



Case Study: Surprise Community and Recreation Services

City of Surprise Reduces In-Person Registrations by 85 Percent with Online Registration Service

Background

Ranked the safest city in Arizona, Surprise sits 25 miles northwest of Phoenix. Surprise's Community and Recreation Services Department offers specialized recreational opportunities in the areas of youth and adult sports, after school and summer recreation, teen and senior programs, special interest classes and special events.

Challenge

Staff members at the City of Surprise's Recreation Department were long tasked with managing large volumes of registrations through manual, paper-based processes. In order to participate in any of the Department's programs, citizens had no choice but to drive to the recreation campus to sign up for the activity in person, often from other towns miles away. Several staff members felt time and money could be saved if staff members had access to an automated software system and if city residents had a more convenient and environmentally friendly way to register for classes. They were right.

Solution

To begin their search, Surprise's Recreation, Purchasing, Finance and IT departments joined together to disseminate an RFP requesting companies to provide information about their operations management software. The departments quickly narrowed their choices down to three viable vendors then solicited recommendations from parks and recreation facilities throughout the country. The responses overwhelmingly pointed to the Active Network's Class software. The Active Network was known to be a reputable company and its software provided the Department with the ability to streamline its daily operations by automating processes securely and reliably.

"Our city was most impressed with Class' reporting capabilities, a feature that was really important to us," explains Recreation Manager Donna Miller.

Implementation

Once the City of Surprise made its selection, recreation staff members spent the next few months familiarizing themselves with the software. Because all of the information was paper-based at the time, the data had to be inputted manually, but Miller notes that the software was easy to use, which allowed the data entry process to move much more quickly.

After completing implementation of the software, Surprise's Recreation Department was ready to simplify the registration process for its citizens.

Customer at a Glance

Customer: City of Surprise Community and Recreation Services

Solution: Online Registration, Facility Reservation, Membership Management, Point of Sale

URL: www.surpriseaz.com

"[After] using Active Network's online registration service, only 300 people lined up, reducing the line by 85 percent!"

– Donna Miller,
Recreation Manager

How the Surprise Recreation Department Benefited from Online Registration:

- ▶ **Save residents time and money when registering for a program**
- ▶ **Reallocate employees' time to accomplish other departmental tasks**
- ▶ **Improve efficiencies, record-keeping and organization**
- ▶ **Reduce waiting times during registration periods**
- ▶ **Increase participant satisfaction with multiple, convenient options**

The Recreation Department informed its residents of the new online system through word-of-mouth, website advertising, quarterly brochure advertisements, and email blasts to current participants. It also mailed a magnet with client ID and PIN to participants of various programs. The Recreation Department saw immediate results from its efforts.

Results

Since launching online registration, the Recreation Department has received positive feedback from residents who no longer have to wait in line for hours to register for a program and waste money on gas driving to the campus. The Department has even been able to cut down 75 percent of the staff members needed for registrations and, instead, reallocate their time to manage other departmental tasks.

"Before using the Active Network's online registration service, 2,000 people would line up on Saturday morning to sign up for summer swim classes," explains Miller. "The following summer only 300 people lined up, reducing the line by 85 percent!"

"Our customers are very responsive to online registration," Miller explains. "The overall feedback has been very positive. Our patrons are happy to save time and not have to wait in line for hours."

Future

The Recreation Department now serves 400,000 participants each year in and around the city of Surprise and that number is still expanding. With a newly opened tennis facility, the department is looking to make operations there run as smooth as possible and plan to explore other software options offered by the Active Network. In fact, Miller is considering the use of a pass system to save residents time upon entry and point-of-sale software to better organize merchandise sales. "We are always looking for ways to improve our citizens' experience," says Miller.