

Five Ways Mobile Technology is Reshaping Events



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Use of mobile applications in the North America and Europe is expected to grow by more than 40% this year, presenting an opportunity and a challenge for event organizers who are increasingly being pushed to adopt mobile technology as part of their event technology mix.

Today, the impact of mobile on meetings and events has been primarily limited to onsite functionality and content distribution. As mobile applications become more sophisticated, though, event applications are evolving into more robust, interactive and persistent platforms.

Adoption of mobile technologies for corporate and association events will likely quicken in coming years, driven by the competing needs to reduce costs while improving attendee engagement.

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1. Improved onsite efficiency and accuracy

Onsite mobile tools now provide real-time access to attendee check in, reports, lead retrieval data and customer feedback. By linking directly to event management platforms, these applications are freeing event organizers from clunky clipboards and three-ring binders and eliminating frustrations caused by out-of-date data. Event organizers can now use mobile devices to access attendee records on the fly, deal with payment issues, monitor exhibitor or session traffic and quickly compile and evaluate attendee feedback. The result is smoother, more efficient events with fewer errors and happier attendees.

2. Flexible, environmentally friendly content delivery

Content distribution at events is traditionally limited to live content, printed materials and virtual offerings. Mobile is quickly changing that by allowing organizers to deliver and update content through applications. These applications make content delivery less expensive, more flexible and "greener" than traditional channels. Organizers can easily update content and send alerts. Attendees can update schedules dynamically and access area information, hotel details and venue maps to reduce frustration at events.

3. Improved interactivity and informed content

In addition to improving content delivery mechanisms mobile applications are improving content itself by expanding interactivity and increasing content relevance. Digital guides come to life with interactive polls and discussions. Attendees can provide feedback through their mobile devices with everything from their likes and dislikes to real-time contributions to live debates. This allows organizers and presenters to respond and react, building informed content around the needs of the audience.

Here are some useful tips to consider when developing your mobile application:

- 🔗 Use web and embedded options to remain platform agnostic.
- 🔗 Allow for application download during every registration process.
- 🔗 Think beyond an event by distributing content before and after.
- 🔗 Look at mobile as a new tool, not a replacement for old ones.
- 🔗 If you don't know what your audience would like, ask them.

4. Expanded networking for attendees

Networking at events is notorious difficult, requiring attendees to research possible connections and search them out in a busy sea of people. Mobile improves the process by providing intelligent matching tools that pair up attendees based on shared attributes. Once matched, attendees can use these applications to schedule one-on-one meetings, share contact information and connect through existing social networks.

5. Persistent audience engagement platform

Mobile technology's biggest contribution may be its capacity to extend the reach of events by creating a persistent community platform. Social media groups on Facebook and LinkedIn are pulled together to create discussion. Twitter conversations are marshaled to aggregate relevant tweet subjects. Invitations to new events are delivered through push notifications and registration becomes a one-click process, ensuring that organizers maximize repeat attendance. Additionally, continuing education credits can be tracked and organizers are able to create progressive profiles based on attendee behavior, delivering meaningful data about their audience to their organization.