How to Excel in
App Marketing?

With people spending *89% of their media time* on mobile apps, the market for apps is definitely hot and trending. But it is highly competitive and overcrowded! This whitepaper discusses top strategies to excel in mobile app marketing, get users download the app, use it, and eventually entice them to purchase whatever the app has to offer.

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Is Your App Worthwhile?

The success of any app ultimately depends on the utility it offers. The best of marketing efforts fail if the app does not add value to the consumers. For instance, an app that duplicates the website will usually fail, if there is no significant differentiation from what consumers already have. On the other hand, an app that makes the purchase process easier compared to the website, may find many takers, if marketed in the right way. A good case in point is that of Purina pet-centric app that helps users locate pet friendly places when they travel, and throws in several resources such as fun pet videos, the latest pet news, stories, and more.

An app need not even contribute directly to the brand's line of business to become popular and gain ROI. For example, Phoenix Children's Hospital built a *car seat helper* app to assist parents find the right car seat to keep their child safe. The value that this app provides, help the brand gain positive association. The app users will definitely have Phoenix on top of their mind when they have to take their children to a hospital.

The onus is on the marketer to identify the underlying utility of the app, and convince target consumers of its utility. Many marketers make the mistake of harping on the functions – instead of the core utility of the app.

How to Improve the Visibility of Your App?

If the app isn't there to be downloaded, it won't be downloaded. App marketers cannot rest on their laurels after uploading the app to Google Play or iTunes store. They need to deploy innovative means to make the app visible in highly competitive app stores, where hundreds of new uploads drown earlier uploaded apps within minutes.

Here are some tactics towards improving the visibility of the app in the app store:

- Keep up-to-date with best practices related to the respective app stores. For instance, app names, iTunes, Google Play keywords, and the description play a major role in increasing the visibility of your app in the app store search results.

- Just as in search engines, a high listing in the app store search listings can make or kill an app. App names with fewer than 35 characters offer the optimal boost in iTunes store, and lesser the characters used for iTunes keywords, bigger the SEO boost.

- Consider offering the app at reduced promotional prices, or even free, for a specific time-period. It might make sense to offer a free "lite" version of a paid app, containing basic functionality, and preview of the advanced features available in the full-blown app.

- Encourage user reviews. Reply and resolve any negative reviews that come by.

Add Testimonials

These days, as the consumers are highly knowledgeable and responsive, whatever the marketers say will be taken with a pinch of salt. Consumers tend to rely on the views shared by credible third-party influencers they trust. Therefore, marketers would do well if they can get reviews and endorsements from the current app users, steering clear of black hat tactics in the process. The following are some ways towards generating reviews, the white hat way:

- Approach a sample of the target audience, offer them a beta-version of the app, and seek feedback.

- Submit the app to popular app-review websites such as 148apps, AppStoreApps and AppAdvice. Some third-party services assist the marketer in such tasks. PreApps, for instance, produces a demo video of the app and submit it to scores of app review sites.

- Reach out to the top influencers in the app niche, and seek their review. Tools such as Buzzsumo and Followerwonk make the task easy.

The overall credibility of an app largely depends on the reviews it obtains, and the opinion given by credible third-party influencers.

Leverage Digital Assets

Marketers need to supplement their efforts in the app exchanges, and get reviews, with similar promotional efforts in the wider cyberspace.

The first step is to leverage existing digital assets available with the marketer, and other app stakeholders. Marketers can promote the app in the web landing page of the company, through social media profiles, by adding an email signature to provide a catchy one-liner about the app along with a download link, or by including QR codes for downloading the app in the company websites, storefront window, and other places.

The importance of social media in app marketing can never be understated. Leverage Facebook, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Pinterest profiles of the developer, and other key stakeholders connected with the app. Reach out to admins of related Facebook pages, especially pages with 100k+ likes, and give them a compelling reason to mention about your app.

More often than not, the app marketer will have to create a presence on specific channels where the app is likely to gain traction. The following are some options to this end:

- Create blogs, podcasts, videos, teaser pre-launch website, and microsites that showcase the app
- Place PPC ads and Google Adwords on mobile device, to target prospects when they search for products or services related to what the app offers
- Approach popular blogs and news portals, for guest blogging. While promotional guest posts are highly inappropriate, there is no harm in positioning the content towards a call to action that leads to the mobile app
- Launch ad campaigns, and optimize it by measuring user engagement in real time. The best unit to measure the success of an app is to see the number of times an app is download. Identify which ad leads to more downloads, and maximize resources on similar ads.

Tie up all promotional activities with a coherent strategy. Plan in advance, rather than execute random tactics. Track long-term metrics such as Life Time Value (LTV) to get confirmation on the effectiveness of promotional campaign. Evaluate the content, frequency, offer, and timing on a regular basis.

Have a Coherent Onboarding Strategy in Place

First impression is the last impression. The marketer can adopt various tactics and methods to bring a consumer to download an app, but unless the first screen offers the consumer a compelling reason to stay, they are unlikely to return.

Many apps now include an onboarding screen. Such screens usually assume the form of a simple walkthrough, introducing users to the app's purpose and features. As always UX can make or break such an onboarding screen. There is no hard and fast rule regarding an onboarding screen as the best practices are app-specific. Yet, here are some of the best practices to get the onboarding screen right:

- Offer an overview of the important areas of the app. Allow users to locate the functionality easily while keeping the app screen visible

- Utilize as few screens as possible. Lengthy onboarding before users can just get started is a big put-off.

- Avoid text-heavy explanations. Use in its place illustrations or visual content

User permission is one of the key functions of the onboarding process. About 60% of users chose not to install an app when they discover how much personal information the app is asking for. The golden rule is to keep permission requests to the minimum, and make it explicit why the app requires access to certain areas of the phone, and how such access will add value to the user.

Sustain the Campaign

Marketers who treat app marketing as a one-off project, to be executed around the launch time of the app are doomed to fail. App marketing is a continuous process, often involving trial and error, and feedback-improvement loop.

Mobile app users demand engagement. ***In 60% of the cases,*** users never return to an app, if they haven't visited an app in a week.

The following are some ways to engage the target audience on a sustained basis, with an aim to create a loyal user-base:

- Adopt push messaging, in-app messaging, and emails to reach out to app users, enticing their interest through special offers, contests, and other activities that create a buzz
- Read user reviews, and gain feedback. Fine tune the app based on user preferences. Communicate the new features to users regularly.
- Optimize the app by studying the insights gathered, based on user preferences. For instance, touch heat maps gathers data on the part of the screen most frequented.

Loyal users generate ***25% more in-app purchase,*** and 71% of app store revenue comes from in-app purchases.

Worldwide mobile ad market is now ***worth $24.5 billion,*** but smart marketers who run highly efficient app marketing campaigns can look forward to have a share of this pie.
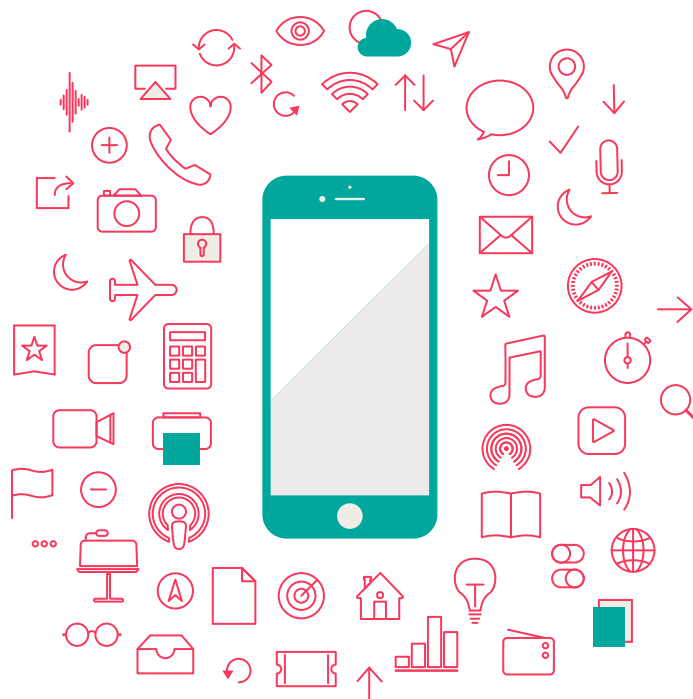
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We enable you to create insights driven customer engagement across all touch points to build a unified marketing approach. Our custom technology solutions have been deployed successfully in companies across the globe, especially in the US, UK, Europe and Australia.

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