



AHRA Leaps into the Virtual World of Educational Programming

Case Study: Enhancing Educational Programs and Member Services with Technology

Founded in 1973 and now more than 5000 members strong, AHRA: The Association for Medical Imaging Management is the professional organization representing all levels of hospital imaging departments, freestanding imaging centers, and group practices.

Executive Summary

In 1990, AHRA founded its Education Foundation to create programs and services specifically designed to promote ongoing applied management education for imaging leaders. AHRA plays a significant role in the sustainable education of imaging managers and administrators, and is consistently enhancing its world class research and education initiatives.

Challenges

AHRA's mission is to bring high quality education initiatives to the imaging profession worldwide. To support the mission, the association hosts three in-person conferences each year. They also host an online institute providing courses and webinars on diverse and trending topics.

Today, the association faces two significant challenges. First, healthcare is evolving at lightning speed with new technology being developed virtually every day. With these rapid advancements, coupled with uncertainties in healthcare, professional medical associations like AHRA must offer solutions to help their members navigate the changes and help them stay on the cutting edge of innovation.

At the same time, budgets for educational programs have declined. As a result, AHRA faces the challenge of delivering high quality, valuable training options to its 5000 members without the cost of travel and lodging.

Solution

A 100 percent virtual conference was AHRA's approach to meeting its members' needs. They turned to the [iCohere Unified Learning System](#).

Planning, Design and Implementation

Conference planners wanted the virtual conference to provide networking opportunities similar to its in-person event, and the same high quality content members were accustomed to receiving.

Content: The conference included nine pre-recorded sessions and a live keynote speaker, just as the in-person events. To provide networking opportunities, planners scheduled live chats with speakers.

Leading up to the conference, planners provided a five-minute promotional video of a speaker presentation as a sampling of the high quality content members could expect.

Member Experience: Because the concept of a fully virtual conference was new to members, conference planners were proactive in identifying and addressing concerns to ensure an optimal member experience.

Key tactics included:

- Publication of the event Itinerary well in advance, so members could choose the content most important to them.
- A dedicated customer service team to field questions, and an online, in depth FAQ resource.

- A team of volunteer association members to help develop the programming and serve as conference monitors. The team answered questions, assisted with technical issues, participated in live chats and prompted discussions, and proactively reached out to attendees to foster engagement.
- The conference was held over a two-week period, accommodating varying schedules. Access to the content was made available after the event, online for an extended period.

Results, Return on Investment and Future Plans

In addition to regular event attendees, the virtual conference attracted a new audience of members who otherwise would not have attended the in-person event. With strategic pricing, planners were able to double the attendance from in-person events. On average, about 10 percent of the attendees participated in the live chat sessions. A post event survey resulted in especially positive feedback from members.

Future plans include hosting a second virtual conference in 2016 and will use live webinars and meeting rooms for the Q&A sessions, for a more interactive and collaborative experience.



"The virtual conference was a learning curve for us from the administrative side, but the feedback from members was very positive and the support we received from iCohere was amazing."

Debra L. Murphy
Deputy Executive Director

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For more information and a free demo, contact Lance Simon, CGMP, CVEP at lance@icohere.com or at (202) 870-6146.