BizX by ActionCOACH UK

Building the "UK's biggest business event" with Zoho Backstage

The Company

ActionCOACH UK is a business coaching franchise that specialises in pairing business experts with business owners - particularly those who are seeking the secrets to growth.

Since 1993, the organisation's coaching model has enabled thousands of business owners to maximise their time, acquire new skills, attract great employees, and generate more income. A community of like-minded ActionCOACH-led business owners now spans every corner of the UK, celebrating each other's successes and sharing opportunities. Its network of over 200 coaches empowers more than 4,500 businesses on a monthly basis, providing a toolbox of resources and knowledge that "help them make money, save money and grow", says ActionCOACH's Partnerships Director, Craig Jackson.

We caught up with Craig, a long-standing Zoho One advocate, at ActionCOACH's flagship event, BizX. He reveals how a move to Zoho Backstage - a comprehensive event management software (EMS) - helped ActionCOACH reach new heights of success in the build, promotion and rollout of its most popular event. "BizX is phenomenal, all aspects of it. I think this year, the seamlessness, the app…they have contributed to it being a greater experience all round," beams Craig.

The Event

📅 **Date:** 17th - 19th April, 2024	
📍 **Location:** ACC Liverpool, UK	
👥 **Attendees:** 1,100+	
🎤 **High-profile speakers:** 12	
🏅 **Awards:** 19 categories	
⬇️ **App downloads:** 860	
📢 **Event management software:** Zoho Backstage!	

ActionCOACH hosts a huge number of physical and virtual events every year, from member meet-ups to workshops, webinars, roundtable dinners, and more. But BizX is its flagship event, the largest and most hotly anticipated in its annual calendar. "We do lots of events, but obviously this is the biggest one we do," confirms Craig.

The goal of BizX is to bestow its attendees with insider knowledge and actionable advice, including the best practices in business, sales strategies, mindset development techniques, marketing inspiration and growth ideas. As such, a line-up of experienced entrepreneurs, global thought leaders, authors, sports personalities, and performance coaches headline the two-day event to educate and encourage the attendees. BizX also promises extensive networking opportunities, entertainment, and a glittering awards ceremony.

The ActionCOACH team begin work on the next BizX event as soon as the lights go down on the last event, spending up to a year securing the most influential business speakers, booking a venue, signing up sponsors, and collecting award nominations. With such a huge amount of effort and organisation invested behind the scenes, only the best EMS will do for "The UK's Biggest Business Event". Enter, Zoho Backstage.

The Challenge

Source a platform that could seamlessly manage the end-to-end delivery of a physical and virtual event

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The team were using various different platforms... **it was painful integrating it all.**

Craig Jackson
UK Partnerships Director

BizX has been running since 2012 and during that time, the ActionCOACH team had used a number of tools to manage it successfully. Dhru Parmar, ActionCOACH's Digital Marketing Executive, spent a lot of time building a dedicated website each year to promote the event, and this directed visitors to a platform called TryBooking to sell and manage the tickets. A plethora of Excel spreadsheets were used to hold and track speaker and attendee information, agenda details, and sponsor sign-ups. This fragmented range of platforms meant a lot of time-consuming exporting, importing and cross-referencing of data, which also left the event plans vulnerable to errors. The team sought an all-in-one integrated solution which could handle every aspect of promotion through to ticket sales, agenda building and sponsor profiling.

What's more, before onboarding Zoho Backstage, the BizX registration and badge allocation processes were somewhat chaotic and highly manual. The organisers had to pre-print and display every attendee's badge ahead of the event opening. "Previously, everybody's names and badges were all laid out on a table. 1,100 badges there and everyone's alphabetically looking "Where's my badge?"" explains Craig. The team knew there had to be an easier, smoother way to manage the event logistics as well as the organisation.

The Solution

Zoho Backstage streamlines event promotion, ticket sales, and check-in whilst optimising attendee engagement

We loved the whole Backstage experience and we'll be using it again.

Craig Jackson
UK Partnerships Director

The Backstage features ActionCOACH loved:

- ❯ A custom event website (using the no-code website builder).

- ❯ QR code check-in and badging.

- ❯ Expo management.

- ❯ Agenda publishing.

- ❯ Exhibitor profiles.

- ❯ Sponsor lead capture facility.

- ❯ A hybrid event format (via live streaming).

- ❯ The mobile app.

- ❯ The networking zone.

- ❯ Session management.

Event build-up

As existing Zoho One users, ActionCOACH was well acquainted with the software giant's expertise and invited Zoho to take up a sponsorship booth in the BizX 2024 exhibition hall. During these discussions, the ActionCOACH team discovered the Backstage EMS application and were impressed by its breadth of features and budget-friendly pricing. "The other platforms that were able to deliver anything like it would have cost significantly more money," explains Craig.

From the outset, the ActionCOACH team found the simplicity of Backstage a major boon. It offers an intuitive no-code website builder, allowing organisers to easily design a richly branded website dedicated to their event. Enhancing the event microsite, users can add agenda sessions, speaker profiles, networking lounges and sponsors, plus enquiry forms and FAQ pages. "Building the website for BizX has been seamless and simple. Adding who was speaking, the agenda, timings, photos, links… it looked really professional," says Craig.

Backstage also handles the sale of tickets, which attendees can purchase directly from the website. Backstage enabled ActionCOACH to hold early bird sales as well as offer flexible tiered pricing options depending on which parts of the event guests wanted to access. "We had multiple ticket options available. You could purchase tickets either for the full two days, or one day, or just an individual speaker as well," recalls Craig. The data from all ticket sales was then pushed directly into ActionCOACH's CRM system, so the team had full visibility of attendee demographics, session popularity, ticket availability, and revenue throughout the lead-up to the go-live date.

BizX gets underway!

Upon arrival at BizX, attendees found Backstage's check-in and registration process slick and easy. "People just arrived with their QR code, scanned it on the printer, and it was just punching out all of these badges. It was turning them around quickly," explains Craig. Guests felt the same, with one exclaiming "I really loved that you just scanned your code and you were logged in, super quick and easy!". Her co-attendee agreed, saying: "We arrived, we got straight in, scanned the badge and were in, within seconds."

Throughout the event, attendee engagement was significantly boosted by the follow-along format of Backstage's mobile app. "One of the real benefits of Backstage that we haven't had previously, is that it comes with an app…really powerful," says Craig. It enabled visitors to easily refer to the agenda, curate personalised schedules by marking sessions as favourites and receive reminder notifications ahead of upcoming sessions. "I've used the app to follow the agenda, so I knew who was coming up next. I found it quick and easy," said one attendee. "It's made me excited about specific speakers!" said another.

More than just accessing the agenda, the app allowed attendees to view and engage with the event sponsors, book meetings, and network with fellow attendees. "I think the app is a really great addition. Some events I've been to before use a text service, which is a bit clunky. Having the ability to interact through the app is brilliant," said one impressed guest.

A further feature of Backstage that BizX leveraged was the live streaming service, which meant virtual attendees could catch a piece of the action too. Each session was filmed and beamed out in real-time to viewers watching from around the world. "We did have people watching this event live internationally," says Craig. Those recordings were then available for a further 30 days after BizX ended, ensuring every ticket-holder could log in and replay the details of each session at their convenience.

When it came to BizX's sponsors, the Backstage platform enabled them to feature prominently at the event, with a digital as well as physical presence. Each sponsor was allocated a profile on the event website and app, a customisable space where they could promote their products, add hyperlinks and offer appointment slots for in-person or video meetings with attendees. "A much-valued add-on compared to previous years," nods Craig. "At the event, which is probably the best thing, they were able to scan the badges of the attendees and capture that data straight away," he adds. Backstage's lead scanning feature meant sponsors could add notes to each lead record to document the conversation they'd had. All of the details were then readily exportable from the Backstage platform so sponsors could upload them to their databases after the event. One sponsor at the event told us: "We've been using the app to capture our leads. It's been amazing, I'm really pleased with it."

Backstage benefits BizX enjoyed:

- Managing the entire event through a single, seamless platform.
- Significant time savings against manual organisation processes.
- Increased value for money compared to alternative platforms.
- Enhanced attendee engagement and experience.

Post-event plans

Once the doors close on an event, it's only then that much of the hard work begins for many organisers and sponsors. With leads to follow up on, post-event analysis to conduct and feedback to gather, there's much to be done. Thankfully, the Backstage app allows users to easily measure the impact and performance of an event through analytics and reports. Organisers can run in-depth reports on sales, revenue, ticket types, and more to determine future strategies and maximise the revenue of their next event.
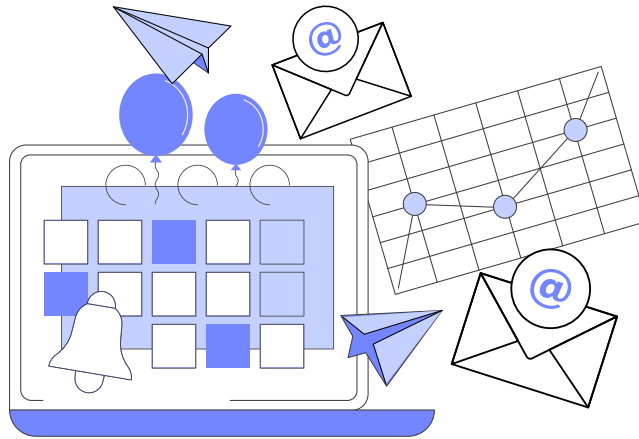
For the ActionCOACH team, the end of one BizX event sees them immediately turn their attention to the next. "Next year is already in the making. We've booked the venue, we've booked six or seven speakers and… we've already started taking bookings using Backstage. We're signed up and here we go again," enthuses Craig. "To anyone else out there thinking of putting on an event…no matter what size of event you're looking to put on, it can cater to them all, and the value for money is phenomenal," he adds.

A partnership with a personal touch

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It's so good to support ActionCOACH and BizX at this event.
For six months we've worked on every aspect.

Ajay Jeyaraj
Head of Presales, UK & Europe, Zoho Backstage

From the point that ActionCOACH first started evaluating Zoho Backstage to the close of the event, Backstage's product and development teams were on hand to assist. Craig recalls how enthusiastic and thorough Ajay and his colleagues were in making sure that Backstage was the right fit for BizX. "Ajay and the team over there in India showcased what it was, how it would work, what it would look like from the perspective of what we were trying to achieve," he says. Assured that the platform would deliver a fantastic event, Craig and his team at ActionCOACH formed a close bond with Ajay as they navigated their BizX 2024 journey together using Backstage. "He was such a super help from stage one, understanding what our requirements were… he made sure he delivered everything that we needed. He went the extra mile the whole way through," explains Craig.

In fact, Ajay travelled many, many miles, as he flew from India to the UK to attend BizX in person and offer his know-how and support. After months of working with ActionCOACH on the event, seeing its success first-hand was a personal achievement for Ajay, who told us: "It's been great, I'm so happy."

Looking to the future, Ajay is excited to support ActionCOACH as they embark on the next BizX adventure with Backstage, helping them make the most of new features whilst crafting an event that's bigger and better than ever before.

About Zoho Backstage

Backstage is an all-in-one event management software for in-person, virtual, and hybrid events. Backstage lets organisers plan, run and analyse an event seamlessly to streamline the entire process. With over 1.65 million people attending one of more than 100,000 events built on Backstage, your event is in safe hands with Zoho.

Please find out more via our website: https://www.zoho.com/Backstage

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ZOHO

zoho.com

Zoho
Backstage

BizX website

www.thebizx.co.uk

ActionCOACH website

www.actioncoach.co.uk

Email us:

Sales@zohocorp.com

Contact us:

+44 (0)203 564 7890