25 Best Meeting & Convention Apps

Strategic Event Design
the intelligent choice

Convention planning? There's an app for that.

How many times have you heard "there's an app for that"? When it comes to event planning, apps are a dime a dozen. And while the landscape is continuously evolving and improving, the field is admittedly a bit flooded. Some apps are great, some are lacking. The problem is, it takes time to figure out which apps work for you.

Our goal here is to help quickly guide you to the apps that have been proven in the field. By going with tried and true apps from an experienced event planning team, you should be able to shorten the app vetting process and hit the ground running with your new software.

Our guide is broken up into six sections:

Video Streaming | Organization | Networking | Time Management | Event Execution | Live User Engagement

Need a little help? Strategic Event Design specializes in helping you achieve the goal of your event, whether that is closing a sale or simply having a little fun. We work with you and your staff to customize an event (using our favorite apps) that helps achieve your goal. Find out more at StrategicEventDesign.com.

Video Streaming

Apps for streaming, uploading and sharing video are huge for events right now. The web is getting faster and faster, which makes video a more viable possibility than ever before. Event planners have to get creative in how they use this channel of communication.
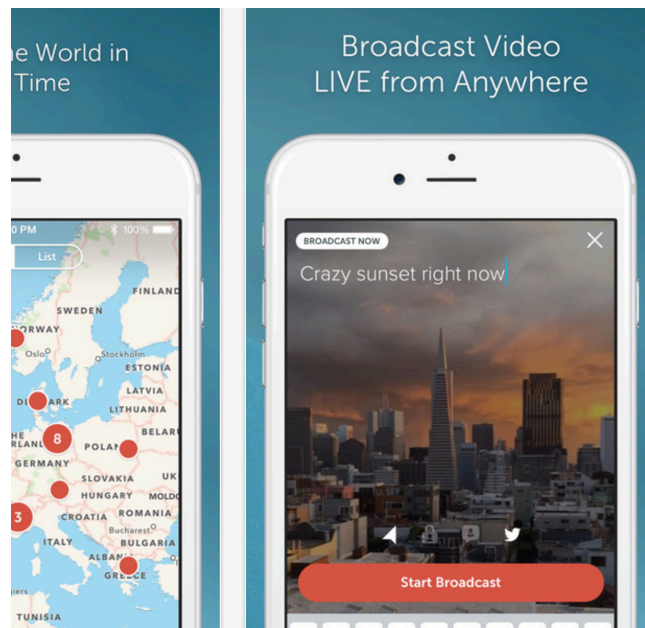
1. Facebook Live

www.facebooklive.com

In Spring of 2016, Facebook released Facebook Live, a live streaming service that allows users to live stream events from their personal account or event page. After the live event is over, the recorded video can then be saved and shared as usual. Users can interact via comments, likes and emotional reactions, resulting in very high engagement because people are so active on Facebook during the course of the day. Most users are familiar with Facebook and already have the app on their phone.

2. Periscope

www.periscope.tv

Periscope is owned by Twitter and thus, is deeply integrated into the famous 140-character network. Noted as the easiest live stream program, a user simply logs in, sets a phone on a tripod or sturdy shelf and hits a button to go live. Videos can then be replayed or embedded onto a website. Currently, Periscope is partnering with GoPro to enable GoPro camera streaming capabilities, which will be great for sports and other active events.

3. UStream

www.ustream.tv

UStream is live streaming platform that starts at $99. It has more capabilities than Facebook Live and Periscope as you are able to brand video content and use multiple cameras. It is easy for the user as they simply enter a link into their browser. This is where UStream departs from competitor LiveStream as you need to log in to view a stream with that platform. UStream does offer a free trial.

Organization

There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to pulling off an incredible event. The following apps are great for helping you stay organized through the thick and thin of the different planning and execution stages.

4. Evernote

www.evernote.com

Evernote is an app that will keep you organized. You can make to-do lists, organize projects and share them with your team selectively. Evernote has a wonderful search feature that can find even hand written words scribbled on notecards. Which bring us to our next app…

5. Evernote Scannable

www.evernote.com

Evernote Scannable makes it easy to say goodbye to your clunky scanner/printer. Simply snap a pic on your phone or tablet and it is saved as a jpg or pdf. Keep your receipts for each task and job. Simply add it to your task in Evernote. Both Evernote and Evernote Scannable are free with paid options.

6. Asana

www.asana.com

Asana takes task management to the next level, while staying in your budget (they have a robust free option). Excellent for teams to use, Asana easy and intuitive. You can create tasks, deadlines, share, delegate and attach just about anything. This is the app that can get a team with many responsibilities organized fast.
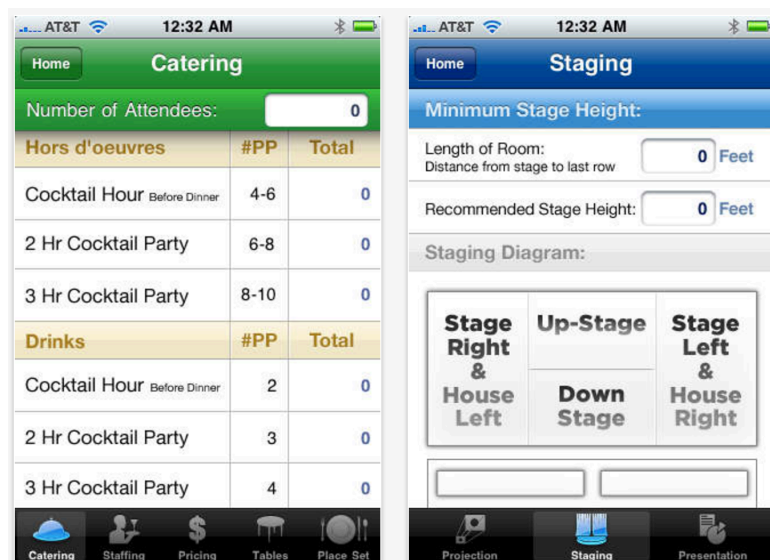
7. Slack

www.slack.com

Do you tend to lose emails in the mix? Slack is a very popular communication tool for online team collaboration. There are a number of settings and options. Messages can be public, shared with a few or shared between two people in a direct message. Slack can be integrated into other office and planning tools and could be very helpful when used with an event planner program or project management software. There is a free version and paid subscriptions available.

8. SupperPlanner

itunes.apple.com

SupperPlanner is a business app specifically designed for event planners. The beauty of the app is in the calculator resources. Do you need to know how much alcohol for 500 people for 5 hours? This app will tell you. It will also tell you how big your dance floor should be and a number of other very useful things. It is an event encyclopedia in the palm of your hand.

9. Google Drive

www.google.com/drive

Hopefully Google Drive isn't new to anyone, however, this app is worth a mention. It remains one of the easiest ways to share/store spreadsheets and collaborative information with other people. Share photos, menus, pricing spreadsheets, and comments between team members. Plus, it provides a ton of free storage.
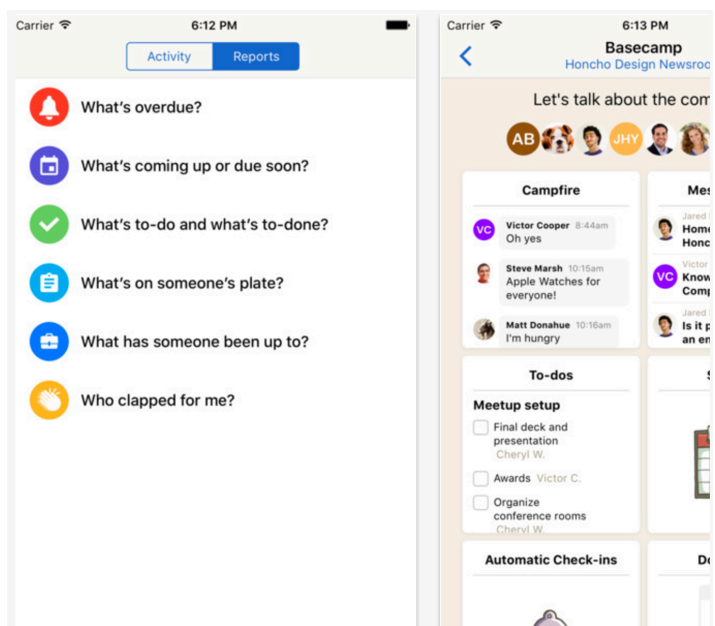
10. Smartsheet

www.smartsheet.com

If you love spreadsheets when it comes to event planning, Smartsheet might be for you. Commonly described as "excel on steroids" Smartsheet offers many features that excel simply doesn't. There are live collaboration capabilities and communication tools to help your planning team keep things straight.

11. Basecamp

www.basecamp.com

Basecamp is a project management tool for small to medium size teams. There are communication features, document sharing and archiving. We find it very easy to learn and use. Task management and group calendars keep collaborators notified and up-to-date. The starting price is $29.99 per month/per user.

Networking

One of the primary reasons attendees go to conventions, meetings and exhibitions is for networking. The easier you can make this task for them, the more they will love your event and keep coming back – and tell their friends.
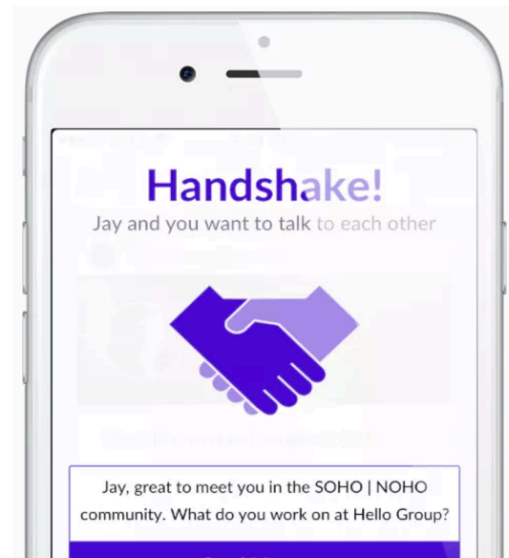
12. Rapportive

www.rapportive.com

Rapportive is a Gmail extension for social media research. Social media websites like LinkedIn load information while Rapportive displays a picture right into your inbox. Search for speakers, colleagues, employees and more. Find out if they are in the area and arrange to meet up. Also see which contacts you may have in common. The extension is free for Firefox and Chrome browsers.

13. Grip

www.grip.events

Grip, formerly known as Networkr, is a boon for weary networkers everywhere. Grip is a location-based service that loads LinkedIn profiles into a easy-to-use Tinder like swipe interface. Who has the time and energy to work a room figuring out who has similar interests or business objectives? With Grip, attendees can spend that time interacting with the right person instead of finding them.

Time Management

Time isn't always on our side when it comes to event management. During the early phases it may feel that there is plenty of it, but it inevitably runs short in the days, hours and minutes leading up to your big event. Use these apps to save precious time planning.

14. Hootsuite

www.hootsuite.com

Hootsuite lets you send messages to multiple social media networks at one time. If you've tried it the other way around – especially when you have many messages to send – you'll know this is a huge time saver. At 10

million users, this is one of the most popular social media management programs around. Hootsuite also has the ability to schedule messages on a handy calendar (even in bulk from a .csv file). Free programs and paid subscriptions are available.
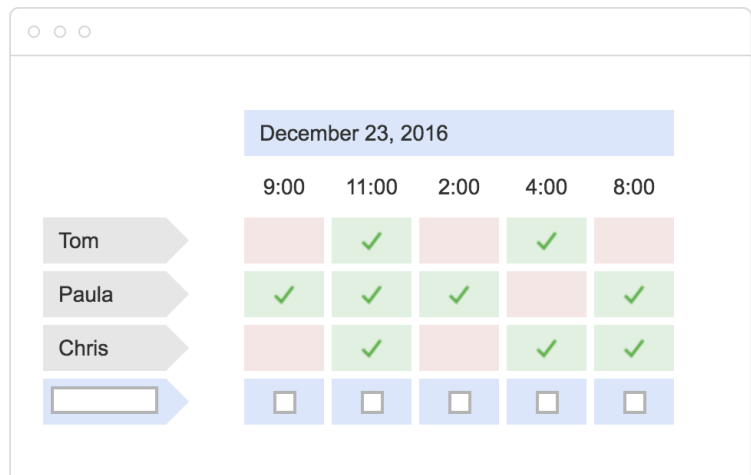
15. Buffer

www.buffer.com

Buffer is clean, easy and simple to use. There are less features than its competitor Hootsuite, but it still posts to major social media networks and has recently added a tool that works with posting to Instagram. There is a tool to overlay text/quotes onto images to either share or download. Free plans are available as are paid subscriptions.

16. Doodle

www.doodle.com

Doodle is an app for scheduling meetings. Doodle was Voted "#1 Productivity App" by *PC Mag* for 2016. If you are having a hard time scheduling with a client, a group of clients or even your team, you might want

to try Doodle. Users tout Doodle as being easy and simple to use. The basic level of Doodle is free and business plans start at $39.99/year.

Event Execution

You can only throw another human at a problem for so long. At some point, you have to get the right technology to help you keep track of things like tickets, registration, attendees, revenue and more. The right app can make all the difference.

17. Bizzabo

www.bizzabo.com

If your event requires registration or ticketing, Bizzabo is a great option. It allows you to create an event, add in ticket types, build an event website and send out invitations all on one, easy-to-use application. It also integrates with social media for promotion purposes, helps manage sponsors, attendee surveys and feedback. At this time, Bizzabo doesn't offer auction or seating features but is working on adding these items.

18. Boomset

www.boomset.com

Meant for trade shows, expos, conventions and conferences, this innovative on-site technology solution provides tools to help event organizers with productivity and efficiency. Fromevent registration to event lifecycle, you can do things like create guest lists by uploading contacts from Excel, Eventbrite, Meetup, Facebook and others. Users can print name tags as guests check in. Boomset is also good for lead retrieval. Get a custom price quote on their website.

19. Eventbrite

www.eventbrite.ca

Eventbrite is great for event registration, especially for the budget-conscious planner. Best part? This software is free. Eventbrite will help with designing an event webpage, handling multiple ticket types, discount codes and merchandise. You can promote the event through custom links, invitations and social media. There are easy online payment features as well as income tracking.

20. EventMobi

www.eventmobi.com

EventMobi is a world leader in making apps for conferences, tradeshows and other events. In fact, EventMobi just won the 2016

"Best Event App Award" at the *Event Technology Awards UK*. People really like the CMS feature, gamification possibilities, surveys, polls and feedback. The EventMobi website has a number of resources like guides to event gamification, event app marketing and event app sponsorship. Pricing varies.

21. Planning Pod

www.planningpod.com

From start to finish, Planning Pod is a value-based organizational app designed just for event planners. The pricing is a monthly fee based on how many events you are juggling at one time. This amazing app helps with designing floor plans, tracking invoices, generating leads and proposal templates, among other things. Planning Pod is a one-stop shop for all things events. Prices range from $9.99 per month to $69.99 per month. A free 30-day trial is available.

22. Caterease

www.caterease.com

Caterease is a very popular event planning application. It was designed for event planners and covers all aspects of the event. From billing to managing customer data, venues and wait staff, Caterease can help. Users love the training feature, though it is not free. Caterease pricing starts at $65/month and a free trail is available.

Live Engagement

Beacon technology at events offers limitless possibilities. Once an attendee downloads the customized event app, the possibilities of attendee engagement start to skyrocket. Beacons work with Bluetooth technology; some are tracking devices placed on venue walls where others are small and wearable.

23. Event2mobile

www.event2mobile.com

Event2mobile (E2M) makes beacon-integrated event apps and designs them for events, conferences and conventions. The event2mobile apps boost audience engagement as attendees can check in, network with other attendees, and receive push notifications like agenda, exhibitor info and more. For the planner, E2M provides valuable data in understanding audience engagement activity and lets you promote sponsors and exhibitors through alerts. E2M promises to be one of the most secure event apps and works with many of the world's top financial institutions. Pricing ranges from $1,500-$10,000.

24. Loopd

www.loopd.com

Loopd provides a wearable beacon that attaches to a lanyard. Beacon wearers share all contact information. Marketing materials are distributed and gamification options are available. Planners and interested parties receive extensive analytics. Real-time measurements include number of attendees, number of networking connections and how much time people are spending at key sponsor booths or exhibitors. Heat maps of the crowd flow can be generated at any time. Pricing starts at $2-$5 for device rental per attendee, plus $6,000-$10,000 per event for analytics. A $5,000 is also assessed for the integrated app.

25. DoubleDutch

www.doubledutch.me

DoubleDutch provides a live engagement event app with a wide range of possibilities. Inform attendees through

push notifications, drive engagement through posts on your shared app and communicate through location-based beacon technology. DoubleDutch can deliver all kinds of specialized information very quickly. From gamification to live polling, DoubleDutch gets the pulse of your event. Pricing varies.

There are plenty of helpful apps and tools that can help with your next event. From video streaming to live engagement there is an app that can help you make your next event unforgettable.

Sit back, relax, and let us help.

These apps are sure to bring some productivity and longevity to your events. But we will admit that an app can only take you so far. The data in an app is only as good as what you put in. Strategic Event Design is a full service event agency that can help with all things events. From games and themes to execution and ROI tracking, we assist in making your next event even better. Contact us today.

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