



CTO Interview Series with Brian Brittain, Global COO, RX Global

By Danica Tormohlen, SISO Content Director

Read highlights from our conversation on Dec. 14, 2021 or [watch or listen to the full 30-minute interview](#).

Backstory: RX produces 400+ events in 22 countries. At RX, about 250 people work in the product and tech group. Brittain joined RX in 2017 as Global CTO and was named Global COO in January. Prior to joining RX, he worked at FedEx for nine years.

Data ownership and protection. “We take data ownership incredibly seriously. The data comes down to two ownerships. It's either our customers or it's ours. That's it. That is exactly how we see it. And as a part of that, every single partner we work with, we take them through a very strenuous privacy, security and compliance review to make sure the data is protected.”

Tech ownership vs. partnership. In terms of RX's tech stack when it comes to its product or customer sites, “we think about what parts do we want to own the technology and what parts do we want to partner with. So those that are key to the customer, like registration or the event websites — those are things we want to own because that's an experience that we can differentiate with some of our competitors.”

Using tech to differentiate the customer journey. “We pick and choose, and it all comes down to the journey itself. Can we create a differentiation in that journey? Because you need the data and you need to experience. And with those two, you can delight the customer and that's what we aim for.”

Registration becoming core. “A great example of that is historically registration is something that we have worked with our partners. We didn't consider it core yet. We had other things to do, and now we are moving in that direction. It's not global yet, but it's moving that direction.”

Digital products augment physical event. “Now we're starting to come out of the pandemic and you're starting to see the physical with an augmentation of digital products.”

Scale and testing. “We have a scale that most other event organizers don't. When you're working in over 20 countries and over 400 events, scale becomes an important part. We can run literally dozens of tests in a set of events throughout our portfolio and figure out what worked and what didn't. We take experience and tests that we run in

every environment and continue to roll them into other countries. If you have your own platforms, you can move them to all of your events in an extremely short period of time.”

Investing in security. “Our strategy and approach for the next couple of years isn’t really that different than what it was even pre-pandemic. The very first thing we focus on is security. That’s number one — whether it be our data for our customers or whether it be a data for employees. These are relationships that we have with everyone and there’s trust there and we take security extremely seriously.”

Digital experiences tied to buying cycles. “We fully expected that folks would want to move to digital experiences pretty much year-round anytime, engage at any time. Interestingly enough, the research is coming back and the data is coming back, it’s actually around the buying cycles, but that is different by sector. This is in every country we’ve tested this. It isn’t necessarily every day you want to jump on a webinar as an example. You want to use it just when it’s right for you, and that’s usually around the buying cycles. That was a bit of a surprise for us.”

Next gen matchmaking and digital incentives. “The whole concept is based on registration data and on what products your customers are bringing so you can then turn around and give meaningful advice to your attendees based on what they want to do. Digital incentives are targeted offers to a very small subset of our attendee population. This enables our exhibitors to target rather than blitzing everybody with an ad or marketing campaign. It’s worked out incredibly well.”

Almost like being there. “Our physical events are the backbone of the industry. It will always be part of what we do. If you create that fuzzy picture in the distance, we’d like to be able to create an experience for someone who is remote that can’t make it to the event for whatever reason, that is almost as good as the physical event. That’s the goal.”

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