



## Proving the value of a Strategic Meetings Management Program

**\$46.75M**

in verified savings  
through SMMP

**66%**

reduction in planning  
statuses with MRF

**5%**

sunk costs only due to  
savings through SMMP

Corporate Travel Management (CTM) is an award-winning international provider of innovative and cost-effective travel solutions spanning corporate, events, leisure, loyalty, and wholesale travel. CTM's event management division, Event Travel Management (ETM), is a global, multi-award-winning provider of professional event management services delivering innovative solutions and exceptional value with each custom-tailored event.

ETM first began using Cvent to optimize business efficiencies and services in 2009. Since that point, the organization has grown their solution suite as the business expanded. They have created executive reports and dashboards, streamlined the transient hotel RFP process, reduced manual labor, optimized the attendee experience, and eliminated the need for single point solutions within the business. ETM uses a host of integrated Cvent solutions including Event Management, Cvent Mobile Event Apps, Strategic Meetings Management, Cvent's Diagramming & Seating solution, the Cvent Supplier Network, Surveys, and much more. "When we first started exploring options, we were looking for a registration technology and a sourcing solution, but more importantly, we were looking for a partner and somebody who would grow with us," explains Tami Reier, Senior Vice President. "And we certainly have not been disappointed. That has been our experience in the time that we've been with Cvent."

The ETM team notes that the integrated Cvent platform has directly contributed to three key business goals: integrating decision support systems for one source of truth, optimizing purchasing power, and fostering a unified culture.



## Ensuring effective crisis management through Strategic Meetings Management

At the outset of the global health crisis, ETM found their Cvent solution suite to be a vital tool in navigating the initial challenges of the pandemic. Many of their scheduled meetings and events were canceled or rebooked, which significantly impacted expected revenue and existing staffing models. Simultaneously, CTM had acquired Travel and Transport Events (now ETM); the acquisition resulted in several new projects centered around staffing, service design, and technology solutions. The crisis also impacted ETM's clients. "When the pandemic hit, it was slightly chaotic," says Julie Huber, Sourcing Manager. She explains that a lack of transparency into data and fluctuations in the daily news around COVID-19 caused confusion amongst various departments within their client's organizations. She adds, "So we really had to pause and wait to see where this information should come from."

A large financial industry client had partnered with ETM to streamline their Strategic Meetings Management Program (SMMP). "The client is in insurance, so mitigating risk and spending money wisely is very important to them," notes Marla Everett, Director, Consulting Solutions. Their SMM program, internally branded "MeetingHub," was being revamped in tandem with an enterprise-wide transformational growth plan. One of the key goals of this plan was to drive cost savings, which ETM was able to assist with. In March 2020, the organization had 153 signed contracts in excess of \$50M when they stopped all travel and meetings.

Understanding the current state of their meetings program in the face of the pandemic was a key to the organization's ability to navigate the crisis successfully. First, they needed to mitigate loss from canceling

or rebooking. In the weeks that followed, the company relied on the MeetingHub SMMP to help mitigate loss from canceling/rebooking and centralize processes to help manage risk management. With evolving guidelines, multiple teams, and inconsistent information, there were significant challenges in understanding what data was needed to make key decisions. Therefore, having centralized data already located within Cvent was invaluable. Marla explains, "What we discovered was that we were tracking a lot of data for events that were going to happen, and we weren't tracking a lot of data to prepare for whether or not we needed to make decisions for the event not to go forward." With the discovery of these data gaps, ETM and the organization worked together to assess exactly what data was missing and how they could configure the available data in Cvent to plug any leaks. "We actually went back into Cvent and entered data for each of the contracts that we had regarding cancellation, timelines, milestone dates, when decisions needed to be made, and what the financial impact was," Marla adds. "We were able to pull what we called the milestone report and made decisions in a timely way, based on the data that we put into Cvent, and we're able to pull out and analyze along the way. "

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– Tami Reier, Senior Vice President



## Optimizing program efficiency through a single source of truth

A crisis team was put in place to help manage expectations while quickly finding key solutions for the business. The crisis team involved several key stakeholders across the business, all of whom leveraged the provided reports on a daily basis to make decisions about moving forward. The ETM team was then responsible for reducing touchpoints and implementing the decision across the business. "I think that the critical piece that we did upfront was to decide what data do we need that we don't have and then go back and put that into the system," says Marla. Initially, she explains, the business was using a shared online file to track data. She shares, "It was being treated as the source of truth and I said, no, Cvent is the single source of truth." ETM was able to maintain clean and comprehensive data within Cvent instead, creating pathways to better decision making for the business.

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- Tami Reier, Senior Vice President

To support the continued transformational growth of the business during the crisis, MeetingHub 2.0 involved several key updates. The organization and ETM together implemented a new Group Booking Agreement (GBA) and "light" version for small meetings. They also incorporated a cost management team's internal order (IO) number to tie together information from multiple systems. They streamlined key information in the contract processing workflow for GBA's and updated the unified meeting and event policy to include virtual and hybrid events. Updated data mapping within MeetingHub for senior leadership reports showed overall spend, savings, and meeting pipeline information.

The business was also divided into 16 regions with different teams using Cvent. This resulted in 27 planning statuses and 58 different notifications across the business. They had begun their Solution Evolution process with Cvent prior to the pandemic, but the onset of the crisis complicated future policy and workflows, as well as the migration as a whole. The continuation of their Solution Evolution with Cvent during the workflow redesign reduced planning statuses from 27 to just nine. The workflow redesign drove savings through efficiencies with the program and improved the overall user experience. Tami adds, "This really could not have happened if we didn't have a solution like Cvent. Being able to generate those reports on-demand and make decisions based on that data was critical to this project."

They also took advantage of the opportunity to reimagine the organization's Meeting Request Form (MRF). The now fully dynamic form gave ETM the opportunity to address gaps in logic. "When we changed the MRF and built in more logic, it closed those holes, even just having one form for everything. It was a huge help for us and set us up for success moving forward," insists Julie.

The organization now utilizes a cohesive internal microsite for "all things meetings," says the ETM team. This includes new virtual and hybrid support tools, SSO for the central Access Portal in Cvent, and improved data hygiene for when travel and meetings fully resume. As the organization began incorporating virtual and hybrid service offerings, they realized the need for an integrated platform. They once again turned to Cvent. For one particular division, they adopted the Cvent Attendee Hub to execute events like a two-day conference. The Event Management solution supported multiple registration tracks with custom questions per registration type. They were even able to leverage the registration data to send custom VIP swag boxes directly to attendees.



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## Proving the value of a Strategic Meetings Management Program

The importance of MeetingHub in driving efficiencies within the business - even during an unprecedented crisis - cannot be understated. "One of the most important hallmarks of the MeetingHub SMM program is the consolidated reporting which gives a comprehensive view into the overall meeting spend," explains Tami. "That intelligence is then used to drive meeting strategy." Having a centralized source to house such complex data means ETM can prove the value of the SMMP during times of crisis. "The cross-events reports drove the strategy used to manage cancellations and rebooking of the MeetingHub contracts, and resulted in \$46.75M in verified savings," she adds. This also meant less than 5% of sunk costs in total for the business. "The data will save you," insists Julie. "You're just kind of surviving this, day in and day out, and then seeing the final outcome was incredible."

The ETM team notes they received feedback across stakeholders of various levels and departments within the organization, all of whom could see these metrics in real time as the pandemic progressed. Marla says, "They were able to see how much savings we were contributing to their organization, which really helped their goals. They had a high cost savings number and all of these efforts helped catapult them towards that finish line."

In fact, the savings identified by the MeetingHub team earned the top position within the company when compared to other sourcing categories and made a significant contribution to their overall enterprise savings goal for 2020. Tami says this model of success is essential for other organizations that may be considering implementing their own programs. "It really highlighted the importance of having a strategic meetings management program," she says. "We've had a lot of conversations with customers as a result of this who are now interested in exploring strategic meetings management and/or technology such

as Cvent to get access to that data quickly, should something similar happen. It also just shows how the day-to-day value of a strategic meetings management program pays for itself."

Moving forward, ETM will continue supporting their client's Strategic Meetings Management programs as well as in-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings. As they look forward to the return of travel, they understand the value of having a strong meetings and events team as a critical piece of ETM's success. "I could not be more proud of this team and everything we've been able to accomplish," concludes Tami. "This is not just in 2020, but as meetings come back and we continue to rebuild."

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- Marla Everett, Director, Consulting Solutions



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*Cvent is the global meeting, event, travel, and hospitality technology leader.*

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