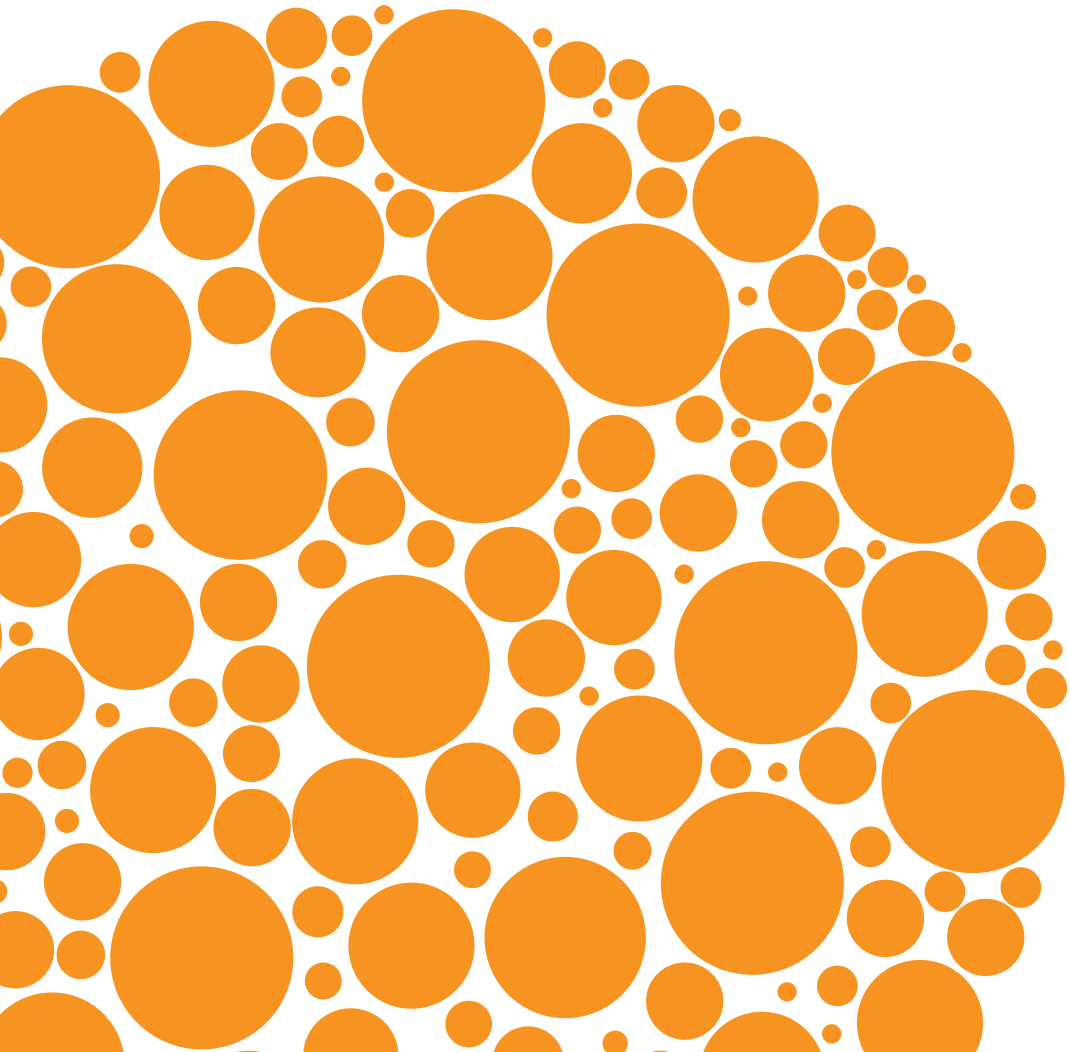
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Event apps

A B2B Marketing Technology Review

Published May 2012



B2B Marketing

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About B2B Marketing

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About this report

This *Events Apps Tech Review* was produced by B2B Marketing in 2012. The app evaluation was written by freelancer David Howell [nexuspublishing.co.uk]. Design and layout was by ICD. The four apps in this review were selected at random, but are broadly comparable. All four were all tested on an iPhone.

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Introduction

What exactly is an event organiser app?
In the past, organising even a small event was a logistical challenge that few companies could manage alone. Enter the smartphone and tablet PC, and the availability of hosted data services. Suddenly event organisers have an organisational and communication platform they can use to manage every aspect of their event. The latest breed of apps are more than simply meeting schedulers as they offer advanced personal communications and strong links to social media networks.

Why would I want to use an app to help manage my event?
Today speed and immediacy are the watchwords in the business environment. Using traditional printed materials is simply not versatile enough – committing to printed event support materials requires long lead-in times. Using an app enables you to make changes literally up until the doors open. And of course, costs can be much lower as an app can be used across multiple events over any period of time.

How can these new apps help me on a practical level?
The smartphone and tablet PC have put into the hands of delegates and exhibitors a powerful tool they can use when navigating an event. For event organisers, a dynamic web presence can be transferred to a mobile device during the event. The flexibility this hybrid approach offers is changing how events are organised and attended.

What resources do these apps take to set up?
Most of the professional level event apps offer a complete and integrated service. This means your event will have a branded website that offers the full range of services such as attendee registrations, exhibitor listings and the link to the mobile app. Data can be pulled in from a range of information silos, such as Saleforce, to populate the event's site.

What is the commercial value of these event apps?
Today, only those businesses that engage with their customers will be sustainable. Events and conferences remain highly popular, but they have had to evolve to keep up with the pace of mobile communications technology. Using apps to help manage your event, and offer delegates' instant access to information they had hitherto been unable to manage, enables your event to offer real commercial advantages to attendees and organisers alike.

"Offering delegates' instant access to information, enables your event to offer commercial advantages to attendees and organisers alike"



Zerista



GenieConnect



Flock



Guidebook

ZERISTA

RATING

FEATURES	★★★★★
IMPLEMENTATION	★★★★★
VERSATILITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★



"If you're looking for a complete and comprehensive event management platform with state-of-art app integration, look no further"

Described as an event intelligence platform, Zerista offers a complete end-to-end event organisation service that includes a full-featured app. The most impressive key component is the level of integration that Zerista offers. If your business has customer data spread over a wide number of sources, Zerista will be able to capture, aggregate and integrate that information to help you build a great experience for every delegate attending your event.

Powerful analytical tools

Unlike other event apps, Zerista offers a branded website that can be used by delegates and exhibitors to set-up and manage their accounts and profiles. The platform includes an exhibitor marketing suite to allow the generation of leads and an organiser control centre that spans Zerista's mobile and web application.

The mobile app component of the Zerista platform places powerful tools in the hands of exhibitors. Event agendas, mapping, exhibitor profiles and a powerful set of analytical profiles is also included. The Attendee Edition offers basic functionality compared to the Unlimited Edition, which includes API access and sandbox testing if you have a large complex event to organise.

Advanced integration

Of particular interest is how the platform places all the tools within easy reach of the event organisers. From attendee registration to post-event analytics, the level of feature integration is impressive with each one well thought-out and implemented across the web-based and mobile application on the iPhone and Android.

Of course, social media is an integral part of the Zerista platform. The system offers instant polls where an attendee can rate a speaker or session, with the data feeding back into the post-event analysis. The end-to-end approach that Zerista has taken is ideal, as delegates can move seamlessly from the website to their mobile devices and always have their contacts, agendas, sales leads, speaker profiles and even a live chat if they want to engage in immediate feedback. If you're looking for a complete and comprehensive event management platform with state-of-art app integration, look no further.

INFORMATION

Developer
Zerista

Solution
Zerista

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Zerista.com

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+1 720 936 4004

Price
Price on application

GENIECONNECT

RATING

FEATURES	★★★★☆
IMPLEMENTATION	★★★★★
VERSATILITY	★★★★☆
USABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★☆

With a client list that contains some of the world's largest corporations, GenieMobile, has rapidly developed a reputation for excellence in this burgeoning market. Offering six packages, from a build-your-own app approach to comprehensive expo and conference platforms, there is a service available regardless of your needs and budget.

Intuitive CMS

One area that sets GenieConnect apart is the attention to detail with the content management system (CMS) the platform uses. The CMS is intuitive, offering all the features that make up a typical event app – easily accessible even for businesses with little technical insight into app development. The cloud-based server is able to take data feeds from the most popular sources that you can then craft into an app using the GenieBuilder CMS – a beautifully integrated approach.

All of the features you would expect from an event app are present including scheduling, exhibitor profiles, social media and messaging – which are also available as a desktop web portal. However, GenieMobile will only become involved with your event after registrations are complete. If you're looking for a complete end-to-end service you will need to look elsewhere. The app's analytic capabilities, which continually capture data, are particularly impressive. Organisers can segment their attendees by session or interest group, as well as clearly defining the engagement that exhibitors received.

Feature-rich app creation tools

The scalability of the GenieConnect platform is its most impressive feature. Apps can be created that not only look great, but have robust data foundations that ensure the app delivers the exhibitor's and delegates' needs. With this system you can select and buy the functionality your event needs. GenieConnect is one of the most advanced and feature-rich app creation tools in this sector. However, it would be better if the app offered a registration portal as well.

The whole system is based on a CMS that users have control over and offers a toolset that is second to none. The ability to build the specific app your company needs for its unique event is one of the core strengths of this platform.



"The ability to build the specific app your company needs for its unique event is one of the core strengths of this platform"

INFORMATION

Developer
GenieMobile

Solution
GenieConnect

Contact
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+44 (0)1628 569 351

Price
Price on application

FLOCK

RATING

FEATURES	★★★☆☆
IMPLEMENTATION	★★★★☆
VERSATILITY	★★★★☆
USABILITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★☆☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★★☆

Flock is billed as one of the most advanced mobile event apps currently available. The app is branded white allowing you to fully customise its appearance.

The app runs across all the major handset OS's and also has a great tablet version that is highly popular. Social media is at the heart of the app allowing delegates to fully engage with their networks during speaking sessions or while at exhibitor stands, with the app allowing ratings to be given – vital information for event organisers.

Live messaging

The real-time immediacy of the social media component of the app puts the delegate in complete control over their social connections. The live messaging facility between delegates is a particularly impressive way to network.

For event organisers, all of the most desirable components are present in the app including global push notifications to alert delegates to any event or session changes. A QR code reader is built into the app, as is Game Mechanic, which allows organisers to include games linked to the event or a particular exhibitor. This component alone has proven to be popular and highly engaging for delegates.

Metrics and reporting

Also impressive is the reporting and analytics that developer Double Dutch provides post-event that offers detailed insight into a wide variety of metrics. Reports can be customised to reveal just the information that is required by the event organisers. This app is certainly fully featured, but it needs more incorporation with a web-based event portal to really give organisers a completely integrated platform.



"Social media is at the heart of the app allowing delegates to fully engage with their networks while at speaking sessions or on exhibitor stands"

INFORMATION

Developer
Double Dutch

Solution
Flock

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+1 415 449 5744

Price
Price on application

GUIDEBOOK

RATING

FEATURES	★★★☆☆
IMPLEMENTATION	★★★★☆
VERSATILITY	★★★★☆
USABILITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★☆☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★☆☆

If you run ad-hoc events, the tiered pricing structure of Guidebook is highly attractive. From a free version that is no slouch in the features department to their premium service costing $5000, the versatility of this platform is impressive.

Session scheduling

With event delegates always having their smartphones available, it makes sense to offer them a complete event programme on their handsets. Guidebook offers interactive maps that will soon allow attendees to choose an exhibitor and have their handset guide them to the stand. If you have large events, this is an innovative and insightful addition.

Scheduling for multiple sessions is at the core of this app which also allows the organiser to include personal agendas for each delegate so they never miss a session. The event exhibitor listings can include images, stand details and links to the exhibitor's website. Social media is fully integrated into this app with users able to post updates to Facebook, send tweets and even direct delegates to a special version of an exhibitor's YouTube channel, if they have one, to see their latest videos.

Instant feedback

This app offers a lot of versatility to event organisers. You can simply buy the features your business wants to offer to delegates – that could mean a completely free event app you build yourself. Also useful is the instant feedback feature (available on the Plus Price Plan) where delegates can be quizzed about what they thought about your event with multiple-choice questions – a great bonus to help you improve your next event.

Overall, this app is well implemented and offers businesses a versatile and powerful platform that covers all of the main aspects of an event, and puts these features within easy reach of a delegate. Instant feedback is possible, however, it would be good to offer more analytics to users after an event to deliver real value.



"You can simply buy the features your business wants to offer to delegates – that could mean a completely free event app you build yourself"

INFORMATION

Developer
Guidebook

Solution
Guidebook

Contact
Guidebook.com

Phone
+1 (650) 319 7233

Price
Free (standard edition)

Verdict

When considering which event app platform to go with it is important to look past the cosmetics of the app itself and consider the technology that is supporting and populating the app. The group here offers roughly comparable app development platforms. Each understands that robust data management is a key component of whether an app is used or abandoned by an event's delegate or exhibitor.

"Zerista offers all of the key features an exhibitor or delegate would need in an app"

Guidebook: Costs within this sector can be high, but if your budget is tight then the app platform from Guidebook may be highly attractive. The free version of their app has limited functionality but may suit small scale conferences or sales drives, but expect to upgrade to their higher cost packages quite quickly.

GenieConnect: If you need a platform that can grow with your business, which perhaps holds a number of different events, GenieConnect is a great choice as it offers an intuitive CMS more than capable of data management. It also offers a system that produces apps for all the major operating systems that are engaging, attractive and ultimately usable by attendees and exhibitors alike.

Flock: Clearly, social media and apps go hand-in-hand. Flock clearly understands this symbiotic relationship and places social connectivity at the heart of its apps. Its maker, Double Dutch also has an excellent grasp of the analytical aspect of event apps and delivers a dashboard that is insightful and of great practical value. We would, though have liked all these platforms to offer more end-to-end integration that many B2B companies desire. However, if you already use a third-party registration system all the app vendors here can accept that data.

Zerista: Zerista's system offers just this level of end-to-end integration. Where other systems don't come onboard until you have your delegates registered, Zerista offers a complete solution that begins with your events web presence that is a comprehensive data management platform in its own right. Zerista then offers all of the key features an exhibitor or delegate would need in an app.



Ratings comparison table

Solutions	Features	Implementation	Versatility	Usability	Value for money	Overall rating
Zerista	5	5	5	4	5	5
GenieConnect	4	5	4	5	5	4
Flock	3	4	4	4	4	4
Guidebook	3	4	4	4	3	3

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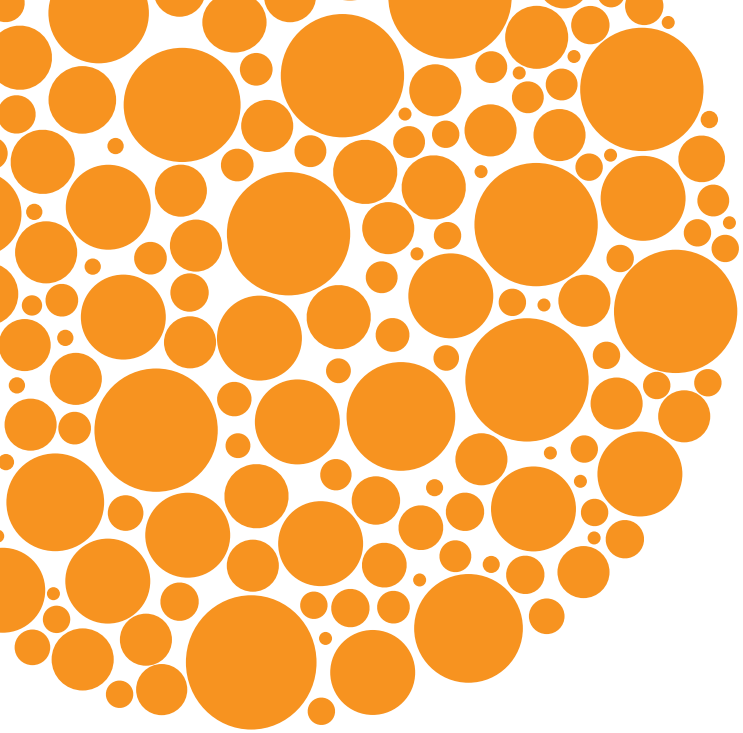
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