

Mobile Apps for Events, Conferences, Training and Employee Engagement used by Investment Banks, Insurance, Pharmaceutical and Technology Companies



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CEOCFO: Mr. Phillips, what is Gather Digital?

Mr. Phillips: Gather Digital is an industry leader in providing mobile apps for events, conferences, training programs and employee engagement. Our solution is software as a service (SAAS), so the apps that we provide are highly configurable with no expensive custom coding required. Our apps can be deployed immediately and have a powerful set of features that can be designed and updated from our website at GatherDigital.com.

CEOCFO: What do you understand on a fundamental level about mobile engagement and all the people you need to reach that enables a solution that is a cut above?

Mr. Phillips: We have been fortunate to have a very sophisticated set of customers that we have partnered with for years to help guide the development of our mobile solutions. Gather Digital provides apps for the top five investment banks as well as leading insurance, pharmaceutical and technology companies and we have an integrated vision for how mobile fits into an overall approach for how our clients go to market. Whereas other vendors might be focused on a simple two-day event or trying to create some sort of instant pop up social network for that event, the Gather Digital apps might start out containing one or two events, but soon those apps hold a major user conference, an internal training meeting with tracking of CE credits, as well as department directories and news for the client team. We are seeing a lot of crossover between internal company events and employee engagement functionality or between external events and an ongoing mobile marketing presence. We’ll continue to lead there.

The app lives on the participant’s device all year long and our clients can send them push notifications and make relevant offers. Moreover, with the interactive capabilities Gather Digital makes available in the app, we help our clients to know their participants better and enable shared learning among the participants. We can track end-user behavior, preferences and feedback that create real, actionable insights for our clients. Our clients understand that when their app houses many programs, events and year-round engagement, it becomes a targeted marketing channel. In a way, it cuts through the noise of email. Creating a new way to reach customers and learn more about them is the kind of thing that gets us and our client’s management team excited.

Gather Digital is best in class across a number of dimensions. First, we have a powerful set of features. While other vendors are providing just one piece of the puzzle, we provide an integrated solution. Previously you might have needed a live polling vendor, a CE credits/continuing education credit tracking vendor, a lead scanning hardware and software vendor, a speaker and exhibitor portal for content management, etc. We provide all of those services under one integrated package so that our clients have one view and one integrated set of data for each app user. Second, Gather Digital apps

are highly configurable, completely branded for the client and simple to change on the fly from our online dashboard. Content, buttons and features can all be updated in an instant. Third, our apps are beautiful. They are individually designed for each native platform and reflect well on our clients and their brands. Finally, the Gather Digital apps are road-tested and secure. We are audited by several third parties to ensure that our technology and processes meet the highest standards for security and we're happy to share those reports with our clients.

CEOCFO: *How do you help an organization know what they can do with your system so that they fully utilize it and how do you help with questions along the way?*

Mr. Phillips: We have a dedicated account team assigned to each of our clients. Members of the team not only bring knowledge and expertise on our system, they offer strategic insight and experience from other mobile apps they have developed for our clients. Some of our clients are very sophisticated and have leveraged mobile apps before; for others, it is their first time. Gather Digital has a set of processes and exercises that we take our clients through to help them prioritize what they are trying to accomplish, to understand what some early victories might be in this mobile world and then to think about a long-term road map of how this app or suite of apps might evolve to better serve both their customers and employees.

CEOCFO: *What is an example of some of the features that companies might not typically think of that you offer?*

Mr. Phillips: Gather Digital apps not only provide powerful functionality to users, they also provide a lot of data. So when we work with our clients, one of the things we focus on is how to acquire actionable information from the user's behavior within the app. How can that data drive our clients' businesses forward? Not only can we provide the standard agenda, speaker information and maps, but we think strategically about data gathering and user experience. At what point during a session do we want to take a live poll? Let's also design polling to occur throughout the event at a moment's notice so that we can take the pulse of the event and pull together a more complete picture of a customer. Which materials are they downloading in the app? Which sessions are they choosing to attend and which exhibitors did they check into? That's game-changing data we can send to marketing automation and sales systems on the client side.

CEOCFO: *How do you insure easy use both for the company and for event attendees?*

Mr. Phillips: Many of the event app vendors started as custom software development shops, so they were doing a series of one-off projects, starting from ground zero. Gather Digital was product focused from day one, which means we concentrated on how to make our apps easy to use for end users. We went through many rounds of user testing because we were focused on a single product and experience rather than trying to create fifty completely different experiences. We were able to optimize what that end user experience is. With this product focus, we also designed a content management system for event planners that is easy to use and gives them a tremendous amount of power. There is no custom coding required, so no need to call a developer to make a change. We designed the web interface for our event planners to be able to make a change at a moment's notice and for that change to be sent out to the apps instantly and the apps adjust accordingly.

CEOCFO: *How do you know what the next event trends are so that you are ahead of the curve?*

Mr. Phillips: This is a challenge because the technology is constantly evolving and we are all still learning about what user preferences and concerns about privacy are. It's a challenge that excites us. For example, I think the industry is still trying to understand how to use location within a conference as a source of actionable information and what the best way is to obtain that location information. Many people know about a technology called beacons, which can be placed around the venue and potentially track a user's experience. We've moved quickly from thinking the app could track location to opting to provide location-tracking functionality embedded in an attendee's lanyard. That way it's always with them, always on, and something they can opt into automatically.

But to answer your question, the Gather Digital account teams schedule regular strategic discussions with our clients. We talk to them about their larger strategic priorities, so our development is focused on creating capabilities that make a real difference. We've learned that the onus is on us to make sure these conversations happen and that we are listening and translating those wishes and needs into best-of-breed solutions.

Then we try to anticipate how to best capitalize on the success scenario of our apps living on end user devices all year long and enjoying high usage rates. Our focus is on increasing the data and insight we can glean from our users' behavior and integrating the app as a real-time marketing channel that can deliver that data and send push notifications in the moment to drive that behavior. We think one of the key concepts is personalization. How can the app support providing white-glove treatment to high-value clients? How can the app deliver a truly personal experience—whether at a large trade show or a private event?

Finally, I think as an industry, we need to be focused on security. Gather Digital has invested a lot here, both in processes and technology. Every major release of our apps is reviewed by one of the major mobile security companies. Our server infrastructure and our content management system is security tested on an annual basis and we have a SOC2 report issued on our internal processes and security measures. We are one of the few major app vendors that has gone through that process and had that kind of reporting and security testing performed.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential clients and how do you jump off the page if someone is looking?*

Mr. Phillips: Our best marketing tool is our apps. One of the great things about this industry is that both users and event planners are getting more sophisticated with technology every day. The minute someone uses one of our apps, they can see the difference between our solution and the inferior technologies that some of our competitors provide.

We have a dedicated sales team that is reaching out to potential customers and we have always focused on enterprise and corporate relationships. We have found that once we are able to work with one division at a company, the quality of the work we provide enables us to work across major corporations on a global basis, working with multiple divisions and regions. Expanding within our current client base and working with them strategically on the mobile side has been a great source of growth, learning and success.

CEOCFO: *What is next for Gather Digital?*

Mr. Phillips: We won't be resting on our laurels. We will continue to innovate with events and integrate those efforts with employee and customer engagement initiatives. Housing multiple events and programs inside one app that is equally focused on ongoing marketing and engagement is the future; and we are already a leader there. That mix of real-time and resources ensures ongoing usage. Our app is the hub within a powerful ecosystem and we'll continue to build compelling features, integrate more information and generate more actionable intel for our clients.

