



12 Best Practices to Launch an In-person Event App Your Attendees Will Actually Use





Are you adding an event app to your tech stack simply because it's trendy?

Let's take a few steps back and rethink your approach.

Instead of treating it as a fancy accessory that's forgotten by 60% of your onsite attendees, convert it into an interactive tool they can't imagine attending the event without.

Event apps that take your attendees on a journey from finding areas within the venue to interacting with the event are non-negotiable.

But, how do you design an app that meets attendees where they are in their event journey and delivers what they are looking for and more?

Simple:

- Stop treating your apps as a tech gadget.
- Start thinking about attendee expectations, needs, and your event goals.
- Map these to the onsite attendee journey.
- Deliver while keeping the optimal attendee experience in mind.

This guide serves up practical tips for designing an in-person event app that your attendees would actually LOVE using.

Get easy-to-use frameworks, real-world success stories, and expert insights across the entire event lifecycle - from pre-event planning through post-event engagement. Each section includes concrete strategies, implementation checklists, and AI prompts to accelerate your planning.

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PRE-EVENT PHASE

BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

12 Best Practices to Launch an In-person Event App Your Attendees Will Actually Use

1

Start with Clear Goals and Stakeholder Alignment

This sounds like a given, but you'd be surprised to know that many event apps fail because planners don't define what success looks like for them.

They jump into planning features and design thinking these components will shape up their event's direction.

This leads to misaligned priorities, wasted resources, and an app that doesn't serve anyone well.

Before you get caught up in features and design, take a step back and get everyone on the same page.



My advice to all event planners is to talk to all stakeholders and get them to agree on a shared vision. When everyone buys in early, you avoid costly pivots and deliver an app that truly serves your event's goals.

Muhammad Younas
CEO, vFairs



Host a 60-minute virtual stakeholder session where each department shares top three app priorities. You'll quickly see where consensus exists and where compromise is needed. During your session, give them a framework as a starting point and go from there.



Cheat code: Use this prompt to draft a clear agenda

Act as an event strategy consultant. Help me draft an agenda for a 60-minute stakeholder alignment meeting to define top priorities for our event app. The event is a [type], and our main goals are [goal 1, goal 2, goal 3].

Goal-Setting Framework by Event Type

Your goals and KPIs will vary based on the type of event you are hosting. Here are a few examples to illustrate what your event goals can look like:

Event Type	Primary App Goals	Key Success Metrics
B2B Conference	Lead generation, Content delivery	Meeting bookings, Content downloads
Corporate Training	Knowledge transfer, Interaction	Assessment scores, Participation rates
Trade Show	Exhibitor visibility, Networking	Booth scan data, Meeting stats
Consumer Event	Brand engagement, Social sharing	Social mentions, Activity participation



Pro Tip: Create a checklist and a clear timeline outlining each step in your mobile app set up. A kick-off document helps assure everything is tracked and nothing falls through the cracks.

What success looks like with goal alignment

We’ve seen how companies like [Cadence achieve success at events](#) when they start with clear goals. At their recent event, CadenceLIVE Silicon Valley 2024, they wanted to consolidate their event tech stack and boost event engagement.

These goals directly informed their app strategy.

To avoid switching between multiple tools, they chose vFairs’ tech. The all-in-one platform allowed them to manage everything from registration, badge printing, lead capture, to building a custom mobile app for attendees.

The app covered everything from easy check-in options using QR codes, floor maps for simpler navigation, personalized agendas, networking tools, and live surveys for real-time feedback. By adding relevant features, they substantially increased attendee engagement.





2

Prioritize Core Features and User Experience

You know what frustrates attendees more than anything? When they can't find basic information like the session room or who's speaking next.

This happens when you don't prioritize core app features as part of your user experience.



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User experience isn't just what features should we put in the app—it's the invisible architecture that determines whether your app becomes essential or an accessory in your users' daily lives.

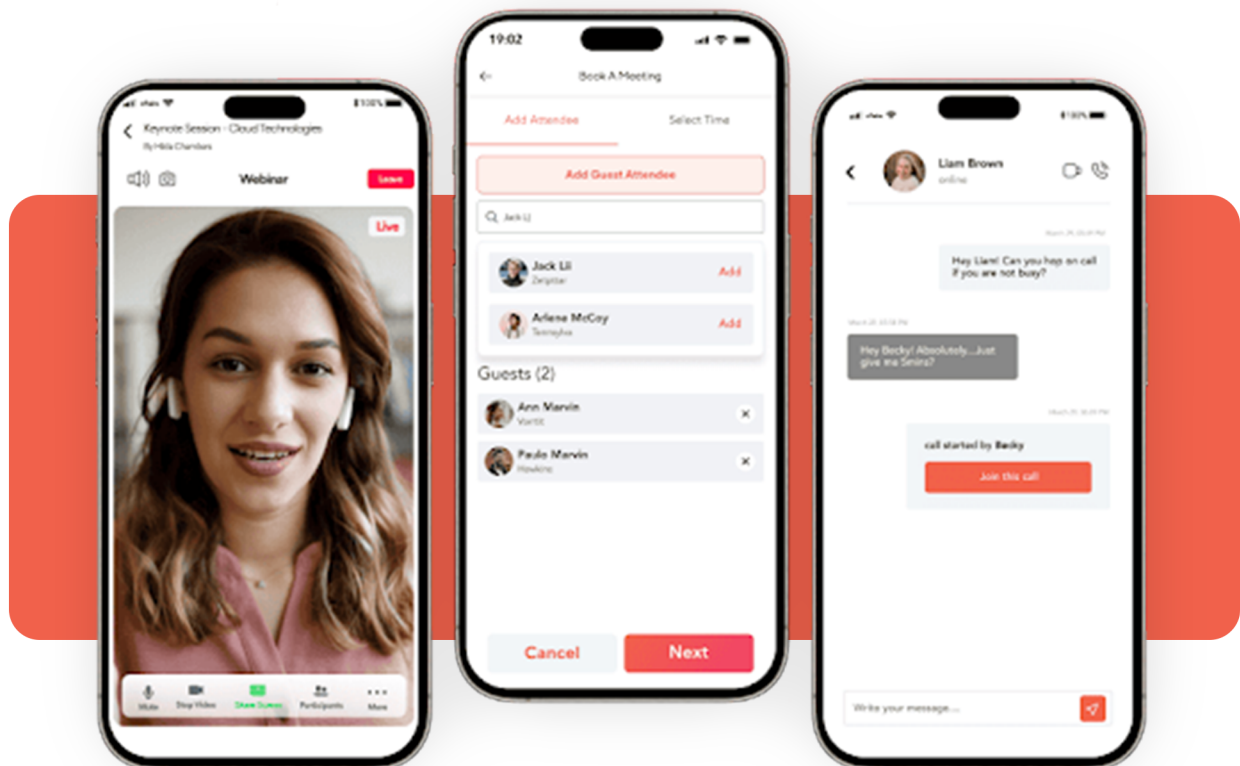
Muhammad Younas
CEO, vFairs

”

Event apps should be designed with a clear structure that attendees can easily understand without confusion. An intuitive design means that users don't have to think twice about where to find key features like schedules, speaker information, or networking opportunities.

Just because your app provider can add 100 different features for you doesn't mean you need to. A sea of features may only overwhelm your attendees, especially if they are not tech-savvy. Some may miss essential features in the midst of all the features.

You need to find out the most essential features your event attendees need and focus on creating your app around those.

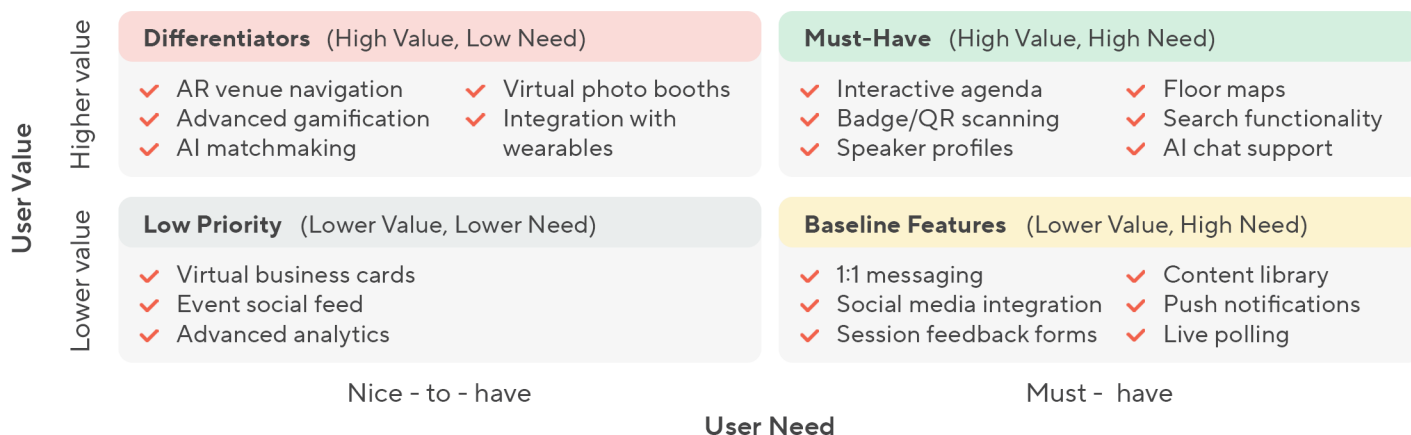


Provide these features with enough visibility on the app's home screen. Some of these include:

- Interactive agenda with personalization options
- Comprehensive speaker profiles
- Accurate, searchable floor maps
- Reliable badge/QR scanning capability
- Robust search functionality
- [AI chat agents to answer attendee queries](#)

Enter: Feature Priority Matrix - Value vs Need

Create a priority matrix to make the decision easier for you. Here is an example:



Cheat Code: Need help creating this matrix? Copy and paste this prompt into your favorite AI tool

Act as a event strategy consultant and help me brainstorm a list of 'Must-Have' features for an event app for a [Type of Event, e.g., B2B Conference, Trade Show] focusing on [Primary Goals, e.g., Lead generation, Networking]. Suggest features considering a [persona eg., tech-savvy audience].

As you finalize your features, keep these technical considerations in mind as well:

- Ensure offline functionality for essential features
- Test performance under high-volume usage
- Verify compatibility across iOS/Android and various screen sizes
- Implement accessibility features (screen reader support, contrast options, text sizing)



Do this:

At vFairs, we've found that comprehensive testing with actual users (not just developers) catches the issues that matter most. Create a "must-work perfectly" list of core features and test them relentlessly with various devices and user types.

3

Design an Intuitive Home Screen

Design the home screen to meet attendee needs.

Think of your app's home screen like the lobby of your venue. It sets the tone and helps people find their way. A well-organized navigation bar, icons, and buttons should guide users naturally to the next step in their event journey.



“

Your event app is not a digital brochure. It's how attendees experience your entire event. When they can't figure out the schedule or find the networking lounge, that's not an app problem, that's an event problem.

Muhammad Younas
CEO, vFairs

”

While having core features is important, users should be able to access them without any friction.

When it comes to user experience, follow these design principles:

- Apply visual hierarchy to emphasize the most important elements
- Limit the number of tiles/buttons (aim for 5-7 primary options)
- Use clear, action-oriented labels
- Incorporate your event branding subtly without overwhelming the interface
- Consider customizable home screens for different attendee types





“

The key to maximizing engagement at your event is creating an app experience that feels effortless. Attendees can easily navigate, find what they need, and stay connected

Kristian Papadakis

Founder & Product Director

”



When your design is ready, try this litmus test:

Show your home screen design to someone unfamiliar with your event and ask them where they'd tap to find the agenda. If they hesitate for more than 3 seconds, simplify your design.



Cheat Code: Need ideas? Give this prompt to Lovable get a mockup designed.

Provide layout suggestions for an event app home screen with the following key features: [User lists features]. Prioritize visual hierarchy and suggest action-oriented labels.

4

Build Your Event's Go-To Knowledge Centre

Your app should be the go-to source for all event content. Make it easy to find and use with a content hub or resource centre.

These quick tips can help make sure attendees don't have any missed opportunities for engagement and learning.

- Organize digital materials in logical, searchable categories.
- Host on-demand video directly in the app when possible
- Regularly update content before, during, and after the event
- Create content sections specific to your event type:

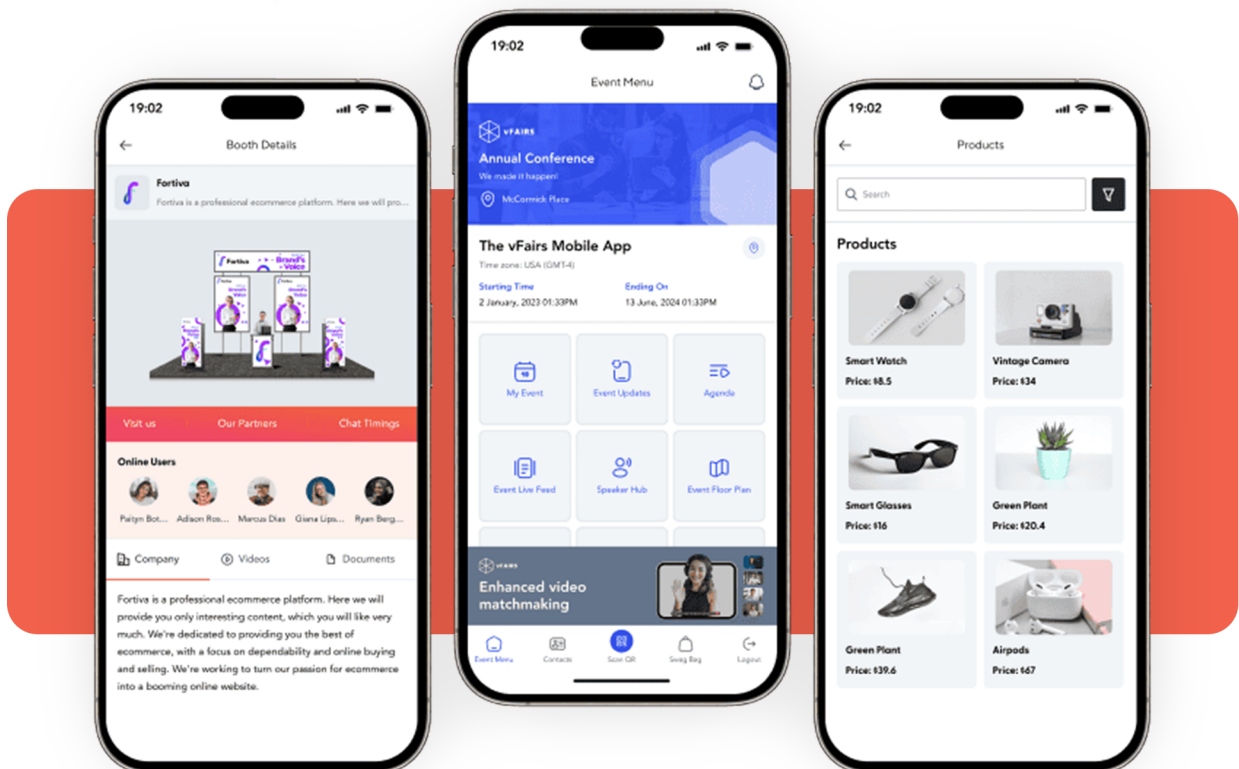
For Trade Shows: Product catalogs, exhibitor profiles

For Conferences: Session materials, presentation downloads

For Recruiting Events: Job listings with application functionality

For Training Events: Worksheets, reference materials

For product launch: Product demos, spec sheets



**Try this:**

Create content categories that match how your attendees think, not how your organization is structured. Allows attendees to filter materials by topic, format, or relevance to their role. This dramatically improves the user experience for content-heavy events.

A marketing conference should categorize content by topics like marketing automation or email marketing rather than by session type.

Don't forget to:

- Optimize file sizes for mobile download
- Consider bandwidth limitations at your venue
- Provide offline access to essential documents
- Include search and filtering capabilities

5

Create Strategic Engagement Features

Turn passive app users into active participants with thoughtfully designed interactive elements.

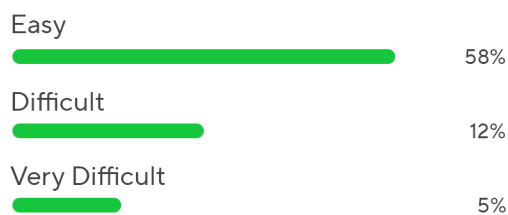
'Thoughtful' being the keyword here.

Don't just add games for the sake of having games. The most successful vFairs customers tie their gamification directly to behaviors they want to encourage.

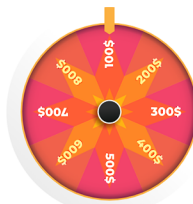
A recent sales summit hosted by a telecom company on vFairs platform is a great example of this tactic. One activity on the leaderboard asked attendees to get their badge scanned by exhibitors. Attendees had an incentive to talk to exhibitors. At the same time, exhibitors got a good flow of traffic at their booths. It was a [win-win situation](#).

Live Polling

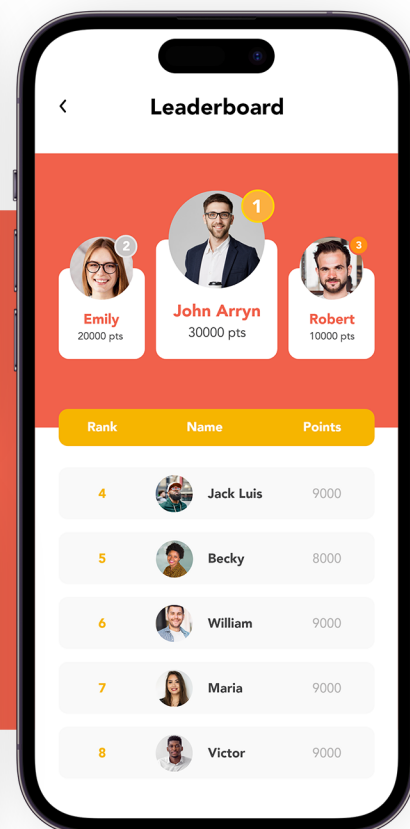
How easy did you find searching for products/content on our website?



Spin the wheel and win prizes



Start now!





“Mobile event apps are not just about enhancing the attendee experience—they're about creating an entirely new level of engagement that keeps people connected, involved, and excited throughout the event.”

Kristian Papadakis
Founder & Product Director

You can also get the ball rolling before the event begins. Launch your engagement and gamification features 1-2 weeks before the event date. Incentivize early adopters with rewards for exploring the app, booking meetings with exhibitors or other attendees, and posting about the event on social media.

Use this Checklist to Plan Your App Engagement

- Define 2-3 attendee behaviors you want to encourage (e.g., booth visits, networking, session participation).
- Choose engagement features that directly support these goals (e.g., scavenger hunts, polls, leaderboards).
- Launch at least one interactive feature before the event to build momentum.
- Incentivize participation with meaningful rewards (not just swag).
- Monitor engagement data and adjust on the fly during the event.



Did you know?

With vFairs, you can launch engagement features like gamified leaderboards, instant polls, and networking challenges weeks before your event.

JVS Toronto hosted a hybrid job fair that had over 1,200 attendees participating both in person and virtually. They wanted attendees to [connect and network](#) at the event. The mobile app was a great enabler for this purpose. At the end of the job fair, 1,400+ interactions at the onsite booths through QR scanning.



Pro Tip:

Reward early adopters for exploring the app, booking meetings, or sharing event updates on social media. This not only builds buzz but ensures attendees arrive already invested and engaged.

6

Develop a Multi-Channel Promotion Strategy

Even the best app is useless if people don't know about it or understand why they should download it. While early feature launches and incentive programs can help, you also need to promote the app on other channels.

You don't even need to create a ton of assets. Just plan one hero asset and repurpose it for different channels and formats.

Host an information session or training before the event to help attendees get familiar with the app. Encourage them to download the app.

Create a few 15-second videos from the session showing your app's most impressive feature in action. Post it on your social media channels.

Convert the same video into a GIF. Add it to an email blast and give your attendees a quick walkthrough of how to sign up and use the app pre, during and post-event.

Besides covering all promo channels, you must zero in on segmentation. Your audience will include different types of people. You can't reach them with the same message.

Event Promotion Cheat Sheet to Get You Started

Audience

C-Suite

Millennials

Technical Audience

First-time Attendees

Primary Channels

Personal emails, LinkedIn

Instagram, TikTok

Twitter, Reddit

Email, YouTube tutorials

Key Messages

Efficiency benefits, ROI

Social features, gamification

Integration capabilities, data access

Ease of use, orientation features

Week Promotional Timeline

Start promotions as soon as the app is ready. Ideally, start 4 weeks before your event to get maximum adoption. Here is a promotional plan you can consider for this timeline:





7

Nurture App Users from Download to Maximum Adoption

Many attendees download the app but never explore its features. They either get busy or decide to explore later, but forget about it. Plan automated reminders to stay top of mind and guide attendees through download to active usage.

Here's a sequence you can deploy:

- **Day 1:** Welcome and profile completion
- **Day 3:** Feature highlight: Personalized agenda builder
- **Day 7:** Feature highlight: Networking opportunities
- **Day 10:** Introduce gamification elements
- **1 week before:** Final preparation steps

You need to tweak the content depending on your event goals and user activity. If you want to support exhibitors in getting meetings before the event begins, add a reminder showing attendees how to book meetings.

If you want attendees to register or attend maximum sessions, prioritize personalized agenda reminders over everything else. Here are some ideas:

User Action	Trigger	Message Example
Downloads app but doesn't complete profile	24 hours after download	"Your profile is 80% complete! Add a photo to make networking easier."
Views agenda but books no sessions	48 hours after agenda view	"Sessions are filling up! Add your favorites to your personal schedule."
Books meetings with fewer than 3 exhibitors	3 days before event	"Maximize your ROI by meeting with at least 5 exhibitors."
Hasn't accessed app in 3+ days	After 3 days of inactivity	"New content alert: 3 speaker presentations just added!"



Cheat Code: If you are stuck, try this AI prompt to brainstorm messaging ideas

Based on these user actions [downloads but doesn't complete profile, views agenda but books no sessions - or add your own list of actions], generate message examples for automated app reminders.



Did you know?

With vFairs, you can easily set up automated email workflows for registrants within the backend. You don't need a separate email automation tool for it.

Don't forget to:

Test different message formats to see what drives the highest engagement:

- Question vs. statement format
- Emoji vs. no emoji
- Morning vs. evening delivery
- Value-oriented vs. FOMO messaging

Prepare Your Speakers and Exhibitors to be App Champions

Your app isn't only for your attendees' benefit. Don't forget your sponsors, exhibitors and speakers.

Your speakers and exhibitors can be your greatest app ambassadors.

Set up their speaker profile in advance. Encourage them to post about their session or attendance. Do a LinkedIn live pre-event with the speaker to give your audience a little taste of what these speakers will discuss. Encourage an AMA on platforms like Reddit, X or even LinkedIn, warm up the crowd and collect questions.

>

Profile

Speaker



Display Name

Prof. Daniel Christopher Hayes

Institute

University of Cambridge

Title

Professor of Artificial Intelligence

Save Changes

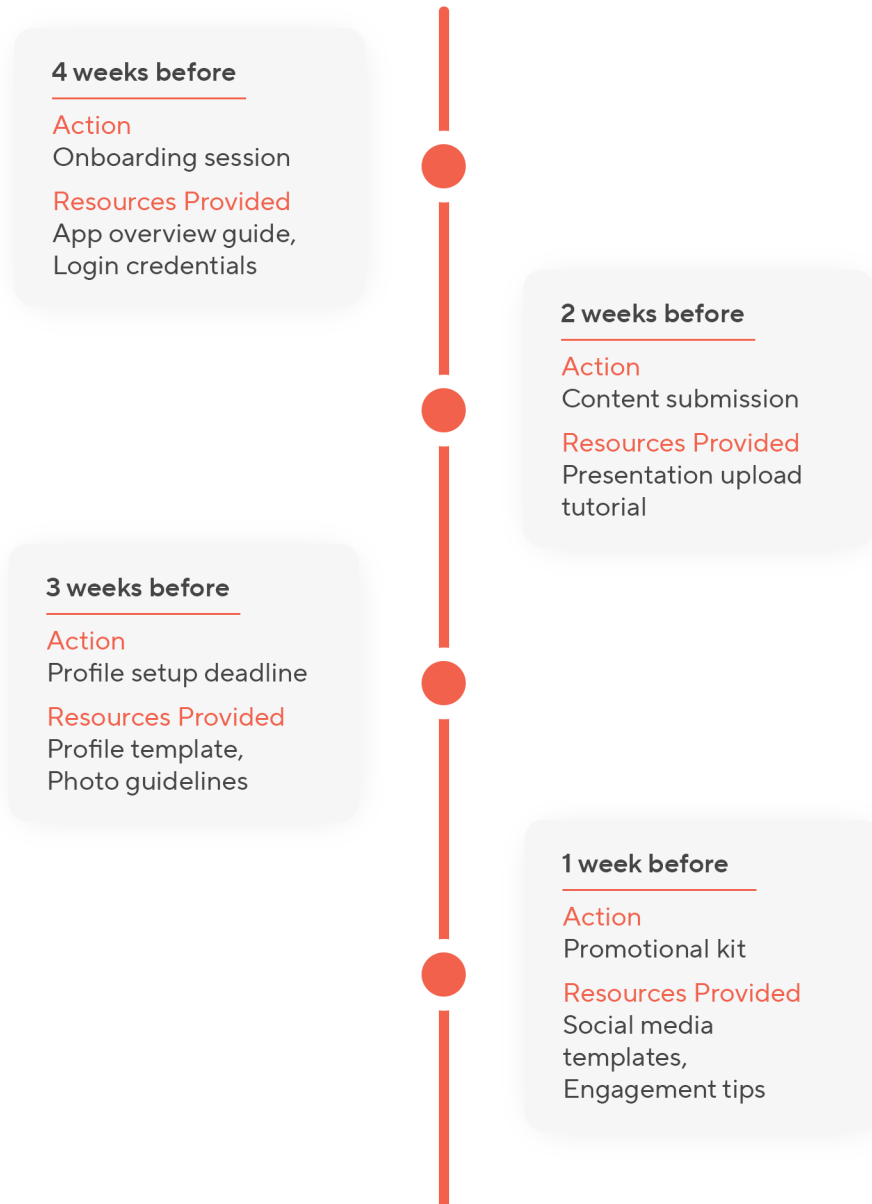
Open up the exhibitor and sponsor portal a week before the event so that they can book meetings. Participating companies can share that they are attending on their social media, encourage attendees to download the event app and book the meeting slots.



Try this:

Create a "speakers/exhibitors cheat sheet" with the top 5 ways they can use the app to enhance their presence. Distribute it to them a week before the event. Don't take this step lightly.

Plan this properly and you will see your app adoption rates go up. Your exhibitor/speaker/sponsor happiness level will skyrocket.





DURING THE EVENT PHASE

DRIVE ACTIVE USAGE

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9

Reinforce App Usage On-Site

Just because people have made it to your events doesn't mean you need to stop prompting the app. Now is the best time to help attendees realize the real value of the event app.

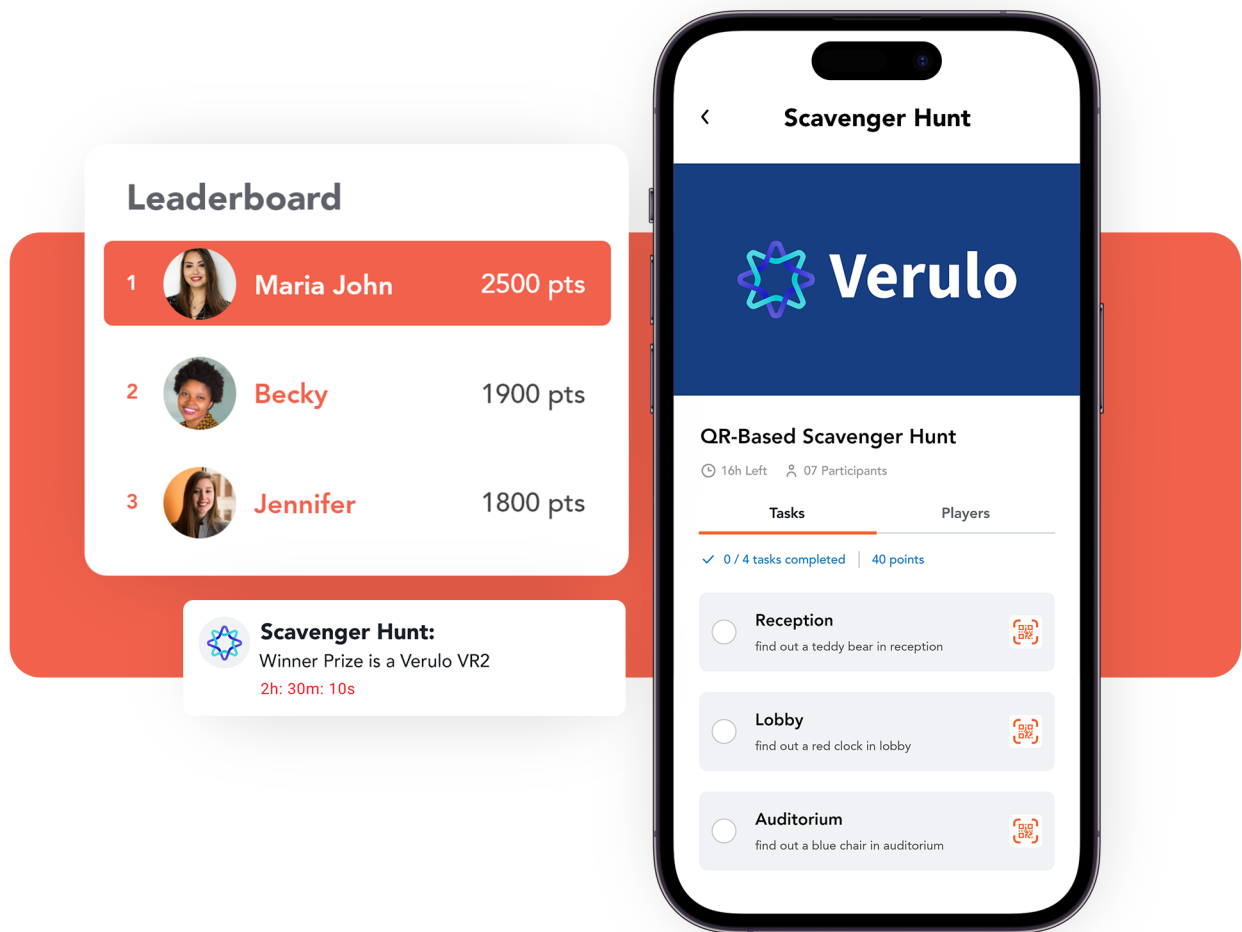
As attendees enter the venue, train your staff at the reception to check with attendees and confirm if they've downloaded the app. If not, request them to do so. Paste a QR code at the reception desk for easy access. Display the QR across TV screens and encourage people to download the app.

Set up a troubleshooting station and appoint trained staff to provide instant tech help.

- Help with downloads and login issues
- Demonstrate key features
- Solve common technical problems
- Gather feedback on app usability

Add soft reminders before or after key sessions.

Besides adoption, you also want to make sure those who have the app use it. For this, you can send email reminders or schedule push notifications around activities. Plan games and networking sessions that would require the use of the app.



A leading telecom company wanted to [encourage conversation](#) between various business units at the latest event. They launched a scavenger hunt with clues that compelled attendees to chat with other attendees. It got people up, around, and talking. It was valuable for the business, 70+ participating sponsors and 2000+ attendees alike.

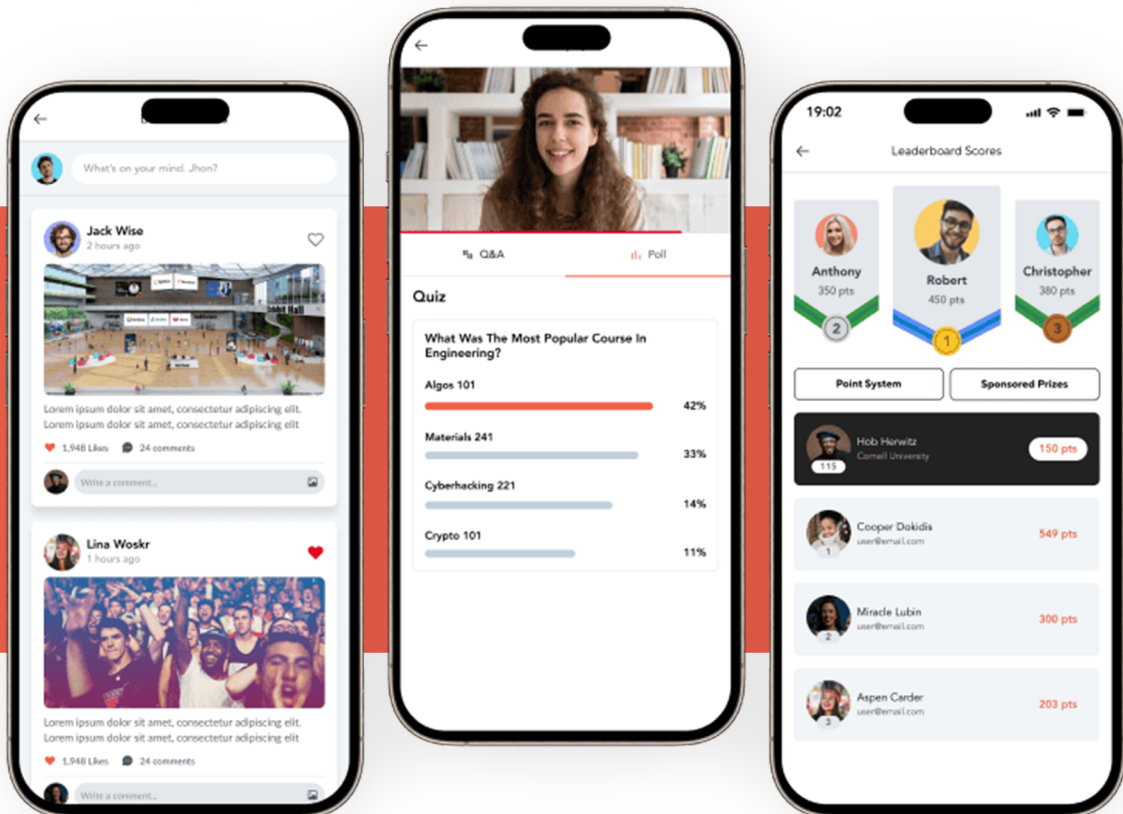
Monitor Live Engagement

Keep an eye on how people are using your app in real-time so you can make smart adjustments. Real-time feedback is one of the best ways to improve an event as it's happening. Use live polling or instant surveys to get feedback and make changes on the fly.



Pro Tip:

Assign someone to be your "app engagement monitor" during the event. Train them to interpret data patterns. Give them authority to send push notifications or make quick adjustments based on what they're seeing on the analytics dashboard.



To implement this effectively, start by identifying which metrics matter to you the most. A few things to consider:

- Session attendance vs. registration (identify no-shows early)
- Dwell time in specific areas (virtual or physical)
- Peak engagement periods and content types
- Question volumes in Q&A features
- Networking activity patterns
- Search query trends

Tactics you can implement quickly to increase engagement:

- Send targeted push notifications for underattended sessions or exhibits
- Highlight trending topics or popular speakers through app banners
- Deploy "flash" engagement activities in areas with lower traffic. For example, announce a spin the wheel competition for session with a low number of attendees and award prizes



Cheat Code:

When you are onsite, you're tackling so much. A little help from AI can save you time and effort. Use this prompt to brainstorm quick engagement ideas.

Act as an event engagement expert. Suggest 3 last-minute, easy-to-implement tactics to boost attendee engagement using our event app. The event is currently underway and we have access to real-time app usage data. Our goal is to increase [mention specific engagement metric, e.g., session attendance, networking interactions, participation in polls]. Provide actionable ideas with specific examples of in-app messaging or features we could send.



POST - EVENT PHASE

KEEP ENGAGEMENT GOING

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11

Track Performance and Record Takeaways

Teams often move on after the event without tracking its performance. Younas recommends using data to understand audience behavior. The insights from your app usage can transform your next event if you know what to look for.

- Look at session preferences, survey responses, and booth traffic to gauge what caught their attention.
- Track content downloads, engagement rates and chat logs to assess the level of interactivity with the event.
- Check survey and poll responses to solicit feedback.



Data tells you the real story of your event. It's not just about how many people showed up, it's about understanding what made attendees stick around, what sessions they loved, and how to make them want to come back next year.

Muhammad Younas
CEO, vFairs

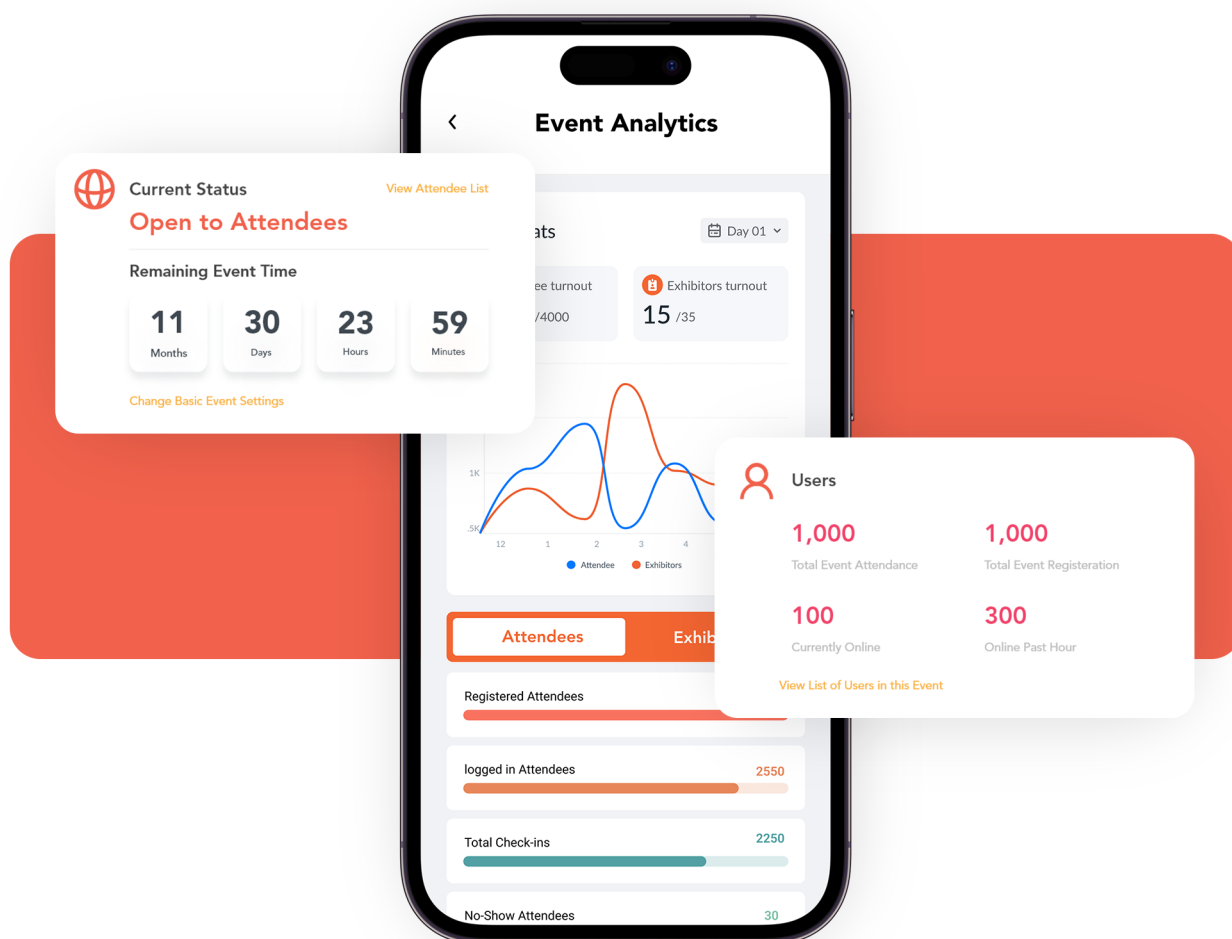
Don't limit your analysis to a single event. Consolidate data from all your events and do a longitudinal analysis.

- Track attendee behavior across multiple events
- Identify trends and changing preferences over time
- Create attendee profiles based on consistent behavior patterns
- Track how app interactions influence customer journeys
- Measure the impact of event participation on customer lifetime value



Pro Tip:

Establish a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and implementing insights. This way, your data analysis step will not be an afterthought. It'll become a part of your event debrief. Replay these findings to influence any necessary app changes for future events.



Extend the App's Lifecycle

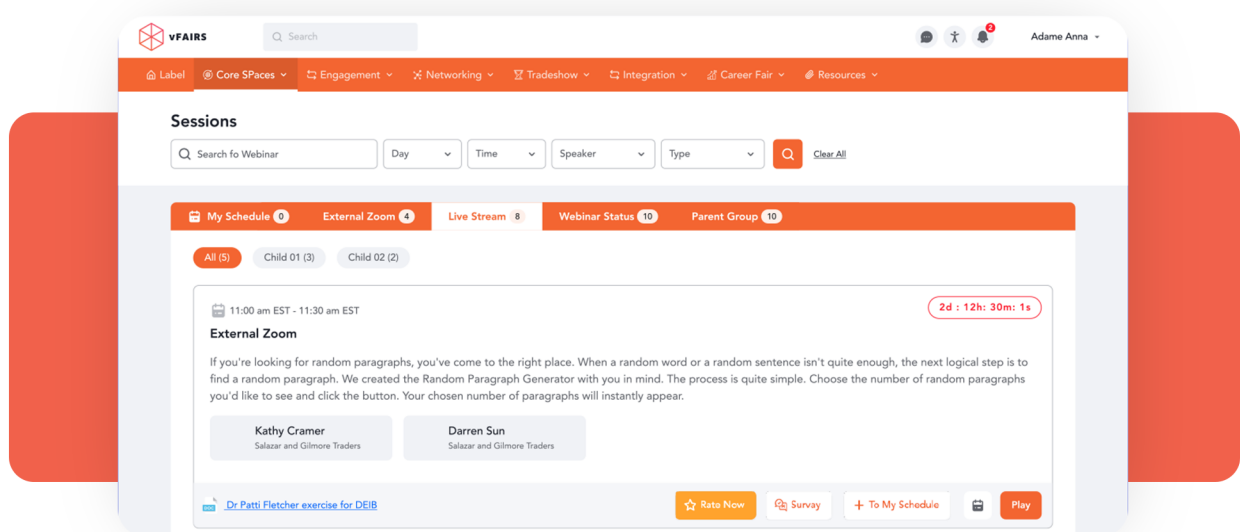
Your event may end, but your app doesn't have to disappear. There are so many ways you can still engage your attendees. Deploy feedback surveys within the app to increase the response rate. Keep the chatbot active to help guide users through any post-event queries.

Plan your post-event content strategy before your event even happens. Once the event ends, upload sessions on demand. You can also schedule new content drops every few weeks to keep users coming back.

Email your attendees, informing them and share a clear timeline until when they can access that content. Give recommendations about what sessions to watch on demand or brochures to download based on their interest.

You can also encourage attendees to keep networking with peers they have met onsite. Use the app to create a lasting community that continues to engage long after the event is over.

LASHCON, a conference for lash artists, did this very well. After the event concluded, attendees had access to 40 recorded educational sessions through the app. The organizers provided ongoing value to their community of lash artists who typically work in isolation and [extended the life of the app](#) as well. This approach contributed to an impressive NPS score of 70+.



Take Your Event App from MEH to an Audience Favorite

Attendees expect experiences that feel tailor-made to their interests and needs. Event apps are a great way to do just that if you don't treat them as a fancy add-on. Event apps should be your attendees' companion for navigating and engaging with your event whenever they need.

Align your app features, design, and experience with your event goals and audience needs.

We'll leave you with a quick TL;DR:

- Start with clear goals aligned to your event objectives
- Focus on essential features that enhance the attendee journey
- Design for intuitive navigation and ease of use
- Promote early and often across multiple channels
- Enable speakers and exhibitors as app champions
- Monitor, measure, and adjust based on real-time data
- Extend value beyond the event dates

The outcome? You hand attendees your event inside the app and help them make the most of it.

PS. Scroll down for an implementation checklist for these best practices.

PPS. Liked the AI prompts shared in this e-book?

[Access our complete AI prompt library](#) FREE.

Ready to build an event app your attendees will love?

Book a Demo with vFairs

Appendix

Quick Implementation Checklist

8 Weeks Before:

- ✓ Set goals and align stakeholders
- ✓ Select app platform
- ✓ Define core features

6 Weeks Before:

- ✓ Design home screen and user experience
- ✓ Begin content creation
- ✓ Plan engagement features

4 Weeks Before:

- ✓ Launch app for early adopters
- ✓ Start promotional campaign
- ✓ Onboard speakers and exhibitors

2 Weeks Before:

- ✓ Implement automated user journeys
- ✓ Conduct final testing
- ✓ Prepare on-site activation plan

During Event:

- ✓ Monitor real-time analytics
- ✓ Activate on-site promotion
- ✓ Address issues promptly

Post Event:

- ✓ Analyze performance data
- ✓ Launch post-event content
- ✓ Plan long-term engagement

AI Prompts to Make Event App Planning Easier

Create an agenda for stakeholder alignment session

Act as an event strategy consultant. Help me draft an agenda for a 60-minute stakeholder alignment meeting to define top priorities for our event app. The event is a [type], and our main goals are [goal 1, goal 2, goal 3].

Create a feature priority matrix

Act as an event strategy consultant and help me brainstorm a list of 'must-have' features for an event app. The [event type e.g., B2B Conference, Trade Show] focuses on [primary goal, e.g., lead generation, networking]. Suggest features considering [persona eg., tech-savvy audience].

Need your app design to be intuitive. Give this prompt to Lovable and get a mockup designed. You can also launch the app later if you like.

Provide layout suggestions for an event app home screen with the following key features: [User lists features]. Prioritize visual hierarchy and suggest action-oriented labels.

Brainstorm messaging ideas to nurture users from downloads to active usage.

Based on these user actions [downloads but doesn't complete profile, views agenda but books no sessions, or add your own list of actions], generate message examples for automated app reminders.

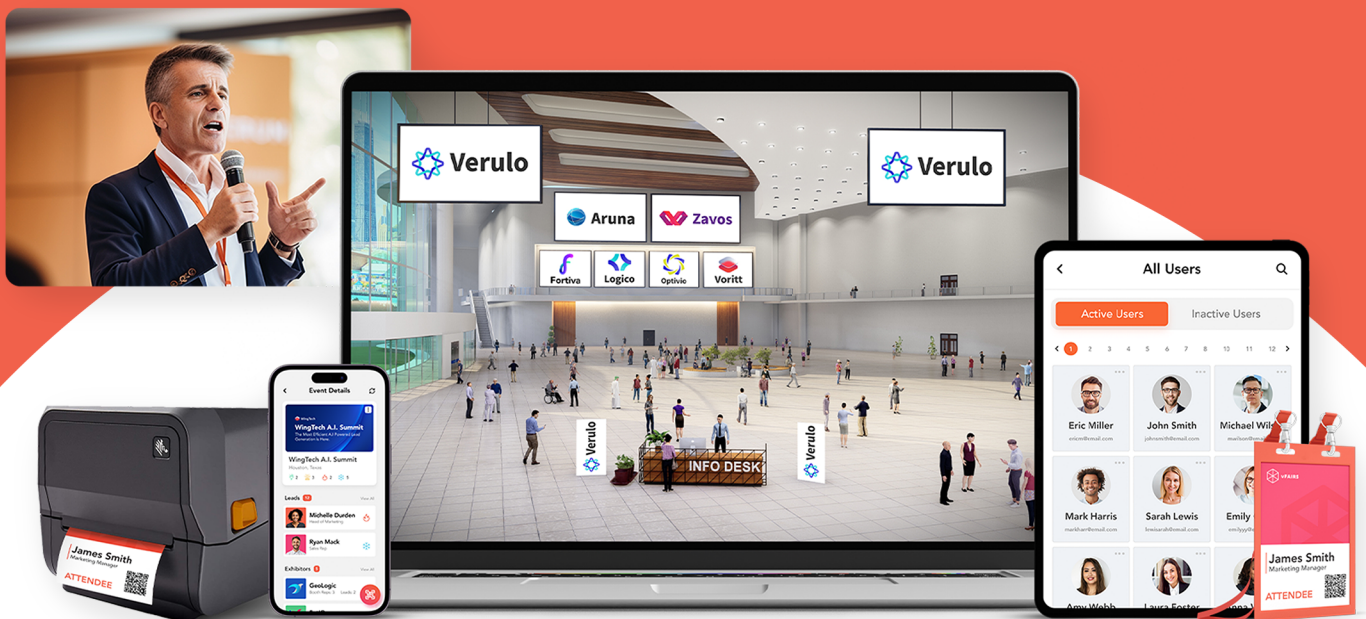
Use this prompt to brainstorm quick engagement ideas onsite to boost engagement

Act as an event engagement expert. Suggest 3 last-minute, easy-to-implement tactics to boost attendee engagement using our event app. The event is currently underway and we have access to real-time app usage data. Our goal is to increase [mention specific engagement metric, e.g., session attendance, networking interactions, participation in polls]. Provide actionable ideas with specific examples of in-app messaging or features we could send.

vFairs is the all-in-one event management solution for virtual, hybrid, and in-person events.

vFairs provides user-friendly, integrated technology that maximizes engagement and interaction for events of all sizes. We help organizations plan and execute events with ease, deliver engaging experiences, and capture actionable insights.

To learn more or book a demo, visit vfairs.com or contact us at sales@vfairs.com.



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