Mobile Event App Benchmark Report

How Do You Measure Up?
Strategies From Our Top Performers
Introduction

Event technology is helping all of us improve the success of our event programs. Onsite technologies, like mobile event apps, have become a must-have that create streamlined and engaging experiences for attendees, sponsors, exhibitors and speakers—all while facilitating valuable interactions with your event branding and content. After all, this is why we have live events.

We know these in-person interactions are instrumental to increasing sales or membership. But we also know that simply using a technology, like a mobile event app, isn’t enough. Attendees only get the most out of our events through the tools we offer if they adopt the app and use it to further engage with the event.

We know adoption and engagement are important, but what does success look like? How many people should you expect to download and use your app? How do your adoption and attendee engagement stats compare to other events?

We created this benchmark study to eliminate some of the guesswork and give you insights into app adoption, attendee engagement metrics and best practices that you can use to help achieve your business goals.

In order to pull out the best tips for your team, we took a closer look at our High Performers (events with apps in the top 25%) and our Top Performers (events with apps in the top 10%). Read on for the tactics they used to get the most out of their mobile event apps, so you can do the same.
Our survey set out to answer the big question on every event planner’s mind: How much event app adoption and engagement can we expect?

**Adoption**

To calculate event app adoption, simply take the number of attendees who downloaded and logged into your app and divide it by the number of people who attended your event. The key to driving adoption is marketing your app so that your audience knows about all of the opportunities that the app offers to get the most out of your event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE ADOPTION RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Performers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Engagement**

Engagement is measured each time an attendee interacts with your event from within the app. This includes checking out a session, sending a message to another attendee or even posting to social media through the app. Increased engagement with your content, speakers, exhibitors and brand leads to sales conversations, membership interest or other interactions that directly impact your event ROI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE OF ALL ENGAGEMENT RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Performers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A note about the data: The data for this report was pulled from 2,032 events taking place during the spring of 2017 (from 3/1/2017 to 5/31/2017) that used the CrowdCompass mobile event app. Events were comprised of all types, sizes and locations (worldwide).
This research revealed many insights, validating once and for all that a mobile event app can prove valuable for events of all types and sizes.

Event Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Size</th>
<th>Adoption (in percentage)</th>
<th>Engagement (per attendee)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to 250</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-500</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-750</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750-1,000+</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendees will log in and use an app, regardless of event size or type.
With the right best practices around adoption and engagement, a mobile app can drive value for any type of event.

### Event Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Adoption in percentage</th>
<th>Engagement per attendee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference/trade show</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/workshop</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar/webinar</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVG**

**Average adoption per attendee**

**Average engagement per attendee**

**How do you measure up? Strategies from our top performers**

CROWDCOMPASS BENCHMARK REPORT
Half of the events in the data sample were password-protected. The events that had the top 25% of adoption and engagement rates (the High Performers) were using several security features.

In fact, the events that use additional security features see an average of 159% more engagement, which means that each attendee is engaging with content within the app about 40 times during the event, on average.

Balancing security and accessibility is a challenge for event planners. On the one hand, you want to protect event information and only share it with attendees, but on the other, you worry that giving users any additional steps will scare them away. Turns outs, there’s nothing for you to worry about.

How Does Security Fit In?

Security sometimes seems like a boring or unapproachable topic, but when it comes to adoption and engagement rates for secure events, the results are eye-opening.

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Password-Protected Events See Great Metrics

64% of the highest-adopted apps were password protected.
44% of the highest-engaged events were password protected.

Hidden Events

Average adoption: 2.5% above average
Total above-average engagement: 44,093 average
Above-average engagement per attendee: 40 average
Now that you’ve had the opportunity to compare your results to these benchmarks, let’s explore some best practices from the Top Performers so that you can see how you might increase your adoption and in-app engagement. Improving both will help you reach your overall event goals and directly impact your event ROI.

Want to increase your adoption and encourage more mobile event app downloads?  
[Join us on page 8.]

Want to increase engagement and encourage organic interactions at your event?  
[Hop over to page 12.]

Want to do it all?! Read through both—because we all know that adoption and engagement go hand in hand.
Adoption

Adoption is the cornerstone of your event app success. If attendees download this app, they will be able to engage with your event and show immediate impact on your bottom line. Simply asking your event attendees to download a mobile event app—without cause or reason—isn’t enough. You need to show them value. Make your app a content hub for all things related to your event. If you rely on your app to distribute all the important content to your guests, they’ll have to rely on it, too.

The easiest way to increase adoption is to use a mobile app for all your events—big or small. If your team uses mobile event apps at all of your events, your attendees will become accustomed to them and get in the habit of expecting an app.

The more events you can pair with a mobile event app, the more your attendees will come to expect it. And as a result, your adoption will soar.

ADOPTION PER # OF ANNUAL EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Annual Events</th>
<th>Adoption Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 10 events</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20 events</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ events</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Your App

Another key to successful mobile event app adoption is how you market it. Beyond simply telling attendees that an app is available, you can use some simple marketing tactics to get them just as excited about it as you are.

Don’t just take our word for it. Telecommunications company Calix used a mobile event app and marketing plan to drive engagement at their events with great success. Take a look at this case study on the power of marketing your mobile event app.

CALIX GOES PAPERLESS

Events are a crucial part of the marketing strategy at Calix, driving lead generation and operating as a communications channel to their existing customer base. Each year, their teams run more than 200 events worldwide.

THE CHALLENGE

Calix struggled with app adoption during previous events, always printing the agenda to enable attendees to rely on it as the main source of information. Last-minute updates forced them to pay rushed printing fees, sometimes costing them as much as $10K for a printed agenda that was just discarded after the event. And updating attendees on last-minute changes was nearly impossible.

THE SOLUTION

In 2016, Calix went all in, leveraging a CrowdCompass mobile event app to both increase engagement during their events and directly impact their bottom line by saving more than $18K on printing and shipping fees. They saw this as an opportunity to provide content during the event and use the app as a year-round communication tool. They committed to doing everything in the app—meaning no printed agenda—and doubled-down on promotion.

Here are some of their strategies:

- **Start promoting the mobile event app early.** In Calix’s case, they started four months ahead of the event and let everyone know they would be going paperless.
- **Share a video walk-through** on the company website, in emails, and in push notifications. Calix also played the video at registration, near check-in and badge-printing stations.
- **Ensure staff buy-in,** holding internal webinars that stressed the importance of being “mobile app experts.”
- **Use session-level engagement tools** to encourage app downloads and engagement. They also included app download instruction slides at the beginning of each session.
- **Use a game to generate excitement.** Their “submit your selfie” game awarded daily prizes.

THE RESULTS

- **300%** increase in app adoption
- **100%** increase in app engagement
- **75%** of attendees logged in before they even arrived.
Include Lots of Content

Uploading a schedule, map and maybe page or two of additional content isn’t enough to excite your audience and entice them to continue using the app. Part of the draw of using a mobile event app is giving your attendees the ability to access all sorts of information. We found that the more information you include, the higher adoption you can expect.

**HIGH PERFORMERS (TOP 25%) INCLUDED**

- 39+ pages of content

**HIGH PERFORMERS SENT OUT**

- 18+ push notifications

In-app multi-purpose pages are great for:
- Dress code information
- Venue Wi-Fi password information
- Daily event recaps
- Speaker FAQs
- Emergency information

For urgent or time-relevant content and messaging, push notifications are a great way to immediately get your attendees’ attention.
Use Engagement Features

Creating in-app engagement with speakers, attendees and your brand, as well as sponsors and exhibitors, leads to value-based activities that help prove event ROI. Engagement features are also a great way to encourage adoption. Attendees don’t want to be left out, and weaving these features at both the event and session level is a great way to encourage group participation.

Want to play? Download the app! Gamification is an easy way to spur further app usage. Events that used gamification saw 7% higher app adoption.

Live polling and Q&A can encourage app downloads. In fact, events that included session-level engagement saw 6% more adoption.

And since your attendees are on social media anyway, including pre-filled hashtags and other social elements in the app encourages downloads. For example, SocialWall puts together memorable moments by enabling planners to curate tweets, Instagram posts and more, then share them on-screen at the event.

Many Top Performers (top 10%) used live polling to entice attendees.

Keep reading if you want to learn about how to increase measurable engagement at your event.
Mobile event apps are a great way to encourage engagement at your event, especially during sessions. Sitting through one presentation after another can be draining, but encouraging session-level engagement with live Q&A, in-app surveys and polls helps attendees absorb the content, keeps them involved, helps them participate in the conversation and keeps them coming back year after year.

In examining our High Performers' app-related actions, they all had certain characteristics in common and saw impressive results.

Events are more successful when they’re engaging. Generating an engaging mobile event app is part of that task. Everyone attending your events, from attendees to sponsors to VIPs, is often much more satisfied (and more likely to return year after year) when they are engaged.

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In examining our High Performers' app-related actions, they all had certain characteristics in common and saw impressive results.

This means that attendees at High Performers' events spent more than twice as much time as other events' attendees interacting with the event through an app. Read on to learn the High Performers' tactics.
Use Gamification

Who doesn’t like a game? Gamifying your event encourages attendees to interact and can help drastically increase engagement numbers.

Every event, not just the Top Performers, saw benefits from gamifying the experience. Those who used gamification saw a:

- 44% increase in engagement
- 95% increase in user contributions to the app

Even small events with fewer than 100 attendees can benefit from gamification. Events such as these saw a:

- 10% increase
- 1,667 overall engagements

59% of Top Performers used gamification.
Create In-App Content

Imagine going to the bookstore and buying a brand new book only to open it up and find a measly couple of pages of content mixed in with hundreds of blank pages. Not worth it, right? Well, the same goes with a mobile event app. The more content you include, the more your audience will stay engaged (and the more willing they will be to download and use the app at every step of their live-event experience).

Content pages are custom pages like know-before-you-go, transportation, or Wi-Fi information that provide valuable tips for your attendees beyond schedules, speakers, exhibitors and sponsors.

Including maps ensures your guests know their way around. In addition to a map of the city, include separate maps for the exhibit hall and session rooms or a separate map for each floor of the venue.

We’ve found that there is a clear connection between banners and engagement. Our chart on the right shows that attendees are more likely to interact with your event branding and sponsorship messages when you include more banners. So for your next event, try brainstorming what additional banners you can incorporate.

ON AVERAGE, OUR TOP PERFORMERS’ APPS INCLUDED

- **39 content pages**: 11 more than average
- **4 maps**: 1 more than average
- **5 banners**: 2 more than average

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**BANNERS**

- **Top Performers (top 10%)**: 6 used
- **Average**: 3 used

- **Impressions**
  - **Top Performers (top 10%)**: 317,416
  - **Average**: 72,694

- **Taps/banner**
  - **Top Performers (top 10%)**: 3,978
  - **Average**: 639

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*HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP? STRATEGIES FROM OUR TOP PERFORMERS*
PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

There’s no better way to get your attendees’ attention than by using push notifications. Not only are you creating an action that needs an immediate response, but you can also use them to encourage the specific engagements you want at your event. Need everyone at the opening reception in 15 minutes? Send a push. Last-minute room change? Let everyone know.

HIGH PERFORMERS’ APPS INCLUDED

Average of 18 push notifications

SOCIALWALL

Social media engagements are #gold because they take the excitement that’s happening on location at your event outside its four walls.

SocialWall, a curated collection of social media posts that you can display on-screen at the event and in the app, is a great way to encourage social media sharing.

Events with fewer than 100 people saw a huge increase in engagement using SocialWall.

73% of our High Performers used SocialWall.

26% increase in overall engagement
Encourage Session Engagement

No matter how exciting your sessions may be, keeping up the enthusiasm after multiple hours (or days) can be challenging. You need your audiences to be engaged in your sessions because this is where they’re going to decide if your event was worth the cost and if they will attend again next year. Using session-level engagement tools results in an immediate and significant impact, and attendees walk away more satisfied.

Events with the highest engagement use twice as many surveys as the average. You can easily add more surveys by creating a set of questions and applying them to several (or all) of your sessions at once.

More polls in your sessions equal higher engagement. Asking attendees to respond to questions during their sessions gets them involved and more interested in the content being presented.

The results are clear: Events that use these features see a huge return.

**Encourage Session Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH PERFORMERS DEPLOYED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 more than average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVENTS THAT INCLUDED SESSION-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT SAW**

- **160% more engagements** than the average
- **190% more user contributions** than the average
- **35,563 total average engagements**
- **4,513 total average user contributions**
Ultimately, a mobile event app can have a direct impact on your event’s overall success by encouraging valuable interactions. Luckily, event type and size do not directly impact adoption and engagement—which means you can use this mobile technology where your audience is spending most of their time anyway, across all of your events. Adoption leads to engagement, and engagement leads to ROI.

The real driver for improved app usage is taking advantage of CrowdCompass’ unique in-app features. Providing rich content and interactive experiences engages attendees within event apps and helps you reach your broader event goals.

Schedule a demo to see how CrowdCompass can help you create great event experiences.