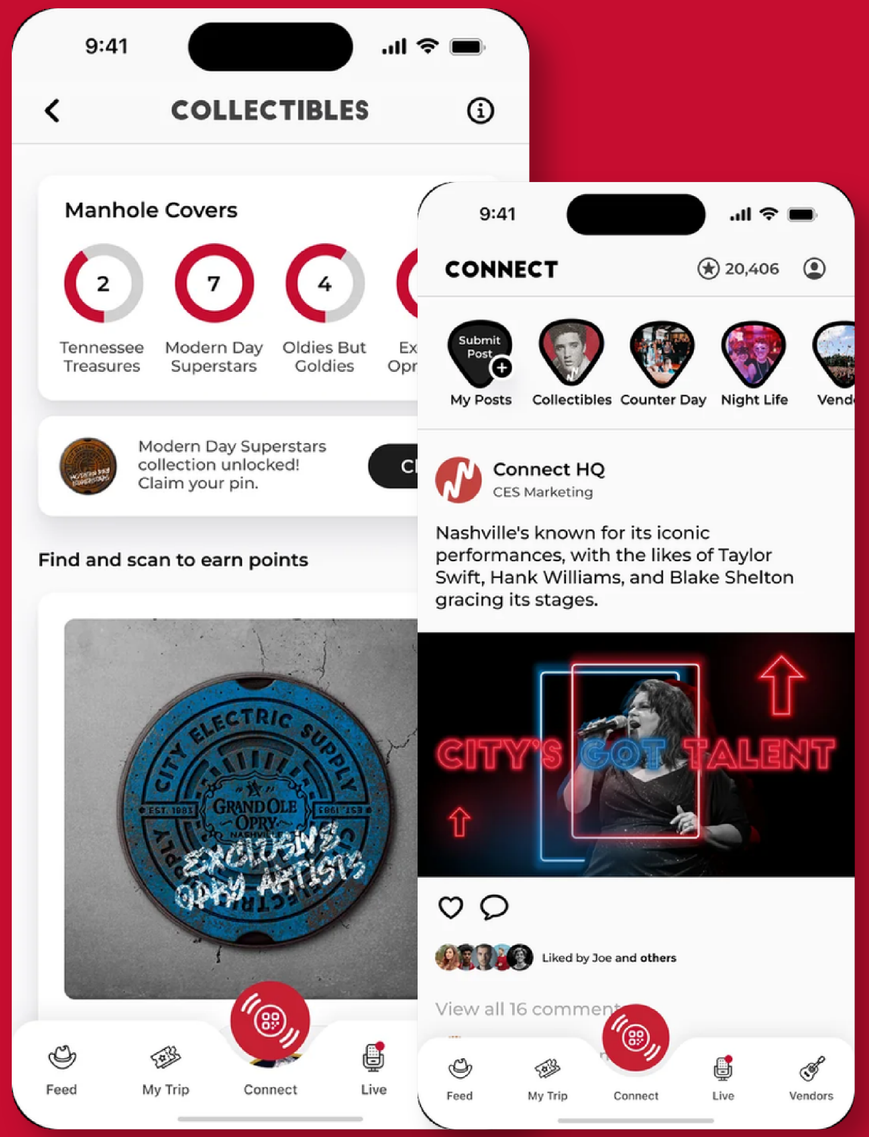
CONTENT CASE STUDY

CES Connect 2024 Event App

Ten features. Three days. Two thousand people who had never opened the app before, and would never open it again. Everything depended on the words.

City Electric Supply · 2024



An app with no onramp

CES Connect is City Electric Supply’s biennial company conference. The 2024 edition ran three days for more than 2,000 attendees — mostly employees, plus invited guests.

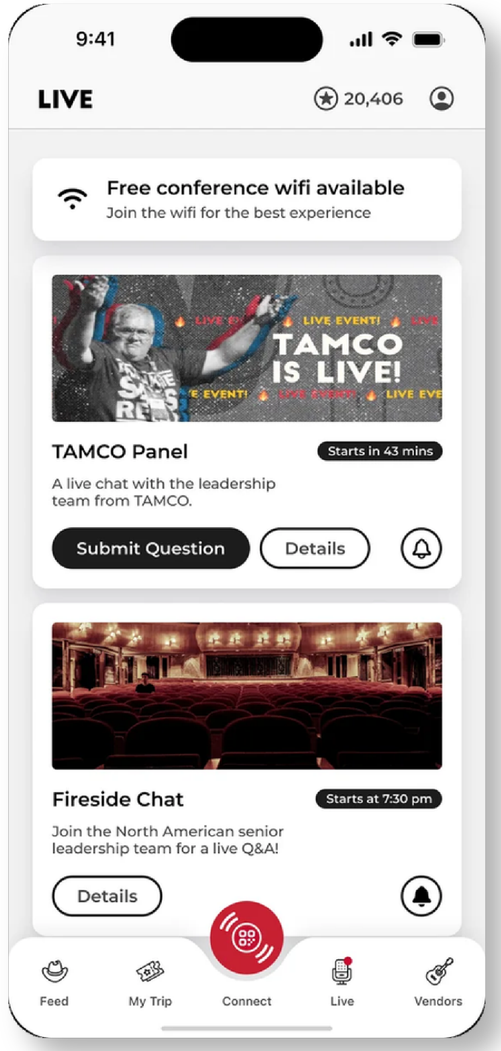
The app had no install base and no onboarding funnel. Nobody had used last year’s version, because there wasn’t one. There was no trickle of early adopters, no in-app tutorial anyone would sit through, and no second week to recover in. Two thousand people downloaded it at roughly the same hour and needed to be competent in it immediately.

2,000+
attendees

3
days

10
features

0
prior installs

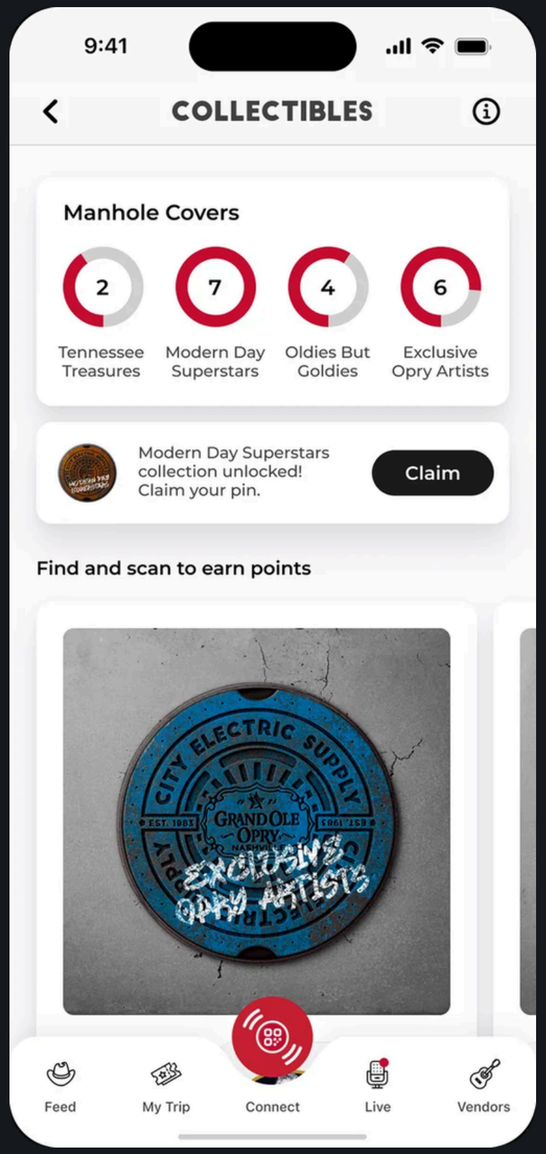


Which made it a writing problem

When excited team members are standing in a hotel lobby with a name badge on and a drink in hand, they won’t read a how-to article or watch a walkthrough. They’ll open the app, look at one screen, and decide whether it’s worth the effort.

So the teaching had to live inside the product copy — in the labels, the headers, the messages that land right after an action. The app explained itself while someone used it.

> ***“Find and scan to earn points”***
>
> Six words sitting directly above the thing you scan. Nowhere else to go, and nothing to dismiss first.



What the copy had to do

1 Give it a name that sticks with people

A thousand steps was called a “kick-a-watt.” A scannable checkpoint was called a “manhole cover.” A unit with a name is one people can aim at.

2 Put the instruction where the action is

The line telling you what to do sits directly above the thing you do it to. Nothing is filed away somewhere else to go and look up.

3 Never make a number explain itself

A rank, a score or a total is followed straight away by what it gets you. On its own, it’s just trivia.

4 Explain points once, properly

Points connected every feature. Getting that one explanation right meant the other screens did not have to repeat it.

5 Label the menu with plain words

Feed, My Trip, Connect, Live, Vendors. Five words someone can sort through on the first screen without guessing.

Five rules.
Ten features.
No tutorial.

One paragraph, doing five jobs

The walking challenge had to explain a personal target, a company-wide target, how the donation worked, where it stopped, and what a kick-a-watt is — to someone glancing at a phone between sessions. It does all five in one block of copy.

41,500

steps asked of each attendee, across three days

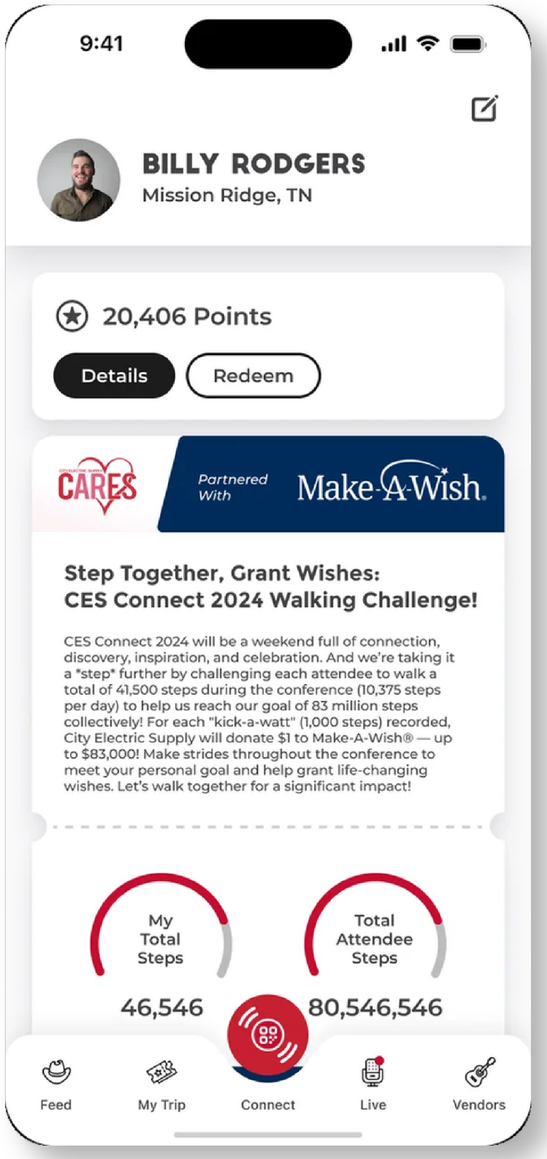
83,000,000

collective step goal for the company

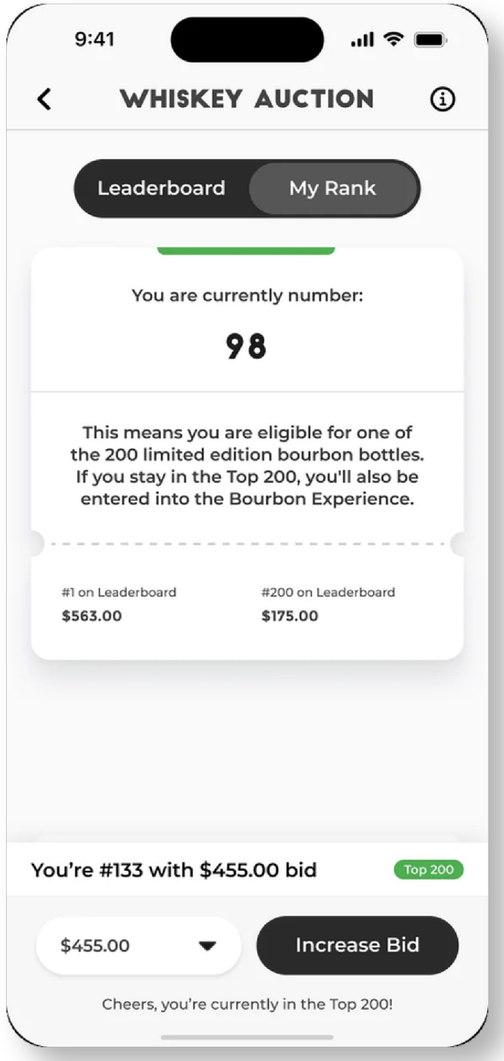
$83,000

maximum donation to Make-A-Wish

> ***"For each kick-a-watt (1,000 steps) recorded, City Electric Supply will donate $1"***
>
> The unit is defined in the same breath it is introduced. Nobody has to go anywhere to find out what a kick-a-watt is.



Telling people where they stand



An attendee who can't tell where they stand stops playing. Every ranked screen pairs the number with what it buys — and then tells you, in a sentence, what happens if you stay there.

"You are currently number: 98"

A rank on its own is trivia. It tells an attendee nothing about whether to keep bidding.

"This means you are eligible for one of the 200 limited edition bottles"

The next sentence on the same screen. Status, then consequence, then what to do about it — in that order, every time.

What all of it had to carry

Alongside the agenda and event reminders, ten interactive features ran across the three days — each with its own copy to write, and none with a tutorial to lean on.

1 Talent show voting

Live votes for the talent show on night one.

2 Collectible scanning

“Manhole covers” hidden around the property, scanned for tokens and raffle points.

3 Step tracking

Steps counted toward a company-wide fundraising goal.

4 Pig racing bets

Wagers placed with accumulated points on the last night.

5 Social wall

A shared feed for photos and comments across all three days.

6 Vendor contacts

Scan a vendor code on the trade show floor, keep the contact in-app, and earn points.

7 Whiskey auction

Place bids and track your position for a special-edition bottle of bourbon.

8 Q&A submissions

An open line for questions to be asked on stage during the leadship Q&A.

9 Charity activity

Fill backpacks with school supplies for a childrens nonprofit and earn points.

10 The big raffle

Post-event, use all your points to “buy” raffle tickets on prizes — right in the app.

Adoption, measured

Totals recorded in the app across the three days. Each one is a feature somebody found, understood and used without being walked through it.

1,855
votes cast for the talent show

21,559
collectible tokens earned by scanning manhole covers

1,032
pig racing bets placed with points

1,712
photos posted to the social wall

15,322
vendor contacts saved on the trade show floor

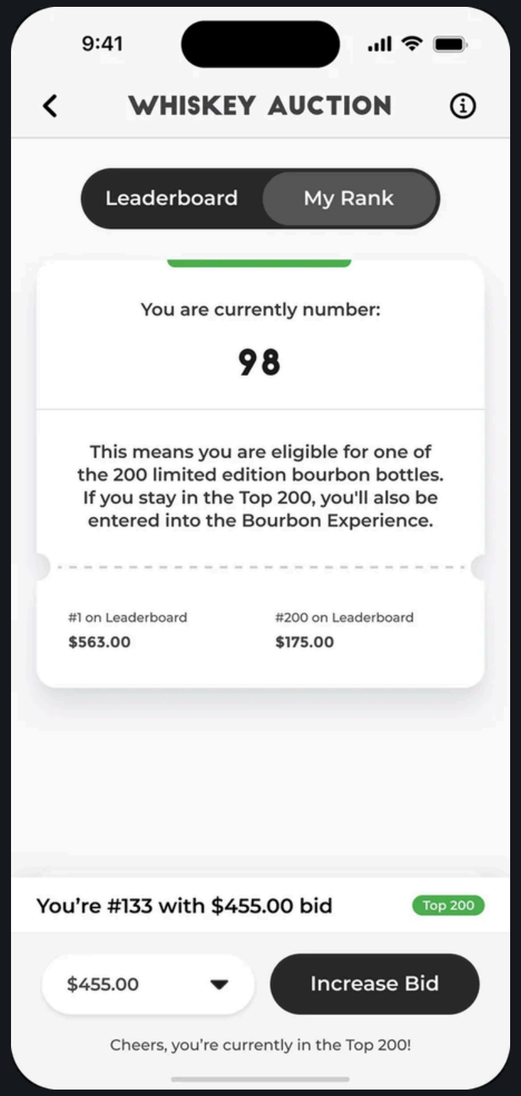
My role

Content

In-app copy for CES Connect 2024, written as one of three writers on the conference campaign.

Built with

The CES web design & development team and the marketing team.



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