Certain

Connect More! 19 Ideas for Greater Event App Engagement

Get Personal

Mobile event apps allow you to provide customized content on a level that is almost impossible for an event manager using traditional methods. This is one of the major advantages of having an event app, so be sure to make full use of it. Having relevant content gives your participants a solid reason to use the app; you are providing them with highly valuable information that is directly applicable to them.

1 Does your conference have multiple tracks happening at the same time? If attendees sign up for these tracks before the event, talk to your app provider about having personalized itineraries for your attendees. If attendees choose their tracks while at the conference, make sure that they can "favorite" sessions in the agenda, which allows them to build their own agenda. This works especially well if you are making the app available before your event starts; attendees can look through the agenda and build their own schedule before arriving at your venue.

2 Do you have scheduled meetings between attendees? Between attendees and sponsors? What about small group meetings? Talk to your app provider about setting up a personalized meetings schedule in the app.

3 Maybe several different types of people will be attending your conference. When you choose an upfront password as your login option, you'll be able to customize what these different types of people see. Do you have after-dinner cocktails scheduled for VIP sponsors? Put that in the app, but only for those VIPs to see. Maybe your event is customer facing and you want to hold daily debrief and planning meetings with your sales team. Put that meeting into the schedule, but only allow your sales team members to see it.

With all of these personalized content types, make sure you are letting people know that personalized content will be available to them in the app. If they understand that the app is so much more than a digital copy of the paper agenda, people are more likely to see the value of the app and use it.
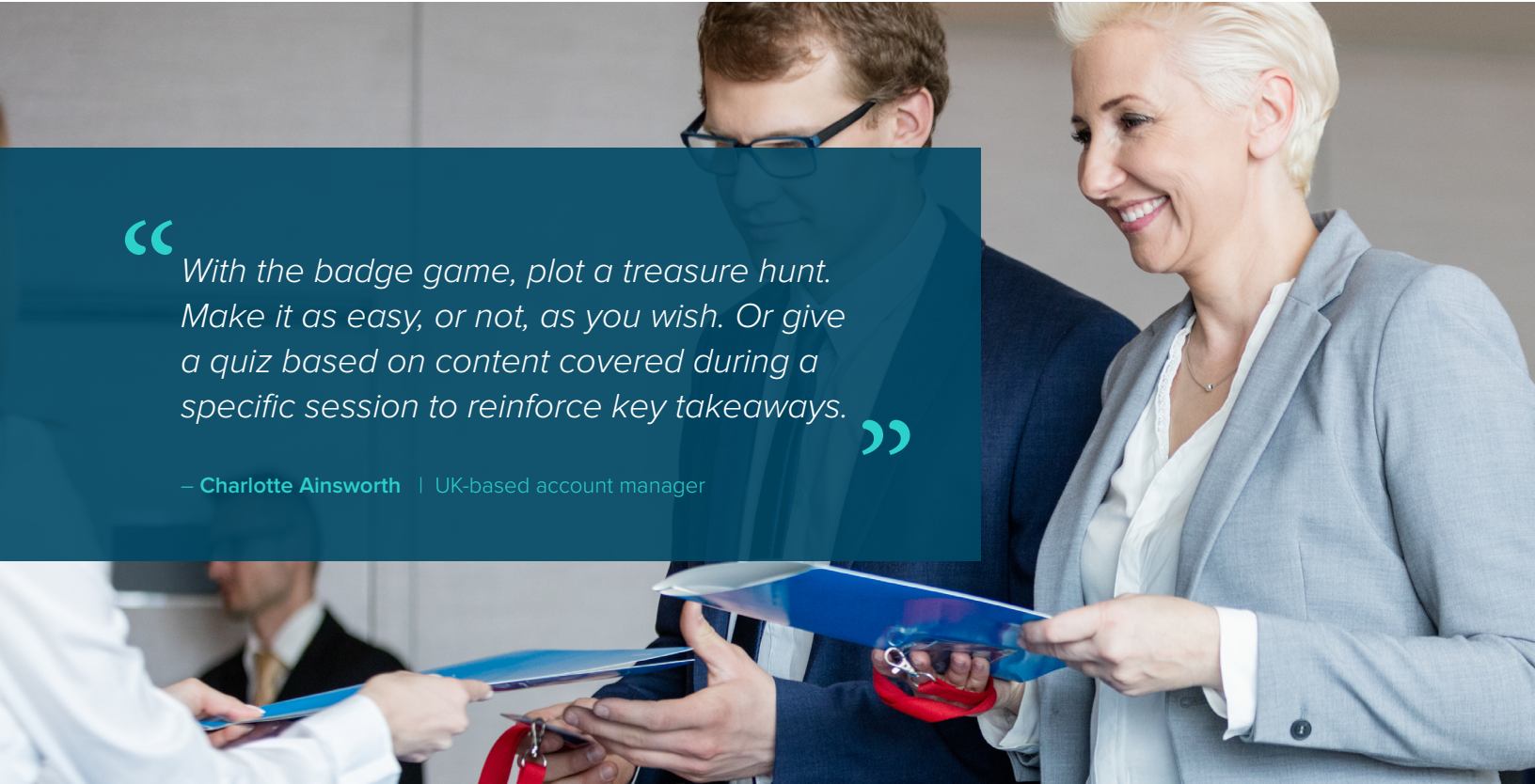
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Play Games

Simply put, gamification is providing small rewards to drive particular behaviors. Because your app allows you to track attendee behavior, you have the power to reward the behavior you want. With a little bit of planning, gamification can significantly increase your app ROI.

4 Talk to your app provider about a badge game. With a badge game, you can specify a list of tasks and provide a badge for each attendee who completes one of these tasks. You can have a badge for logging in, one for exchanging contacts with someone, another for checking in at a sponsor table and still another for completing a survey or for posting a photo. You can provide levels of badges as well; maybe a bronze badge for visiting a sponsor, silver for visiting five sponsors and gold for visiting 10 sponsors. Attendees can view a leaderboard in the app, which shows who has earned which badges. The huge advantage of this tool is that it allows you to incentivize the particular actions you want attendees to take.

> *With the badge game, plot a treasure hunt. Make it as easy, or not, as you wish. Or give a quiz based on content covered during a specific session to reinforce key takeaways.*
>
> **— Charlotte Ainsworth** | UK-based account manager

5 Not all gamification has to be competitive. Simply offering a reward can often be enough. On day one of your conference, offer a free latte to anyone who shows you the homepage of the app on his or her phone. Draw for door prizes using the list of attendees who logged into the app, checked into a particular session or posted a photo in the photo section. Choose some of the best responses from the discussion board each day and highlight them during lunch the following day.

Super-Charge Agenda Details

6 Speaker notes can be uploaded to a session, as well as links to areas of research or more information. Talk to your app provider about a Speaker Portal, which allows your speakers to log in and upload content to their sessions directly, without needing to go through you.

> " *The beauty of the speaker portal is that once you give speakers access, it really does run itself, and saves a whole lot of time for the event planner.* "
>
> **– Elyse Allen** | US-based account manager

7 Provide an in-app to-do list before the event. This lets people know what they need to do and as they check items off on their list, it allows you to see if anyone is falling behind on preparation.

8 Attendees can take notes in the app and then have those notes emailed directly to themselves. Advertise this feature so attendees know they have a green and hassle-free option for notes.

Interact and Crowdsource

One advantage of using an event app is the ability to interact with your attendees and crowdsource parts of your conference. Don't forget to make use of these opportunities!

9   Use live polling for a Q&A session. This is particularly effective for large crowds. Instead of asking people to walk up to a microphone (intimidating) or you having to run around the room with a microphone in hand (a hassle), just ask the attendees to open the app and type in a question for the presenter. The polling moderator can see the questions as they come in and display the most appropriate ones. Be sure that you tell attendees at the beginning of the session that you will be using live polling so they have time to download and log in if they haven't done so already.

10   Use discussion boards to crowdsource. Work with your speakers to develop questions and topics for discussion; then schedule a time to feature some of the best responses.

11   Set up a photo booth in a lobby and encourage attendees to upload photos to the app. Make sure someone on your staff posts the first few photos; many people will be hesitant to be the first one to post a photo. You can use these photos in promotional material for next year's event!

12   Organize photo bingo or a photo scavenger hunt with attendees posting photos of themselves in particular locations, with particular people (drive them towards your sponsors!), or doing particular things. See who can fit the most people into a selfie or take a picture with a famous landmark in the background.

13   Put a "get to know you" survey in the app a few weeks before the conference and ask attendees to fill it out before coming. Let attendees know that their answers will be visible in their attendee profile on the app. This information can be great for breaking the ice and networking. Promote this aspect of the app and how useful it will be when prepping for networking meetings.

14   Crowdsource a report on an important topic in your industry, with all participants receiving a free copy of the report. Dedicate a segment of time for responding to this topic. If you have the right people participating, you can even sell this report to non-attendees.

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Promote, Promote, Promote

Your attendees need to know that you have an app, why they should use it, how to download it and how to log in.

15 Include a checkbox on your registration that says, "I'll save a tree and use the app—no need to print a big, heavy program guide for me." You'll be surprised at how many people will forgo the printed agenda when they know you'll give them a greener option.

16 Send a separate email announcing your app at least a week before the conference. Don't mention the app in the middle of long email covering conference logistics; if you want people to take note, you can't bury the news in a torrent of information. In the email, tell people what will be available in the app: personalized agendas, contact exchange, a badge game, photo sharing or speaker handouts. You know why the app is awesome; make sure you tell your attendees why it's awesome. If personalized information will be provided in the app, it is very important that you communicate this to your attendees.

17 Have a placard on display at the registration or sign-in table with instructions for downloading and logging into the app. Be sure to include Wi-Fi information as well!

18 Have a laptop at the registration desk with someone who can login to your app dashboard in case an attendee experiences problems. What if an email address is wrong? What if somebody isn't on the attendee list? If you can immediately correct these problems on the spot, your attendees will more likely use the app.

Finally, Delegate

19 Consider getting on-site support for your app. This can be particularly useful at large events where you could use some extra help with participant questions or issues. Talk to your app provider about sending an account manager to your event to handle all app-related tasks. This person can help run live polls, assist with in-app promotions and update any schedule changes in the app.

Use these ideas, and others sparked by them, to increase your mobile event app usage and engagement!

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Certain delivers the leading enterprise Event Automation platform to personalize event experiences and provide meaningful connections that accelerate business. Certain integrates with marketing automation and CRM systems to help move prospects through the buying cycle faster; and the Certain Event Success Hub includes industry partners that extend event automation capabilities. Our Lead Intelligence adds event-level interactions to not only track what attendees are doing, but also understand their actual interests in order to drive more personalized lead nurturing and effective sales follow-up. The Certain platform enables attendee management, utilizes a mobile app to simplify and speed-up event registration and management, provides event branding as well as social and mobile participation, and facilitates 1-to-1 meetings that engage audiences and maximize event value for all participants. Headquartered in San Francisco, with offices in North America, Europe, and the Pacific Rim, Certain is a strategic event partner to over 600 enterprise and Event Automation companies.

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