Location-Aware Native Event App Platform

Eventbase (formerly known as Xomo) is the world's most trusted event app platform. Eventbase enhances the attendee experience by providing a feature-rich, location-aware, native event app available on popular smartphone and tablet devices. Eventbase Premium powers official native apps for the largest events on earth, including the London 2012 Olympics, South By South West (SXSW), Spring Fair (UK's largest tradeshow), Sundance Film Festival and Lollapalooza. Eventbase also produces Eventbase Free, a self-service app that's perfect for events of any size - including conferences, festivals, sport and community events.

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

CEOCFO: *Mr. Sinclair, what is Eventbase?*

Mr. Sinclair: We are a company that produces apps for many of the largest events in the world. We have a technology platform that enhances the experience for attendees at events, as well as exhibitors and vendors and event organizers themselves.

Jeff Sinclair - Co-Founder

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about events that perhaps your competitors do not?*

Mr. Sinclair: We really focus on use cases and how mobile devices can enhance the experience for people that have those events. We spend a great deal of time doing usability testing, actually watching real people use our apps. The user experience is something we really focus on and is what differentiates us as a company. The companies that choose to go with us are doing it based on their commitment to user experience and that is how we have been able attract the best events in the world.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned from watching people that surprised you?*

Mr. Sinclair: The whole company is built around the very first use case where we were acting on the idea that people want to know what is happening around them. The use case for mobile is you are at an event, you pull out your device and you want to know what is going on next or what to do next. I think that use case remains very strong.

What we have learned is the way that apps are used at events is evolving. The expectation about what the event app does has come a long way in just a few years. It went from the mobile app being a source of information like a schedule, to now where we are using the mobile app to help people interact with each other so they are networking and making transactions through their phones. It is allowing them to exchange contact information or eventually they will be paying for things at events using their phone.

The second thing we have learned is that your app is not only useful at the event, but before and after as well. Many more people are using the app before the event to plan ahead, create a personal schedule to try to explore what is going to be there to plan their experience. That is something that we are putting an emphasis on. The event app is something which now lives year round. It is very useful when you are at the event, but after the event people use it to reflect on what has happened and plan for next year. We're focused on the event lifecycle and not just when people are at the event and on their site.

CEOCFO: *What is it about your apps that encourage people to look at it before, look at it after and use it much longer term than they might with someone else's product?*

Mr. Sinclair: When you look at most conference or trade show apps, they look boring and bland. Very large conferences and trade shows have apps that are very focused on getting you access to base level information, but we really focus on user experience and making it very visually exciting. Our apps look very different from our competitors, so people enjoy using them much more. At South By Southwest, which is one of our biggest events, the average person opens the app 14 times per day and spends a great deal of time on it. For many people it is more popular than Facebook during the event. Focusing on these cases and making a really enjoyable user experience means that people want to tell their friends about it.

CEOCFO: *How do potential clients find you? Do you reach out?*

Mr. Sinclair: We have been developing great technology and most of the clients find us through referrals or they go to an event and see that we have done the apps and find us that way. We do not have a large marketing or sales team, so we are dealing only with companies that called us. For the most part, we are not doing outbound calling. Many of our competitors hire for example 30 outbound sales people who are really trying to push themselves onto event organizers. Because we are dealing with premium events, we try to make a name for ourselves as the go to company in this space. There are definitely cheaper solutions in the market. Many of our competitors are trying to compete by grinding each other down in price, so the price point is lower. Ultimately, we have been very good at keeping customers happy and have a very deep customer base in each of the sectors that we are in, which has been key.

> **"Facilitating transactions and providing offers on your mobile phone at exactly the right time is key." - Jeff Sinclair**

CEOCFO: *What is involved in creating an app?*

Mr. Sinclair: A typical turnaround time for an app is 6-8 weeks for the typical platform. A key for us is we actually start the development looking at wire frames and helping our clients understand what are the major use cases, rather than saying "Here are your choices, which ones do you want?" We start with trying to understand the different types of users that are at their events.

We also like to build fun into the app. There are so many events that are crossover events these days, like South By Southwest does with interactive, film and music. For instance, the Exact Target Connections conference ended with a music festival at the end. We see many other clients trying to build in more fun elements. If you are doing that, you are trying to enhance the experience to make it less dry content and more of an exciting experience that elevates the brand of the event.

Also, we represent the brand in an elegant way. We have custom fonts and graphics and have many layout options. As a result, many of our apps look very different from each other, whereas many of our competitors have a template approach. That can mean they all look just as boring as each other.

CEOCFO: *Why did you recently change the company name?*

Mr. Sinclair: We thought it was a stronger name to go to market with. We want to make sure that our brand is easy to identify. In addition, as we are going more international, Eventbase is an easier name to remember and spell. We had eventbase.com and our technology has been called Eventbase for several years now. It was really to improve the clarity of our message. That was a way for us to go forth with the strongest possible brand.

We also launched a Freemium version of our product recently, which is enabling events at any size to have a free guide inside the Eventbase app. Launching that model, we wanted to make sure it was something a little

more accessible and something that was easy for event organizers to understand. It is just a stronger name to move forward with. The response has been tremendous. It is helping already and we are only two months in.

CEOCFO: *What is next for Eventbase?*

Mr. Sinclair: A big thing for us is focusing on becoming more transactional. We have historically had a licensing model, which was essentially clients paying an annual fee and getting access to our software. Now we are trying to enhance our offering by offering transactional capabilities that generate revenue to our clients. We would get paid if a transaction is successful.

The idea is to use your mobile app to generate more revenue for the events themselves by doing things like unlocking inventory that they had trouble moving before or enabling transactions that was not possible before. For instance, when someone is standing outside of the session you could offer them access to a VIP area that they can pay for through their phone. This could work well as you know where they are and they trust the app. Facilitating transactions and providing offers on your mobile phone at exactly the right time is key.

The other initiative we have is to enable transactions at trade shows. We just launched a Lead Retrieval system for exhibitors at trade shows and that is sold on a per exhibitor basis. The more exhibitors use this feature, the more money the event organizer makes and we participate in that revenue as well. That is a change in model in terms on relying just on license fees alone to moving to more transactional fees. It is something we are really excited about.

BIO: Jeff Sinclair is an accomplished leader with over 15 year's of executive management experience and a proven track record of successfully leading teams of creative, technical and sales professionals. In 2009 he co-founded Eventbase (formerly Xomo), a leader in event app creation. Jeff previously co-founded a digital agency called Intergalactic, specializing in the creation of interactive projects including custom mobile apps, touch screens, motion graphics, 3D animation and websites. Before that Jeff was CEO of The Level, which built a global content management tool used for all of Google's websites, and he managed the products team at StockHouse.com, a popular North American online financial community. Jeff won the 'Top 40 Under 40' Award by Business in Vancouver in 2007, and co-founded the Vancouver Canary Derby in 2008, where tech companies raised $109,000 for research into the early detection of cancer.

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