grip

The ultimate guide to promoting your event app

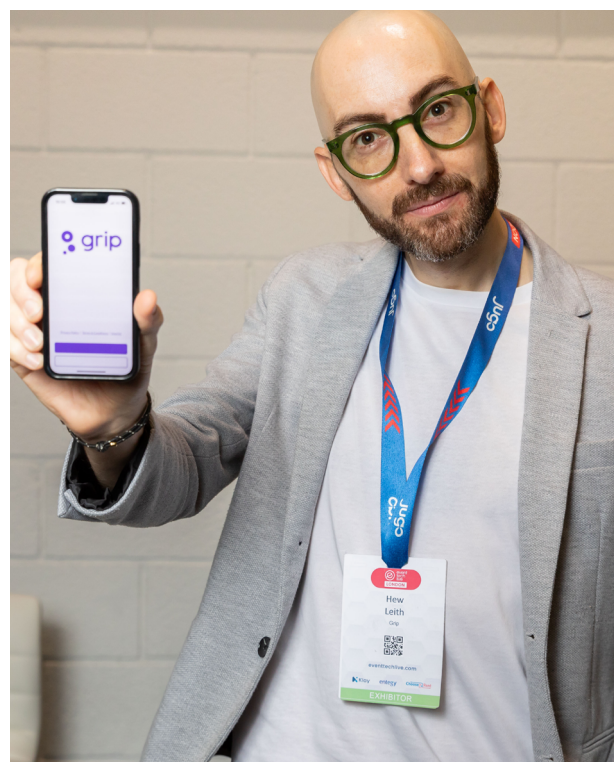Grip

contents

Why your event app promotional strategy matters

Launching a **mobile event app** is more than just flipping a switch. For event organizers, it's about promoting it in the right way so your participants get a seamless digital layer to their event experience. Done right, it delivers connections and business relationships at your event, drives exhibitor ROI, increases engagement and gives your team powerful event intelligence.

But an event app, or wider event engagement platform, won't deliver ROI if no one uses it. That's where the right app promotion is needed with a blend of strategic planning, cross-team execution and clear communication.

Strategy is everything when it comes to app promotion. For example, Grip's research reveals that making your event app live 6 weeks before the event, rather than 2 weeks out, doubles engagement.

This guide uses insights from thousands of events to detail how you can successfully launch and promote your event app across the full event lifecycle, from initial planning to post-event insights.

6 months out: Set the foundation

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Hold a strategy kickoff meeting with key stakeholders to agree:

- Measurable goals for your event app. E.g. target number of downloads, meeting requests via app, attendee engagement scores, etc.
- Event theme, branding and personality
- Features and functionality to be used with your event app
- Exclusive content and incentives to boost app downloads

Determine the core drivers of app engagement for your event, then tailor your messaging accordingly. To do this:

- Review the popular app features used previously by participants (e.g. event agenda, floor plan, exhibitor search, networking/matchmaking, lead retrieval, etc.)
- Analyse if there are any differences in feature engagement by persona (e.g. exhibitor, attendee, sponsor, VIP, etc.)
- Save this research for when you draft marketing messaging (see the next stage: '3 months out')

Set up new mobile app accounts for Google Play Store and Apple App Store. Support article for App Store, see here. For Play Store, see here

Draft and include event app value propositions in your event prospectus, exhibitor service manuals, sponsorship brochure and sponsorship opportunities support article

Create an event app promo video, which you can use across all channels. A good example is here

Draft and distribute a press release about the event, including details about the app, or create a dedicated press release specifically about the app

Create an exhibitor / sponsor toolkit: Provide example messaging and social media post templates in a toolkit for your sponsors / exhibitors. You want them to promote that they can be reached via your event app (either by messaging directly or by requesting a meeting in your app)

Host marketing team training: Ensure the marketing team is equipped to create promotional content and materials that will raise awareness about the event app's features

3 months out

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Confirm app functionalities such as matchmaking, lead retrieval, floorplan mapping, and session feedback are configured

Design intentional event app promotional signage at high traffic areas: registration, lounges, lobbies, hotel entrances, airports and shuttles

Set up the app's branding, core content (agenda, speakers, exhibitors) and integrations (registration system, CRM, etc.) For a helpful guide on designing a visually stunning and functional homepage for your event app, see here

Configure any desired iFrames (for Grip users: 'Widgets') to embed directly in the event website. This will drive event participants to log in and add content to improve their event experience

Draft tailored marketing messaging using the research conducted into feature usage (6 months out) based on the features that people used most to get people to adopt the app.

2 months out

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops
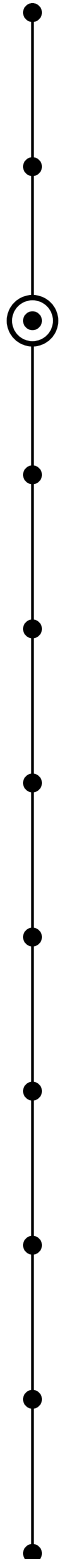
Publish your app to the relevant app stores. For a guide on this, see here

Test your event technology platform. To ensure everything is ready for a smooth and successful experience, we've created this easy-to-follow checklist, see here

Publish a dedicated event app landing page highlighting key features and benefits of the app to build anticipation. Good examples are here, here and here

Draft FAQs: Create a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions for exhibitors and another set for attendees so they can get the most out of your event app

Create a QR code which points to your event app landing page (for Grip users: Smart Marketing Link); Ensure QR code is featured heavily at the venue so finalize staff T-shirts, badges, signage, hotel flyers, registration branding, etc.

Finalize the preliminary floorplan file so it can be used for the event app's interactive floorplan

7 weeks out

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Create your toolkit: social banners, email banners, instructional videos, download links and QR codes

Draft welcome emails for sponsors and exhibitors on the platform

Draft a quick start guide: A tailored guide specifically for exhibitors and separate one for attendees, offering step-by-step instructions for getting started. You can find an example guide exhibitors here. And the example guide for attendees here

Create training videos: Short, instructional videos explaining how to use the event app (this is different to the promotional video as it's more for in-depth walkthroughs)

Deliver customer success / customer service training: Provide training for your customer service team on the event app and basic troubleshooting, so they can answer any attendee queries.

Design event badges: Ensure event badges have a call-to-action printed on them e.g. "Download the app" and a QR code to your app landing page (for Grip users: Smart Marketing Link). For some reference badge design templates you can use, see here

6 weeks out: Launch

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Launch your event app to exhibitors: Our data shows that events launched 6 weeks before your event, achieves 30% more engagement compared to those launched 4 weeks before. Therefore, we recommend that the event platform be launched to exhibitors 6 weeks prior to the event start date

Send sponsor and exhibitor emails with download links and clear setup instructions by including any resources that have been created

Exhibitor-focused campaign: create a specific campaign aimed at getting your exhibitors to log into the platform, create their profile, list their products / services, schedule meetings, promote their attendance

Draft attendee and speaker emails promoting the app (see below for example email copy you can use)

Host a webinar for exhibitors / sponsors walking them through the app and giving them tips on how to have a successful event

Design and print flyers for attendee welcome packs, check-in desks, etc.

Create gamification challenges and scavenger hunts using in-app check-ins and surveys

If using matchmaking, promote it now. For a helpful guide, see here. For a video showcasing the benefits, a good example can be found here

5 weeks out: Drive exhibitor conversion

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Exhibitor-focused campaign: create a specific campaign aimed at getting your exhibitors to log into the platform, create their profile, list their products / services, schedule meetings, promote their attendance

Add your own sales and support teams to the platform so exhibitors can connect with them directly before and during the event

Review the preliminary interactive floorplan and provide any feedback to ensure it adheres to event branding

4 weeks out: Drive attendee conversion

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Launch platform to attendees: Send attendee emails with download links and clear setup instructions

Launch your event app: Start a multi-channel promotion campaign across email, social, PR, and your event website (e.g. blog and dedicated app landing page) using the content created above. Lead with the benefits, then features

Update the dedicated event app landing page to reflect the app is "available now" and download instructions

Host a webinar for attendees walking them through the app and giving them tips on how to have a successful event

Send attendee emails with download links and clear setup instructions

Encourage staff to update their email signatures with app download call-to-action, like to app landing page

2 weeks out: Drive conversion

Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Build out push notification timeline, identifying key speakers/sessions, sponsorship fulfillments, networking, gamification challenges, social media channels and event milestones

Train your internal teams and registration staff to guide attendees on how to promote and use the app

Post event app walkthrough videos on social channels and your event website

Promote exclusive in-app content (e.g. speaker handouts, digital giveaways, access to polls)

Drive engagement of specific features using in-app signposting. To do this, use your feature usage research from earlier (6 months out) to drive adoption of underused features. For example, if you want more participants to use matchmaking but you know from your research they access the agenda more, promote that the event agenda is available in the app. Then inside the app, promote your 'new' matchmaking functionality to drive engagement of this feature

1 week out: Final push
Lead: Marketing | **Support:** Exhibitor Success

Send final reminder emails to attendees and exhibitors

Upload app promotional video to displays onsite

Confirm signage installation at high traffic areas: registration, lounges, lobbies, hotel entrances, airports and shuttles

Add app slides into speaker decks and high-attendance sessions

Reach out to VIP event participants personally on the telephone to let them know why they don't want to miss out on specific meeting requests that are pending

Publish final checklist for staff and volunteers

Rehearse app talking points for on-site staff and announcers

Print badges to test badge scanning functionality works with paper finish, printer quality, and QR code/barcode resolution

During the event: Maximize adoption and usage
Lead: Ops & Event Delivery | **Support:** Marketing

Provide app talking points one-pager for on-site staff and announcers.

Share how-to videos via shuttle TVs

Present a short keynote or demo of the event app at the start of the event to highlight its features and encourage usage

Send real-time alerts for room changes, session starts, networking opportunities and competitions

Promote features like booth routing, smart matchmaking and session ratings

Deploy app help desk or branded ambassadors to assist with downloads and troubleshooting

Encourage live social media posts and photo sharing directly from the app

Run gamification challenges and scavenger hunts using in-app check-ins and surveys

Post daily push alerts and networking prompts

Monitor real-time analytics and adapt messaging

Capture testimonials and in-app user behavior to reuse in case studies

In the keynote(s), get your MC to ask attendees to scan their badges / connect their Smart Badges with the person sitting next to them

Post-event: Review, learn and repeat

Lead: Marketing & Product | **Support:** Sales & Ops

Review analytics: total activations, session engagement, meeting conversions and time spent in app

Schedule a wrap-up call with your app provider to analyze what worked and explore new features

Conduct internal debriefs to document what to improve in the next cycle

Share specific insights with your sales team. Focus on metrics like connections made, meetings held and heatmap insights. This data can inform future strategies and help demonstrate the value of the show to rebook exhibitors / sponsors

Survey attendees and exhibitors on ease of use, features, and outcomes

Use post-event insights to plan content strategy, event layout or sponsorship packages for the next event

Sample copy for your marketing channels

6 weeks out: event app launch

Email

Subject line: Start Networking Today – Download the *[EVENT NAME]* App

Body: The official *[EVENT NAME]* app is now live! Plan your schedule, connect with exhibitors and discover personalized meeting recommendations now.

Log in now to:
- Build your personal agenda
- Connect with attendees and exhibitors
- Book meetings
- Get real-time updates and notifications

[Download Now] – Available on the App Store and Google Play

Social media

LinkedIn / Facebook

Your ultimate event companion is here. The *[EVENT NAME]* app helps you connect, plan and engage. Meet new contacts, pre-book meetings and stay on top of every moment.

Download now *[Link]* *[#EVENTNAME]* #SmartNetworking #EventTech

X

Maximize your time at *[#EVENTNAME]* with our official event app! Schedule meetings, discover exhibitors, and unlock exclusive content. Download now *[Link]* #EventProfs #Networking

Website page

Headline: The *[EVENT NAME]* App Is Here

Body: Access the full attendee list, browse exhibitors, explore the agenda and build your schedule before you arrive. Download the app today to connect with the right people and maximize your time onsite.

[Download the app]

During the event: drive app activation

Email

Subject line: Your [EVENT NAME] App is Here

Body: Welcome to the [EVENT NAME] Conference! The event platform is now open and ready for you to explore. Activate your account early to set up your profile and begin establishing valuable network connections prior to the live event [EVENT DATE]. The platform will remain open through [EVENT APP END DATE].

1. **Activate your account now**
You can login using your registration email and Registration ID. Once there, set up your profile, check out our recommendations and start creating your schedule.

2. **Get planning before you arrive**
Receive tailored recommendations of people to meet, discover conference sessions in the event agenda and build your schedule.

3. **Download the [EVENT NAME] app to use onsite!**
[Download Now] – Available on the App Store and Google Play

Website page

Headline: The *[EVENT NAME]* App Is Here

Plan your experience, connect early, and get the most out of *[EVENT NAME]*.

Activate your account now and download the app.

Platform open until *[EVENT APP END DATE]*

[Download the app]

Social media

The [EVENT NAME] Conference platform is now open!

Set up your profile, connect with attendees, and start building your schedule before you arrive.

Use your registration email and ID to log in and explore tailored recommendations, sessions, and networking opportunities.

Download the [EVENT NAME] app on the App Store or Google Play to make the most of your time onsite.

Download now [Link] [#EVENTNAME] #SmartNetworking #EventTech

X

The [EVENT NAME] platform is OPEN!

Log in early to plan your schedule, connect with others & get ready for [EVENT DATE].

Download the app on iOS & Android.

 [Insert link] #EventTech #Networking #EventApp

Dos and don'ts of event app promotion

Do

- Promote the app at every attendee and exhibitor touchpoint

- Calculate the amount of signs and other printed promotional material you need to create

- Educate through FAQs, walkthroughs, and onsite signage

- Use a "go paperless" sustainability message to boost app usage

- Embed QR codes on lanyards, registration desks, hotel signage and even airport pickup banners

- Create incentives for exhibitors to share the app (e.g. additional visibility, sponsored filters)

- Offer an app help desk at the entrances to your show

Don't

- Wait until the week before the event to start promoting the app

- Forget to include app instructions in registration confirmations

- Overwhelm attendees with too many notifications at once

- Neglect onsite staff training - they're key advocates for usage

Tips and tricks

Pre-event

- Incentivize everyone who downloads the app with entry into a prize draw to win an item (which can be sponsored)

- Host a pre-event webinar for exhibitors on how to maximize their ROI at your event, including how to get the most from the app

- Offer to plant a tree or donate £1 to charity with every app download

- Sell the value and benefits of the app, not just listing the features in marketing materials. i.e. what problems does it solve rather than what it does. Show participants that it's easy for them to find what they're looking for using the searchable exhibitor directory (rather than simply 'exhibitor directory')

- Create a 'sizzle reel' video of the app to use across your marketing channels and between sessions in conference theatres (we offer bespoke sizzle reel videos to our clients, get in touch for more info)

- Schedule a campaign email a few days before the event to all inactive users

- Consider a 'last push' of the app on the first morning, timed for when participants are travelling to the venue

- Add an item in the exhibitor manual checklist to download the app

- Train your information/support staff to refer to the app when answering questions on-site, to encourage downloads.

During-event

- Use printed QR codes for easy app download. Display the QR code in registration areas

- Show QR codes near any foreseeable queuing points

- Get the QR code printed on support staff t-shirts
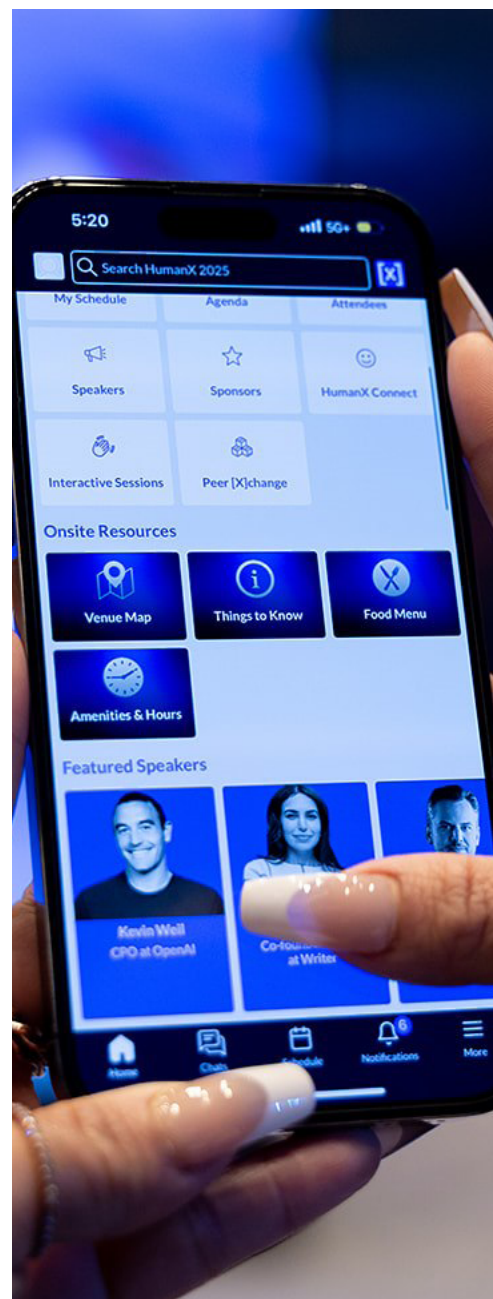
Post-event

Measure your event app adoption rate, that way you can test some of these tips and see which ones move the needle, then double down on them.

Additional resources

Webinar

Watch this on demand webinar where the top app adoption experts give over 50 strategies to get your participants using your mobile event app.

Blog

For more top tips, see this article where Abi Cannons, Senior Strategic Account Manager at Grip details over 50 tactics to increase event app adoption: "54 tips to increase mobile event app adoption".

Final thoughts

Event technology works best when it's adopted by everyone. With the right plan, your event app can become the digital heartbeat of your show, driving engagement, connections, business relationships and commercial success.

Promote it like it matters. Because it does.

Need help launching your app? Contact our team to build your customized event app promotion plan