



In January 2014, leaders from across the meetings and events industry gathered at Convening Leaders in Boston for cutting-edge education, networking opportunities and to learn about the latest innovative solutions. The hybrid meeting included a traditional face-to-face convention and a virtual component, both of which attracted record attendance. In fact, 877 people took advantage of the virtual component, an increase of 40 percent over 2013, adding to the 4,072 people who came in person. According to PCMA, 34 percent of the hybrid attendees spent at least 10 hours at the event.

The event also featured the first-ever Mobile App Hackathon, which put a significant spotlight on mobile event technology. Participants were challenged to create innovative, game-changing mobile technology to address communications and connectivity challenges at meetings and conferences. The Hackathon served as a blueprint for event planners to incorporate similar events within their own conferences and organizations.

Sector: Meetings and Events Devices: iPhone, iPad, Android, Mobile Web

Highlights



More than 4,000 attendees downloaded the event app, resulting in a 102% adoption rate by both single device and multi-device owners



App allowed PCMA to reduce printed 65-page event guide to pocket-size program



PCMA collected more than 9,250 survey responses through the app



There were more than 2.2 million impressions within the app

An Emphasis on Technology

The success of the virtual component and the hackathon demonstrate PCMA's understanding of the value of technology for the industry and for connecting and engaging its members. At Convening Leaders 2013, the organization introduced a mobile application designed to provide attendees with all the information they would need at their fingertips. To ease the transition to mobile for its attendees, PCMA also printed full-size, 65-page program guides. The app was supposed to provide attendees with any changes and activities that couldn't make it into the printed guide. Unfortunately, the app underperformed, and based on its many technical challenges and how it looked, the organization decided to pursue a new development partner for Convening Leaders 2014.

After a thorough RFP process, PCMA partnered with QuickMobile.



Kelly Peacy

Senior Vice President, Education and Meetings,
PCMA

“Based on QuickMobile’s multi-event platform, the extent of its offering, and its reputation in the industry, it was easily the best choice for PCMA,” said Kelly Peacy, Manager, Digital Marketing & Communications, PCMA. “The biggest thing that we wanted from QuickMobile was for the app to look good, function well and integrate with our other systems. We gave QuickMobile a tight timeline, and they delivered.”

Peacy credited a smooth development process to QuickMobile developing a working plan that included constant communication and quick responses to any questions or issues.

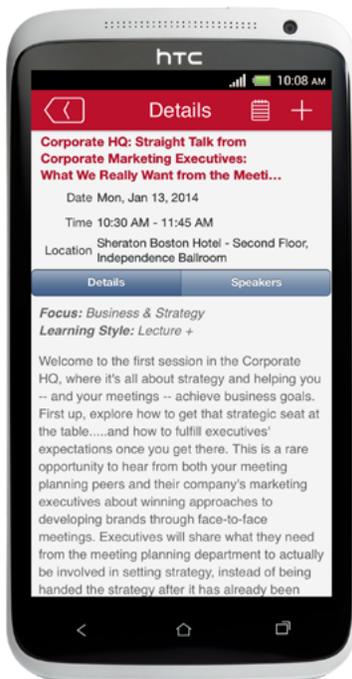
Doing Event App Marketing Right

QuickMobile and PCMA rolled out the app slowly once it was deployed to the app stores, and then put on a full marketing push as the event date got closer.

“For Convening Leaders, we wanted to focus on technology and help our members get comfortable with the types of technology we plan to use going forward,” said Peacy. “This also means a gradual move toward paperless events, and while we did not go completely paperless this year, we only produced a small pocket-sized printed program.”

To get people to download the app, PCMA sent emails, promoted the link on social media, and included it on the front of its website; literally leading with the app in every communication that was sent to members and prospective attendees. PCMA also did one final push the Sunday of the conference, resulting in more than 2,200 downloads. In the end, the app was downloaded 4,073 times, achieving a 102% adoption rate (including downloads on multiple devices owned by an attendee).

Mobile Features Increase Engagement



For Convening Leaders attendees, the app provided numerous benefits, including the ability to create their own schedules, set up meetings without leaving the app, network with peers, and share insights and photos using integrated social media tools.

PCMA updated information regularly through QuickMobile's content management system, and also took advantage of the integrated survey and polling features. Many presenters invited questions from the audience through the app, while PCMA polled the audience to collect real-time feedback on a variety of topics.

“Our attendees appreciated the ability to interact directly with presenters, and to provide their feedback directly through the app, rather than waiting for PCMA to send them a link after the event,” stated Peacy. “In 2013, we did not have the ability to collect surveys through our app. In 2014, we collected more than 9,250 survey responses. That feedback is extremely valuable for our presenters and for our planners as we prepare for future events.”

Not Going Back

For the PCMA audience, the comprehensive focus on technology across the entire conference was a significant move. The app was very well received as page impressions surpassed 2.2 million.

“Putting more emphasis on the mobile app and de-emphasizing paper was a new thing for our attendees, but the satisfaction and usage rates were very high,” added Peacy. “Overall, the app was a success, and given the high adoption and usage, we’re not going back.”

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