

# The Momentum of Mobile Event Apps

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Benchmarks Study

How **Best-in-Class** Event Producers and  
Brands Are Using Mobile Apps to Drive Event Success

Exclusive Industry Analysis by



# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 3

Executive Summary ..... 4

    I.) Mobile Event Apps Usage and Budgets ..... 6

    II.) Attendees and Sponsors Usage ..... 11

    III.) Working with Mobile Event App Vendors ..... 15

    IV.) Mobile Event App Features Important Today and in 2016 ..... 17

Conclusion: The Future of Mobile Event Apps ..... 20

About the Respondents ..... 21

About CrowdCompass by Cvent ..... 22

About Event Marketing Institute ..... 23

# Introduction

Mobile apps are one of the most important and fastest growing areas of the events and meetings industry. Apps provide a powerful tool with many value elements that improve event management, deliver information and content, capture data and analytics, and foster networking between attendees and sponsors.

To analyze key trends in this area, CrowdCompass by Cvent and the Event Marketing Institute have developed this unique study to quantify how event producers are using and would like to use mobile app technology and services. A key finding is that over the next two years event producers and meeting planners expect a dramatic increase in how attendees value and engage with mobile event apps.

The study covers best practices, benchmarks and opportunities. This report also provides:

- Percentage of events with apps currently and expected in 2016
- Mobile event app budgets and growth outlook
- Value to attendees and usage benchmarks
- Value to sponsors
- App features important today and those expected to be even more important in 2016
- And much more

A number of areas within the report compare mobile event app usage, features and respondent opinions currently to what the event producers and meeting planners expect in 2016 and 2017.

To access this unique market information, a survey of leading event producers and meeting planners was conducted between November and December 2014. The response is from an elite group of more than 300 leading associations, exhibition producers, corporations with major event and meeting programs, and meeting planners. The respondents represent many of the largest, leading event management organizations and corporations in North America.

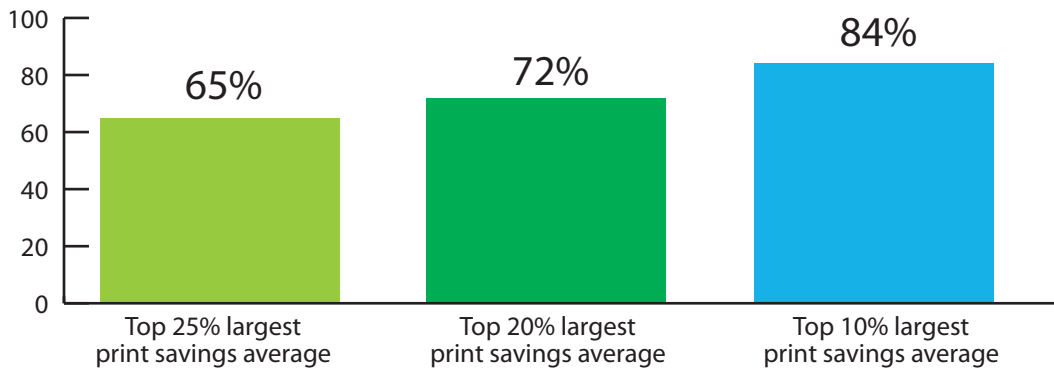
CrowdCompass and the Event Marketing Institute thank all of the respondents for their invaluable contribution to the study.



# Executive Summary

## Leading Event Producers and Meeting Planners Expect Dramatic Print Savings from Mobile Apps by 2017

The study finds that leading event producers and corporate meeting planners expect to realize dramatic printing cost savings by using mobile event apps by 2017. The chart below shows the average expected print cost savings among the top 10%, 20% and 25% of respondents in 2017. Specifically, the findings show that 25% of the industry expect to reduce their total printing cost by 65% via apps within two years and an elite 10% expect to save a very significant 84%. A number of top companies expect to completely eliminate their printing needs by using apps over the next few years.



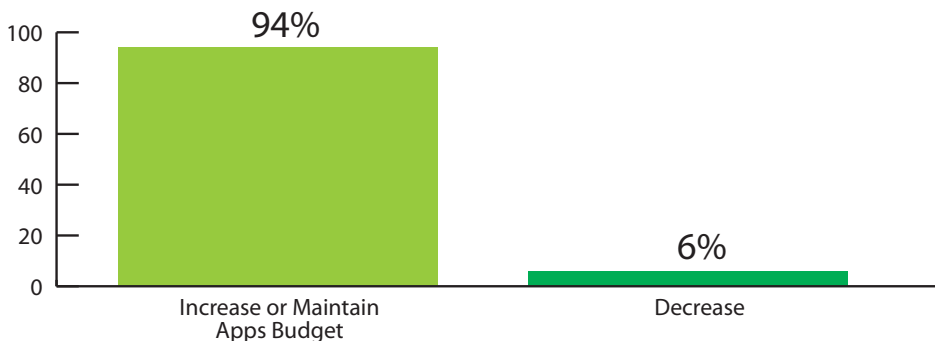
### Percentage of Event and Meeting Planners Currently Using Mobile Event Apps Today – and 2016 Forecast

**TODAY**  
75% have an App

**BY 2016**  
86% will have an App by 2016

## 2015 Mobile Event Apps Budget Growth Expectation

**Ninety-four percent** of the industry with a mobile event app will increase or maintain their app budget spending level in 2015. Of the groups planning to increase their spending, the average budget increase is a significant 21%.



“(Our mobile event app) improves our brand image as technically relevant and looking for ways to improve the attendee experience.”

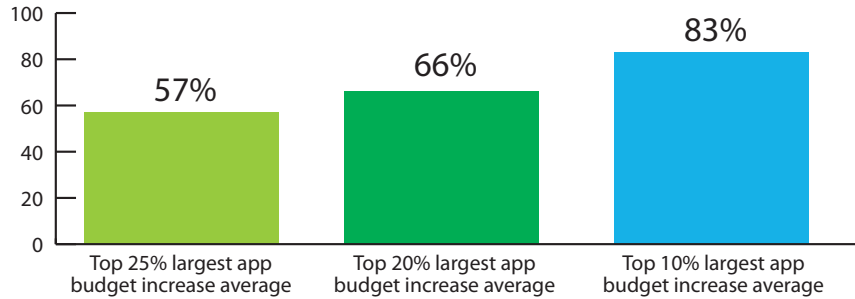
– Leading IT company with large event and meeting programs worldwide

#### Key Insight

The average budget increase expected for mobile event apps by leading event producers and meeting planners in 2015 is **21%**.

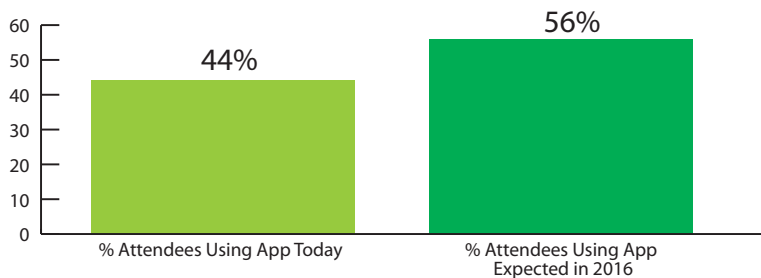
## Leading Event Producers and Meeting Planners are Significantly Increasing Mobile Event App Budgets in 2015

The data below provides the average expected increase in total spending on mobile event apps among the top 10%, 20% and 25% of event producer and meeting planner respondents.



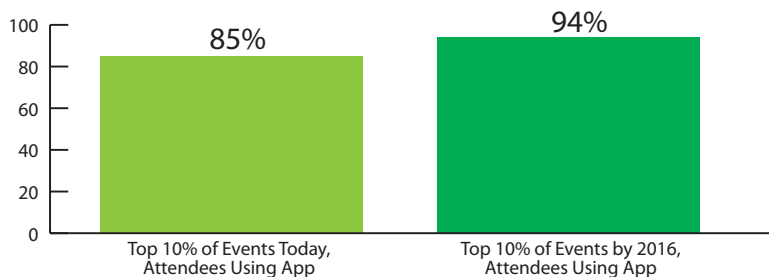
## Percentage of Attendees Using Mobile Event Apps Today – and Expected in 2016

Forty-four percent of attendees on average throughout the industry use mobile event apps currently, according to event producers and planners. This percentage is expected to increase to 56% in 2016. It is important to note that this is what event planners think about attendee expectations.



## For Many Leading Events the Percentage of Attendees Using Apps is Much Higher

Among the top 10% of respondents in terms of current attendee app usage, the average percentage of the attendee base using their app is 85%, and by 2016 this is expected to increase to 94% of attendees.



“(The app) provides consistent branding options that builds attendance, knowledge and enthusiasm about the show.”

– Meeting planner survey respondent

### Key Insight

Over the next two years event producers and meeting planners expect a dramatic increase in how attendees value and engage with mobile event apps. *2015 is expected to be the first year that more than half of attendees and delegates throughout the event and meetings industry engage with apps.*

### Key Insight

By 2016, **88%** of event producers and meeting planners expect their attendees will consider mobile event apps to be critical or important to their event experience.

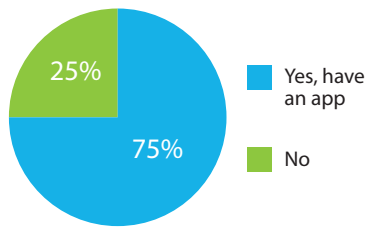
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# I.) Mobile Event App Usage and Budgets

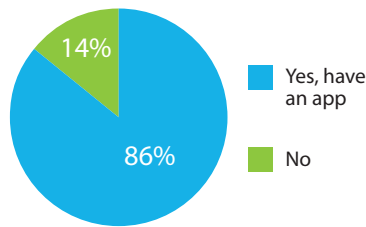
## Percentage of Events that Currently Have a Mobile Event App

Three out of four of the respondents currently have a mobile event app for at least one of their events. By 2016 the study forecasts 86% of major event producers and meeting planners will have an app.

**ALL RESPONDENTS TODAY**



**ALL RESPONDENTS 2016 FORECAST**



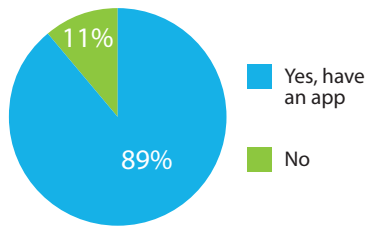
### ▶ Key Insight

Currently, associations are most likely to have a mobile event app, followed by meeting planners and conference producers. Seventy percent of for-profit exhibition and trade show producers have an app according to the survey data. Corporations with events and meetings show serious interest in apps although only 58% have one for events today. This suggests the corporate events sector is poised for significant app adoption over the next few years.

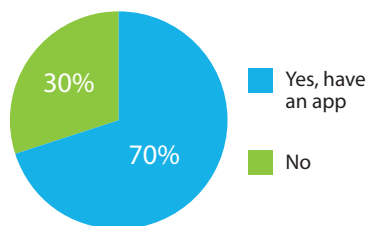
## Events that Currently Have a Mobile Event App – Comparison by Type of Organization

Associations are most likely to have a mobile event app today, followed by meeting planners and conference producers. Seventy percent of for-profit exhibition and trade show producers have an app. Corporations with events and meetings show serious interest in apps although only 58% have one for events today.

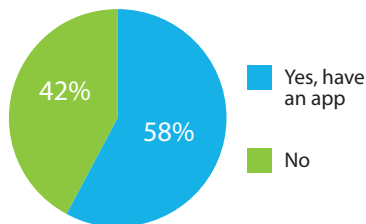
**ASSOCIATIONS ONLY**



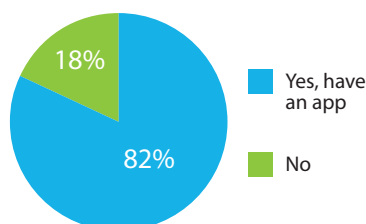
**EXHIBITION / TRADE SHOW PRODUCERS ONLY**



**CORPORATIONS WITH INTERNAL EVENTS & MEETINGS ONLY**



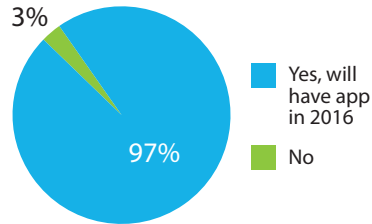
**MEETING PLANNERS / CONFERENCE PRODUCERS & CONSULTANTS ONLY**



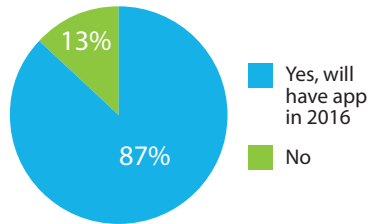
## Events that Plan to Have a Mobile Event App by 2016 – Comparison by Type of Organization

By 2016 nearly all associations with events and meetings will have a mobile event app. The other key industry event management segments also expect to see considerable mobile event app adoption growth over the next two years.

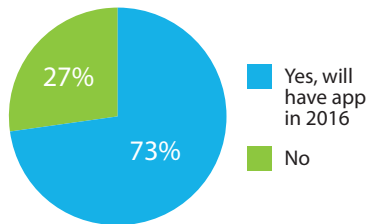
### ASSOCIATIONS ONLY



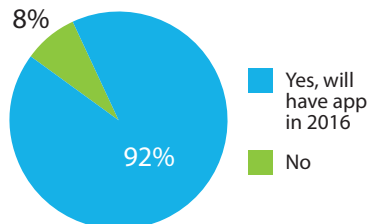
### EXHIBITION / TRADE SHOW PRODUCERS ONLY



### CORPORATIONS WITH INTERNAL EVENTS & MEETINGS ONLY



### MEETING PLANNERS / CONFERENCE PRODUCERS & CONSULTANTS ONLY





## CIA CASE STUDY

The Culinary Institute of America came to CrowdCompass with the hopes of creating an event app that would feature every aspect of its real-life conference—minus the tastes and smells. Conference organizers were thrilled with how the end product generated an 140% download rate and ultimately enabled a stronger connection with attendees.

“Our conference app successfully met our objectives for creating a more engaging and technologically enhanced experience for our attendees,” – Jacquelyn Chi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Learn more: <http://www.crowdcompass.com/case-studies/cia.shtml>

“(Our app) moves us to a more sophisticated position in the marketplace.”

– Leading medical association with conventions and conferences

### ▶ Key Insight

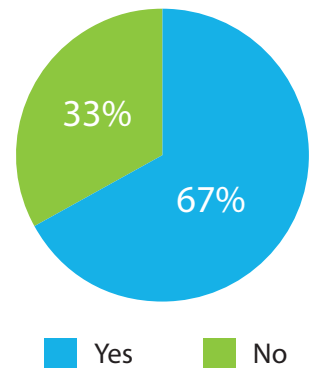
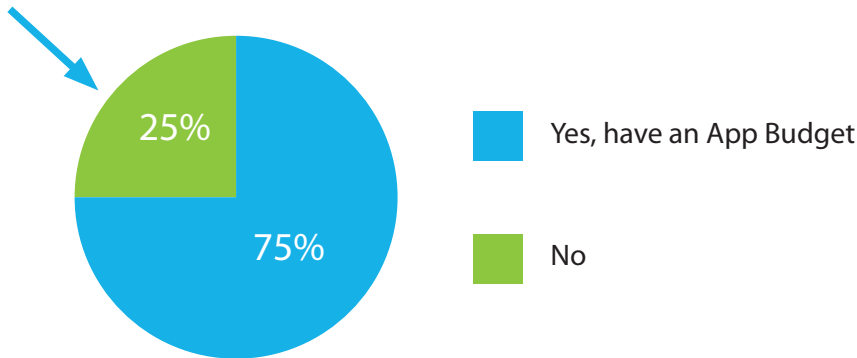
**If There’s No Budget Currently, Will this be Established in the Future?**

Of the planners with an app but not a specific budget line item, 67% expect to budget for apps in the future.

## Event Producers with a Budget Line Item for Mobile Apps

Of the events with an app currently, 75% have a specific budget line item for these technologies.

And 67% of this segment expect to have a budget line item in the future.



## Mobile Event App Budget Outlook for 2015

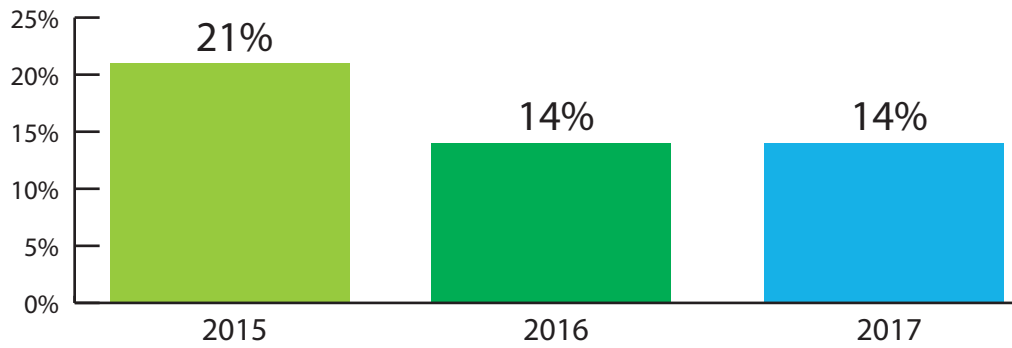
A total of 94% of the event producers and meeting planners say their budget for event apps will increase or stay the same in 2015. Corporations and brands with event and meeting programs have the largest percentage expecting to spend more on mobile event apps in 2015.

	ALL RESPONDENTS	ASSOCIATIONS	EXHIBITIONS	CORPORATIONS	MEETING/CONF. PLANNERS
<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>SAME</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>DECREASE</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>



## Budget Increase Outlook 2015 to 2017

The average app budget percentage increases expected over the next three years are provided in the table below.



“(The app) helps with sustainability and carbon footprint of the meeting.”

– Top association management company

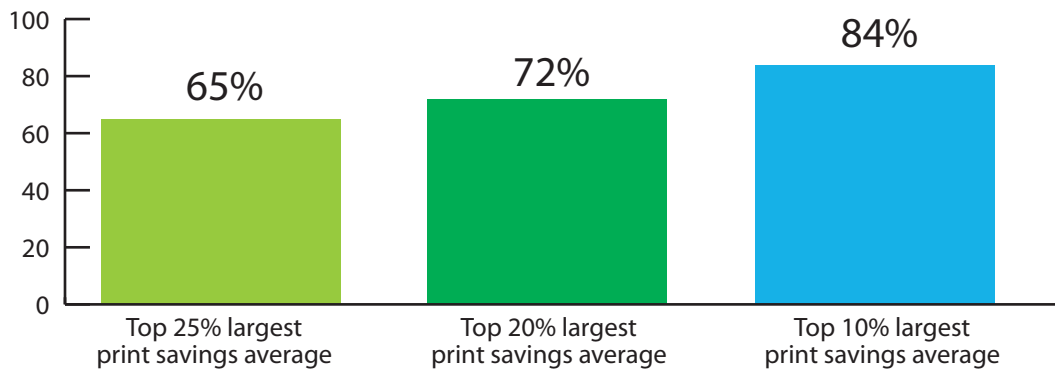
## Mobile Event App Cost

The table below provides the cost of event apps, not accounting for sponsorships, according to the survey respondents. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents spend between \$5,001 and \$10,000 and a total of 44% spend more than \$10,000. The findings are broken-out by organization type below.

	ALL RESPONDENTS	ASSOCIATIONS	EXHIBITIONS	CORPORATIONS	MEETING/CONF. PLANNERS
\$500 to \$2,000	11%	12%	6%	10%	28%
\$2,001 to \$5,000	18%	19%	19%	7%	28%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	27%	33%	28%	24%	6%
\$10,001 to \$20,000	23%	28%	19%	14%	28%
Over \$20,000	21%	8%	28%	45%	11%

## Leading Event Producers and Meeting Planners Expect Dramatic Print Savings from Apps by 2017

The study finds that leading event producers and corporate meeting planners expect to realize very dramatic printing cost savings by using mobile event apps by 2017. The table shows the average expected print cost savings among the top 10%, 20% and 25% of respondents in 2017. The findings show that 25% of the industry expect to reduce their total printing cost by 65% via apps within two years and an elite 10% expect to save a very significant 84%. The study also finds a number of top companies expect to completely eliminate their printing needs by using apps over the next few years.



**The print savings by using apps is considerable.** According to Red 7 Media Research on convention and exhibition producers, the typical leading event spends more than \$80,000 on printing and some of the largest trade shows spend more than \$100,000 to \$200,000. Clearly, some of the top event producers and corporations are looking to use apps to reduce or even eliminate these costs.



### BLACKBOARD CASE STUDY

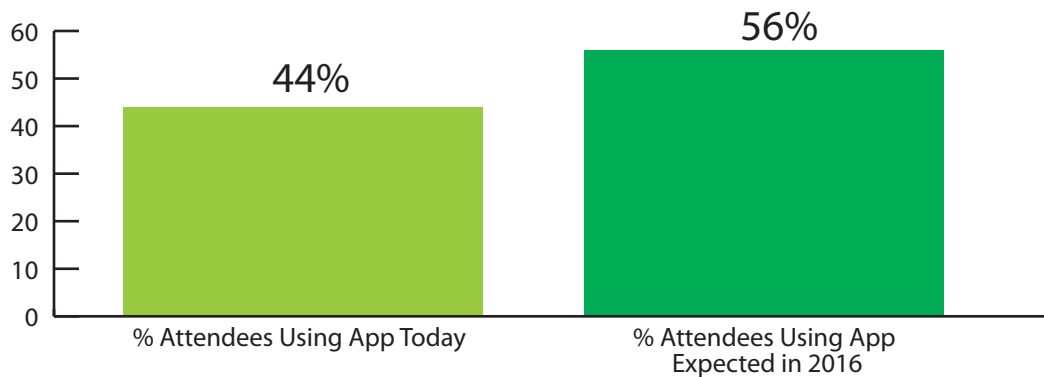
Blackboard estimates it saved \$80,000 in printing and resource costs by implementing a mobile app with CrowdCompass and eliminating the printed program. The planner for Blackboard's annual user conference estimates having a mobile app and eliminating the printed program saved her about a month's worth of work.

## II.) Attendees and Sponsor Usage

A key theme of the study is that apps have evolved rapidly from experiential to mainstream. The industry has crossed the threshold and the momentum is moving fast in terms of both mobile event app adoption, usage and engagement.

### Percentage of Attendees Using Mobile Event Apps Today – and Expected in 2016

Forty-four percent of attendees on average throughout the industry use mobile event apps currently, according to the event producers and meeting planners. This percentage is expected to increase to 56% in 2016. These findings suggest that 2015 will be the year that more than half of attendees and delegates throughout the industry engage with apps.



### For Many Leading Events and Meetings the Percentage of Attendees Using Apps is Much Higher

Leading events and meetings are already seeing very high levels of app usage by their attendees. Among the top 10% of respondents in terms of current attendee app usage, the average attendance base percentage using their app is 85%, and this is expected to increase to 94% of attendees – again according to the top 10% of events reporting in this area – in 2016.

	TODAY	IN 2016
Top 10%	85%	94%
Top 20%	79%	89%
Top 25%	76%	87%

It is important to note that this is what event planners think about attendee expectations.

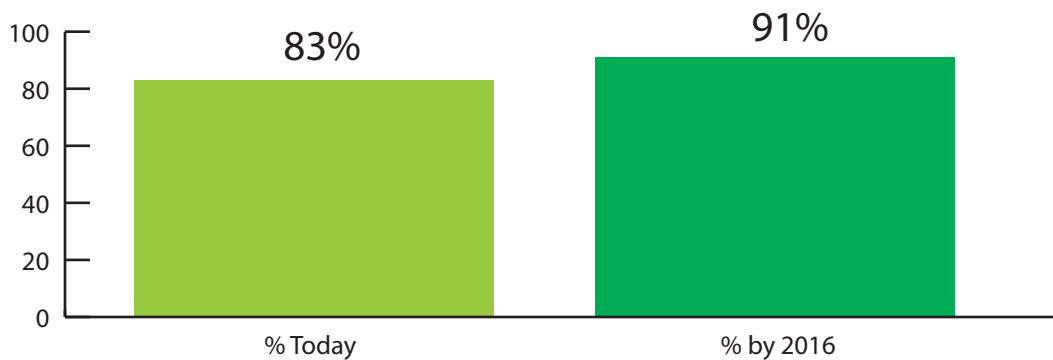
#### ▶ Key Insight

Over the next two years event producers and meeting planners expect a dramatic increase in how attendees value and engage with mobile event apps.

## Attendees' Dependence on Print Guides Today – and Expected in 2016

Event producers and meeting planners see that attendees highly value apps today and they expect this to increase significantly over the next two years. Already a very high percentage of the overall attendee base at conventions, events and meetings is considered to not be dependent on printed guides and this percentage is increasing. Consider the findings that today event producers feel about 83% of their attendees are *not dependent* on a printed guide, and that this is expected to be more than 90% by 2016.

### % OF ATTENDEE BASE CONSIDERED NOT DEPENDENT ON A PRINTED GUIDE



Associations in particular expect to see a big jump in the percentage of their attendees in terms of their dependence on print guides at their events.

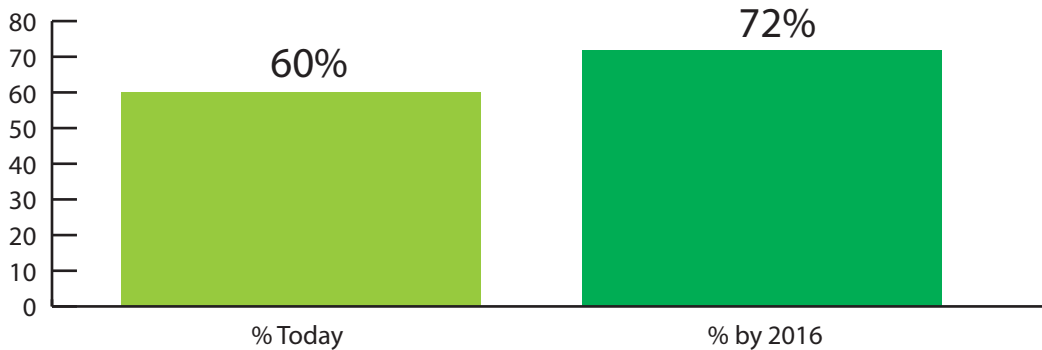
## Attendees' Dependence on Print Guides Today – and Expected in 2016 – Comparison by Type of Organization

ASSOCIATIONS	% TODAY	% BY 2016
% of attendee base considered not dependent on a printed guide	78%	92%
EXHIBITION / TRADE SHOW PRODUCERS	% TODAY	% BY 2016
% of attendee base considered not dependent on a printed guide	76%	76%
CORPORATIONS WITH EVENTS/MEETINGS	% TODAY	% BY 2016
% of attendee base considered not dependent on a printed guide	93%	96%
MEETING & CONFERENCE PLANNERS	% TODAY	% BY 2016
% of attendee base considered not dependent on a printed guide	94%	94%

## Level of Sponsor Interest in Mobile Advertising Options Instead of Print Today – and Expectation in 2016

Today, 60% of the respondents say their sponsors are interested in mobile advertising options instead of print. This percentage is expected to increase to 72% in 2016.

### TOTAL INTERESTED IN SPONSORSHIP



### VERIFONE CASE STUDY

VeriFone decided to shake things up at its annual conference by enhancing its Cvent partnership to include a CrowdCompass mobile event app with extensive sponsorship opportunities. With 140% ROI, VeriFone not only recovered the cost of the app but also decided to provide tablets for its nearly 300 attendees (with the app preloaded), to ensure adoption and engagement. What's more, the app helped event organizers reduce paper usage by 10,000 sheets.

“Once we knew Cvent had a mobile app solution, we stopped our research on other mobile app providers right then and there. CrowdCompass integrated data with our Cvent events, which was the ultimate selling point for us,” Brian Hurd, Events Marketing Manager

Learn more: <http://www.crowdcompass.com/case-studies/verifone.shtml>

## How Mobile Apps Enhance Event Brands

The survey asked for write-in, open-ended responses to this question:

*How does your mobile app enhance the event brand now?*

Some of the key responses include:

- “Aligns with our leadership position.”
- “All show information in the palm of your hand.”
- “Easy access to schedule and other information before, during, and after conference.”
- “Helps with sustainability and carbon footprint of the meeting.”
- “Improves brand image as technically relevant, looking for ways to improve the attendee experience.”
- “It enables interaction between attendees and our brand, as well as attendee-to-exhibitor and attendee-to-attendee.”
- “It helps the attendee plan and execute their plan for the event.”
- “It moves us to a more sophisticated position in the marketplace.”
- “Makes it easier for participants to connect with one another.”
- “Makes it more prominent to all sponsors, vendors and delegates.”
- “Makes it more relevant to a younger demographic.”
- “Provides clear and easily accessible information. Our last app included some very beneficial networking functionality, and making connections is a big selling point of our events.”
- “Provides consistent branding option that builds attendance, knowledge and enthusiasm about the show.”
- “We went through a branding change in 2014 and it significantly enhanced that change at our National conference.”

## III.) Working with Mobile Event App Vendors

### Most Important Attributes When Considering Mobile Event App Vendors

The top three most important mobile event app vendor attributes to event producers and planners, based on the combined 5 and 4 level ratings, are service and reliability, support, and security and privacy.

	5 = Extremely Important/ Critical	4	3 = Moderately Important	2	1 = Not Important
Service and reliability	84%	11%	4%	1%	0%
Customer Service	62%	26%	10%	2%	0%
Support	61%	31%	6%	1%	0%
Security and privacy	58%	33%	8%	2%	0%
Integration with registration for personalized schedule	49%	26%	17%	3%	4%
Data and analytics	49%	34%	14%	2%	0%
Flexibility for branding	46%	35%	16%	2%	1%
Easy to use CMS	43%	40%	13%	3%	1%
Smart Personalized Features	38%	33%	25%	3%	1%
Social Media integration	30%	32%	24%	9%	5%
Revenue opportunities	27%	33%	27%	7%	5%
Year-Round ROI	12%	30%	29%	20%	9%

#### ▶ Key Insight

When selecting app vendors, event producers and meeting planners, by far, indicate that service and reliability are the most important/critical factors.

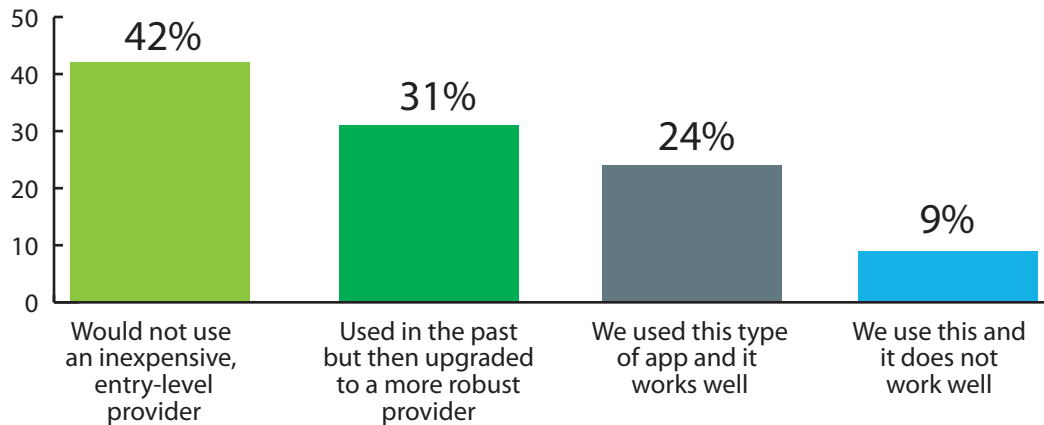
### Opinion of Mobile Technology Companies of Various Sizes

The survey asked about the level of trust event producers and planners have in mobile technology companies of various sizes. Interestingly, mid-sized companies are the most trusted currently.

	HIGH LEVEL OF TRUST	MODERATE LEVEL	LOW LEVEL
1 to 25 employees	21%	62%	17%
26 to 100 employees	32%	62%	6%
101 to 500 employees	27%	62%	11%
Over 500 employees	24%	58%	18%

## Opinion of Inexpensive, Entry-Level App Providers

Forty-two percent of the event producer and meeting planner respondents say they would not use an inexpensive, entry-level app provider. Thirty-one percent indicate they have used this type of provider in the past but later changed to a more robust provider.



### ▶ Key Insight

Seventy-six percent of event producers hold a low opinion of inexpensive, entry-level app providers.



### ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH FAMILY & CHILDREN AGENCIES CASE STUDY

The Association of Jewish Family & Children Agencies has partnered with CrowdCompass for several years to create its mobile event apps. They are committed to enhancing attendees' mobile event app experience year after year. That's why the event organizer is asked to look at the marketplace to compare providers to ensure the best decision is made for the organization.

"Every single year I research other places and every single year CrowdCompass is able to match our budget and is always coming out with new features that are really helpful so we keep coming back. Why would I want to switch to another company when I already have this great relationship with Cvent and CrowdCompass?" – Megan Manelli, Director of Marketing & Communications



## IV.) Mobile Event App Features Important Today and in 2016

### 2016 Expectation of the Importance of Mobile Event Apps to Events as well as Attendees, Sponsors/Exhibitors and Speakers

As shown in other areas of this study, event producers and planners expect mobile event apps to become more important over the next few years. Specifically, 64% say apps will be extremely or very important to their organizations in 2016. And an even larger percentage expect the same from their attendees.

IN 2016	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT/ CRITICAL	VERY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
Your Event / Organization	22%	42%	25%	8%	3%
Attendees	19%	46%	23%	9%	3%
Sponsors / Exhibitors	17%	38%	30%	10%	5%
Speakers	7%	27%	39%	19%	8%

### Mobile Event App Features Important Today – *and to be More Important in 2016*

The survey respondents were asked to rate the most important mobile app features today compared to what they think will be even more important to their organization, attendees and sponsors/exhibitors in 2016. The most important mobile event app features currently are:

- Event agendas/schedules
- Floor plans
- Branding
- 24/7 Support
- Personalized scheduling
- Exhibitor profiles

These findings also show the sheer number of ways that mobile event apps add value to event producers and meeting planners and their audience and sponsors. Consider, of the 35 areas in the table below, 17 are rated by more than half of the respondents as important now, and another 12 are rated important by 25% to 45% of the event producers and planners.

## Mobile Event App Features Important Today – *and to be More Important in 2016*

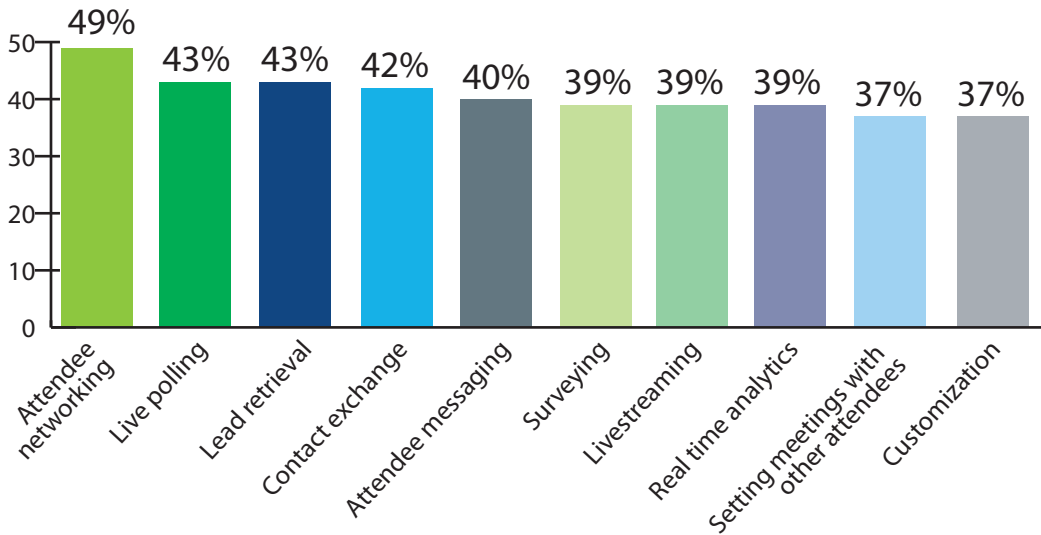
	IMPORTANT NOW	NOT IMPORTANT NOW	MORE IMPORTANT IN 2016
Event agenda/schedule	84%	5%	36%
Floor plan	73%	16%	32%
24/7 Support	72%	14%	38%
Branding	71%	17%	32%
Personalized scheduling	70%	19%	35%
Exhibitor profiles	69%	17%	33%
Speaker profiles	68%	21%	29%
Maps	67%	23%	30%
Push notifications	67%	20%	37%
Customization	65%	20%	38%
Sponsor banners	63%	30%	29%
Surveying	58%	21%	42%
Content capture	57%	28%	34%
Works offline	57%	28%	33%
Real time analytics	55%	26%	41%
Session ratings	54%	27%	39%
Attendee messaging	54%	27%	39%
Attendee networking	45%	30%	50%
Live polling	42%	33%	45%
Social networks sign in	42%	43%	32%
Contact exchange	41%	36%	45%
Attendee profiles	34%	48%	33%
Multievent	34%	55%	26%
Lead retrieval	32%	41%	46%
Onsite registration	29%	56%	30%
Custom solutions for venues	27%	62%	24%
Slidesharing	26%	58%	31%
Setting meetings with other attendees	26%	51%	39%
Registration within app	24%	59%	33%
Gamification	21%	65%	27%
Multilanguage	19%	65%	26%
Livestreaming	18%	57%	38%
Hosted/buyer appointment management	17%	70%	24%
Room capacity planning	14%	77%	20%
iBeacons integration	9%	75%	24%

### ▶ Key Insight

The primary focus of mobile event apps today is on providing event information and enhancing the brand. In 2016, event producers and meeting planners expect apps to be used more to foster networking, communication, data capture and lead retrieval.

## Top Ten Mobile Event App Features Expected to be More Important in 2016

The top three app features considered to be more important in 2016 are attendee networking, live polling and lead retrieval.



“The app enables interaction between attendees and our brand, as well as attendee-to-exhibitor and attendee-to-attendee.”

– Leading business media company and exhibition producer



### BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY CASE STUDY

“We were able to reduce the amount of paper used by asking all of our presenters to use the app for their own agendas, a considerable cost savings.”

– Melanie Scharton, Behavioral Science Technology

Learn more at <http://www.crowdcompass.com/case-studies/bst.shtml>

## Conclusion: The Future of Mobile Event Apps

Today, the primary focus of mobile event apps is to provide event information, schedules, floor plans, and exhibitor and speaker profiles – and to enhance the event or meeting brand. Event producers and meeting planners tell the Event Marketing Institute and CrowdCompass they expect the future of event apps to increasingly focus on:



**Attendee networking and messaging**



**Lead retrieval and management**



**Polling and surveys**



**Real time analytics**



**Live streaming sessions and content**



**Meeting setting**



**Customization**



**Increased print cost savings**

“Apps make it easier for participants to connect with one another.”

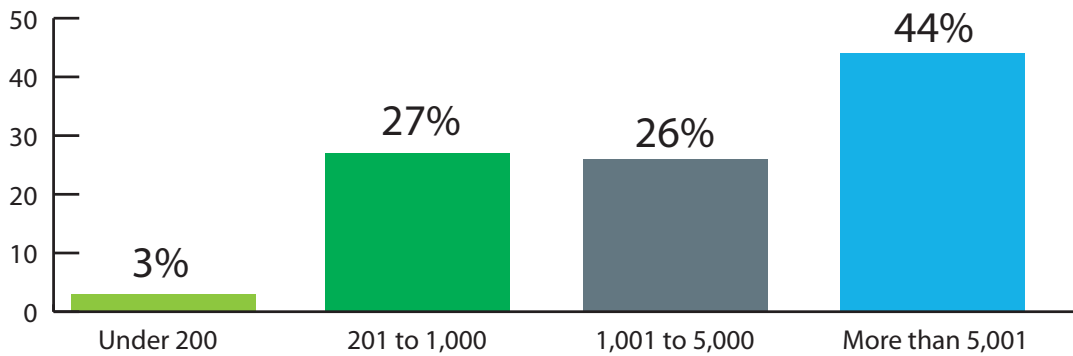
-- Association convention organizer

## About the Respondents

CrowdCompass and the Event Marketing Institute conducted a survey of leading event producers and meeting planners between November and December 2014. The survey was sent to 3,637 event producers and meeting planners and 311 responded for an 8.6% response rate.

	%
<b>Association</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Corporation with Internal Meeting and Event Programs</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Exhibition/Trade Show Producer</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Meeting Planner or Conference Producer Consultancy</b>	<b>12%</b>

### NUMBER OF ATTENDEES AT LARGEST, MOST IMPORTANT EVENT



## About CrowdCompass by Cvent



CrowdCompass by Cvent offers smarter mobile app solutions for events. With thousands of unique and customized event apps published, our clients rely on us to help them deliver an innovative event experience that increases engagement and produces a strong return on investment.

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## About Event Marketing Institute



TRENDS | TRAINING | TOOLS

The mission of the Event Marketing Institute is to help our members enhance their professional performance by providing comprehensive education, research and analysis related to emerging trends and insights into event marketing strategy, as well as creating a growing list of productivity tools and professional networking opportunities to foster information exchange.

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