

World Market Center Automates Management of 3.5 Million-Square-Foot Event

“After the first show in July 2005, I started looking at how well it had gone and from a data management point of view, we used brute force to pull off that event. I could tell the systems wouldn’t be able to handle things going forward. We consolidated all those disparate systems in a2z, where the database is kept in synch using web services.”

— Alex Peachey, Database Manager, World Market Center, Las Vegas

CHALLENGE:

When World Market Center (WMC) debuted the Las Vegas Market in July 2005, it was the largest trade show launch in U.S. history. The twice yearly event now features more than 4 million square feet of temporary exhibits and permanent showrooms for the home and hospitality contract furnishings industry. By 2013, when WMC is complete, the trade show complex will total 12 million square feet, with exhibit space in eight buildings.

During startup, WMC used separate systems for prospecting, customer data management, floor planning, directory publishing and event portal management. Transferring data between systems was a manual process. After the first show, it was clear that this cumbersome approach would not support events of this magnitude. WMC needed an easy-to-use, scalable solution that would give all departments access to accurate information for multiple events.

SOLUTION:

WMC selected the a2zShow event management system for end-to-end event management, consolidating disparate systems in a single database with one administrative interface. Using web services technology, the a2z system integrates with WMC’s customer relationship management system, ACT!, to provide a seamless interface for automatic data synchronization. The solution eliminates double data entry and ensures exhibitor information stays consistent across systems and events. a2z’s web-based system provides secure access to up-to-date event data for anyone who needs it. Sales, operations and marketing now pull reports from one central location, eliminating inaccurate and outdated spreadsheets. Exhibitors see the most current floor plans that display what space is still available, simplifying the sales process. Vendors retrieve the information they need to create event portals, publish directories, and provide event services.

RESULTS:

Using a2z’s co-located events feature, WMC set up the permanent showroom buildings as one year-round event, and the twice yearly trade shows as their own separate events. Managing all the space in one system has streamlined the associated processes:

- **Onsite booth sales** — a2zShow enabled WMC to do advance booth sales onsite for the first time in January 2007, when they sold about 25 percent of the space for the 2007 Summer Market.
- **Real-time floor plans** — Online maps eliminate the need to print, mark-up and fax maps to prospective exhibitors, making booth sales smoother, faster and less cumbersome.
- **Accurate financial reports** — Instead of using unreliable spreadsheets, the leasing team can get an instant snapshot of accounts payable before talking with exhibitors and showroom tenants.
- **Staffing requirements** — WMC is growing, but using a2zShow has limited the number of new hires needed to manage accounts to perhaps one new hire instead of two or three.
- **Immediate cost savings** — The systems and services a2zShow replaced were more expensive, resulting in as much as 30 percent cost savings per year.
- **Return on investment** — Because a2zShow is licensed per show, and one of the systems it replaced was licensed per seat, a2zShow paid for itself within one year.

“a2z makes it possible for our vendors to pull information from one system, rather than our trying to consolidate information and share it around.”

— Alex Peachey, Database Manager, World Market Center, Las Vegas