



How Much Time Does Your Check-In Team Lose Per 500 Attendees?

A data-backed guide to the hidden cost of manual event check-in, with real case studies and the metrics that change how event teams think.



You are losing more than time at the door

Every event starts at the entrance. Before a single keynote plays, before the first handshake happens, your attendees are standing in a line. That line tells them everything they need to know about how you run events.

Most event teams measure success by what happens inside the venue. But the research tells a different story. The check-in experience is one of the top three factors that shape attendee satisfaction. And for most events today, that experience is still powered by printed name lists, manual searches, and stressed staff.

The average attendee spends 6 to 11 minutes waiting to check in at a manual registration desk. At a 500-person event, that is more than 83 hours of collective wait time. Time your attendees could spend networking, engaging with content, or building real business value.

The time gap: Manual vs Automated

83+

Manual check-in

Hours lost across 500 attendees. Based on average 10-minute check-in time per person, including search delays, reprinting, and staff confusion.

25min

Automated (fielddrive)

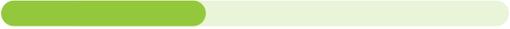
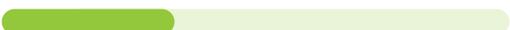
Total time for 500 attendees. Based on fielddrive's average 3-second check-in per person, with zero staff input required per transaction.

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Where does the time go? Manual check-in breakdown per 500 attendees

Activity	Time	Relative Impact
Name search and list scanning	28 hrs 	
Badge printing and reprinting	18 hrs 	
Queue management and crowd control	15 hrs 	
Handling no-shows, walk-ins, and errors	13 hrs 	
Staff briefing, setup, and post-event reconciliation	09 hrs 	

Industry snapshot

67%

of attendees say check-in wait affects their overall event rating

\$18

average staff cost per hour at a mid-size event in Europe and the US

4x

faster average throughput with automated vs manual check-in

92%

of event planners report check-in as the most stressful part of event day

fielddrive Intelligence: Across more than 1,200 events run on the fielddrive platform, events with automated check-in saw a 41% improvement in first-impression scores from attendee surveys, measured within the first 30 minutes of arrival.

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What real event teams found when they measured it

The numbers above come from averages. But the real picture emerges when you look at individual events and what changed when teams made the shift to automated check-in. Here are three stories from three different markets.

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CASE STUDY 01 CORPORATE CONFERENCE



Pan-European technology summit

Annual conference | 480 attendees | Amsterdam, Netherlands

This annual B2B technology event had been running for six years with the same check-in model: printed lists, two staff members per desk, and four desks total. The organizing team assumed the process was working because they had always done it this way.

In year six, they tracked check-in time for the first time. They found that the peak rush between 8:30 and 9:15am created a queue of more than 120 people. The average wait was 9.4 minutes. Three attendees missed the opening keynote entirely. Post-event surveys showed that 29% of attendees mentioned the entrance experience negatively.

In year seven, they switched to fielddrive automated kiosks with facial recognition. The 8:30 to 9:15 rush cleared in under 12 minutes total. Average check-in dropped to 2.8 seconds. Zero staff needed to manage badge searching.

97%

reduction in average
wait time

4

staff reallocated to networking
and session support

0

negative check-in mentions
in post-event survey

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CASE STUDY 02 HIGHER EDUCATION

International academic conference on life sciences

Academic summit | 510 attendees | Singapore

Academic events have a particular challenge: attendees often arrive in clusters right before sessions begin. For this life sciences conference, the surge happened daily, not just on the first morning.

The conference used fielddrive to deploy QR-based self-check-in across three kiosks at the venue entrance. They also enabled real-time session scanning at all breakout rooms. The result was not just faster check-in. The organizers gained live data on attendance patterns across all three days of the event.

The session data revealed that two workshops had far higher attendance than expected. The team was able to move one of them to a larger room before it filled beyond capacity. This kind of live visibility was entirely new to their process.

3.1s

average check-in time vs
8.7s previously

2

room reconfigurations based
on live attendance data

100%

of sessions tracked with
real-time analytics

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The true cost of manual check-in at a 500-person event



\$1,440

Staff cost for 8 check-in personnel across a 10-hour event day at



\$620

Badge printing, reprinting, and supply costs for errors and last-minute changes



\$2,200

Estimated lost opportunity value from poor first impressions and delayed attendee engagement

Manual vs Automated: side by side

Metric	Manual Check-In	fielddrive Automated
Average time per attendee	6 to 11 minutes	2 to 4 seconds
Staff needed per 500 attendees	6 to 10 people	1 to 2 people
Badge error rate	8 to 14%	Under 0.5%
Real-time attendance data	Not available	Live dashboard
Walk-in handling	Manual form filling	Instant onsite registration
Session tracking	Paper sign-in or none	Automated scan at every door
Post-event data export	Manual (2 to 4 hrs)	Instant CSV or CRM push

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What smart check-in actually looks like

Fixing the check-in problem is not just about buying faster hardware. The teams that get the best results are the ones that rethink the entire flow, from registration to post-event data, as one connected system.

fielddrive was built on one idea: that the check-in kiosk should be the start of your event intelligence, not the end of your event admin. Every scan, every badge printed, every session entered feeds a live picture of your event that you can act on in real time.

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One platform. every door. every data point.



Facial recognition check-in

Attendees register once with a selfie. At the door, the kiosk recognizes them in under 3 seconds. No QR, no badge search, no delay.



On-demand badge printing

Badges print only when the person checks in. No pre-print waste. No sorting. No alphabetical pile to dig through under pressure.



Live attendance dashboard

See who is inside, which sessions are full, and where congestion is building from your phone, in real time, from anywhere in the venue.



Access control by badge type

VIP, general, press, staff. Each badge tier gets automatic access rules. No manual gatekeeping. No awkward staff decisions at the door.



Session scanning

Track who attends which breakout, workshop, or keynote. CPE credits, capacity enforcement, and session analytics automated at every door.



Lead retrieval for exhibitors

Exhibitors scan badges and instantly capture attendee data. No separate hardware. No lost business cards. Clean leads, same day.

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How the automated check-in flow works



Pre-event: Registration sync

Your registration data from Eventbrite, Cvent, HubSpot, or your own form syncs directly to the fielddrive platform. Attendee photos are collected during registration for facial recognition.



Day of event: Kiosk setup in under 20 minutes

fielddrive kiosks arrive pre-configured. You plug them in, connect to Wi-Fi, and they are ready. One staff member can manage up to four kiosks simultaneously.



Attendee arrives: 3-second check-in

Attendee looks at the camera or scans a QR code. The system confirms identity, prints the badge, and logs the check-in. The entire interaction takes 2 to 4 seconds.



During the event: Live data for your team

The organizer dashboard shows real-time headcounts, session attendance, and access patterns. Your team can make live decisions based on actual data.



Post-event: Instant reporting

Attendance records, session data, and lead lists export in one click. Push directly to your CRM or download as CSV. No manual data entry.

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Industry benchmarks you should know

These figures come from fielddrive platform data across 1,200-plus events and third-party research from PCMA, Skift Meetings, and the Event Manager Blog.



Events using automated check-in report 34% higher attendee satisfaction scores in post-event surveys (PCMA Convening Leaders 2023)



The average event planner spends 6 to 8 hours on post-event data reconciliation with manual check-in, compared to under 30 minutes with an automated system



73% of exhibitors say lead quality from badge scanning is higher than from business card collection (Exhibitor Magazine, 2023)



fielddrive-powered events have processed over 3 million check-ins across 60 countries with an average check-in time of 2.9 seconds

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What to do before your next event

You do not need to redesign your entire event operation to start saving time. Start here:

Step 1:

Time your current check-in process. Pick three people at your next event and count their total time from queue entry to badge in hand. Most teams are surprised by the real number.

Step 2:

Calculate your staff cost. Multiply the number of check-in staff by their hourly rate, then by the hours they spend on registration tasks. Compare that to what automated kiosk rental costs.

Step 3:

Ask what data you are missing. If you cannot answer how many people attended session 3B or what time most attendees arrived, you are running blind. Real-time analytics is already included in the platform.

Step 4:

Run one event with automation. fielddrive clients consistently report that the first automated event is the last time they go back. The time savings, the data, and the attendee reaction make the decision easy.

Stop losing hours at the door!

Learn how fielddrive works for events your size. [Talk to an event technology specialist today.](#)

And if you're looking for more helpful guides, templates, and reports, check out [fielddrive Onsite Academy](#), your one-stop-destination for all things event planning!

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