

From “App-rehension” to App-Comprehension: How to Select a Mobile Event App

When an event planner is considering using a mobile app, start with this question: “What is my attendee value proposition, and how will technology contribute to solutions?”

The “attendee value proposition” is like a mission statement for your event, and it incorporates questions like: Why is this event important to attendees? What is the outcome that we want? What are the meeting’s objectives?

Many events have elements of education, certification, idea sharing, networking, product demonstration, and sponsorship. Prioritizing these will help define the app experience you’re seeking. For example, a medical-related conference that highlights research advancements might require displaying abstracts. Conversely, there are meetings where socialization is key to a conference’s success because establishing relationships and creating memories are the reasons attendees come back. There’s no right or wrong, but finding the mobile app that can reflect that experience will make a difference.

Because there are now over 100 event app providers, it can be daunting to find the one app that can deliver all of those elements at a price that meets your budget. So, here are some things to think about when seeking prospective mobile app providers:

1. Features, Navigation, and Customization

View several apps from each provider you interview. Think about the demographics of your attendees. From the very first screen, can you envision them quickly understanding how to find the information they’re looking for? If education is important, is the app organized well to show schedules, speaker profiles, downloadable presentations, surveys, polls, and note-taking? If socialization is important, look at chat capabilities, activity feeds, and gamification.

2. Support and Workflow

Gain a good understanding of the provider’s timeline and other requirements to produce the app. Review the back-end publishing tool. Does it seem easy to use? What kind of training and ongoing support will the provider make available to you in the months leading up to the event, and what are the help procedures and availabilities during the event for last-minute changes?

3. Contracts and Pricing

Review what’s included in the app proposal and what may cost extra. Would you rather try the app for one event and then make a long-term decision, or does the provider require you to commit to multiple events and years? Are you getting a branded app, or do your attendees need to download the provider’s app first and then search for their event? Are there fees to integrate with your registration platform? Is the provider charging an annual fee? Can the app perform without Wi-Fi?

Reach out to references. Don’t assume that the most well-know names in the app industry are the easiest to work with or that a higher price means it must be a better product.

A good resource is the annual Event App Bible, which can be downloaded for free at www.eventmanagerblog.com/event-app-bible. To help compare app providers, we’ve developed a one-page worksheet that lists key questions. For a free copy, send an email to phil@agendapop.com with the subject line “Questions.”

by Phil Rappoport
VP Sales & Marketing
AgendaPop Mobile Event App

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Mission: The mission of PCMA and the Chapter is to be the leading organization for meeting and event professionals by delivering superior and innovative education and promoting the value of professional convention management.

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If you have any comments, suggestions or would like to write an article for *The Chatter*, email: PCMAchatter@gmail.com



Message from the Board

Jim Kelley

Going for the Gold....

What makes an Olympic Champion? As many of us have watched the Olympics recently we have seen the victories, the awarding of medals and the celebrations. However, what we don't see are the days of waking up in the darkness, the hours of practice before most of us have gotten out of bed, and in many cases a day followed by what we would refer to as 'day jobs or school', often ending with another training session before going to sleep. What we witnessed recently was only the tip of the iceberg and the culmination of years of training.

Let's look at Michael Phelps. His training regime involves approximately eight miles of swimming six days a week. The average length of his Olympic races this year was one hundred and fifty yards. He effectively trained daily for a race that was 1% of the length of his daily swims. Success and winning is not about the race; it is about the efforts put in before the race. In Michael Phelps' case, success was 99% training and 1% competing.

So what does this have to do with PCMA Capital Chapter? The answer is simple; we are your training ground. The value of the education, content, and networking provided by the Capital Chapter is a means for you to train, get better at your craft, and to hone your skills. The results you get are in direct relation to the effort you put in to taking advantage of what is offered; your willingness to participate; and in some cases making a sacrifice and doing what is a little uncomfortable and hard. This may be as simple as attending an education program and asking a question, writing an article for the Chatter, or talking to someone new at a networking event.

You are a part of the PCMA Capital Chapter Team and we need you to train for us to all win! •

**"If you want to be the best,
you have to do things that other people
aren't willing to do"**

— *Michael Phelps*


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Inaugural Hotel Tech: The Experience

Every four years the DMV hospitality industry is provided the opportunity to showcase the best it has to offer. With the quadrennial celebration of a new or returning president, hotels are looking for new and innovative ways to improve the experience of their guests. While certainly not absolute, former key draws to inaugural properties have focused on competing “things” (who has the best bottle of champagne vs. the best dinner vs. the best doorman) and proximity to the parade route or White House. Beginning in 2008, President Obama’s inauguration heralded the ascension of the Gen X/Millennial driven administration shifting the focus to the property that has the best experience for the dollar. A key factor in determining which hotels can offer the best experience is the level of accessibility guests have to services, and this is driven by high-end hotel tech.

Accessibility and services; the St. Regis, which already has its location going for it, will be providing an on demand, Uber like, golf cart transportation service for its guests. This service is partially a result of its location within the security zone but it also highlights the industry’s embracing of new tech in a different way. Remember the concept of ride sharing was in its infancy in 2008 and still a relatively new thing in 2012. Other hotels in the DC area will be placing tablets in their guest rooms that guests may use to order services, transportation, and entertainment while they wait in potentially very cold bleacher seats prior to the inaugural parade. “Apps” are another big thing. All of the major hotel chains, and many of DC’s boutique properties, are launching or honing their apps to meet the needs of their guests. Being



able to access service-on-demand will appeal to any guest who needs their inaugural ball tuxedo pressed or that last minute line-stander reservation for Rose’s Luxury.

A key focus of many hotels for the inauguration is ensuring that their IT infrastructure is able to support all of the tech that its guests bring with them. Simply put, even more so than the average DC business traveler, the inaugural demographic is a connected one. One engineer mentioned that he would be doing his best to ensure access to 90 Mbps+ of bandwidth beginning in 2017 (the industry average at a 5 star property being 80 Mbps). It would be hard to schedule that golf cart to the Blair House if one could not connect their second iPhone to the hotel’s network.

The end result is that the 2017 inauguration will allow DC area hotels to showcase their existing and new technology, further building their connections with the customers who will most likely be looking for a hotel upon their return to DC during the ensuing four years. •

*Kyle West, CMP, MBA
WorldTEK Events*



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LinkedIn – To Do/Not To Do

With the continuous morphing of social media there is often confusion about how best to use LinkedIn for Business. Following are some ideas about how to use LinkedIn and recommendations on what to avoid.

Do connect with people you have met at Tradeshows, Networking Events, and Business Meetings and through correspondence. It is great to grow your network!

Do Not shotgun an invite to every person who shows up in your LinkedIn feed as “people you may know”.

Do create a personal note about how and where you met the individual you are trying to connect with; this approach reminds your pending connection that you did actually meet and you are not a virtual stranger.

Do Not use the form message that pops up or simply hit the connect button, it is impersonal and tends to be less accepted (this can impact your future requests).

Do post educational material, consider writing your own “LinkedIn Post” (an article format works best), share articles you have found useful and make comments on other posts.

Do Not CONTINUALLY post Facebook type posts – it is okay to be personal once in awhile; however, if you consistently share what you are eating or your grandchild’s picture, it is likely you will be removed from your connections LinkedIn Feed.

Do help your circle of influence – learn about a job opening, share it!

Do Not bash people in your post or comments – the old adage if you have nothing nice to say.....

Do share appropriate business information. This is a place to keep people informed, be consistent about sharing information and keep your newsfeed relevant.

If you are a Twitter user **DO** link your LinkedIn account to Twitter for increased exposure among your connections.

Do use LinkedIn for learning about potential clients, growing your circle of influence, educating yourself and job searches.

Do Not avoid using this important tool – if you are unsure about how to start, take a class at any number of our industry events, ask a colleague who is LinkedIn savvy or go online and search for A GAZILLION articles about how to use LinkedIn. •

by Tanna Pearman, National Sales Manager
Silver Legacy Reno, NV



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Droning On...

In August, I had the distinct pleasure to attend the 2016 National Drone Racing Championships in New York City. The entire reason I was there came from a simple conversation I had during lunch at PCMA EduCon in St. Louis. It turns out the woman sitting next to me was doing a lot of work in the drone space. I, being a massive geek and fascinated with drone technology, created a barrage of questions that inundated this poor woman simply trying to eat her chicken. Two months later there I sat watching drones race around the track on Governor's Island at 100 mph.

While sitting in the tent next to the track, they had Virtual Reality (VR) goggles available for spectators to put on. The goggles were tuned into cameras in each of the drones. The racers all wear goggles that allow them to fly the drone as if they were sitting in it. This meant that you were seeing what the racers were seeing. Putting on those goggles created an experience, unlike anything I had every experienced before. It gave a level of engagement that gave me an instant appreciation for the pilots and what they were doing. This would have been impossible not too long ago.

The point is traditional A/V technology will not be enough for our meetings and events. Attendees will want to be in it. They will expect to be the drone pilot for a brief moment, not just watch it on a screen. With wearable technology, virtual reality, and big data event intelligence becoming more available and affordable, this is right around the corner. It is our job to learn, embrace and leverage these tools. •

*by Donny Neufuss
Director, Business Development
Production Resource Group, LLC*

Are You Getting the Best Out of Your Vendor Contract?

Meeting Vendor Contracts 101, hosted on August 25, 2016, welcomed 97 attendees (62% planners) to the Emerging Professional Committee's (EPC) roundtable event. The program encompassed seven roundtables: convention centers, mobile apps, on-site services, photography, speaker bureaus, staffing and transportation. Each roundtable was facilitated by an industry expert who guided the discussion around the "do's and don'ts" of negotiating contracts in each arena.

Overall, attendees experienced truthful conversations about negotiating tricky contracts, being aware of contract pitfalls, and how to get the best out of a contract with the vendors themselves. As one attendee commented "I really liked that we all broke out into small groups to get further information on the presentation each vendor did. I like (that) the meeting allowed for such intimate groups instead of listening to a full on presentation."

With the success of this event, PCMACC will consider hosting a similar event in 2017 that will allow for more candid discussions between meeting planners and their suppliers with an emphasis on education rather than sales pitches. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Thank you to our fantastic host Hilton Alexandria Old Town and program sponsor Cincinnati USA CVB. Extra thanks goes to Heather Kyler, Meeting Manager, of ASCB who championed this event, we couldn't have done it without you! •

*by Christine Faiman, CMP
Chair, Emerging Professionals Committee /
Global Account Executive, Marriott International*



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Made for Events: Snapchat Geofilters

When Instagram introduced “Instagram Stories” recently, many said Snapchat was dead. Articles with similar headlines to TechCrunch’s “Instagram castrates Snapchat like Facebook neutered Twitter,” went viral. But, once we step outside the tech bubble and step into the events world, it’s easy to see that Snapchat isn’t going anywhere. What separates Snapchat from other social media platforms is geofilters.



A geofilter is a picture overlay, usually consisting of graphics and words, that users can put on top of their photos and videos. Geofilters use location services to provide location-based filters.

For example, if I’m in Washington D.C., there are Washington D.C. specific geofilters that I can use. Those are called “Community Geofilters.” What makes geofilters valuable to the events community is their “On Demand Geofilters,” which allow you to create your own, select a location, date, and time, and pay a small fee.

For events, On Demand Geofilters provide a way for your attendees to not only share with their friends, families, and colleagues where they are, but it also gives you an opportunity to sell more sponsorships with very little overhead. Little Bird Told Media created a geofilter, put our logo on it, and had it available for 4 hours during a reception at MPI’s World Education Congress. It cost less than \$20 and had over 4,250 views. For those counting, that’s less than half a penny per view. That’s a pretty outstanding return on our investment. It was used 182 times. That’s an average of 23 views per use. In this sense, Snapchat is made for events in a way that Instagram Stories is not.

It should be said that there’s no one way to use geofilters for an event. You can create different geofilters for your keynote speaker, your sponsors, the tradeshow floor, your opening reception, and more. •

— by Alex Plaxen
President/Founder
Little Bird Told Media
PCMA 20 in their Twenties 2016
@aplaxen

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Member Spotlights

Spotlight on a Planner

Tracie Howard, CMP
Meetings Manager
AcademyHealth



Tracie is all about family! An identical twin and one of four girls, if she doesn't see her family daily, she talks with them. Tracie's twin, Stacie, is her best friend. They graduated from different colleges on the same day and made it to each other's graduation. Tracie also loved talking with her grandmother, a strong-willed woman with great insight. She raised seven children and never let grass grow under her feet. Grandma made Tracie's much-loved Dad the man he is today.

With meeting planning as her goal, Tracie began her college career in Johnson and Wales' Hospitality Management Program and finished in Business Marketing at the University of Baltimore. Her career path was paved with internships, the Baltimore Artscape Festival being her favorite. She loved working with talent, making sure all their needs were met and then seeing the artists and "finished product" at the festival. Upon graduation, Tracie joined the AcademyHealth family and 17 years later she is still there, growing in expertise along the way. Her greatest accomplishment??? Earning her CMP.

What does Tracie do for hobby and fun? She makes wedding invitations (yep!), plays with her English bulldog, Pazelee, does dinner and movies with sisters and friends and enjoys outdoor life. Her ideal vacation is a toss-up between the beach with umbrella, breeze blowing... drink in hand, or beautiful mountain scenery... drink in hand. •

by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill
Global Account Director
HPN Global



News Bytes

Email your news: PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com

- **Katharine Gausmann, CMP** is leaving the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and heading to a new role as a Project Manager in the government contracting sector.
- **Sara Kilkenny** formerly with Association of Clinical Research Professionals is now Director of Meetings at School Nutrition Association.
- **Christine M. Klein, CMP** is now Vice President, Meetings & Events at National Defense Industrial Association. •

Spotlight on a Supplier

Krystine LoBianco, CMP
National Sales Manager
Connecticut Convention Center



Krystine grew up in Cape Cod, so representing the Connecticut Convention Center and "The Gateway to New England" is like coming home for her! "Hartford makes me nostalgic for my childhood in the New England area. The food, the people, the fall foliage all hold a special place in my heart!" After graduating from Towson University in Towson, Maryland, Krystine began working in the Human Resources Department of the Baltimore Convention Center as a Personnel Assistant. Over her twelve years in Baltimore, Krystine held various positions in the Sales & Marketing Department including Account Executive and Sales Manager before moving into her current role with the Connecticut Convention Center.

"My favorite thing about working for Hartford is having the opportunity to introduce a client to all we have to offer, work with them to make their event successful in our destination, and then see that come to fruition." A member of PCMA since 2006, Krystine is actively involved in the PCMA Chesapeake Chapter and has held several board positions including Director of Membership, Secretary and Treasurer and is currently serving as President-Elect. "I am looking forward to my presidency in 2017 and continuing to promote PCMA through our chapter's education, networking and community events." Krystine also volunteers for the Capital Chapter Communications Committee.

"When I am not on the road promoting Hartford, I enjoy being home, reading a great book, spending time with family and friends and playing with Roxie, my 2 year old Jack Russel/Beagle." •

by Will Trokey, CMP
Visit Charlotte



Connect with the Capital Chapter!



Connecting with the Capital Chapter is not just about tracking what we are up to. We want to see what you are up to as well.



PCMA Capital Chapter has become the first PCMA chapter to have an Instagram account because we believe in being creative and having fun with our communication. However, it is only as good as our members make it, so start shooting and posting today!



Follow us @pcmacapitalchapter and remember to tag us in your spring meeting photos as well by adding us into the comments or tag section. •



Mark Your Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register:
www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital

9/23 K Street Farm: Community Services Project

3:00pm - 6:00pm
111 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20001

9/28 Globalize Your Meeting State Side and take the Leap Internationally

3:00pm - 6:30pm
FHI360, 1825 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009

10/13 Get Hooked: Joint Networking Event with PCMA Capital Chapter and MPI Potomac

6:00pm - 9:00pm
The Odyssey, 600 Water St. SW, Washington, DC 20024

10/26 Team Work Makes the Dream Work – Uniting Meetings and Education

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AUSA, 2425 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201

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