

Case Study On



How Maxwell Mbugua Brought the World's Largest Tea Auction Community Into the Digital Age

Case Study

East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA) is a non-profit organization established in 1956 that promotes and supports the tea trade industry across East and Central Africa. The association manages the Mombasa Tea Auction, one of the world's largest tea auction centers, and works with tea producers, exporters, buyers, and brokers to strengthen the global tea market and maintain industry standards.

Problem Statement

The Africa Tea Convention is one of the most significant gatherings in the global tea industry — organized by the East African Tea Trade Association, which runs the world's largest tea auction from Mombasa, Kenya. Held every two years and rotating between East African countries, the convention brings together tea producers, traders, exhibitors, and industry stakeholders from across Africa and internationally. For an event of this stature, the experience had long been held back by one significant gap: everything was done manually. Registration, follow-up, check-in, presentations — all of it ran on paper and personal effort, with no digital infrastructure to support it.

The challenges this created were persistent and compounding. Confirming registrations required manual tracking. Follow-up emails for registered attendees were sent individually. Cancellations were difficult to identify and harder to manage. After the event, attendees routinely chased presenters for slide decks — and the team had no clean way to distribute them. For an organization representing the largest tea auction in the world, the gap between the event's industry standing and its technology infrastructure was widening.

Maxwell Mbugua first encountered Eventify at an event in Sri Lanka. Initially hesitant — having never used an event platform before — he was given a trial and was struck by how easy it was to navigate. With quick support responses and user-friendly onboarding materials, his team was up and running faster than expected. By the time the 2024 convention arrived in Rwanda, Eventify was the operational backbone of the entire event.

CHALLENGES BEFORE USING EVENTIFY

- All registration, check-in, and attendee management was handled entirely manually — no digital infrastructure existed
- Confirming registrations and tracking cancellations required individual follow-up with no centralised system
- Last-minute cancellations — including a mass withdrawal triggered by a regional disease outbreak days before the Rwanda event — were nearly impossible to track and confirm in real time
- Post-event presentation sharing was a persistent problem — attendees chased speakers for slides after every convention
- There was no mechanism for attendees who couldn't travel to remain connected to the event in any meaningful way
- The convention had no branded digital presence — no app, no platform attendees could point to as evidence of the event's professional standard
- Meeting scheduling between attendees and exhibitors happened informally, with no structured tool to facilitate it
- The team had no prior experience with event technology, making adoption feel like a significant risk

WHY EVENTIFY

- Eventify offered a white-label app — giving the Africa Tea Convention its own branded presence on the Play Store for the first time
- The platform was easy to adopt from scratch — Maxwell described initial fears quickly replaced by surprise at how user-friendly it was
- Onboarding materials were clear and accessible, and support responses were fast throughout the setup process
- Real-time presentation access inside the app solved the post-event slide-sharing problem entirely
- Check-in tools gave the team real-time visibility on attendance — critical when a disease outbreak caused last-minute cancellations days before the event
- Remote attendee access kept those who couldn't travel connected to exhibitors, other attendees, and event content through the app
- Meeting scheduling directly through the app gave exhibitors and attendees a structured way to connect — supporting the convention's core goal of facilitating industry deals
- The platform's simplicity meant a team with no prior event technology experience could adopt it confidently and quickly



How Eventify Helped

A Branded App That Justified the Investment For the first time in the convention's history, the Africa Tea Convention had its own app on the Play Store — with the event's name on it. For members who had been paying to attend for years, this was tangible evidence of progress. It changed the conversation around value. Attendees could point to a branded, downloadable application and say: this event has arrived. The white-label capability was one of the features Maxwell highlighted as standing out most from the entire experience.

Real-Time Presentations — No More Chasing Slides After every previous convention, the same pattern repeated: attendees would contact speakers after the event asking for their presentations, and the team would scramble to distribute them. With Eventify, that problem was eliminated entirely. Presentations were available in real time inside the app — and Maxwell's team made a deliberate decision to stop sharing them through any other channel. If attendees wanted the content, they joined the app. Once they did, they were immediately impressed, and many asked why it hadn't been used sooner.

Navigating a Disease Outbreak in Real Time Days before the Rwanda convention, a disease outbreak in the region triggered a wave of last-minute cancellations from international guests. With ~500 attendees expected and no way to track who had actually withdrawn, the team faced a crisis that manual systems simply couldn't manage. Eventify's check-in tools gave Maxwell's team real-time visibility on exactly who had arrived and who hadn't — something that would have been impossible with their previous paper-based approach. For those who couldn't travel, the team directed them to download the app, where they could chat with exhibitors, connect with other attendees, and access presentations from the event floor. Without a full live stream, Eventify created a meaningful hybrid experience that kept the wider community connected to the convention regardless of where they were.



KEY FEATURES USED

- **White-Label App (Play Store)** — Branded application published under the Africa Tea Convention's own name — a first for the event
- **Real-Time Presentation Access** — Speaker presentations made available inside the app during the event, eliminating post-event slide distribution entirely
- **Speaker Profiles** — Full speaker profiles built into the app, giving attendees context before and during sessions
- **Attendee Check-In** — Real-time check-in tracking that gave the team instant visibility on attendance during a disease-outbreak-related cancellation crisis
- **Remote Attendee Access** — Attendees who couldn't travel stayed connected through the app — chatting with exhibitors, engaging with peers, and accessing event content
- **In-App Meeting Scheduling** — Attendees and exhibitors scheduled meetings directly through the app in real time
- **Exhibitor Interaction Tools** — Remote and in-person attendees could engage with exhibitors through the platform regardless of physical presence

RESULTS

- The Africa Tea Convention published its own branded app on the Play Store for the first time — visibly elevating the event's professional standard
- Post-event presentation chasing eliminated entirely — all content was available in real time inside the app
- Real-time check-in data gave the team instant visibility during a disease-outbreak crisis that caused last-minute mass cancellations
- Attendees who couldn't travel remained connected to the event through the app — chatting with exhibitors, accessing presentations, and engaging with other attendees
- Attendee reaction upon joining the app was immediate and positive — with many asking why the platform hadn't been used at previous conventions
- In-app meeting scheduling supported the convention's core purpose of facilitating industry connections and deal-making
- Maxwell is already building out the next phase of Eventify features for upcoming events — with a goal of a complete end-to-end Eventify experience
- A team with no prior event technology experience adopted Eventify quickly and confidently, supported by responsive onboarding and fast support responses
- Only one minor bug — Typing issue was the only technical problem reported
- Design and function together — Rare combination of looking good and working well



Finally, I had an app on the Play Store with my name — attendees could download it, get presentations in real time, and schedule meetings through the app.

About the Company

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