Guide to Building and Managing a Successful Event Using the MobileUp App Platform
INTRODUCING...MORE IMPACTFUL EVENTS

Running a successful event can pay dividends for your organization throughout the year and beyond. The best events provide opportunities to share and develop knowledge and insights among attendees, create valuable professional and personal connections, and strengthen the affinity attendees feel to your organization.

Furthermore, they unlock positive value between event hosts and sponsors—delivering valuable revenue that fuels your organization’s goals, while providing sponsors with new business that keeps them coming back year after year.

And as in-person events become the norm again after their hiatus of the last two years, organizers and attendees are once again realizing the benefits of face-to-face connection.

This guide will help organizers think through planning, organizing and managing a mobile app platform solution for their events.
Planning (At least 60 Days Prior To Event)

Begin planning your event app by making a vendor selection at least 60–180 days in advance of your event. Exactly how far in advance will depend on your needs and your staff's availability to focus on launching the app, but a good rule of thumb is 60 days minimum should give you time to get everything up and running. In some circumstances, with the right solution in place, we’ve seen event organizers get an app ready in just a few weeks.

There are many vendors active in the event space, and choosing one that is best aligned to your organization’s goals and resources is critical.

Many organizers will start with the question, what is the number of participants to justify developing an app for their event? A better question is, what is the experience we want attendees to have, and how can we provide rich and engaging access to information about the venue, speakers, sessions, exhibitors, materials, etc., in one convenient place.

Managing Budget

There are mobile app platforms at a number of different price points, and there is sure to be an option that fits your budget. That said, here at MobileUp, we strongly believe that a pricing model where organizations pay a flat annual fee, with no upcharges per event or attendee, is the way to ensure a wide range of customers can incorporate mobile technology into their event planning with confidence and predictability. But regardless of the approach you take with the budget, we recommend organizers prepare to spend a few thousand dollars per year with their mobile app partner.

Find a budget friendly solution

Today’s technology platforms provide very cost-effective solutions that should fit everyone’s budget. Some vendors charge per attendee, others charge per event and the variables continue. At MobileUp, we believe in one annual fee that fits everyone’s budget. No per attendee charges and no per event charges. This makes your budget planning very predictable and will also allow you to target certain revenue opportunities to make your event mobile app a net revenue generator versus a net cost.

Planning on a few thousand dollars a year is a pretty good data point to work from. In some cases, it could be less and in others it might be a bit more. But the days of having to spend $5,000–$20,000 for a single event app are over.
Features for Sponsors & Exhibitors
A mobile app platform can greatly enhance the value your sponsors and exhibitors receive from their partnership with your organization, which will improve revenue opportunities and returning sponsorship.

Take note of how different mobile app platforms incorporate sponsors and exhibitors into the app. This is an easy value add for your sponsors and exhibitors and will help attendees see information from all sponsors and exhibitors that they might be interested in learning more about.

And it’s not just about your presenting sponsors and exhibitors. Your app can also help attendees find specific exhibitors, learn a bit about them before visiting their booth, and even check-in for a booth visit, creating a seamless exchange of contact information.

Features for Attendees
What are the features that your attendees require? You will likely want to offer standard features like session schedules and tracks, registration integration, attendee information, speaker information and materials, sponsors, and collaboration and communication tools just to name a few. You will probably want to explore features that can increase attendee engagement and data collection while they are at your event, with tools such as event and session check-ins, surveys, and newsfeed that allows attendees to create and share content.

The key is to keep the feature and functionality aligned to your attendee needs and practical usage while providing value to both attendees and your organization.
BUILDING AND DEPLOYING YOUR APP: KEY DECISIONS

**Branded App vs. Container App**

As you navigate the vendor landscape, there are two types of apps dedicated to delivering a great experience for both the organization and the attendees. Some vendors do both and some only provide a single option. MobileUp provides both options as each has its own advantages but, both do provide the same features set.

**A Branded App** results in your organization having a fully custom branded app in the major app stores, under your organization’s name. Because of this, it’s easily searchable by your users in the way they’re accustomed to. However, there is one extra requirement to this approach: your organization must maintain developer accounts with both Apple and Google and keep them in good standing. It takes about 7–10 days to set up accounts for an organization.

**A Container App** uses a generic app from your technology vendor to host your content. (In MobileUp’s case, your attendees would download our app “GoEngage” from the app and then log in using credentials which you would provide.) Two advantages with this are your organization does not have to create and manage an Apple or Google Developer account, and there is a lower entry cost. The disadvantage is all attendees will have to download the “GoEngage” app and then enter the access code provided by your organization.

A container app is not searchable under your brand name in the stores, unlike a branded app. Apps within a container are searchable by name or can be restricted to access by a unique code. Once accessed, branding to match your organization appears.
What registration system?
Having a good registration system to collect the information you are looking to gather while also processing payments is a vital element in your planning process. MobileUp does not offer a registration system currently but does provide integration with various registration vendors. This integration provides a seamless process to take all registration data and move it into the mobile app prior to your event.

Choosing a Platform
Besides the ‘feature’ set, check references and make sure you feel good about the relationship dynamics of implementation and support. Features are always the next version away, but the underlying business practices are usually steady state.

Obviously, money does come into play in most cases, so make sure you know all the costs and what potential additional costs there might be. You don’t want to get yourself in a situation where large hidden costs hit you just prior or just after your event, or nickel and dimes hit you just to turn on additional features.
MANAGEMENT OF YOUR EVENT

Given the administrative tools most solutions provide today, organizations can modify, add or remove any app content in minutes and push to all app users immediately. Most of the app management during the event is focused on attendee engagement and data collection. Following, you will find some valuable programs and feature concepts that should be used for increasing the value of your mobile solution while providing rich benefits to your attendees and collection of actionable data by your organization.

Content & Feature Usage

I. Revenue Generation
   - Sponsorship by leveraging the carousel feature on the top of the app.
   - Sponsor & Exhibitor Directory listings, with levels of sponsorship.
   - Send out announcement and/or notifications with links to sponsorship information prior to and during your event.

II. Attendee Engagement
   - Set up time sensitive notifications that should be scheduled to go out automatically throughout your event.
   - Highlight the attendee directory to encourage peer networking.
   - Create announcements in the feed system promoting sessions, links, photos, and ‘hot topics’ for discussions.
   - Turn on the ‘Comment’ option in the feed system to allow attendees to make comments to posts made by other attendees or staff.

III. Credentialing & Session Check In
   - Attach a ‘check in’ option to any or all sessions. This then provides ‘credit’ to session attendees for continuing education or other certification needs.
   - Check In should be flexible to allow use for social events or other activities.
   - The administrative tools should provide good reporting for each event with such data as individual, date and time of check in and out, and the number of credits.

IV. Organizational Feedback
   - Surveys – this tool should be used for direct session (each session can have a unique survey) feedback as well as any general survey’s you wish to create before, during or after your event. Surveys can be attached to any session, can be put behind a home page button and can be linked through promotion.

V. Exhibitor Value
   - Exhibitor directory with both organization and employee contact details.
   - Booth lead capture that should enable each Exhibitor to 'check in' any booth visitor.
   - Promotion in the home page carousel linking to the directory.
   - Schedule notifications or send out announcements through the feed system promoting top-level exhibitors.
SUPPORT SERVICES – WHAT TO EXPECT & OPTIONS

Having the option to employ assistance from your app provider prior to or during your event, should be an option. Not every organization needs this and nor does every vendor offer this. The following ‘add on’ support services can be beneficial.

**Prior to the Event**
If you are pressed for time, short on staff, etc. a vendor should be able to provide managed services to build out your app. Typically, this is done by staff with assistance from your Vendor but in time of need, your app provider should offer that option to build out your app for a nominal fee.

**During the Event**
All vendors supply technical support assistance Monday – Friday during normal business hours as a part of the license fee. Beyond this, following you will find additional ‘opt in’ options to employ during weekend or holiday events.

**Extended Support** provides vendor staff members via dedicated email and phone during the entire event to answer any questions or address any issues from system administrators. This typically comes with a fee.

**Admin Support** provides a vendor staff member to create and manage various engagement opportunities throughout the event. Organizations use this service so that site staff are free to attend to other items. This typically comes with a fee.

**Onsite Support** means a vendor staff member will be onsite during the entire event. Vendors will charge a daily rate for this service along with airfare and hotel accommodations.
RECAP YOUR EVENT AND FUTURE PLANNING

Take a few days to breathe. A lot of our clients start to gear back up within a week or so of completing the last event, while others wait until a few months prior to the next event. In either case, a thorough review should be done soon after your event to enable you to review data collected and get feedback from attendees and exhibitors.

In preparing for this future planning, take advantage of the technology in the hands of each attendee. A few things that can be of great benefit:

- Review app analytics and discover actionable data.
- Send out a post event survey from the app.
- Share feedback with all attendees through the app.
- Use the app for ongoing communication throughout the year by turning on the community module – there is an added fee for this module.
Benefits to Attendees
A strong mobile app means a more valuable event for attendees. Professionals across all fields have become accustomed to using their smartphone as the engine of connection and productivity. That absolutely must extend to the while they are attending your event—not to mention the key moments before and after the event while they make their plans and consolidate their learnings.

Benefits to Organizations
A rich and yet easy to use mobile app platform for your events provides a much easier and more cost-effective way to deliver all the programming and materials without IT support. Not only can you save planning budget dollars by using mobile technology, but last-minute changes are much easier and less stressful. Using technology to collect timely feedback and instill conversation is invaluable in setting future planning and programming.