

ASAE Demo Days – A New Revenue Stream to Transform Member Value and Engagement

A PAI Client Success Story

ASAE's Demo Days

What began as a real-time response to a pandemic-era need has evolved into a sustainable slate of programs with a growing revenue stream for ASAE.

With the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020, in-person events for associations were canceled for the foreseeable future. Conferences and events—both a significant source of revenue and an integral way for associations to provide educational programs, connectivity, and value for members and sponsors—came to a halt. ASAE members faced a crossroads, needing solutions for hosting meetings in this new environment.

In a timely response, and with consultation from **Profitable Association Inc. (PAI)**, ASAE quickly envisioned and created a framework for **Virtual Event Demo Days**. The inaugural event, held in June 2020 on Zoom, attracted over **900 registrants** and **11 sponsors**. A second event, two months later, drew nearly **700 registrants** and **9 sponsors**.

Virtual Event Demo Days were designed with two goals in mind:

1. To address the immediate need for associations to transform in-person events into virtual offerings.
2. To provide a platform for industry partners to showcase their capabilities in meeting those needs.

Reggie Henry, CAE, Chief Information and Performance Excellence Officer at ASAE, highlighted a key advantage of the initiative:

“Having a technology conference that’s once a year and expecting people to be paying attention at that particular time... that’s our old model of doing things. The fact of the matter is people make technological decisions throughout the year, so only offering one opportunity is crazy. Now, I can watch a demo. I can ask questions. ***Being able to provide that kind of service on a monthly basis benefits our members and our industry partners immensely.***”

Expanding the Demo Days Model

With the success of the initial Demo Days, ASAE and PAI explored the feasibility of expanding into other technology categories. They identified **Learning Management Systems (LMS)** as the focus for their next event. Given the increased workload and tight deadlines, ASAE tasked PAI with both sponsorship sales and the management of sponsor fulfillment and services.

Henry emphasized the value of having PAI involved:

“Most associations don't have a sales team that is sufficient to take them outside of their existing business model... ***So having the PAI team there to focus on this product and its success without other distractions is a good thing. Having PAI Sales as a teammate for this Demo Day product—and they've been there since the very beginning—makes sense.***”

In **September 2020**, the LMS Demo Day event attracted **350 registrants** and **8 sponsors**, setting the stage for planned programming across five categories over the first seven months of 2021.

Innovation and Sustainability

In 2021, ASAE transitioned Demo Days from Zoom to the **Matchbox platform**, improving coordination with attendees and sponsors while enhancing the experience for both groups.

Henry dispelled concerns that Demo Days might compete with ASAE's larger events:

“I get asked this all the time by people considering Demo Days for their own organizations... ‘Does it take away from exhibiting at the annual meeting and other major conferences?’ It does not. In fact, I've seen some new players realize they need to be at the annual meeting and MMC + Tech. I haven't had anybody stop exhibiting at Annual or any other conferences due to their involvement in Demo Days. ***There was an untapped need for industry partners to connect with audiences outside of our major conferences.***”

Since 2020, ASAE has conducted over **35 Demo Day events**, has featured **over 300 presentations** and attracted **nearly 10,000 viewings** by registered association leaders.

Henry concluded:

“It's one of the better ways we provide opportunities for industry partners to connect with their target markets. ***Sometimes, PAI and we brainstorm what to add to the mix. The simplicity of the program allows us to experiment. Demo Days are a substantial non-dues revenue stream, and that's not going to change.***”

Profitable Association provides custom-built sales programs, by embedding with and serving as a strategic extension of an association's team. ASAE's award-winning Demo Day program is an example of PAI strategically creating, shaping, and growing a sustainable program, while helping ASAE enhance value to its members and the solution provider community.