Mobile App Development for Non-Profit Organizations

Avodigy is leading global provider of technology consulting services, which offers a family of mobile products built on the next generation of Web, Mobile, and tablets/iPad, and applications. Our business is about asking the right questions, considering possibilities responding with well-thought out strategies and actions and delivering the highest quality products and services.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Sun, what is the concept for Avodigy?*
Mr. Sun: We are building mobile apps for the association of non-profit organizations.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the special challenges in that area?*
Mr. Sun: The non-profit area is always lagging behind on technology. It is hard to turn attitude toward new technology, so that would be the challenge on the customers' side. Our competition is certainly a challenge as well, and technologies are always moving so fast. Our challenge is to always keep up with the latest and greatest technology. It is always challenging but rewarding and fun.

CEOCFO: *What types of apps are standard that you would be working on?*
Mr. Sun: Our core competencies are mobile apps for events, conferences and seminars. Our apps will power the content for the events from speaker, the session and the schedules. That is for the information, but our app is also social, which means attendees can communicate with each other. There is photo feed and photo sharing where people can like and comment. Also, there is the analytical aspect, where we provide the tracking of the behaviors of the users. It is basically an app that not only powers the content, but it also gets people more engaged to give them the ultimate satisfaction of the conferences and events that our clients put out.

TJ Sun- CEO

CEOCFO: *Is it standard for conference goers to be working with mobile apps while they are at the conference?*
Mr. Sun: It depends on the demographics of the members. If it is an all technology-related organization, their members are used to using mobile apps and devices. Some of the more professionals are lagging behind. I would say right now, that this area is one of the hottest areas in the association world. Right now, this is the time that people have started using mobile apps for events and conferences.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach prospective customers?*
Mr. Sun: We reach prospective customers mainly from tradeshows, expos and advertising. We also reach them from the lists that we get, through word of mouth, referral programs and we partner with our third party vendors that are serving in the same space.

CEOCFO: *When you are working with an association or organization, do they know what they want or do you provide them a solution based on your understanding?*
Mr. Sun: I would say that usually it is 80/20 for the clients. They are frequently switching from a mobile vendor and most of the time they already know what they want. That is the reason why they switch. For a majority of them, they started to use this and want to know the pros and cons. Until they see our app, they say they have never known that a mobile app could do so much because they were still locked down into the old thinking of technology. I would say that 80 percent of the people that we show our product to are relived that they have found a solution that is better than what they thought. The other 20 percent know what they want and they will say that the companies they used in the past did not do very well and they want to see what we can offer.

CEOCFO: *How do you ensure user friendliness?*
Mr. Sun: User friendliness is very subjective. We are human beings, and that is why certain products are being sold very well. First of all, we have an excellent team that is very young and energetic, and they download other types of mobile

apps. This helps boosts their creative and inspirational ideas. We want to make sure that anybody can use our app without any instruction. Every single time we create an app for a client, we ask for feedback from our clients and the attendees. We incorporate their remarks and comments and we continue to improve our user interface and user experience on a daily basis.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the items you might be able to include that would surprise people?*
Mr. Sun: We always look for things that we can do differently. We always look for things that people have not done before, instead of looking at what other people have done. We do not want our app to merely replace a program book; we want to show the value of our app. We deliver to our clients the complete success of running their event. We want to expand to areas for more than just attendee use. Every constituent or any stakeholder in the entire event business will be able to use different types of apps to manage their functions and gain the ultimate satisfaction for our clients.

CEOCFO: *How do you keep pleasing and uncluttered visuals?*
Mr. Sun: We review that on a daily basis. Certain things are very subjective, so we always try to put the control back in the hands of our clients. We introduce many areas where we let the clients design how they want the app to look. We provide functionalities, but we try to push the overall look such as coloring, placement and theme back to our client and let them decide. Like I said, things can be very subjective. Someone might like red and someone else likes green. We try to build options into our functionality and let our clients decide instead of us.

CEOCFO: *How long does it take to design an app for a specific company?*
Mr. Sun: It depends on the size of the event. Usually, we will say that we would like to have 2 to 3 months so there is enough time for a perfect app.

> **"If you come to us, you will find that we pay fine attention to detail on all our apps. We want our clients to be happy, so we set their expectations right and our price is more than competitive." – TJ Sun**

CEOCFO: *Is each app custom?*
Mr. Sun: Our app is highly configurable. It is the same infrastructure, but clients can change the icons, look and colors. We still do not consider that a customization. The client will have their own branding, but under the hood, they are all using the same kind of engine that drives the delivery of the content and the visuals.

CEOCFO: *How do you keep up with new trends?*
Mr. Sun: Reading and acting like a kid. We always look for cool gadgets, we participate in shows and we listen to customer feedback.

CEOCFO: *You have a long history working with associations and technology. What have you learned from past experiences that you have been able to bring to Avodigy?*
Mr. Sun: My history is more from the development side, so I am a person who is very realistic. At the end of the day, when the client is not happy with your app, you will only see them once. I think that setting the expectations is my strength and knowing how associations function, think and act. I always try to make sure that I set expectations, so that we provide exactly what is expected. After that, when we go beyond expectations, our clients are thrilled. An app is only as good as the efforts put forth by both sides. Some clients have unrealistic expectations, and those are the clients we will try to work with and educate, so that they know there are many things from their end. Having been in this business so long will help us drive true customer satisfaction.

CEOCFO: *What is ahead for the company?*
Mr. Sun: We are building apps for the attendees, but we want to expand into different entities so that exhibitors, speakers and sponsors can have their own apps. We would like to take our business global. Our staff is from all over the world, and we already have multilingual capabilities. We are definitely taking this outside of the United States.

CEOCFO: *Is there a specific plan in place or is it more in the thought area both in developing apps for different types of clients and the expansion?*
Mr. Sun: We are focused more on the exhibitor app first because of the lead generation. We want to bring value to exhibitors, so they will be able to track the attendees better. We not only want them to track the people and certainly visit their booths, but nowadays with social media, if somebody at a corner or 200 miles away likes an exhibitor, we would want to provide that information to the exhibitor. This could be a potential prospect for them as well. Exhibitors and sponsors are the areas where we want to provide such information capabilities for them. At the same time, if they use our app they will continue to go to our clients' tradeshows. That makes our clients happy. That will be the one area we focus on. Geographically, we would like to focus more on Asia. Considering Europe, we already have a client in England. We are focusing on Europe and South America first and then we will go to Asia. Asia is a little bit further away, but we do have

a lot of connections there; even I do personally. I just do not think they are quite ready, especially in China. Eventually, that is where we definitely want to have a presence.

CEOCFO: *How is business these days?*
Mr. Sun: Business has been doing very well. Every time we get an onsite demo, we can win the business. There are always challenges internally and externally, but business has been good. We are seeing more and more associations starting to recognize that they have to have a mobile app. Otherwise, their members and attendees will demand to have a mobile app based on the features that an app can now provide. To stay ahead of the curve, we have to put in a lot of effort into R&D, implementation and making the process smooth. Business is good, but it is always challenging. If you want to stay ahead of the game, you always have to work hard to earn it.

**CEOCFO:** *Put it all together for our readers; why pay attention to Avodigy?*
Mr. Sun: We are passionate, energetic and we only have one mission in what we do. We want to have happy customers. We are not a huge company yet. We see that we are heading in that direction. If you come to us, you will find that we pay fine attention to detail on all our apps. We want our clients to be happy, so we set their expectations right and our price is more than competitive. We take excellent care of our customers. In my mind, you not only want to offer a great product. Many times, it is our services and attitude that wins your business. Every company starts small, but we see us coming with our number one goal in mind – to have happy customers deliver the best product out there.

BIO: TJ Sun is a proven leader serving member-based organizations across North America. He brings Avodigy clients the benefit of 20 years of experience working with associations of all sizes and specialties to identify and craft intelligent and useful solutions.

Prior to becoming President, Mr. Sun served as Founder and Vice-President of Avectra, where he led technical services and support for Avectra. Mr. Sun was one of the original architects of the netFORUM solution and helped prove out the capabilities of the netFORUM Toolkit, the netFORUM Upgrade Tool and the netFORUM Application Programming Interface (API). Mr. Sun helped grow Avectra into a multi-million dollar enterprise, and today they rank on the Inc 500 list of fastest growing technology companies in America.

Prior to joining Avectra, Mr. Sun served as Founder and Vice President of The Association Software Company (TASC). At TASC, he led the implementation, support and training teams dedicated to the TASS and Interview software systems. Mr. Sun was instrumental in migrating TASS from a DOS-based environment to a MS Windows-based environment and finally to the Web.

Mr. Sun has a Masters Degree in Information Technology from the George Mason University in Virginia and Bachelors of Science from the National Taiwan University in Taiwan.

Eventpedia

powered by: AVODIGY
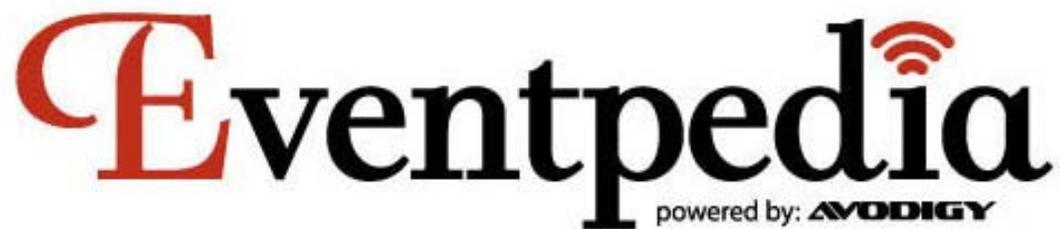
Avodigy

1420 Spring Hill Road, Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102
703.442.4164
www.avodigy.com