

The Event Effect

What's Really on the Minds of Your Attendees?

2016

A CROWDCOMPASS / EDELMAN STUDY

Introduction

Do you know the effect your events have on your attendees? Understanding the mindset of the individuals who attend your event is the first step when creating and delivering valuable content. Identifying your attendees' unique characteristics will put you in the best position for creating events that resonate. This report is the first of its kind to analyze the attendee mindset and give you the tools to create more memorable, engaging, and profitable events.

CrowdCompass by Cvent and **Edelman Intelligence** conducted this study to dive deeper into the mind of the event attendee. This report focuses on:

- Attendee expectations, pre-event
- Perceptions of what events actually deliver
- How attendees apply event experiences, post-event

This study helps identify attendee traits and preferences while highlighting how technology impacts the overall event experience. The end result? Best practices for planners, benchmarks, opportunities, and insights into your attendee. Additionally, you'll learn key demographic data regarding event attendees, why they attend your meetings and conferences, what they want when they are onsite, and insight into their professional pain points.

Survey Respondents

CrowdCompass and Edelman surveyed 1,000 people via an online quantitative survey from January 11-15, 2016. The respondents represent attendees of professional conferences in the past six months – to further dissect the results, we also looked at event participants individuals who have attended at least ten events in the past year (referred to throughout as “Frequent Participants”), and those who downloaded a mobile app for their last event.

The overall goal of this report is to help meeting and event professionals understand their attendees in order to deliver more engaging, educational, and memorable events while seeing ROI gains year after year.





Executive Summary

The momentum around professional events has continued to build as mobile apps help contribute to an overall positive attendee experience.

This study finds that, on average, event participants attended five events in 2015 and 98% plan to attend the same amount or more this year. Also, 60% of event attendees indicated they sought out the event opportunity (vs. it being a requirement), with professional development being the prime motivation. Specifically, one in three event participants cite professional development or training as the primary reason for attending.



QUALITY OF LEARNING

IS THE #1 MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR ATTENDEES WHEN CONSIDERING AN EVENT

92%

OF ATTENDEES SAID THE LAST EVENT THEY ATTENDED WAS A VALUABLE TIME INVESTMENT

85%

OF EVENT PARTICIPANTS SAY ATTENDING PROFESSIONAL EVENTS HELP THEM THINK "BIGGER PICTURE" ABOUT THEIR JOB

As positive as events are, as well as the educational opportunities associated with them, attendees still associate them with a layer of stress. One in four agree that the last event they attended was a stressful experience, with even more millennials echoing the same sentiment (37%), as well as frequent participants who have attended ten events in the last year.

EVENT PARTICIPANTS ARE MOST OVERWHELMED BY THESE THREE STRESSORS:

1

THE CHECK-IN PROCESS

2

HOW TO ORGANIZE THEIR SCHEDULE

3

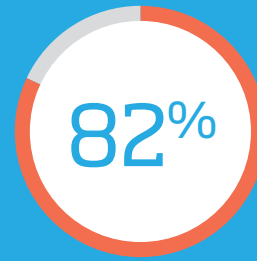
OVERCROWDING

An app is a great asset to manage your attendees' onsite stress including their personal schedule, real-time scheduling updates, and maps. It's also a smart way to ensure a quality learning experience for your guests with interactive sessions and networking opportunities – these were also the top two rated event components that had a positive impact on event experience.

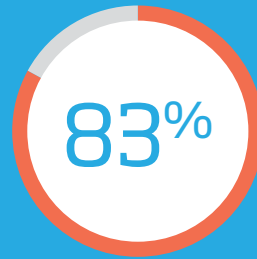
Mobile Apps continue to shine, but awareness is key to adoption.

Just over one-third of event participants surveyed said a mobile app was offered at the last event they attended (38%), while 62% of frequent participants say the same. When available and/or acknowledged, usage is almost universal – the large majority (82%) chose to download the mobile app when presented with the opportunity, with 83% of downloads occurring before the event. More specifically, one in five indicated that they downloaded the app the day before the event.

Positively, mobile apps are perceived as valuable for those who download them. 83% of app downloaders found the app to be valuable, and two-thirds indicate the mobile app had a positive impact on their event experience (only 5% indicate the mobile app had a negative impact). Attendees noted that their top onsite (vs. before or after the event) mobile app features included scheduling capabilities, real-time information, and updates.



**OF ATTENDEES AWARE OF THE
OPPORTUNITY, CHOSE TO DOWNLOAD
THE MOBILE APP OFFERED**



**OF DOWNLOADS OCCURRING
BEFORE THE EVENT**



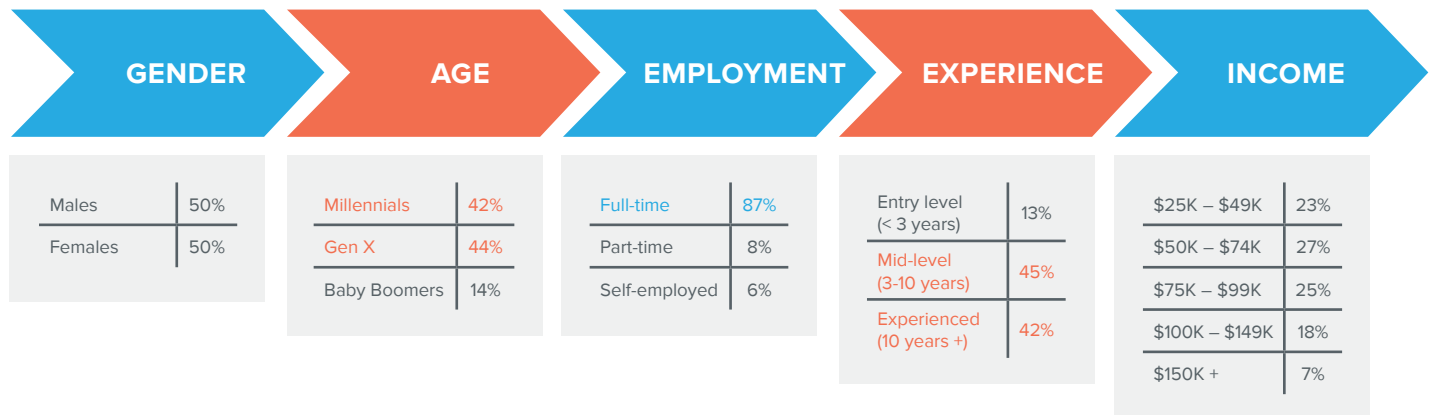


Events by the Numbers

Who are the people attending your events? Information gathered about participants demographics, background, and mindset can help you better tailor your content and create more memorable events.

We were able to collect data from a broad demographic of event participants. **Not all attendees are the same**, so it's important to gather feedback from several types of attendees. This way you can better understand your guests and customize content they would find valuable.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS



People are looking to go to more events year after year.

On average, **professionals are attending five events per year**, with the intent of maintaining status quo or even increasing their attendance in 2016.

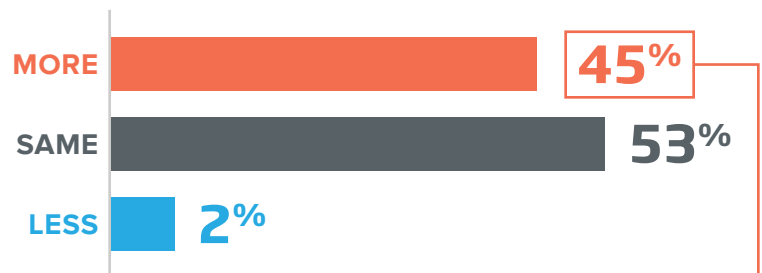
EVENT PARTICIPATION IN 2015

ON AVERAGE,
EVENT PARTICIPANTS
ATTENDED

5

PROFESSIONAL
EVENTS LAST YEAR

EVENT PARTICIPATION OUTLOOK

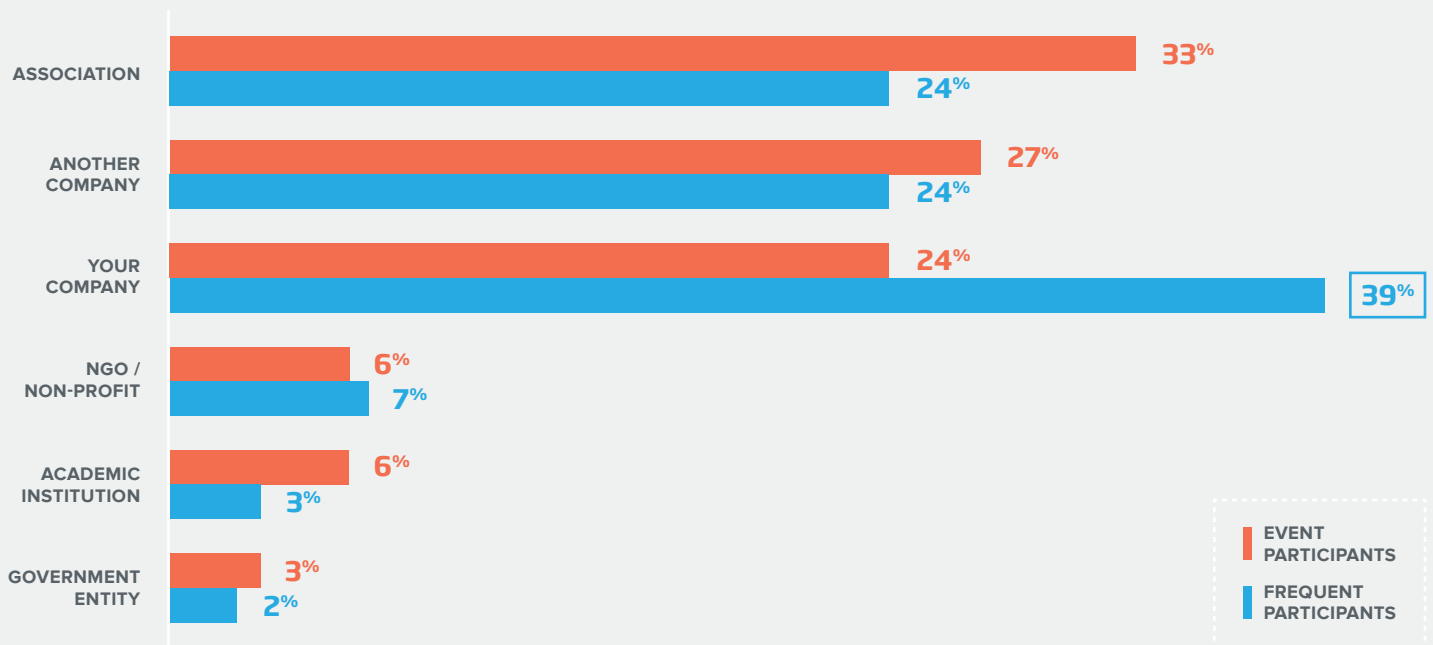


Who is interested in attending more events next year?
Professional newbies.

Millennials (55%) and Entry-level Employees (57%)
are most interested in upping their event attendance.

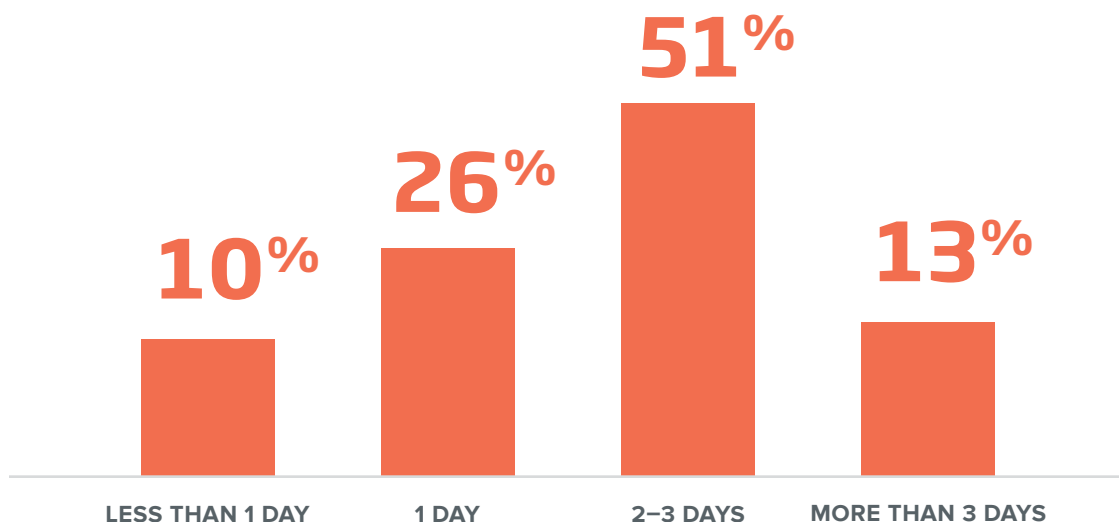
Who leads the pack when it comes to holding events?

MAIN EVENT ORGANIZER OF LAST EVENT



Attendees realize events are a big commitment monetary investment, so they choose the events they attend wisely.

LENGTH OF LAST EVENT



ESTIMATED COSTS OF LAST EVENT

EXPENSE	COST (MEAN*)
Registration	\$264.22
Lodging	\$325.30
Other travel costs	\$263.91
TOTAL	\$853.43

**ON AVERAGE, EVENT PARTICIPANTS ESTIMATE
EXPENSES TO BE JUST UNDER \$1,000**

*Outliers removed, total is the sum of the 3 disparate averages

Part of that commitment is time in the sky, as overall travel tops 500 miles and nearly five hours on average.

TRAVEL DISTANCE TO LAST EVENT



FOR REFERENCE, TORONTO TO
NEW YORK CITY IS 491 MILES

TRAVEL TIME TO LAST EVENT



Why Do They Attend?

There are numerous reasons someone might attend your event. It could be a requirement or something they proactively sought out as a learning experience. Below are the most compelling pieces of data discovered for why an individual might attend your event.

They know what they want!

Attendees are proactive and seek out the events they want to attend.

The last event I attended was...

40%

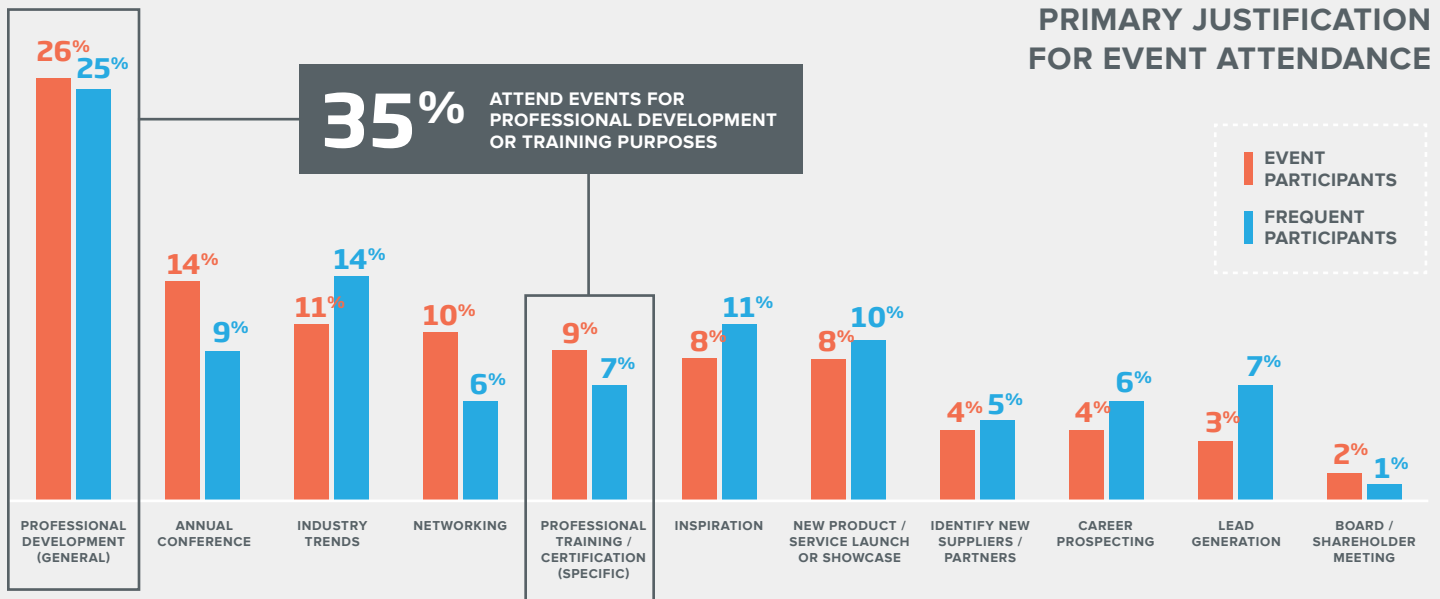
A COMPANY
REQUIREMENT

SOMETHING I
SOUGHT OUT

60%

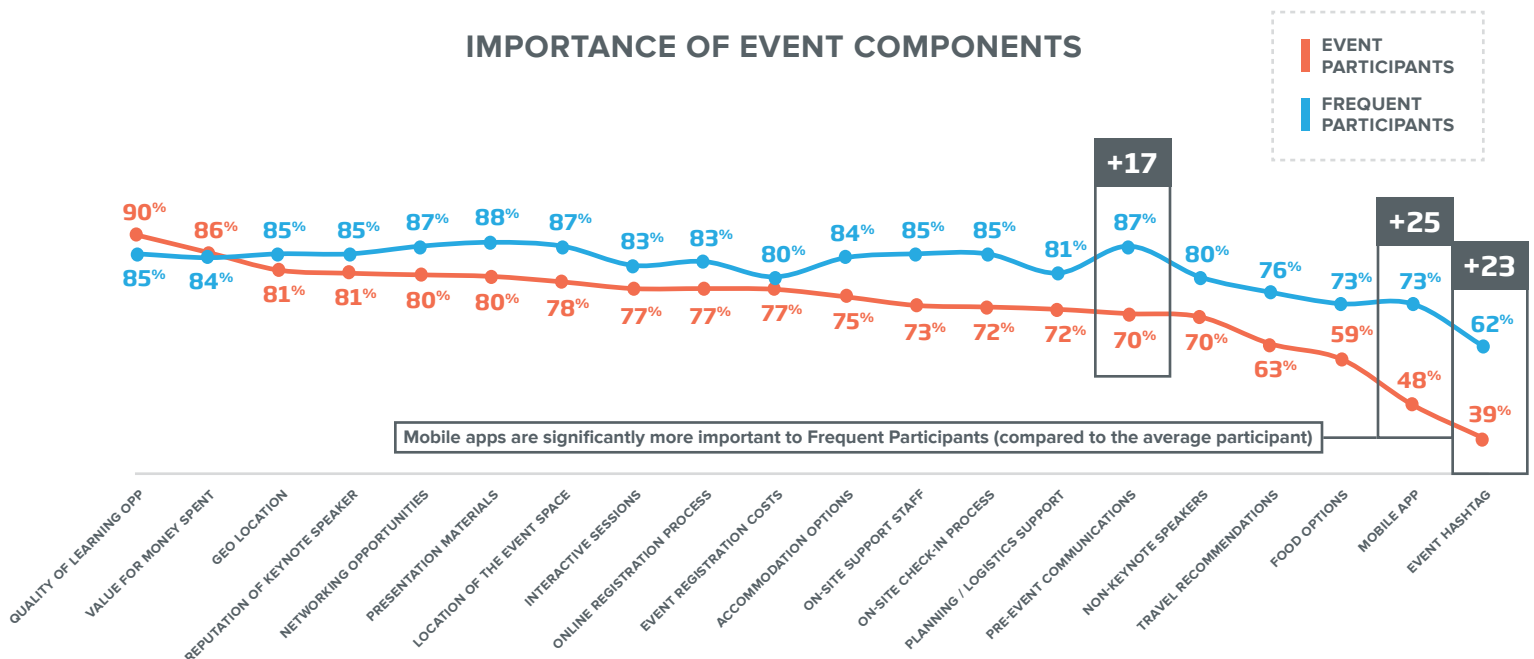
It's all about being a better employee.

Professional development is the key justification for attending events.



Don't forget the fun!

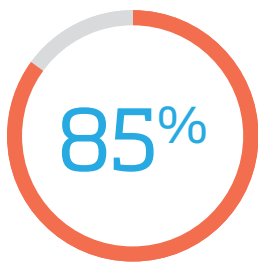
Value, location, and quality of speakers are powerful drivers to attendees.



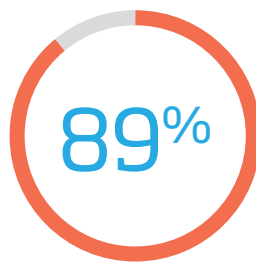
The Value of a Positive Onsite Experience

The onsite experience can be a major stressor for attendees (especially millennials). Understanding the importance of a positive first impression onsite allows you to alleviate any anxiety; this ensures a memorable event experience for attendees.

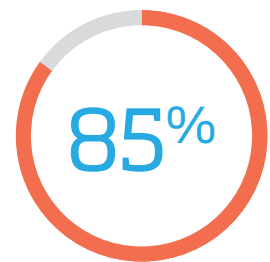
Event attendees want to learn! Professional events are growing in popularity, and quality of learning scores highest.



SAY ATTENDING PROFESSIONAL EVENTS HELPS THEM THINK BIGGER PICTURE ABOUT THEIR JOB



SAY PROFESSIONAL EVENTS ARE A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE



SAY THEY ALWAYS TAKE AWAY AT LEAST ONE NEW LEARNING FROM EACH EVENT THAT MAKES THEIR JOB EASIER

They value the experience. Attendees are finding the events they recently attended to be very valuable professionally.

Those labeling the event as a waste of time, frequently cite two things:

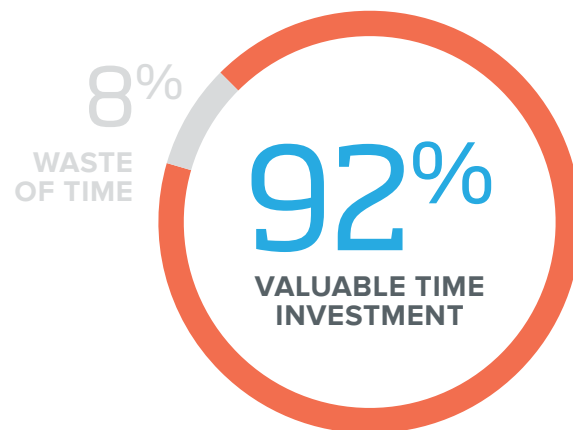
LACK OF NEW INFORMATION / PERSPECTIVE

"It was no new information. They just repeated a bunch of stuff that could have been condensed into 30 minutes."

LACK OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION

"It was not specific to my job. It was more of a who's who."

POLARITY: VALUABLE TIME INVESTMENT VS. WASTE OF TIME

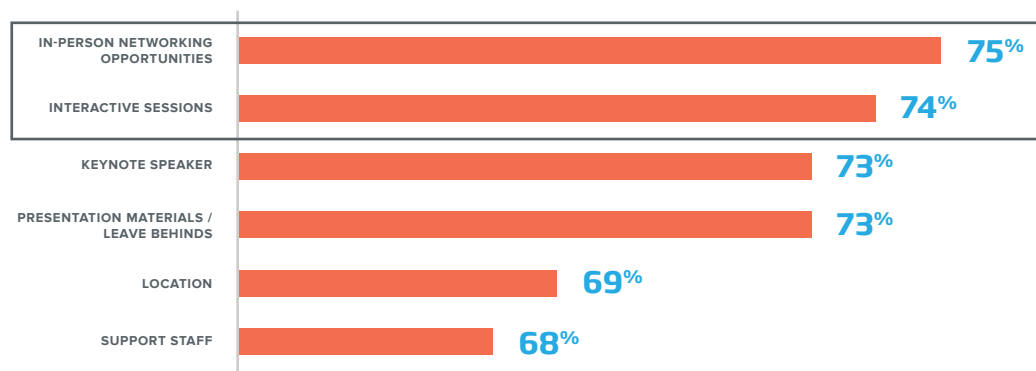


LEARNING + NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES ARE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF DELIVERING VALUE

Content, content, content!

Quality of content that facilitates learning opportunities is key.

EVENT COMPONENTS THAT HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON EVENT EXPERIENCE



OPPORTUNITY:

HOW CAN YOU MOBILE APP HELP YOU LEVERAGE THESE FACTORS TO CREATE A MORE POSITIVE EVENT EXPERIENCE FOR ATTENDEES?

Attendees get stressed!

Stress onsite is still a factor for attendees, with millennials citing this the most.

STRESSFULNESS OF LAST EVENT



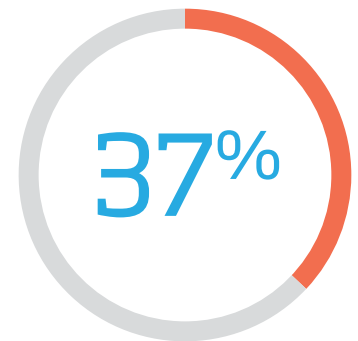
1 in 4

EVENT PARTICIPANTS
LABELED THEIR LAST
EVENT STRESSFUL



1 in 2

FREQUENT PARTICIPANTS
LABELED THEIR LAST
EVENT STRESSFUL



MILLENNIALS
LABELED THEIR LAST
EVENT STRESSFUL

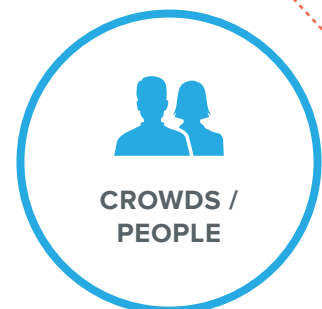
Planners are not the only ones stressed at events. Attendees (millennials especially) find events extremely stressful. Staying organized, the registration process and large crowds are the biggest stress points cited.

"Keeping up with the intense schedule of speakers and presentations."



ORGANIZATION /
SCHEDULES

"So many people there. So crowded!"



CROWDS /
PEOPLE

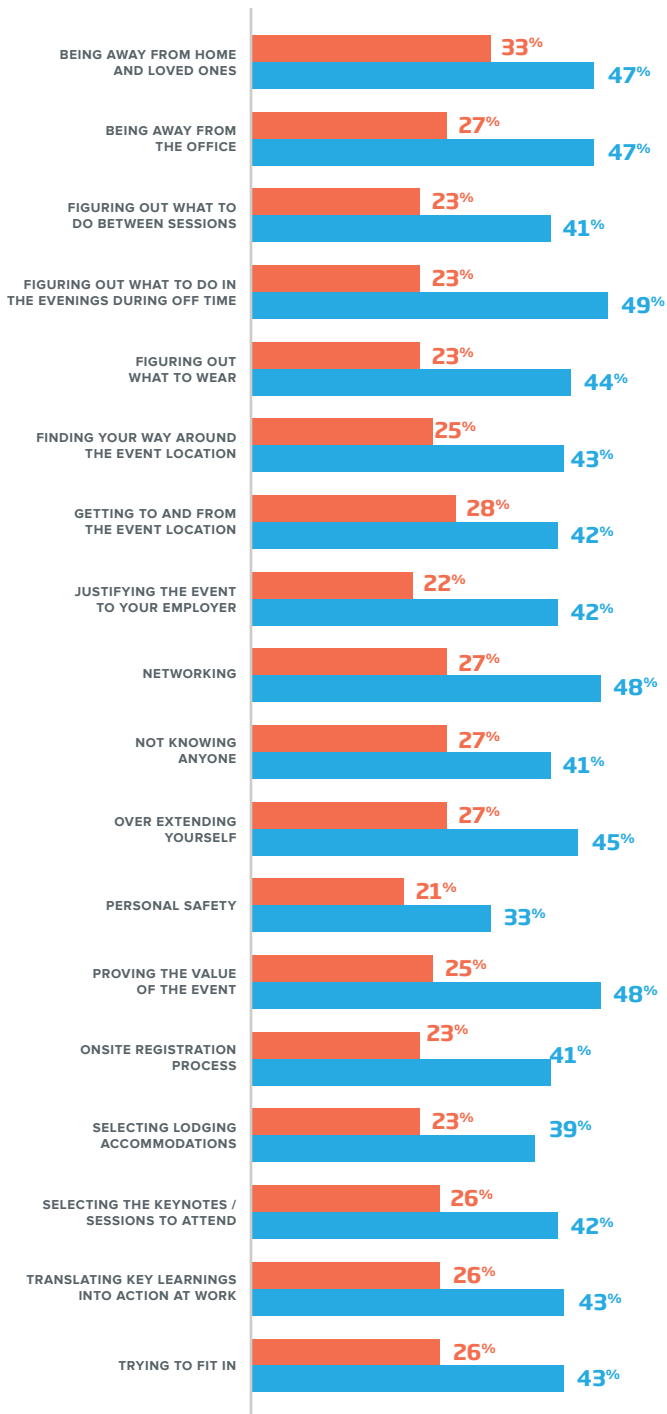


REGISTRATION /
CHECK-IN

"The check in process was very long and unorganized."

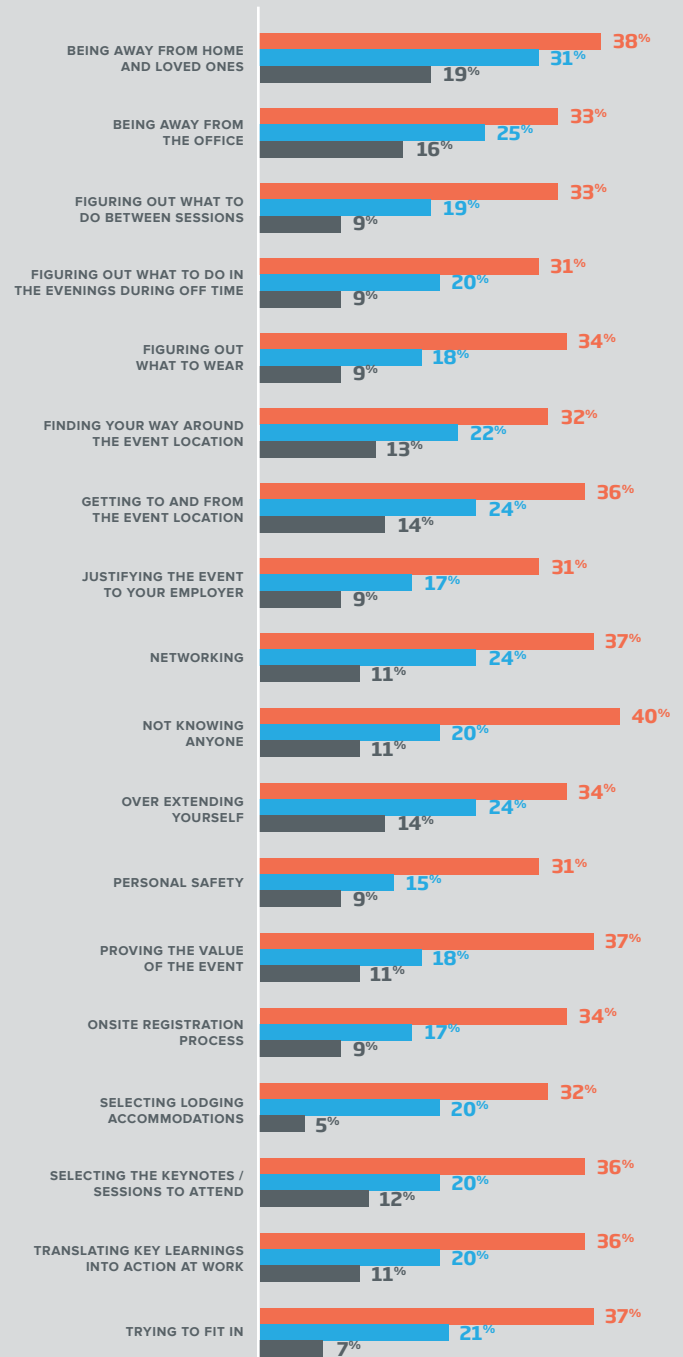
Stress comes in all forms especially at events. From networking to being away from loved ones, attendees can find events mentally exhausting. **Knowing what your attendees find stressful can help you create more successful events.**

STRESSFUL EVENT ACTIVITIES



EVENT PARTICIPANTS
FREQUENT PARTICIPANTS

STRESSFUL EVENT ACTIVITIES BY GENERATION



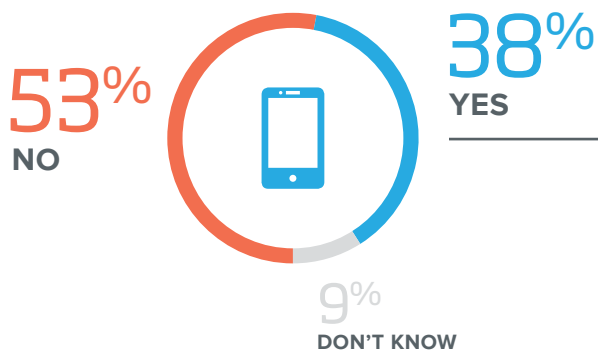
MILLENNIALS
GEN X
BABY BOOMERS

Mobile Matters

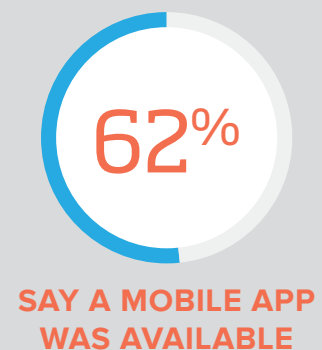
Mobile event apps can be a valuable asset for your attendees and contribute to an overall positive onsite experience.

Mobile is on their minds. Over one-third of event participants indicate that a mobile app was available at the last event they attended.

MOBILE APP OFFERING AT LAST PROFESSIONAL EVENT ATTENDED



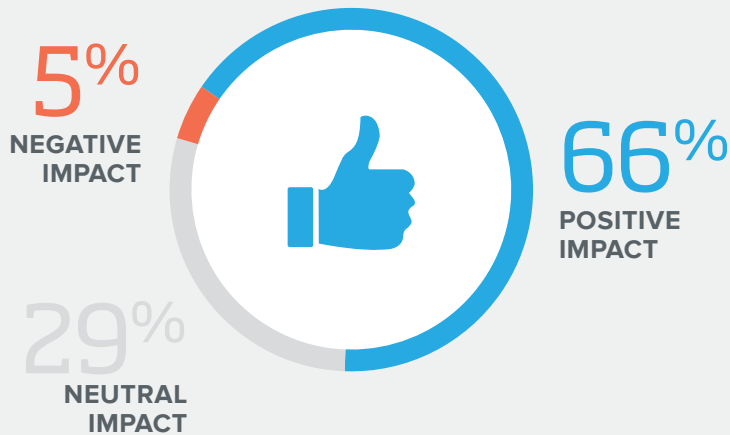
AMONG FREQUENT PARTICIPANTS



Increase impact!

What are the favorites?

Mobile app had a...



... on event experience.

MOBILE EVENT APP – FAVORITE FEATURES (UNAIDED)



SCHEDULE

The ability to see the event schedule, and create a personal schedule of events, is attractive.



EASY USE

From a functional standpoint, ease of use is a notable app quality.



MAP

A floor plan of the conference or event has been cited to be very important.



INFORMATION

The centralization and volume of “updated” information was frequently cited.

Advertise your app before your event!

Your attendees will likely download an app if and when they know it's available.

MOBILE EVENT APP DOWNLOAD HISTORY + RATIONALE

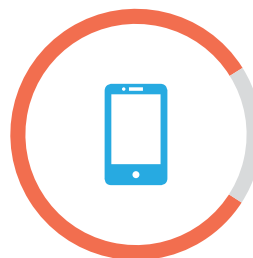
“The ability to see everything that is going on, and get alerts if something changes.”

82%
YES

Downloaded the mobile app

More likely to be entry-mid level experienced millennials

“Easy to access data on the go.”



18%
NO

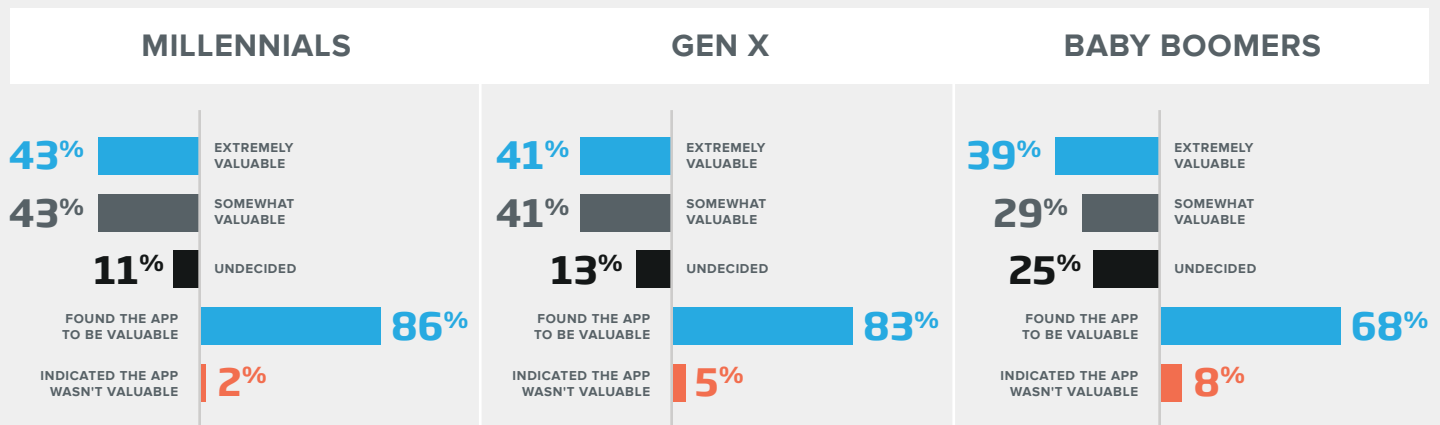
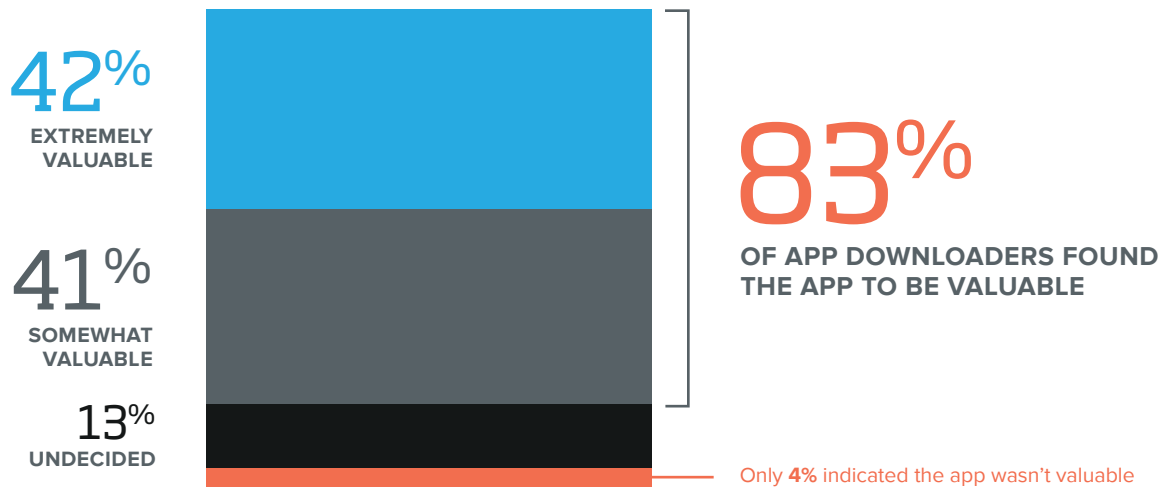
Did not download the mobile app

“I find they do not help me enough to justify downloading them.”

“No need. I can use my eyes and ears to figure out what I need to do!”

Once downloaded, the value of the app skyrockets for attendees.

MOBILE EVENT APP – VALUE

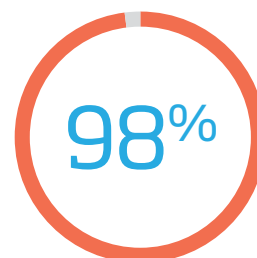


Don't be quick to think that millennials are the only ones glued to their mobile devices. **A sweeping majority of attendees across all generations polled said yes to having a smartphone.**

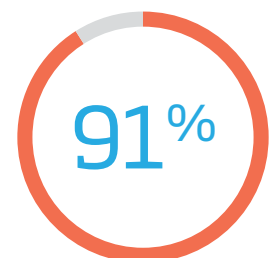
EVENT PARTICIPANTS WITH SMARTPHONES



MILLENNIALS



GEN X



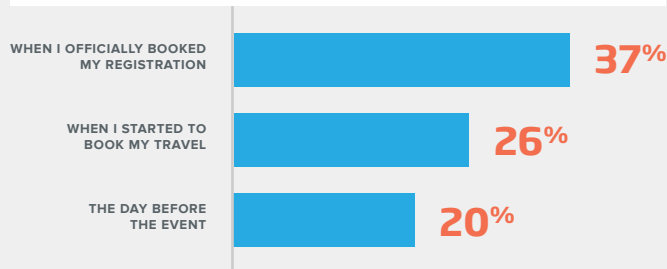
BABY BOOMERS

Get the word out! Most attendees will download an app prior to their events.

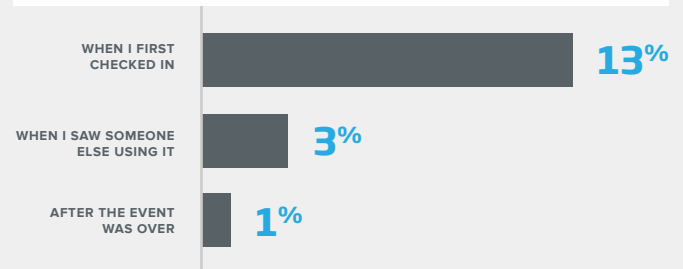
In fact, **37% want to download the app during registration!** If they don't download, they likely were unaware of availability.

MOBILE EVENT APP DOWNLOAD TIMING

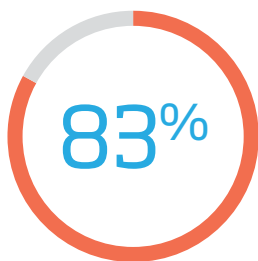
83% – BEFORE THE EVENT



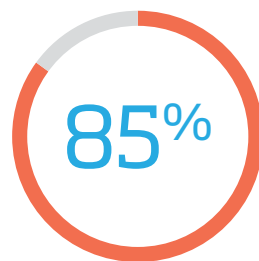
17% – AT (OR AFTER) THE EVENT



DOWNLOAD THE APP BEFORE THE EVENT

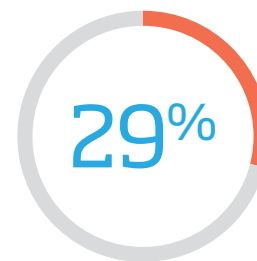


MILLENNIALS



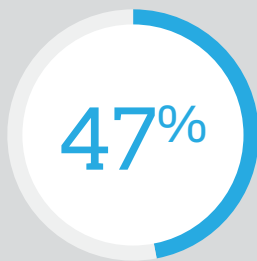
GEN X

DOWNLOAD THE APP AT THE EVENT WHEN THEY FIRST CHECK IN



BABY BOOMERS

WHY NOT SOONER?



I DIDN'T NEED IT UNTIL I WAS ACTUALLY ONSITE AT THE EVENT



I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A MOBILE APP AVAILABLE



I FORGOT THERE WAS A MOBILE APP AVAILABLE



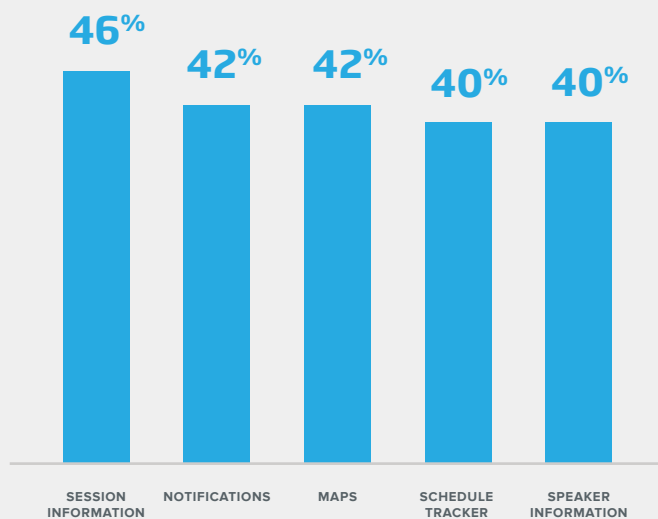
I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH STORAGE SPACE ON MY PHONE

APP AWARENESS IS KEY TO APP ADOPTION. A BEST PRACTICE IS TO START PROMOTING YOUR APP 30 DAYS BEFORE YOUR EVENT.

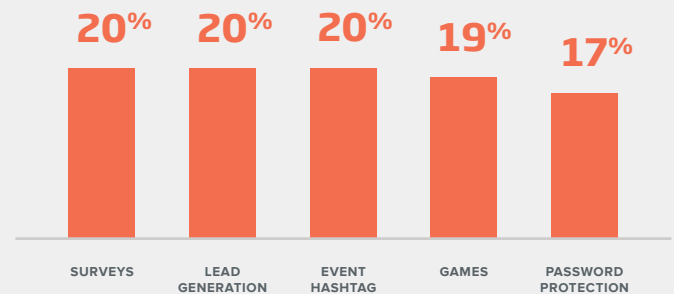
Know what they don't want. Games and surveys lag behind the favorite features.

MOBILE EVENT APP – FAVORITE FEATURES (AIDED)

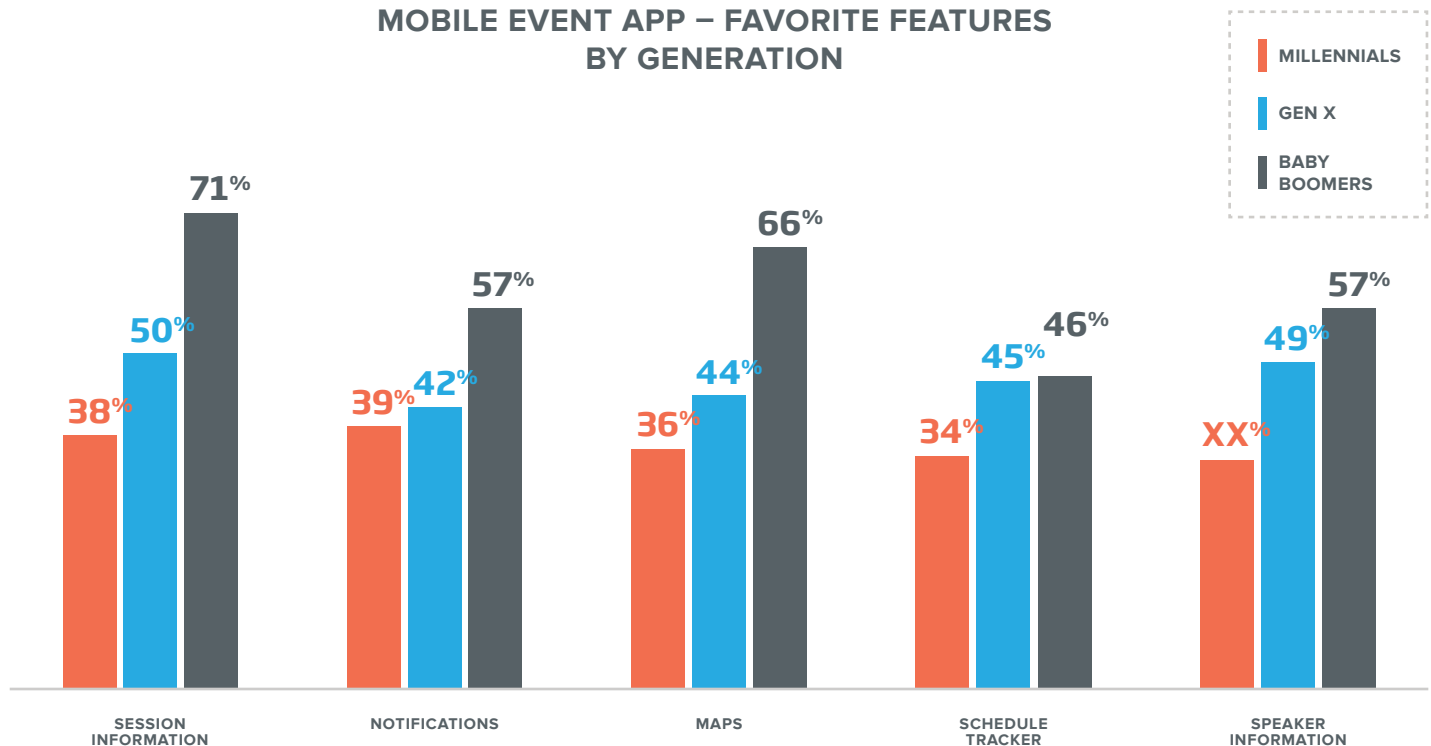
TOP 5 – FAVORITE FEATURES



BOTTOM 5 – LEAST FAVORITE FEATURES



MOBILE EVENT APP – FAVORITE FEATURES BY GENERATION



What's on their wish lists? Here's what attendees want more of in their apps.

MOBILE EVENT APP – WISH LIST

"Maybe some interactive training so that I could remember what I learned?"

More interactivity

"A heck of a lot more interactivity. I think they need to think about my journey as an attendee from start to finish, and think about making it an integral part of my experience. It's a huge and complicated event. A BIG thing I am wishing for is a way to be alerted when events have reached capacity. I would have appreciated not having to deal with wasting my time trying to get to events that aren't letting more people in."

"Some recommendations of future events to attend."

Predictive Recommendations

"Better real time updating of event changes. I found myself at one event that had been cancelled, and I could have attended something else or simply gone to my room to take a nap."

"More information on upcoming seminars and more mobile technology app predictors."

Real-time updates

Conclusion

In an industry where much of the focus is placed on the event planner, this report arms you with greater insight into an audience that drives much of an event's success: the attendees. Event participants are much more complex than given credit for, and only when event professionals understand this audience's interworking can they execute events that resonate. Using these insights, meeting and event professionals can create more engaging events by knowing how to provide greater value through event technology and mobile event apps.

Recommendations

By understanding the mindset of event participants, you can better customize your events for higher engagement and greater event satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THROUGHOUT THE EVENT LIFECYCLE

- Drive awareness of mobile app offerings
 - When aware, event attendees download
 - Emphasize the opportunity to download close to the start date
- Clearly articulate the benefits mobile apps can afford
 - Show how mobile apps can amplify the on-site experience, and mitigate stress
- Continue to innovate (and tell people why!)
 - Think about how mobile apps can facilitate more networking, interactivity and real-time updates



Include professional development or training sessions within your event—quality over quantity!

KEEP THESE TAKEAWAYS IN MIND FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT:

1

Professional development is the primary justification for attending events.

2

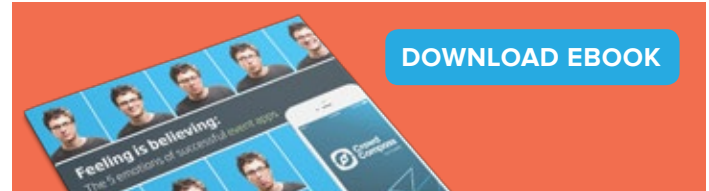
In-person networking opportunities and interactive sessions are the biggest influences on positive onsite experiences.

3

Mobile apps have a positive impact on the event experience.



Create and implement a mobile app for your event as a hub for additional content.



To alleviate attendee stress, make sure to include schedules and maps on the event app.



Provide incentives or app-only content for attendees to increase the app's value.

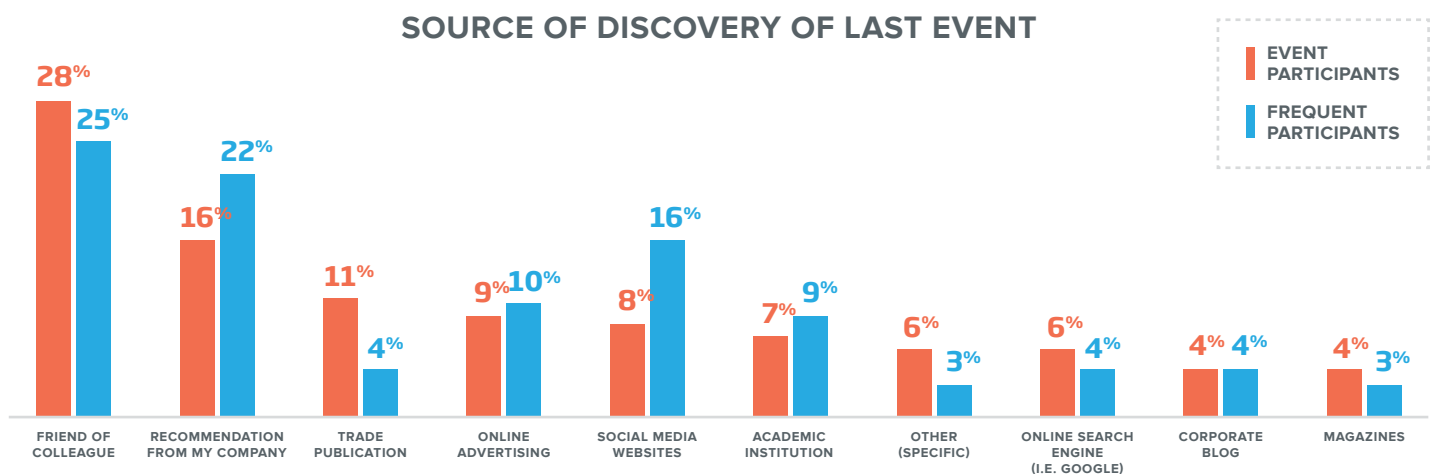


Bring awareness to downloading the event app by including it in your event marketing; make sure you clearly articulate its value.

Appendix

More valuable event data to enhance your knowledge about the attendee experience.

Traditional marketing for the win. Word-of-mouth still proves to be the most effective form of referral marketing for your event.



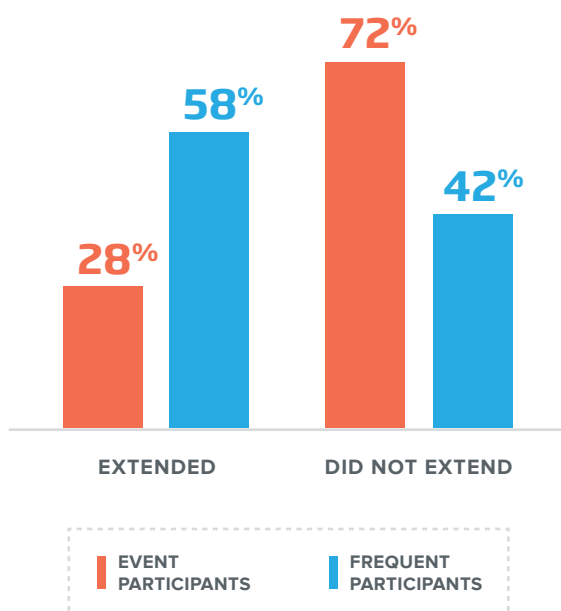
Though obtaining approval may be easy, travel logistics usually fall on the attendee.

COORDINATION OF EVENT TRAVEL LOGISTICS



Frequent participants are more than twice as likely to extend their trip around your event.

TRIP EXTENSION SURROUNDING EVENT



REASONS FOR TRIP EXTENSION

"More time for networking."

"To ensure I had time for me to be there in advance of the conference and time to travel back home after the conference."

"Since it was so far to travel, I wanted to get as much from the travel time as possible."

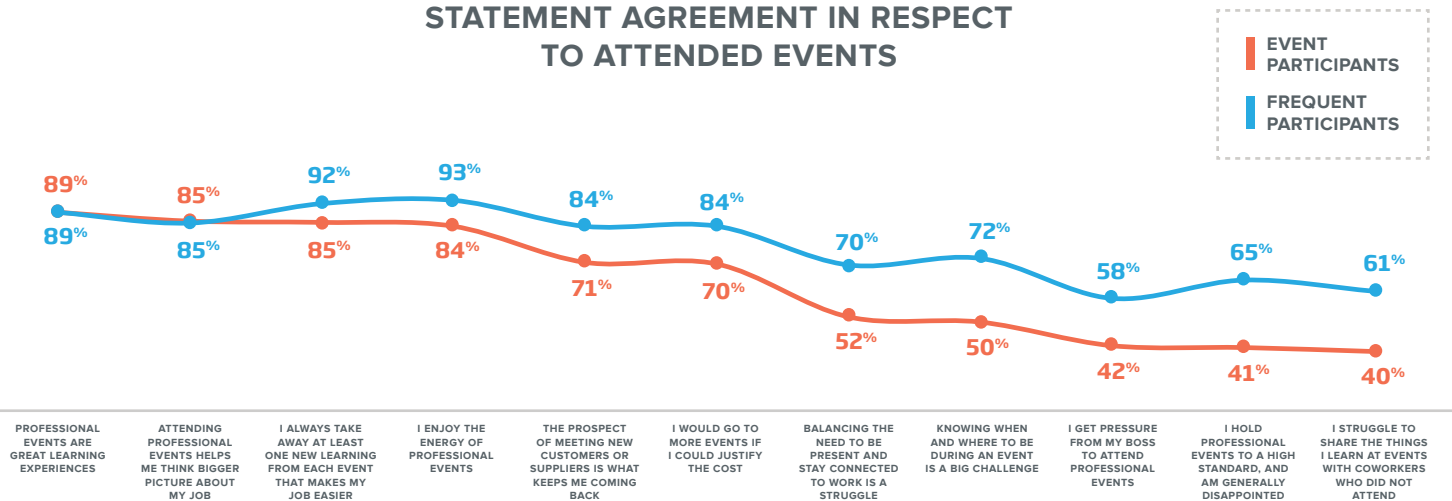
"Can participate in breakfasts, dinners, hospitality suites, etc."

"It was in San Diego, CA. I've always wanted to visit there and explore the beach and the sights."

Frequent participants enjoy the energy of the events and take away at least one new learning that makes their job easier.

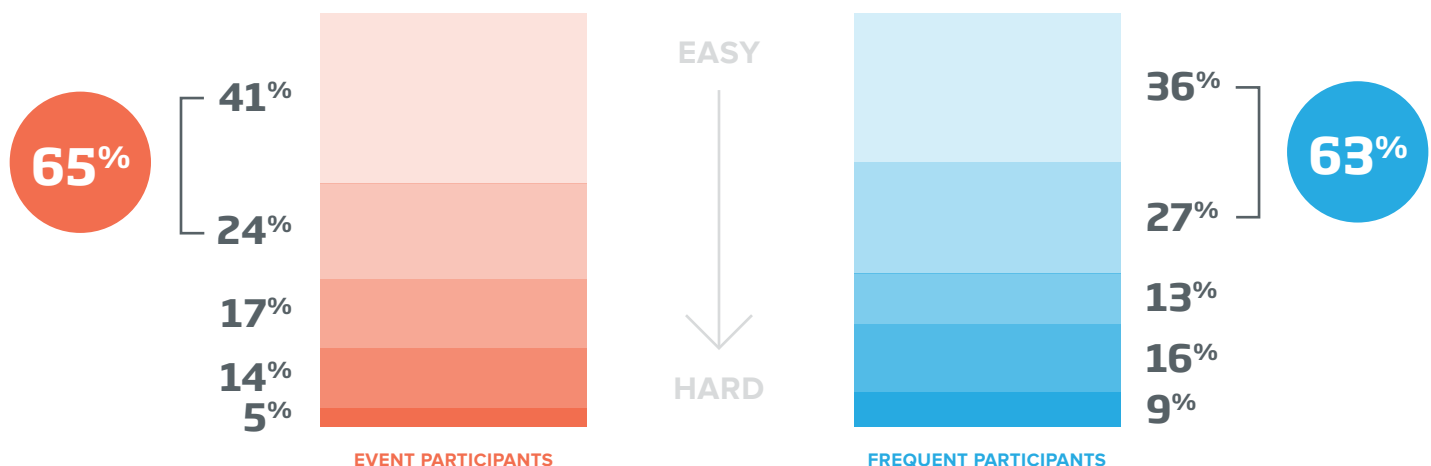
Event participants find that professional events are great learning experiences and help them think “big picture” at their job.

STATEMENT AGREEMENT IN RESPECT TO ATTENDED EVENTS



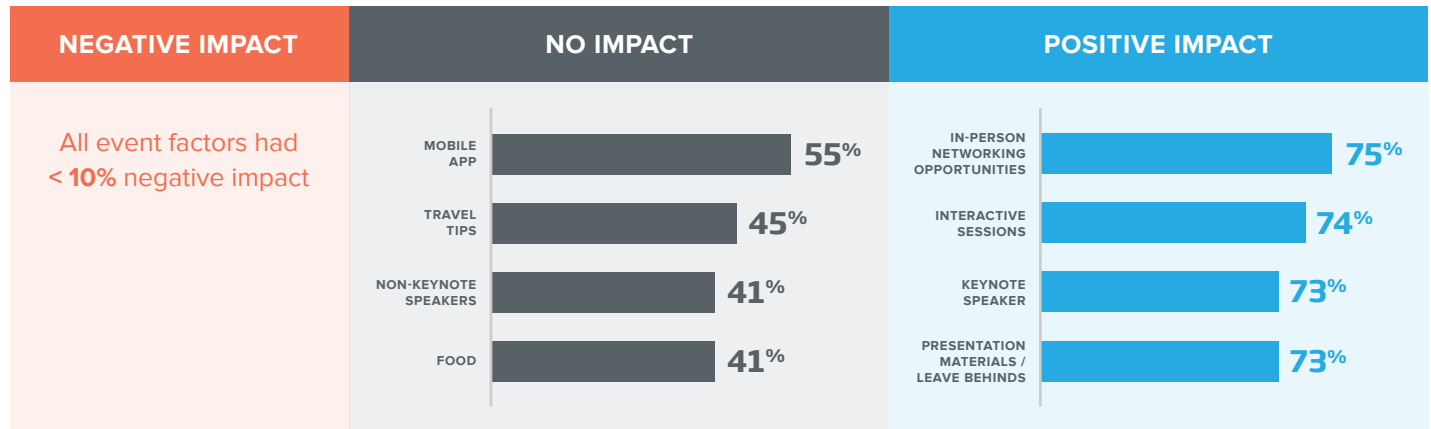
Stamp of approval. Both event and frequent participants found it generally easy to obtain employer approval to attend an event.

EASE OF EMPLOYER APPROVAL TO ATTEND EVENT



Attendees found that networking opportunities and interactive sessions had the biggest positive impact, while the event app had no impact on experience.

IMPACT VARIOUS FACTORS HAVE ON EVENT EXPERIENCE



Social media channels like Facebook prove to be an effective way to connect with Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials while platforms like Instagram appeal best to the younger generation.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CURRENTLY USED

