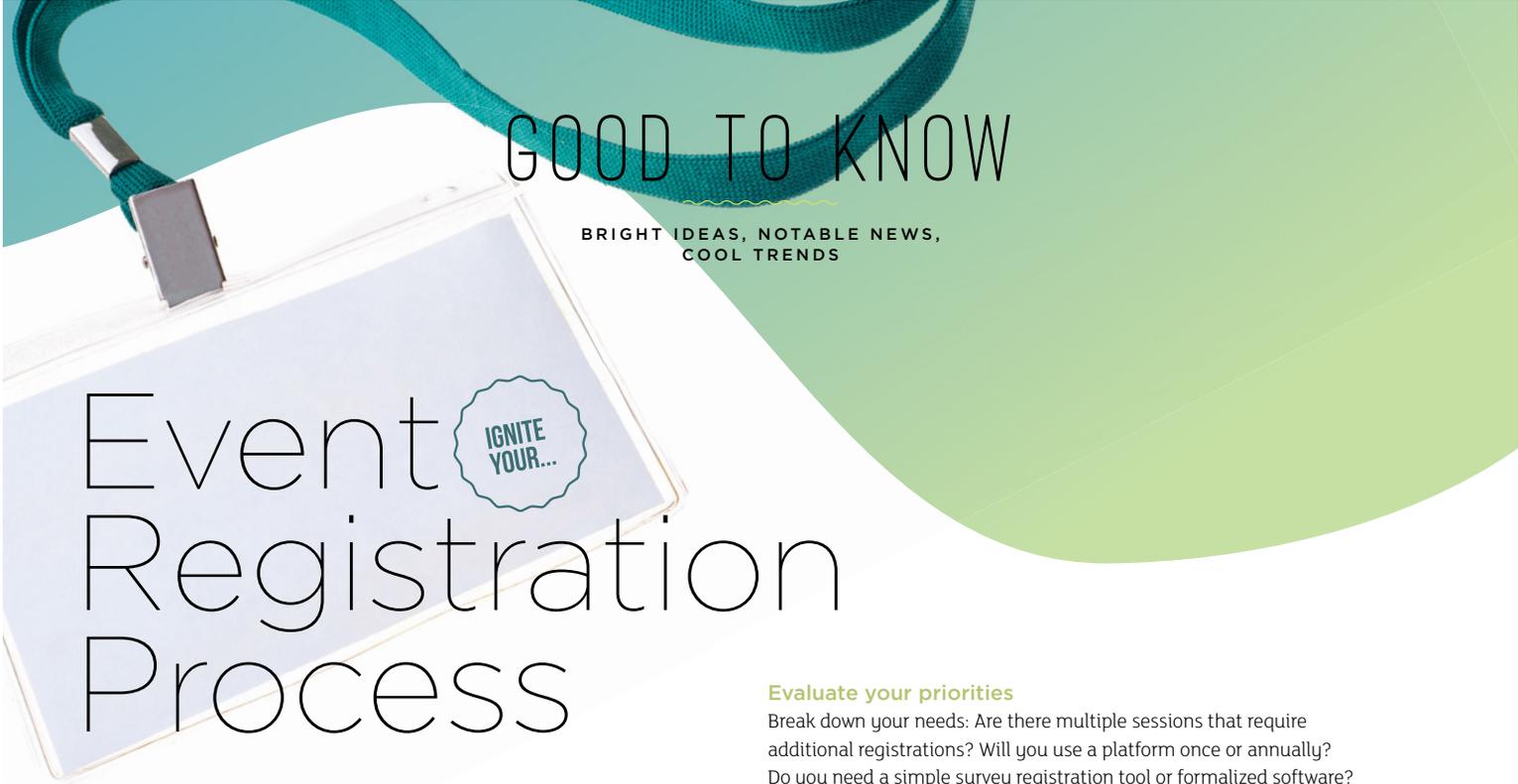


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## Event Registration Process



How to optimize this vital attendee touchpoint

by Wendy Helfenbaum

As registration software developments come fast and furious, with a myriad of customized options, planners face an overwhelming array of choices. Whether you're pivoting to hybrid or virtual events, here's how to determine your needs so you can create a tailored solution for your next event.

### Build around your attendees' expectations

"My audience is a bunch of meeting professionals, so the bar is set very, very high; we need a quick, seamless, very easy, self-guided process," says Melinda Burdette, director of events for Meeting Professionals International, which runs 50 events per year, including multiple online programs that require registration.

"When in-person events return, it's important our attendees don't spend significant time waiting in line or having issues at the registration desk, so we ask lots of questions and get acknowledgements on the front end."

Burdette notes there are ways to reduce touchpoints in the registration area, such as having a bring-your-own-badge option that has a QR code.

"We've seen that registration for virtual or digital events escalates around two weeks prior to the event," she says. "Since there's no travel or accommodations to be arranged, attendees wait later to register."

At MPI's 2019 WEC event in Toronto, attendees used the QR code generated by MPI's automated Cvent platform during online registration and checked in at an on-site kiosk that printed out event badges.

### Evaluate your priorities

Break down your needs: Are there multiple sessions that require additional registrations? Will you use a platform once or annually? Do you need a simple survey registration tool or formalized software?

"Based on how intricate your event is, you'll need different systems to get attendees registered, whether you're collecting financial information and analytical data or deciding between a confirmation email or sending information directly to their calendar," says Christina Northcott, senior manager, conferences and events at Canada Health Infoway in Toronto.

"For us, it was important the data remained within Canada," says Northcott. "For less-intricate events, we use survey tools to track registration."

Building event registration platforms for virtual events is easier because there's no need to include transportation or accommodation details, adds Northcott.

"As a result, the timelines are shorter. Many of the virtual event platforms include a registration component, therefore your data is contained within one environment, which provides you with great analytics."

Planners should be able to customize a registration platform, adds Burdette. "Establish a relationship with your vendor so they can work with you to make that platform meet your needs. We need something intuitive that lives between a registration page, a website and a mobile app, so as you go from pre- to post-event, there's knowledge shared between those internal platforms." →