

# How Hanapin Marketing Used Attendee Feedback to Increase Engagement & Retention



## Hero Conf:

This two-and-a-half day annual conference takes place in the US and UK. The event provides over 600 marketers with professional development and education related to paid search and advertising, and networking opportunities with the biggest and brightest in the industry.

## Hanapin Marketing

Hanapin Marketing is a leading US-based advertising agency. They're experts at developing strategies and execution for acquisition-focused paid advertising and social programs.

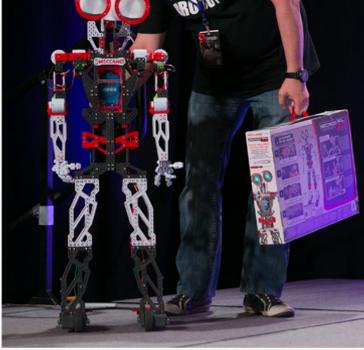


### Meet the Person Behind the Magic

**Audrey Brown**  
Senior Event Manager Hanapin Marketing

Audrey is a team of one and Jane-of-All-Trades, managing the planning and execution of Hanapin Marketing's two annual conferences. Ensuring the organization achieves their event goals is her critical responsibility and success is evaluated using event analytics.

## Attendee Retention Rate



## Event Goals

Hero Conf's overarching goal is to position Hanapin Marketing as a thought leader in the paid advertising space, and increase attendee retention. To improve, the team focused on achieving the following goals to prove the success of the event:

- 1. Provide a top-notch attendee experience**  
The overall design of the event, including the event app, needed to be structured in a way that provided easy access to information. The audience is very data and analytically oriented so it was important for users to be able to have a straightforward experience and easily find information.
- 2. Provide interesting programming**  
To offer the best programming, Audrey needed to understand which topics and speakers were of interest to attendees. With this insight, she would be able to design scheduling around the needs and wants of the audience.
- 3. Increase brand awareness of Hero Conf and Hanapin Marketing**  
To increase the awareness of the conference and link it to Hanapin Marketing's corporate brand, the event app needed to be designed in a way that promoted the brand without being overbearing.

## Why Hanapin Invested in an Event App

Hanapin Marketing first started using EventMobi's event app technology in 2014 after experiencing how it worked at another event. Given that the event caters to a digital-first audience of marketers and advertisers, Audrey knew they were expecting event technology solutions that would keep attendees informed and up-to-date throughout the event.

"Since our attendees are tech-savvy, we felt that giving them a printed program with all the session descriptions and speakers was becoming antiquated. We wanted to add value to the event and the attendee experience by putting it into an event app."  
— Audrey Brown, Senior Event Manager

"We were able to convince leadership that the company would see significant cost savings through the elimination of printed material. Also, we demonstrated how the event app would enable us to improve retention and enhance the overall event experience. Those benefits held a monetary value to our team as well."

## How Audrey Got Buy-In from Leadership

When Hanapin Marketing first introduced an event app into their event experience, the biggest challenge Audrey faced was convincing the leadership team why dedicating event budget was worth the return on investment.

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**Trying to get buy-in from your executive team? Read this guide for tips on how to create a compelling pitch.**

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## How Hanapin Marketing Achieved Their Event Goals

### 1. Provide a Top-Notch Attendee Experience

#### Personalized Scheduling & Speaker Profiles

The schedule for Hero Conf was complex with four concurrent sessions, each catering to a different category of skills and training. Using the personalized scheduling and speaker profile features allowed attendees to view session and speaker descriptions. This enabled attendees to gauge which sessions were of most interest to them and build their own schedules.

"Allowing the attendees to build their schedule and view the session descriptions is really huge for the on-site flow. Also, being able to give folks easy access to the information they want, when they want it, without having to search too hard for it is really important to their overall experience."

"A lot of people are afraid to be the first one to raise their hand or don't want to be identified, so it's awesome to give those people the ability and opportunity to get their questions answered."

#### Feedback Surveys

Before implementing the event app, paper evaluations were used and the completion rate was extremely low.

"At the end of the conference, attendees don't have time to sit down and give feedback. Having the survey questions open for a week after the event and easily accessible allows people to get back to their office and fill out the survey on their own time. It's higher quality feedback because it gives them time to refer back to the sessions and consider what they found most valuable."  
— Audrey Brown, Senior Event Manager

The Q&A feature was actually attendees' most favored part of the event app, based on survey feedback. Not only did it enable people to ask questions, but it also allowed questions to be upvoted by other attendees. For Audrey, this provided great insight into what content was important and of interest to attendees, as well as provided feedback to speakers.

"From the survey feedback, people said the Q&A portion was one of the most valuable pieces of them. They appreciated the use of the app to submit questions and upvote. It's so cool they found that worthy enough to call out."  
— Audrey Brown, Senior Event Manager



#### Push Notifications

Using alerts within the event app allowed Audrey to communicate last-minute updates, for example, scheduling changes. "We had a speaker that couldn't make it last minute, so it was a fantastic way to mass communicate a change in the agenda," says Audrey.

#### Live Polling and Q&A

Increasing engagement during speaker sessions was a priority for the organizing team. With live polling and Q&A features, audience members were able to participate in the session and ask a question in a very easy and non-confrontational way.



### 2. Provide Interesting Programming

#### Session Feedback Surveys

For every session, the events team evaluated the speaker based on their content, presentation style, and audience feedback. This information is used as a guiding light when creating the programming for the follow year's event. The top ten highest rated speakers got an automatic invite back so this incentivized session speakers to promote the feedback surveys in the event app.

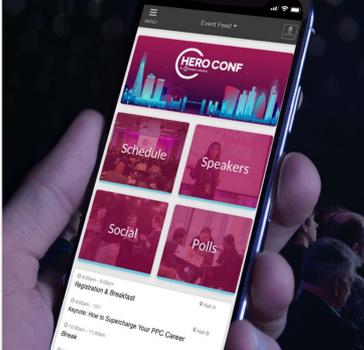
All of the feedback Hanapin Marketing collects also helps Hero Conf retain and attract the best speakers. "Our speakers absolutely love that they get individual session feedback. We believe in transparency, so we share the feedback—whether speakers get an awesome score or a poor score. I think that sets us apart from a lot of the other conferences. Our speakers feel we're helping them with their professional development and career advancement."

"We initially invested into an event app because we wanted to run a tech-savvy event. A great byproduct was that it provided us huge cost savings in printed materials and to become greener. What we didn't realize at the time was the incredible amount of feedback and insight we were able to gather through the event app."

### 3. Increase brand awareness of Hero Conf and Hanapin Marketing

#### Customizable Event App Design

EventMobi's event app enabled Audrey to customize the design and event needs and included touchpoints with users. "I really love that almost everything is customizable—the splash screens, module buttons, banner ads, social links, just to name a few things. We were able to place our brand everywhere we wanted to."



## Results

### Hero Conf achieves its highest attendee retention rate

Audrey and her team achieved an attendee retention rate of 45% for Hero Conf. "That is astronomical compared to other events. Aiming for 15% to 20% is pretty good. 30% is outstanding. So, us landing at 45% is validation that we're putting on an event people want to come back to," says Audrey.

#### Audrey checks this up to several factors:

- Easing communication streams with attendees via a branded event app
- Truly understanding what attendees want to learn by capturing more attendee feedback
- Creating valuable engagement opportunities between the speakers and audience with digital question submission and upvoting
- Retaining top speakers by sharing in-depth attendee feedback
- Creating a better overall experience for a tech savvy audience
- Reinvesting event budget saved from printed materials back into swag and food and beverage for attendees

— Attendee Feedback —  
"I appreciated the use of the app to submit questions and the effort of the moderators to get to as many questions as possible."

"We retained 45% of attendees that came to the year prior. I feel like the Event App keeps our conference fresh, sleek, and ahead of the competition."

**Thinking of investing in an event app? Here's a guide that will help you decide if you should build or buy.**

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## Audrey's Top Tips For Using an Event App to Engage Attendees

"The investment in an event app is worth it. As a planner, the main goal is to set attendees up for success and make them feel like the event is worth their time.

Having an app that lays out everything offered at the event and makes them feel like their input is valued is an instrumental way to do this. Attendees can carry around everything there is to know about your event on their smartphone or tablet and reference it at any time. It's fantastic for the attendee experience."

### Determine what you need in an event app

Audrey says when looking at investing in an event app, consider your needs and which features best fit those requirements. "Choose the vendor that's suitable for your team and is aligned with your goals. Is the priority for it to be user-friendly? For it to be creative and offer gamification options? What kind of budget are you working with?"

She also notes to be aware of any data privacy or protection protocols that will be important to your company and/or attendees. "We have app security and users must accept the Terms of Use. If you run international events, in particular, looking for providers that have General Data Protection Regulation-compliance features will likely be important to you," says Audrey.

If you need to sell the idea internally to your team, consider explaining how costs can be offset via sponsorship opportunities within the event and cutting back on printing. Audrey says it's also important to highlight how efficiently you can collect attendee insights and feedback with the right tool.

### Promote your event app by showing attendees the possibilities

Attendees may be shy to use features in your event technology or chat with one another. Audrey says planners should do the work of showing them the value first and inspiring them with how it can be used. For instance, have instructions for using features on collateral around your event and in presentations.

"We've always have general signage about the wifi and app downloads, and we promote as much as we can via email. Also, our MC in the welcoming remarks always calls out to download and use the app," says Audrey.

A new technique they tried this year was placing individual promo cards in easy-to-access areas. "This year, we incorporated the app download instructions on our centerpieces in our general ballroom sessions. It was amazing! I spent significantly less time answering questions—and when you're running around on-site, that's really helpful!," says Audrey.



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