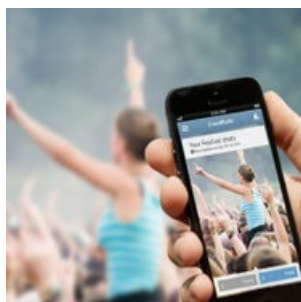


MOBILE

Advertisers cheer as live event apps take center stage

March 29, 2016



Live-event apps are implementing several key mobile trends

By **Alex Samuely**

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

As adoption grows for live event applications, offerings are evolving to please both users and media buyers, with 2016 set to bring forth opportunities for tailored ads, live chat capabilities and local targeted messages within these platforms.

The days of paper agendas and schedules are long gone, paving the way for their new replacements: Mobile apps dedicated to specific conferences, festivals, sporting events and concerts that contain real-time updates and a plethora of relevant information for event-goers. As the year progresses, marketers will delve deeper into their usage of mobile for live event branding, leveraging options for in-app native advertising as well as newer digital trends, such as live streaming.

"In 2016, we'll see a higher investment in mobile apps and technology that extend the benefits of personalization and native advertising to live events," said Adam Grow, general manager and senior vice president of Rakuten Display at **Rakuten Marketing**. "Increasingly, event organizers and groups are creating their own apps for events whether it's a trade show or a sports team and encourage users to push live updates via social channels.

"These apps have the possibility of delivering tailored ads to a very specific audience, as strategies like hyper-local targeting and real-time, in-app advertising engage the most interested consumers within an already relevant mass audience including those who never walk by a booth or banner, and those live-streaming the event from home," he said.

"For marketers investing in live events through existing social platforms, Snapchat will be an important tool with its new customizable, geo-targeted filters."

Incorporating new trends

Most mobile-savvy users have encountered live event apps before. Typically, these types of apps are havens for up-to-date schedules, information on nearby happenings and details on speakers or performers.

While this information will continue being front-and-center, many marketers are thinking up new ways to drive app downloads for their major events and also provide enticing advertising opportunities for brands.

Consumers can expect to see ride-sharing options abound within these apps, especially as Uber continues adding

additional cross-partnerships to its belt. For example, consumers attending a major concert would likely find value in having the ability to request a Lyft or Uber vehicle to bring them to the venue and back.

While event-ticketing platform StubHub already offers this capability, standalone event apps may want to join the fray as well.

Additionally, live streaming integration will help companies reach more mobile users even individuals not present at certain events.

"We're seeing traditional geographic event barriers being crossed, as live streaming is opening content to much larger audiences," Mr. Grow said. "Marketers are leveraging this trend to reach larger targeted audiences, and big social media platforms like Facebook and Snapchat now offer streaming apps.

"A great example of this evolving trend is Turner Sports' recent deal to sell ad space within the live stories' they post on Snapchat during professional sports events. The collaboration is already attracting advertisers, like Allstate, that want to reach the young audience actively using Snapchat during March Madness."

Therefore, brands wanting to advertise in an event app have more incentive to do so, as their content will reach consumers on-premises as well as off.



Coachella is experimenting with virtual reality on mobile this year

Virtual reality is another trend likely to appeal to the highly-desirable millennial demographic.

California music festival Coachella is supporting its cutting-edge image with a virtual reality app boasting a comprehensive content strategy before, during and after the event ([see story](#)).

However, consumers of all ages will expect marketers to go beyond stationary information and features to include contextual and memorable micro moments in their apps.

"The on-demand' economy has changed our expectations on how and when we get the things we want," said Ryan Costello, CEO of [Event Farm](#). "I expect more mobile applications to provide on-demand experiences for event attendees.

"Understanding who is at your event and what they value in real time is [also] critically important. Google calls this micro moments.' As mobile technology continues to evolve, I expect micro moment marketing strategies at live events to be a must-have."

Per Google, marketers have an opportunity to provide significant value to consumers by matching marketing messages with the signals of intent and context that mobile provides ([see story](#)).

Seamless user experiences

Part of the reason for consumers' willingness to engage with live-event apps is their increasing comfort with experiences on small-screen formats. However, companies must still ensure that their offerings are as optimized as possible for short-term and long-term in-app sessions.

If event-goers download a new app and find the interface clunky, or difficult to use, they will not hesitate to delete it from their smartphones.

Apps that offer standard key information such as real-time agendas coupled with new features and technologies will be the ones to stand out.

According to Rakuten Marketing's Mr. Grow, any instant communication platform including WhatsApp or Viber or app that provides for easy sharing experiences via video formats will experience substantial growth in 2016.



Consumers appreciate having easily accessible venue maps and updated schedules during events

These new avenues will also make it possible for advertisers to more programmatically purchase ad space in these targeted channels.

"Mobile is becoming an expected complementary experience to live events," Event Farm's Mr. Costello said. "Event apps that list the schedule of events and basic event info (who, what, where, when) were the starting point and they have become the baseline standard.

"But in 2016, these applications are evolving from simple information sources to powerful communication tools and content distribution channels," he said. "Attendees want to be able to communicate with each other and event organizers need to be able communicate with attendees and certainly not by email.

"Chat functionality in all flavors is the dominate theme here. On the content side, we are a mobile-obsessed society. We want everything at our fingertips. So mobile apps that allow us to capture and consume relevant content is expected. The best events are realizing that these tools can build incredibly authentic and valuable relationships with consumers in an entirely new way."

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.