

# **Mobile Technologies in Corporate Event Sector: description, implementation and future opportunities.**

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<b>Thesis title</b> Mobile Technologies in Corporate Event Sector: description, implementation and future opportunities.	<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> <b>74 + 7</b>
<p>Mobile Technologies are developing quickly and playing a great role in the Event Management processes. New software is evolving, convincing event professionals and companies to implement it.</p> <p>The research looks into the world of Mobile Technology in Corporate events sector. What is the current situation? What are the main trends of the Mobile Technology world? What features and possibilities do they have?</p> <p>Research studies the attitude towards Mobile Technology from the event attendee's perspective and event producing companies point of view. Giving the overall picture of added value that Mobile Technology brings, main obstacles that people face while using software and future perspectives. Thus, the main goal is to examine and study the Mobile Technologies in Corporate Events Sector for all event professionals in order to implement them or to bring changes into already existing Mobile Technologies they are using.</p> <p>Research methods are online survey for event attendees and semi-structured interviews with representatives of event producing companies. The interviews were done with Finland-based companies and the online survey was open to everyone and collected the answers of event attendees from all over the world. Survey and interviews were completed in 3 months.</p> <p>Results of the study showed high level of Mobile Technology grow in the field of Corporate events. People are already using many of studied Mobile Technologies and the results are varying for different age groups and frequent/rare attendees. Engagement is seen by many professionals as the key feature of Mobile Technologies, but the results are showing minority people using this features. Engagement features are popular among age group 25-44. Younger generation is mostly interested in personalization. Functionality and user experience are one of the main obstacles from both attendees and event companies' perspective. Future perspectives according to event producing company's representatives are pleasant and positive. They predict grow in the number of developers, software supply, interest in Mobile Technology on the market and number of people using Mobile Technology at the events.</p> <p>The topic is vast and further research can be made in order to examine new and already existing Mobile Features for Corporate event sector, making attendees experience better and more event management more effective.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Mobile apps, Event Management, Conference Management, Mobile Technology	

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# 1 Introduction

Event Industry has changed significantly during the last 20 years. Trends in technology are shaping the industry more than others. Percentage of people using smartphones is growing steadily in all countries of the world and Finland is not an exception.

People are using smartphones and tablets for online search for venues, online staffing, online payments and many other event-related tasks.

According to the research, made by Event Management Blog, 59% of Event Management Professionals do not use an event mobile app and 53% of them are looking to get one in the future. The topic is conversional as there is a high interest towards mobile technology on one hand and high level of frustration and uncertainty towards mobile technology on the other. One issue is clear- we live in the technological epoch and Generation Y, who are mostly early adopters are forming the workforce.

Trends in communication between the audience and speakers, such as audio beacons, hybrid events and live streaming through periscope, digital gift bags and vegetarian option in menu- the list of innovations is vast and not all trends are long-lasting.

This study is focusing on the Mobile Technologies for Corporate event sector. Different mobile technologies will be presented in this study, analysed and reviewed. What are the main groups of Mobile Technologies for Corporate events there are on the market right now? What is the added value of them to the attendees and to the event producing companies? What are the main drawbacks and obstacles and what is the future of Mobile Technology? This study is answering all these questions and more.

There is no set up commissioner for the thesis. The study is meant for all event professionals. It provides core information about the attendee's attitude towards Mobile Technology and event producing companies' attitude. Thus, every event professional can get more information what attendees are more and less interested in, what is the situation on the market and what competitors are using. What are the key players on the event market in Finland and what are thinking about Mobile Technology? What is their attitude towards it? The study is independent, hence, all event professionals can benefit from this research, implement and use the results of it in their work to create better events, more effective and technological. Make attendees more engaged, interested and loyal in their events.

Research also represents core information for software developing companies, who are focused on the native and web applications for event management solutions. Software

developing companies may use the data collected from potential event attendees on their preferences and event producing companies needs for developing and creating a better event platform, more useful and helpful for both parties.

Research results will be distributed via email to the participants of the research (on-line survey) and as well, to those who were interviewed. Results will be published online on my LinkedIn page, providing the access to this research to everyone.

### **1.1 Aims and Objectives**

Aim of this work is firstly, to study Mobile Technologies for Conferences, Meetings, Exhibitions and Incentives. Secondly, to evaluate the necessity and interest towards different technologies from the attendees' perspective. Thirdly, key objective is to study the interest and attitude of event producing companies towards event software by interviewing event producing companies.

Research will include study of different mobile technologies for MICE events - types, features and possibilities they have. The value they create for business and for attendees will be also discussed. The study will include the current situation in the Event Management Industry, trends, innovations and study of human behaviour towards the mobile technologies, trends and expectations. Research also will provide a picture of future perspectives from the event producing companies point of view.

### **1.2 Structure and conduct of study**

The study consists two main parts: theoretical frame and empirical part. The theoretical part is divided into Events section and Mobile Technologies section. In the first section origins of event and current situation is discussed as well as listed different types of events and their features. The emphasis is made on the MICE sector with conferences, exhibitions, meetings and incentives. Business, or MICE sector, is the most appropriate place for mobile technology implementation due to many factors that will be discussed further.

Also, main trends in the industry are discussed and the study comes to technological trends and second section of theory part. In the second section the discussion is going about the Technologies that are shaping and changing the industry. The core values that mobile technology is bringing to business and to people attending the events. Moreover, key features and possibilities of mobile technologies are discussed in second section and

formed in 4 groups: General Features, Communication & Personalization Features, Engagement & Interaction and Monetization Features.

Empirical part consists of a research description, aims, methods and results. The research was conducted during 3 months and using online survey method and semi-structured interviews.

Discussion part looks into the key findings and their significance, analysis of the situation and future perspectives. Additionally, further research opportunities are reviewed.

### **1.3 Methods**

The data collection is done by two methods.

Firstly, survey was conducted for the target audience of my research group (People who are potentially interested in attending conferences). The survey was done with the Webropol tool. Social media channels, such as LinkedIn and Facebook and face-to-face interviews with target audience were used for collecting the data. The methods are quantitative and qualitative.

Secondly, the data was collected from the event producing companies. The method was qualitative and the interviews were conducted with the employees of the company.

### **1.4 Limitations**

Events that are studied are: Meetings, Conferences, Incentives and Exhibitions.

Mobile Technologies for Special events such as: festivals, sport events, religious events and private events are not studied.

Mobile technology, that is studied, connected with mobile devices and tablets mostly. Visual, audio and other technological innovations that are not connected with mobile devices are not presented in this work.

Research regarding the attitude of people towards Mobile Technologies is for people who are potential MICE attendees. These people are in the age group 15-44, most of them are 30+, majority have vast working experience in some particular industry (ex. IT) and they are attending professional conferences, meeting, exhibitions etc.

## **2 Event Management Industry**

This chapter looks into the roots of Event Industry generally and Corporate Event Sector in particular. The event landscape is vast and specific groups of events can be divide out of it: Business or Corporate events. This group presents main interest for the research and thus, the emphasis of this chapter is on it. Classification and discussion about the Corporate event sector, its origins and current situation, structure and its trends are presented in this chapter.

### **2.1 Roots and landscape**

In most definitions of events we will find that event is a temporal phenomenon.

According to (Getz, 2007), "Event is an occurrence at a given place and time; a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy occurrence".

Word Event comes from Latin word "eventus" which means an event, occurrence.

Event is a "planned public or social occasion", according to Oxford Dictionary.

Events have their roots in the ancient history. They are documented in the historical period before the fall of Western Roman Empire (A.D. 476). They had important social functions, such as sharing rituals and socialization. (Razaq Raj, 2009)

Nevertheless, the event management as we know it today did not exist. The lack of planning processes or its absence at all was typical for events in historical times. Events were held because they were needed. "Markets and fairs were necessary for trade, parties and celebrations fit organically into everyday life, games were not professionalized as sport." (Getz, 2007)

During all human history, different events were celebrated according to the rules of the time and with different purposes. Most of them were aiming at controlling the public, especially in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and approval of social and moral values, signified the unity of the society. Events were very important as during them people were stepping out of their everyday life and routine. At events people had a chance to eat heavily, to feel idleness and moral free.

Ancient and Medieval events were religious celebrations, carnivals, town holidays or dedicated to new harvest. In modern society, especially in western cultures, people are becoming less religious. The culture becomes more and more individual. People tend to cel-

celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries more than Easter Holidays. Nevertheless, demand for socialization is still strong, and nowadays, public events are making a considerable contribution to the cultural and economic development of countries where they are held.

Modern events vary in their sizes, from small events for 10 people to massive events to millions of attendees (for example 4.2 millions of people at the Rob Stewart concert in Rio de Janeiro, 1994). They vary in their purposes, objectives and stakeholders.

Due to the commerce, events are not connected with the seasons and heritage sites. They are one of the main tools in the local economy growth. Events are enhancing the local hosting sector, as well as developing the local industries and businesses that are aiming at tourists. Events are helping to create a strong brand of the city or country and promote it. Flow festival in Helsinki in 2015 brought 70,000 attendees from all over the world, creating a brand new image of Helsinki for young people. Events are also often aiming at establishing and strengthening of the international relationships and communication. Educational and business events are promoting and facilitating trade, knowledge and experience exchange.

Events are using diverse range of services. Technical and venue services, sound and lightning, musicians, web developers, catering, security and thousands of other services. Thus, events are contributing into growth of all these event supporting services and labour market. (Razaq Raj, 2009)

Among different methods of communication, events are most powerful ones. This happens because people are tending to remember emotions more than knowledge. They might forget the concrete numbers and specific information, but they will remember how the event made them feel. Experience management and creating unforgettable feelings at the event are one of the main aims of all events.

## **2.2 Disadvantages and social security issues**

Along with number of benefits, events can cause troubles. Social disadvantages of events may be:

Inconvenience-when during one-day event local people cannot find a parking place in their town, behavioural consequences- increase in crime. (Charles Bladen, 2012) The other factor is a terrorism threat. Although, in most cases security control during the events is strong, threat of terrorism at the crowded event is also one of the cons of event. For example, November attacks in Paris, at the sport stadium Stade de France during the

football match or bombings at Boston Marathon in April 2013. In today's instable world, large gatherings of people require highest levels of security and safety management. (Silvers, 2008)

Technologies and social media are contributing to the development of terrorism and these organizations might use mobile apps like Telegram, WhatsApp and other social networks in their purposes.

"The Internet offers a simple access to a global stage, every terrorist could instantly reach large masses or targets specific groups of individuals. ...Resources of the Internet could offer anonymity to the user, a great advantage for a terrorist organization that wants to spread their message while remaining undetected."

(Paganini, 2016)

## **2.3 Corporate events sector**

This chapter is taking a closer look at the Conference Industry and its main features.

Conference Industry is the part of event industry, where mobile technologies can be applied most successfully and where event professionals are already using these technologies.

In this sub chapter, origins of the Conference Management are discussed as well as current situation of the market. The main focus is on the structure of the conference industry. The main figures in the market, their main features and differences are reviewed in this sub-chapter as well as typical delegate on different conferences and his preferences. This represents a particular interest, as for implementation of Mobile Technologies at Conferences vital complete and clear understanding the target audience and their needs.

### **2.3.1 Origins and current situation**

Conference Industry is young compared to others. However, it is growing rapidly and already occupies a significant niche.

Conferences have originally occurred in Europe and North America and now they are being held internationally. It would be true to say that meetings appeared with the first villages of ancient people, when they were gathering together to discuss their problems.

(Fenich, 2012) Trade and commerce were driving the meetings industry in Roman times in Britain and Ireland. (Shone, 1998)

Today, the face of modern conference changed notably. During last several decades, conferences were traditionally part of business tourism. Although they are still closely related with tourism, today conferences are more independent and have different forms such as:

summit, meeting, incentive, congress, briefing, training, incentive and many others.  
(Rogers, 2013)

Tony Rogers (Rogers, 2008), in his second edition of the book *Conferences and Conventions* is talking about lack of market intelligence towards the conferences. He is claiming that due to the difficulty in demonstrating economical results from the conferences, the governments are not taking the industry seriously. The problem of measuring the success of conferences remains. However, numbers of research and analytics conducted by, for example, Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre in Australia are targeted to solve this lack of intelligence.

As was mentioned before, tourism and events have a great influence on such industries as hospitality, transportation, restaurant and catering. Thus, information from the researches and reliable data will help the industry to grow and develop.  
(Rogers, 2008)

The unstandardized terminology in the sector is also one of the causes for the difficulties in research. In its turn, this is due to the “underdeveloped educational framework” (Rogers, 2008). People who are today working in the conference and meeting industry have the education in some related fields like hospitality or business administration. Clearly defined terminology would have certainly positive effect on the industry on the whole.

Conferences have a number of specific benefits such as greater profitability, activity through all year and improving the quality of life. Business tourists who are coming for conferences are likely to spend up to 3 times more money during their visits than all other categories of visitors (International Passenger Survey 2005). As well, conferences are great future investments. Delegates who had pleasant experience after the conference in a particular city are not only likely to come back, but being influential people, they might promote destination for others.  
(Rogers, 2008)

### **Business Events**

Business events are also often called MICE include meetings, incentives, conferences and corporate events and represent particular interest for this work. “This sector is largely characterised by its business and trade focus, although there is a strong public and tourism aspect to many of its activities.” (Glenn Bowdin, 2011) The purposes of business events are facilitating trade, cooperation, negotiations, knowledge exchange between people. Conferences will be discussed in more details, as they are one of the event types where mobile technologies can be implemented most successfully.

### **Corporate events**

This category includes incentive travels, corporate hospitality, team buildings and meetings, trainings and entertainment. (Rogers, 2008)

According to (Charles Bladen, 2012), Corporate events are “produced by or for business, with a primary purpose of supporting business grow”. Business relations are key focus in corporate events.

Corporate events are closely related with tourism industry and hospitality as it provides grow and sales in these sectors.

During last 2 decades there is a significant grow in B2B planned events sector. The reasons for it are internal: increasing corporate visibility, driving sales, improving staff morale and broker relationships between firms and external: globalization, municipal promotional strategies, technological advances and development in travel. Large companies are considering corporate events among core activities and hiring internal event managers or outsourcing. (Charles Bladen, 2012)

**Incentives**, as a part of corporate events, are representing the way to reward employers are increase loyalty to the company. However, the EIBTM’s Trend and Market Report indicated the downturn in incentives and indicated that economic crisis of 2008 affected the incentives more than others in the corporate sector.

**Conferences** are “assemblies for the purpose of conferring and discussion, and should be small enough to facilitate interaction” (Getz, 2007). Main objectives of conference include discussion, problem solving, fact-finding and many others. Conferences vary in size, length, content, but in majority they are focused on a specific topic which is discussed by key speakers on the plenary session, panel discussions and different workshops and smaller lectures (Charles Bladen, 2012). Donald Getz (Getz, 2007) claims that people are motivated to attend conferences to “fulfil part of their business or job description” and (Charles Bladen, 2012) suggests that people are searching for content (information attendees are given) and networking (information and people they meet).

**Exhibitions** form significant part of business events. They can be described as events that bring together buyers and sellers in particular industry. They include agricultural shows, consumer shows, specialized trade shows and exhibitions and private exhibitions. According to (Glenn Bowdin, 2011), during last years emerged a new term- confex, which combine the exhibition and conference. Exhibitions may be categorized by the venue



type: qualifying venue, non-qualifying venue or mixed, where qualifying venue has to be at least 2000m<sup>2</sup> of continuous covered space). (Glenn Bowdin, 2011)

### **2.3.2 Structure of the conference industry**

Likewise other industries, conference industry consist of buyers and suppliers.

The buyers are usually event managers and organizers, who are 'buying' venues, technical support and other services in order to conduct a conference. Two main types of buyers are corporate buyers and associations.

Corporate buyers are companies who provide services or producing and manufacturing who are organizing a conference. They might have their own internal department for conference management activities or they are outsourcing conference organizing company. Most of the companies does not have department responsible for conference organizing. Moreover, during the economic downturns, such departments are closing first to save budget.

Main types of corporate meetings according to (Rogers, 2013) are may be divided into two groups: internal and external events. Internal events are targeted for employees and external events, such as product launch is aiming at building strong Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Rob Davidson (Davidson, 2014) besides Internal-solely for companies' employees and External-attended by people outside the company is adding to this classification Mixed- events that include employees and non-employees of the company who are funding the event.

Most common types of corporate meetings according to (Rogers, 2013) are:

- Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Board Meeting
- Corporate Hospitality
- Exhibition
- Incentive Travel
- Road show
- Product Launch
- Sales Conference
- Training Course
- Technical Conference
- Team building event

- Symposium

(Davidson, 2014) classifies the Corporate events into

- Annual general Meetings
- Sales Meetings
- Staff Trainings
- Product Launches
- Incentive Trips

Moreover, (Davidson, 2014) is offering classification by purpose:

- Legal/Constitutional- purpose of electing and voting on people or business strategies
- Commercial- Sales Increasing
- Social- Team building, Networking

Venues for corporate events are mostly hotels and special conference and meetings centres. Compared to association conferences, corporate conferences are planned few months ahead, as the amount of delegates at the conference is from 10 to 200. The budget for corporate conferences is higher than for association conferences.

(Rogers, 2013)

### **Typical delegate**

The average age of delegates from the corporate buyers is 38 and 64% of attendees are male. They are holding senior or middle management positions (60%), accountants (16%), general administration (15%) and attending about 3 conferences a year. (Rogers, 2013)

According to (David Seekings, 1999), October is the most popular month for Corporate Conferences and it still remains the most popular month today (Rogers, 2013), although, corporate events are held year-round. The length of corporate events is 0.5-1.5 days usually.

The **associations** are other type of buyers. Associations may be professional, trade or voluntary. Members are joining for the personal reasons like hobbies and common interest or professional reasons.

The primary difference is that attendees are not being asked to come by their employer, but they decide themselves whether they want to attend the conference or not. Hence, they have to pay for themselves and they require a wider range of accommodation and transportation facilities. At the same time, association conferences attract more attendees than corporate conferences. (Rogers, 2013)

Association conferences, requires research work, regarding the venue, destination and other issues and conference organizer has to provide research to the committee, who will make final decisions. (Rogers, 2013)

Associations are being planned years ahead, compared to corporate conference. The reason for it is the high number of participants and limited choice of venues. Some convention centres have reservations for around 10 years ahead. (Rogers, 2013)

Rotations are also important to consider, as some conference have patterns and they are following them strictly. For example, north-south locations, in that case in one year conference is being held in northern country like Finland, and in other it will be in South Africa. Some conferences are staying in one destination, but most of them are trying to find new destinations for their conferences. (Rogers, 2013)

In spite of number of differences between corporate and association conferences, they have one thing in common. According to (British Meetings & Events Industry Survey , 2011-2012) interesting content, relevant to work/daily life is what makes an event successful and the most important current issue is attendees increased expectations of events.

The public sector buyer represents governmental organizations, educational and health sectors and usually it is considered as a part of association buyers. The other type of buyer is entrepreneurial buyer. Entrepreneurial buyer is organizing a conference on a specific relevant and interesting for audience topic and making profit by selling tickets. Entrepreneurial buyer risks more than others but able to make good profits if succeeds.

Suppliers are those who possess the venues that buyers are hiring, destinations and a wide range of event related services. Today, number of those suppliers is growing and industry rely on those suppliers.

(Rogers, 2013)

Additionally, besides the buyers and suppliers, there are hundreds of agencies and intermediaries. They can be characterised as both suppliers and buyers. They are buyers as they are working for companies or associations and they are intermediaries between the client and suppliers. Agencies can consist of group of people or even one person. Such agencies and intermediaries may be venue finding agencies, conference, exhibitions or-

ganizers, incentive travel houses, business travel agencies and destination management companies. Other important trade and professional associations as Association Internationale des Palais de Congres (AIPC), International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE) and many others are helping the industry to function professionally.

(Rogers, 2013)

### **2.3.3 Trends**

Global trends in the world are affecting the Conferences, their purposes and methods. Internet provides us instant communication and access to information and knowledge. Google, Wikipedia and thousands of other information channels changed the way we learn and interact for ever. Nevertheless, global trends are shaping the conference industry but the core objectives of conferences are remaining the same. Today, conferences and meetings according to (Joint Meetings Industry Council, 2008) are:

“primary engines of both economic and professional development, key vehicles for not just sharing information-something, that, in many cases, can be done just as effectively on the internet- but building the kind of understanding, relationships and confidence that can only be achieved on a face-to-face basis”.

The Joint Meeting Industry Council article is continuing with the economic role of Conferences, adding:

“gatherings bring what is often world class knowledge and expertise within the grasp of local businesses and professionals, improving overall knowledge in ways that would not otherwise be possible”.

Thus, conferences are not simply sharing the information tool; they are political and economic tool. Conferences are gathering together professionals from different parts of the world, enabling networking and building relationships.

Juraj Holub, Marketing Manager & Meeting Designer at sli.do blog, conducted several interviews with Event and Meetings professionals on the topic of future of the conference industry and some of the main trends are presented below.

Trends in the conference industry are undoubtedly connected with the target audience, their age and interests. In the near future, generation Y will be main labour on the market.

Rob Davidson, Managing Director at MICE Knowledge thinks that:

"The people who will determine the future design of conferences are Generation Y, those born between 1977 and 1995, who are on the way to becoming the dominant age-group. By 2025, 75% of the world's working population will be Generation Y..."

(Davidson, 2014)

Rob Davidson is also claiming that presentation length will be also minimized up to 20 min.

According to Jan-Jaap In der Maur, Professional Moderator and Owner of Masters in Moderation and Rob Davidson, Generation Y will expect more interaction, more involvement into the process of conferences. Kristin Arnold, High Stakes Meeting Facilitator is adding that attendees are aiming at active and dynamic learning, building networks, connection and cooperation.

The study, made by MPI (2012) suggests that new generation will search for such topics as professional development; they will seek for "personalization, concise content and visible technology".

**Online staffing** as well as online platform for **venue search** is highly convenient way to manage events without travel costs and at one place. Online venue search is particularly very interesting as it is not well known and yet. Same way as the Airbnb services works, new technologies enable to search for venues. Such online platforms as [www.meetingsbooker.com](http://www.meetingsbooker.com) are offering many meeting facilities. However, there is a lack of creative and "special" places for events in other than USA countries. The industry is working extremely fast and probably in a few months new destinations and web pages will occur. Venues are also changing the way how they look. They are more creative, innovative and less "boring". People are tired of hotel meeting spaces and they are ready for something more. Lofts and creative spaces are becoming more popular.

(Solaris, 2015), (Wynant, 2015)

Miguel Neves, Senior Online Community Manager at IMEX, thinks that people will start to use all 5 senses. Video and audio engagement is not enough for new generations and event professionals need to think how to use other senses.

Michael Heipel, Owner Michael Heipel Concept & Consulting, is saying about information flow: people have information sources everywhere, however it is hard and time consuming

to find the relevant and trustable source, thus conferences are there to guide and present qualitative and credible information.

Technology will be involved more, according to Liz King, CEO of Techsytalk. With more strategic approach toward technology conferences will be more measurable. Further, more insides into the technological trends will be presented.

Engagement and technology are the most important issues for developing in near future. Numerous blogs and vlogs (video blogs) are very powerful. Bloggers today are not ordinary people who are writing about life in front of their computers, they are influencers of XXI century. According to McKinsey research, paid advertising is working twice weaker than word of mouth marketing. Brand influencers are conducting this word of mouth functions. They represent products from their perspective, as basic users. Influencers in Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr, Vimeo and other social networks are extremely powerful today as they bring insides to the goods and services for customers and they “speak on customers’ language”.

(Wong, 2014)

Along with listed trends, there are hundreds of others that affects market situation change every day. New software, applications, web pages and tools are arising constantly and thus changing the event land scape.

### **Hybrid events**

Hybrid events are symbiosis of live and web events. Hybrid events reach a lot of aims of event producers as they are engaging and interactive and at the same time they combine convenience, cost savings. Moreover, hybrid events are expanding the event by reaching virtual audience.

Virtual components of the hybrid event can be as follows:

- Live audio or video streaming
- Online presentations
- Hybrid Event Webcast with synchronized slides alongside the live and achieved webcast video presentations
- Online chat or discussion forum facilities
- Online blogging
- Live photographers

- Integration of social media tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr and etc.

Moreover, cost effectiveness can be reached by increase revenue by selling live or on-demand access online to attendees, selling webcast sponsorship to exhibitors and sponsors and at the same time eliminate the need for note-taking by revisiting sessions to review key points and as following, eliminate the need to spread the hand-out flyers, brochures and CD/DVD materials. (Smith, 2013)

### **Event Sustainability**

Environmental issues today are the main concerns all over the world. Conference and conventions industry in general is not an exception. Barbara Maple in her article “Does Anyone Really Care?” (Maple, 2007) is claiming that sustainability is no longer a “good thing to do” but it is a “requirement for being able to operate at all”. British Standards, Copenhagen Sustainable Protocols and ISO 20212 are all founded in order to help the industry to operate and conduct events in more sustainable manner. The first “green” standards were made by Convention Industry Council Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) and The American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM) in February 2012. These standards are covering all the aspects of event planning and management. Mobile Technologies are contributing significantly to Sustainable Events. They are reducing the paper use for the event information such as agenda, key speakers, floor plan, for ticketing issues, registrations. (Rogers, 2013)

### 3 Technology and Event Management

This chapter studies Technology in event management in general and focuses on the Features and possibilities of Mobile Technology for Event Management and especially, Corporate event Management. What is the value of technology for event management? How can different features of Mobile Technologies for event management be classified? This chapter answers these questions.

#### Technology at Events

Nowadays, nearly everyone possesses a smartphone and/or tablet. In Finland 51% of people access the internet at least as often via smartphone as computer, according to the (Consumerbarometer, 2016). Sean Byrnes, founder and chief technology officer, Flurry, is claiming that Mobile Technology evolution is the “fastest evolution that world ever seen”. He also added that “80% of mobile minutes are spent in apps and 84% of mobile device owners spend 1.6 hours per day using those devices while watching TV”. (Nessler, 2012) IBM study conducted in 2011 predicted that in 2016 80% of the world population will possess a smartphone. The main advantages of smartphones are:

- Constantly carried with person
- Constantly online
- “Available at creative impulse” –person can go online in any minute when he needs something.

(Rossler, 2014)

Personalization is term that describes the Mobile Technology Evolution. Businesses are using technology more in order to personalize customers experience and Mobile Apps are playing a great role in that. However, the same technology that brings us so many benefits “separates us and puts up barriers to making deeper face-to-face connections”. According to (Jakobson, 2016), what is why in 2016, we need to engage with attendees more than ever before and create “meaningful experiences that positively affect attendees”.

It is vital to understand the difference in usage between mobile devices and computers. According to (Harvard Business Review , 2013) most of mobile search and use is done when people are at home and in the office. This time is very private and called by (Harvard Business Review , 2013) “ME” time. Although, the key values in the mobile usage are usability and speed (Rowles, 2014). People are using mobile devices more and



more and one third of all time spent online is spent beyond the PC (Mobile Future Focus report, 2013).

In 2008, during the conferences and meetings people were asked to turn off their phones, and even in 2008 only three quarters of delegates were turning mobiles off, according to a survey carried out by venue VVyboston Lakes. "The study questioned 875 delegates and found 75% ignored requests to switch off mobile technology during sessions. Of these, 40% checked devices at least every 30 minutes and 10% every ten minutes." The study at that time were aimed to find the ways to keep audience focused and study how speakers can do it. (Bache, 2008)

Today people are impatient. Their time is valuable and they are not willing to spend it not efficiently. According to (Harpointer, 2015), 60% of mobile users, for example, are expecting the web page to load in 3 sec. In order to fasten the access, producing companies are optimizing their web pages for mobile devices are tablets. Optimization is also important for consumer convenience as on the mobile friendly web version buttons, for example, are usually smaller and the menu is easy to access on the small screen. 67% of mobile users are more likely to buy products from a mobile friendly web page. (Harpointer, 2015)

Today, modern Mobile technologies require three main features: to be quick, simple and have good context. (Rossler, 2014)

Among others, poorly working web page or mobile app are not simply causing frustration. People are feeling angry, they are not likely to make any purchases and not likely to return ever again. Moreover, people are saying if the web page is not mobile friendly and easy they are feeling that company doesn't care about its customers. Such experience creates very negative emotions and associations and customer can be lost for the company for ever. (Harpointer, 2015)

The difference is also in the way, how often and for how long people are using mobile devices. When people are using mobile devices, compared to the time spent with PC, they are focused and they have a goal. They are willing to achieve it in a very small amount of time. (Rowles, 2014) People are using mobile devices often but for a relatively small period of time, at the same time they are using computers several times a day but for much longer periods (Libin, 2015).

As was mentioned earlier, engagement is one of the key aspects for event planners and one of the most important things to consider as it is a key to successful marketing. People are no longer want to "just sit a listen". They want to act, they want to try and they are ex-

pecting completely different methods and tools of getting knowledge. One of such tools is mobile technologies.

Although, Mobile Devices itself would be less interesting and less powerful without applications

“The revolution started just over seven years ago. The iPhone combined with the App store introduced a new paradigm that all modern smartphones followed. This model has transformed the telecommunication industry, the software industry and society in general.”

(Corbin Ball, CMP, CSP, DES Meetings Technology Analyst, 2015)

Nowadays, people are creating mobile applications to increase effectiveness of business, for marketing purposes, cost saving purposes, and of course to involve people and make them loyal.

Dimitar Toshkov, Head of Growth at Weemss in his interview for Juraj Holub, Marketing Manager & Meeting Designer at sli.do blog said:

“Conference organizers cannot afford to ignore or, even worse, fight the use of technology and apps at their events. They must use event technology to their advantage, to create events and sessions that are more interactive and engaging.”

(Holub, 2015)

Technological trends are modifying the whole events industry from different angles. Keeping track on new features and implementing those technologies are one of the key concerns in event management profession. Such technologies are enabling conferences to remain competitive, maximizing revenues, create better communication between the audience and speakers, and engage people.

“Conferences and events of the future will be more and more digitally powered for reasons of logistical efficiency but also around networking and audience engagement. Audiences will no longer be passive. They’ll be active participants in the conference and technology will facilitate this.”

Padraic Gilligan, Managing Partner

On the other hand, with such strong supply of mobile apps on the market, there is relatively low demand. Only 56% of event professionals know about event apps and at the same

time, the most used technology is event apps (44%). Level of frustration and unclearness towards mobile technologies among the event organizers is very high. People are not clear with the objectives and values that mobile technologies can bring to the event.

(Solaris, 2015)

According to the report (Solaris, 2015) event managers are implementing the mobile technologies based on these factors:

1. Price and cost
2. App providers' location
3. Web vs. native
4. Features
5. App provider credibility

### **3.1 Value of mobile technologies for event management**

According to (Elsinger, 2014), 29 % of mobile users describe mobiles as "something they can't imagine living without". People are considering mobile phones as something very special and thus, all mobile related marketing and interaction between company and user has to be personally related. That is why, it is highly important to get to know your customer. Old approaches to identify target audience by analysing age, gender, and country are no longer working. Gathering specific data about the preferences, interests and lifestyle of target audience is vital and numerous researches should be made in order to really get to know your customer. (Elsinger, 2014)

#### **What mobile technologies bring to event managers & what value of mobile technologies for business?**

"The high-end corporate users are looking at recurring apps, enterprise-level apps that they can use for all different events, big and small. They'll be highly branded and in a native environment. On the low end, there are lots of lower-cost and free apps out there that you can put conference agenda and speaker information into. It's easier than having a small program printed."

Corbin Ball for (Davis, 2013)

Hence, small events such as so-workers meeting obviously doesn't need an app, but large events and corporations want to be branded and thus Mobile Technology is a natural solution for them. (Davis, 2013)

Most of the software providing companies are offering full range of services that include pre event software, aimed at planning and managing processes, improving logistics, communications and time & task management, during event software, which depends on the events and preferences is helping to achieve your goals for event, and post event software, which is providing data collected from the attendees and whole event process and able to save all information.

**Cost savings and ROI**

- reduce of paper use
- reduce in operating costs
- reduce of staff use  
(decreases the need to guide, tell, provide info)
- improved logistics
- new revenue streams from sponsors and exhibitors
- ROI

Figure 1. Cost savings and ROI

**Internal communication**

- planning and managing systems
- communications systems
- better attendee management, registration, check-inns, ticketing, crowd control

Figure 2. Internal communication

### **Information distribution**

- other ways to reach new customers
- providing data about the customers, their interests
- their user journey
- increase of life cycle of the event
- ability to attract people to the new event via mobile app that was installed on the previous event
- building loyalty with the customers

Figure 2. Information distribution

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are showing 3 main fields of benefits from implementation of mobile apps in business. They are in financial, management and information distribution sectors. Mobile apps are helping to gather important information from the participants, their profiles and interests, their opinions about speakers and sessions and find out what they are really interested in. Reported data is a key for building successful relationships with attendees and increasing of effectiveness of event. Besides, mobile apps for events are increasing competitiveness and extend the brand of the event and the organization. (Solaris, 2015)

Among all the reasons for implementing mobile technologies, 75% of respondents agreed that engagement is the main reason (Solaris, 2015).

Engagements is so important as it is

- a powerful marketing tool
- enables to treat people differently, forgetting about their customers and clients roles
- make memorable event for attendees

(Solaris, 2015)

When we are talking about information channels, today they are completely different. Online registration is already adopted and now, some events are implementing robots with technology of face recognition and ability to ask questions from people. These are the ways to increase effectiveness of event and make event more enjoyable and interesting for people.

(Ryan Costello, 2015)

### **What people want and what mob technology can offer & What Value mob technologies bring for attendees?**

“People will only change their behaviour if they perceive the value is worth the effort”

(Javornik, 2016)

People might be very interested in trying new technologies, obsessed with smartphones and can't imagine their life without them, even digital natives hardly would use something that doesn't bring value to their experience and in that case, the content would be the most important issue to enhance the customer experience and bring something that would worth the effort of downloading, registering, learning to use any digital technology.

(Javornik, 2016)

As was mentioned earlier, engagement and information are the aspects people are willing to be provided at events. (Solaris, 2015) As well, they are also interested in other types of payments (cashless) and ways of getting and sharing the information. Figures 4 and 5 are representing main interests of people towards mobile apps at events. Apps are enabling to see all the information in one “place” which is very convenient. Mobile apps are facilitating learning by providing access to additional data and knowledge before, during and after the events. On the Figure 5 displayed engagement functions of mobile apps. The empower stimulation for engagement and learning, networking and sharing, they involve attendees and reward them. For example, at Consumer Electronics Show 2014 in Las Vegas, iBeacons were used and the task was to go around all stands at the exhibition, first person to do this wins the prize. Ability to interact with speakers and other attendees, often called Match Making, are also vital for participants. (Solaris, 2015)

According to GenieConnect

“As the app learns about the user, it becomes ever more relevant, giving them more value whilst helping you understand them better and uncover the true story of your event.”

(Davis, 2013)

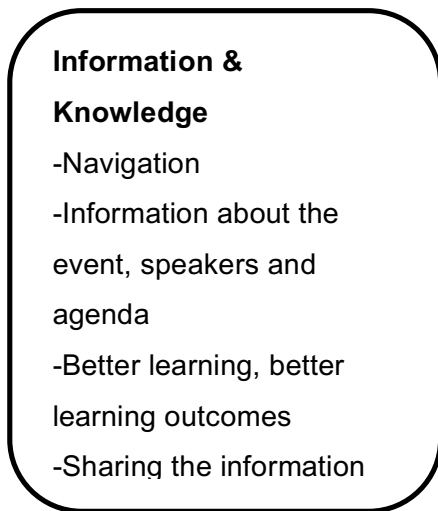


Figure 4. Information & Knowledge

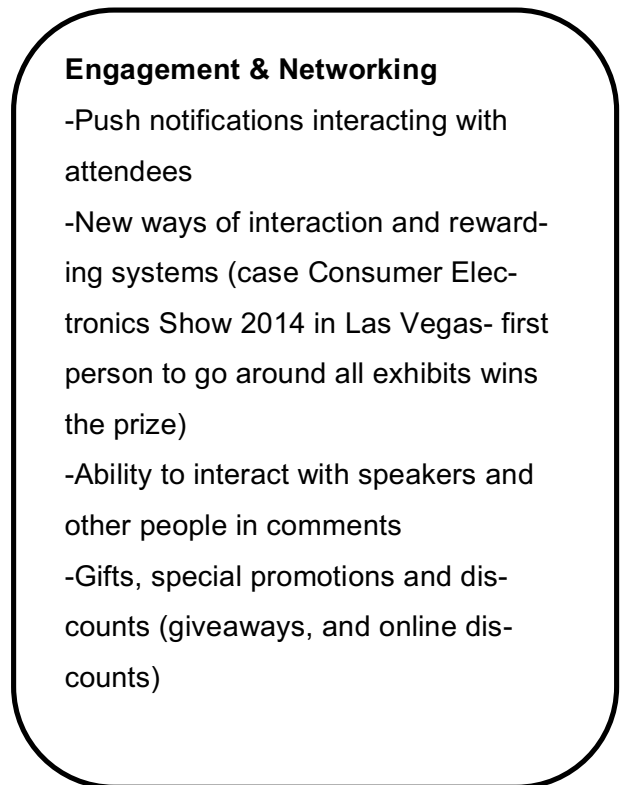


Figure 5. Engagement & Networking

### 3.2 Different technologies

#### Native vs. Web

Different apps have different features and possibilities but before considering that, event planners should think about whether they want native or web app. The choice depends on the target audience of the event.

“In 2007 the five major mobile-phone Manufacturers-Nokia, Samsung, Motorola, Sony Ericsson and LG- collectively controlled 90% of the industry’s global profits.” If we will look on today’s situation it will be completely different: “by 2015 the iPhone singlehandedly generated 92% of global profits”. The That happened because they released new strategy – platform strategy, which is connecting the app providers with customers in the App market. The strategy was followed by other industry players and changed the way we use our phones.

(Marshall W.Van Alstyne, 2016)

Native is an app that you have to download from the App Market. That causes difficulties. App Markets for different OS have different apps. It may happen that app was made for IOS and doesn't exist in Android Market. As well, the need to download something stops people, as they do not want to spend the mobile memory, it takes time, they have to register and people who are not early adopters will probably dislike this. At the same time, native app allows sending push notifications, it is faster and easy to use, it is customized for phone and tablet. Native apps are also easier to update and maintain and they are also more secure. On the other hand, web apps will work on any device as they are working from browser and they are cheaper. People do not have to download anything on their mobile phone which is also a benefit. However, today, many providers are offering both versions. (Elsinger, 2014)

**Videoconferencing** is another type of interactive communication for conferences and meetings. With improvements in personal computers, web cams and high speed internet they became popular and common way of communication. Videoconferences enable to interact with two or more locations. Costs of such methods are very low. (Rogers, 2013)

“Video conferencing replaces some small conferences of five people in the short-term, but it doesn't replace any longer-term meetings. (MCG, 1999, p. 8).”. As well, only 32% of corporate meeting planner said they have planned already a Video Conference. (Rob Davidson, 2002)

The modernization of videoconferences is called 'telepresence'. Telepresence is using big TV screen as a mirror where you have another group of people with whom you are having a conference.

This method enables people to feel face-to-face interaction and communication.

Beaming is one of the modern technologies that for most people sounds not realistic enough. Although, European Commission have a project aiming at finding how a person can be transmitted to the other location by means of internet. This is a reality in Game industry and in near future it will be widespread to the conference industry and change tele- and video- conferencing.

(Rogers, 2013)

**Web Conferences** are extremely popular as they enable to connect unlimited amount of viewers and create chat rooms, share presentations, reports, documents, PDFs. Web conferences may be combined with live events or be separate online events. Well known



form of web conferences is webinar, which is a web seminar. They are typically recorded in advance and provide additional information on the topic of conference.

Web castings are also one of the forms of transmitting the audio and video materials over the internet. The materials may be available after or during the conference and extends the lifecycle of the conference. The web page may be free to access of the access may be limited and passwords for the web attendees will be required.

**Teleconferencing**, according to (Rogers, 2013) is one of the virtual technology trends via phone. (Rogers, 2013) is defining the teleconferences as easy and cost-effective way of communication. It enables people to make fast decisions from wherever they are and reduce travel expenses. On the other hand, without face-to face communication there is a possibility of misunderstanding and distractions. As well, some people are finding that frustrating to talk in a “vacuum”. (Rogers, 2013)

Along with Virtual trends the question arises- would that add more value to the conference or it will replace the face-to face meetings little by little? According to MIA’s UK Conference Market Survey 2000, virtual technologies are used by “over 40% of corporate respondents in addition to meetings, but by just 10% instead of meetings (Greenhill, 2001)”. Same study showed that 66% of associations agree that new technology will not replace face-to face events, and 40% of corporate agreed. (Rob Davidson, 2002)

### 3.3 Features and possibilities of mobile technology

All features for Mobiles can be divided into 4 main categories according to their value and targets.

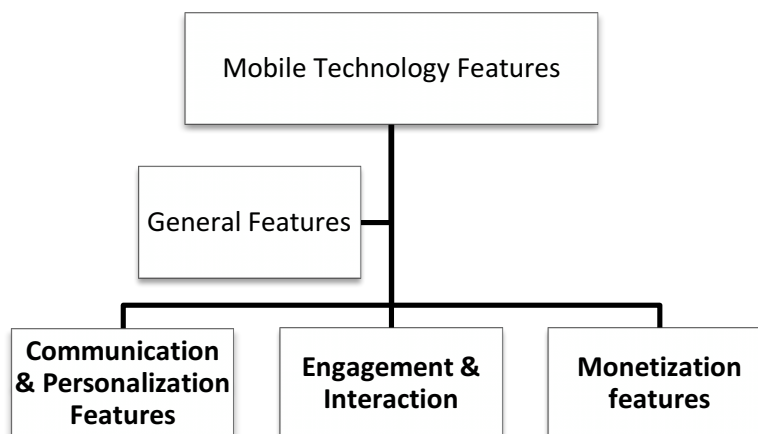


Figure 3. Mobile Technology Features

### 3.3.1 General Features

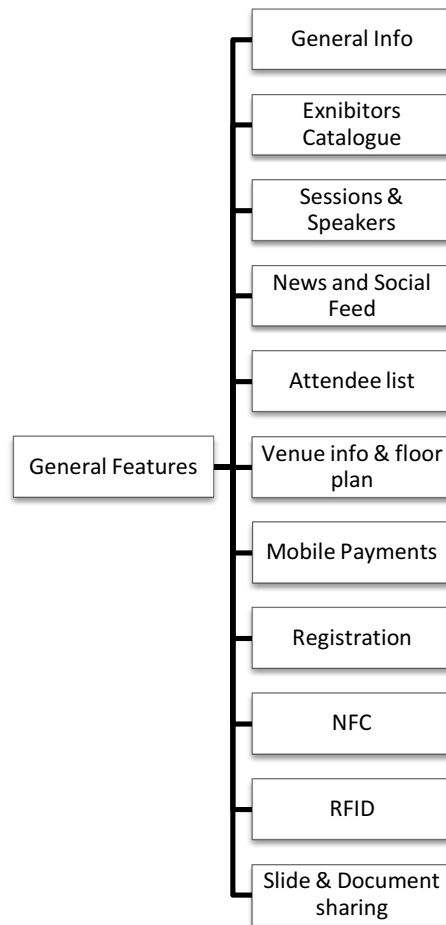


Figure 4. General Features

**General Info** about the event is the main feature that usually exist in all mobile applications for events services. Constant access to the all necessary information is important for people. Providing information before, during and after the event, minimizing office work, questions from attendees and helps to make event more efficient. **Contacts** are enabling people to simplify and speed up the processes of contacting organization team in any cases.

#### **Exhibitor Catalogue**

**Sessions & Speakers** information generate interest towards particular speech and part of the event.

#### **News and Social Feed**

**Attendee list** may be free to see for everyone and as well it can be protected and be as premium content.

#### **Venue info & floor plan**

One of the best and innovative technological trends for 2016, according to Julius Solaris, editor of EventManagerBlog.com, an international speaker and author of The Event App Bible and The Annual Event Trends Report, is “**Audio Beacons**”. Beacons were made to enable attendees to locate different stands and places on the event map and find what they want to see. Audio Beacons are no longer using Bluetooth technology to activate actions in the mobile apps. Today they are using sounds that are imperceptible to the human ear. All beacons are mostly important for exhibitions, trade fairs, museums, festivals and many other events. (Solaris, 2015)

Location at the event is very important especially on the big trade fairs where it is easy to get lost and it takes a lot of time to find what you are looking for and Mobile Applications such as Goomeo ([www.goomeo.com](http://www.goomeo.com)) have a **3D map** function along with iBeacons, Geo-location and Meeting Platform.

As well as location at the event, additional services enable to provide **Local area guide and maps** (with local sponsorship opportunities) and integration with taxi services can help to get a taxi after or before the event. **Transportation information**, such as shuttle bus schedules and flights at local airports can also be useful for big events, with number of people who are not from the same city or country. (Penton Media, 2010)

**Online and mobile payments** are also one of the main innovations according to (Solaris, 2015). People are tired of waiting and that refers especially to new generation. Generation Y are not willing to wait and if they have option to speed up the process, they will take it. That is where mobile payments have their advantage. Although, the study done by (Cihan Cobanoglu, 2014), showed that such factors as compatibility with lifestyle, perceived usefulness, subjective norm, security, and previous experience with mobile payment were the main reasons for adoption of Mobile Payments.

**Registration** with mobiles helps to avoid queues and make the process faster. Registration and online payments may be done by methods, described below.



Figure 8. NFC System possibilities

**NFC** Technologies (Near Field Communication) is a wireless technology which enables to exchange data on the small distances (10 cm) for example between smartphone and paying terminal. Figure 8 shows NFC system possibilities for the consumers.

**RFID** (Radio Frequency Identification) is a way for automatic Identification of objects, in which by means of radio signals, data is being read or written, which is stored on the transponders or RFID.

**Slide sharing/documents sharing**- this function enable people to see the presentations that are already on the screen, follow it and study it precisely. This function also enables people to send the documents and presentations from one to each other. That is reducing the need to send materials to attendees after the events and helps to get more benefits out of conference. Moreover, **Lead Retrieval** function allows providing contact data collected from an individual via the app. Speakers and exhibitors can collect detail of those who are interested in further information and additional data. (Solaris, 2015)

### 3.3.2 Communication & Personalization Features

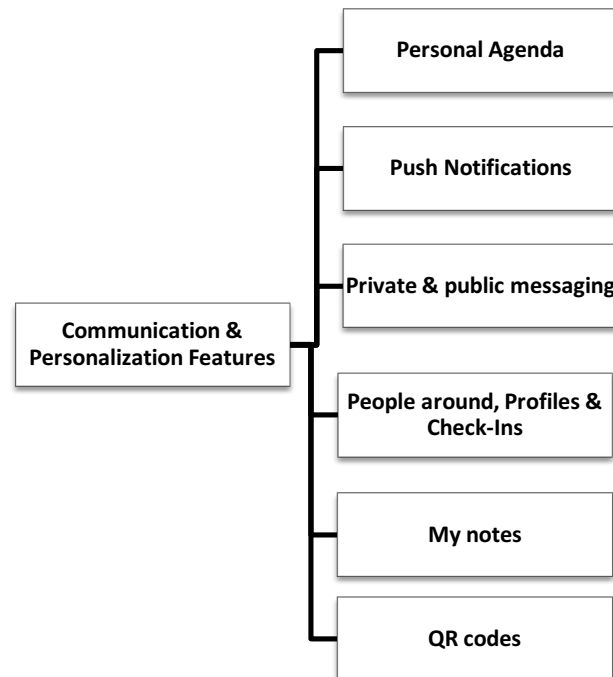


Figure 9. Communication & Personalization Features

**Personal Agenda** this is advanced agenda for complex events with diverse structure and simultaneous lectures in different places. This enable person to build his own agenda, chose the speakers he would like to hear, build timetables and be flexible.

**Push Notifications** are helping to keep track on on-going lectures, their start, breaks, and other news important for the attendees.

**Private & public messaging** important for people who would like to share their message but due to the amount of people or to the other personal issues it is hard. This is very useful for big events or events where people know each other and motivated to send messages in order to share their thoughts.

**People around** the same as list of attendees such function may be free or premium function. This advanced feature not only showing the list of people, but showing them in an interactive map, with approximate distances and even small icons and may be integrated with **Profiles & Check-Ins**. As well, there are numbers of other functions as **Favourites** and **My notes**, which are basically exist in other types-as social media duplicated, but in such Event Mobile apps they are all in one place, which is more convenient and easy to use.

**QR codes**- Quick Response codes are scanning the information from code with your mobile device and then mobile phone is responding by some actions-for example opens the

web page. QR codes are something many of us know but not many actually using. QR codes require downloading special app and then it is still not very clear what the value that they bring is. One field for their existence is clear- huge storages where it is difficult to know is a specific item there or not and instead of typing long code number to find it, QR code enable to make process fast and easy. (Rowles, 2014)

### 3.3.3 Engagement & Interaction

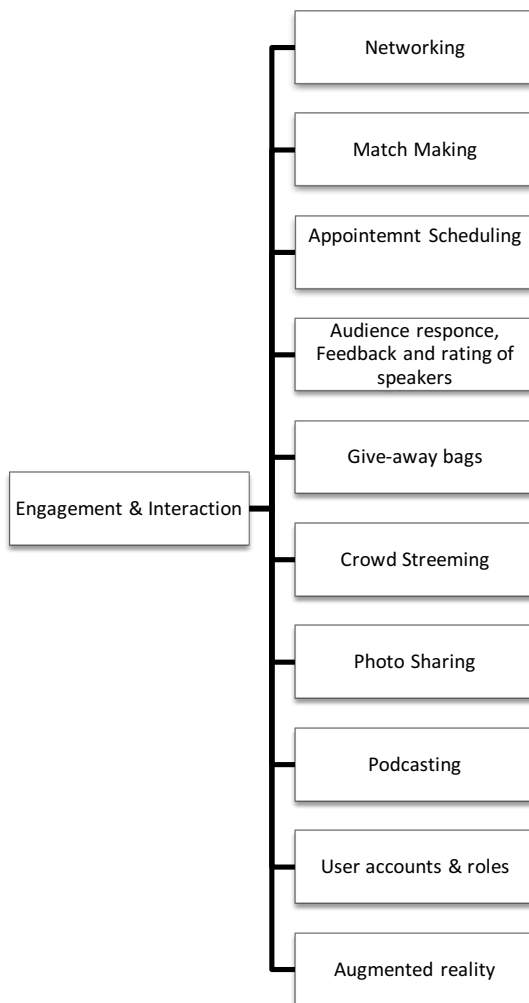


Figure 10. Engagement & Interaction

**Networking**, as one of the key functions of conferences is also changing. Numerous mobile apps are changing the way we interact and the information that we have. Combined with social media platforms LinkedIn, Facebook and others, they build connections between attendees of events.

(Solaris, 2015) Social Media integration is very important and according to (Tokosch, 2011) such possibilities should be tested in advance.

Moreover, (Rossler, 2014) is offering such function as “**Digital Business Card**” which is a new format of contacts exchange.

**Match Making** is also called networking technologies, with help of those attendees can find other people with similar interests, send messages, documents and network in the app. Match Making features are considered among top wanted and needed from event professionals according to (Solaris, 2015)

**Appointment Scheduling** – some apps enables appointment scheduling with exhibitors or other attendees which is also important as people are sometimes shy and they are afraid to come and ask for a meeting personally. Such functions are helping attendees to use the networking possibilities completely.

### **Audience response, Feedback and rating of speakers**

Interaction between the attendees is important but communication between the audience and the speakers might be even more important if the **Q&A session** is a vital part of event agenda but the audience is not active enough. Different mobile apps are designed to solve this problem and help people to ask questions to the speakers. Such apps are native and web and people do not need to register, they just need to type the event code. Such technologies are working for all devices, all users, quickly and simply.

The other solution for increasing the efficiency of Q&A session is **crowd mics**. Crowd mics are enabling people to use their smartphone as a microphone and as well, to write text questions and participate in the live questionnaires. The advanced features, like mics are working from the apps that attendees need to install and thus, they are not as easy as simple text versions. In order to choose the right tools, event managers have to analyse their target audience according to their age, preferences and level of technological adoption. Such features are also enabling to make **real time analytics** from the responses of attendees, rate the speakers and provide fast feedback. (Solaris, 2015)

Many events are presenting gifts for their attendees that they will take home. These **give-away bags** are aiming at prolonging the life of the conference. People are taking home brochures, trinkets, USBs, CDs, DVDs, magazines and info cards. New trend in the gift bags is -digital gift bags. Digital gift bags are minimizing waste of paper for printed materials while giving more opportunities. Online giveaways may include far more valuable information from the event such as key speaker’s summary of the topics, presentations, infographics, and statistics and sponsors information, virtual coupons and special offers.

Such giveaways may be alternative to “real” gift bags or they might include both, in any case, this is cost effective and engaging trend.

(Solaris, 2015)

Twitter today is more than a way for sending instant small messages. Twitter can be used as a platform to thousands of ways for interaction. One of the examples is the **Stanley Piano** (Digital Kitchen, 2013) which is able to play a song from your Tweet. Such technologies surprise people, make them talk about what they saw and share it online. On the other hand, does it bring enough ROI and ROE for the money invested in such technologies that is the most complicated question.

**Crowd streaming** is a way to make event present online. Mobile applications like Periscope are enabling people to stream online any event where they are. Crowd streaming is a way to easily transform real event into hybrid. Unlike hybrid events, which may be free online or cost money, crowd streaming is free, easy and accessible for everyone on the planet who has mobile with internet connection. Software like Periscope is operating on their own online platform and registration is free for everyone. Thus, crowd streaming saves time and money for both event organizers and users.

(Solaris, 2015)

**Photo sharing** is one of the marketing strategies which is part of new, inbound marketing technologies. Such promotion is created by attendees, not by the company and thus, people trust this way of marketing more and they rely on the positive attitude towards event of their friends and colleagues. Instant photo sharing is also creating behavioural situation know as syndrome of missing something important, that is happening when you see in the internet that someone is somewhere and you are not there, thus missing something important. Photo sharing through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter are already extremely popular. Sharing photos from the event in the mobile app makes the process faster and easier.

**Podcasting** is a convenient way of sharing information. Nearly all computers are able to play MP3 and MP4 files and the podcasting is cheaper than print, radio, CDs and DVDs. The podcasts may be implemented to broadcast the event (audio or video) for those attendees that cannot come for the event. Podcasts can save costs for PR of the event on the web page, providing the information about the events, presenting interviews with key



speakers and thus, raise interest in the audience. Moreover, MP3 players with podcasts may be used as giveaways at the events.

(Rogers, 2013)

**User accounts & roles** may be connected with social media networks or with a need to create separate profile. Function of login through Facebook today is extremely popular due to the time savings and convenience.

### **Augmented reality**



Figure 11. Augmented Reality

(Guardian, 2013)

Tom Elsinger describes Augmented Reality as incorporation of “digital images into real footage so seamlessly that with a little suspension of disbelief, viewers can’t tell where the reality ends and the augmentation begins.”

(Elsinger, 2014)

Augmentation of reality is an overlaying of a real eye perception of human by virtual elements and its possibly with HoLolens, GoogleGlass and with a smartphone. (Javornik, 2016)

According to (Rowles, 2014), “AR overlays information on top of what we see in real world”.

According to Ana Javornik, Augmented Reality has to be researched more in a way to build a strong understanding for people why should they use AR and what benefits it will bring. As well, according to her, there should be closer collaborations between computer scientists, designers and marketers. The lack of clarity in the subject creates misunderstanding. People are not sure what is actually different in the AR compared to all other digital technologies. She explaining the key difference of AR as:

“the ability to overlay virtual content on the physical world and have the two interact in real time”

### 3.3.4 Monetization features

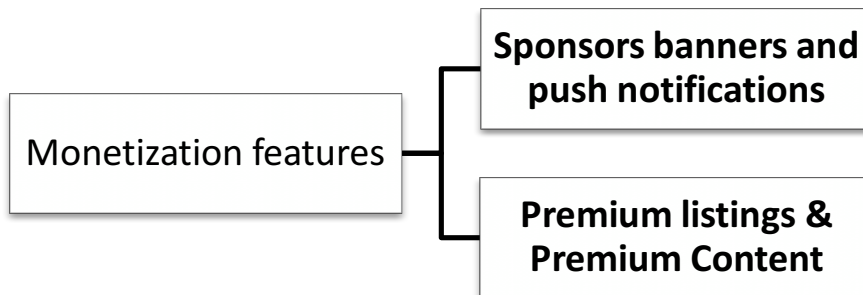


Figure 12. Monetization Features

**Sponsors banners and push notifications.** Mobile Applications are may be used as the additional source for sponsorship opportunities. Advances visibility and promotional opportunities are increasing the revenues and extending the size of the event.

**Premium listings & Premium Content** are useful for companies that are selling this as an additional service. It allows to promote the additional services that event company is offering and purchase them through mobile app, which is increasing the purchasing power.

(Nelissen, 2015)

#### **Prices for event apps**

Prices for apps are varying significantly due to the size of event, audience, features in the app, possibility of having native or web app, provider's reliability and other factors.

“Most suppliers provide a native version of the app as standard, even at the lowest price range. Planners prefer apps that are both native and web (hybrid). 24/7 support, which is often high on the planner’s priority list, is standard only in higher priced apps”.

(Solaris, 2015)

## **4 Research method and data collection**

This chapter discusses the aims, tasks and objectives of the research. Describes the methods and explains the methods choice. This chapter describes the data collection processes and additionally, discusses reliability and validity of the research.

### **4.1 Aim and development task of the research**

The target of the research was to study and analyse people's attitude towards mobile technology at conferences, meetings, incentives and exhibitions. Identify and reveal which mobile technologies people tend to like more, which they already used and which they are willing to use. As well, study was aiming at finding out what are the main reasons for people's negative attitude towards mobile technologies and which drawbacks and obstacles they are facing while using Mobile Technology at events.

The objective was to present the overall picture of the Mobile Technology in Event Corporate sector from the both attendees perspective and producing companies' perspective. In order to get a deeper understanding what are the key reasons for people attending events and companies producing them for not using Mobile Technologies and how they can start beneficially using them.

The development task of the thesis was to analyse the situation on the market of Mobile Technologies, study the trends, main functionalities and possibilities of Mobile Technologies, develop the questionnaires according to the aims of the thesis, conduct the interviews and online survey and by analysing the results present the view on the topic from both perspectives: attendees and producing events companies.

### **4.2 Problems of the research and data collection**

Problems of the research were mainly connected with the difficulties to get answers from the target audience. It was hard to contact the right persons from my target audience. Firstly, lack of time. Event professionals are busy, they usually didn't have time for answering and it was hard to convince them spend their time answering the survey. Secondly, it was hard to find contacts and channels in the internet, such as forums and discussions to reach them.

Also, one of the problems was low response rate from the social network channels. Number of people who viewed the survey was several times bigger than the actual response rate. Conversion from tweets, retweets and shares was also quite small and thus there was a need to contact people personally, using private messaging, email and phone

which was time consuming. Due to my age, my personal and professional networks consists of people who are yet not professionals, who are not attending the conferences and I was not able to use it for the research purposes, which also affected the number of respondents. The other problem was novelty of the topic and many people were not familiar with many terms which were used in the survey. The Mobile Technologies are evolving constantly and there is a lack of clarity about new software and its possibilities was affecting the response rate and quality of answers.

Unintentional mistakes connected with the age of the interviewer, lack of experience, gender and voice might also cause difficulties and be a reason of lower validity and reliability. As well, as the online survey consisted of not obligatory questions, some people were missing open-ended questions and break-offs occurred in the middle of the survey, due to the appearance of open-ended questions.

Problems during collecting data that emerged during the interviews were connected with the subconscious feeling that there is the right answer, socially approved, that it is good to use Mobile Technologies and it can occur that people were tending to say what society approving and what people want them to say. Nevertheless, that was not affecting the results that much, as people were talking freely and a lot on the topic of obstacles and reasons for not using Mobile Technology.

### **4.3 Method description**

The main difference between qualitative and quantitative methods of research are in the procedures. It's a reflection of "different perspectives on knowledge and research objectives" (Pervez Ghauri, 2002).

Quantitative method emphasising on testing and verifications, it focuses on facts and it's logical and rational. Objective is distant from data. Qualitative method is on the other hand emphasising on understanding. Interpretation and analysis of a respondent view is crucial in this type of research. Moreover, in this type of research, skills and experience of researcher plays a great role. Qualitative method involves conversations, unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

(Alvin C.Burns, 2014)

For the survey both quantitative and qualitative questions were chosen. Survey was conducted for the target audience of a research group (People who are potentially interested in attending conferences).

Survey method was chosen due to the need to gather more extensive amount of answers from people who are not willing to spend more than 5 minutes. Online method was used

to achieve better results in terms of quantity of answers and gather people's opinions all around the world. The platform for the online survey was Webropol tool. The questions were constructed that way, so the person was primarily asked close ended questions and after he had a few open-ended questions which were not obligatory to answer. This allowed to get more responses on the key close ended questions and keep those people who were not willing to answer open-ended questions.

The online survey was conducted from 23.03.2016 till 25.04.2016. During that time the survey collected 76 responses.

I have chosen qualitative method for the interview and was collecting the data from the event producing companies by interviewing the key figures in 4 different companies (Managing Directors, Regional Managers, etc.). Interview method was chosen for event producing companies were the aim was to discuss the questions on the topic of Mobile Technology usage. The method included open-ended questions and semi-structured interview guidelines. Method was chosen because it allowed me to keep the conversation open, ask additional questions, be flexible in the conversation and get in-depth information on the interesting for the research topics.

#### **4.4 On-line survey**

Online survey was conducted with the Webropol online software. Survey consisted of 12 questions, 4 of them open-ended and others multiple answer closed questions. The target audience of a research group were people who are potentially interested in attending conferences, meetings, exhibitions, incentives and have experience in being a participant or guest on this type of events.

#### **4.5 Implementation of working methods**

In order to collect data from the target audience different social media channels were used, such as LinkedIn groups, Facebook, Twitter and face-to-face interviews with target audience, personal emails and phone calls.

In these social networks following methods were used: private contacting (personal messages), public contacting (groups), news commenting, updates, participating in discussions, commenting and writing tweets. Twitter has shown itself in a number of positive ways. I was writing messages to the experts in the Event Industry in order to ask their opinion on how to get more answers for my research study and I got several advices on the associations which I should ask. Some people were sharing the link to my survey for their followers, which was also helping me to get more responses. LinkedIn also was very

powerful tool, many people were interested in participating in the survey as they were part of the event professionals' community or connected to it, such as association of Simultaneous Interpreters and others.

#### **4.6 Interviews**

Interviews were conducted during 4 different days. Each of 4 interviews was from 30 minutes to 1,5 hours. All interviews were conducted in March, April and May. After creating preliminary survey questionnaires and interview questions Pilot versions of both interview and survey were made. Pilot version of online survey showed that text in the head of survey included unnecessary information and was too long. Some parts were deleted and some were reviewed and corrected in order to save time of the person who is willing to answer the survey. Also, pilot versions helped to avoid grammar and spelling mistakes. Pilot version of the interview has shown that several questions should be deleted, some questions should be corrected in order to be easier to understand, some questions had to be commented and the overall length should be reduced to 20-30 min instead of 1,5 hours.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of event producing companies. Companies for the interviews were chosen carefully according to the type of events that they are holding and relation to the topic of Mobile Technology in the Event Corporate Sector. Representatives of the companies were contacted by emails and interviews were done face-to face and via Skype. Skype interviews were shorter and answers of people were more strictly corresponding to the questions while face-to face interviews were longer and the discussion was sometimes going below the subject. The problem that occurred with the Skype interviews was poor connection and due to that it was hard to maintain free discussion and follow the conversation as during the face-to face interviews. Although, it allowed to reach people who were not able to meet personally. All interviews were recorded and audio recording was transmitted into the transcription. Working material of the transcription afterwards was analyzed, classified and studied.

#### **Background information about the respondents:**

Table 1 (Background information about the respondents) presents background information about the respondents, companies, types of events they are producing, amount of events, Mobile Technology they are using, main reasons to use them.

Table 1. Background information about the respondents

<b>Company</b>	<b>Fair Centre</b>	<b>Event production and Event Marketing</b>	<b>MPI</b>	<b>Management events</b>
<b>Types of events</b>	Seminars, exhibitions and different kinds of celebrations.	Whole field of event industry, including B2B events, B2E, B2C, different kinds of incentives etc.	Monthly events, meetings, networking.	Conferences, high-level executives B2B.
<b>Amount of events per year</b>	Plan approx. 20-30, hold over 150	200	9-12	Approx. 170
<b>Level of Mobile Adoption</b>	In between the amateur and Professional	Amateur	Beginner	Professionals
<b>Which MT company is using</b>	Screen.io, click share + our own mobile app for events.	Screen.io, Brella + tailor made applications.	Registration and all the general features.	Responsive sites.
<b>Producing or buying software?</b>	Both ways.	Both ways (planning the content and UX and outsourcing company to make it).	-	Developing our own software.
<b>Main reasons to use MT</b>	Engaging attendees, feedback, getting information about attendees.	Additional revenue streams, ROI, Communication and Management. Information about attendees, engagement, feedback.	Costs reduction, information distribution, maps, speakers' info, access to all information.	Costs reduction, additional revenue streams, ROI, Internal Communication and Management, Information about attendees, engagement, feedback.

#### **4.7 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability of the research refers to the tools and methods that are used in order to gain data and most importantly that sample will represent the population. In this research, questions about the age group, number of events that person is visiting through year and field of occupation help to achieve reliable results, as the samples are randomly picked through online social media channels and all respondents are attending conferences, thus they are main target audience for my research. Meanwhile, reliability might be questionable, as people might answer positively on the question of attendance.

Validity of the research refers to the fact that it is measuring subjects it was intending to measure. However, it is more difficult to assess the research which contain qualitative data. (Dorothy Fox, 2014)

In this study, it is very hard to say how can be measured the questions about the attitude of people towards different Mobile Technologies. Although, the initial aim was to provide information on the reasons for using and not using Mobile Technologies, as well as to choose which Mobile Technologies people would like to use and used already. From this perspective, the research showed clear information on these questions and measured how many people are willing to have which functionalities, which way of Mobile software they prefer and how many people tried which features. However, some questions might be invalid due to the fact that people are tend to say that they are attending more events that they actually are are this is "socially approved" answer, as well, concerning the question of Mobile Technologies person have already tried and would like to try. This invalidity might happen, but oh the other hand, as the survey was done online and was anonymous, there was no strong need to say untruthful information in order "choose right answer". On the stage of designing questionnaires, by reviewing them, implementing and conducting pilot version, the unintentional respondent errors, such as misunderstanding and guessing were minimised. Due to the small number of questions and overall length of the survey and interview, respondent fatigue and caused by it distractions and loss of attention were also minimised.

Research also is able to provide generalization from the results and thus it is externally valid. Results of the study correlate and support the theory that was given and that means that research is contractually valid. Overall, validity both in the online survey and interview was set up to measure the attitude towards Mobile Technology and by using different indicators, it succeeded in measurement by providing results on the set up aims and questions.



## **5 Research results**

This chapter looks into the results of the research. Research was conducted with on-line survey form and semi-structured interviews. The chapter is divided into 3 parts: results of the on-line survey, results of the interviews and summary part which presents key findings of the study.

### **5.1 On-line surveys**

On this Figure 12. (Online survey review) are shown close ended questions. They are shown in decreasing order according to the number of people answered. It is clearly seen that questions 1,2 and 4 were answered by every respondent and questions 13, 15, 11 and 12 had the lowest respondent rate from the close ended questions.

Question	Count
6. Please, tick the box with features of Mobile Technologies for Events you have tried	320
1. Gender	76
2. Age	76
4. How often do you attend Conferences, Meetings, Incentives, and Exhibitions?	76
5. Are you familiar with Mobile Technologies for Events besides Social Networks (Twitter, Facebook)?: - - +	75
17. Would you prefer download an app or have it in browser?	75
7. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Have general information about speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and at the event on your mobile	74
8. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation on mobile	73
9. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: To have a mobile ticket instead of a printed one	73
14. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Find more about people around you at the event	73
10. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: To have same presentation as speaker has in your mobile	72
13. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Ask questions, write comments, see others people comments, participate in live polls on your mobile	71
15. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Network with people with your mobile	71
11. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Have your personal agenda on your mobile	70
12. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?: Have push notifications about start of conference and news	70

Figure 13. Online Survey review

Nonresponses to specific questions, which are part of the group “What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?” might be due to the complexity of question, longer time needed for answer. As well, some people might not be familiar with some terms and due to that they refused to answer.

### Information about the respondents

In the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked three questions in order to get background information about them. First question was about their gender. Second about age group, among the offered answers were three groups 15-24, 25-44, 45-64 and 65+. Third question was open-ended and about their profession or field of occupation. These questions were important for the reliability and validity of the whole research and provided

us data which can be used in analysis of preferences and differences of respondent answers according to these groups.

### Gender and age

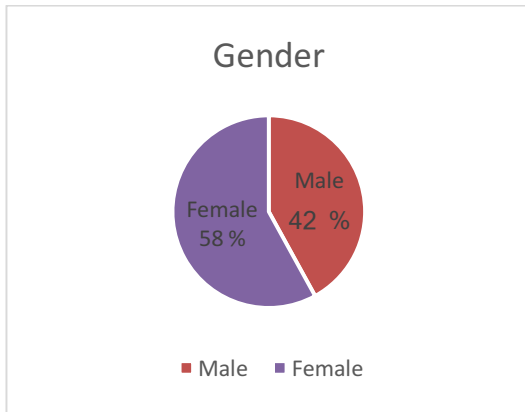


Figure 14. Gender (n=76)

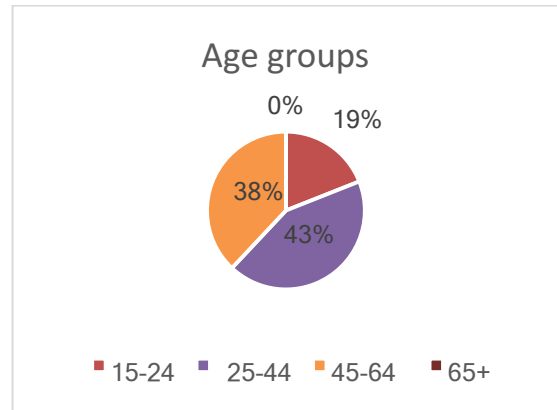


Figure 15. Age groups (n=76)

Gender of participants has divided into 58% Female (44) and 42% Male (32).

Age of the respondents was divided into 4 groups: 15-24; 25-44; 45-64 and 65+.

Main age group of 43% of all respondents are in group 25-44, 38% in 45-64 and 19% in 15-24. Group 65+ was not participating in this survey.

### Professions

Professions are ranging significantly as can be seen on the Figure 16.



- Event video production
- Business Development Manager
- Product Designer
- Florist

### Frequency of attending conferences

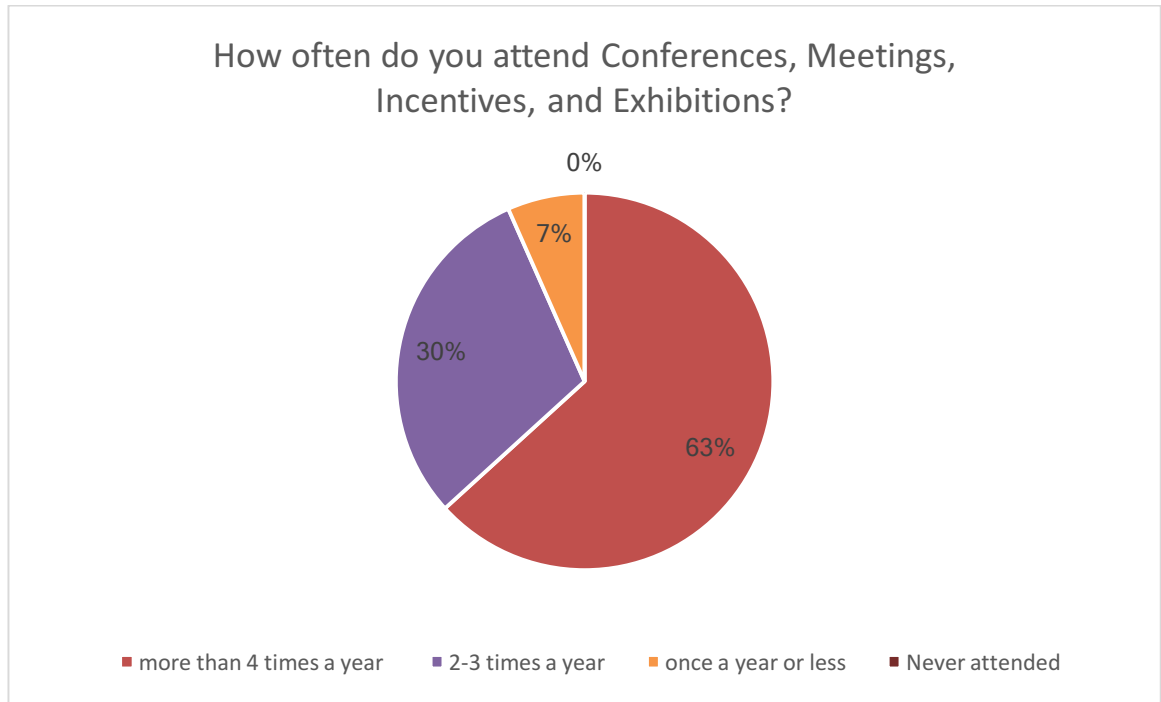


Figure 17. Frequency of attending MICE events (n=76)

Figure 17 (Frequency of attending MICE events) is showing that most of the respondents are attending events more than 4 times a year 47 respondents (63%), 30% of respondents- 23 respondents are attending events 2-3 times a year and 5 respondents (6,6%) are attending once a year or less.

People in the age group 45-64 are mostly attending conferences more than 4 times a year (65%) and 2-3 times a year 24%.

In the age group 25-44, majority of respondents (58%) are attending events like conferences, meetings, exhibitions and incentives more than 4 times a year, 36% are attending 2-3 times a year and only 6% once a year or less.

Age group 15-24 is the most active in attending conferences: 71% of them are attending conferences more than 4 times a year and 29% 2-3 times a year, 0% once a year or less.

Thus, we can see that in the research the majority of respondents are frequent attendees in all age groups and all the data from the responses can be used for analysis.

### Level of digital adoption of respondents

This question was asking the respondents to which degree they correspond more, do they know and do they use Mobile Technologies besides Social Networks like Twitter, Facebook.

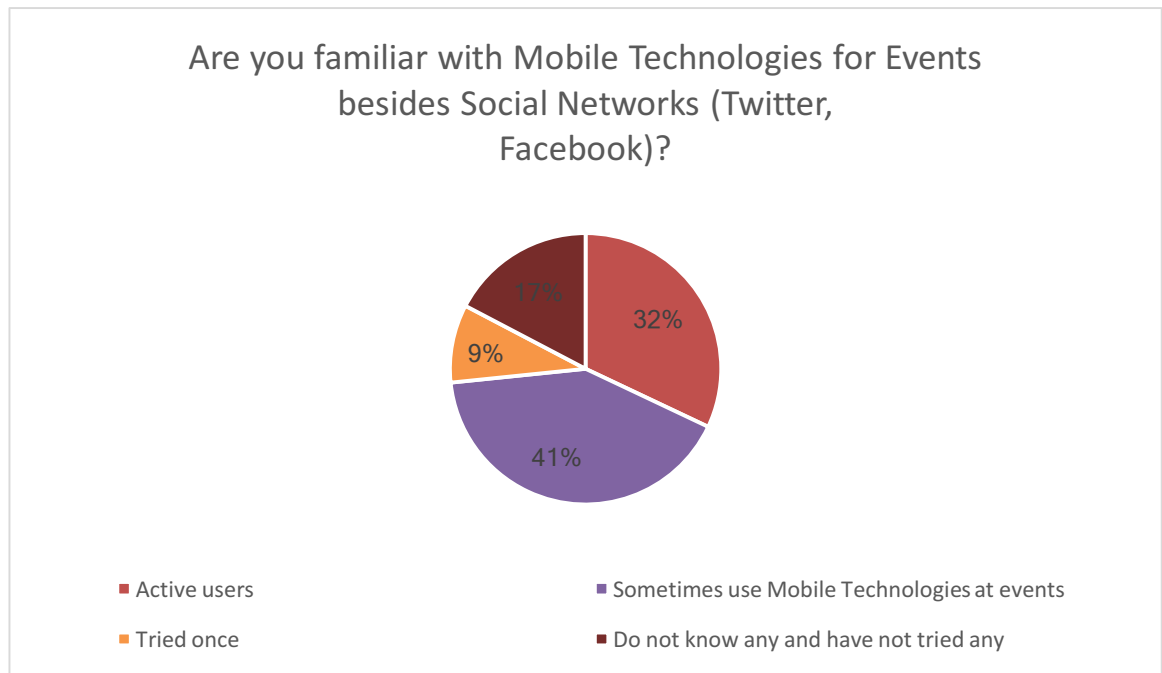


Figure 18. Level of digital adoption (n=75)

According to the level of familiarity with Mobile Technologies, respondents has divided into 4 groups:

32% are active users, 41,3% sometimes use Mobile Technologies at events, 9,3% tried once and 17,3% do not know any and have not tried any.

The age group 45-64, 28,6% of respondents are active users, 43% sometimes use Mobile Technology, 7% tried once and 21% don't know any and haven't tried any.

The age group 25-44, 36% of active users, 42% sometimes use Mobile Technology, 6% tried once and 15% don't know any and haven't tried any.

For the age group 15-24 level of adoption of Mobile Technologies, 28% are active users, 35% sometimes use Mobile Technologies at events, 21% tried once and 14% do not know any and have not tried any.

This question is highly important for the research as it represents the background information about the degree towards which people are digitally native and active with Mobile

Technologies. We can see, that generally, most of the respondents (41%) placed themselves to the active users and 32% said they sometimes use Mobile Technology at events. Thus, it can be seen that more than 70% of respondents are familiar with Mobile Technologies for events besides Facebook and Twitter. The interesting fact is that age group 15-24, which consist of young generation, also known as generation Y, and digital natives, have smaller amount of active users (28%) the same amount as 45-64 age group, compared to group 25-44, which have 36% of active users. That might happen due to the lack of experience of using Mobile technology during the events, lack of attendance on the events and fro the group 45-64, complexity of UI and as well, lack of experience might cause low activity with Mobile Technologies.

### **5.1.1 Features people have tried**

This question aims at finding the features of Mobile Technologies for events that people have already tried. Analysing of this question gives relevant information about the situation on the market from the customers' perspective. This questions provides the overall picture of the Mobil features that are popular and that people are familiar with and which exactly they have tried. This is also gives us understanding about the age preferences and which features respondents is different groups have used. Additionally, open ended questions about the Mobile Technologies and closely connected with this questions as people are referring and evaluating based on the features they have tried.

All Features can be divided into 3 main groups according to the chapter 3.3 "Features and possibilities of Mobile Technology".

General features: Mobile Tickets, Mobile Payments, Navigations, 3D maps

Communication & Personalization Features: QR Codes

Engagement & Interaction: Live Streaming, Networking, Slide & Document Sharing, Augmented Reality, Crowd Mics, Beacons.

### **All groups of respondents**

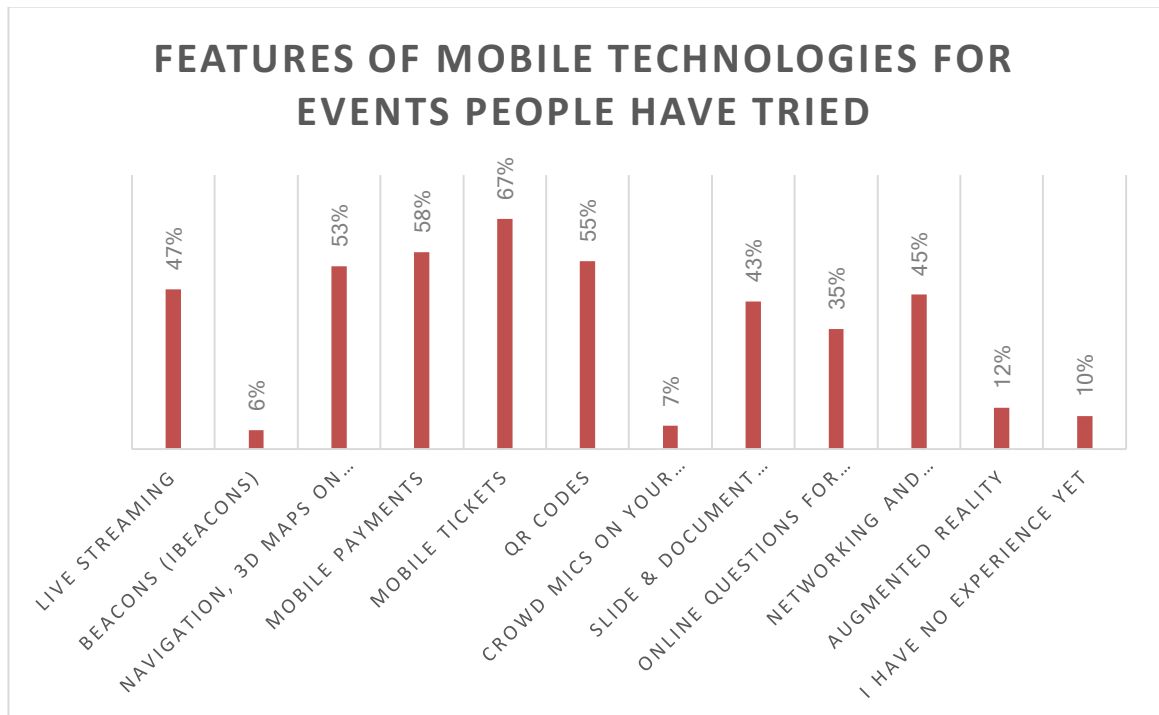


Figure 19. Features that people have tried (n=75)

This Figure 19 (Features that people have tried) shows the features of Mobile Technologies that respondents have tried. 67% of respondents tried Mobile Tickets, Mobile Payments (58%), QR Codes (55%), Navigations, 3D maps (53%), Live Streaming (47%), Networking (45%), Slide & Document Sharing (43%), Augmented Reality (12%), Crowd Mics (7%), Beacons (6%) and 10% Have no experience in using Mobile Technologies for events.

Thus, it can be seen that such features as Mobile Tickets, Mobile Payments, QR Codes and Navigations, 3D maps are frequently used by the respondents and people are familiar with them. Such features as Augmented Reality, Crowd Mics and Beacons are least popular among the respondents and we can claim that for some reasons, people haven't tried them or not familiar with them. Reasons might include lack of clarity and understanding of benefits for using these technologies and also lack of experience and information about these technologies.

According to the results, General features and Communication & Personalization Features are more familiar to people than Engagement & Interaction Features, while the last ones are considered as the most important features for event management.

### Comparative analysis of 3 Age Groups



As age might be one of the reasons for some groups for not using specific features, the possible correlations and comparisons will be analyzed below.

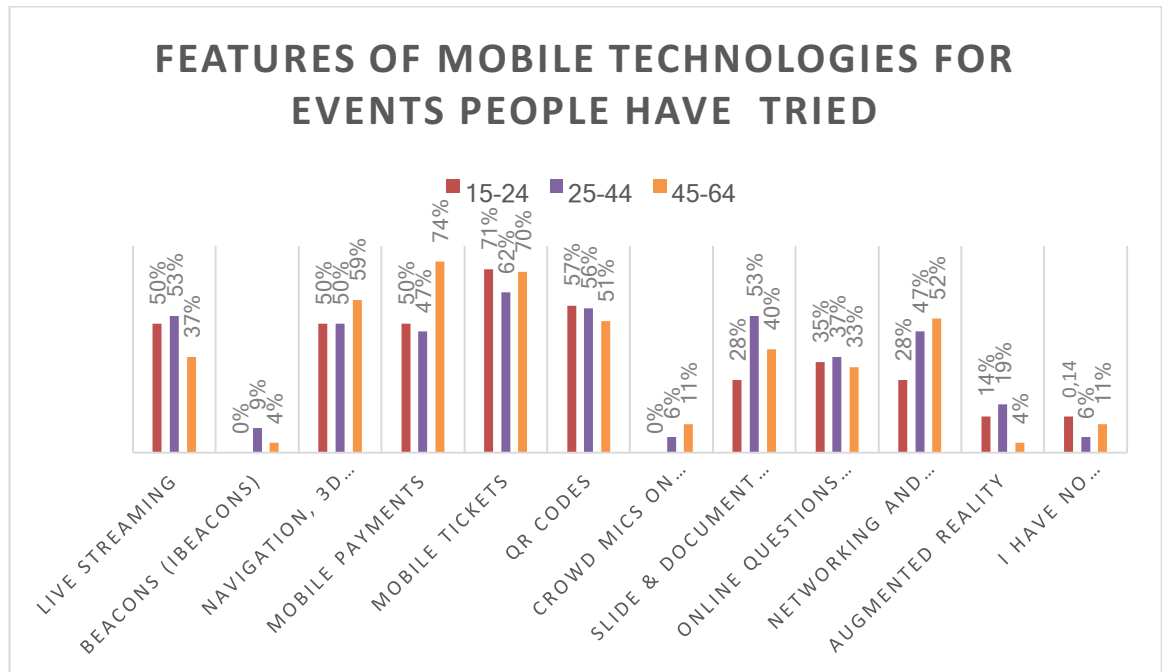


Figure 20. Features that people have tried (age groups) (n=75)

This Figure 20 (Features that people have tried (age groups)) shows the features of Mobile Technologies for Events that people have tried. Results are divided between three age groups: 15-24, 25-44 and 45-64.

Can be concluded that most popular features among all groups were Mobile Tickets and QR Codes. In all groups more than 50% respondents have tried them.

Live streaming is less popular in the age group 45-64 and most popular in the group 25-44. Slide & Document Sharing is more popular among group 25-44 and least used among the group 15-24.

Online questions, live polls are used quite similarly among all the age groups (around 30%). Networking features are more used in the group 45-64 and least used in group 15-24.

Group 45-64 is mostly actively using such features such as Mobile Payments, Mobile Tickets, Navigation, QR Codes and Networking features and this age group is more active than two others.

Group 25-44 is mostly using such features as Mobile Tickets, QR Codes, Live Streaming and Slide & Document Sharing.

Group 15-24 is using actively Mobile Payments, Mobile Tickets, QR Codes and Live Streaming and Navigation.

### **5.1.2 Demands of attendees**

Respondents were answering the question “What features would you like to have during the event?” and among the offered answers were:

- “Have general information about speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and at the event on your mobile”;
- “Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation on mobile”;
- “To have a mobile ticket instead of a printed one”;
- “To have same presentation as speaker has in your mobile” ;
- “Have your personal agenda on your mobile”;
- “Have push notifications about start of conference and news”;
- “Ask questions, write comments, see others people comments, participate in live polls on your mobile”;
- “Find more about people around you at the event”;
- “Network with people with your mobile”.

Respondents had three options such as “Yes”, “Maybe” and “No” for each questions. This was aimed to find out what are demands of the respondents and to which degree they are interested in having and using Mobile features.

The answers can be interpreted and divided into 3 main groups according to the chapter 3.3 “Features and possibilities of Mobile Technology”.

General features:

- Have general information about speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and at the event on your mobile;
- Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation on mobile;
- To have a mobile ticket instead of a printed one.

Communication & Personalization Features:

- To have same presentation as speaker has in your mobile;
- Have your personal agenda on your mobile;
- Have push notifications about start of conference and news.

**Engagement & Interaction:**

- Ask questions, write comments, see others people comments, participate in live polls on your mobile;
- Find more about people around you at the event;
- Network with people with your mobile.

**All groups of respondents**

Firstly, all respondents' opinions were analysed and as can be seen from the Figure 21, 90% of all respondents agreed that they would like to have general information about the speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and after the event on Mobile.

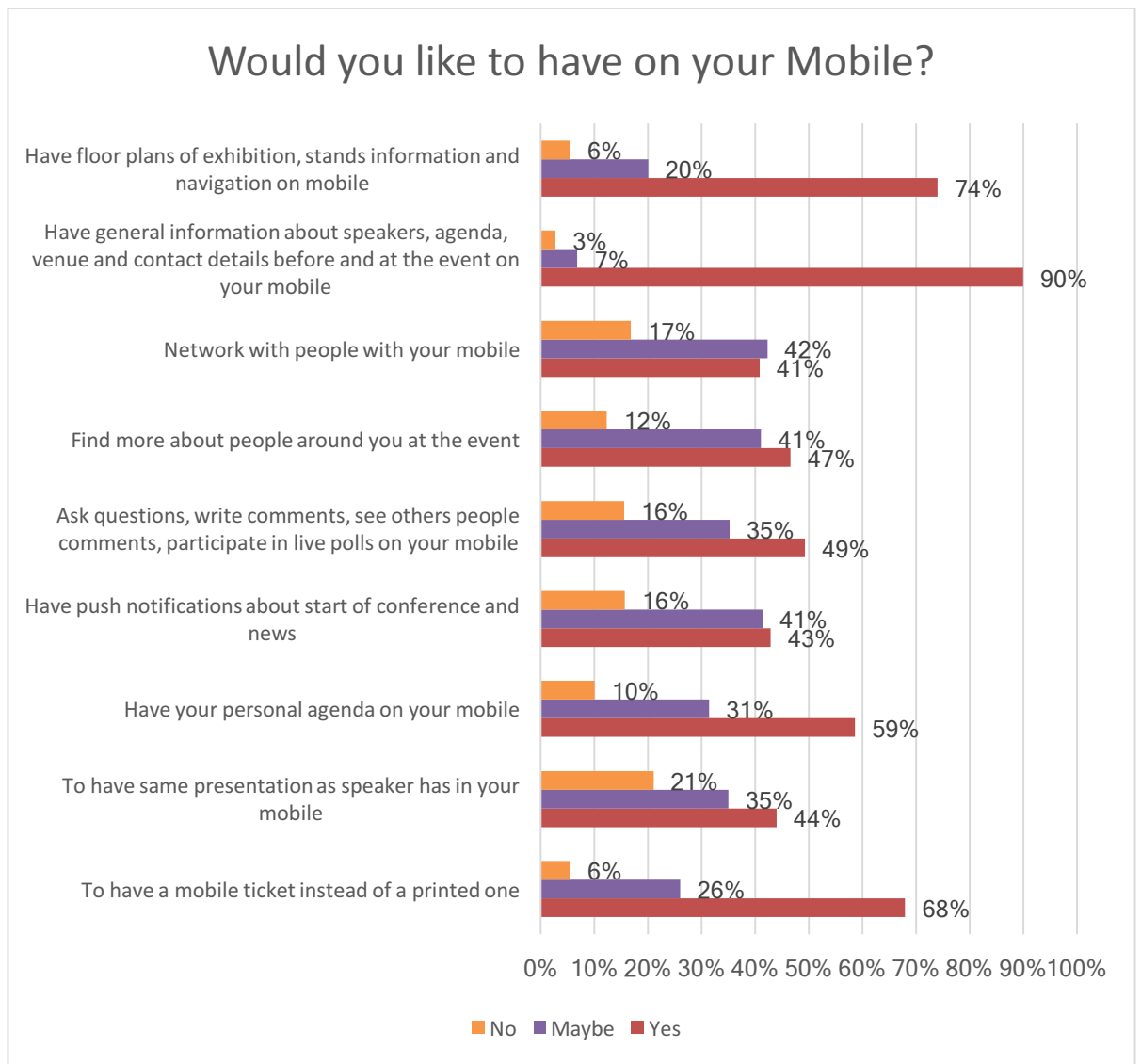


Figure 21. What people are mostly interested in? (n=73)

As well, on the question “Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation” 74% of respondents said “Yes” and only 6% “No”. Majority - 68% would like to have Mobile Ticket instead of printed one.

According to this results, it can be concluded that people are mostly interested in having

1. Have general information about the speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and after the event on Mobile
2. Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation
3. Have Mobile Ticket instead of printed one

This means, that group General Features, according to the Chapter 3.3 is the most popular among the attendees compared to other groups.

The least interesting for respondents are such functions as:

- To have same presentation as speaker does on your Mobile
- Network with people with your mobile

Respondents might be not interested in have same presentation on mobile device, as the mobile screen is quite small and it might be difficult to read the information and follow the presentation on the mobile screen. Networking function might have had low response due to the desire of respondents to interact in real life. People tend to use conferences as a place where you can have live conversation with other people. Some respondents might be tired of Mobile Technologies and their strong presence in their life and they might feel overwhelmed by them. These can be reasons for low demand of such functions.

On the other hand, people would like to have more information about the event on their mobile and have Mobile ticket. These functions are presenting more value for people, as they don't have to carry papers with plan of the conference, agenda and other information. Also, Personal Agenda comes next most desirable function after first three listed above. Respondents showed their interest in good information content, that will bring benefits to them and will be personalized. Mobile Technology can beneficially bring all necessary information in one place and that might be one of the main reasons for respondents to choose these functions.

### **Comparative analysis of attendees demands for different age groups**

Results of the same questions for the different age groups showed slightly different results as can be seen in the Figures 22, 23 and 24 below.

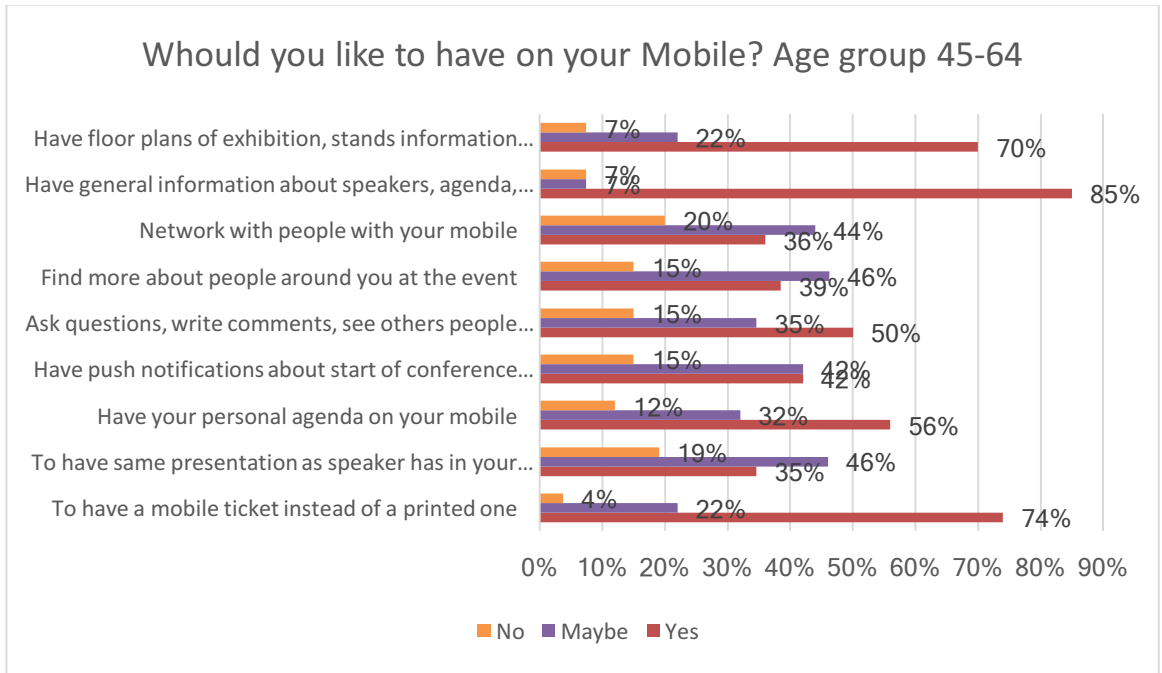


Figure 22. What age group 45-64 interested in? (n=73)

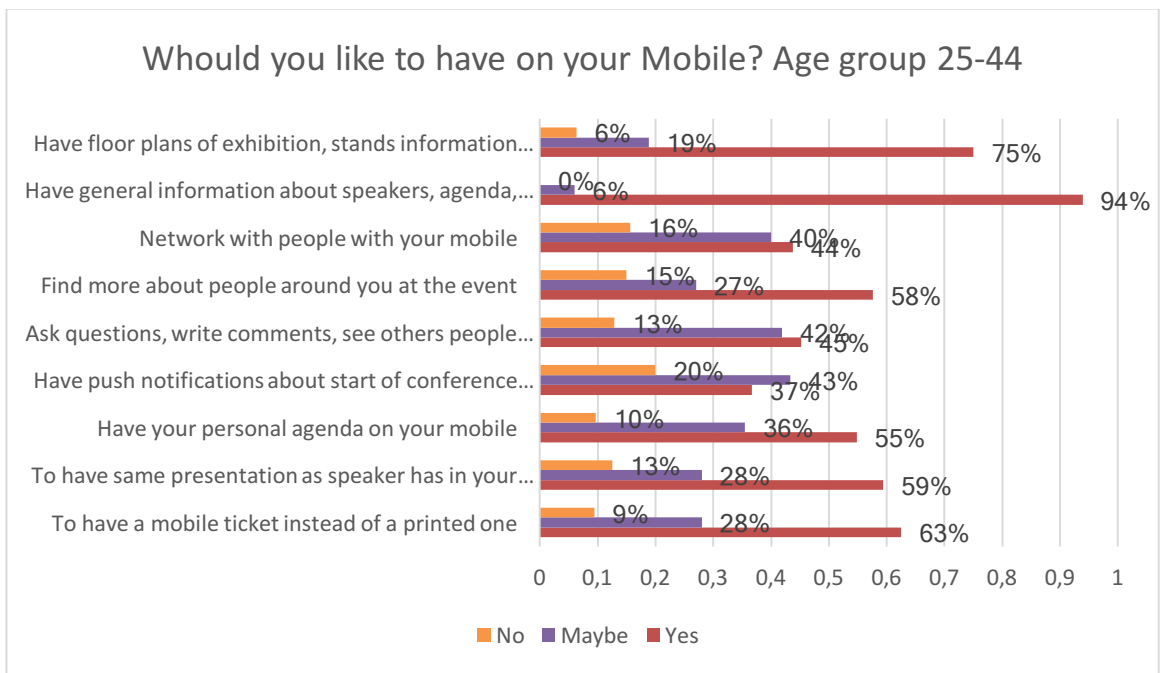


Figure 23. What age group 25-44 interested in? (n=73)

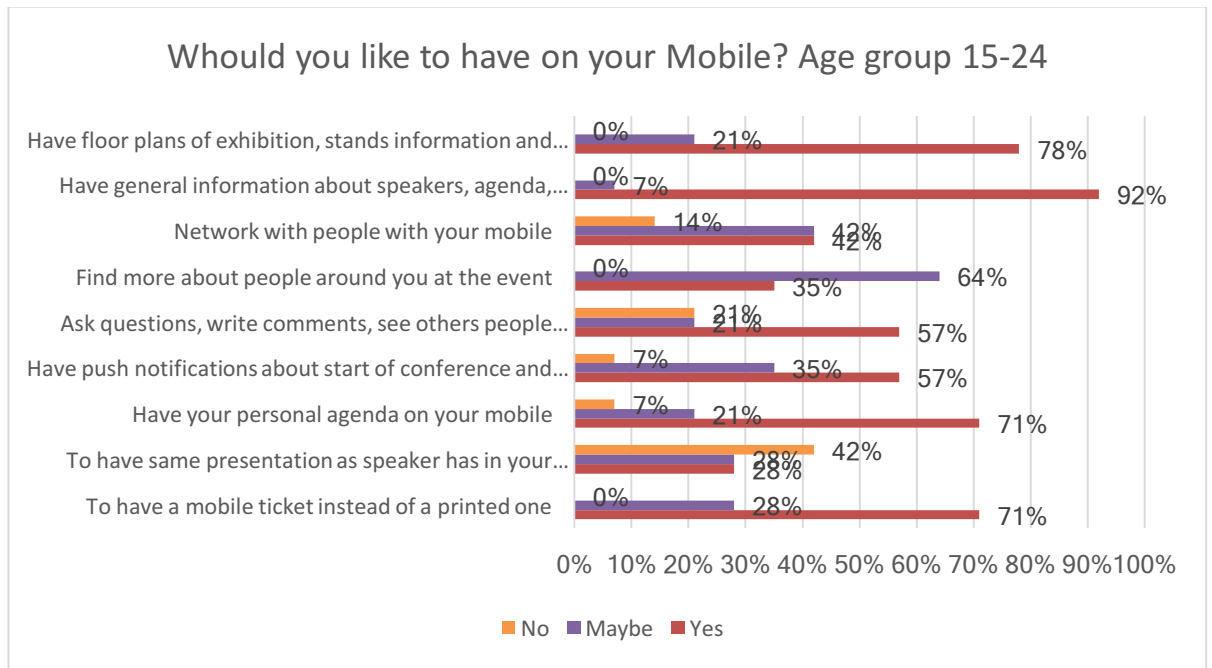


Figure 24. What age group 15-24 interested in? (n=73)

As can be seen from Figure 22, 23 and 24 most of the age groups responded on the questions similarly at certain point. Preferences in the listed features are varying slightly on specific questions.

Age group 25-44 is least interested in having mobile tickets than other age groups. On the question “To have same presentation as speaker has in your mobile”, age group 15-24 was least interested, compared to group 45-64 and especially to group 25-44. Personal Agenda is more interesting for the group 15-24 than for two others. Age group 25-44 is more interested in Finding more about people at the event than other groups. Push notifications are seen as not very interesting for the age group 25-44.

Respondents from the age group 15-24 might be interested in personalization due to the digital native attitude towards Mobile Technologies. They are expecting the mobile not only to show the information, but to show relevant for only them information, they are ready to be engaged in the process of conference and become active participants, receive push notifications. At the same time, they are not willing to network with people around them and seem to be not very interested in finding more about other participants.

Respondents from the age group 25-44 age generally more open to new technologies and more willing to try different functions. This group is interested in being active especially in communicating, networking with people around through their mobile, getting to know other people around them. At the same time, they are not quite sure do they want to receive push notifications.

Age group 45-64 are interested in having general information about the event, floor plan, mobile tickets and have personal agenda. In others, like Push notifications, networking features and “know more about other attendees” they are not sure do they want to have them. Their answers are laying between Yes and Maybe in those questions. As well, half of respondents would like to have opportunity to ask questions, participate in polls and write comments with their mobile.

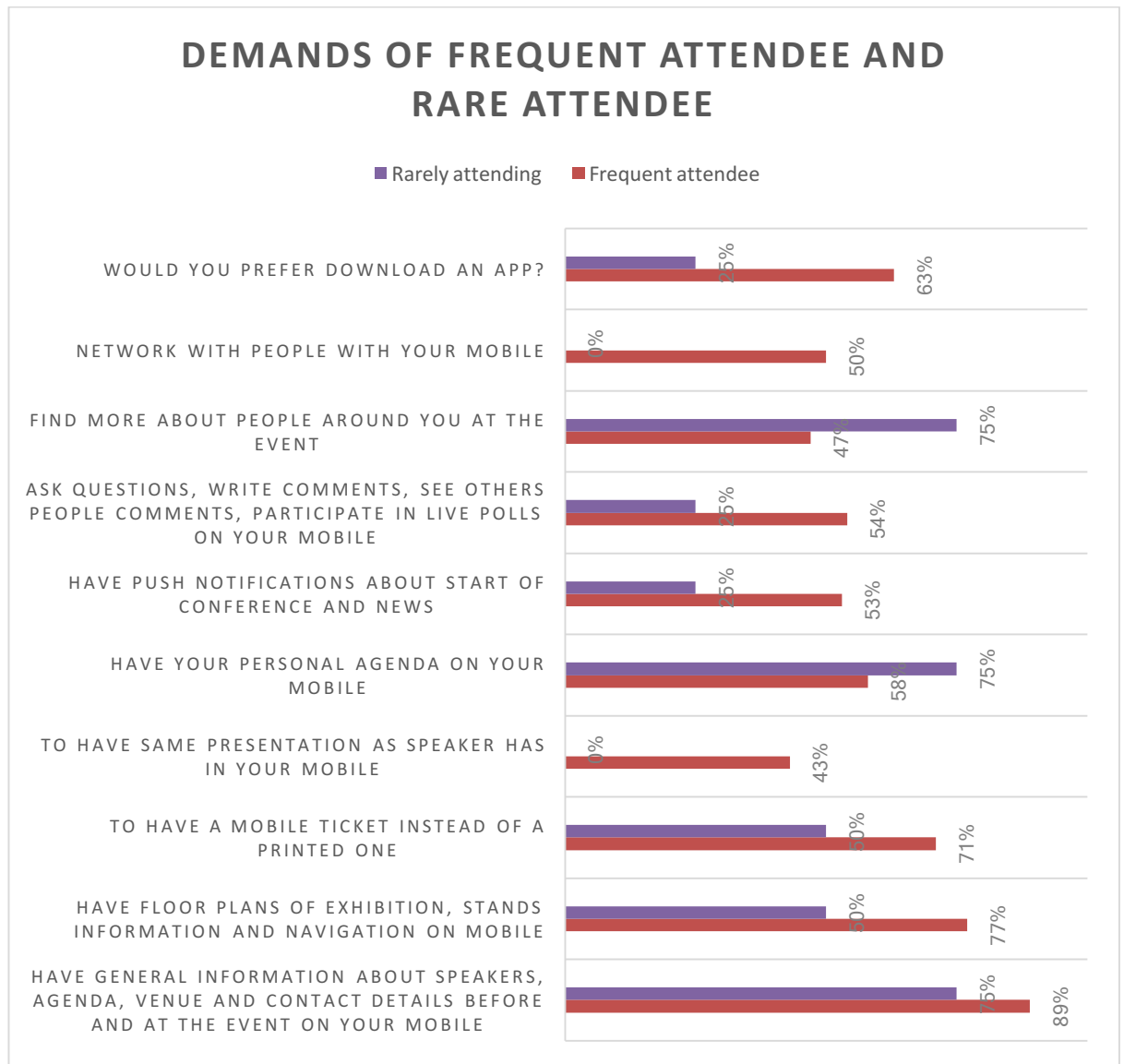


Figure 25. Demands of frequent/rare attendees (n=73)

According to the frequency of attending the conference, respondents can be divided into those who are attending more than 4 events a year and once or less. These groups will help to understand what are preferences and demands of people who are attending con-

ferences often and rare. For the future planning purposes, this might be helpful if there is information about target audience and their attending experience.

50% of frequent attendees would like to network with people with their mobile compared to 0% of rare attendees. 47% of frequent attendees would like to find more about people around them at the event comparing to 75% of rare attending respondents. 54% of frequent attendees would like to ask questions, see other people comments, participate in live polls and 25% of rare attendees would like to have this function. 53% of frequent attendees would like to have push notifications compared to 25% of rare attendees. 58% of frequent attendees would like to have personal agenda compared to 75% rare attendees. 43% of frequent attendees would like to have same presentation as speaker has compared to 0% of rare attendees. More than 70% of frequent attendees would like to have Mobile Ticket and floor plan of exhibition, stands information and navigation compared to 50% of rare attendees. 89% of frequent attendees and 75% of rare attendees would like to have general information about the speakers, agenda, venue and contact before and after the event.

Generally, frequent attendees are more interested in using Mobile features, however not on the same questions. Rare attendees are very interested in finding more about people around them while frequent attendees are not very interested in that. Rare attendees are very interested in having personal agenda compared to frequent attendees. Rare attendees are completely not interested in networking through their mobile with other people and in having same presentation as speaker in your mobile. Rare attendees might feel frustration when they are coming to the conference or any other event and thus they would like to have their personal agenda, where they will have all necessary from them information and instructions where to go. As well, they are interested in meeting new people. They would like to find more information about them using the mobile phone and then to network in real life.

Frequent attendees are interested in having mobile tickets, general information about the speakers, agenda, venue and contact before and after the event and floor plan of exhibition, stands information and navigation. Frequent attendees are less interested in having same presentation as speaker, finding more about people around them and networking.

### **Do they want to download or have it in browser?**

Figure 26 shows attitude of respondents towards the tool they would like to have for using Mobile Technologies.



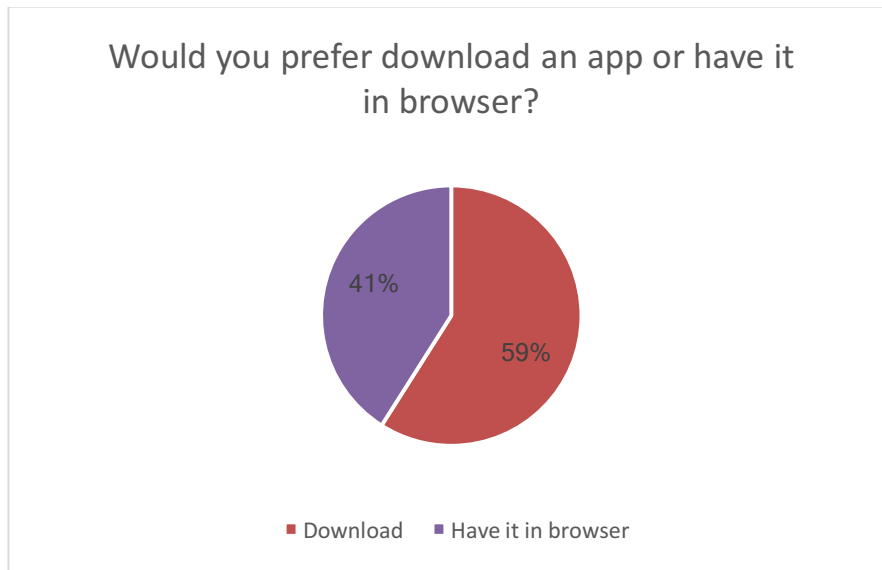


Figure 26. Download vs have in browser (n=75)

More than half of respondents (59% or (44 persons)) agreed they would like to download the app, while 41% (31) prefer to have it in browser.

For the age group 15-24 majority - 78% of respondents said they would like to “Download” and 21% “Have it in browser”. From the age group 25-44, 59% of respondents would like to download the app rather than have it browser (41%). Age group 45-64 answered 48% would like to download and 52% would like to have it in browser.

On the Figure 22, can be seen that 63% of frequent attendees would like to download an app while only 25% of rare attendees would like to have the same.

It can be concluded, that younger attendees and frequent attendees are mostly interested in downloading the app. This might be because younger people feel more comfortable with process of downloading of the apps. The usability of downloaded app is more important than time and power they have to spend in order to download the app. Compared to the older age groups and people who are not attending events frequently. These people are less comfortable and easy with downloading, they don’t want to install anything and they prefer to lose the speed of the connection and usability and have an app in browser.

### 5.1.3 Qualitative questions

Reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies and added value from Mobile Technologies.

Respondents were answering two open-ended questions:

1. What would be the main reasons for not using Mobile Technologies?
2. What added value do you experience by using Mobile Technologies?

All answers were divided into two main groups:

Reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies and added value from Mobile Technologies.

Reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies	Added value from Mobile Technologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical problems, failures in the apps</li> <li>• Internet connection and Wi-Fi</li> <li>• Battery limit</li> <li>• Privacy, anonymity and security</li> <li>• Poor content production, complexity, bad UI</li> <li>• Lack of clarity and experience in usage</li> <li>• Unfriendly interface and complicated navigation</li> <li>• Poor formatting, poor production of content</li> <li>• Distraction</li> <li>• Costs and prices</li> <li>• Time consuming</li> <li>• Live communication shortage and lack of personal contact</li> <li>• Lack of active users for networking</li> <li>• For live streaming: contended bandwidth and latency</li> <li>• Health issues (eye tiredness)</li> <li>• The capabilities of the gadget are ahead of the service operators</li> <li>• Bandwidth</li> <li>• Useless after event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Networking opportunities</li> <li>• Easy and quick access to all information about event</li> <li>• Simplicity</li> <li>• Less organizational challenges</li> <li>• Faster to navigate in the exhibition</li> <li>• Time management (keeping track of meeting/event schedules)</li> <li>• Everything at one place</li> <li>• Costs and time saving</li> <li>• Additional information</li> <li>• Real time connection</li> <li>• Speed, convenience, practicality</li> <li>• Environmentally friendly</li> <li>• Less paperwork</li> <li>• Less staff needed</li> <li>• Gives more flexible</li> <li>• After the event activities</li> <li>• Helps to feel more connected to the event</li> </ul>

Figure 27. Reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies and added value from Mobile Technologies

Figure 27 represents main answers in form of table.

Among main reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies were Technical problems, failures, poor internet connection and Wi-Fi, Battery Limit, complex and inadequate UI, privacy and lack of live communication. People were especially concerned with battery life, as once the phone dies, all the information is unavailable, thus they would like to have the opportunity to charge their phones during the event. All these technical issues make Mobile Technologies unreliable in the respondents' perception and there is no guarantee that everything would work as it should be. Internet connection was also mentioned more often than others, among the respondents, as the absence of it is one of the problems but the big amount of attendees and the server response might be low, as well as the overall connection might be poor due to the number of connected people. Especially, that concerns people who are traveling to other country, as they don't

have domestic operator and the Wi-Fi is the only way for them to stay online. Many conference facilities are emerging and if this is not a hotel, the Wi-Fi is one of the concerns for respondents.

User experience, quality content and simplicity were among top reasons preventing people from using Mobile Technologies and which might happen due to “Unprofessional approach to the creation of apps”.

Lack of live communication is also one of the reasons for not using Mobile Technologies. People are overwhelmed with social networks and constant mobile activities and for many conferences are remaining the best place for real networking. As the previous question was showing, people are interested more in getting more information about other attendees, however they are more interested in connecting with others in real time rather than in the app. Moreover, respondents are claiming that there is no “critical mass of active users for networking” and that might prevent them from using these features of Mobile Technologies.

People are also feeling distracted from the events and speakers when using the Mobile technologies and some of them are not willing to spend time for setup, login and start using different technologies.

Some respondents claim that the industry is not ready and not developed enough in some countries and that is one of obstacles for them.

Also, some respondents are feeling that the app is useless after the event and doesn't bring any value to them once the event is over.

Respondents are also feeling lack of experience in using some technologies and sometimes don't see value in them “no need to have one” was among the answers.

From all the answered above, can be concluded that the main reasons preventing people from using Mobile technologies are remaining technical issues and quality of content.

People are not willing to use Mobile Technology if they don't see value in it and especially when it consumes their time and energy. They have to see real added value, which will be worth spending their time. Mobile Technology has to answer need of attendees and most importantly, be simple to use.

Respondents agreed, that they see value of Mobile Technologies in engagement. People want to have an opportunity to interact with others, find right people, set up private appointments, personalized conversations and be active participants in the event and Mobile Technology can help them to achieve this aims.

As well, respondents feel that having all important information in one place is very valuable for them, that saves their time and makes their attendance easier and enjoyable. Re-

spondents agreed that they are feeling very comfortable with their mobile and since that they prefer to have all information on their mobile. People are answering that Mobile is an “instant communication channel” and “communication on the go”.

They also feel that they have real time connection and they can have additional information and they are staying updated in case of any changes in agenda of the event, which is also important for them. Respondents are also interested in having own agenda and they see value in having personalized navigation, schedules and information. For many respondents Mobile Technology helps to feel themselves more flexible, which is highly important, as this is the positive emotions that are remaining long after the event. When you have all information and schedule of the event you don't have to worry that you miss something, you don't have stress when you can't find a room for next session and that brings comfort and calmness. As well, some people are feeling that it helps them to feel more connected with event and they value opportunity to have after event activities. Furthermore, environmental issues are important for many respondents and Mobile Technology can significantly reduce paper use.

On the other hand, some respondents don't see any value in Mobile Technologies at all and they see them as one of the modern trends, which will be soon replaced by “Augmented Reality”.

## **5.2 Interviews**

Second method of collecting data for the research were interviews with event producing companies and experts in the field of Mobile Technologies for Event Management.

Interviews were semi-structured. There were 4 interviews with different event-producing companies in Helsinki, Finland. The process was starting from finding the right companies, then searching for people in those companies who are willing to discuss the topic and who are involved in this topic. Interviews were conducted by Skype and face-to face. Interviewees were asked prepared questions as well as were asked unprepared questions and all the discussions were very lively and interesting. Interviewees were feeling quite comfortable during all interviews. No misunderstanding in terms of formulation of questions, structure, terms was seen from interviewers' perspective.

Interviews were starting from the general question about the company, types of events, amount of events and specific information about the respondents, such as Level of Mobile Adoption in the company, Which Mobile Technologies company is using, Do they buy Mobile Software or produce it personally for themselves.

### **Added value of Mobile Technology**

All the respondents agreed, that Mobile Technology is a great way to deliver the information to the attendees, such as general information, information about speakers, calendar, notifications and this is crucial for the event management processes.

As well, respondents agreed, that Mobile Technology can be used to get in-depth information from the attendees, feedback and preferences.

Respondents also pointed out commitment of the attendees and simpler communication with them.

One respondent saw the added value of Mobile Technology in additional revenue streams and reducing of costs.

Moreover, one respondent agreed that Mobile Technology enable them to “have much better customer service in a number of ways”.

Important to mention that one respondent also pointed out the importance of the sponsors key messages and delivery of those through the Mobile Technology.

Comparing the results with classification of added value in chapter 3.1 “Value of Mobile Technology for Event Management” we can say Information Distribution, Engagement and Networking, Cost savings and ROI are the most important in terms of added value of Mobile Technologies.

### **Main drawbacks and obstacles**

All the respondents agreed that one of the main obstacles is the functionality and efficiency of the software “I have seen many of MT but only few very good once”, “some mobile apps are not functioning properly, not up to date, not updating. Design, user experience, navigation are poor”.

Three respondents agreed that Mobile Technology is not suitable for all events and all attendees, it depends on the filed of event and particular audience and “how actively people are using the mobile phones, some are heavy users, but it’s quite small amount of group”, some participants are “not really ready” for them.

One respondent claimed that Wi-Fi is the main obstacle for Mobile Technology, while others haven’t mention that at all.

### **What are the reasons for not using the MT?**

Two respondents agreed that the main obstacle is that audience is not ready and they are not suitable for some events.

Two other respondents have different points. For one respondent the main reason was “price and lack of providers, information, security”. The other respondent claims they need

something that app doesn't have yet on the market.

### **Future perspectives**

All respondents agreed that the use of Mobile Technologies will grow and expand during next years:

“next two years it will explode, the amount of applications will grow”, “more and more events will have mobile apps as a must, so they will always provide this opportunity to download the app and use the app to the audience”, “I see that this is exactly the right moment to do a lot of different development, and tests and try to be innovative and very disruptive, because there is a huge treasure in the end of rainbow for someone who will develop. There are amazing opportunities how you can leverage face to face using a lot of mobile and other technology. So the opportunity is great, it's like the other big industrial level revolutions, making the engine, finding those things. Now these are the best years to do, because technology is now ready, it's not something that freaks. We all have the mobile phones, smartphone in our pockets, so now it's time to capitalize and make the solutions that will make great great businesses.”.

The respondents had very positive picture of a Mobile Technology usage in the future, they are confident that people will start using them more and companies will offer them to the attendees. On the other hand, one respondent thinks there are a lot of difficulties and we still need to teach people to use the mobile technology. As well, one respondent agreed that there is a question how the audience will react on the high level of supply because “if you never wanted to use the app, and you don't feel comfortable, no matter what you will not use it”.

### **5.3 Summary and key findings**

Based on the results that I collected from my survey and interviews, it can be concluded that the industry of Mobile Technologies for event management is vast and developing quickly. There was no need to discuss different platforms, applications and software as new are emerging every day. Among 4 groups of features and possibilities of Mobile Technology the most familiar to people were General features and Communication & Personalization Features (Mobile Tickets, Mobile Payments, QR Codes).

Evaluation of the current use of mobile technologies in different age groups showed that Younger people 15-44 are tend to try engaging and interactive technologies, compared to people aged 45-64. However, event professionals and expert claim that the most important and beneficial mobile technologies are from the group Engagement & Interaction, as can be seen in theory part.

As well, research showed that all age groups of attendees are mostly interested in trying General Features. This group of Mobile Features is the most popular among the attendees compared to other groups.

People in the age 15-24 are generally interested in personalization of agenda, schedule, plans and other mobile functions. People aged 25-44 are interested in engaging with other people, communication and networking and people aged 45-64 want to have general information, floor plan, mobile tickets and personal agenda.

Research also showed that majority of people in age groups 15-24 and 25-44 would like to download the application, in age group 45-64 48% of people would like to download it. Among main reasons for not using, obstacles and drawbacks of Mobile Technologies were Technical problems, failures, poor internet connection and Wi-Fi, Battery Limit, complex and inadequate UI, privacy and lack of live communication.

Majority of respondents agreed, that they see value of Mobile Technologies in engagement, networking, simplicity and environmental issues.

Event producing companies who are producing from 150-200 events per year are using Mobile Technologies in the Events and investing in it and 3 of 4 companies are producing and buying software at the same time. Main reasons for them to use Mobile Technology are Engagement, Information, Communication & Feedback, Additional revenue streams, Reducing of costs and ROI, Internal Communication. Event producing companies see added value of Mobile Technologies in a new way to deliver the information to the attendees,

get in-depth information from the attendees, feedback and preferences, communication and additional revenue streams.

Event producing companies agreed that one of the main obstacles is the functionality and efficiency of the software. This was also one of the main obstacles and reasons for not using Mobile Technologies from the attendees' perspectives.

Other obstacle from the event producing companies were different groups of attendees, where some people were ready to use technology and some not. In this research, attendees were divided into several groups by age and by frequency of attending events. Thus, it can provide important information and give understanding which groups of people are more interested in Mobile Technology usage and in which in particular.

The research showed also very positive and active view on the future of Mobile Technologies. Event producing companies are sure in progress and grow of technologies, grow in usage. They are confident that right now is the best time to test different software, develop

and create new apps. People are ready to start using technology at the events and it soon will be must-have for at least big events.



## **6 Discussion, conclusions and further research**

The main aims of the research were creating an overall picture of the industry of Mobile Technologies in Corporate Events sector and studying the Mobile Technologies for Conferences, Meetings, Exhibitions and Incentives in today's world. Secondly, main aim was to evaluate and examine the necessity and interest towards Mobile Technology among the event professionals (event producing companies) and event attendees in the world and particularly in Finland, Helsinki. Reveal the attitude of event professionals on the topic of Mobile Technologies, understand what are the main reasons for using Mobile Technologies and what are the main obstacles for not using them. As well, give a view and discuss future perspectives of Mobile Technologies adoption in the MICE sector.

The aims were reached completely. In the theory part, the overall picture of the Mobile Technology in the Corporate sector was revealed in details. Different Mobile Technologies that are right now on the market were reviewed. Survey was completed successfully and respondents answered to all questions, showed their attitude towards the mobile technology. They told what Mobile Technologies they have used, which they would like to try, what obstacles and drawbacks do they face while using Mobile Technologies at the events. Interviews were conducted also successfully. Respondents discussed their level of Mobile Technologies adoption, added value, drawbacks and obstacles and presented their view on the future of Mobile Technology in the Events Sector.

The thesis examines very urgent and important issues for event management professionals in today's world. However, the rapid changes in technology, speed of adoption and progress make the whole research temporary. The research studied the attitude of people towards Mobile Technology, but there are still many issues to study and analyse. New technologies are evolving very quickly and the audience age is changing significantly. There is a broad field for studying the attitude of younger generations attitude as it can be completely different from the age groups 30-45 and 45-60+. As well, new technologies, such as augmented reality presents a whole new field to examine.

The development side of the issue is one of the most interesting and broad subject for analysis. How we can create better engagement and effective presence on the events with Mobile Technology? Which features we can develop and how?

One of key findings of the research was the main obstacle and drawback from the attendees' perspective and event producing companies perspective- functionality and efficiency of the software. Poor User Experience was one of the main issues for attendees for

not using Mobile Technologies and for companies to avoid using them. Further research can be done in order to get more information on what exactly attendees would like to have in mobile technology, what exactly creates bad user experience and how it can be fixed. Such research can provide crucial information for the event companies and they will be able to cooperate with software developers, creating better experience for people.

Moreover, the study was oriented on the Corporate events sector, including Conferences, Meetings, Exhibitions and Incentives, while there is a vast field of leisure events, sport events, music events, festivals and etc. Additionally, cultural events such as museums exhibitions, galleries exhibitions involve nowadays Mobile Technologies such as QR codes. How can they implement Mobile Technology in order to involve more attendees? What would be more interesting for museum and galleries attendees and how technology can help people understand art? These topics are still relevant and important and will be even more crucial for businesses and professionals in different event fields because they are helping to maintain the competitive advantage.

Thesis process was one of the main works in my entire life and a great part of my University experience. The most important part was the choice of topic, I spent several months thinking and gathering different information on the preliminary topics. The process of the thesis writing was smooth and engaging since I was very inspired and interested in the topic. In order to make a good theory part, I was examining a lot of materials, reading many authors, watching short interviews, listening to video lectures. I learned to structure the text, concentrate on the important parts and many other important skills for my future career and life. I learned how to manage the work from the beginning to the end, how to approach a topic, develop it, conduct a research. I also learned how to conduct an independent research, how to do it professionally and how to interpret results.

I was studying the companies in Finland, getting in touch with representatives and agreeing on the meetings and interview with them. Thesis process also taught me to manage time and work, to prioritise and plan. I also expressed myself, I had the freedom of choosing the topic, choosing the books that will be basis for the theory, designing the questions for surveys and interviews. During the thesis writing I also learned how to be creative and use different and new methods of getting more data for online survey. I met many professionals in the industry online and during the interviews. Thesis was the main independent and comprehensive work during the studying time in Haaga-Helia UAS.

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## Appendices

### 1. Interview guide for event producing companies

#### Interview guide for Event Companies

This interview is conducted by Sofia Mednikova, last year student of Haaga-Helia UAS, Finland as a part of my Bachelor studies.

Aim of this interview is to study the interest and attitude of event producing companies towards event mobile software. The objectives of the whole study will be to analyse the Mobile Technology and its added value to the Event Management sector.

Interview consists of 9 questions. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, and all received data will be used for research purposes only.

1. What types of events do you hold?

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2. How many events per year do you plan?

1-50    50-100    100-150    150 or more

3. Where would you place your company on this scale, according to the level of Mobile Technology adoption?

Beginner-Not using and not considering to start using   Amateur-Not using, but considering to start using in a nearest future   Professional-Using actively

-            +

4. What are your main reasons for Mobile Technology usage in Event Management?

Reducing of costs

Additional Revenue Streams

ROI

Internal Communication and Management

Information about attendees (Their profiles, interests, behaviour etc.)

Engagement of attendees (Navigation, networking, sharing of information, matchmaking, polls, comments)

Feedback

**5. What added value does Mobile Technologies bring to your events? (If you are already using them)**

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**6. What according to your experience are the main drawbacks and obstacles of Mobile Technologies for events? (What you would like to add, implement, increase)**

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**7. Which Mobile Technologies are you using, if any?**

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**8. Are you using your own developed Mobile Software or do you buy it?**



Own software (Personally developed)

Buying

9. What are the main reasons and obstacles for not using Mobile Technologies?

Price

Time

Staff

Security issues

Not suitable for our events

Audience is not ready

Lack of information (Clarity about the Mobile Technologies and people's attitude towards them)

Lack of ROI

Lack of ROE

We need something that event apps doesn't have right now

10. Please, tell your email, if you would like to receive the results of the study

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# 1. Online Survey

## Events Attendees attitude towards Mobile Technologies

Thank you for participating in this survey.

This survey is conducted by Sofia Mednikova, last year student of Haaga-Helia UAS, Finland as a part of Bachelor studies.

Aim of this survey is to evaluate the necessity and interest towards Mobile Technologies in Event Management from the attendees' perspective. The objective of the whole study is to analyse the Mobile Technology and its added value to the Event Management sector.

By term Mobile Technology I mean all types of software developed for mobile devices. Both web (from internet browser) and native (mobile apps).

Survey takes approx. 5 minutes. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, and all received data will be used for research purposes only.

### 1. Gender

Female

Male

### 2. Age

15-24

25-44

45-64

65+

### 3. Profession/Field of occupation

**4. How often do you attend Conferences, Meetings, Incentives, and Exhibitions?**

- More than 4 times a year
- 2-3 times a year
- Once a year or less
- Never attended

**5. Are you familiar with Mobile Technologies for Events besides Social Networks (Twitter, Facebook)?**

- No, I do not know and have not tried yet any      Yes, I tried once      Yes, sometimes I use Mobile Technologies at events      Yes, I am an active user
- +

**6. Please, tick the box with features of Mobile Technologies for Events you have tried**

- Live Streaming
- Beacons (iBeacons)
- Navigation, 3D Maps on your mobile device
- Mobile Payments
- Mobile Tickets
- QR Codes
- Crowd Mics on your mobile device
- Slide & document sharing on your mobile device
- Online questions for speakers, comments, feedback, participation in live polls on your mobile device
- Networking and messaging with people around me with the help of mobile device
- Augmented reality
- I have no experience yet

**7. What would you like to use/have on your mobile during the events?**

	Yes	Maybe	No
Have general information about speakers, agenda, venue and contact details before and at the event on your mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have floor plans of exhibition, stands information and navigation on mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To have a mobile ticket instead of a printed one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To have same presentation as speaker has in your mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have your personal agenda on your mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have push notifications about start of conference and news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask questions, write comments, see others people comments, participate in in live polls on your mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find more about people around you at the event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Network with people with your mobile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. What would be the main reasons for not using Mobile Technologies?**

**9. Would you prefer download an app or have it in browser?**

Download

Have it in browser

**10. What added value do you experience by using Mobile Technologies?**

**11. What obstacles and drawbacks do you face while using Mobile Technologies?**

**12. Please, write your email, if you would like to receive the results of survey**