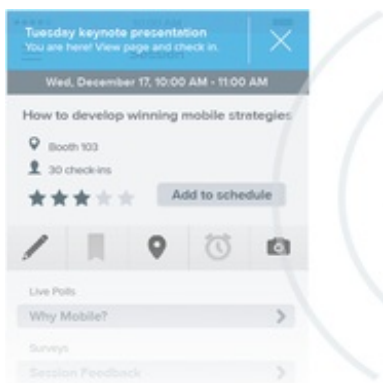


MOBILE

Starwood app minimizes hassle of event planning via partnership

June 3, 2015



CrowdCompass app

By JOE MCCARTHY

Starwood Hotels and Resorts is equipping event planners with a new mobile application to streamline and broaden decision-making capabilities.

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Luxury Daily

The "CrowdCompass" app, designed by event management platforms Cvent and PSAV, will be available for event planners around the world, reflecting the transnational nature of business. Events constitute a good portion of revenue for luxury hotel brands and reveal their properties to swaths of consumers who may end up staying as a guest in the future.

"The motivation behind the app aligns with a key goal of ours to incorporate technology to make our customers' lives easier," said Jonathan Kaplan, director of sales, new business and digital programming at **Starwood**, New York.

"This is particularly relevant as technology continues to become that much more pervasive in how our customers operate, including their on-site experience," he said. "So, we're taking the opportunity to better understand those needs and identify ways to offer even greater value."

"Ultimately, with any of our solutions and services, we want to free up our customers to focus on what matters most – their event and their attendees. Event planning and business travel are important to us – B2B drives 70 percent of Starwood’s room revenue and group business accounts for approximately one-third of that business."

Sifting the crowd.

CrowdCompass targets event planners of all backgrounds who are looking to book meetings and events at Starwood properties.

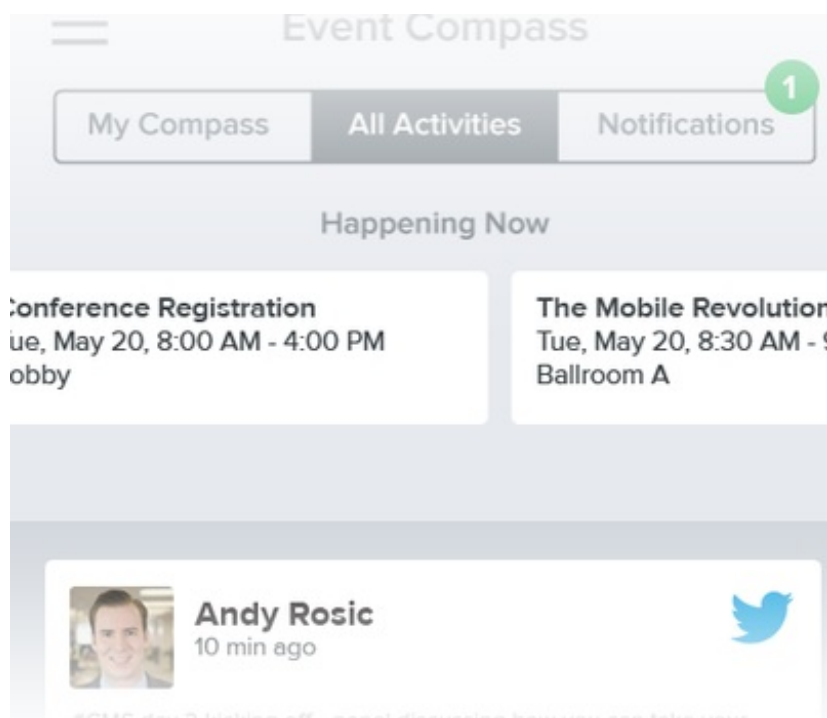
The brand previously had an event planning app designed for SPG Pro members.

Starwood had rolled out a new version of its Starwood Preferred Guest loyalty program, SPG Pro, to cater to business professionals.

This offer allows meeting and travel professionals—those handling the logistics of events—to gain elite status, upgrades and SPG points for business-to-business events booked at portfolio properties. Essentially, Starwood is allowing business professionals to reap personal benefits for what they do at work ([see story](#)).

CrowdCompass is independent from SPG and can therefore attract a broader audience, potentially generating SPG sign-ups in the process when benefits are learned.

The app's elasticity allows for broad customization, allowing event planners to access as little or as much information as they want.



CrowdCompass app

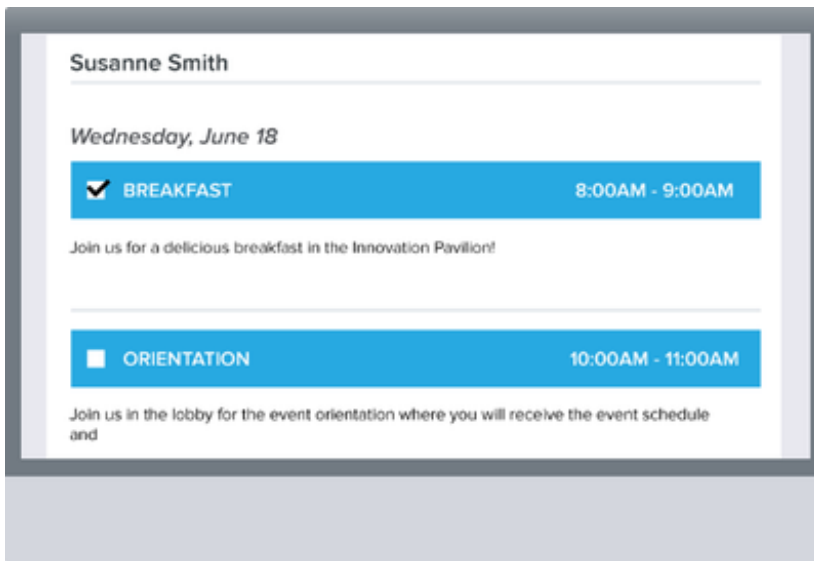
For instance, users will be able to "create personalized schedules, share contact information with other attendees, connect with others via social media and receive push message communications instantly from onsite meeting planners."

As the event transpires, those in charge can coordinate with one another and implement

changes cohesively.

During the event, attendees can use the app, eliminating the need for paper guides and allowing consumers to explore more aspects of the event.

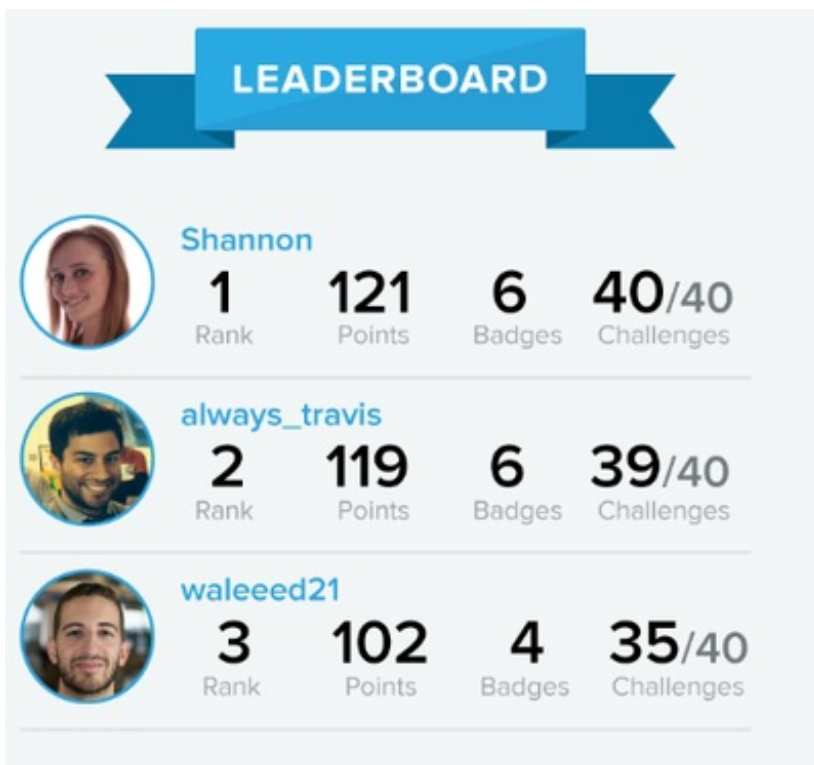
Real-time content such as event agendas, speaker bios, presentations and property information will also be available through the app.



CrowdCompass app

The app also synchronizes with iBeacons. As attendees move through the event, iBeacons can trigger additional content.

Interactive games can be hosted on the app for attendees that then link up to social media.



CrowdCompass app

Other features include polling, push-messaging, lead retrieval and sponsorship tools.

Users are also ensured of privacy and security. A user agreement must be signed prior to use and the app is password-protected.

All in

Other brands have upped their event planning game recently.

For instance, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is enhancing its event services with a mobile application designed to assist meeting and event planners with the details involved with scheduling a function at a property.

The app, ((Chime)), gives meeting planners a way to communicate with the Ritz-Carlton while organizing the fine details such as food and beverage choices, audio visual requests, in-room temperature and more. The ease of throwing an event through this app will likely entice more companies to hold conferences and meetings at Ritz-Carlton properties ([see story](#)).

Sometimes individual properties improve event planning toolkits so that content fully reflects what to expect.

Four Seasons Hotel Sydney is launching an independent Web site to facilitates event planners.

The Web site is joined by a competition that encourages event planners to interact with the hotel and Web site. Having this separate site for events will help organize and explain events at the hotel and will likely elevate Four Seasons Sydney standing among event planners ([see story](#)).

"The CrowdCompass Attendee app helps meeting planners communicate and share documents so they can deliver a more personalized, intuitive and real-time experience to each attendee," Mr. Kaplan said.

"Planners will be able to save time and costs on printed collateral, generate revenue from sponsors and ensure every attendee has current event details at all times," he said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/o1iaTJ6UcC0>

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