third category).

This is especially true for example if you need to apply complex VAT rates (events in a foreign country, with foreign attendees, ... it can get very complicated very quickly!), address the invoice to another person than the participant himself, or need your invoices to display a particular prefix or number (i.e. to stay in line with your company's accounting), etc.

Furthermore, you might want to look for solutions that also let you generate credit notes, in case a participant cancels his/her registration.

Online guest management

Depending on your event and the level of control you need to have over registrations, you will also need to choose a platform that gives you a clear view on participants and participants choices.

Additionally, it is important to be able to add or delete participants as well as change their choices, payment methods, invoicing options, etc., directly from the backend.

Not all solutions offer you the same level of control over your event's registrants, so we advise you to consider this point as well in your choice.

Badge creation

Beyond a certain number of participants, you will need to distribute badges, especially if your event is corporate.

You can either work with a professional badge company, or prefer to create and print them yourself to save you the trouble and the money. If this is your case, choosing a software that automatically creates nominative badges is what you need.

Only a handful of providers offer this feature. Be careful not to choose your provider for this feature only though, as you want to consider the whole package before making any decision.

Post-event analysis

After your event, the analysis of key data such as participant attendance to various workshops or “sub-events”, as well as purchasing behaviors during the registration process, or any other aspects might be interesting to analyze and understand for remarketing purposes or to change some things for your next event.

If this is relevant for your event, make sure you choose a software that allows you to keep track of your guests and analyze their choices. Many solutions out there do offer either a built-in feature or a connection with Google Analytics or a similar solution.

Level of support

Another key aspect to consider is the level of support and assistance you require from your software solution provider.

If you organize small, free events, you might not need any assistance at all in which case any provider will do the trick.

For more complex, large corporate events, it can be very useful to have someone to talk to and ask advice. If this is your case, we recommend you skip the standard ticketing platforms and go straight to more professional, B2B-oriented offerings, as they will offer quality customer assistance and support when you'll need it.

Additional services

Last but not least, the number and nature of additional services you require for your event may have an impact on the provider you choose.

If you plan on hiring an external event manager or agency to handle additional services such as machine rental, catering, guest seating, tablet rental for on site check-in, etc., then you can work with any software provider that fulfills your needs.

If you on the other hand prefer to work with a single provider for your entire event, you should consider providers that not only offer you online event management solutions but also the additional services you require.

To conclude...

As you can see, there are many aspects in event management that you need to consider before choosing a software provider.

The best solution for some might not be the best fit for you, which is why we recommend taking a step back and thinking of your event as a whole in order to consider every aspect of it.

We hope this helicopter view will help you make an informed decision when selecting your event management software provider for your next event.

4. About idloom-events®

Idloom-events® belongs to the third category of event management software, in the sense that our work and offering is mainly client-focused. Indeed, the platform has been developed especially for its users, which are mainly international associations and industry lobbies, as well as large private or public corporations.

Our clients have in common the fact that they organize frequent events in the form of seminars or conferences taking place over the course of several days and with (very) complex programs (several speakers and conferences per day, with different price tags and attendee lists, ...).

Our entire offering has been designed to answer these precise needs, starting with the creation of a dedicated event website with a customized URL and multiple pages displaying for example the program, the speakers and their descriptions, sponsors, partners, and all other pages they might need.

The event website is fully customizable, and our clients own branding is displayed on every page, which is a very valuable and rare feature in the industry. In terms of event promotion, these are extremely powerful attributes!

On the registration side, forms are fully editable and the platform automates everything from e-ticketing and on-site check-in via a mobile app to customized invoicing and payment systems, but also hotel room booking, badge editing, guest list and data monitoring and analysis, confirmation emails, etc.

Idloom-events® handles all VAT calculations and, for the most complex events, is able to apply multiple VAT rates depending on the country of origin of the guest, location of the event, or type of event.

In terms of pricing, idloom-events® chose to offer all its features at a significantly lower price point than the competition. Furthermore, no percentages are charged on transactions at any stage of the registration and payment processes.

In a nutshell, idloom-events® is tailor-made for its clients and offers the highest level of personalization and versatility in its segment. The software allows our clients to spare time and save money in their event organization processes, but

also to reach an unparalleled level of professionalism which directly reflects on their image and reputation.

You'll find more information about us at www.idloom.com . If you wish to know more about how we could help you organize your next professional events, or if you simply have questions regarding this article please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at info@idloom.com. Our team will be glad to assist you.

We wish you the best of success in the organization of your future events!

The idloom-events® Team.