



CTO Interview Series with Michael Hatton
Data and Marketing Technology Director at Tarsus Group

By Danica Tormohlen, SISO Content Director

Read highlights from our conversation on Dec. 13, 2021 or [watch or listen the full 30-minute interview](#).

Data always belongs to the organizer: “We had actually signed a contract with a company where in the contract it said that after the event they become what's known as a data controller effectively. They would own the data. Luckily, we hadn't handed over any data and we canceled the contract. It is a tricky thing.”

Biggest project in last few years. “Switching to Salesforce and Pardot as our email and marketing automation and lead generation system. We rolled that out at the end of 2019, which was quite fortuitous because we've been relying on that heavily over the last couple of years.”

Building — and improving — the data infrastructure. “We spent the last two years working on data and trying to improve it, how we structure it, how we store it, all that sort of stuff. That's still our key strategy: trying to improve that side of it. If the data is in good shape, it makes it easy to then go from there and add things on.”

Use tech to enhance in-person experience. “As we are going back to live events, what we have been doing is looking at how we can add more value to events with platforms like Grip for matchmaking, for example.”

Doing more with data they have. “With Pardot, we've done a lot of work on things like automated list building. If somebody inquires about a particular event and we have an additional event where they are in their country or city, we are adding them to the list automatically. If people visit a particular page on the website, view a floor plan or do other activity, they get a score. When they reach a certain threshold, the leads pass onto the sales team to follow up.”

Additional revenue from Pardot leads. “Those sorts of activities have helped us in the last two years, especially in 2021. One division generated over \$2 million in additional revenue as a result from leads identified through Pardot.”

Registration: Keep it simple. “One of the things that we've sort of been using as a guide ... at Event Tech Live in UK at a session on registration, for example, they said, if you look particularly on site at how long somebody spends completing a registration, it's 10 seconds for the whole thing. They are not going to sit there and read every answer.”

We've got to think like consumers. They don't take it as seriously as we do. So we just need to make it as simple as possible for people.”

Budgeting for integration in 2022. “We are trying make the process simpler for exhibitors. We're building a new exhibit portal, for example, on our websites. We have one already, but it's not as integrated as it should be. We are making all the services available for purchase there.”

Exhibitor portals: controlling the messaging. “We don't want an exhibitor getting loads of messages from us. What we're trying to do with the new portal ... we are integrating it with Pardot. All the emails will go out from the proper email system, not just from the website. That also means people control what they receive in a much better way. There's no quicker way of upsetting an exhibitor than by having them contacted by loads of different people.”

One tech strategy for 2022: Walk then run. “The key thing when it comes to data, try to simplify. This is the conversation I have on a weekly basis with different teams where people are trying to run before they can walk. It's a cliché, but it is absolutely the case where people are trying to do what they see as clever things with technology and the data just isn't there.”

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