

## BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD ASSOCIATION GOES EZ ON MULTIPLE EVENTS

*“I was using various software to manage 15 plus shows a year. I thought that there must be a better way than using all these programs. The a2zShowEZ web-based module brought everything together for me in one place. For the biggest shows, it’s cut my time almost in half.”*

— Judy Hambrick, Consultant, Exhibit & Sponsorships, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

### CHALLENGE:

As the trade association for 39 independently owned and operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) produces more than 60 conferences per year to deliver superior quality educational programming and conferences to member Plans and their business partners. The 15+ expositions range in size from about a dozen table top displays to more than 30,000 net square feet.

Until three years ago, one person managed all these exhibits using a combination of spreadsheet, word processing and registration software. Floor plans were drawn “the old-fashioned way” using pencil and paper and, contracts were processed by fax. All exhibitor requests for information and services went through the exhibit manager. Financial reporting requirements were met by merging spreadsheet data, which was sometimes inconsistent.

### SOLUTION:

In 2003, BCBSA selected the web-based exposition management tool, a2zShowEZ, with financial and badge management modules. Used to manage the seven largest shows each year, a2zShowEZ provides one centralized location where both attendees and exhibitors can access conference information online. Attendees not only view full conference agendas but also see what companies are exhibiting and how to contact their representatives. Exhibitors view the floor plans, submit space applications, download service kits, upload profiles and manage their own badges.

### RESULTS:

Producing the seven largest events produced by BCBSA using a2zShowEZ has reduced hands-on management time by nearly 50 percent. Because the exhibit manager now spends less time on manual processes, more time is available for sales and marketing. BCBSA expects to increase non-dues revenue by up to 20 percent through increased booth sales and a new online banner advertising program. In the meantime, the association has realized these process improvements:

- **Conference website deployment** — A fully featured event website is now deployed in less than 30 days, including time taken to assemble the exhibitor prospectus and hotel information.
- **Booth space assignment** — Exhibitors access online floor plans to select space and submit applications, making the process of assigning space go more smoothly.
- **Exhibitor profile management** — Exhibitors submit their profiles online, then update the information at will, rather than asking the exhibit manager to make changes.
- **Exhibitor badge management** — Giving exhibitors access to their own badge data cuts down on change requests.
- **Lead generation** — Attendees view company profiles, click through to the websites, and/or send emails directly to sales representatives.
- **Customer service** — Exhibitors appreciate the time savings they realize by being able to quickly access and update their conference information.
- **Service contractor interface** — All the information service contractors need is accessible online, so they do not rely on the exhibit manager to run reports.
- **Financial reporting** — Monthly reports generated from the centralized database are accurate and up-to-date, eliminating the need to reconcile conflicting and redundant data.

*“Before, I was sending accounting reports in Excel by downloading the data and merging reports. They were always calling me with questions about duplicates and errors. Now I give them everything they want in one report, once a month, and I don’t get any questions from them at all.”*

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