

OVERVIEW

Dell is one of the world's largest technology solutions companies, delivering innovative technology, business solutions and services to a worldwide community of users. With more than \$52 billion in annual revenue in 2010, it was listed 38th on the Fortune list of top companies. As a global leader, Dell conducts meetings and events all over the world, producing user conferences, training meetings, technical seminars, executive dinners, trade shows, hospitality days, product launches, partner conferences, technology showcases, and webinars. Competing in a hotly competitive marketplace, Dell recognizes the value of meetings and events as a strategic marketing tool to extend and promote brand awareness and to educate its current user base and internal teams. It hosts close to 3,000 events annually in more than 20 countries and has hundreds of people involved in the process.

CHALLENGE

While Dell is synonymous with performance and efficiency, the procedures and controls in its global event registration process were decentralized with each department operating independently by region and market. This was causing inconsistent reporting from country to country and division to division, impeding Dell's ability to accurately track attendee levels, overall success and various other functions.

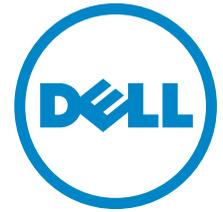
"When we audited the global teams, we uncovered more than 16 different registration systems in use worldwide," said Liz Lathan, Dell's Director of Americas Event Marketing. "We realized we needed a standardized process for events." Depending on whether you registered for the same Dell event in Germany or Switzerland, you could be using two completely different registration systems and have a totally different brand experience. "We were losing a lot of brand credibility," Lathan said.

Dell was also losing cost efficiencies by using multiple vendors. Many of the vendors worked on a "pay as you go" approach to system customization with no incentive to rein in customization costs or the number of hours required. In the Americas, for example, every time Dell needed a new reporting template, it cost between \$1500 and \$3000, plus \$75 an hour when they needed technical support.

EVALUATION

Dell needed to present a more consistent experience for those attending their events in a manner that maintained data integrity and privacy for users. Saving money was important, but it was not the driving force – Dell needed to standardize processes using one vendor with an integrated set of software applications that implement and manage events. The company needed a solution that could change as their market needs changed, could adapt as the industry adapted, and could come to market quickly and efficiently with upgrades and new releases.

As Dell evaluated vendors, etouches quickly distinguished itself with its one-stop shop, personalization and global capabilities. etouches was available in all 21 languages required of Dell. etouches also provided thorough global support, which was important to Dell as its efforts were about to increase in the Asian market. Also, unlike other vendors with six-month or yearly product refresh cycles, etouches issued updates every month.



Quick Facts:

- Headquarters: Round Rock, Texas
- Employees: 96,000 worldwide
- Annual Revenue: \$52.9 billion
- Fortune 1000 Rank: 38
- 2992 meetings/events annually
- 742 people involved in meeting planning
- Events in 23 different countries
- Events in 21 different languages

"etouches' background in event management was such a benefit. They always understand what we are talking about – they are a partner in our success."

*-Liz Lathan
Director of Americas
Event Marketing*

SOLUTION

Dell made the decision to centralize worldwide event management under etouches, and the benefits were immediately apparent. "We couldn't believe how well and how easy we were able to capture global information and look at specific category spends," said Lathan. "Our automated reporting has been a huge plus – we can automatically email spreadsheets to whoever needs it. We determine the content and we determine the frequency. This has been a great help in our decision making."

Before the partnership with etouches, reporting was a challenge for Dell. "We did not have the ability to track if an invitation was received or opened – we just had the ability to see if it was a bounce-back. And we were using separate tools for post-event surveys. Under etouches, we are now confident in the customer experience. We have templates in the system, and we have amazing support from etouches whenever we run into an issue."

Dell found etouches was flexible enough to support the Dell process, adjust to Dell's needs and, as a result, accelerate user adoption – unlike other vendors who required Dell to adapt to the vendors' system-defined process and offered limited flexibility at a cost. By shedding the maintenance and support associated with Dell's previous 16 systems and moving to etouches, the company estimates savings of at least six figures.

While it wasn't in Dell's initial requirements, the company took advantage of etouches' productivity software such as eBudget and eProject. eBudget allowed Dell to set up an approved budget for any event and track its progress in real time, being integrated with eReg to follow costs and revenue gains as they were realized within the system. eProject helped Dell create event timelines, assign tasks to team members, send out reminders, and stay on schedule.

NEXT STEPS

As Dell looks to the future, they see their event business getting simpler yet more complex. "Our events are not necessarily growing in quantity, but they are growing in size," Lathan said. "We'll be keeping an eye out for other tools and enhancements from etouches that will continue to take the load off our event managers, make their jobs easier and help reach our customers."

More companies like Dell are looking to chart a path to better operational and procedural efficiency. They are seeing the benefits of managing events under one centralized, integrated suite of web-based software tools that allows them to better analyze, predict, track, streamline, strategize, implement and deliver the kinds of events that are going to make a difference to their bottom lines. Ultimately for Dell, it was the partnership with etouches that made it happen.



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-Liz Lathan
Director of Americas
Event Marketing

About etouches

etouches is a global on-demand suite of integrated software applications that help organizations perform every function in the event planning lifecycle.

etouches offers tools for:

- registration
- budgeting
- project management
- scheduling
- event microsite
- seating
- surveying
- event marketing
- booth purchasing
- networking