

OFFICIAL MPI RESEARCH:

The State of Event Apps

All the information you need on mobile app adoption at events. Research conducted in partnership with Meeting Professionals International, presented by DoubleDutch.



Research conducted by



Report written by

doubledutch

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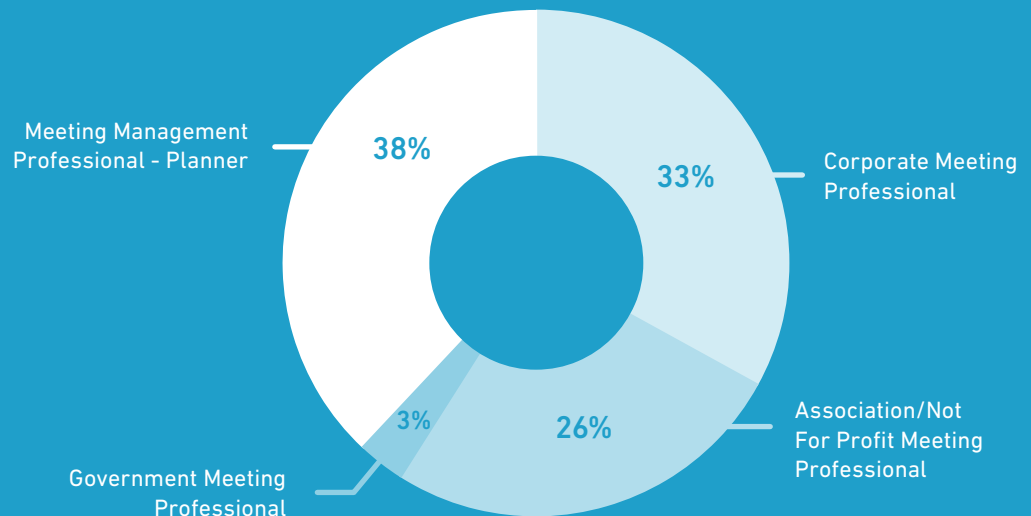
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About the Survey

In May 2014, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) teamed up with DoubleDutch to survey nearly 1,800 members of their organization about how they've adopted mobile applications as part of their overall event strategy. The results of the following survey consist of responses from 382 meeting professionals across various industries, with a wide breadth of tenure in their fields.

This report aims to provide a better understanding of how and why meeting professionals currently use mobile event applications, what results they expect, and how they intend to use them in the future.

Breakdown of Survey Respondents



About Meeting Professionals International

Founded in 1972, MPI believes that meeting and event planners serve a critical role in the success of business, and is committed to giving its members the very best in professional development, business opportunities and a vibrant industry community.

About DoubleDutch

DoubleDutch is an award-winning provider of mobile event applications, with a unique focus on capturing and surfacing data from live events. The first to bring a data-driven technology approach to the event industry, DoubleDutch customers include SAP, UBM, Audi, IDG, and Estée Lauder.

Executive Summary

It is estimated that roughly \$500B+ is spent per year on events worldwide.¹ In fact, events make up the largest portion of an average B2B marketer's budget at nearly 20% of their overall spending.² As marketing departments have an increased focus on mobile and digital campaigns, a similar expectation has been applied to the world of events, meetings, and conferences.

“Events make up
nearly 20% of the B2B
marketer's budget.”

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Think of live events 10 years ago. After checking in to registration, you would be handed a large paper guide with all event-critical information including: session details, speaker bios, floor plans, exhibitor information, and more. The only way to keep track of what was happening at the event was to carry the printed guide along with your notepad, business cards, and other event essentials while navigating the conference room floor.

Organizers were able to track what happened at the registration table (who attended and who did not), but had little insight into what happened after an attendee walked through the venue doors. Of course, innovations like lead retrieval, audience response systems, and session attendance tracking devices helped shed some light here, but these disparate systems left many questions unanswered.

Flash forward to today: attendees now carry around mini-computers called smartphones in the palm of their hands (or more recently, strapped around their wrists). These new, powerful devices enable organizers to better measure what happens after an attendee crosses the venue threshold: which sessions they've attended, which speaker was their favorite, how they prepared for the event, and more.

Event apps give access to event information, help build schedules, or set up meetings with the right people. Other apps help attendees keep track of connections they make by scanning business cards or badges for better post-event follow-ups.

These smart devices are quickly becoming an extension of who we are. Naturally, this has both positive and negative implications on events. The digital era is one where marketers can track virtually any online action, enabling them to measure activity taking place on the show floor. But it's also having an impact on our attention spans and patience. We can get answers to the most mundane questions within seconds by doing a quick Google search on our phones.

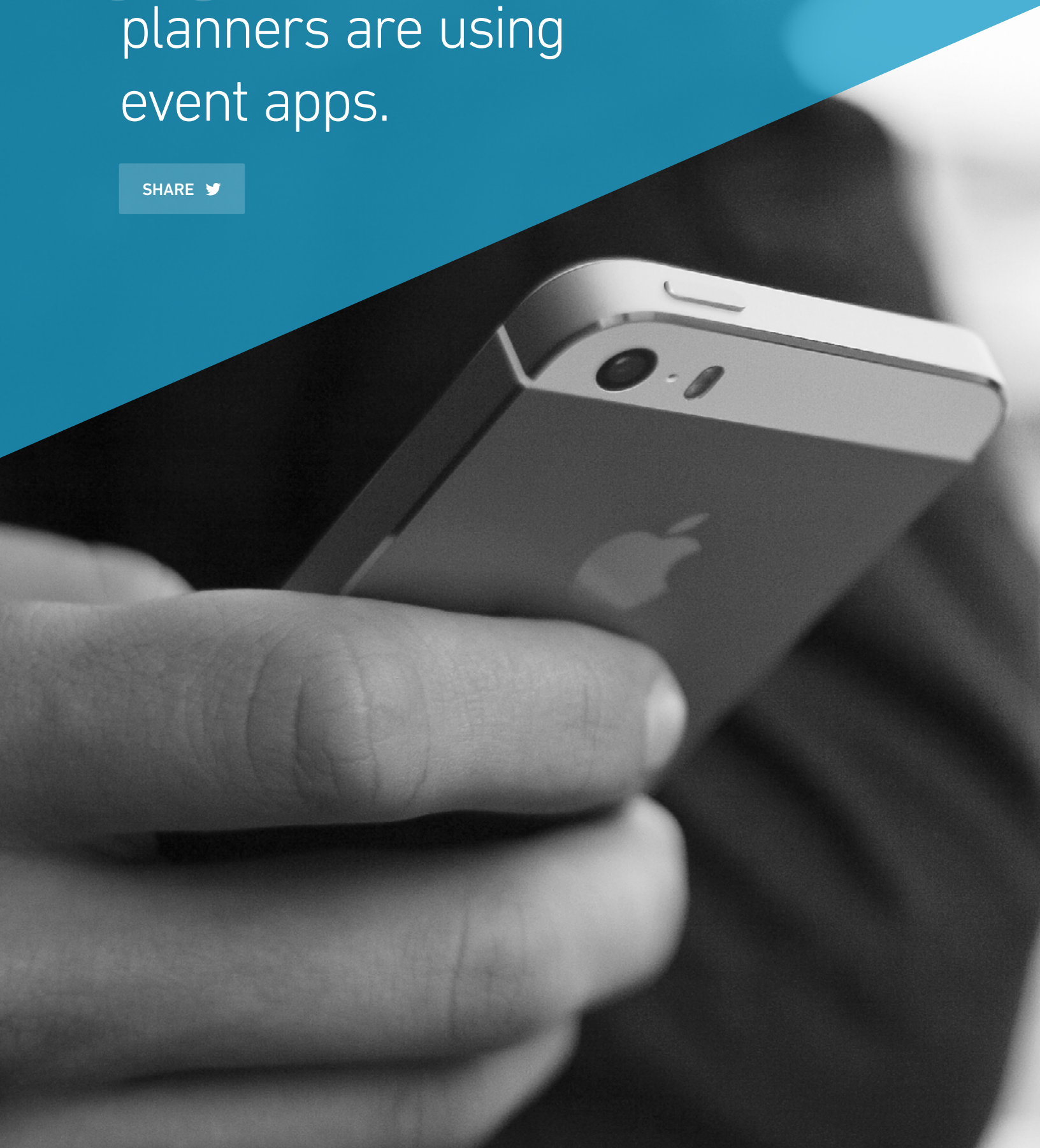
Because of this shift in our mentality, meeting professionals must be able to give attendees the same experience at their own events. Event apps give attendees easy access to upcoming session details, speaker bios and more to meet the need for immediate information.

Today, 63% of meeting professionals use mobile apps to organize and run their events. According to the research, the primary reason these planners choose to use an event application is to provide more convenience to attendees, highlighting the app's easy access to session details and streamlined schedule-building capabilities.



63% of meeting planners are using event apps.

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Research shows that in the near future, meeting professionals will expect more features from mobile apps that focus on improving various elements of event engagement, such as live audience response, surveys, and polling. They also plan to integrate mobile applications more deeply into the event strategy by using it for data-generation, attendee retention, lead retrieval for exhibitors, and event-performance analysis.

As the research indicates, selecting a mobile app vendor typically falls under the responsibilities of the Events General Manager, but may require input from other leadership positions such as the CEO or CMO. These roles also influence the budget these companies have for purchasing and implementing a mobile application. The primary reason that these meeting professionals chose to use—and thus budget for—a mobile event app is they have been proven to enhance the attendee experience, which largely determines attendee retention and event success. In short, if a mobile app can demonstrate impact on the event experience, it is more likely to find a spot in the budget.

The future for mobile event applications appears to be one characterized by high growth. In the next 6–12 months, it is expected that we will see an 85% or greater mobile app adoption rate among event professionals in a variety of industries. As indicated by this increased adoption rate, mobile applications will be viewed not only as a more convenient alternative to the paper guide, but also an integral component of the overall event strategy and experience, impacting key initiatives such as stakeholder retention, revenue outcomes, and data collection.

“In the next 6–12 months, it is expected that we will see an 85% or greater mobile app adoption rate among event professionals in a variety of industries.”

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Which Meeting Professionals Use Event Apps?

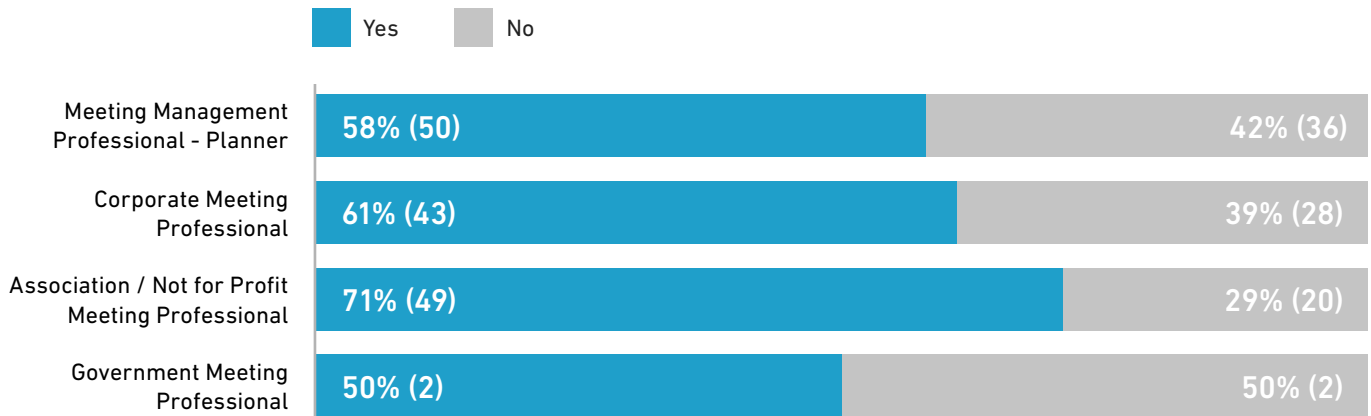
Mobile applications are quickly becoming an integral component of the event professional's toolbox. Of those surveyed, 63% of meeting professionals are currently using mobile applications to enhance their events, and 60% of those who are not currently using one expect to be in the next 6–12 months.

Do you currently offer, or have you developed, a mobile app for a meeting or event?

Yes No

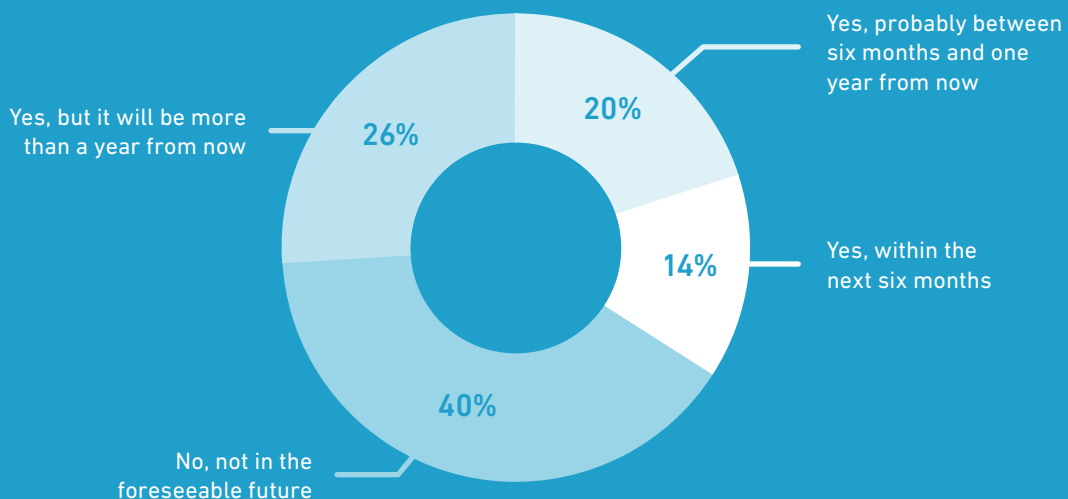


Do you currently offer, or have you developed, a mobile app for a meeting or event? (by planner type)



In further breaking down the profile of those who have already adopted a mobile application, the research discovered that association meeting professionals constitute the largest percentage of adopters at 71%. Other industries with high adoption rates include finance, event design, and trade shows.

If you have not used an event application, are you planning to use one in the future?

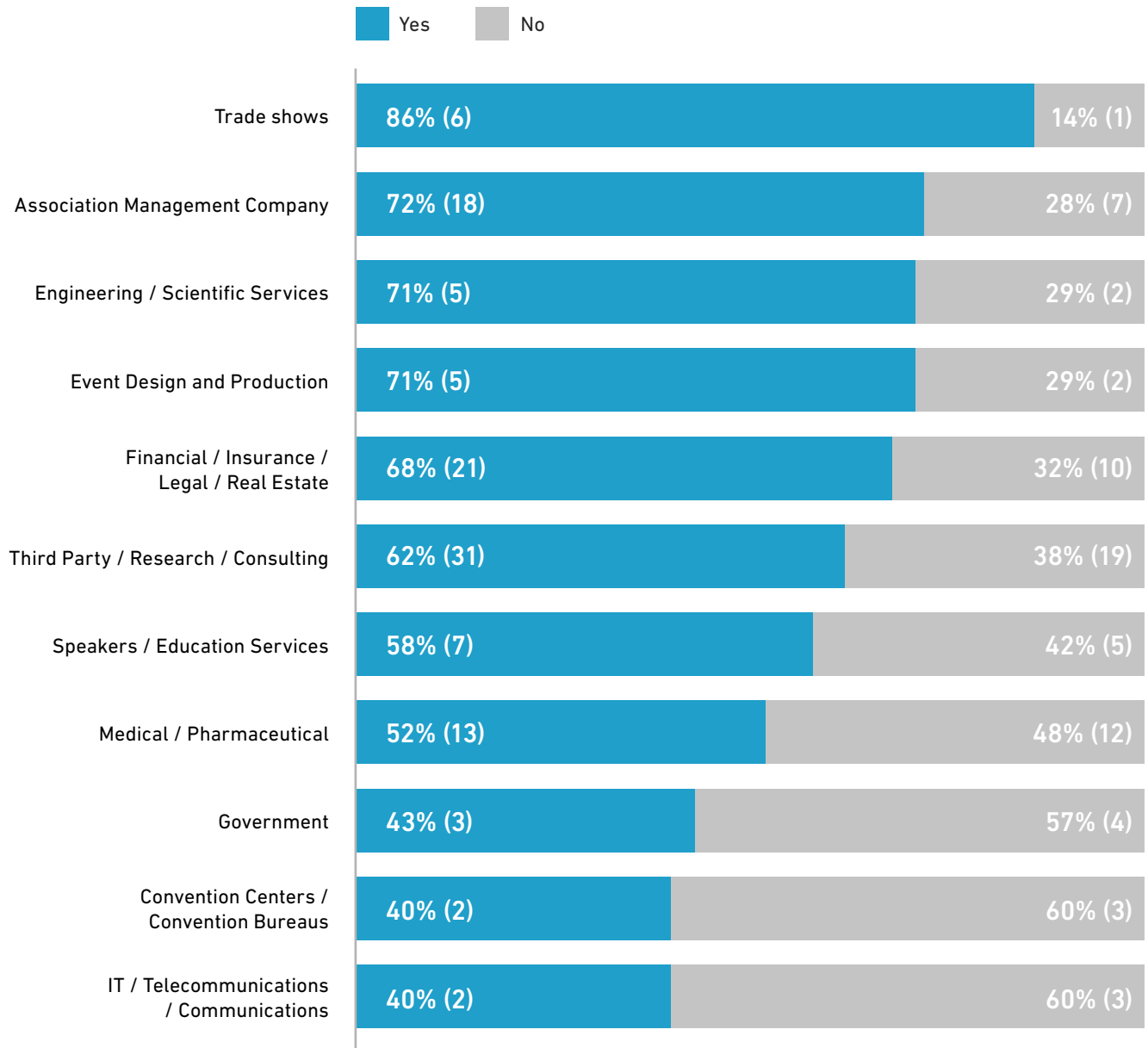


“71% of association meeting professionals are using an event app to engage members.”

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Do you currently offer, or have you developed, a mobile app for a meeting or event? (by industry)



Lower adoption rates for corporate meeting professionals could be due to the wide range of meeting types in this field. For example, small executive meetings may not have budgeted for a mobile application due to the brevity and size of the meeting, while larger corporate user conferences could more readily secure budget for a mobile app.

Low event app adoption rates across pharmaceutical companies, government organizations, and nonprofits could be due to the highly regulatory nature of these industries, making it more difficult to procure a budget for this type of technology. As mobile event applications become more ubiquitous and continue to prove themselves to be secure and enterprise ready, it's likely that mobile apps will become more highly adopted in these industries.

Which Events Use Mobile Applications?

Event applications can impact a wide variety of event types, from small internal meetings to large trade shows. See how the mobile strategy can differ, depending on the goals of the meeting or event.

Trade Shows and Conferences


Trade shows and conferences are largely driven by sponsorship revenue. Mobile applications elevate key sponsors and drive engagement at exhibitor booths in a number of ways. By creating an easily navigable section in the application for attendees to discover, bookmark, and interact with exhibitors, event apps increase the event value for sponsors.

In-app sponsorship opportunities are huge revenue drivers for trade show and conference organizers who can sell promoted messages, sponsored app sections, and more to key event sponsors. These in-app advertisements not only help elevate the profile of the sponsor, but also give the organizer access to a wealth of data that can later be shared to demonstrate the sponsor's ROI.

Another source of revenue for organizers is in-app lead scanning. Event applications with integrated lead-retrieval technology not only help exhibitors keep track of who they've met, but also give them the ability to continue their conversations with booth visitors through the life of the event.

For instance, with in-app lead scanning, exhibitors have the ability to view an attendee's profile activity to see which sessions they've attended and which other exhibitors they may have visited. This gives the sponsor more insight into the type of people and companies they've interacted with to better gauge purchase intent. Such key intel allows the exhibitor the insight they need for smarter post-event follow-ups.

Event professionals are then able to increase the value of their sponsorships and measure the likelihood that key sponsors will return next year.



“In-app sponsorship opportunities are huge revenue drivers for trade show organizers.

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Association Meetings

Event applications give associations and member-based organizations the ability to engage members in a year-round experience that lasts beyond their annual event.

By providing training content, research materials, surveys and polls to reinforce continuing education and member feedback, the application continues to act as a resource for members before, during, and after the event.

Internal Meetings and Sales Kickoffs

During internal meetings, important company-wide information and initiatives are often shared. Organizers want attendees to have a discussion forum and ideation platform during these types of events, while maintaining the privacy of confidential information. Employees and leaders can be social, collaborative and publicly expressive around the event, within the privacy and security of the branded mobile application.

Why Are Mobile Apps So Crucial to Event Planning?

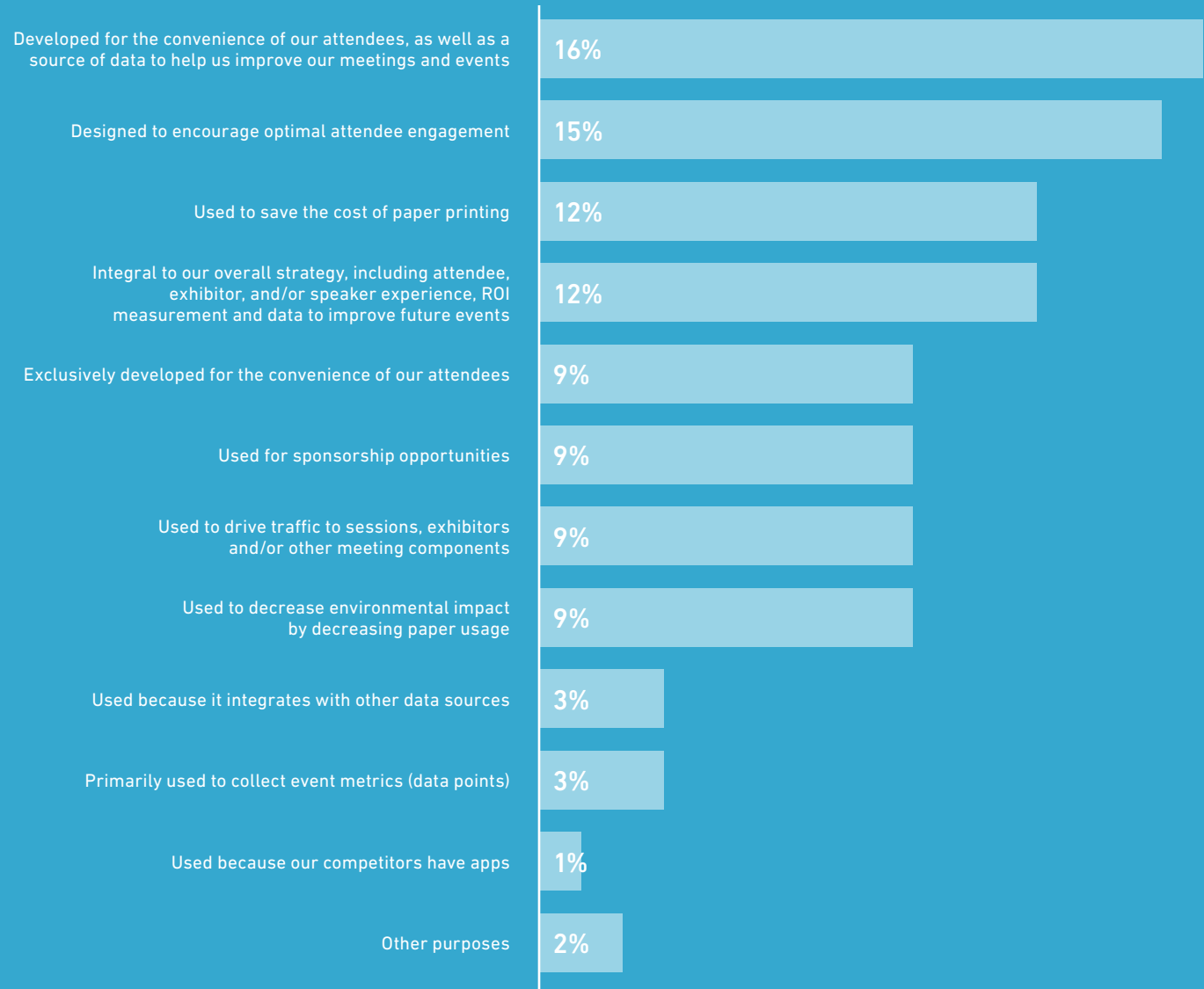


Mobile Facilitates Event Success

The success of an event is largely determined by attendee satisfaction. It's not surprising, then, to find that planners use mobile apps primarily to improve the event experience for their participants. By integrating the mobile application into the overall event strategy,

planners are able to not only improve the experience for attendees and exhibitors, but also generate compelling data to better demonstrate ROI and improve upon the event year after year.

Which of the following statements describes your mobile app use for meetings and events?



A Central Content Hub with Cost-Savings to Boot

By giving attendees access to the most up-to-date event details, mobile applications create a convenient hub for all event-critical information. For instance, because planners are able to update content on the fly, they can also notify attendees when a session is running late or a room change has been made. Because printed guides are often outdated the moment they return from the printer, these problems can be more difficult to overcome without the help of a mobile application.

By giving event participants access to resources (like slide decks, PDFs, videos, and more) in the mobile application, planners are able to create a central hub for all event content from beginning to end.

While replacing the printed guide with a mobile application is convenient for attendees, it benefits the organizer's budget as well. It's no secret that plans change at a moment's notice during even the most well organized event; a speaker's flight gets delayed, sessions run over their allotted time slots, or other unforeseen scheduling issues arise. Unfortunately, once the programs are sent to the printer, making changes is a difficult or troublesome process at best.

With the ever-changing nature of events, mobile applications give planners the ability to update content on the fly and notify attendees of those changes immediately. Thanks to cloud configuration, when a session runs overtime, planners are able to make updates instantly with just a few clicks in a content management system (CMS).

Replacing the printed guide with a mobile app gives incredible flexibility for content changes and can reduce printing costs significantly, making it a win-win for many planners. Today, mobile applications also offer a vehicle for multi-sided conversations to occur between all event stakeholders.

“With the ever-changing nature of events, mobile applications give planners the ability to update content on the fly and notify attendees of those changes immediately.”

Engaging Social Community

The mobile application also creates a community environment for attendees to engage with content and each other in meaningful ways. By giving attendees a platform to communicate with one another (and the organizers) through status updates and private messaging, planners are able to create a deeper bond between attendees and the event, ultimately leading to greater brand loyalty and attendee retention.

With constant activity happening within the event application, the organizer can keep a finger on the pulse of their event, allowing them to be proactive in identifying and addressing problems as they arise. By taking a proactive approach to ensure attendee satisfaction, planners can have more confidence that attendees will return each year.

By building a community within an event's attendee base, the mobile application becomes an integral component of the event experience. Planners who can successfully integrate the mobile application into the larger event experience gain access to a wealth of data and insights that enable them to further improve upon events year after year, ensuring stakeholder retention.

Utilizing the event app as a communication platform, planners are able to address problems immediately and avoid disgruntled attendees. Additionally, apps can be used to open up lines of communication between attendees, exhibitors, speakers, and planners. As each event stakeholder is given a voice in the app, the event becomes a more collaborative, participatory experience.



“The mobile application becomes an integral component of the event experience.”

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Demonstrate Event Impact by the Numbers

The research shows that planners are also using mobile applications to collect data and improve future events.

Broadly, planners are looking at the number of app downloads, active users, and activities per user to determine the success of the application. While these numbers do a great job of giving a basic understanding of the value of the mobile application, they do little in the way of impacting the event experience.

Mobile applications with native in-app polling and survey features give planners a second layer of data to better comprehend and react to event performance. Using contextual triggers such as time and location, mobile applications have the ability to prompt attendees to give honest feedback in the moment, rather than days or weeks after the event. Because of this, planners can increase response rates significantly and quickly, empowering them to make smart, data-driven decisions.

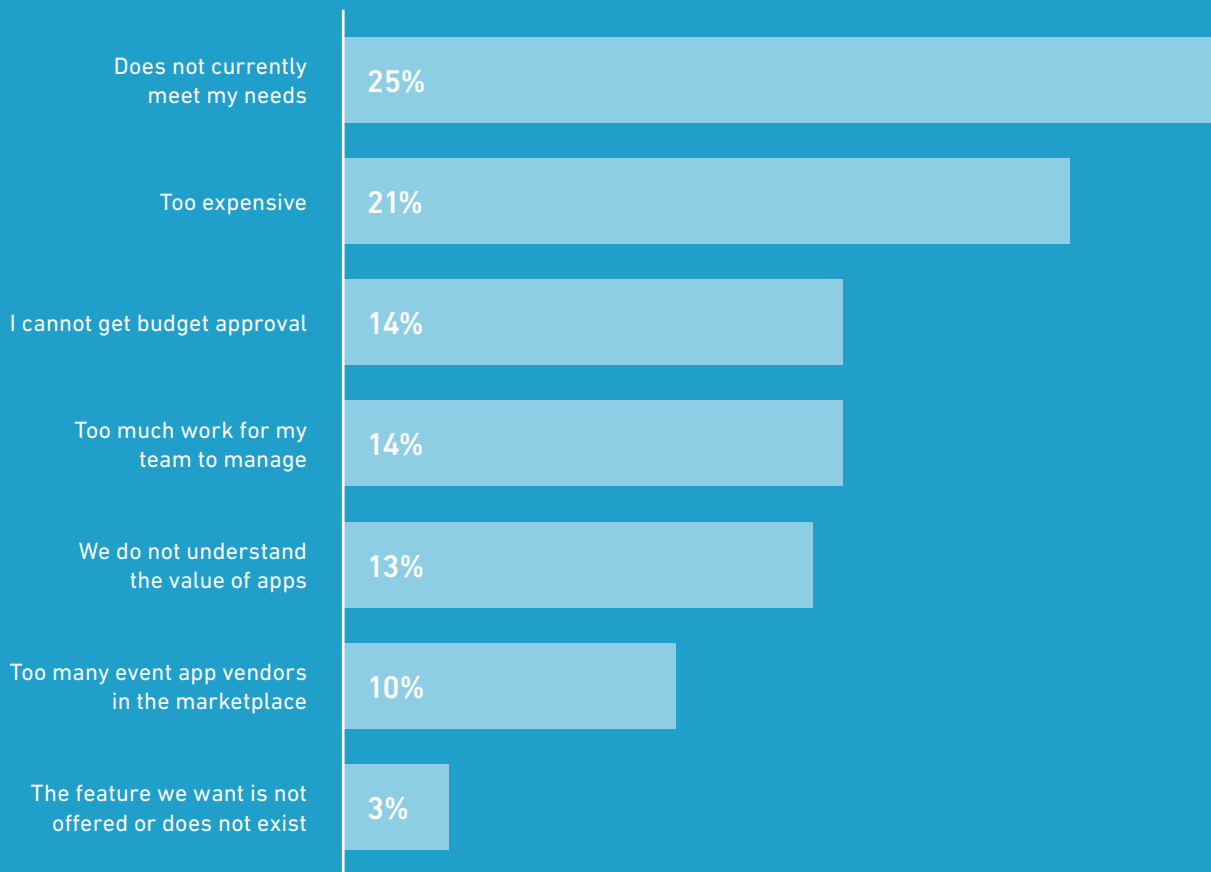
MPI member responses suggest there is an opportunity for planners to take better advantage of the full breadth of analytics and data provided by event applications. Identifying your most attended session is helpful, but the data generated by a mobile app can be more powerful than that. Mobile gives organizers the ability to identify the most influential attendees, project retention, and increase revenue.

“Mobile gives organizers the ability to identify the most influential attendees, project retention, and increase revenue.”

How Do Companies Get Budgets Approved?

While a majority of planners have experience with mobile applications, 37% of respondents had not yet implemented one at their own events. Justifying the increased spend for an unproven line item requires planners to explain how the benefits outweigh the cost, and deal with objections as they arise. As planners become better educated on using mobile applications at their events, apps will be more likely to become a critical element to the event experience.

Why do you not have a mobile application for any events?



While 25% of meeting professionals claim that event applications do not currently meet their needs, 35% of respondents cited that budgets were an issue (21% said apps are too expensive and 14% said they cannot get budget approvals). The following sections will help you secure budget for a mobile application.

Start With Mobile Education

While many organizers are already enjoying the benefits of mobile applications, some are still educating themselves on what mobile apps are capable of and whether the benefits will outweigh the perceived challenges. Those planners who are not currently utilizing mobile applications cite a few reasons why they choose to refrain, including: lack of budget, the app not being perceived as necessary, or a fear they are not technical enough to use it properly.

When asking for budget for an event application, planners may face a few objections, making it difficult for them to implement a mobile strategy. The research indicates the top two objections planners face when budgeting for a mobile application are WiFi availability and generational differences.

“The biggest challenge is connectivity on properties. The WiFi needs to be robust at the venue to allow for so many users to be online doing something on their apps (e.g. polling) to ensure that the application works when you need it to. The cost to boost WiFi upload and download capabilities is still so prohibitive in some properties.” — Survey Participant

“Difficulties arise when introducing the app to attendees who have never used it before. Proper marketing and promotion is important to making sure there is usage. Older or less tech-savvy attendees may not understand how the app functions.” — Survey Participant

Apps with “Offline Mode” Mitigate WiFi Concerns

In order to ensure the mobile experience is not weakened by poor connectivity, planners must consider the strength and availability of WiFi within the conference center. Currently, meeting professionals are purchasing WiFi packages to supplement the basic use of attendees on their smartphones. Adding a mobile application to the mix forces planners to consider additional WiFi barriers such as network infrastructure and data speeds.

Some respondents fear that WiFi availability and cost could limit the adoption of mobile applications at events. However, as WiFi becomes more of a commodity across conference centers, this issue becomes less of a concern for mobile app developers. In fact, some companies and organizations are already pushing for free, worldwide WiFi networks.³

Furthermore, applications are now better designed to work offline or with poor connectivity. Upon initial download, all critical content (sessions, speaker bios, etc.) is cached on the device in advance and stored for offline access, and when connection is regained, app users can publish to the platform once again.

As smartphones and mobile applications continue to become more sophisticated, their reliance on high-powered WiFi networks becomes less and less. Look for apps that have a proven “offline mode” for such scenarios.

An App for All Generations

Beyond the basics of WiFi availability, planners also indicated concerns around mobile app adoption among less tech-savvy generations. It goes without saying that younger individuals are quicker to adopt new technologies than their older counterparts, but what does this look like for mobile adoption?^{4,5}

“I believe everything is going digital, and especially in upcoming generations, apps will be essential. When looking at my business website analytic data, over 50% of the website views are mobile. The challenges of apps will be the advance in technology and getting our more mature members to embrace them.” —Survey Participant

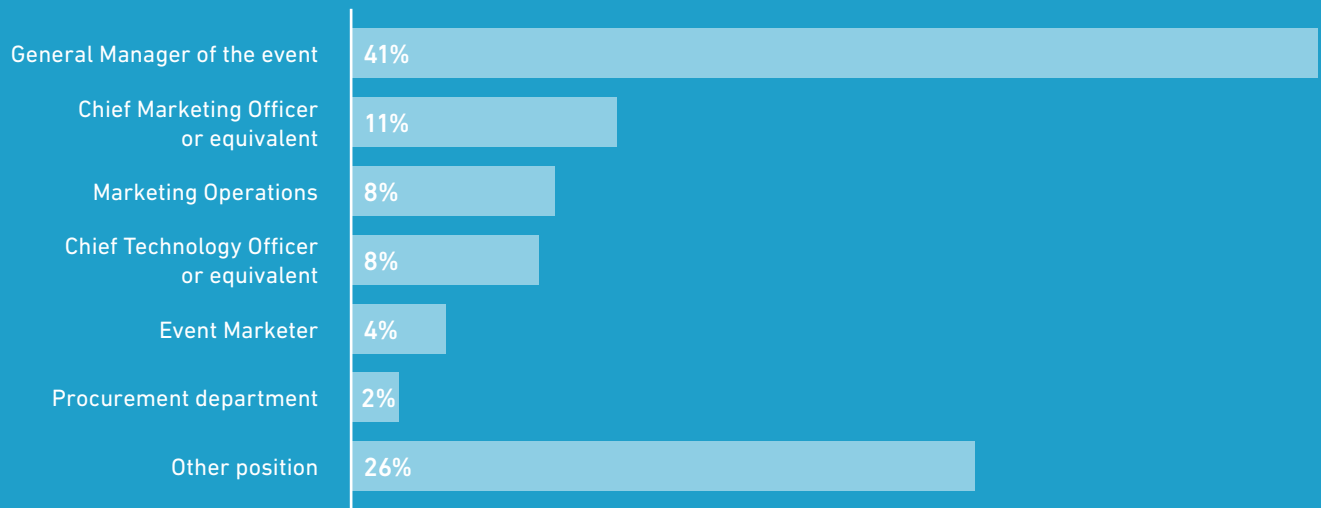
As smartphones and applications themselves become easier to navigate, it is likely that we will see higher adoption rates across less tech-savvy demographics. Furthermore, by incorporating in-app tutorials and onboarding procedures for users, event applications will help these demographics navigate app features and functionality with confidence. The benefits to the attendee are there, but onboarding these segments is key to higher adoption rates.

Who Holds the Budget

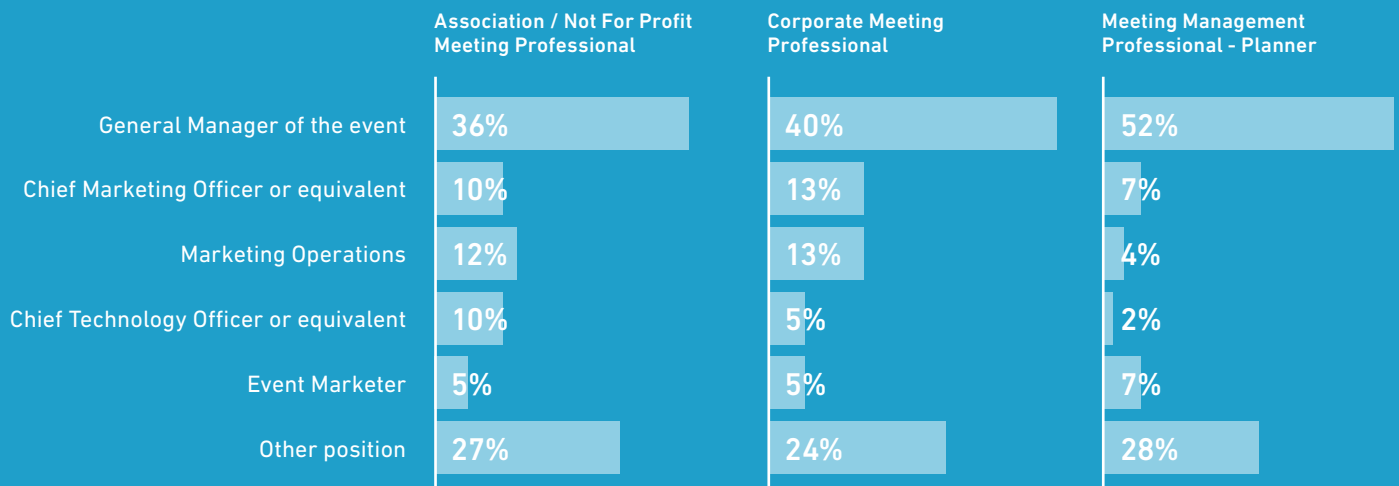
When it comes to creating the budgets, meeting professionals identify the General Manager (GM) of the event or the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) as being responsible for making this decision. Before asking for the budget, it's important to understand the priorities of the budget holder. Typically, this always comes down to more data.

Just like in other parts of the marketing mix, data to demonstrate success is key to procuring budget. Planners who see value in the application's ability to generate business-boosting data will be leaps and bounds ahead of those who cannot clearly communicate its benefits to leadership.

Who within your organization is responsible for budgeting for mobile apps?



Who within your organization is responsible for budgeting for mobile apps? (by planner type)



Understand Different App Use Cases


As mentioned, large corporate conferences or association meetings already see the benefits of a mobile application, but the cost may outweigh the perceived value for smaller meetings and events.

This indicates a lack of knowledge among planners about the true impact of mobile applications within different event types. Today, planners are primarily using event apps to simply replace the printed guides for attendees, but they can demand more answers from app vendors regarding how to deploy mobile effectively at various event types, large and small.

Demonstrate that Event App Benefits Outweigh the Costs

Planners who think that the only value of a mobile app is its cost-efficient, paper-saving qualities are missing a larger opportunity. Features like in-app polling and surveys, session and exhibitor bookmarks, and interactive maps just scratch the surface of the full capabilities of mobile event applications.

The results of the MPI research reveal there is an opportunity for mobile app vendors to ensure that their clients (both organizers and planners) know about additional functionality of the app, and to help them successfully implement it. However, at its most basic iterations, an event application enables organizers to engage attendees on a platform that simply did not exist before. Through mobile engagement comes powerful data which can be used to demonstrate event success.



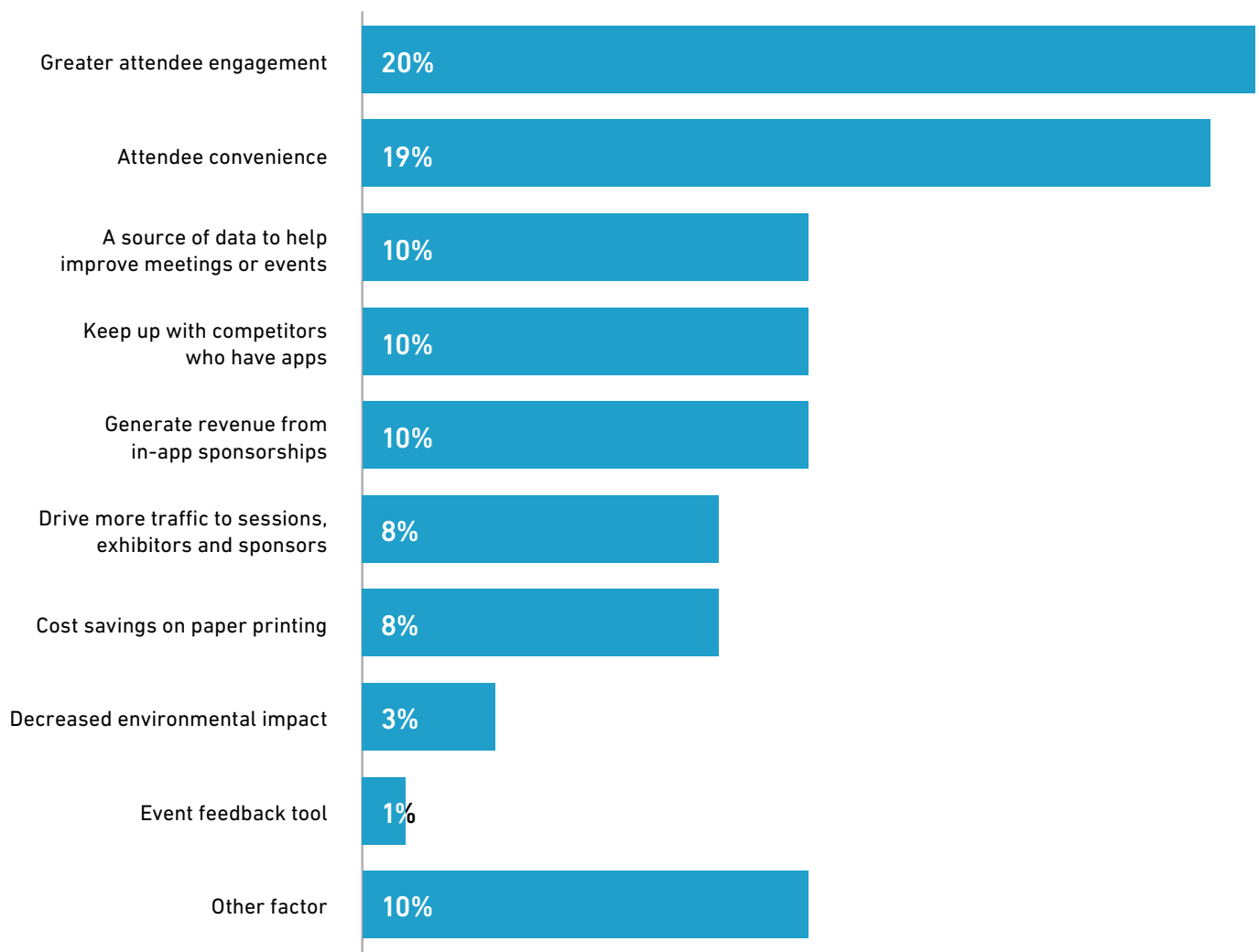
“Through mobile engagement comes powerful data which can be used to demonstrate event success.”

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Highlight the Benefits

The key reasons behind budget approvals for mobile applications center around stakeholder retention. This includes improving the experience for attendees, generating ROI for exhibitors, and capturing data to demonstrate event success.

What is the primary reason you got budget approval for your mobile app?



Improve the Event Experience for Attendees

Above all else, a mobile application should make it easy for attendees to experience the event to their best ability. This means delivering the most up-to-date content and information, such as schedules and floor maps, to attendees in a way that is easy to navigate. The end-user experience (how a person interacts with the product) of the mobile application is paramount to making it simple for attendees to access the right information at the right time in the right place.

“In events with multiple tracks, attendees use apps to pre-select sessions they want to attend or make sure they are making the best use of their time at events hosted over multiple locations.”

—Survey Participant

Secondly, the mobile application must offer an engaging experience for all attendees. This includes both networking elements that enable attendees to connect with one another and gamification tools for planners to incentivize the desired behaviors of the attendees. For instance, organizers can offer points and incentives to attendees that visit high-value sponsor booths or attend specific sessions.

As the study suggests, mobile applications that simply replace a printed guide will no longer suffice for planners since getting budget approval relies on creating an engaging mobile experience for attendees.

Increase ROI from Key Sponsorships

Deeper attendee engagement on a mobile app can generate more leads for sponsors, when done effectively. It's not surprising that this goal is high on the list of requirements for event planners. Sponsors are often the financial backbone of many events, such as trade shows and conferences, and their retention rates rely on their ability to return to the office with a list of qualified leads.

Planners using mobile apps that can directly impact sponsor-generated revenue are more likely to increase their budgets than those not using this technology. This includes having the ability to combine explicit actions like attendee badge scanning with more implicit actions like views and time-on-page.

What are explicit and implicit signals of data?

Explicit Signals

- Polls
- Surveys
- Bookmarks

Implicit Signals

- Taps
- Time Spent
- Location

There are a variety of sponsorship opportunities on which planners place a high value when budgeting for an event application. Those which satisfy a number of different sponsorship opportunities—such as promoted posts that pin to the top of the activity feed, or push notifications that appear on the phone's lock screen—have a higher chance of procuring budget than those that do not.

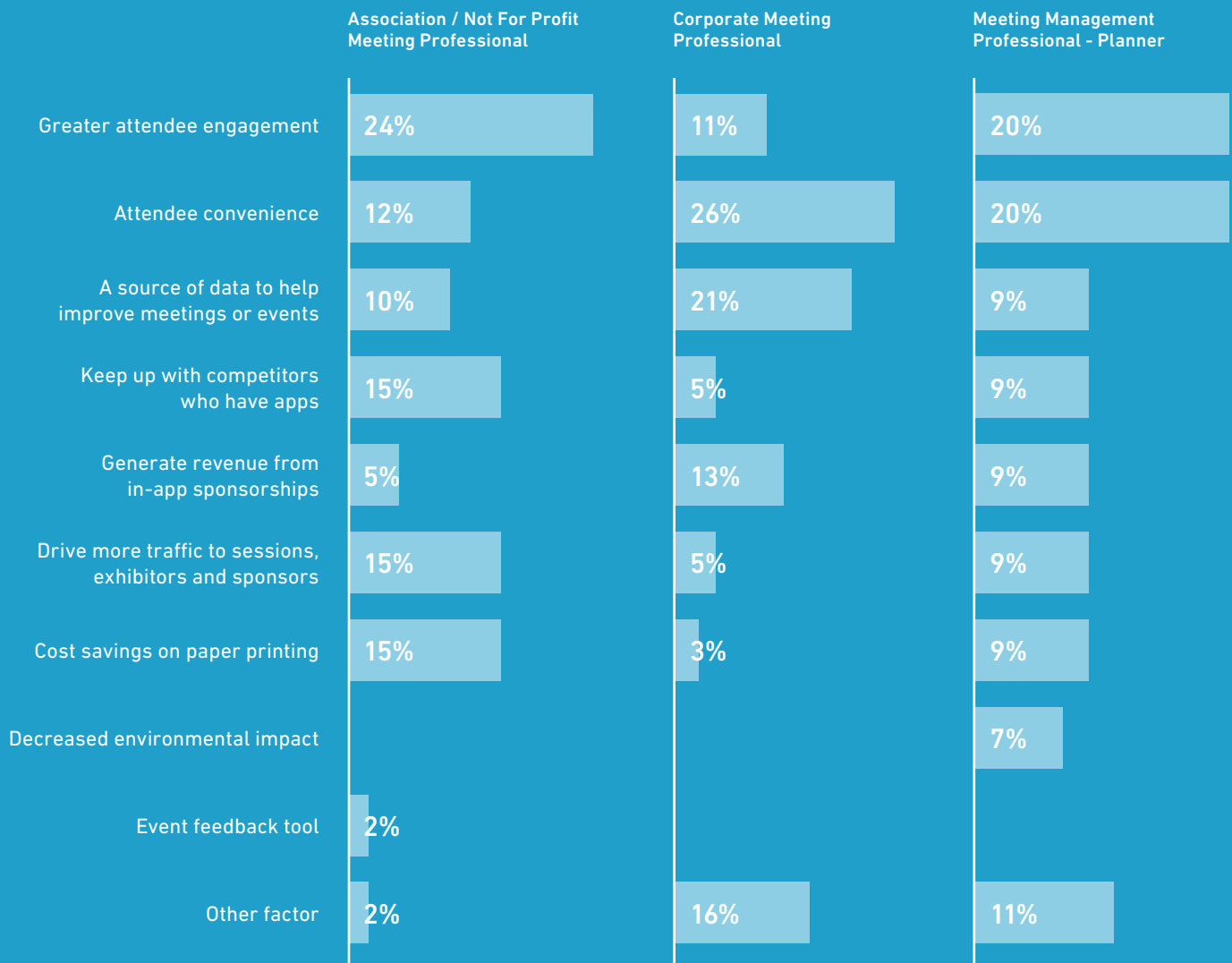
“Event apps can directly increase ROI for sponsors.”

Use Data to Demonstrate Event Success

Mobile applications with the ability to analyze attendee satisfaction at events not only help justify their own cost, but help planners more easily demonstrate event success. By making sense of explicit (badge scans, bookmarks, likes, etc.)

and implicit actions (location, time spent on page, etc.), event applications help generate a wealth of business-boosting data. Event apps can then enable planners to better answer the question, “Was this event a success?”

What is the primary reason you got budget approval for your mobile app? (by planner type)



The primary reason for budget approvals across various planner types is attendee convenience. By simply providing event information in a downloadable, mobile application, organizers are already able to secure budgets for this technology. However, there is a much larger opportunity in front of event professionals that is relatively underutilized.

24% of association planners cite attendee engagement as the key reason for getting budgets approved. This indicates a need for associations to keep members engaged in conversations year-round by providing educational materials, opening up networking opportunities, and building a community that goes beyond the walls of the event.

“In a broader sense, I see mobile apps as becoming a central location for members of an association to interact. As features become more commercially accessible, associations will be able to create apps that allow members to pay dues, send messages to one another, and perhaps even conduct business or conference calls.” —Survey Participant

21% of corporate planners were able to secure budget because of the data the app could generate. It makes sense that these planners care more about data than their association counterparts (10%) based on the types of events they produce (user conferences and road shows).

The primary purpose of many corporate events is to understand the wants and needs of their market in order to generate new business. In order to get budgets approved to host the same event each year, corporate planners require an arsenal of data to demonstrate ROI from exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees to leadership teams.

“Event apps can then enable planners to better answer the question: was this event a success?”

Understand the Implementation Process

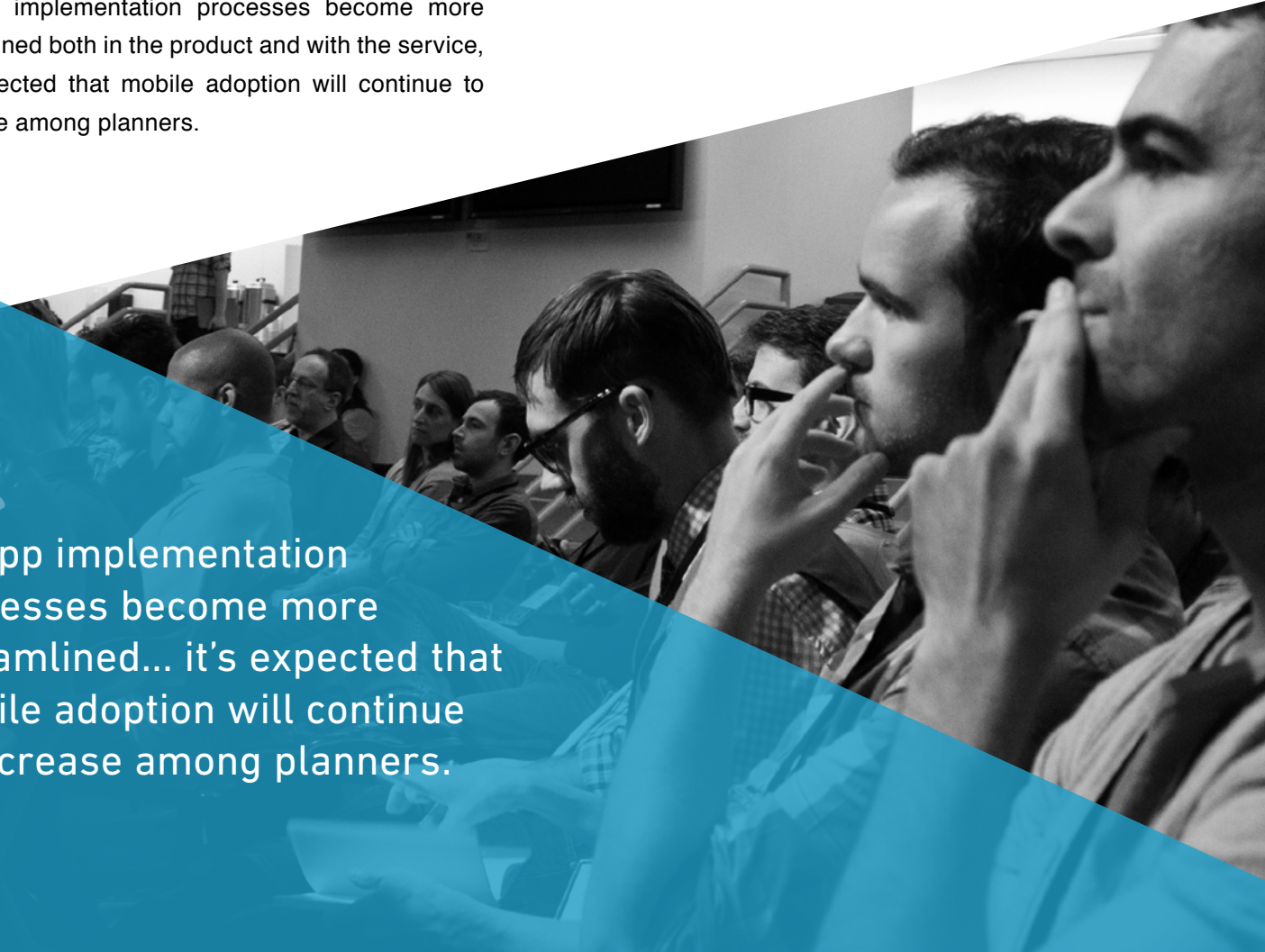
The robust features and functionality of an event app can lead planners to assume it's too confusing or that they are not technically savvy enough to implement one. Most mobile event apps are designed with non-technical users in mind to alleviate this concern, but all planners should consider ease of use when selecting a mobile provider.

Applications themselves are becoming easier to implement, and vendors' support and customer success teams are stepping up to educate and equip organizers for success. A few event app vendors even have online customer communities so planners can learn from each other, with easy access to video tutorials and training materials. As app implementation processes become more streamlined both in the product and with the service, it's expected that mobile adoption will continue to increase among planners.

The Growing Value of Event Apps

Based on the research from MPI, there are still strides to be made in the way of educating the market about the value of implementing a mobile application at events.

In their current iteration, event applications meet all of the requirements listed by planners in order to receive budget approvals from company leadership. With the ubiquitous adoption of mobile applications, organizers can come to understand the full suite of benefits guaranteed by a mobile app, and creating budgets will become as standard a line item as budgeting for lunch breaks.



“As app implementation processes become more streamlined... it's expected that mobile adoption will continue to increase among planners.”

What Are the Most Important Features?

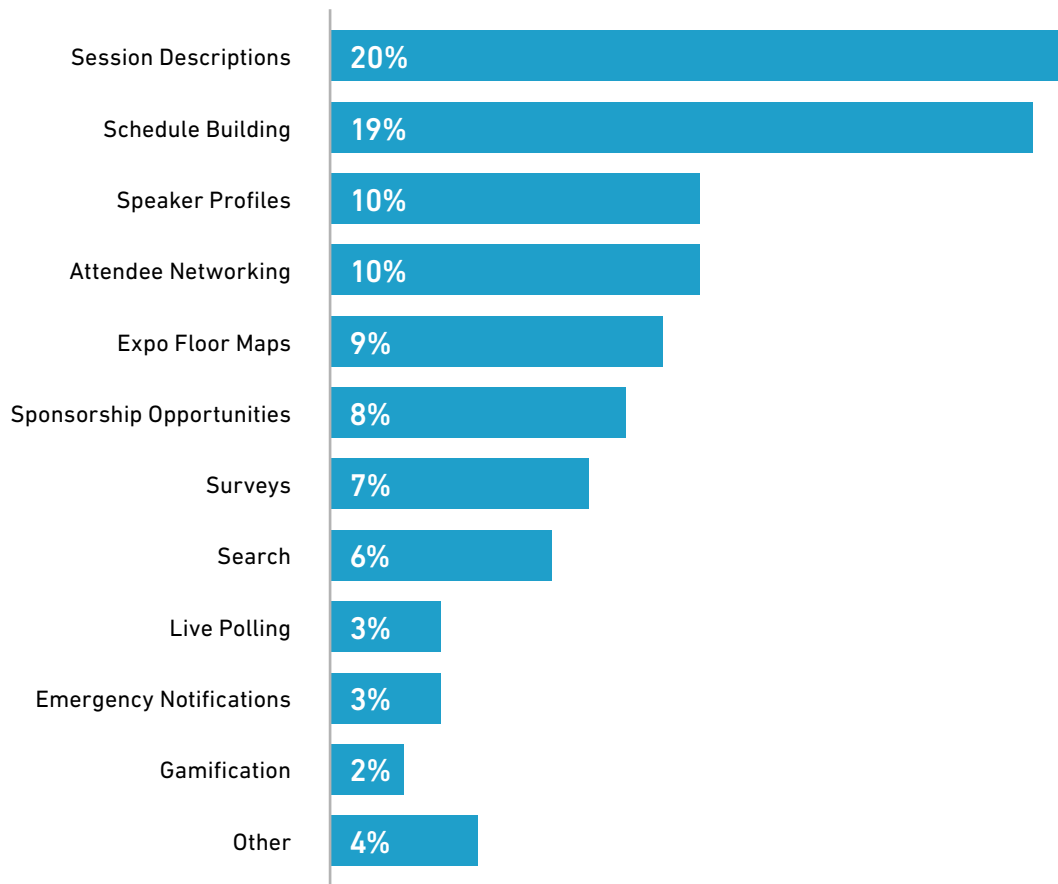
Planners cite various benefits to using mobile applications, and some features are considered more important than others. The most frequently used features deliver event content to attendees in an easily navigable way (relating back to the convenience factor mentioned earlier), while more niche features like advertising opportunities and gamification are considered more complementary to planners.

“Because mobile apps are generally ubiquitous in 2014, event apps are becoming standardized with common features and a relatively similar layout. Increased competition will drive app costs down. With that, differences will appear with app functionality, integrations, and customer service. Those providing quality in those areas will see greater investments.” —Survey Participant

Important Features to Planners

Mobile applications are loaded with features that undergo continuous innovation. Below is a list of event app features, in their order of importance to planners.

What are the most important features of your mobile apps?





Session Descriptions

Attendees can view session details such as descriptions, speaker bios, room/location, and related documents.



Schedule Building

Attendees have the ability to create their own agendas and sync them to their device, or use pre-loaded agendas based on badge type.



Speaker Profiles

Attendees can access speaker bios that include session details, social networking information, and videos, among other features.



Attendee Networking

Attendees have the ability to filter other attendees by interest, follow their updates, and send private messages to them during and after the event.



Expo Floor Maps

Attendees can view a full conference map and get directions to and from various locations.



Sponsorship Opportunities

The application offers a variety of sponsorship opportunities such as promoted posts, push notifications, and sponsored app sections.



Surveys

Planners can collect survey feedback from all attendees, or segment the audience to survey specific groups.



Search

The app is easy to navigate and allows users to find the right information with just a few simple taps.



Live Polling

Speakers can run live polls during their sessions to engage audience members and display results in real time via the app or on the big screen.



Emergency Notifications

Planners can send push notifications to attendees regarding schedule changes, or other emergency alerts as needed.



Gamification

The application has a customizable gamification solution to increase attendee engagement and impact particular event goals.



Other

Mobile applications continue to innovate and meet the needs of organizers, creating features they didn't even know they needed.

What Does the Future Hold for Event Applications?

All of this data demonstrates that mobile app adoption has reached a pivotal tipping point. Currently sitting at a 67% adoption rate amongst planners, 60% of those not currently using an event application plan to within the next 6–12 months. This implies that roughly 85% of meeting professionals will be using mobile applications at their events within the next 6–12 months.

The event technology industry is growing and transforming at a rapid pace, with new and innovative companies and products emerging daily. While the future of mobile applications appears bright, some respondents have more specific desires for future feature development.

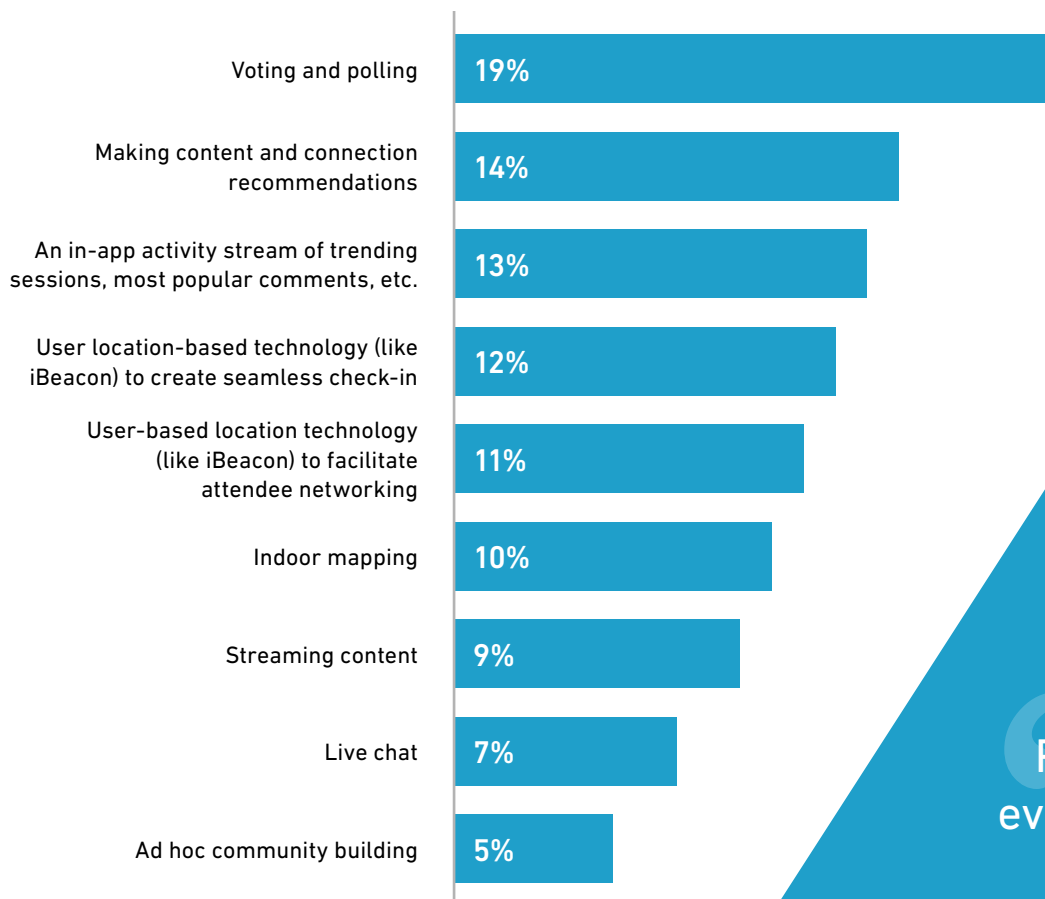
“In the next 6–12 months, we expect to reach 85% event app adoption across meeting professionals.”

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Expect More Robust Features and Functionality

Planners expect event applications to become even more robust in their offerings. The most requested future feature is the ability to poll audiences in real-time through the application, and display results on-screen and in the app. This feature, while already available in select event apps, could have major implications for existing audience response systems, and may displace the non-native live audience response market altogether.

Future Uses of Event Applications



“Planners expect event applications to become even more robust in their offerings.”

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After Polling, it's difficult to determine what planners will prioritize based on their unique event needs.

"I think as more of the general population gets smart phones, apps will become an expected part of the conference and event experience for all sizes of events, not just large ones." —Survey Participant

In a 2014 report by Tracey Stokes titled "Create Mobile Moments That Boost The Brand Experience," Forrester Research, Inc. forecasts that by 2017, 84% of the US online adult population and 90% of the EU-5 online population will own a smartphone, up from 75% and 78%, respectively, today.⁶ Forrester believes that consumers are witnessing a "mobile mind shift —the expectation that I can get what I want in my immediate context and moments of need." They believe that "mobile is now central to experiences," and that applies to live events more than anywhere.⁷

With mobile applications, attendees are able to easily access the information they want, when they want it. Recent advancements in technology like Apple's iBeacon or Bluetooth LE, and NFC are already enabling organizers to engage attendees with contextual experiences based on time and proximity.

In September 2014, Apple introduced the Apple Watch, wearable technology that pairs with your mobile device for improved tech-assisted experiences. It is yet to be revealed what developers will do in the live event space to take advantage of this new technology, but it's clear that mobile is becoming an extension of our being.

The modern event, conference, and meeting planner is living and thriving in this mobile moment. Brands that create, anticipate, or answer to their consumers in personalized, contextual ways through mobile device will grow to understand their customers more deeply and thereby experience greater event success.

The future of event applications is full of promise, as many planners are already beginning to integrate mobile technologies into their strategic vision.

In short, the time for mobile is now.



“
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Quiz: Is an event app right for you?

Answer the following questions as they pertain to the type of events you (or your team) are responsible for producing. Keep track of your answers, then use the key below to find out if a mobile app is right for your events.

1 What's the size of your largest event (# of attendees)?

A. < 200 C. 501–2000
B. 201–500 D. 2000+

2 How many exhibitors do you have at your largest event?

A. 0 C. 11–50
B. 1–10 D. 50+

3 Does your event require a registration system?

A. Yes
B. No

4 How many events do you do each year?

A. 1 C. 6–10
B. 2–5 D. 10+

5 What types of events do you host? (check all that apply)

A. Internal Corporate Meetings
B. External Corporate Conferences
C. Trade Shows
D. Annual Association/
 Organization Meetings
E. Road Shows

Now, using this Answer Key, add up your points to find out if a mobile app is right for your events.

ANSWER KEY:

Question 1: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4

Question 2: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4

Question 3: A = 4, B = 2

Question 4: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4

Question 5: 1 point for every letter checked

15+ POINTS

You need a mobile strategy, pronto.

11–14 POINTS

You can definitely benefit from a mobile application.

7–10 POINTS

A mobile app is a good option for your events.

<6 POINTS

It's hard to tell the impact a mobile application can have on your events.

Appendix

1. "A Survey of Meeting and Event Planning Professionals and Hotel Operators", Frost & Sullivan, 2013
2. "B2B Marketing Budgets Set to Rise 6% in 2014: Forrester", [AdAge](#), 2014
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5. "The Smartphone Generation Gap: Over 55? There's No App for That", [Deloitte](#), 2014
6. "Create Mobile Moments That Boost The Brand Experience," [Forrester Research, Inc.](#), July 29, 2014
7. "Create Mobile Moments That Boost The Brand Experience," [Forrester Research, Inc.](#), July 29, 2014

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