

CLIENT PROFILE: VISIT FAIRFAX & VALLEY FORGE

A mobile visitors' guide?
An engaging event app?

We can do that.

Our VisitApps clients have creative solutions and smart digital marketing strategy in hand. Visit Fairfax enhanced their visitors guide by making it mobile. Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board reached out to sports fans attending a major event in their location through their phones, boosting local business

with the help of push notifications. Both DMOs demonstrate that the digital marketing and customer service opportunities available through VisitApps mobile travel applications—guidance, promotion, engagement, communication, revenue generation, and more—are plentiful. Now that's beyond handy.

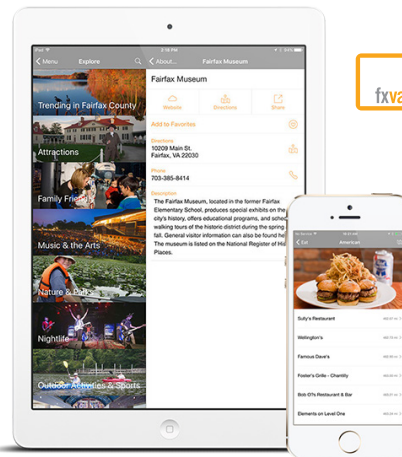
TRAVEL GUIDE APP

Visit Fairfax chose to use their VisitApp as a mobile version of their visitors guide, particularly for visitor use in-market. The DMO considers the app an extension of the guide, providing up-to-date information by season in a way the annual printed guide can't.

"Everything integrates perfectly with our CRM," said Patrick Lennon, Director of Marketing for Visit Fairfax, about the app.



Visit Fairfax: Travel Guide
by VisitApps



Fairfax County, Virginia
Connect with America

THE APP COMPLIMENTS THE PRINTED GUIDE

Visit Fairfax has no plans to get rid of their printed travel guide, however. "People love it," said Patrick, also pointing out that the printed guide still provides substantial fulfillment.

"The one thing this app does that our visitors guide will never be able to do," Patrick adds, "...it helps them navigate (by car). This is a huge benefit for us. As a county of over 400 square miles, people have to drive when here to get from place to place – so having the ability to use the app to get directions to their points of interest is fantastic. It's also a great amenity for those in hotels to see what's right around them."



APP PROMOTION

The DMO promoted the app through cards given to anyone visiting their visitor center, at hotel front desks, and through cards distributed with hotel keys. "This is one of the most successful ways we promoted in-market," said Patrick. To their hotel partners, providing the app option to their guests enhanced the guest's visit.

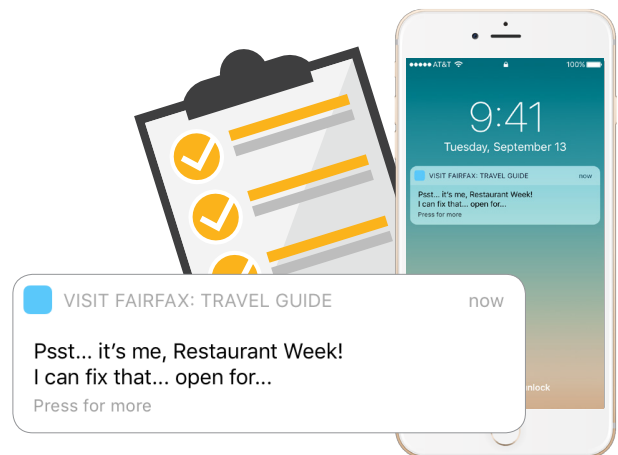
"It's mainly educating our partners," noted Patrick. "It costs them nothing to talk about it, but it benefits the visitors."

Visit Fairfax further promotes their app as an amenity to groups, tournaments, and meetings they book, and through a tourism ambassador program they started to teach tourism entities about the app. They also distributed a welcome email promoting the app. Facebook ads were the only paid social they used for promotion. "Facebook campaigns have worked really well for us in terms of facilitating downloads, and push notifications have worked to boost engagements," said Patrick.

STAKEHOLDER PROMOTION

Currently, approximately 2,000 partners use the Visit Fairfax app, with some stakeholders adding information through the extranet or otherwise, which is preferable to the DMO. "They update their information in one place," Patrick said, adding that there is seamless distribution between the website and the CRM.

"Since our goals revolve around steering measurable incremental business to our stakeholders—the app complements and supports this quite nicely. It's flexibility in terms of housing content, providing push notification functionality, and usefulness when it comes to mapping all support this goal."



CONTINUING OPPORTUNITIES

As for their continued use of the app, Patrick commented, "We want to think outside of the box about how to use this." They plan to use it to promote seasonal content, and to make suggestions for those in-market. They particularly see the value in showcasing unique details about their destination, rather than just providing listings. "People can drown in listings," said Patrick.



"People like easily digestible content. We don't want to overwhelm them, we want to inspire them. It's our job to inspire people."

Patrick Lennon
Director of Marketing, Visit Fairfax

In order to further your brand, reach out to people to get them to continue using the app. Reach out locally. Talk to the residents. "Be genuine and funny and speak the truth to residents," Patrick suggests. "It gets back to the entertainment factor. Talk to them in a human way to build trust. Start off someone's day with a smile."

There are all kinds of opportunities to use the app. Visit Fairfax is considering packaging push notifications with DTN ads, for instance.

He gave the example that instead of just delivering 400 restaurant listings, they can provide focused content like, "Visit these top 15 restaurants in the area."

"People like easily digestible content. We don't want to overwhelm them, we want to inspire them," said Patrick. "We, as DMOs, it's our job to inspire people."

PATRICK LENNON'S ADVICE TO DMOS FOR USING VISITAPPS:

Push notifications are the equivalent of a subject line in an email. The purpose is to get people to open the message. Geoffrey Schultz of VisitApps agrees. He suggests using the best content possible, and using the title well as a draw to open it. "Keep it brief and brilliant."

The key is regular communication to get good, worthwhile information. For example, "We tell our partners, if you have a special deal, you can work with us to give a push notification that they (visitors) can use to redeem the offer." He points out that this is measurable, and allows for instant feedback to stakeholders that this works.

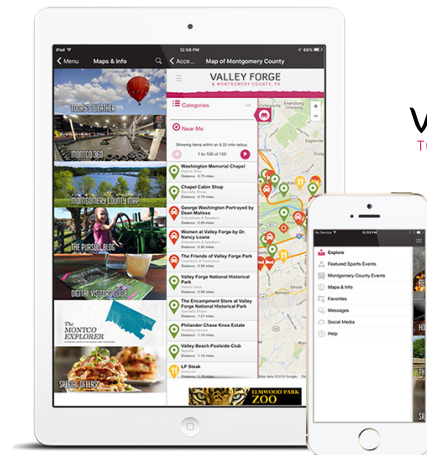
SPORTS PLAYBOOK APP

Valley Forge chose to use their app as an event promotion tool, in particular, a Sports Playbook.

"Our app is called the Valley Forge Sports Playbook because it is specific to our sports sales market. We offer it to our clients as an alternative to creating their own event app," said Zach Brown, Online Marketing/Research Manager for the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board.



Valley Forge Sports Playbook
by VisitApps




VALLEY FORGE
TOURISM & CONVENTION BOARD

VALLEY FORGE'S MAIN KPI IS BOOKED BUSINESS

At first, though, they didn't see the use for an app. "Why have people download an app, when I am being measured on the number of people visiting the website?" said Zach.

However with their event app, they aren't measuring by downloads, but by how the app is bringing in business, he said. "We continue to use it to drive sales moreso than downloads," said Zach. "Our main KPI is booked business."

You see, when the DMO heard a large sports event was coming to town, they wanted a way to interact with those participants. They set up their app to feature a shuttle schedule, show the hours of operation of gyms and spas that the participants needed to utilize, and to send push notifications.



APP PROMOTION

The app pulls listings from the DMO website via the Simpleview integration, provides information on partner/advertiser schedules, and suggests in-market activities like where to go to dinner with the team after

the tournament. "One (event) organizer spiked app downloads by running a contest," added Zach.

"We rely a lot on our partners for this app," Zach said. "It's something they asked for." The DMO promoted the app in person. "We have someone on site at these events to talk about the app," said Zach.



REPEAT BUSINESS

Valley Forge has since replicated the app for other events, whether smaller or larger tournaments, weightlifting events or basketball tournaments, new or repeat business. They learned by working with tournament organizers what worked and what to do differently. For example, if an organizer felt schedules changed too often to keep updated on the app, they would replace the schedule on the app with other information the next time around. The DMO realizes that if the app is useful, repeat tournaments will be repeat business.



"We continue to use it to drive sales moreso than downloads. Our #1 KPI for the app is events booked."

Zach Brown

**Online Marketing/Research Manager
Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board**

ZACH BROWN'S ADVICE FOR TWO VISITAPPS USE CASES:

Push notifications can be used to promote special deals from partners. Tournament partners—for example, a sports retailer, in the case of the Sport Playbook app—offer special deals to those visiting for the tournament/event and promote push notifications for a specific event.

VisitApps' geo-targeting for push notifications can be very helpful, because with sports, multiple events can sometimes be taking place at once. At the same time, being a large county, Montgomery can bring in multiple events at once, too. Geo-targeting allows the DMO to focus push notifications, said Zach.