# NAVIGATING **EVENT APPS**

## CONVENIENCE, ENGAGEMENT & R.O.I

THE BUSINESS OF EVENTS | THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

## EVENT INSIGHTS

WHITE PAPER SERIES TO HELP YOU TRANSFORM YOUR EVENTS

Apps for events of all sizes have become the industry norm. Starting out as vital tools for large events like conferences or trade shows, event apps are now found at every level of the industry – as of 2017, even 60% of incentive and reward trips were using an app[1]. The obvious advantages to the event manager of using an app compared to traditional methods of conveying event information to your audience are easy to list; no more printing costs and any schedule changes are instantly updated.

What's not as obvious is the value that event attendees gain from using an event app. The top three things event participants find stressful at an event are checking-in, organising their schedule and dealing with overcrowding[2]. Leading reasons for attending events include professional development, keeping up with industry trends and networking[2].  Event apps give your audience valuable tools to deal with their top three stresses and to enhance their top three reasons for attending. Convenience and engagement – these are your goals when developing an app for your event.

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EVENT INSIGHTS

# THE
## TOP FIVE
### FEATURES YOUR ATTENDEES WANT IN THEIR EVENT APP ARE SESSION INFORMATION, NOTIFICATIONS, MAPS, A SCHEDULE TRACKER, AND SPEAKER INFORMATION

## NATIVE OR WEB?

There are two types of event app – native and web. A native app is a stand-alone application that you download and install from Apple's App Store or Google's Play. A web app is an app that runs via a device's internet browser. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

Native apps must be actively downloaded and installed by your attendees. The downsides are they take up space on their device, are expensive to produce and take a long time to get approved for inclusion on the app store by Apple or Google. They might not be available for all of your guest's devices, including PCs, Macs and smart phones that do not run on iOS or Android. An advantage of native apps is added functionality specific to the attendee such as private in app messaging to other attendees and receiving push notifications direct from the event organiser.

Web apps are accessed by a URL and log-in via the device's built-in browser. They are cheaper and quicker to design and build, and are completely customisable. Any changes or updates during an event can be handled by the organiser through a simple web interface. In order to function correctly for your attendees, they do need to be connected to the internet via mobile data or WiFi, so take that into account if your event is in a remote location. Often these apps do not have in-app communication tools.

## APP ESSENTIALS

The top five features your attendees want in their event app is session information, notifications, maps, a schedule tracker, and speaker information[2]. Juggling their time and determining the most relevant speakers to their interests far outweighs their secondary considerations like incorporating an event hashtag or gamification. What attendees definitely want more of is real-time updates when an event is at capacity or cancelled, interactivity to help reinforce learnt material and tools to encourage interaction with speakers and other attendees. Another feature high on many wish-lists is the ability to track and measure attendance at professional development sessions to achieve or maintain industry certifications.

A successful app will address all of your attendee's basic needs, as well as offering interactive tools like real-time audience polling for presenters, simple networking tools that offer value outside of regular avenues like LinkedIn and reinforcement of presenter's material with downloads and video links. The top two factors contributing to a positive on-site experience at an event are in-person networking opportunities and interactive sessions[2], event app use contributes greatly to both.

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## APP AWARENESS

With attendees reporting overwhelmingly positive results and attitudes to event apps, they key is getting them to install or log-in in the first place. This is a simple matter of awareness – with clear demand for the product, all you have to do is make sure your audience knows that it exists and how to get it.

Communicate the essential nature of your app. It's their one-stop-shop for all timing, bios, interactivity, and real-time updates. Mention what it is and where to get it in every single piece of communication related to your event – emails, invitations, websites, social media, and even printed material. Stress that there is exclusive digital-only content and features that can only be accessed through it and promote it way in advance of the event.



## STAYING CONNECTED

If you run regular or annual events, there's big advantages in enabling social features in your app that keep your attendees connected all year. If you have built a community around a niche industry or objective, your guests perceive great value out of making and maintaining new connections via the networking your event and app provides. The benefit to you as an event organiser is the ability to promote upcoming events directly, keep your audience engaged and excited with new content and get a jump on registrations and ticketing with push notifications.

## ENHANCING YOUR R.O.I.

Apps offer multiple platforms and opportunities for event sponsorship – embedded sponsor logos, individual session sponsorships, in-app video advertising, or simple banner ads running on event info pages. These can be easily customised, changed and served up on a rotating basis in both native and web apps, or can be built-in to the source content to ensure they never change.

Continuously improving your events to ensure their ongoing relevance and success is a difficult task, and is almost totally reliant on you understanding your customer's needs. Event apps offer an unparalleled opportunity to get deep and instantaneous feedback from your attendees – they can actively rate each session and leave reviews, or respond to push polls. In the background, you can track attendee's interest in particular information (like an individual speaker's bio) via the amount of page clicks, and, with the right app, physically measure the amount of guests in a session at any given time.

## COST VS BENEFIT

With an expanding market of apps and developers, it's hard to know what type of app and functionality is going to suit your event and budget. App types can be template-based cookie-cutter clones of each other, or totally unique software built from the ground up. Payment plans can range from one-off fees to monthly access charges, with pricing from the hundreds to the tens of thousands.

ENABLING SOCIAL FEATURES IN YOUR APP KEEPS YOUR ATTENDEES

## CONNECTED

ALL YEAR

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# CUMULUS IS A TOTALLY

## CUSTOMISABLE

### WEB APP THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH ANY DEVICE

Encore offer their web app Cumulus free of charge when you employ them as the exclusive AV provider for your event. Cumulus is a totally customisable web app that is compatible with any device that can connect to the internet and run a browser. Users are given a URL and keyword to enter and then everything they need to know about their event is at their fingertips on their phone, tablet, or computer, regardless of operating system.

**MOBILE APPS STATISTICS**

› When your event offers a mobile app for download, an average of 82% of your guests will install it.

› 83% of those will download it in advance of the event.

› Once installed, 83% will report that the app added value to their experience.

› 100% of millennials, 98% of Gen X, and 91% of Baby Boomers attending events own smartphones

i.  "The Top 7 Myths of Using Mobile for Incentive Trips" by Brooke Gracey, 2017, available for download at https://www.siteglobal.com/whitepapers

ii.  "The Event Effect: What's Really On the Minds of Your Attendees?", Edelman Intelligence and CrowdCompass, 2016, available for download at http://www.crowdcompass.com/lp/whats-really-on-the-minds-of-your-attendees.shtml

iii.  ibid

iv.  ibid

v.  ibid

Speak to your local Encore representative or get in touch by emailing

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