

Tradeshows are becoming 'app happy'

By Natalie Relf
 Exhibit City News

Mobile applications have become an integral part of the tradeshow experience in recent years. The need for quick, easily accessible information is greater than ever, and the industry is mirroring this with the creation and usage of smartphone apps.

App inventions are growing exponentially as the market finds newer and more imaginative uses for them. For instance, business card readers, digital brochures, live streaming broadcasts, online directories and show floor apps help find the way for people looking to navigate the business world in a digital format.

Adoption of this technology appears to be a no-brainer since most people in the business world, as well as the digital age, already carry web-enabled phones. The implementation of this technology is, in fact, so successful it is becoming increasingly difficult

Continued on page 8

to find a phase of an event, tradeshow or specialty meeting that cannot be handled with the right app.

Penton Media Custom Solutions brought this to light at the Food Marketing Institute 2010 in May.

Penton created an app that included a show directory and a show floor map. The directory listed exhibitors and their booth number and attendees could download marketing materials.

"Anything you used to see before, e-mail newsletters, show directories, show dailies, we tried to consolidate these into an app that an attendee could use before the show, during the show and after the show as a refer-

ence," said Scott Beida, vice president, Penton Custom Solutions.

Tech-savvy attendees and planners are effectively managing logistics, travel, polling, scheduling, websites, digital broadcasts, and many other tasks all from their smartphones. In addition, social media presents the opportunity to use apps to connect and interact with suppliers; and with every show, uses for existing and new applications grow.

Show organizers are continually seeking ways to facilitate a more high quality event experience, not for just the duration of the shows, but for pre and post-show as well. Show associations are getting in on the act by creating and distributing their own show-individualized applications for mobile devices, such as the one introduced at Chicago's Gift Market in July of 2010.

The online mobile app, introduced by MMPI, allowed buyers to search the showfloor digitally, before and during the event.

"The launch of The Chicago Market's mobile app was a great success. Attendees, showroom employees and exhibitors were able to navigate the show and the product locator on their smartphones while on the showfloor," said Paula Guiliano, senior director of marketing, MMPI. "With everyone's busy schedule, this advanced technology served us well. We also included national news and weather components so the app could be used post-show."

Tradeshow-based event management company Experient went so far as to form a partnership with Core-Apps, a mobile software company, in



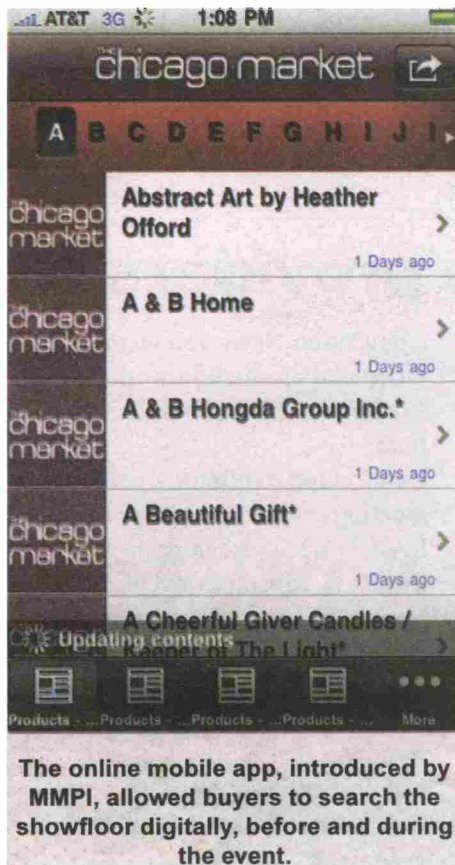
the interest of creating an across-the-board mobile platform.

“The excitement has been high and the client base is looking forward to the joint-development features that will be available,” Jay Tokosch, CEO, Core-Apps. “We are very excited about this partnership. The combination of our two companies will offer customer solutions that are not available in the industry today. These solutions will bring real value to attendees and exhibitors in a way that will make a difference for the organizers of shows.”

Mike Godsey, senior vice president of market development for Experient, believes this partnership will help position both companies for the future.

“The real power of this relationship will be revealed as two industry leaders work to bring the processes of an event into the mobile age,” said Godsey. “Our desire is to change the user experience by providing key event data to attendees and exhibitors on their smartphones. This will add significant value to all constituents of an event.”

In the digital age, technology for keeping up with business changes every day. The same is true for trade-shows and events with the emergence of directly specified apps. These convention specific apps are giving new life to the saying; if you build it, they will come.



The online mobile app, introduced by MMPI, allowed buyers to search the showfloor digitally, before and during the event.