A solution for Koelnmesse

From registration to visitor access – the VOTES System from T-Systems manages all processes related to trade fair visits simply and reliably.

At a glance:

- VOTES provides an innovative Internet-based booking, registration and access control system
- Integrates import/export interfaces into the trade fair company's SAP System®
- Bundles the company's previously independently managed business processes into one unified solution
- Prompt delivery of management information
- Gives exhibitors access to the registration database
- Makes life easier for both visitors and exhibitors
- Competent partners involved in the solution
- T-Systems 24/7 service for the entire solution

The customer and his business

Koelnmesse GmbH operates in the city of Cologne one of the most important internationally recognized trade fair facilities. It has made Cologne the number one trade fair venue for 25 industries by organizing their respective world fairs. In 2006, a total of 74 trade fairs and events with 32,000 exhibitors from 100 countries were held in Cologne. Two million visitors from 200 countries came to the Cologne trade fairs. Events such as the furniture trade show "imm cologne", the "anuga" trade fair for food and beverages, and the "Photokina" imaging world fair are testimony to the success of Koelnmesse, which is active on five continents with 10 subsidiaries and 593 employees, and achieved sales of 226.1 million euros in 2006.
With its 4-i strategy - Innovation, Information technology, Internationality and Infrastructure - and with continual improvement, Koelnmesse provides its customers and visitors an ideal trade fair experience.

The challenge: securing market leadership with new ideas

Like every trade fair company, Koelnmesse must deal with a large number of very different processes – administration, technical service and maintenance, building management and provision of buildings, as well as the core processes directly related to trade fairs, exhibitions and conferences, such as exhibitor and visitor services. In the past, it was not possible to integrate all of these individual processes into a more homogenous solution – this is where innovative ideas were needed. Initially, the trade fair company was only looking for a way to connect the cash desk and ticket booth systems to its existing SAP system®. It also desired to have a new communications platform for improved networking of exhibitors and visitors.
The trade fair company explicitly asked its prospective partners to propose original, advanced solutions. The company additionally desired a partner who would be able to provide support in its efforts to market successful solutions in other segments and to other trade fair companies.

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Working together: thinking the "never-before-imagined"

From this specification profile, it becomes clear that Koelnmesse expects only the best from its suppliers. This applies especially to its IT service providers, because information technology plays a vital role in the networking services Koelnmesse would like to offer its customers and trade fair visitors. T-Systems has been a service provider for Koelnmesse for many years. In 2004, T-Systems took over the entire IT system of the expo site in a successful outsourcing project. T-Systems was also awarded the contract when retendering of all IT services became necessary in 2006.
It was more than just competence and technical infrastructure that swayed the company's decision in favor T-Systems. During their previous work together, Koelnmesse had already gained the impression that T-Systems was a partner who was able to turn the company's strategic ideas into innovative projects. T-Systems had fully satisfied the trade fair company's expectations in the VOTES (Visitor Orientated Ticketing and Entry System) project, among others. Above and beyond the contracted services of this project, T-Systems analyzed – in close cooperation with the company's decision makers – the trade fair processes in detail, and then proposed VOTES, an integrated system in which the trade fair's core processes are brought together in a unified system. During implementation of the project, T-Systems took on the responsibility of coordinating the technology partners who contributed their individual solutions and expertise.

Technical overview

VOTES, as a comprehensive solution, handles all processes related to trade fair visits: registration, ticket sales, as well as control of the access and cash desk systems. Business card scanners can transmit contact data directly into the system, which eliminates time-consuming, error-prone typing. VOTES passes, via an import/export interface, all collected data to the SAP system® and integrated third-party systems, thus the problem of incompatible media is eliminated. Networked access control systems scan and record visitors' tickets at all entrance locations and also count the visitors; access control has become a fully automated process. The scanners are also able to process tickets that visitors have printed out themselves.
Last but not least, exhibitors also have access to the system from their booths, which enables them to exchange contact data whenever the need arises – quickly, reliably and paperless. A further comforting thought for Koelnmesse is that T-Systems provides not only the solution by itself, but also the competent, reliable service that keeps it up and running around the clock.

The benefits – win/win/win situation

Everybody wins with VOTES: the trade fair company, the exhibitors and the visitors.
The trade fair company's previously isolated processes are now integrated into a unified system. This not only saves time and money, but also gives the company a competitive edge by ensuring optimized, stress-free trade fair coordination for both exhibitors and visitors.
Exhibitors can access the data stored in VOTES directly from their booths – with data privacy restrictions, of course. This makes initiating and managing business contacts (leads) much easier and more reliable.
Visitors appreciate the convenience of being able to plan their trade fair visit from the comfort of their office or home via the e-shop. No more waiting in line at the ticket booth!
And T-Systems has also gained from this project: a reputation as a competent solution partner for trade fair companies; even more experience in the integration of complex business processes into comprehensive solutions; and a reference that will be interesting not only to trade fair companies, but also to similar enterprises such as amusement parks and museums.

A successful start – in summary

Now that VOTES has successfully passed the acid test, Koelnmesse is assured that they have the right IT partner at their side. A number of new, innovative projects have already been envisioned, such as an RFID-based information system – the navigation system for trade fair halls.

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