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Key Takeaways | 25 August | HIMSS21 Recap

Event Overview

- Recap of attendees – 1,300 exhibiting companies normally/50% was the outcome of all numbers for this event. 500 call for presentations.
- Quality of attendees was exceptional this year.
- International – normally 7% - this year not very many in person so met that demand with digital.
- Next event: March 14-18, 2022 in Orlando
- How did COVID impact overall attendance? They were about 50% of normal attendance figures. Noted about 80% COVID – 20% timing/budget-related (and international of course too). Couldn't further specify if the COVID-related were personal decisions or company decisions.
- Refunds were offered to those travelling internationally that subsequently had travel bans and could not attend.

Event Recap

- Successful event! There were many challenges from the original event date in March 2020.
- Safety protocols were constantly changing.
 - As a health event, HIMSS felt it important to have protocols in place.
- Digital component? YES - Since HIMSS didn't have one ready when the 2020 cancelled, they knew it was important to have that in place for 2021.

Planning

- Planning Process – Registration launched about a month later than normal (4-5 months in 2021; it is typically 5-6 months out). 12,000 rollover badges from 2020. Terms and conditions changed so they had to re-register as 2021 attendees. HIMSS usually sees an uptick 3 weeks from open date – that didn't happen this year.
- Working with the team in Las Vegas? How did that go?
 - They are great to work with – Convention Center, Hotels, and the City, were all on point. The site visit was later than usual but the HIMSS team wanted to wait until it was safe.



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Marketing / Sponsorships

- What was different from pre-pandemic events?
 - HIMSS added a footer on every communication that led to their most up to date health and safety protocols.
 - There was some confusion as they promoted in person and virtual together, but differently. Marketing focused on the power of the content, who will be there and how to keep them safe. They indicated that there will be a digital component moving forward.

Operations

- Carpet? Yes, they installed carpet – they debated, but from a health/safety and financial perspective, HIMSS didn't see any problems with it. They feel it just makes it look complete and polished.
- Labor – the biggest labor issue was security. HIMSS couldn't get additional staffing as other shows were overlapping or it was triple the price. Otherwise pretty good.
- Was the show floor plan altered?
 - From very early on they allowed for wider aisles with more pathways. Two weeks prior, HIMSS had 70 companies cancel (larger booths) because of the Delta variant. Changes were made to seating areas.
- Tradeshow labor/EAC were not required to have vaccinations. Yes, they did ask for staff to be vaccinated – if not they had to wear masks and be tested, temperature scans, etc.
- Did you let the attendees/exhibitors know that vendor staff may not be vaccinated?
 - In their communications, they indicated they only required it for attendees, exhibitors and HIMSS staff.

Health and Safety

- Did you have daily health questions that attendees had to answer?
 - NO – once the vaccine was verified – attendees were good to go. They encouraged event stakeholders to get tested if they didn't feel well.
- Was there a process in place to notify if there were any positive cases?
 - They heard three people tested positive and they sent out a communication to all attendees who were encouraged to report to them. They did push out the Nevada contact tracing app as well. They now have six positive cases noted (as of 8/25/21).
- Was there more confusion with the CLEAR and SAFE EXPO apps?
 - No, they were very easy to use.
- Mandating vaccinations?



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- Entry to the show was vaccine only – no exceptions. HIMSS did not accept a negative COVID test. They made the decision in early June with a team comprised of a medical panel of experts, legal, and association leadership to come to this decision.
- WHO and CDC info was included and the decision was carefully vetted.
- The digital component helped with the no exception policy – by providing an option to attend.
- HIMSS required masks once Nevada implemented a state mandate a week before their event.
- Did you track vaccines? How, especially with data privacy?
 - HIMSS worked with CLEAR and SAFE EXPO as third-party providers. Attendees needed the green pass before being allowed in to get their badge. They decided against the honor system. HIMSS did turn about 30-40 people away per day...but felt there was enough early communication for attendees to abide by the requirement.
- Did many attendees drop off because of the mandate?
 - Yes, some, but there was much more positive feedback. They did ask the city to provide labor staff who were vaccinated or tested with a negative result.
- HIMSS paid for rapid test – for PCR tests, attendees had to pay.
- Will they mandate vaccines for 2022 program?
 - They will make that decision over the next couple months.

Education / Content

- Education – green room for interviews. The digital team handled that aspect.
- In-person and digital too much for staff teams to do – need separate duties/teams especially if the timing overlaps.



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MATSO Meets OPEN CONVERSATION - Attendee Perspectives

- Some are struggling with requiring vaccinations for their event – exhibitors are asking a lot of questions about attendance. Expecting about 50% attendance. How does marketing and sales staff spin that?
- IT will be all about access for those unable to attend – offer a networking component.
- There seems to be an expectation for more transparency since COVID
- Concern that the Delta variant has impacted registrations.
- Want to set the right expectations for their exhibitors as many contracted back in March/April when the vaccines were slowing the COVID impact. They are experiencing about 50% reduction – they will report that with the most positive spin and hope that the Delta variant will peak and begin falling in Oct or so.
- For those who have fall shows coming up:
 - Are they making aisle adjustments, space requirements, etc.? Some adjusted the aisles – John R started with a slightly larger aisle for his event and actually sold out and had to add perimeter booths.
- Were booths shifting to cubic content?
 - No, they will want that in coming years. One attendee said they did without the line of sight rules for their upcoming event. When asked if that was permanent, he said we'll see. One organization just came out with vaccine mandates – most attendees are ok with it, but there is some opposition. This may be mandated more in some cities than others...
 - Many third-party vaccine tracker sites are booked through the end of the year.
- One attendee noted that the governor of FL won't let organizers ask attendees for vaccine status. Attendees would have to find daily testing to attend. They currently do not have a vendor for that. If you do not require a vaccine and someone gets sick are you responsible? Each state will have different requirements.
- The NRA (Rifle) just cancelled in Texas because of the Delta variant/no ICU beds.
- IAEE is working with other industry organizations on a communications plan for our industry – to the chief executives and corporations and those making decisions about keeping events in place. The message is that is it safe with vaccinations/masks/safety protocols.
- Mailing badges – is that a consideration? One attendee says vaccine proof should be verified first and then badge.
- RSNA requiring a vaccine as well. No pick-up in bulk either. Lines will be longer because of this.



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