

HubSpot

INBOUND 2013 Marketing Conference

INBOUND, HubSpot's premier marketing and sales conference, has become the must-attend event for business professionals worldwide. The four-day inspirational and educational experience started as a user group summit, but in the past two years, the event has attracted a much broader audience and grown into a top conference for business professionals from around the world. INBOUND 2013 took place August 19-22 in Boston, MA.



In 2011, INBOUND attracted more than 1,000 people. By 2013, that number surpassed 5,400, driven in part by the growth and popularity of the event organizer, HubSpot, which now boasts more than 10,000 customers in 56 countries. During the four days of the event, the #INBOUND13 hashtag trended worldwide and was mentioned more than 66,000 times on Twitter, and within a 30-day window, before, during and after the event, the conference had more than 78,000 tweets.

Highlights



Reduced paper materials by 50% by going mobile



More than 5,400 people downloaded the app



108% adoption rate by both single device and multi-device owners



There were 1.23 million impressions within the app



Users opened the app an average of 33 times each during the conference

Going Mobile (for Real)

According to Ryan Brown, INBOUND Conference Manager at HubSpot, previous mobile solutions used at the conference did not “feel right for the type of event INBOUND was growing into.” The old mobile guide had a lot of the features of a native app, but functioned more like a mobile website, which, unlike a native app, requires a wireless connection in order to work.

As the event grew, HubSpot wanted a native app that would serve as an extension of its brand, and provide the look, feel and functionality that matched the event experience. In addition, the company wanted to move towards a more paperless event. Changes to the program were common, which would quickly render their traditional printed event guide obsolete.

In 2013, INBOUND organizers took engagement to another level by deploying a native event app developed by QuickMobile.

Brown commented, “Our goal with INBOUND is to make the entire experience remarkable for attendees, and an exceptional mobile app is a critical component of how our attendees experience the conference. QuickMobile was fully invested in the success of the event and the app. They were available around the clock, and if we had any issues, we felt fully supported that they would be resolved quickly. QuickMobile’s service also extended into the event, providing on-site support that helped people get more value from the app.”

Setting the Standards for Event Technology

“As people shift towards mobile, there are certain features that users expect to have within an event app,” said Brown. “We included all of those, but we wanted the app to reflect the HubSpot brand and to begin to set new standards for event technology. We wanted to make sure that attendees had all the information at their fingertips and that they could easily recognize the functionality to make their INBOUND experience better. Most importantly, we wanted people to use it.”



The INBOUND app, which was fully branded to match the event, included many of the standard features that QuickMobile offers, as well as custom features.

Some highlights:

- Speaker and session information combined with the app schedule builder allowed attendees to customize their INBOUND experience
- A custom synchronization tool made it easy to switch between tablets and smartphones
- In-app messaging and social media tools helped attendees connect and share
- Surveys were used to capture feedback and impressions on speakers, content, sessions and the overall experience

Tested on Day One

INBOUND was so successful that several sessions were over-subscribed with standing room only or packed sessions. The HubSpot team needed to give attendees access to the content they wanted, so the INBOUND team added encore sessions of popular breakouts, resulting in a huge shift in session timing and locations to ensure the best experience for everyone involved.

The team worked with QuickMobile to adjust the schedule and send notifications to attendees regarding the change, resulting in a seamless experience for attendees and real-time notifications of updates so people could plan their days out in conjunction with the newly updated schedule.

Brown added, “When attendees showed up the next day, they had no idea what had happened behind the scenes to accommodate the crowd and keep things running smoothly. They simply turned on their app and went to the right rooms.”

Social and Engaged Attendees

Attendees were able to download the app a week before the app, and tweets from users started pouring in immediately. This not only helped build buzz and excitement for INBOUND, but also for the app itself.

Among the early tweets were the following:

"Immediate buzz on the #INBOUND13 app - it is very cool first time I'm seeing something like this impressive @QuickMobile"

"Playing with my new @HubSpot #INBOUND13 conference mobile app by @quickmobile. This is the most AWESOME conference app I've ever seen!"



"This app for #INBOUND13 just melted my face! Wow. Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?..."

"@TinaSnyderRI: Getting psyched for #INBOUND13. Loving the new app and looking forward to some awesome sessions."

"The app did exactly what we hoped it would do and more," said Brown. "The positive feedback on social media created an electricity leading up to INBOUND that carried throughout the entire event. It was early proof that we had crafted a really awesome mobile event experience that was getting people excited about the event."

In addition to the early social media buzz, overall app usage during the event exceeded expectations. The app became the single most important tool for event information, engagement and updates. People downloaded the app multiple times to their different devices and spent significant amounts of time browsing, contributing and sharing content.



On the final day of the event, the INBOUND team shared with attendees the following impressive statistics about the INBOUND app:

- *108% adoption rate
- Users spent an average of 53.4 minutes in the app
- 1.23 million impressions/page views
- The app had been opened 197,800 times, on average 33 times per user

*including downloads on multiple devices owned by an attendee

Looking Forward to 2014

“The app helped with many areas of the attendee experience, and we see tremendous opportunities to take it even further and make it even more valuable,” added Brown. “We felt the impact this first year as the usage numbers and social media traffic prove. We connected people to educational opportunities, provided great information, and encouraged sharing and networking, yet there is so much untapped potential that we are excited to use in the future.”

The next app, like the first, will be developed with a focus on how it will enhance the brand and the event experience so that attendees will want to tell all their friends about it. This means building on what was accomplished in 2013, as well as developing additional benefits for exhibitors and sponsors, integrating the registration experience, providing great inspiration through education and networking opportunities, and further pushing the boundaries with QuickMobile.

“We could not have been happier or more impressed with the knowledge and experience that QuickMobile brought to this project,” concluded Brown. “We like to work with world-class solution providers, and we see QuickMobile as the best.”

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