



run^oevents

How to build an ecosystem for
professional event organizers

WHITEPAPER

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Introduction

The event and conference-organizing industry has faced a great change in the past couple of years. Promising signs are visible on the horizon, but tumultuous years behind us have shaken the industry and highlighted significant indicators that event and conference organizers cannot ignore.

Technology has become the main driver in the events industry, while at the same time event and conference organizers are well aware of how fragmented the event software market is. In general, complex or singular tools are getting organizers further away from their core tasks, and that’s where event management software comes into the equation. It’s important to understand how to choose between the many available solutions and, more importantly, how to execute the migration process with the least number of problems that might come your way. As our guide is here to help build a sustainable ecosystem for event and conference organizers, we will explain how to plan carefully to side-step the hurdles and continue running amazing events and conferences.

Let’s dive in.



The events industry is on the verge of change

Not so long ago, it was hard to believe that the industry would ever show signs of healing and recovery post-pandemic. However, stakeholders have been daring enough to predict growth. The size of the events industry is expected to reach \$1,552.9 billion by 2028, registering a CAGR of 11.2% from 2021 to 2028, according to [Allied Market Research](#). Despite difficulties, the events industry is finding its way to survive and evolve, adding multiple new dimensions to its already vast ecosystem.

Through its ability always to evolve, the events industry has survived and overcome the unprecedented impact of the global pandemic, which has been followed by further and continued uncertainty. These tectonic shifts impacted and halted several aspects of the events industry, while some accelerated. Mandatory isolation and life under social distancing rules enhanced concepts of virtual and hybrid events, which helped maintain momentum. Ultimately, these emerging factors became dominant and significantly altered the events industry.

Suddenly, event organizers had to create more memorable experiences under limited conditions, while using rapidly evolving technology to support upcoming virtual events. Digital technology encouraged attendees to build meaningful connections and foster strong networks despite limited virtual contact. But in the end all these solutions failed to offer memorable networking opportunities.

With the relaxation of in-person contact in post-pandemic times, event organizers face new challenges, where safety has become a priority. Building trust that leads to safety has become an important component of event organization. Nowadays, organizers must define and maintain clear safety protocols, designing events with digital or touchless communication, where event apps become a point of contact between all stakeholders and the event experience.

Expectations of attendees have also significantly altered, as event organizers face a divide. Some groups are excited about returning to in-person events; by contrast, others want to continue attending (just) virtual events. This extraordinary situation pushes event organizers to decide between a virtual, hybrid, or on-site focus. But from the other perspective, organizers are in the sweet spot. Why? Because nowadays organizers can optimize their portfolio by choosing between on-site and virtual events according to the event context, size, audience preference, or geographic limitation.

In such cases, organizers must rely on amorphic technology to support any chosen ecosystem, or combine all at once.

The events industry's rapid development causes market fragmentation

In the last two decades, the events industry witnessed massive innovation in specialized, computer-based software for event management. During this period, organizers witnessed online software applications for event registration, ticketing, and event marketing. However, the rapid development of event management tools, designed to help event organizers through the organization process (i.e., registration, budgeting, badge scanning) contributed to high market fragmentation.

The rapid development of event technology brought simplicity and easy-to-use interfaces, with shorter learning curves that enhanced faster technology adoption by all team members. In addition, software developers designed their tools to be accessible from anywhere using cloud technology, without installing software or maintenance on local computers. These types of software are extremely reliable most of the time, but there is always a possibility of a security breach. Therefore, event organizers typically look for platforms that offer robust data encryption services. A fully secure event management platform allows event planners to stop worrying about hackers, phishing attacks and/or malicious malware. That's why SaaS tools provide a good choice as digital platforms that have minimal system downtimes.

An upturn in event management platform development brought a distinction between key players offering high-end tools, and small or medium players developing standalone software that contributes to different aspects of event organization.

Therefore, market researchers attribute projected high fragmentation to the revenue generated by new start-ups and other established small- and medium-sized event management software providers operating in the global market. Approximately 65% of the market is held by such businesses, according to [FMI](#) research.

Benefits of using event management platform

Most event organizers still use multiple technologies to produce virtual, hybrid, or on-site events. As you probably know, managing an event can be extremely difficult. That's where single event management platform (EMP) brings real success.

1) Easier management

EMP acts as a centralized hub where event organizers can manage all elements of an event, such as budgeting, analytics, schedule, speakers, guest accommodation, venue, registration payments, reporting, etc. Event management software helps you track all major event elements to make your event run smoothly. Ultimately, organizing your event becomes easier than manually managing the project and organizing all event aspects.

2) Saves time

Saving time occurs through automating all processes. The software enables you to streamline all processes, from registration tracking to bookings and payment processing or tracking emails. Not to mention that automation helps keep event planners happy by supporting a great experience for attendees and event guests and is the key to realizing a positive return on investment.

3) Cuts costs

EMP helps you track your spending and analyze it against event budgets, with a user-friendly interface and reporting that allows you to visualize your spending to achieve maximized return on investments (ROI). Event organizers find keeping track of a budget on a project that is of a bigger scale extremely complicated. Using EMP, you can see exactly where and when money is going in or out of your project at all times.

4) Increases engagement

EMP uses multiple actions to increase engagement rates and encourage participant communication before, during, and after the event. Organizers can keep attendees engaged during events with digital activities and games, live posts, and updates or obtain feedback polls. Using these features helps maintain audience expectations and builds a loyal community interested in following your events year-round.

5) Improves data collection

The software uses data protection to manage personal data to ensure that organizers comply with current regulations. Simplifying and streamlining this process is one of the key benefits of using EMP, keeping multiple logs of attendees' details and preferences, such as who has been invited and who has paid for their ticket. It also makes it easier to capture leads during the event by badge scanning, to allow sending personalized emails using segmented email lists.

6) Analysis

One of the strongest EMP features is assessing the success of events at any time. Polling, reporting, and analytics will provide you with feedback and generate reports to analyze what went well and where you could improve next time.

EMP is highly beneficial for event organizers because it saves time and helps improve the attendees' experience during events.



5 major challenges event organizers face right now

The event and conference industry is facing multiple challenges today. It isn't enough that planning any event demands a lot of work, time, and dedication. Additionally, event organizers have to deal with multiple tools to achieve organizational goals, or stick to conventional spreadsheets, creating an even greater risk of making mistakes. For those already using, or considering using, one of the available EMPs on the market, here is the list of the most common challenges.

1) Incomplete and fragmented event software

Event and conference organizers are facing incomplete, fragmented, and mutually incompatible software tools for conference organization, which cause high licensing, maintenance, and operation costs on the one hand and risky data migrations on the other.

2) Lack of management platform

The market lacks enterprise management platforms, which leads to discontinuity in business processes and cost increase, along with the lack of a transparent view on the bigger picture.

3) Unfavorable spending policies

Costs are charged upfront for required software tools when the financial success of the conferences is all but guaranteed.

4) Virtual events uprising

The vast majority of event organizers are still using multiple technologies to produce their virtual events. The advent of digital events, which emerged during the global pandemic, has proved unsatisfactory in this form to both attendees and exhibitors.

As the events industry is rapidly developing under the fresh breeze of post-pandemic recovery, it's important to constantly monitor all emerging trends and breakthroughs when it comes to event management platform development.

How to design an ecosystem for all conference stakeholders

Event organizers are under great constraints today, managing numerous details using multiple apps and tools to support their decisions and planning processes.

Arranging a corporate event is a massive task and, as an event professional, you have probably dealt with many of them with success. Unforeseen incidents, vendor-related issues, sudden bottlenecks in cashflow, last-minute tasks, or misalignments in short- and long-term plans are the tip of the event-organizing iceberg. These tasks are of great importance to event organizers but, at the same time, draining a lot of energy if tackled all at once. On the other side, there is a significant demand from attendees looking for a practical, easy-to-use, and glitch-free event app as their main source to navigate agendas, network, rate events, or plan to attend future ones.

Understanding the status quo has encouraged run.events to develop a SaaS platform with a unique mixture of subject matter and technology knowledge that changes the ecosystem and brings long-awaited disruption to the events industry.

Innovation driven from professional experience

Based on a decade of experience in organizing one of the largest technology conferences in Europe, run.events has created an entirely new approach toward event management software by offering a continuous ecosystem for all stakeholders (i.e., conference organizers, attendees, sponsors, speakers, service providers). The system enables event organizers to run the business entirely without a set-up fee and upfront costs, with a practical pricing model based on a commission fee.

The business and pricing model based on sales commission requires no upfront license costs. This helps enormously decrease the risks and total ownership costs for event organizers. It aims to replace multiple software tools, which must be paid upfront, with a single enterprise platform priced according to financial success.

In his letter of support, Mr Mark Jones, from the UK company Collabris Ltd, stated:

“To deliver conferences on a platform that offers the best experience for the speaker, attendee, host, and sponsor has been our biggest challenge. We have tried most of the leading platforms. No single system has met our requirements, so we’ve relied on multiple systems causing us more cost and time.”

Key disruption areas

The run.events platform is looking to provide numerous solutions for all involved stakeholders inside the events industry by:

- Offering an enterprise management platform that will enable conference organizers to manage their entire business, including multiple events, over multiple years.
- Offering a pricing model based on ticket sales commission, which eliminates financial and other risks for the event organizer.
- Offering attendees to use one account with a simplified way to manage their business networks for all conferences they attend.
- Enabling sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, and service partners in self-service areas to gain insights into conference engagements, orders, deliverables, and due dates.



Events industry stakeholders' pains vs. gains

Event stakeholders play a crucial role in event success. Understanding their behavior, expectations, and demands contributes to organizing fluid and glitch-free events. As an event organizer, you must be aware that satisfying event stakeholders is a one-off chance, making it extremely difficult to plan circumstances that can lead either to disaster or to ultimate event success.

Based on run.events' founders long-term experience in the events industry (especially in conference organizing) and complete understanding of 4 types of stakeholders became the foundation stone when designing our solution. The run.events team has been in talks with companies (sponsors), event organizers, service partners, and attendees on how to combine and incorporate solutions to their concerns and requests into just one solution.

The outcome resulted in an event management platform (EMP) that provides continuous access to the decision-making process. Events industry stakeholders at all times will have continued access in case of any major event change (i.e., postponement, cancellation, or other updates) or ongoing procedures leading toward event execution (i.e., call for speakers, sponsorships, lead generation, gamification, or giveaways).

Let's deep dive into each stakeholder group to better understand how run.events solve their specific problems.

Customers/Client (Event organizers)

Professional event organizers face a major set of problems today: increased costs, complexity, and risks. These elements are caused by fragmentation and the incompatibility of software tools they use to run their business.

run.events internal data indicates that, on average, event organizers use six different tools and countless spreadsheets to manage just one conference. This situation leads to high licensing, maintenance, and operational costs. Since those tools need the access to the same set of data, data migration between multiple tools often causes errors, leading to additional financial losses and customer dissatisfaction.

5 major setbacks for event organizers

- Too much time and money spent on running and maintaining different tools
- More personnel needed to operate different systems
- Introduction of different software tools requires complex data migration, which carries the potential risks of data loss or even personal customer data breaches
- Data migration between multiple tools often causes errors
- Spreadsheets are used to manage areas that aren't covered by available software tools

As a tech company with first-hand subject-matter knowledge, run.events started developing its platform as an EMP that will enable event and conference organizers to maintain their focus on the business instead of the tools.

6 benefits of using run.events for event organizers

- Manage their entire business over multiple years and conferences
- Engage in long-term relationship management with sponsors, exhibitors, service partners, and customers
- Increase customer engagement and business network expansion in between conferences
- Create financial plans and track budgets and their executions over multiple conferences and years
- Manage all aspects of a single event or conference (planning, marketing, sales, management, and follow-up)
- Manage all stakeholders within a single conference (attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, service partners, and speakers)

Professional event and conference organizers are always trying to reduce licensing and operational costs by limiting the number of tools and their complexity. Some tools are used to cover sales aspects, others tackle ticketing and invoices, while still others are focused on content and agenda or digital streaming. However, none of these tools enable conference organizers to manage their business in their entirety (e.g., the capacity to manage long-term relations with exhibitors, customers, and service partners) or to carry out budgetary planning and execution and financial and resource planning.

Attendees

Attendees comprise the largest user group in the run.events ecosystem. It's not unknown that attendees often are the loudest in criticizing as unsatisfactory their 'digital experience' (i.e., web, app, digital content) at most events and especially conferences. Such digital set-ups often use different systems for conference registration and tickets and, on the other side, completely different systems for agendas, sessions, sponsors, and interactions. In addition, they are often impacted by mistakes during data migration between systems, reducing user satisfaction and conference loyalty.

4 major setbacks for attendees

- Difficult business network expansion and management. The business contacts established at one conference remain in the ecosystem of just that conference, making it later very challenging for them to transfer their context to other business networking tools.
- Attendees maintain many apps, logins, and identities for different conferences, so materials from one conference stay blocked within its respective app or web interface.
- Attendees suffer from a 'zoom fatigue' – disinterest in the ever-growing number of digital events and reduced interest in the digital events they attend.
- Networking opportunities at digital events in their current state are almost non-existent.
- run.events improve attendees' experience by offering an easy-to-use mobile app interface with multi-year access to event or conference materials.

4 benefits of using run.events for attendees

- One account, one experience for the conferences they attend, and one access point to conference materials across multiple years
- Easy-to-build and easy-to-manage business networks and contacts over years and conference
- Insights (consent required) explaining which conferences their business contacts are visiting next
- Intuitive mobile app experience available on all platforms (iOS, Android)

The run.events mobile app pays special attention to seamless conference registration, data security, and an easy-to-use interface to remedy attendees' dissatisfaction with the digital experience.

Sponsors/Exhibitors

Sponsors/Exhibitors are often considered event organizers' main stakeholders. It's a common understanding that the expo area is one of the most important elements of the conference; it's not difficult to see that the entire event is based on the expos (as in the case of fairs), which defines sponsors/exhibitors focus into lead generation.

Sponsors and exhibitors typically face numerous issues at events and conferences, which could be solved or improved using the run.events platform. But let's first identify major setbacks.

3 major setbacks for sponsors/exhibitors

- There is no ability for lead tracking over multiple years and conferences. With each conference, the sponsors' experience has to start from the very beginning, making it difficult to track and analyze existing and new leads, along with their behaviors and interests.
- Sponsors and exhibitors suffer the most with introducing the new digital-only events, where their presence and offerings are being reduced to a website with chat functionalities. These limitations exclude their main networking tools, such as casual conversations, product demos, on-booth events, and attendee giveaways.
- Disconnected lead generation at hybrid events, where digital and in-person leads don't end up in the same database, making it difficult for sponsors to track and analyze leads across companies, industries, and interests.

These can be seen as the most important contributing factors to use the run.events platform as a sponsor/exhibitor.

5 benefits of using run.events for sponsors/exhibitors

- Centralized communications, which includes all deadlines and tasks, with event organizers within the sponsor area
- A self-service area where sponsors and exhibitors can upload their visuals and booth materials
- A lead management area, where leads are gathered together with their notes and context, regardless of whether they come face-to-face, virtually, or through the web or mobile apps
- Lead analytics and insights providing lead behaviors and lead industries, interests, and geographies
- Enhanced attendee engagement through various gamification features, such as quizzes and giveaways, both in person and at virtual events

Service partners

Service partners, such as caterers, booth builders, logistics services, and tech partners, present as stakeholders to event organizers, sponsors, and exhibitors. In general, service partners are more or less invisible to attendees. However, any miscommunication between conference organizers, sponsors/exhibitors, and service partners will be easily noticeable by attendees, through multiple mistakes and glitches in the supply chain, which will result in poor service quality.

Service partners face two major problems before and during events and conferences.

2 major setbacks for service partners

- Complicated order management, as organizers, sponsors, and exhibitors use various communication channels to provide orders or explain their wishes. Systematizing orders, tracking tasks, and due dates and deadlines become the major challenges for service partners.
- All service partners, especially those that aren't bound to venues, suffer from the lack of visibility. In general, they demand better presentations from the event or conference organizers.

In this case, run.events offers two major advantages to service partners.

2 benefits of using run.events for service partners

- Centralized order management, where service partners have insights into all service orders, regardless of whether they come from the conference organizers or the sponsors/exhibitors. run.events support various service orders containing documentation (i.e., offers, invoices), tasks, due dates, and completion levels.
- A service provider marketplace is in development, in the form of a catalog of all service partners, with descriptions of service offers, capacity, and geographical territories where they can provide services. In terms of finding last-minute solutions for event and conference organizers, run.events provide easy ways to find it while increasing much-needed service partner visibility.

Service partners are thus particularly interested in optimizing and improving communications and planning with organizers on the one side and sponsors and exhibitors on the other.



run.events, a SaaS solution for event and conference organizers

As the name suggests, an event management platform (EMP) serves a wide variety of features that are at the event organizer's disposal. Currently, numerous products are available on the market, so choosing between high-end or lower-level solutions suiting the individual needs creates difficulties for event organizers. As a general rule, select the right one based on the possibilities for integration and their depth.

run.events, as an EMP, has been designed from scratch to support event organizers in all aspects of their business, with a modern, cloud-based platform. The platform doesn't require set-up time or upfront payments. It features a modern, web-based user interface that enables quick adoption and short getting-used-to time. From its conceptual phase, run.events should become a central communication point with the main event stakeholders: attendees, sponsors, speakers, and service providers.

The platform itself constantly evolves, but the go-to-market version already has numerous features to ease event organizers' day-to-day tasks. The platform's main focus is on the features that help event organizers with seamless ticketing configurations and sales, tickets and attendee management, customers and invoicing, customer relationship management (CRM) and sponsors management, and speakers and agenda management.

Event ticketing

Ticket sales generate the biggest chunk of revenue in the events business. Maximizing revenue opportunities is a priority for any EMP currently available, to offer multiple features supporting easy ticketing and transparency about prices and discounts. In response to demand, run.events built its main features around tickets, attendees, finances, and payment processes. To name a few:

- Ticket type management, advanced ticket rules and options, ticket add-ons, and ticket options targeted to different audience groups
- Ticket sales, invoice issuing, and management
- Payments management, financial reporting
- Managing ticket refunds and cancellations, issuing cancellation documents
- Managing vouchers and corporate customers
- Conference badge design and printing for attendees, speakers, sponsors, and service providers
- Attendee check-ins and registration desk management

Lead scanning and retrieval services

Let's not forget that event sponsors and partners offer financial stability to event organizers firsthand, and a great sense of credibility for future iterations, generating bigger ticket sales and growth in attendance. In general, sponsors are looking for power options when it comes to lead scanning and retrieval services and, at the same time, transparency inside sponsorship packages. In this area, run.events offer sponsors and partners multiple features:

- Global CRM: Ability to manage all sponsors, service providers, and other key customers in an easy-to-use CRM
- Manage sponsorship items, packages, and contracts per event and sponsor. Organizers are always aware of which sponsorships are closed, which are still in the acquiring process, and which are lost opportunities
- Seamless creation of sponsorship contracts, contract upgrades and invoicing
- A Automated creation of sponsorship tickets
- Self-service area for sponsorship management, lead management, and lead analytics

Fully automated control of key event aspects

In addition, high-end event management platforms such as run.events provide event organizers with completely automated control over the speakers' key aspects of interest and complete agenda management:

- Publishing and managing call for speakers (CfP)
- Managing the content team and automating the whole content selection process
- Schedule builder and agenda management
- Speaker management and speaker communications
- Automated creation of speaker tickets
- Team chat and team communications
- Document upload and document management
- Mobile app for attendees, networking, chat, agenda overview, personal schedule building, sessions overview, speakers and sponsors information
- Session check-ins and self-check-ins within the mobile app
- Lead scanning and lead management for sponsors within the mobile app
- Mobile app gamification

EMPs have the ability to take your events or conferences to a completely new level. The difference between the run.events platform and other market providers are in the event organizing experience of its creators, which has led to multiple solutions that allow event organizers to run their business smoothly without losing valuable time managing various apps. Selecting the right option between so many available on the market makes this task very difficult.

5 steps when migrating to the new event management platform

One of the many reasons you likely started to consider migrating to a new event management platform (EMP) is that your planning needs have evolved and become more sophisticated. As an organization leader, you know that your needs will only continue to grow and change, and you need a solution that can grow with the needs of your organization.

Migrating to a new event and conference management system can sometimes be a long and tedious process. After doing the research and after many discussions with your internal team about which provider suits your organization the best, it's important to deconstruct all important details and features of the EMP to ensure you fully understand its capabilities.

Product fit is the first thing you need to consider when selecting an event management software supplier. Secondly, you need to clearly understand your pain points and which functionalities would become a problem-solver for them. No matter how confident or brand new in event management platforms you are, the probability is that you will produce lots of questions and will need assistance at some point during your journey. Ensure the solution provider has global 24/7 customer service available via various channels to access whenever required. A good solution is looking to a provider with a video FAQ/tutorial database LINK. Feel at ease to ask about their response times and customer satisfaction in this area.

It's always good to assume that the logistics of the migration process will be challenging. If you and your team aren't on the same page, it can cause potential disaster even before migration starts. From migration to implementation, being on top of the process is important to reduce wasted time. Start by focusing on your priorities or must-have event planning essentials (i.e., venue sourcing, registration, websites, badge scanning) and introduce them to your team first. This enables you to get back to your core business as soon as possible, organizing events or conferences!

Whether you are considering leaving your current EMP or transitioning from the spreadsheets and manual process, take these five steps for an efficient migration.

- Prepare for your migration kick-off
- Think through custom integrations
- Address security and scalability
- Look into a platform for customer services and client satisfaction (i.e., case studies, testimonials)
- Take time to get your team adequately trained

Choosing an event and conference management platform provider is an important decision. It will help you achieve a greater level of automation, allowing you to focus on the things that matter the most, organizing events and providing a seamless experience to your attendees. Once you get comfortable and understand the user experience better, it's time to work with the solution provider on the customization that suits your needs, without losing a grip on the overall attendees' experience using the mobile event app.

Conclusion

Event and conference organization sentiments continue to evolve, whether the industry is struck by monumental shifts, such as a global pandemic or continuous uncertain times, while focusing on bringing a unique experience to its audience and other stakeholders. Technology has become essential for event organizers, as it brings much-needed speed to deal with numerous tasks with great reliability.

The seamless integration of event management platforms has become the most important differentiating factor between software providers, while customization is no longer the exception but the rule. With the upturn in hybrid and virtual events, event software providers have to develop flexible and scalable offerings to address customers' specific needs. If they do, you will undoubtedly have a long-term partner in your provider. Find out more about how run.events can deliver the best-in-class event management software solution to your business [HERE](#).



About run.events

run.events is a global AI-powered SaaS enterprise management software for professional event and conference organizers. The solution is designed to be easy to set up and use, a cloud-based event management platform that contains enterprise management capabilities and event management components with a powerful mobile app solution available on all today's platforms. The platform allows clients to create valuable in-person experiences, grow influential communities and expand their brands, while providing services for event sourcing, registration, event marketing, travel management, lead scanning, and ROI reports. It's fair to assume that run.events will become the only software solution you need to run your line of business.

How to get in touch with us:

run.events GmbH
Mainzer Straße 186
55411 Bingen am Rhein
Germany

info@runevents.eu
run.events