



Fifteen Apps Every Supplier Should Download Now

In the early days of the Internet there was a magazine called *Webmaster*. Each month it arrived on my desk with a list of the newest websites that launched on the World Wide Web. As you can imagine, the rapid proliferation of websites made this publication obsolete as fast as you could say “Information Superhighway.” Well, the same phenomenon has taken place in the world of apps.

Each day there’s a new debut of an app “that’s going to change everything.” Some are flash-in-the-pan apps and some are amazing tools that any supplier can benefit from downloading. Below are 15 such apps that fall in the latter category. Whether it’s managing your business’s finances, staying organized, improving your business travel experience or just finding your car, these apps that can help:

1 Waze

Forget the dashboard GPS or Google Maps. If you’re running late to a meeting, Waze is the way to go. The app offers not only the shortest route to your destination; it also factors in real-time traffic updates. Unlike the local 1010 WINS radio report, this report is crowdsourced. Users are encouraged to indicate where traffic is as they see it

unfold. This makes for some of the most accurate, up-to-date reports you’ll find. Like with other hands-free driving tools, you can simply activate the voice option to guide you as you drive and if you have Bluetooth, you can run the voice through your car audio system. The voice will cut in over the music you’re playing whenever the next turn is near, which is a great option if you’re in for a long ride.

2 Find iPhone

I’m certain a lot of folks are aware of this one. For the uninitiated: *There is no better app* than Find iPhone. Essentially, if you leave your phone or tablet behind your phone’s GPS will tell you where it is. I can say from experience that when one of my family members left her phone sitting by the register at the flower shop the mystery was solved rather quickly. I’ve also used it a number of times just to make sure one of the family devices was still in the house versus next to the Skee Ball game at Dave and Busters. There’s is noth-

ing worse the losing your phone, and this is a miracle cure for these bubble-headed moments we all have.

3 CardMunch

CardMunch also isn’t new, but if it’s new to you you’re going to love it – especially after you’ve collected a lot of business cards at a trade show. The app easily scans a business card and files it away for you as a mobile contact automatically. LinkedIn acquired the app and made it work seamlessly with its networking site. As soon as you’ve scanned in a business card, you can automatically see the contacts that you share with this new connection. It also shows highlights from their LinkedIn profile. All told, it’s a powerful organizational and networking tool.

4 Uber

Anyone who’s used Uber absolutely gushes about it. Here’s the gist: You’re in a city on a business trip and need a cab, but can’t find one. No problem. You tap the Uber

app and schedule a car. You can track your car’s location via GPS to get an accurate estimated time of arrival. The price is clearly posted and you make a cashless transaction. Plus you can split the fare with a friend who may have shared the ride. Most agree that the service is extremely reliable and only slightly more expensive than a typical cab ride. The app also allows you to rate the driver on the service they delivered which keeps everyone polite. This app has become so popular that local taxi companies are scared of its potential.

5 Concur

Taking care of your travel & expense costs is always a small nightmare. Concur is designed to take some of the sting out of this mundane task. This streamlined T&E tool captures pictures of receipts in an IRS-compliant fashion and files them away. It also allows you to report car mileage and even accept or reject employee expense reports using manager access.

6 Mint

It only took one reminder that I was about to miss a payment on a little-used credit card to make me love Mint – a tool that offers one centralized place to view

LastPass stores your passwords and generates new, secure ones so you can stay one step ahead of the hackers.

Sales & Marketing

your credit cards, loan payments, mortgages and bank accounts. It offers reminders when payments are due and allows you to track your budgets. Overall, it's very helpful for giving you a bird's eye view of where your money is going. It's a must-have, especially for suppliers who rely heavily on credit cards.

7 Square Register

While we're on the subject of credit cards, let's imagine you're looking to close the deal and your new client wants to use a credit card. Here's an app that lets you swipe away: Square Register. This breakthrough application allows you accept

payment easily. Once you sign up you get a Square Reader, which attaches to your phone. It accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express. There are no fees, but you pay 2.75% per swipe. The deposit is made to your account in 1-2 business days. (Remember when businesses had to make an imprint of your card using carbon paper? It all seems so quaint now.)

8 AwardWallet

How many frequent flier, hotel, car rental and electronics store rewards programs do you belong to? Do you have any idea how many miles or points that you have in each and what they can be

redeemed for? AwardWallet can help. It offers a centralized place to keep track of all of your loyalty programs. (Think of it as Mint for rewards programs.) As a business owner, these points can add up quickly and the perks can be pretty sweet if you don't let them lapse. AwardWallet lets you know when your balances change and, most importantly, when points are about to expire. It currently supports more than 600 rewards programs.

9 Yelp

Yelp is an app with a near fanatical user base. Simply put, it offers user-based local reviews of services, restau-

rants, shopping and entertainment. So if you're traveling on business and don't know what to do or where to take clients, Yelp can help. Even better, if you want to find out where *not* to go, you'll find the reviews to be brutally honest.

10 OpenTable

Speaking of eating out, OpenTable is a Godsend for making reservations. It's an online, real-time reservation service. If you're looking to secure a seat at that hot new restaurant (that perhaps you found on Yelp), you can just type in the name to find a date and time and book it. You receive e-mail confirmation directly after you

make the reservation. Trust me, you'll never pick up the phone again to make a reservation. Like Yelp, OpenTable also offers crowdsourced reviews as well as the menu and pictures of the food. And it helps you earn reward points in your newly downloaded AwardWallet.

11 Remember the Milk

This is easily the best app name of the bunch. If you're like me, you keep a lot of lists to help stay organized. Remember the Milk offers smart lists that can be tagged with dates. This allows you to organize yourself based on important deadlines. You can

also share or publish the task lists with co-workers who are working to meet the same deadlines. Additionally, you can search tasks and add new ones wherever you are.

12 LastPass

Can't remember all your passwords? Me neither. This app stores your passwords and generates new, secure ones so you can stay one step ahead of the hackers. Plus it's got a smart tagline: "The last password you have to remember."

13 LogMeIn

I've never used this particular app but it comes highly recommended. Log-

MeIn allows you to access your computer from your iPhone or iPad, and offers free remote access so you can get a hold of that file you need in a pinch. It also allows you to use your PC or Mac applications from your phone.

14 WiFi Finder

The name is kind of self-explanatory, but it's worth noting that in addition to telling you where the WiFi hotspots are, WiFi Finder gives you directions on how to get there. Pretty sweet.

15 Car Compass

I saved the best for last. Tell me I'm not the

only one who can never find their car in the parking lot, at night, in the driving rain? Car Locator is the answer for this all-too-common dilemma. One tap and it guides you back. The interesting thing is that it marks your location when your Bluetooth connection is cut off from your car. Pretty smart. This one's only for Android, but never fear iPhone users, try AR: Augmented Car Finder.

So there you go – 15 apps that will make any supplier's life a little bit easier thanks to the advent of technology. I know that a handful of these examples have changed my life for the better.
