

# How to Pitch a Mobile Association App to Your Board (and Kill it!)



# Introduction

## Your Challenge

Building a business case for adopting an association app that will increase year-round member engagement.

As an event planner, you're the expert when it comes to knowing what the benefits are from incorporating event technology into your events\*. Increased attendee engagement, event revenue through sponsorships, exhibitors, and ticket sales, and overall brand awareness are just a few examples of strategies that will help in recruiting new members.

But there are a number of key stakeholders on your board who need to be convinced. You're planning to present this initiative at your next board meeting, but you need to be prepared in anticipating their questions and ready to address any barriers to adoption to get the buy-in you need to move forward.

*\*If you need a refresher on the benefits of using event technology at your events, read [The Ultimate Guide to Event App Marketing](#)*

## This Guide Includes

- Preparing your Pitch
- Presentation Tips
- Common Objections to Association App Adoption
- Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers!)
- Timeline & Next Steps
- Support and Customer Success



# Preparing Your Pitch

## Pinpoint The Benefits

Benefits must be clear, specific, and quantifiable. If you're asking a senior board member to approve an investment in new technology, be sure to clearly articulate benefits and provide specific examples as back up.

**When selling through an association app to board members, strong benefits might include:**

-  Generating non-dues revenue through digital sponsorship opportunities
-  Catalyzing member engagement before, during, and after events
-  Building a strategy to attract and retain millennials

## EXPERT TIP

### Present event technology benefits from the board members' perspective

While you'll be very aware of how using an association app will make your event workflows more efficient, to gain board buy-in, it's important to focus primarily on how this technology will offer bigger picture organizational benefits.

Improving the operational efficiency of how you run events may be foremost in your mind, but remember that your board will be more interested in understanding how this investment will have an impact on association goals, such as improving member engagement or generating new streams of non-dues revenue.

## Research All Associated Costs

The benefits are important, but your board's primary question will be: How much is this going to cost our association? And a "no surprises" approach works best when introducing new technology. This is particularly important if there has been resistance and it has taken time to win support for new technological initiatives. It's important to be as objective and transparent as possible when pitching technology to your board, and that means being honest about the costs.

**Keep in mind that when it comes to technology, there can often be hidden costs involved. Make sure you ask yourself these questions:**

-  *How much time and money will it cost to train staff on the new software?*
-  *Is there an opportunity to gain cost efficiencies by using this technology across multiple events over the course of the year?*
-  *What added value are we getting by going with this vendor?*
-  *Are there any other associated costs?*

Let your board know exactly how much they'll be spending both now and in the future. They'll be more confident in making the purchase, and you'll both be relieved when there are no unexpected expenses lurking down the line.



# Benchmark With The Best

Benchmarking is an important step in winning the support of your board members. One benchmarking strategy is to identify other associations that senior executives in your organization consider to be best-in-class who are already using the event technology you want to introduce.

[See deck slides](#) →

In our presentation template, we've included examples from a variety of associations who have run conferences, chapter meetings and other association events using event technology. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these examples before you present!

## Anticipate Their Questions

Start by asking yourself this question: If you were a board member, what would you ask after hearing this pitch? When considering a significant investment, they'll be looking to clearly understand the costs and benefits associated, and how this decision will impact the organization.

**To prepare, you'll need to:**

1. Make a list of potential questions your board could ask
2. Anticipate and rehearse the answers

We've already discussed the importance of addressing these costs and benefits, but your board is sure to have questions beyond those points.

**Here are a few example questions that might come up:**

- How much technical know-how is needed to use the technology?
- How does this technology integrate with our existing platforms?
- How will we ensure that members download and use the app?

Once you have your questions, you can start preparing the answers and, if needed, do additional research. The more prepared you are, the more authoritative your pitch will be, and the more likely you are to sway your board.

To help you prepare, we've created a FAQ section (Page 10), complete with answers that you can tweak to suit your purposes!



## Build And Present Your Business Case

Finally, you need to weave all these arguments into a cohesive presentation. Board executives are busy people, so you'll want to be targeted and concise in your delivery. Include facts and figures but remember, examples and anecdotes from respected sources can be a powerful way of building support. Identify possible concerns and objections and provide information to address them. And of course, provide an opportunity for questions.

### [See deck slides](#) →

To help you whip together an incredible pitch, we've created a customizable presentation template that:

- ✓ Highlights the benefits
- ✓ Clarifies the costs
- ✓ Includes plenty of association app examples

### EXPERT TIP

#### Pressure-Test Your Pitch

Before making the actual pitch, it can be helpful to practice in front of individual board members first to identify if you've missed anything. Also—it can't hurt to do some groundwork and win over a few individuals before taking on the bigger challenge of pitching to the entire board.

First, give them your spiel. Then you can dig into some of the following discussion points:

- Are there any blind spots in my pitch?
- Have I missed any key concerns that may come up with board members?
- Have I missed any key questions?
- Are there any knowledge gaps or areas where I may need to do further research?



# Presentation Tips

Your presentation is prepared, you've done your research, and now it's game day (deep breaths!). Here are a few tips to make sure you drive home your key messages and get buy-in for this decision.



## Know Your Board Members

Often board members can be from different demographic or psychographic groups. Their perceptions of technology may not be in sync and it's not necessarily a matter of age. It also has lots to do with their previous exposure to technology and comfort level in adapting to technological innovations.

To the right is a simple grid to help you determine the most effective communication strategies to sell technology to senior stakeholders.

The process involves two steps:

1. Find out how much senior stakeholders and event participants have with the technology you want to introduce.
2. During the discussion period, engage with board members based on your assessment of their technical aptitude, and their level of comfort with risk.



## Don't Read From The Slides

Although you may not have enough time to invest in memorizing your presentation word-for-word, it's important to rehearse it a few times over in front of the mirror or perhaps a few colleagues.

The goal is to make sure you're comfortable with the structure, have a good idea of what slide will be coming next, and get past the point of sounding awkward or recited. Then you can deliver your pitch with authenticity and confidence.

[See deck slides](#) →

We've included speaking notes which you can tweak and summarize to suit your purposes, but we don't recommend reading it verbatim!





## Make Eye Contact

This is a simple but powerful way to communicate confidence and belief in your point of view. In a recent Inc. article, presentation coach Sims Wyeth wrote:

*When your listeners see your eyes scanning their faces, they feel invited to engage with you. They feel encouraged to signal to you how they feel about what you're saying—with nods, frowns, or skeptical raisings of their eyebrows.*

This simple act transforms your presentation into a conversation, and converts your listeners into engaged participants.

To have a truly successful dialogue with your audience, though, you must respond to what your listeners are signaling. For example, if you see skepticism on the face of a board member, you'll want to empathize accordingly: "I know it seems hard to believe, but I promise you, the investment makes sense..."



## Pay Attention To Your Tone

You respect your board members, and genuinely value their opinion—and that's the tone you want to convey. Avoid coming across as too authoritative or as a know-it-all. Be conversational and don't force it.

TED speaking coach Gina Barnett shares that tone can and should be used to strengthen the impact of your words:

*Merge your tone with the topic of your speech. Don't deliver great news in a monotone voice or serious news too excitedly, as disjunctions like that will distract the audience.*

Barnett recommends going through your script and tagging what each message is intended to convey. This can help you use tone to strengthen your message rather than distract your audience from what you're trying to get across.



# Common Objections to Association App Adoption

Let's talk about some of the key objections that may come up when a board is evaluating a technology purchase like an association app. We've also included suggestions on how to address these concerns, so you can be well prepared to respond.

## *Our demographic isn't tech-savvy enough*

It's true that not every person who participates in and/or attends events is technologically literate, but that's changing fast. With the pace of technology in most offices and professions, members are already receiving on-the-job training in technology. That said, EventMobi's platform is actually one of the industry's most intuitive and easy-to-use event apps.

Another important thing to note: Seeing the value in new technology is one of the key factors that motivates people to learn how to use it. If you can show members how the app will provide benefits that align with the reasons why they initially joined your association, they'll be far more likely to download and engage with it.

## *We don't have the budget for event technology*

This statement may indicate that you haven't done an effective enough job showing your board members how an association app could help solve many of your association challenges. Or perhaps the challenges cited aren't painful enough that they are ready to invest money towards solving them.

One approach to veer the conversation back in your favor is to revisit these challenges and quantify how much money you're losing/already spending.

**For example, as a board, you could discuss how much money you're:**

- Losing for each member than churns
- Spending printing event guides and paper signage
- Spending on direct mailers and newsletters throughout the year

Then, you can continue by emphasizing to your board that implementing an association app will help you save money and/or bring in more net revenue by opening up sponsorship opportunities that not only cover the cost of the technology, but will generate additional revenue.

### **EXPERT TIP** Refresh Your Sponsorship Packages

Ready to start generating new channels of non-dues revenue to cover the cost of your association app?

Check out this ebook: **How to Create a Sponsorship Strategy that Maximizes Event Revenue**

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



[See deck slides](#) →

We've included some basic equations on slides 15 and 26 to help you calculate the potential ROI of adopting an association app.

### *Technology will add layers of complexity to our events*

It's true, there are a lot of technology options out there and most event planners don't have the time or the training to manage multiple vendors. You can remedy that situation by selecting an integrated technology solution that offers an end-to-end solution—from event registration to a mobile app, to digital signage on one platform. This option also keeps you from having to learn, negotiate with, and manage tech support from several companies at once.



# Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers!)

As we've helped coach event planners through presenting this decision to their board, we've heard a number of questions come up. To help you prepare for your presentation, it may be helpful for you to review these questions and get familiar with the answers. They may not all come up, but it's best to be prepared for anything!

**Q** *No one else in our space is doing it. Why should we?*

**A** Many associations are choosing to use event apps, and an association app is an extension of that strategy. Beyond that, investment into the member experience can be a competitive advantage that sets your association apart. And for millennials and other younger member segments, this could be the value-add they're looking for to help them choose you over a competitor.

**Q** *What type of staff training will be required to build and update the technology? Is it hard to use?*

**A** EventMobi's App Builder is extremely straightforward to use, and has become known as "the Wordpress of event apps". In fact, every new EventMobi staff member gets to build an app during their first few weeks of work, from the customer support team, to accountants and salespeople. It's a very easy to use and flexible platform that anyone can learn, no matter if they have limited technical knowledge.

**Q** *What if adoption is low?*

**A** Creating a solid plan for promoting the event app is key to success. You can read more about this in our ["Ultimate Guide to Event app Marketing"](#).

Remember to keep in mind that it's impossible to please all your members all the time. But if you're focused on making sure that the majority of members are enjoying an improved experience using the association app, the less-engaged members will realize that they're missing out and be motivated to download the app to see what all the fuss is about!

**Q** *How much money can typically be generated through app sponsorship opportunities?*

**A** While it depends on association-specific variables, like number of members, many EventMobi customers have had their app paid for entirely by in-app sponsorship opportunities while also generating additional revenue.

The value of in-app sponsorship exposure is much more measurable than traditional sponsorship, so it becomes much easier to clearly demonstrate to sponsors metrics like number of impressions, banner ad clicks, survey participation, website clicks and more.



# Timeline & Next Steps

And finally... to assure your board members that you've done your research, it's important to understand the timeline and next steps in moving forward with an association app. Here is a typical timeline once a vendor has been chosen:

1. Sign association app contract with vendor
2. Introduction to Customer Success Manager  
*(within 1 day)*
3. Event success call with Customer Success Manager  
*(between 1-3 days of introduction)*
4. Onboarding call with Support Team  
*(depends on timing of first event, usually within a month)*
5. Support Team follows up with helpful how-to and best practices resources, articles, guides  
*(same day as onboarding)*
6. App building begins  
*(whenever you're ready)*

Ready to Start Preparing Your Pitch? Use Our Presentation Template

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

Need some help putting together your pitch?  
Book a demo with an EventMobi event tech consultant for more info.

[📅 SCHEDULE A DEMO](#)



# Support and Customer Success



## Our Team Is Your Team

One of the reasons that many of our clients come back again and again is because of our unrivaled customer success team. While you know your members best, our job is to make sure that you have the tools, knowledge and strategies to build, launch and promote your association app for optimal adoption and engagement.

When you partner with us, you'll be assigned a Customer Success Account Manager as your main point of contact, and will go through an app onboarding process to ensure that you and your team are comfortable with the platform.

## Flexibility is the Key to Success

Things always seem to crop up in the event planning process. EventMobi's Support Team can help iron out wrinkles in your plan if and when unexpected changes occur.

## There When You Need Us

Making sure you have support during times of need is a major priority for us. We have extensive support hours in order to be at your service.

### North America

8am - 8pm (Eastern Time) 7 days a week

### Europe

9am-6pm (European Central Time) Monday to Friday

*\* Note that we offer 24/7 support for urgent issues and live events*



EventMobi provides technology that empowers event marketers and planners to create incredible event experiences.

Founded in 2019 EventMobi has been the trusted event technology of over 10,000 clients in 72 countries. One of the fastest growing companies in North America, EventMobi has received worldwide praise for our and people and out platform. From planning to marketing, management to measurement — at every stage of the event life cycle — we're there when you need us.

For more information, visit [eventmobi.com](https://eventmobi.com)

