tips

5 best tips for developing Event Apps®

Apps are a wonderful tool to truly engage your audience and deliver a powerful live event experience. Creating an event application for mobiles help organisers to connect with attendees, keep them informed about changes, and help them share information. Darren Edwards suggests five best tips on what to consider when designing event apps.

1 Features and Platforms

Determine what must-have features you require and what features your attendees expect from your Event App.

Some of the available features include:
- Event branding opportunities
- Sponsorship recognition
- Recognition and advertising banners
- Event documents & links to external urls
- Interactive floor plan for venue and exhibition
- Exhibitor profiles with handouts and logos
- List of attendees at event
- Speakers' biographies
- Complex Session Ratings
- Ability to take notes for each session and email them post-event
- Meeting requests
- Live polling and surveys
- Exhibitor leads tracking
- Presentations and handouts can be downloaded and emailed
- Abstracts, Full Papers, Session Presentations and Digital Posters right in the app.
- Multi Device Sync
- Push technology for alerts to iPhone and Android
- Social Integration with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Locate me with tracker
- Videos
- Photo Sharing and Flickr Integration
- Standalone QR Code Scanner
- Featured Products lists
- Ability to monetise apps through advertising and sponsorship sales
- Detailed post show reports
- Live analytics
- Admin managed alerts feature

2 Turn on Airplane Mode

Download a Native app and a web based html5 app and have a play with both. Put your device in airplane mode to see the worst case scenario. To run a Mobile Web-based app (which is essentially a mobile website), the user commonly has to access the Internet via Wi-Fi or cellular connection. Native Event Apps®, on the other hand, reside on the device itself; they don't require an Internet connection to work. This is crucial because in a hotel or a convention centre you may have hundreds or thousands of attendees trying to access Wi-Fi or cellular network simultaneously to use their Event Apps®, email, social networks etc. Native apps do require updates periodically but those updates usually take less than 10 seconds.
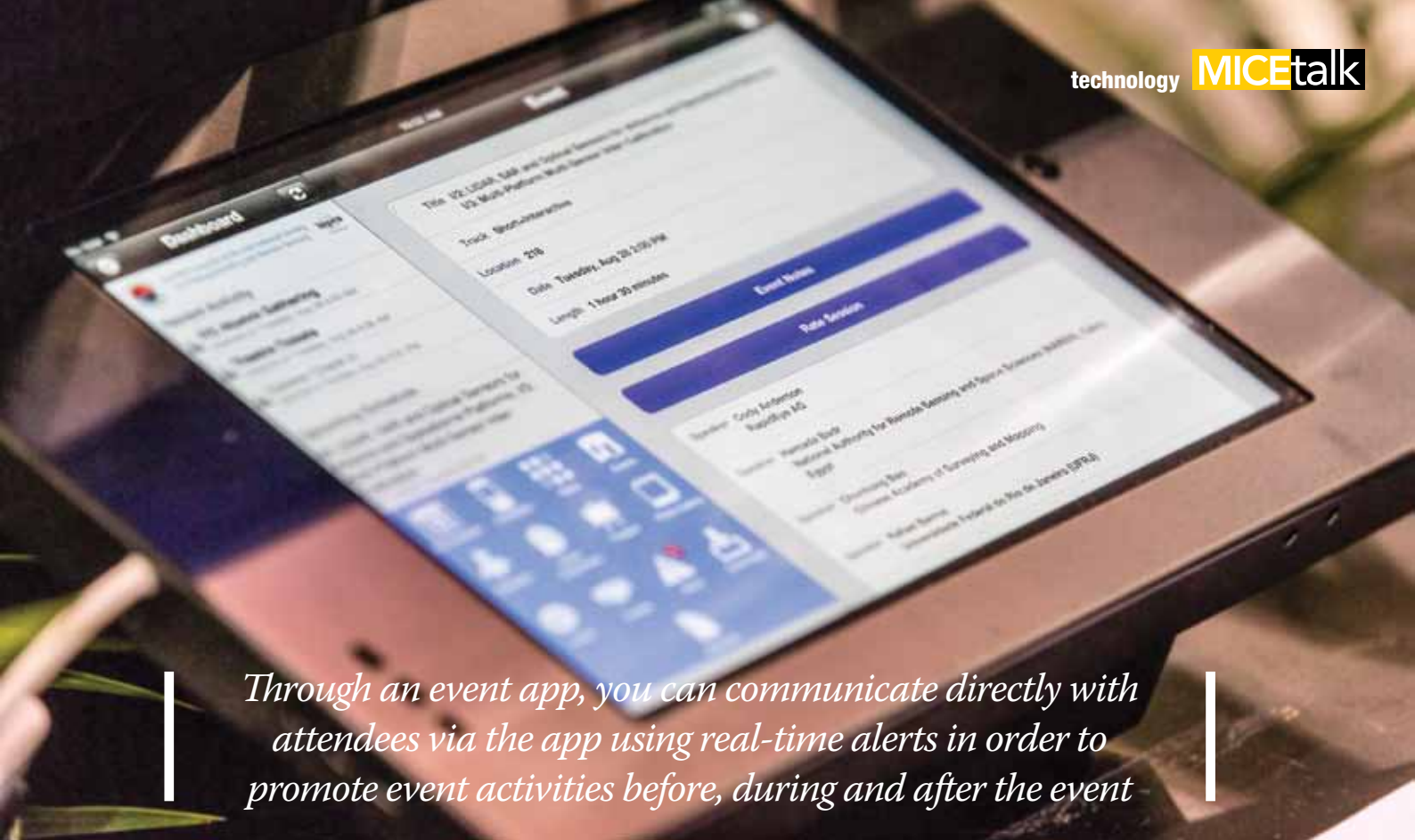
Through an event app, you can communicate directly with attendees via the app using real-time alerts in order to promote event activities before, during and after the event

3 Make sure your Developer 'Speaks Your Language'

The app developer should understand the event to provide support services. They need to speak your language. As part of the development process you will need to design graphics, prepare documents, capture and manage data, create marketing collateral, etc. This will make the development process easier and will produce a powerful event experience for attendees.

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5 Marketing and Engagement

After developing an Event App, you need to get people to use it and engage with it. Your app developer should be able to arm you with the tools to do this such as press releases, download language, QR codes, access links, website language, marketing graphics etc. If you have deployed a native app then finding your app, it will be a whole lot easier as attendees can simply access via their app stores rather than trying to find your unique download url.

Marketing your app forms the single most important part of the development process. If you do not allow adequate time or resources to market your app to staff, committees, sponsors, exhibitors or attendees, there is really no benefit in developing an app to begin with. Marketing can be done via traditional methods using your social networks, youtube, email campaigns, sms, advertising, web banners etc. or by any other means that you commonly utilise to connect to your audience.

4 What Costs?

Cost is an important factor when selecting a mobile Event App developer. Cover your costs through: Sponsorship Opportunities, Banner Advertising, Enhanced Exhibitor Profiles, Exhibitor Leads Generation, Revenue sharing with your developer, etc. If you will choose an app as a revenue generating tool, it will never add any cost to your event.

about the author

Darren Edwards is the founder of Invisage Creative Services in Australia. With more than 20 years' experience and knowledge in the meetings and events industry, Darren continues to drive creativity in events and the way they are run.

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