



Cannabis growers' show streamlines badge printing with ZD420 Series desktop printers

For many attendees, a major aspect of the trade show experience is a rapid onsite registration process—and badge printing is an impactful variable. Produce badges quickly so attendees can get on their way and they're likely to remember their registration experience and attend the event next year. But make them stand in line for long stretches to get their badges and they'll remember your event for the wrong reason. Efficient badge printing technology can make a major impact on attendees' experiences and, potentially, event revenue.

Situation/challenge

The first annual Grow Up Cannabis Conference and Expo in 2017 had much higher-than-anticipated attendance and onsite registration volume. Prior to the event, the conference acquired four Zebra® ZD420 Series desktop printers to produce attendee badges. Amid the numerous event logistics tasks involved in a first annual event, though, they were not tested and operational in time.

The registration management company, Eventdex, instead used laser printers, driving onsite registrants' wait times to an hour in some cases—drawing numerous complaints from attendees. Without more efficient badge printing, the conference's president, Randy Rowe, faced the prospect of low repeat attendance the next year.

Solution

Rowe tripled the number of ZD420s for the next year's event and they were tested and ready for Eventdex to use for badge printing by the first day.

Result

The deployment of more ZD420s was prescient: Show attendance doubled in 2018 compared with 2017. The typical onsite registration wait time decreased significantly, largely due to faster badge printing. That eliminated the potential for low repeat attendance due to inefficient badge printing at the event the next year.

SUMMARY



Customer

Grow Up Conference & Expo
Welland, Ontario, Canada

Industry

Manufacturing

Challenge

Equip temporary workers to print attendee badges efficiently and keep up with rapidly increasing onsite registration demand.

Solution

- ZD420 Series desktop printers

Results

- Decreased badge printing time
- Reduced onsite registration time
- Increased attendee satisfaction
- Continued growth in attendance

Temporary staff gets the right printers for fast onsite registration processing

For the typical onsite registrant at a trade show, time is money. If a drawn-out badge printing process causes them to miss a program that could improve their company's profit margin, they'll be less likely to attend the next event. Inadequate printing technology caused such delays during the first annual Grow Up Cannabis Conference and Expo in Niagara Falls, Ontario in 2017, causing the global cannabis growing industry event's president, Randy Rowe, concern about future attendance. After seeing higher-than-expected attendance overwhelming onsite registration, Rowe knew the event needed more efficient badge printing technology.

Rowe, an executive for two other trade shows—the O'Cannabiz Conference & Expo, an event for Canada's cannabis growing industry; and the annual Canadian Music Week conference and Festival—had acquired four Zebra ZD420 Series desktop printers prior to the Grow Up conference for badge printing. But amid competing priorities inherent in coordinating a first annual trade show, they were not tested and operational in time. Laser printers were used for badge printing and registration times up to an hour resulted.

"The laser printing of badges was a major problem for us that first year," Rowe recalls. "We got instant negative feedback from angry people in line. Also, the most common complaints in our follow-up surveys had to do with the onsite registration process."

Portability, usability and speed made ZD420 the right fit

Rowe knew enough about the ZD420's capabilities to determine that scaling its use would boost the odds of keeping up with the onsite registration volume the following year if attendance exceeded expectations again.

The staff needed to quickly reach badge printing competence and Rowe knew the ZD420, which is designed for no-mess media loading and ease of training on loading and operation, would be an ideal fit.

"One of the things we like about the ZD420s is their portability," Rowe says, referring to the ease with which staff can relocate them to other events. "Also, they're compatible with the custom registration software from the registration management company, Eventdex. The usability and speed are other highlights. They generate a badge in a couple of seconds and the registrant is on his way. Also, Wi-Fi connectivity tends to be spotty at convention centers, but the ability to directly connect the printers to our network via ethernet made the decision easier."



SUCCESS STORY

GROW UP CONFERENCE & EXPO

As the 2018 event approached, show management prepared for a repeat of the high onsite registration volume by tripling the number of ZD420s used for badge printing and hiring more temporary staff than the previous year. The registration management company equipped the staff with tablets, two of which were connected to each ZD420, to process the onsite registrations.

Larger scale, better results

It was a good thing Eventdex made those changes: Attendance roughly doubled from the 2017 event to the 2018 event. Rowe knew that merely scaling printers would not cut those wait times—it had to be easy for the staff to learn to load and operate them. As he anticipated, the ZD420s turned out to suit the event's needs perfectly. "Once we increased the number of printers, it made a huge difference—onsite registration wait times were very, very short," he says.

Rowe adds that the ZD420s have also been used at the O'Cannabiz Conference & Expo and Canadian Music Week since then. "Registration has not been an issue at any show since we got those printers," Rowe says.

Since acquiring the ZD420s, the staff at events Rowe oversees have not had any technical issues with the printers themselves, he says. Another vendor supplied badge paper with incorrect timing marks on the back at two recent O'Cannabiz conferences, which caused printing of two badges at a time



instead of one. The Zebra OneCare® Support Services team helped Eventdex pinpoint the incorrect timing marks as the cause of the badge printing issue. "The Zebra support team worked with us tirelessly to make sure we had a working registration process," Rowe says.

"Our business has been almost doubling every year for the last three years and I don't see that trend slowing down," he adds. "Having a good product like Zebra's to help us get through those growing pains and prevent a stumbling block at registration is key for us."

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