

EMS Case Study *Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Dallas*



Busy Dallas congregation leaves antiquated calendaring system behind for EMS *Simplifies information access and saves time, effort and paper*

Background

As a group whose mission is to share the transforming power of their faith, Park Cities Presbyterian Church has transformed quite a bit itself - from building expansions that have greatly increased their worship and meeting space to huge growth in their membership. Today, Park Cities Presbyterian Church has more than 120,000 square feet of worship and meeting space and hosts more than 10,000 events each year.

The Old System: Outdated and Unreliable

As the calendar coordinator at Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Phil Vandermeer is responsible for scheduling and managing events in approximately 100 rooms. In any given week, the calendar has entries for hundreds of bookings, including worship services, meetings, weddings, Sunday school classes and seminars.

Before Park Cities purchased EMS, Vandermeer was using the scheduling module of a popular membership and attendance program. When the decision was made to upgrade to a new version of the membership program but not the reservations component, the church's technical support ministry

knew it was time to consider a separate program designed specifically for room and resource scheduling.

"Eventually, the daily activity in the church became just too overwhelming to track with our old scheduling program," says Vandermeer. "The old system was very limited. All you could enter were dates, times and rooms. No data concerning special equipment or furniture, and very little in the way of additional setup information could be recorded." The reliability of the old system also came into question over the years. "I remember a few times when reservation data was just lost, never to be seen again," he adds.

Fast Facts

- Replaces unreliable scheduling module with EMS Enterprise; creates **dependable** scheduling process
- **10,000** events each year
- **Virtual EMS** provides web access to meeting and event information
- **5,500** members

EMS Case Study *Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Dallas*

Moving Toward a Paperless Reservation Process

In an evaluation period that lasted more than a year, the review committee had a goal of finding a program that:

- Allowed the entry of detailed event information
- Had intuitive processes for creating and editing reservations
- Enabled users to search for space, make requests or create reservations via the internet
- Was built on progressive, reliable technology

“We really wanted to move toward a paperless reservation process,” says Vandermeer. Ultimately, Park Cities purchased EMS Enterprise.

A Patient and Gradual Transition

Knowing that users can be reluctant to leave the comfort of a familiar system, the technical support ministry coordinated a gradual shift from the old program to EMS. After implementing the primary EMS scheduling capability, Vandermeer began the process of selling users on the advantages of internet-based, self-service scheduling over a paper-driven system. And the patient approach has paid off. “Although the transition has been challenging, everyone is seeing how much easier scheduling is with EMS. I’m getting lots of compliments on the new way of doing things,” he says.

Asked about the advantages of using EMS, Vandermeer doesn’t hold back. “EMS does so much more than the old system. *Everything* is an advantage! There is so much more information that can be communicated...people love the online reservation system...we track statistics on how often certain rooms are used...we use EMS to manage our resource inventory...and we are saving a mountain of paper.”

On the Horizon

Not one to rest on his laurels, Vandermeer is already pondering the next improvement to the Park Cities scheduling process. “After I make sure everyone on staff is comfortable using Virtual EMS to reserve rooms, the next step is to look at the Exchange interface and see how it can help us,” he says, referring to an optional EMS module that creates a connection between Virtual EMS and Microsoft® Exchange®, allowing authorized users to check one another’s availability for meetings.

At Park Cities Presbyterian Church in Dallas, the transformation continues.

For more information on Dean Evans & Associates, and the company’s event management and master calendaring software products, go to www.dea.com or contact the Sales department at sales@dea.com or 1.800.440.3994 ext. 863.

