



The 2017 Mobile Growth Handbook

100+ tips and resources



Author: Peter LaBerge
growth@branch.io

What's **Inside**?

1

Over 100 new tips, real-life hacks, and best practices from top mobile growth experts.

2

Mobile Growth Chart with a list of metrics and available tools.

3

Graphs, numbers, and data to help you understand the mobile app ecosystem.

4

Links to the **best blogs, sources, and community** for Mobile Growth.



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0 ... Introduction

1 ... Acquisition

2 ... Activation

3 ... Engagement

4 ... Referral

5 ... Growth + Branch

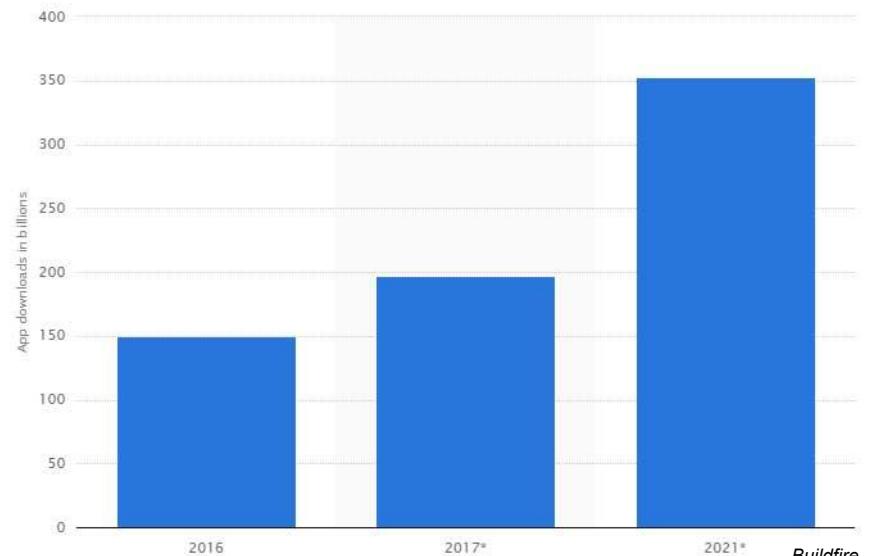


2017's Mobile App Market

The mobile app market is increasingly in the world's spotlight.

Total mobile app revenue is predicted to reach \$77 billion in 2017, with 197 billion mobile app downloads
(compared to 149 billion in 2016).

By 2021, experts estimate mobile app downloads will exceed **350 billion**.

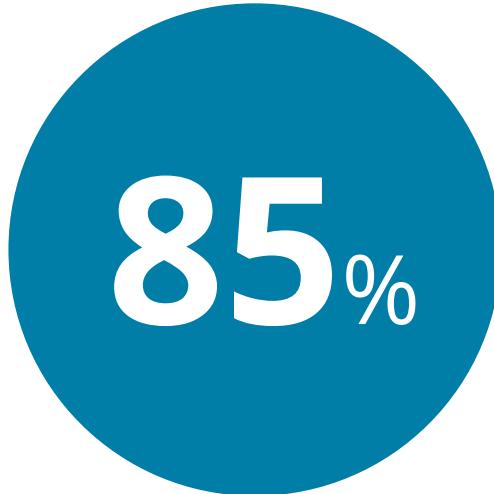


2017's Mobile App Market



69%

of all digital media time is
spent on mobile in the US.



85%

of all mobile time
is spent in apps.



2017's Mobile App Market

App users spend



20_x

more time in apps than mobile web visitors spend in the mWeb.

Mobile apps convert



3_x

more than mobile websites.

App transactions are



55%

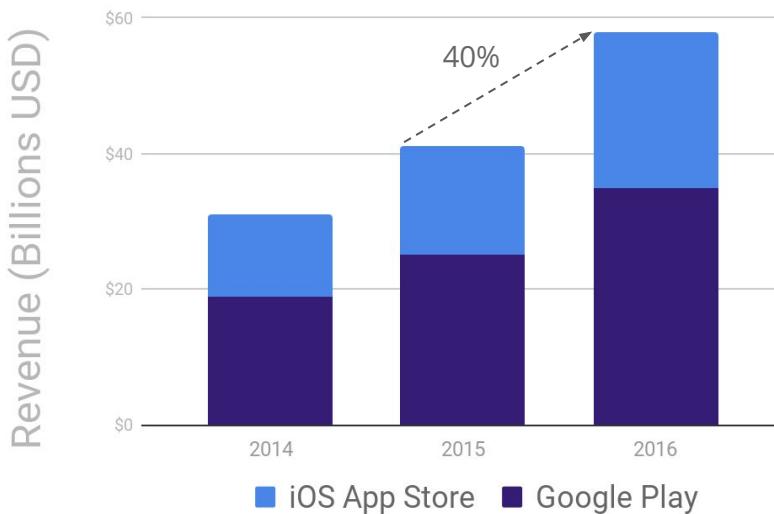
of mCommerce transactions.

The much-discussed mobile revolution is only beginning.

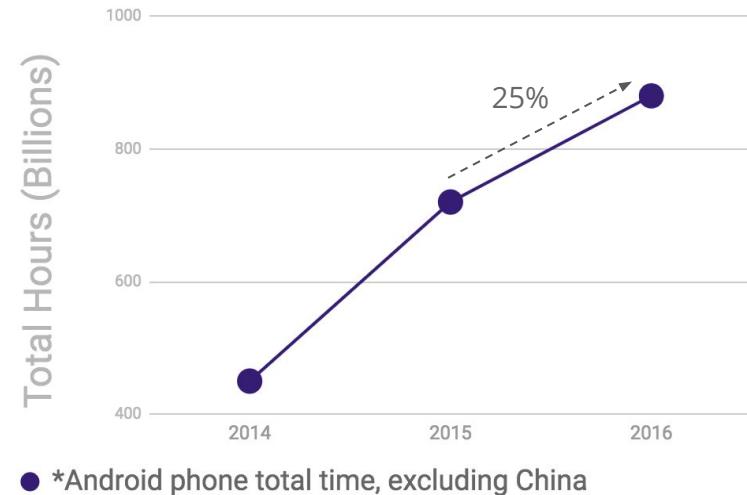


2017's Mobile App Market

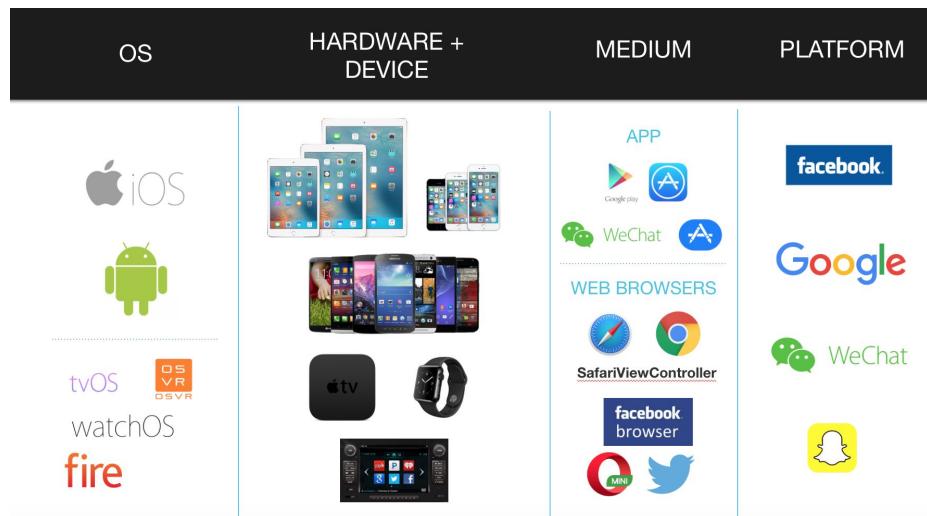
Worldwide App Store Revenue



Worldwide Total Time Spent in App*



2017's Mobile App Market



In a network of unique and siloed platforms, **the mobile ecosystem is undeniably fragmented.**

Let's face it: Serving users uniform experiences across platforms is key—but, due to mobile fragmentation, there are **thousands of possibilities.**



2017's Mobile App Market

The future of mobile lies in a **cross-platform world**. To build a seamless user experience, **product managers and marketers can't be bound to one platform**—experiences and measurement need to be seamless across desktop, mobile web, iOS, Android, watchOS, Facebook, WeChat, and many other platforms in the mobile ecosystem.

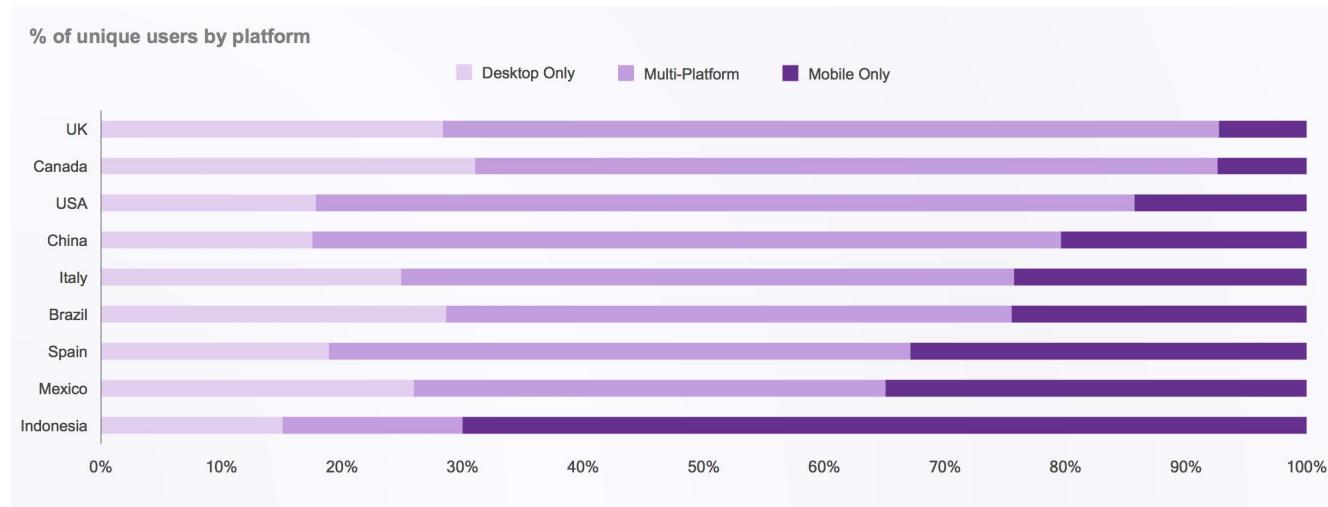


Mada Seghete
Co-Founder @ Branch



2017's Mobile App Market

In fact, **multi-platform** user activity is the **norm** in 2017.



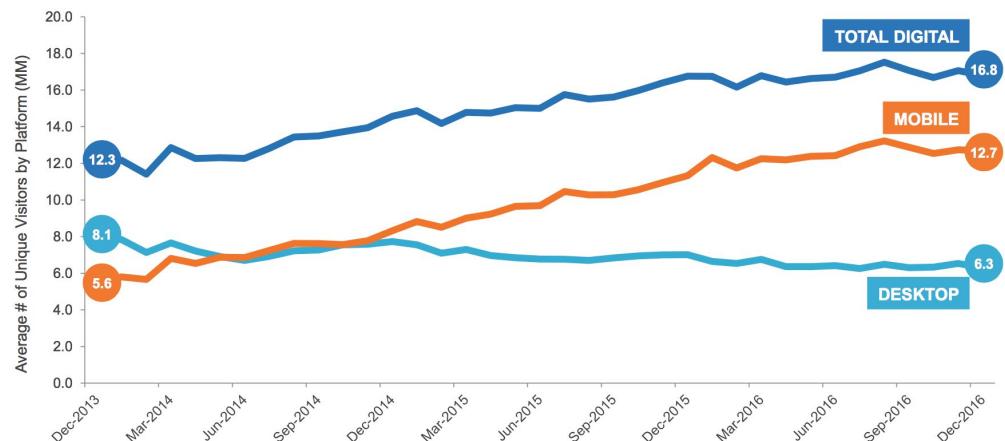
2017's Mobile App Market

The average number of unique mobile users is now double that of desktop visitors, and represents over $\frac{2}{3}$ the number of total digital visitors.

Gone are the days of focusing exclusively on one platform.

Growth in Top 1000 Digital Media Property Audiences

Source: comScore Media Metrix Multi-Platform, U.S., Dec 2013 – Dec 2016



comSCORE



Mobile Trends



The average adult spends **3.1 hours per day** on their mobile phone. Five years ago, we spent **less than one hour per day** on our mobile phones.

China is home to around **700 MM mobile users**, with 12% growth rate Y/Y.

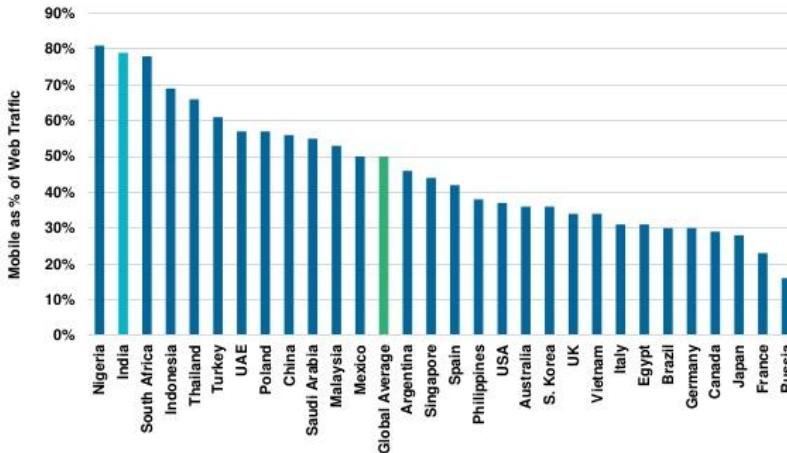


Mobile Trends

80% of India's internet usage is on mobile. The global average is 50%.

India Mobile Usage = A Global Leader vs. Desktop Usage...
~80% of Internet Usage on Mobiles...

Mobile Share of Web Traffic, 1/17



What's the Catch?

“The app ecosystem has an *extremely* harsh **power law**. App adoption and monetization are heavily skewed towards the top few apps. It’s nowhere near 80/20. In fact, **let’s call it the App Store 99/0.01 rule.**”



Alex Austin
CEO @ Branch

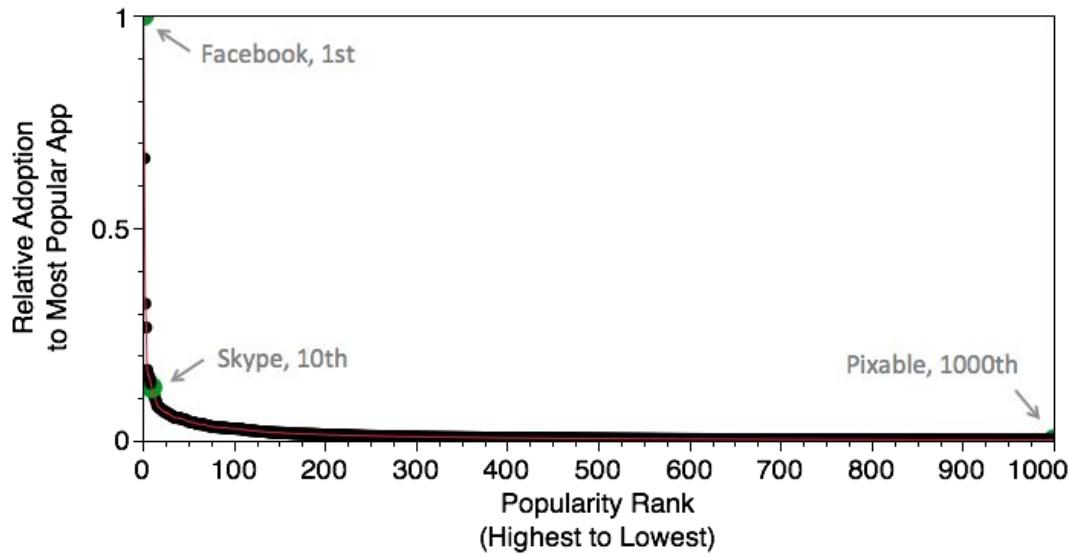


What's the Catch?

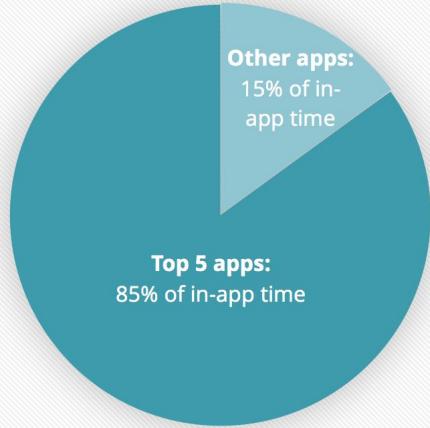
"The structure and layout of the App Store also favors the discovered. The top charts are the biggest driver of the **power law**, as they are **self-reinforcing**."



Alex Austin
CEO @ Branch



Barriers to Growing Your App



Time Spent in Apps

Unfortunately, it's not just app adoption and monetization that are skewed towards the top few apps. **Time spent in apps** also follows this power law.



Barriers to Growing Your App

But how many apps are “**other apps**”?



2.2 Million apps in the iOS App Store.



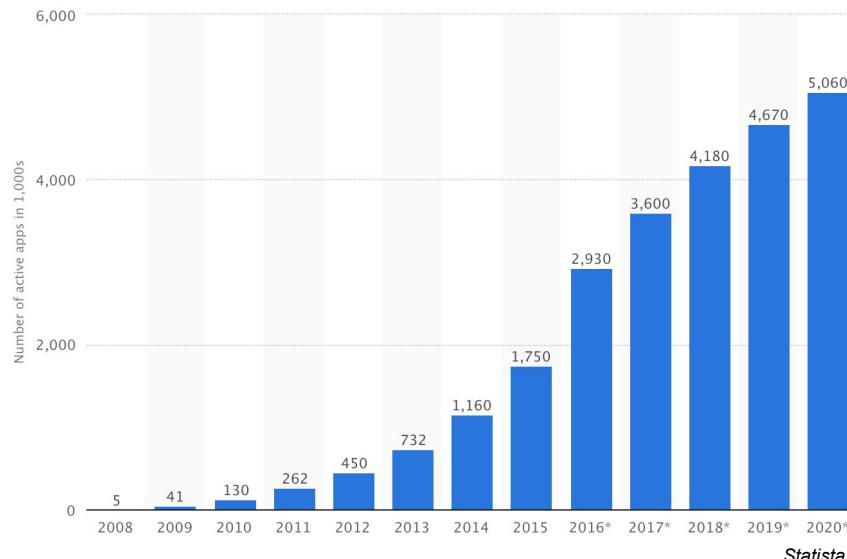
3 Million apps in the Google Play Store.



Barriers to Growing Your App

In terms of usage and revenue,
mobile is clearly the future.

Projected active apps in the App Store worldwide from 2008 to 2020 (in 1,000s)



Statista.



The **Mobile Growth Handbook** breaks down growth into four stages:

1

Acquisition

Are you targeting your users in the optimal way for your app? Find out with the words of our mobile experts.

2

Activation

Start your users off on the right foot with our helpful tips for optimized onboarding.

3

Engagement

You've targeted, sent out campaigns, and brought users into your app. Now it's time to engage your users the right way.

4

Referral

Learn how to best facilitate your most engaged users' contributions to your mobile growth plan.



Featured Experts



Avantika Agrawal
Birchbox



Tabir Akhter
BuzzFeed



Elizabeth Binkley
Crate & Barrel



Marissa Chacko
Foursquare



Josh Elman
Greylock Partners



Erica Hong
Lyft



Tessa Jacocks
Bumble



Jeff Kelsey
Ticketmaster



Liz Li
LinkedIn



Hans Malzar
Facebook



Jeff Morris
Tinder



Chuck Nguyen
DoorDash



Helen Ouyang
Virgin Mobile



Jason Schwartz
Spotify



Jazz Singh
NFL Media



Jules Walter
Slack

...and over fifty additional mobile growth professionals!



Acquisition



Acquisition

Today, **mobile search** is a wild landscape of competing and contradictory technologies, unfulfilled promises, and 800-pound gorillas strategically positioning themselves without any centralized regulation or governance.

By fully optimizing strategies for **organic** and **paid acquisition**, however, you can turn this chaotic landscape into a strong, streamlined source of conversions.



Acquisition: Organic vs. Paid

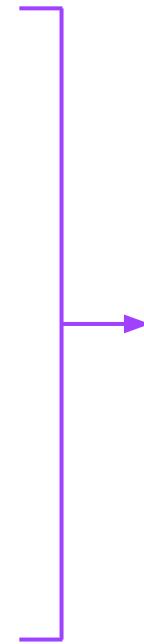
ORGANIC

- Content
- SEO & ASO
- Instant Apps
- Word of Mouth
- Email
- Press Coverage
- Social Media



PAID

- Social Media
- Native Apps
- Apple Search Ads
- Events
- Influencers



Acquisition
of new users



TIP

Start with a soft launch.

Nobody said launching an app was easy work. **Starting with a soft launch to a limited audience** can identify bugs and errors, and may even generate product suggestions or enhancements, prior to the full roll-out of your app.

Wouldn't you rather spend 20k on a small, private launch to learn about what you can improve in your app, rather than 200k to make rushed corrections later?

Annum Munir

Localytics Blog

["Organic & Paid Acquisition: How to Put Together a Foolproof Plan to Gain More App Users \(in 6 Steps!\)"](#)



TIP

Check out our App Launch Checklist.

From the technology you should consider implementing when building your app, to the steps you'll need to build a strong marketing and public relations foundation, **The App Launch Checklist** is chock full of useful content. There are two options: explore the whole list as a learning experience, or build a launch plan that makes sense for your app.



The App Launch Checklist

Actionable insights on how to successfully launch **and** grow your app.



Organic Acquisition: Challenges

For mobile growth professionals, the challenges of organic acquisition aren't a mystery.

Some growth experts are tempted to maximize retention budgets by relying on organic acquisition methods that are tough to **establish, implement, track, and defend.**

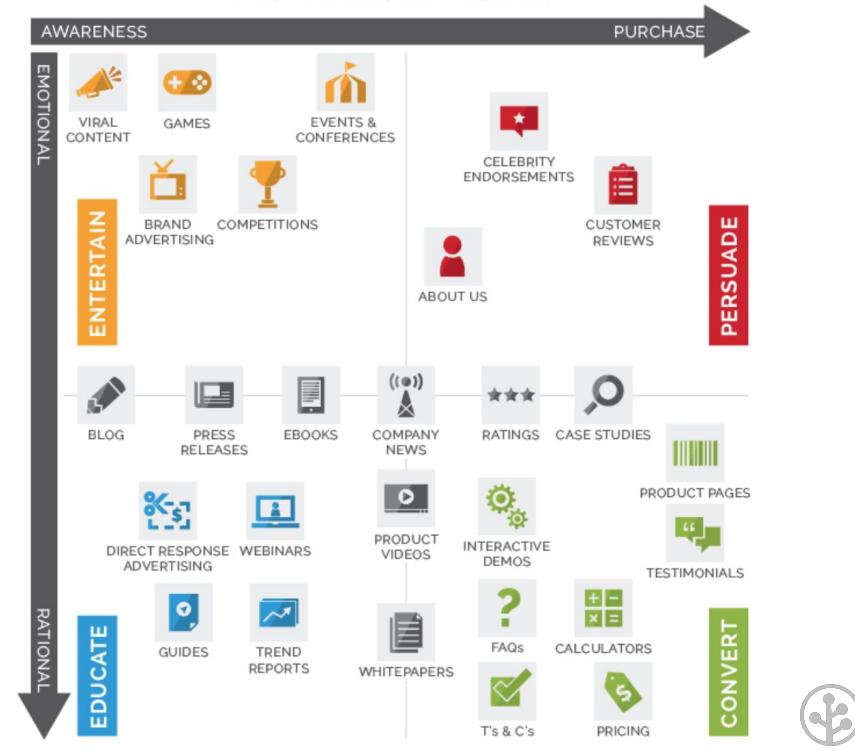
It's also easy to miss opportunities outside of the status quo. As [Ken Favaro writes for Harvard Business Review](#), "**Companies systematically underestimate opportunities for organic growth that are hiding in plain sight.**"



Organic Acquisition: Content

Content could be the answer to all your mobile acquisition woes. These days, content is utilized in a variety of forms to ultimately **entertain, educate, persuade, and convert**.

Distilled has prepared the nifty content matrix to the right. **It's important to understand the proposed role of content prior to writing and distributing it**, so as to optimize conversion and ROI.



The 7 High-Arousal Emotions That Make Your Content Contagious

1. Awe



2. Anger



3. Anxiety

HOW IMAGES IMPROVE—OR DESTROY—CONVERSION RATES

THE #1 CONVERSION KILLER IN YOUR WEB DESIGN (ARE YOU AT RISK?)



The 7 High-Arousal Emotions That Make Your Content Contagious

5. Joy

Hello. My name is Yukon and I love warm hugs.



[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

You, Ankit Saxena, Evan G and 21 others

6. Lust



Free Shipping NOW

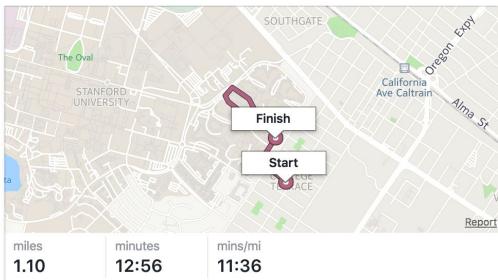
[stylewe.com](#)

Charming Dresses & Unique Design @Stylewe.com

Free Shipping over \$60 [SHOP NOW!](#)

7. Surprise

Mada Seghete ran 1.1 miles with Strava.
June 12 · Strava ·



[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

[Marina Kostjoutchenko](#), Ellen Fang and 10 others

[Marina Kostjoutchenko](#) O wow! That's great
[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · June 13 at 9:34am



What makes good content?

Useful

Humans crave the opportunity to give advice and offer tips.

Why does advocate marketing work? **Your best customers love to help out**, but especially if they offer practical value.

SEO driven

Writing content with SEO in mind, based on search trends and search volume + opportunity to make it to the first page can help your content drive more organic traffic to your website.

Drives emotion

Positive emotions make people **share** (the happier the post, the more likely it is to be shared). **Negative emotions** drive more **clicks**.

High arousing emotions drive more shares.



TIP

Create user-driven content calendars.

"What you publish via social media, what press releases you push, and what eBooks and webinars you develop all fall under the umbrella of content creation. **In order to keep all of your content organized, you need to work with calendars.**

"That could mean a Google Docs spreadsheet with tabs for social media, PR, and content marketing. It could mean a big dry erase calendar hanging on your office wall. **It doesn't matter what your calendar looks like. It just matters that you have one.** Use content calendars to plan your release dates, manage your authors, manage your deadlines, assign keywords, monitor promotion strategies—whatever makes sense for you."

Shanelle Mullin

Kissmetrics Blog

[How to Master Social Customer Acquisition](#)



TIP

Leverage content marketing to connect to your users.

“Focus on writing something that’s of interest to your audience. It doesn’t necessarily have to be about your product. **The purpose of content marketing is producing something of value, not showcasing your product.**”



Robbie Allan

Mobile Product Manager @ SurveyMonkey



TIP

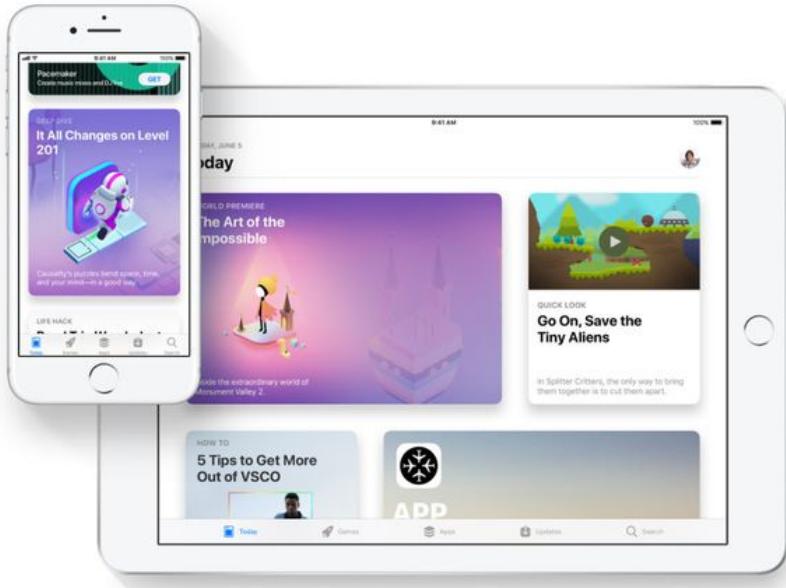
Leverage content marketing to connect to your users.

No existing community for the industry? No problem—sometimes, you may also need to create an optimal channel for your users to receive the content you produce.

For instance, we founded the [**Mobile Growth Community**](#) so mobile growth experts could connect, network, and advance. With free meetups spread around the world and all throughout the year, we're committed to **not only providing quality content for mobile growth professionals, but also providing a channel for them to access it**.



Organic Acquisition: Search Engine Optimization



With the redesign of the App Store and the thousands of apps published every day, **the App Store and Play Store can no longer be the primary channels for organic discovery.**

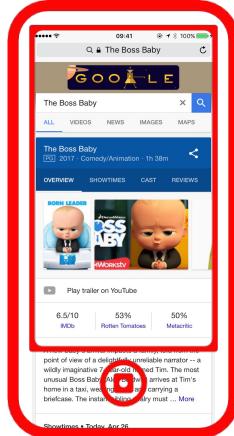
Repeatedly, we've seen developers try to use an App Indexing product, but find that content *never* appears in search.

And don't even get us started on that pesky unattributed direct referral traffic.



Organic Content and SEO

The Walled Garden of Google Search Results



Your app's
result



Organic Content and SEO

There's a science behind every single Google search—**not every Google search is ranked organically**. Below is a slide portraying a rotated Google search for DreamWorks' "The Boss Baby". Notice the limited space for organic content.

Google's Content

Maybe Organic?

AMP (also Google's Content)

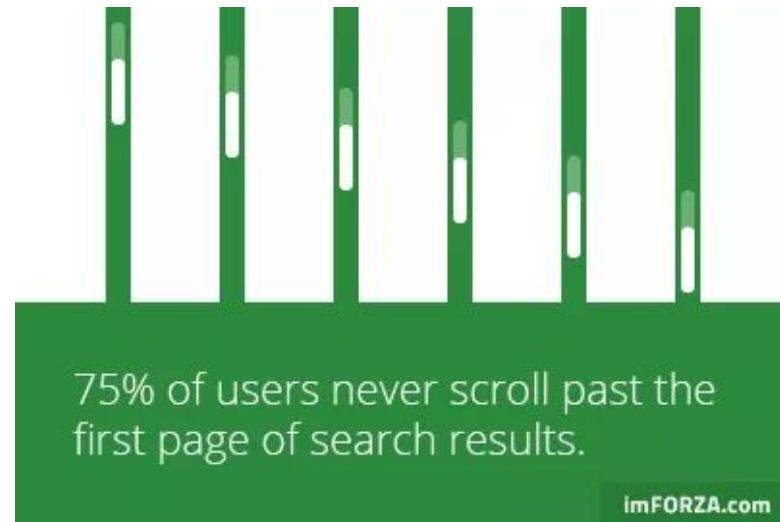
Actual Organic Results

Google's Content



Organic Content and SEO

When applied to the finding that **75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results**, this creates a potentially challenging ecosystem for mobile growth professionals.



TIP

Checklist for Improving mWeb SEO.

- 1 **Pass Google's Mobile-Friendly Test**
- 2 **Improve Mobile Usability**
- 3 **Prepare for Mobile Indexing**
 - Assess Mobile Site Architecture
 - Assess Content Parity
- 4 **Leverage Schema Markup**
(Especially in High-Interest Verticals)
- 5 **Improve Performance (through PageSpeed)**
 - AMP
 - PWAs



TIP

Execute an audit of your app's SEO web performance.

1. Do all your website's pages have **SEO meta titles and descriptions?**
2. Is each page optimized for **SEO keywords?**
3. Is your **URL structure** optimized for search engines?
 - a. Are your URLs short and simple, or complicated and convoluted?
4. Are pages and blog posts formatted with **headings and bolded sections?**
 - a. Have you optimized your page with a Call to Action?
5. Do your images have **keywords in ALT tags?**
6. Are you using **internal and external links** in your content?

Neil Patel

Blog

[“19 Advanced SEO Techniques That’ll Double Your SEO Performance”](#)



TIP

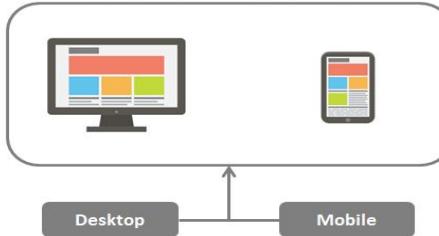
Keep in mind that Google is moving to a mobile-first search index.

Preparing for Mobile-First Indexing (The TL;DR Version)

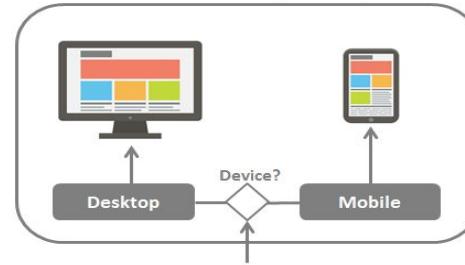
Desktop Only
(1 URL)



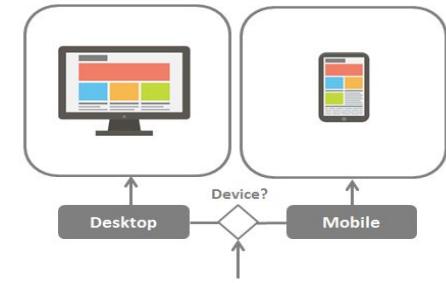
Responsive Design
(1 URL)



Dynamic Serving
(1 URL)



M. Site
(2 URLs)



- Your desktop site will still be used (not ideal)

- Not much changes
- Allow Crawling of CSS, JS, & Images

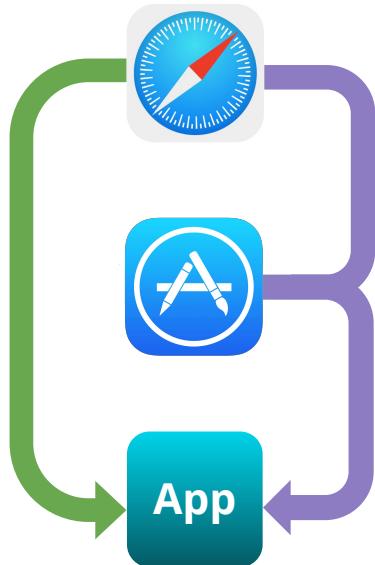
- Allow Crawling of CSS, JS, & Images
- Support Structured Data
- Check html for hreflang, & add to mobile html if needed

- Allow Crawling of CSS, JS, & Images
- Support Structured Data
- Support hreflang on m URLs
- Mobile URL sitemap + More...



TIP

Unlock Your Mobile Site.



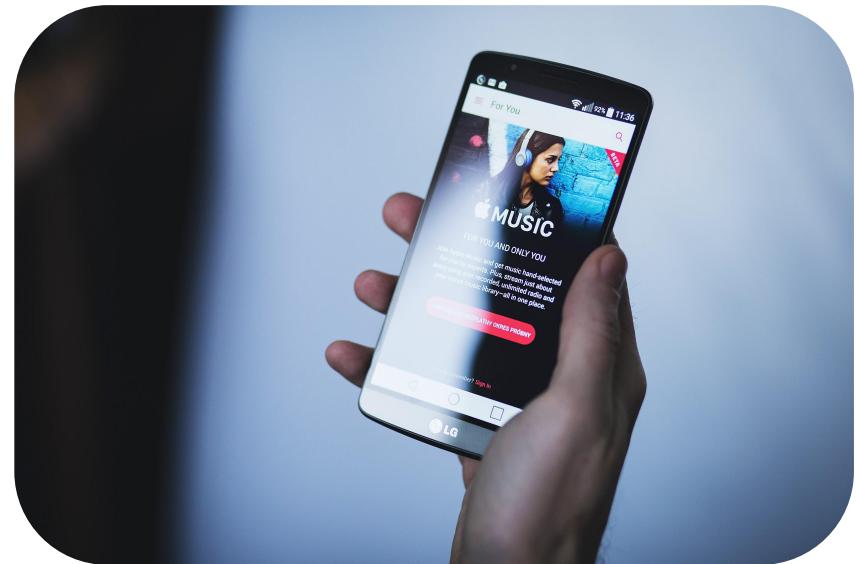
After taking measures to optimize SEO performance, use SEO ranks to drive app installs. Your mobile website is likely the number one driver of app installs that you didn't know about.

With half of Google searches taking place on mobile devices, it's paramount for all brands to focus on driving mobile web visitors to mobile apps, where customers convert more often and spend more.



Organic Acquisition: App Store Optimization

While no longer a strategic sole focus for mobile growth, **exploring methods of App Store Optimization can contribute to mobile growth.**

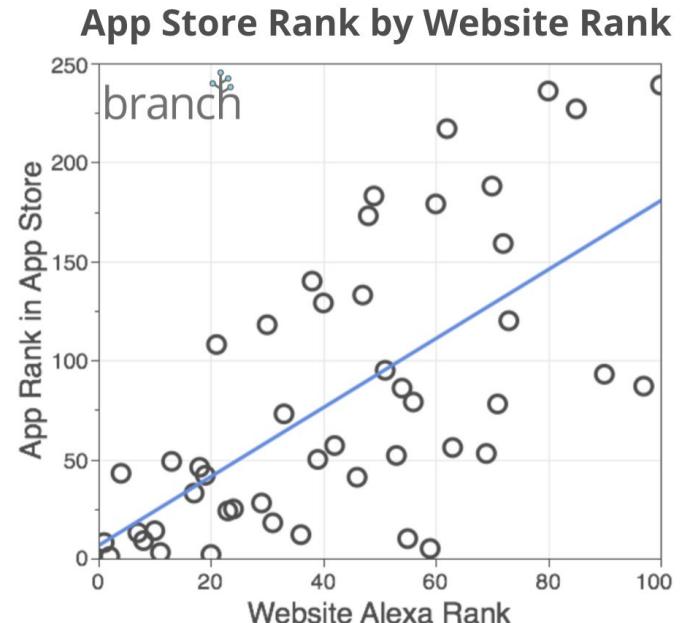


TIP

Boost your web traffic to boost your App Store search results placement.

Higher App Store ranks for websites with higher Alexa (web traffic) ranks is logical, but it's also proved by our data.

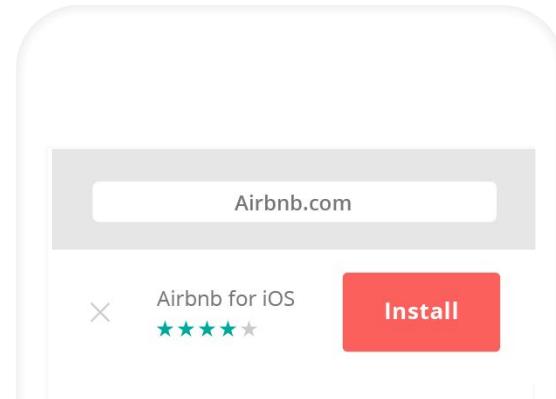
Improving your website traffic can only boost your app's search results spot in the App Store.



TIP

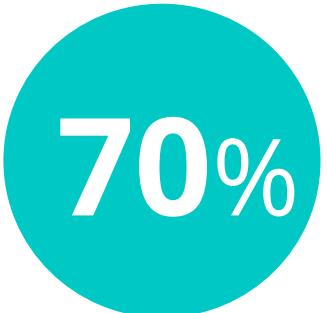
Integrate smart banners into your mobile website.

You are probably familiar with **smart banners**, a tool that appears at the top of a mobile website and that can be effective at getting people to download or continue into the app. Smart banners are intuitive and customizable, and simplify your customer's path to purchase while effectively showing off your app.



TIP

Integrate smart banners into your mobile website.



70%

higher in-app purchase rate for users entering the app directly from a smart banner, compared to general app users.



2.6x

higher in-app purchase rate for users originally installing the app from a smart banner, compared to general app users.



20%

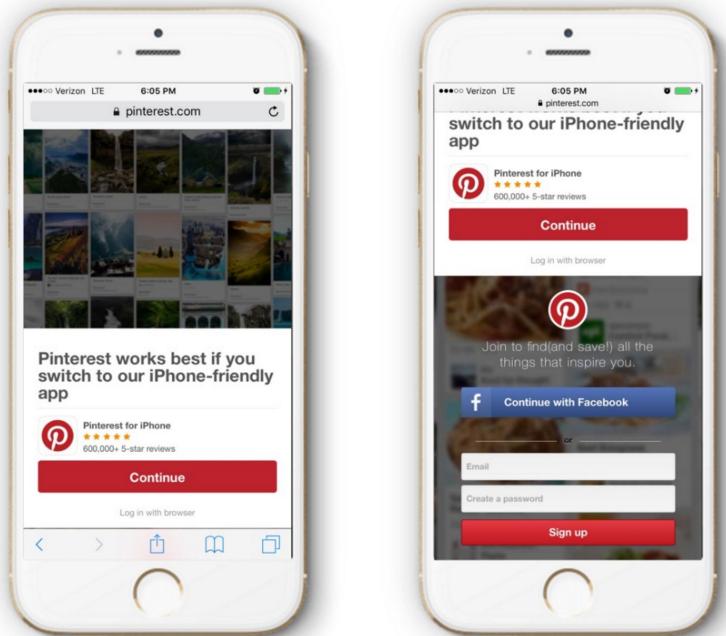
of app purchase revenue from smart banner-referred app user sessions (which are only 8% of sessions).

Smart banners make good mobile strategies great.



TIP

Consider integrating interstitials into your mobile website.



One of the more controversial mobile tactics is the full page takeover screen, often referred to as an **Interstitial** because it stands between a user and the mobile web version of the content. The purpose of the interstitial is simple: to drive as many people to your native app as possible. Far and away, it is the most effective technique to drive pure volume of installs. As it should, every single person who visits your site is presented with the call-to-action to install the app. **If your goal is total installs, this is the choice for you.**



TIP

Approach ASO with a plan of main and secondary ASO factors.

Rank in the App Store can be broken down into main and secondary factors. Let's take a look at a few of the **main factors**—

Title: Apps rank higher in search results for terms used in their titles.

Keywords: Use the most relevant and popular keywords.

Icon: An icon that evokes attractive elements of an app does first impressions right.

Screenshots: Move users through the your app's story while increasing transparency.

Pavla Schlägerová

Leadmill Blog

["App Store Optimization: Maximize Your Organic User Acquisition"](#)



TIP

Approach ASO with a plan of main and secondary ASO factors.

The **secondary factors** can also influence search ranking when it matters most—

Ratings & Reviews: These can influence potential user downloads and brand reputation, but they also influence search ranking.

Download Count: Though difficult to control, download count has a sizable impact.

App Updates: Updating an app is a sign of improvement, both of user experience and the app itself. The App Store values freshness and strives to deliver it to users.

Pavla Schlägerová

Leadmill Blog

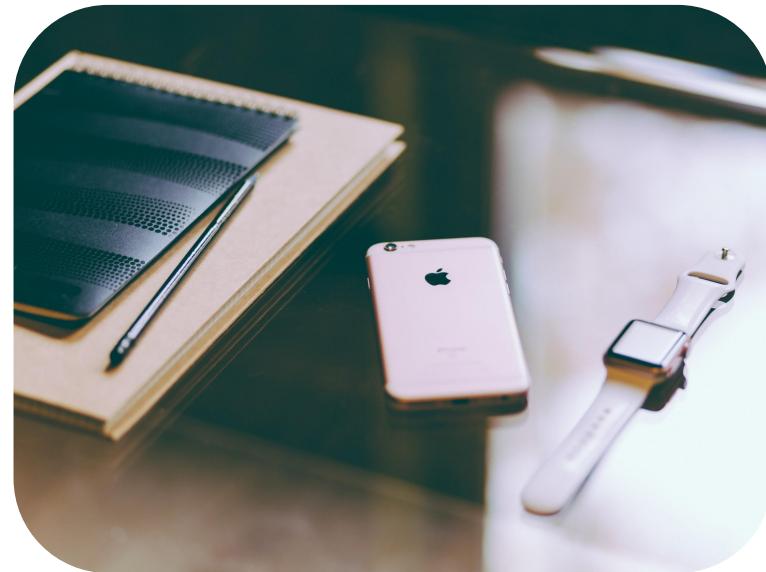
["App Store Optimization: Maximize Your Organic User Acquisition"](#)



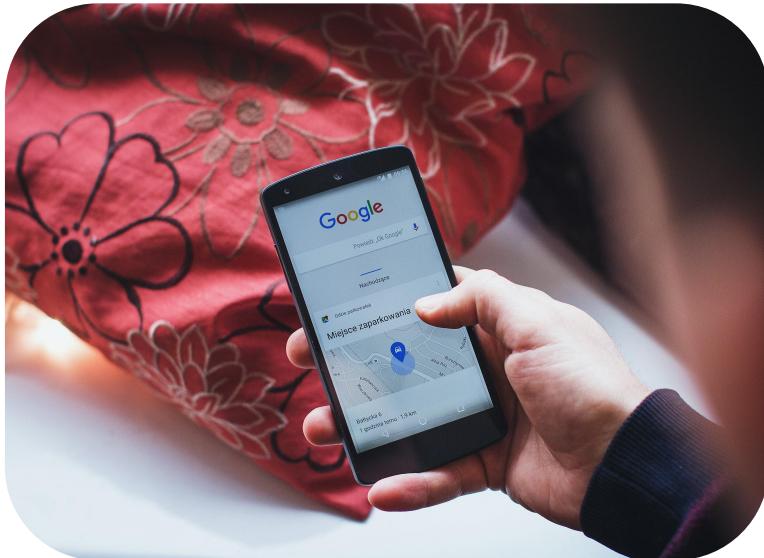
TIP

Remember that App Store Optimization is an ongoing process.

Much as we'd like to, we cannot access the key to App Store Optimization overnight. App Store Optimization depends on being an **ongoing process**, so—naturally—the best strategies are also ongoing.



Organic Acquisition: Instant Apps



Instant Apps is a new technology built by the Android team at Google that allows you to **segment portions of an Android app to load immediately when a link is clicked**.

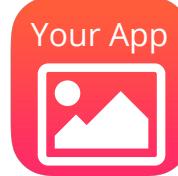
The user will still need to install the full native app to engage with the rest of the experience. Therefore, you need to design your user experience so that users can engage with a portion of your app experience, all the while compelling them to get the full native app.



Organic Acquisition: Instant Apps

If the full app is installed, the full Android app will load instead. In a sense, **an Instant App is a replacement for a mobile website**, only loading if the full Android app is not installed when a link is clicked.

This is significant because **53% of mobile websites are abandoned if it load time is greater than 3 seconds**.



TIP

Repackage what you've got to reap the benefits of Instant Apps.

"Instant Apps give the developer a lot of power, and **you definitely don't need a specific separate team to implement Instant Apps**. Taking what you already have and repackaging it will allow you to reap the benefits of having an Instant App."



Jeff Kelsey

Mobile Lead Engineer - Android @ Ticketmaster



TIP

Repackage what you've got to reap the benefits of Instant Apps.

An Introduction to Android Instant Apps

Google

Make Your App Instant

Yuliya Kaleda, Android Developer



Organic Acquisition: **Word of Mouth**

In a world in which **77% of users discover new apps from viral features such as word of mouth**, it's imperative that users understand your app and brand, and that they feel compelled to spread the word.

But how do we strike the balance—how do we encourage our users to share mobile app experiences without becoming a nuisance?



TIP

Let the user do the convincing!



#MyMintMoment
INSTAGRAM CONTEST

Once in a while your life and finances align to make your dreams turn into your #MyMintMoment.

Stop and celebrate those moments, whether paying off loans or saving for a trip. Better yet, share a photo of your #MyMintMoment for a chance to win \$1,000.

 mint mint

It's nearly a given that in today's world, **users trust their own friends and family more than the words of any brand.**

Smart mobile growth professionals will use this to their advantage by **incentivizing users to refer friends and share elements of an app or a brand on social media.**

More tips and tricks in this area can be found in the **Referral** section of this handbook.



TIP

Give guerilla marketing a shot.

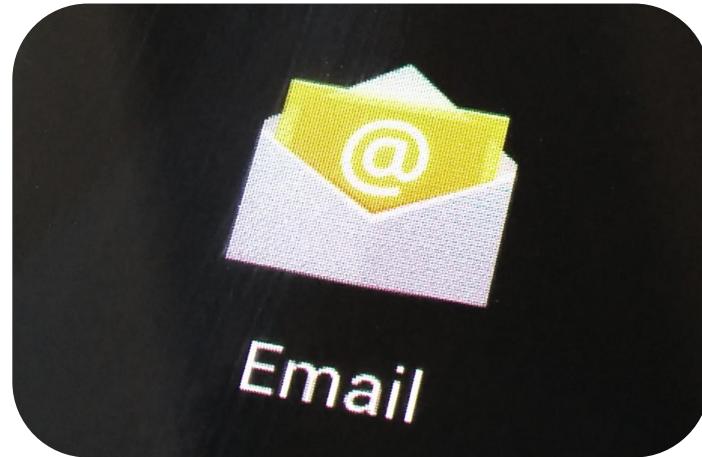
Brand marketing isn't always the least trusted source of messaging, however. Studies show that, if brands can portray themselves as **refreshing** and **authentic**, unconventional marketing tactics can more than pay off.

For instance, AppSamurai reported that **Tinder tripled its app user base** in its early stages by focusing on marketing via college parties—not your usual marketing channel, but it worked.



Organic Acquisition: Email

Email may not be the most exciting new technology that a marketer can use to drive mobile user acquisition, but it remains a key component of any mobile marketer's arsenal.



TIP

Optimize email marketing performance with deep linking.

Deep Links point directly to content inside of an app. **Deep linked emails** are essential for a positive user experience on mobile, and can drive users to a specific piece of content inside of a mobile app.



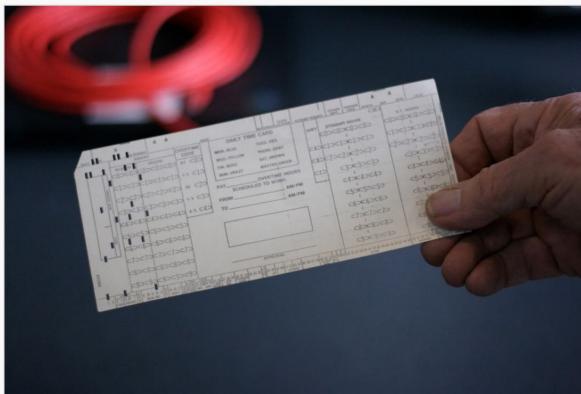
[Our research](#) shows \$3,000 in revenue is lost for every 1 million emails sent without deep linking. Users want to travel to your app directly. With deep linking, they can.



Organic Acquisition: Press Coverage

After rejecting Google, Namely raises \$50M to take on the biggies in HR

Posted Jan 5, 2017 by Ingrid Lunden (@ingridlunden)



One of the big HR startup stories of the last year has been the trials and tribulations of Zenefits, but news coming out today from another company in the space shows that there is still a lot of opportunity in the industry with the right approach.

LAKEFRONT PROPERTY.
JUST ADD PERSON.
shop tent trends
REI coop

Crunchbase

Namely

FOUNDED 2011

OVERVIEW

Namely is an all-in-one platform that manages all HR data in one place, with personalized service to help companies get better and faster. Namely give companies the software and support they need to evolve their company cultures it has evolved along

Press coverage from a high-profile outlet can work wonders to drive awareness and installs for your app, especially for consumer-facing apps.

But before you reach out to a reporter at a tech news site, make sure there's a fit between what your app does and what they cover.



TIP

Weave a narrative into your press materials.

“My hangover-prevention pill keeps you from getting a hangover!” is not a story—it’s an advertisement. As such, it's not interesting to a journalist (unless said journalist happens to be heading to Vegas for a bachelor party). Stories have a beginning, middle and end. They have tension. They have a personal element.”

Think of the press as your audience and as a market. Just as you tailor your message to reach different segments of your customer base, you need to customize your story to appeal to each publication you pitch.

Diana Spechler & Jim O’Grady

Entrepreneur

[“7 Ways to Get the Press Coverage You Want”](#)



TIP

Make press materials timely & relevant.

"When we pitch a story to a publication, the editor always wants to know, '**Why this? Why now?**' **Help us answer those questions.**'

"In other words, a new headhunting company probably isn't worthy of a story. But what if it's a headhunting company that works only with people who have been laid off, inspired by the bleak rate of unemployment?"

Diana Spechler & Jim O'Grady

Entrepreneur

"7 Ways to Get the Press Coverage You Want"



TIP

Cast a wide, strategic press net.

Here are a few app review sites to get you started:

- [Product Hunt](#)
- [148apps](#)
- [App Store Apps](#)
- [AppReviews](#)



Organic Acquisition: Social Media

"People are talking about your brand on social media, whether you're listening and engaging or not—but your customers really do want you to listen.

"Nearly half of customers expect customer service via Facebook alone, but only 23% of brands provide it. The cost of not being involved with social media is rising."



Shanelle Mullin

Kissmetrics Blog

["How to Master Social Customer Acquisition"](#)



TIP

Leverage user-generated content.

Big brands have seen heightened user engagement on social when featuring user generated content.

Brands like **Qatar**, **Red Bull** and **BMW** repost user generated content over 60% of the time.

There is always someone, claiming to be a better driver than you. #InternationalCatDay
#BMW  instagram.com/ourpetsontour/



1:00 PM - 8 Aug 2017

344 Retweets 1,308 Likes



TIP

Brand your links to optimize social media engagement.



Links that match your brand matter. Our data shows that **branded links generate double the number of click conversions than links with unbranded domains.**



TIP

Integrate social sharing mechanisms, and let your users know it.

“Promote your social media accounts as a place for early adopters to congregate by integrating social sharing mechanisms into your app. **You want to make it easy for your first set of users to interact with each other.** You want to entice them to help spread the word about your app.”

Annum Munir

Localytics Blog

[Organic & Paid Acquisition: How to Put Together a Foolproof Plan to Gain More App Users \(in 6 Steps!\)](#)



TIP

Remember that not all social media photo filters are created equal.



Warm tones (red/yellow) with **high contrast** draw up to 21% more engagement and 45% more comments.



Cool tones (blue/green), **artificially aged photos**, and **high saturation photos** performed worst.



TIP

Integrate deep linking into social media features.

For years, if you clicked on a link while browsing social media on your phone, it would open in the mobile web—even if the corresponding app was installed.

Enabling such pages to open in apps rather than in the mobile web is essential for mobile growth and development. In fact, the comScore App Report suggests that **app audiences are 20x more engaged than mobile web audiences, and convert 3x more in app than in the mobile web.**



Paid Acquisition

“It’s hard to understand the value you’re getting from any organic channel. **Paid is very, very consistent.**”

Paid is the channel you can depend on. As long as you optimize it, you can acquire high-quality users at dependable volume.



Billy Shipp

Co-Founder @ Reach Mob, Inc.



Paid Acquisition: Challenges

While it may be true that paid is consistent, it also often leads to **SDK congestion, duplicated data, and wasted marketing spend**. In addition, balancing procedure with product is difficult, and generally costly.

“You most likely can’t have an amazing website, amazing desktop app, and amazing mobile app experience. **You may have to make choices, sacrifices. You have to focus your resources.**”



Jason Schwartz

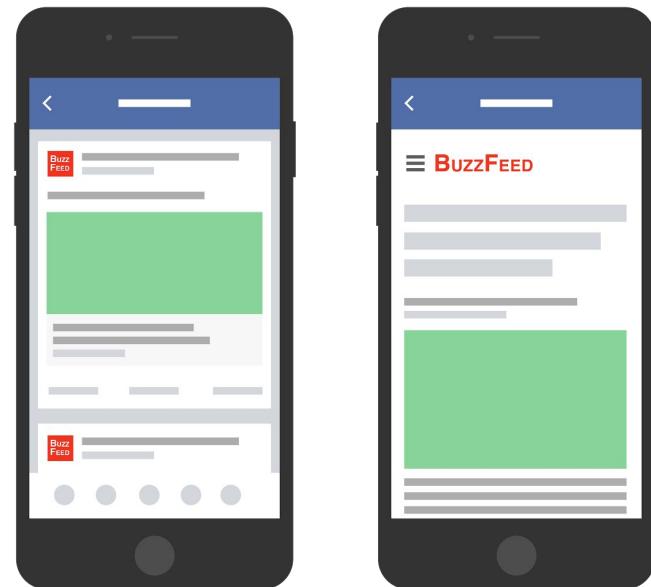
Product Director @ Spotify



Paid Acquisition: Social Media

The mobile ecosystem is **fragmented**, and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are doing everything they can to build walls around their ecosystems.

You can promote and promote and promote your social campaigns all quarter, but linking users across the various OS's, devices, mediums, and platforms—and into your app—is incredibly difficult and complex.



TIP

Build your own fortress.

Find which channel works best for your users—where they engage the most, and where they return to time and time again. **Then, optimize—fight for your users!** Use other channels to push users to your fortress.

“For example, **Instagram** is more effective when selling lower-price point products, whereas **YouTube** is more effective when selling higher-price point products. It’s important to consider the extent to which users will want to invest in purchase decisions, and how certain marketing channels will or won’t accommodate them.”



Brendan Eapen

Co-Founder & CEO @ In/spree Brands



TIP

Watermark your social media ads with your brand.

"We once worked with a company who saw little lift after spending \$250,000 on a campaign, realizing only after that they only had their brand name at the end of the fifteen-second video ad trailer. **When advertising on social media, you need to have your brand watermarked throughout the entire video** so the brand is immediately recognized, and so the brand is driving awareness even when it's not clicked."



Hans Malzar

Global Marketing Solutions & Partnerships Manager @ Facebook

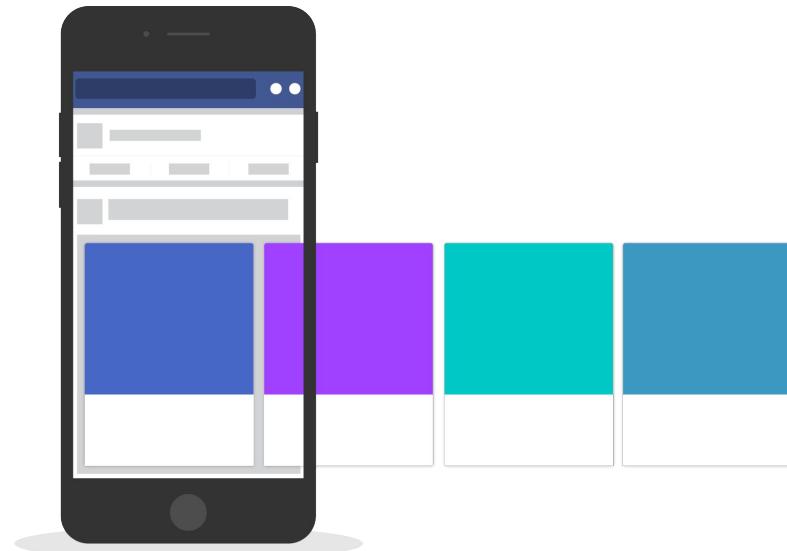


TIP

Optimize Facebook ad performance with Dynamic Ads.

Facebook Dynamic Ads are highly effective retargeting ads, with personalized dynamic ad creatives shown to a targeted, granular audience.

[Hootsuite's AdEspresso](#) reports a 20% increase in click-through rates for **Shutterfly**, a 20% increase in conversions for **Target**, and a simultaneous 34% increase in click-through rates and 38% reduction in cost per purchase for **The Honest Company**—all from Facebook's Dynamic Ads.

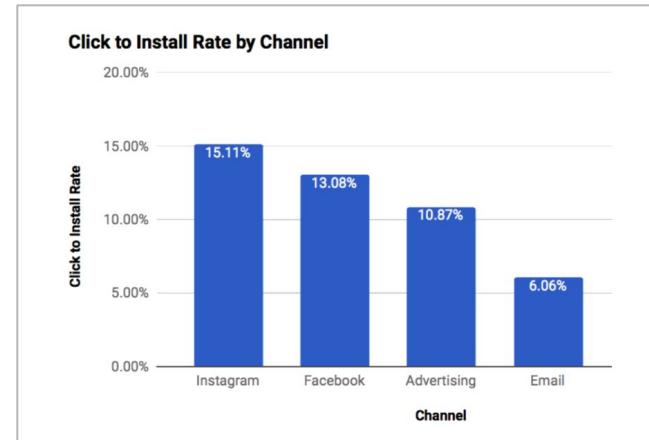


TIP

Optimize Instagram ad performance with relevant calls to action.

Based on data collected from over 10 million installs, Instagram is the optimal social channel in terms of click to install rate. Particularly if you're after app installs, **cementing a solid plan for mobile growth via Instagram could be the answer.**

To optimize Instagram ads, it's important to create a call to action (CTA) that resonates with your objective. For example, a CTA of "Install Now" will target install rate, while a CTA of "Open App" or "Use App" will target engagement rate.



TIP

Host a Twitter Chat or two.

Twitter Chats can connect you with users and potential users who should be aware of your app. They're also an **excellent opportunity to feature content and events** pertaining to your app. **Promoting these chats** among prospective app users could be a recipe for enhanced acquisition success.

For example, check out #BufferChat, a weekly Twitter Chat run by Buffer.

Buffer @buffer · Sep 4
In [#bufferchat](#) this week, we're discussing how to work on your personal branding during a job hunt! Join in at either chat time


PERSONAL BRANDING FOR JOB HUNTING
TWO CHAT TIMES:
Bufferchatters lead these discussions!
4 pm AEST (Sydney) | 9 am PT (San Francisco)

3 19 51



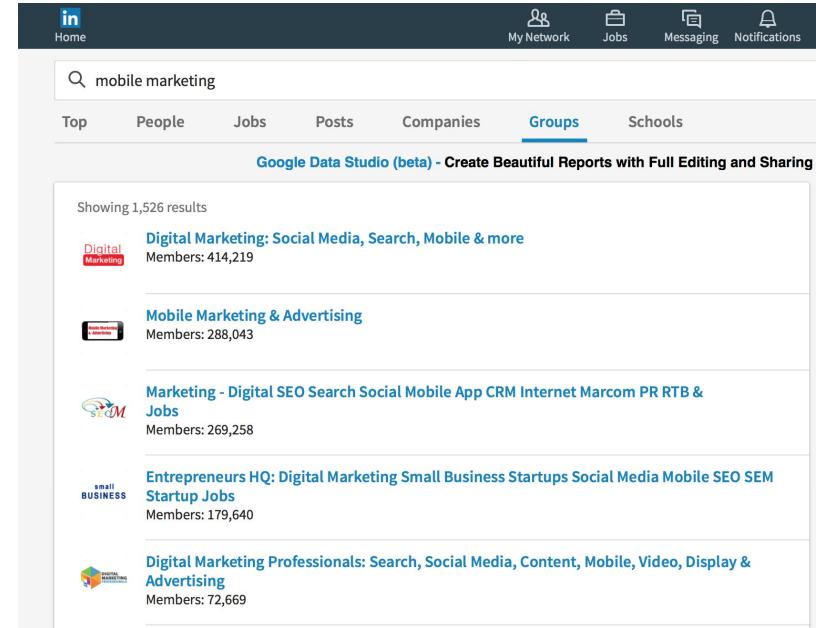
TIP

LinkedIn groups might just be your new best friend.

LinkedIn offers a number of ways to reach potential users: individual tailored outreach, connection requests, sponsored posts, and groups.

Think of LinkedIn groups (such as those pictured to the right) the same way you now think of Twitter Chats: **opportunities to promote relevant blog content and events featuring your app.**

Click [here](#) for LinkedIn's guide on finding and joining groups.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface with the search term "mobile marketing" entered in the search bar. The "Groups" tab is selected, indicated by a blue underline. Below the search bar, there are tabs for Top, People, Jobs, Posts, Companies, Groups, and Schools. A banner for "Google Data Studio (beta) - Create Beautiful Reports with Full Editing and Sharing" is visible. The search results show 1,526 results, with the first five groups listed:

- Digital Marketing: Social Media, Search, Mobile & more**
Members: 414,219
- Mobile Marketing & Advertising**
Members: 288,043
- Marketing - Digital SEO Search Social Mobile App CRM Internet Marcom PR RTB & Jobs**
Members: 269,258
- Entrepreneurs HQ: Digital Marketing Small Business Startups Social Media Mobile SEO SEM Startup Jobs**
Members: 179,640
- Digital Marketing Professionals: Search, Social Media, Content, Mobile, Video, Display & Advertising**
Members: 72,669



TIP

Social Media Toolbox

We've got a few final tools to help you sharpen your app's social media performance.



Buffer is the best way to drive traffic, increase fan engagement and save time on social media.



Socedo's mission is to bring social leads to every business in the world. They've developed a demand gen system that empowers B2B marketers to discover, engage, and qualify prospects through social media to increase revenue at scale.



Paid Acquisition: Native Ads

"If banner ads are the 'old school' of app user acquisition, native ads are the youngsters on the scene. **Taking advantage of the natural form and function of the surrounding user experience, native ads offer distinct advantages from banner ads.**

"Functioning in cohesion with natural mobile content, native ads provide reach, branding, and value. They not only register an **18% lift** in purchase intent when compared to banner ads, but they are also **viewed 52% more frequently than banner ads.**"

Exploring native ads for your app could be your next stroke of acquisition genius.

Anthony McQueen

Digital Turbine Blog

["User Acquisition in 2017: A Holistic Approach"](#)



Paid Acquisition: **Events**

"Acquisition isn't limited to the digital space—in-person events can play a big role in your overall marketing strategy. You're able to make an impact by making a memorable experience, which improves the chances that you'll build traction via word-of-mouth."



Elizabeth Kinsey

Director of Community & Events @ Branch



Paid Acquisition: **Events**

"The real, core community has grown through our in-person events. **Both meetups and larger conferences have been initial starting points** to having folks become genuine members of the community. When I think about community members, I really think about folks who are very active in our forum."



Adam Lovallo

Co-Founder @ Grow.co



TIP

Participate in an event to connect with users and potential users.

If you or a team member has a unique perspective on a relevant and engaging topic of discussion, **seek out an opportunity and platform to speak.**

Feeling stuck and devoid of such opportunities? Try **attending events catering to your area of expertise** and speaking with an event coordinator prior to or following the event.



Stay in touch—you never know when a seat on a panel or a slot in a speaking series could open up. You should aim to be the first contact that comes to their minds.



TIP

Sponsor an event to connect with users and potential users.



If you are interested in moving into a new industry or targeting a new audience, but aren't sure whether your app will resonate, **sponsor an event similar to one you hope to host in the future.**

This will give you a realistic look into how this industry or market will view and respond to your app—especially since **sponsors often receive enhanced opportunities to interact with event attendees.**



TIP

Host an event to connect with users and potential users.

Opportunities to participate in events can be hard to come by, and event sponsorship can come at a pretty penny, so sometimes the most strategic option is to **host your own event!**

Although no easy feat, hosting an enjoyable and well-attended networking event can elevate an app looking to build its user base.



Adam Toren
Entrepreneur
"Seven Steps for Planning a Kick-Ass Networking Event"



TIP

Event Marketing Toolbox

Tools like **Eventbrite** and **Meetup** are great for helping to identify potential new users of your app through expressed interest in your events.



Eventbrite is a platform that allows event organizers to plan, promote, and sell tickets to events and publish them across social networking tools directly from the site's interface.



Meetup is an online social networking website and mobile app that facilitates offline group meetings in various localities around the world. Meetup allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest.



Paid Acquisition: **Apple Search Ads**



Apple Search Ads display at the top of App Store search results, and can give your app an awareness boost to accelerate its user acquisition rate.

Apple prides itself on Search Ads' flexibility, with **no minimum spend** and **no long-term commitment**.

Essentially, Apple will bring top-bidding apps into the light at the precise moment users are looking to install—for a price.



TIP

Checklist for optimizing Apple Search Ads performance.

- 1 **Build strong campaign strategy** involving branded, competing, and general keywords.
- 2 **Design ad group and keyword structure** including broad and exact matches, as well as negative keywords.
- 3 Enable **Search Match** to target users specifically searching for apps like yours, and cover keywords you might be missing.
- 4 **Set up bidding price**, keeping in mind the Search Ads auction is a second price auction based on a cost-per-tap model.
- 5 **Segment and target** users based on gender and age.
- 6 **Segment and target** new users vs. existing users.

JD Prater

PPC Hero

["Apple Search Ads: What You Need to Know to Improve Performance"](#)



TIP

Explore relevant betas, and be ready to think outside the box.

"When Apple Search Ads launched, brands who got involved and created ads early-on gained high-quality users at a very low cost, as there was little competition. This shows the advantage of **being open to new opportunities and experiments, and being ready to think outside the box**. GoEuro supports its advertising partners by testing the most relevant betas to grow beyond competition across marketing channels."



Mariya Katernyak

Lead Mobile Marketing Manager @ GoEuro



Paid Acquisition: Influencers

Paying big industry influencers or affiliates to share your app with their followings could ignite your app's growth.

Whether early-stage or far along, this tactic can provide swell return on investment if executed correctly.



TIP

Find the Right Influencers.

When choosing influencers, it's helpful to consider the following:

Engagement	Is this influencer getting a high engagement rate relative to followers?
Relevancy	Does this influencer create content in my niche?
Demographics	Would the audience that follows this influencer buy my product?
Cost	What would the rate be for partnering with this influencer?
Sponsored Posts	Has this influencer worked with brands before?
Authenticity	Do they appear to be authentic in their posts?
Professionalism	Is working with this influencer easy? Are they open to feedback?



TIP

Consider both objective and search when choosing an influencer.

	Industry Influencers	Brand Advocates	Brand Fans	Brand Ambassadors	Bloggers & Affiliates	Brand Influencers
Engagement with Brand	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Social Influence	High	High-Low	Low	High	Medium	High
Finding Them	Neoreach, Moz, Apptentive	Social media engagement	Apptentive, Localytics, Mixpanel	Fans, students, job posts	Affiliate networks, research	Branch Influencer Tab



TIP

Create a surround sound effect with careful coordination and planning.

In fact, the coordination of multiple influencer campaigns can create a **surround sound effect** that mimics a retargeting campaign.

In March 2015, Lord & Taylor launched a campaign featuring a new dress by partnering with fifty fashion influencers who simultaneously posted about it.



Lord & Taylor found that by partnering with so many influencers, they were able to dominate the social feeds of shared followers and sell out of the dress in a weekend.

Be aware, however, that paying influencers without a clear disclosure could lead to a sizable fine from the FTC.

Source: Yotpo



TIP

Zoom out and remember what's important.

"Always let the influencer create the content idea organically—but don't be afraid to push them on how to make it work with some clever integrations for your goal. **If you need downloads, sales, or engagement—and you don't seem them—who cares how many views or likes it has?"**



Ashley Ryon
Head of Marketing @ Life360



Data Collection & Synchronicity

"The biggest issue we have is data being siloed across different departments of the organization. Our marketing team runs one analytics platform, our eCommerce team runs another analytics platform, and other departments run more.

"We have an exceptional amount of data, but in various channels that we can't necessarily connect."

—Anonymous Product Manager



Data Collection & Synchronicity

"If you collect data well, it's like magic. Opinions, preferences, dispositions, product leanings—they just disappear, and you can point to real quotes by real people."



Benjamin Jackson

Former Director of Mobile Apps @ VICE Media



TIP

The solution should never precede the problem.

"It's all about examining and finding the problem out there, not putting a solution out there for solution's sake. Identify the problem or problems that you're solving for, start small, and build from there in an agile way.

"Get something out there, so you can see real responses from customers, and use those responses to iterate mobile growth."



Elizabeth Binkley

eCommerce Associate Apps Product Manager @ Crate & Barrel



TIP

The solution should never precede the problem.

"Too many people build applications that aren't solving real customer problems.

Make sure you have an app that people will actually want to use. You might overlook it when designing your app initially, but if you don't have that core value proposition, your app is not going to be able to grow."



Jeff Morris

Director of Product Management @ Tinder



TIP

Run fake ads to gauge interest in your idea.

“Every developer looking to build an app should run fake ads before building it. See if people click on it—see if there’s interest among your target audience. No one said you couldn’t start testing before you actually have your product.”



Mada Seghete

Co-Founder @ Branch



TIP

Measure twice, cut once.

“Measure twice, cut once’ is a great rule of thumb for more than carpentry. In growth, be pedantic about tracking every step a user takes for your acquisition model. Then, check that your tracking is working—and check it a second time.

“Once you are doubly certain that things are working as designed, only then should you acquire users, experiment, and improve your acquisition efforts. Measure and confirm it all twice—then start your journey to acquisition excellence!”



Boone Spooner

Principal Product Development @ Caavo



TIP

Unify and standardize data storage, collection, and access.

"If you share your data with your marketing and analytics partner, your chance of seeing the big picture and building on patterns increases dramatically. We worked with one large eCommerce company whose return on ad spend (ROAS) jumped by 250% over 1.5 months.

"With internal data, we could see the full funnel and target accordingly (both in terms of relevance and cost-effectiveness), and then together we could optimize based on sound, complete data."



Jimmy Schmidt

Director of Product @ AppLovin



TIP

Let the data speak.

“Always try to remove your personal identity from your process of forming a hypothesis. The more we try to overengineer our tactics, the more we might not be able to figure anything out at all.”



Erica Hong

Senior Marketing Analyst @ Lyft



TIP

Let the data speak—but data itself doesn't tell the story.

You should evaluate large overall trends to understand how overall trends such as awareness work, but **analysis by region can yield insightful results.**

“Data itself doesn’t tell the story. You have to break it down. Positive top level data doesn’t guarantee positive data on more specific levels. Break nations into regions, overall downloads into iOS/Android. Etcetera.”



Jazz Singh

Director of Product (Mobile & Connected) @ NFL Media



TIP

Data is only the beginning. The next question should be, "Why?"

"Users aren't going to tell you, 'hey, this hurts because...'. It's your job—as the developer or the product manager—to figure that out."



Justin Romano

CEO @ Backspace



TIP

Optimize in-app surveys to collect key data across key metrics.

While surveys have been around for generations, there are a few things to keep in mind specifically for in-app mobile surveys.

- **Short and simple** surveys are almost always best.
- Avoid question formats that involve left-to-right scrolling, such as **matrices**.
- Don't miss out on respondents because you're asking at the wrong **time** or in the wrong **place** within your app.
- Limit open-ended questions, and always **lean towards the specific**.
- **Apply what you've already got** to collected data for maximum insights.
- Don't forget—you can do a **soft launch** of a survey, or **run A/B testing** to optimize it!



Measuring Acquisition

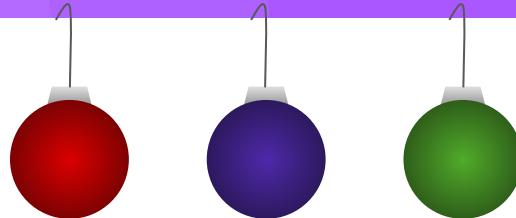
The most important metrics for user acquisition are **number of installs** and **install rate**. These two metrics are the easiest way to tell if your app resonates, and therefore has a shot at being successful. From the perspective of a marketer, however, it is also important to consider other metrics that deal with cost. These include:

- **Cost per install** (CPI): The cost of getting a new customer to install.
- **Cost per action** (CPA): The cost of getting a customer (old or new) to convert.
- **Return on investment** (ROI): Are the users you acquired making you money? Making purchases in-app?
- **Cost per 1000 impressions** (CPM)
- **Conversion rate**
- **Customer acquisition cost** (CAC): Total acquisition costs divided by total new customers.



TIP

Bonus Tip: Optimize the Holiday Season (aka App Developers' Season).



Millions of people all over the world just got brand new mobile devices. They're off work, hanging out with their families, and half the day is dedicated to eating ginger cookies and drinking eggnog. There couldn't be a better time to play with their new toys, so they start exploring, discovering, and downloading new apps.

On Christmas Day 2014, Flurry tracked 2.5 times as many installs in the US than the average daily number for the first three weeks of December.



TIP

Bonus Tip: People are generally focused on themselves, not you.

“Don’t always assume that people are approaching you with a specific product in mind. People come to us for designer-level quality, but they come with an event in mind—not a designer or product. When we uncoupled the algorithm of product to product mapping and swapped in event to product mapping, we started to see great success.”



Josh Gray

Former Senior Director of Growth Marketing @ Rent the Runway



TIP

Bonus Tip: Don't be afraid of going deep.

“Don't be afraid of going deep. The tendency in mobile growth is to go broad, but most early stage startups will struggle to find even one reliable growth channel.

“Experimentation across channels is fine and necessary, but once you nail one approach that works, don't be afraid to double down and focus.”



Mike Duboe

Head of Growth @ Stitch Fix



Activation



Activation

23%

of users abandon an app
after just one use.

62%

of users will use an app
fewer than 11 times.



If you acquire users without focusing on activation, you're effectively buying water and putting it in a leaky bucket.

As your product gains traction, growing existing user engagement is extremely important to prevent the **leaky bucket scenario**.

"If people discover your app, but don't activate, who cares?"



Ali McCourt

Former Senior Product Marketing Manager @ Trulia



“Activation is the act of getting visitors to take an action in your product that you are guiding them toward.

“Activation is not just the act of clicking around randomly without bouncing. Activation is when users do something that you’ve decided beforehand they should do, something which furthers your goals.”

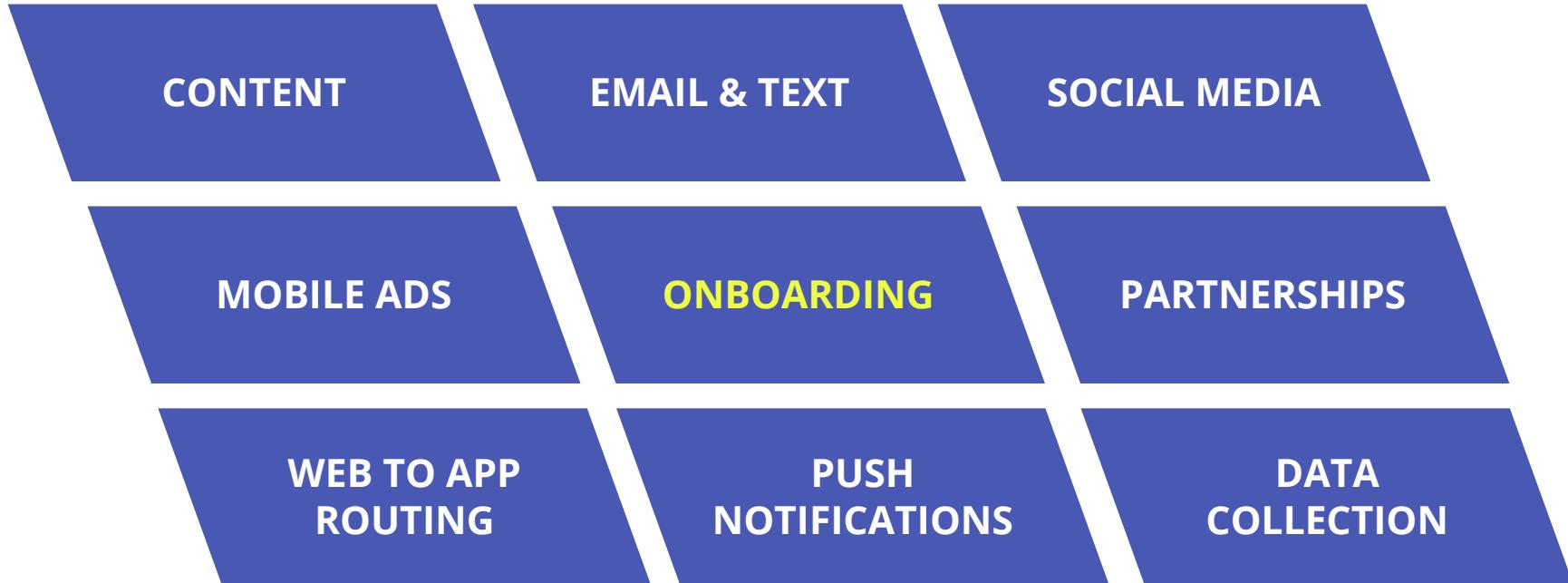
Neil Patel & Bronson Taylor

QuickSprout

[“The Definitive Guide to Growth Hacking”](#)



Elements of Activation



Onboarding

The process of walking users through the registration and function of your app should be easy, right?

It's actually very difficult to make a good first impression. In fact, requiring users to register immediately leads to a **50% drop** in users before they've even activated their accounts.

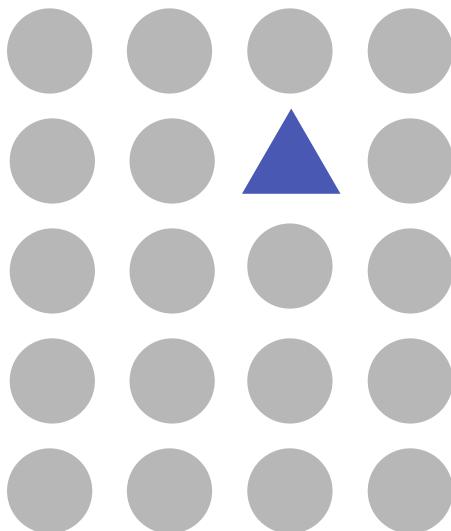


If you can optimize your download to activation flow, you're already well on your way to improving your initial engagement numbers.



TIP

When it comes to onboarding, one size never fits all.



If you force all your users to go through the same onboarding screens, they could lose the excitement and interest that initiated the app download in the first place. They may not even remember the information they've provided, because they just want to swipe as quickly as possible to get to app content.

Much of the time, companies try to impress users with intricate, interactive onboarding processes—but lengthening your onboarding process means more time until users get to use and explore app content. **Choosing a one-size-fits-all onboarding approach just doesn't work.**



TIP

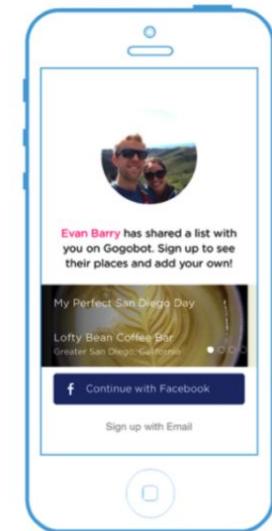
Solidify a positive first impression with a personalized onboarding experience.

Say that you give your users the ability to share your app with friends. **Potential users are much more likely to sign up for your app if you offer a personalized welcome screen and experience.**

Trip.com (formerly Gogobot) saw a 78% increase in sign-up conversions from simply adding the referrer's photograph to the new user's onboarding screen, as well as the piece of information the friend shared.



↑ 78%
Conversion to signup



TIP

Simplify, simplify, simplify!

“Along with personalization, simplicity is key. Make the steps for sign-up and login as easy as possible. If a lot of the onboarding information is only necessary later, save it for later. Think long and hard about what your users want from your app.”



Marissa Chacko

Senior Director of Consumer Products @ Foursquare



TIP

Know your optimal customer path before adjusting your onboarding flow.

“Before trying to improve your onboarding flow, make sure you understand which actions are critical for users to take in order for them to get the most value out of your product. **A great onboarding flow will emphasize those actions and present them in a way that makes sense to users.**”



Jules Walter

Product Manager @ Slack



TIP

Remember that not all successful apps have sign-up pages.

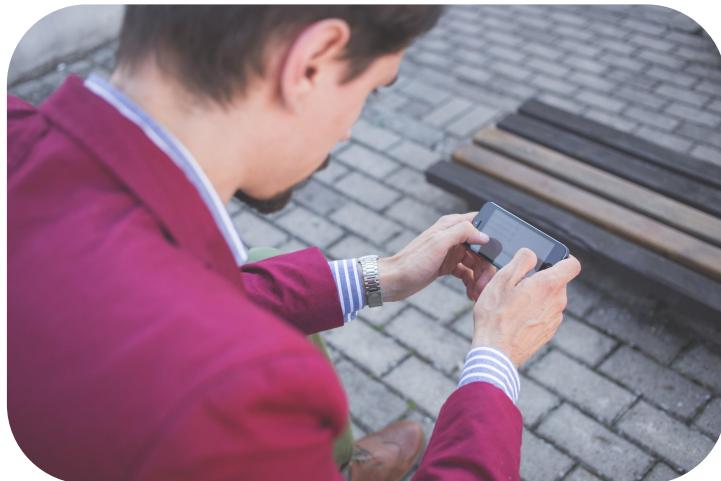
It may be worth asking whether a sign-up step is a fully necessary component of your onboarding process. One app we've worked with experienced a **50% lift in 1-week retention**, a **35% lift in engagement**, and an **85% lift in 6-week retention** simply by removing its sign-up page.

Furthermore, **Gametime** determined that users were 15% more likely to make a purchase if they were deep linked directly to content rather than linked to an onboarding flow.



Content

Every piece of live content about or on behalf of your app is an opportunity—an opportunity to forge a relationship with your visitor and, in doing so, present the value of activating your app.



The space above your content's fold is your content's most valuable space. Fill it with information relevant to activation (*not just acquisition*) of your app, so as many viewers of your content are presented with the full value proposition of your app as possible.



TIP

Build your app content on the web.

“Unlike searches in the App Store, searches on the web are focused on intent. For instance, if your app sells red Nike shoes, it might be practically impossible to appear in an App Store search for ‘shoes,’ but you can get the red shoes to appear in web search results. From there, you can get a user to download your app.”



Mada Seghete

Co-Founder @ Branch



TIP

Perfect the call to action.

- 1 Keep the call to action “above the fold.”
- 2 Make any and all buttons noticeable!
- 3 Don’t be generic with button text.
- 4 For long landing pages, create a second call to action near the end.
- 5 Create a sense of urgency. Make sure visitors think the best time to activate is now.

A good call to action can convince even the most hesitant downloaders to activate right then and there. **For activation, creating a sense of urgency is particularly important.**

Renée Warren

Kissmetrics Blog

[“The Ultimate Guide to Customer Acquisition”](#)



Email & Text

These days, there's no such thing as too many platforms, because **all channels present opportunities for enhanced user activation and engagement.**

Email marketing is a relatively inexpensive way to keep customers informed and to keep conveying value.

SMS-based marketing boasts a whopping open rate of 98%, according to VentureBeat. And—unlike most other forms of marketing—texts present a more customary path for user response and engagement.



TIP

Offer a text-me-the-app feature.



This may come as a surprise, but links created from desktops via **text-me-the-app features** have a higher conversion to signup than other linking features.

If users have spent the time to enter their phone numbers, open texts, and click on links, they've probably already made up their mind that they want the app. This is why we see an install rate of **42% when it comes to text-me-the-app link clicks**.



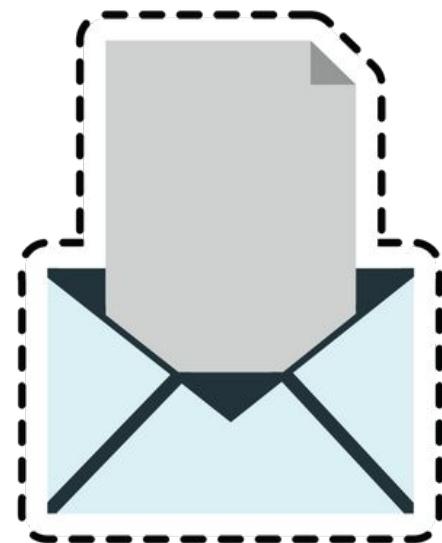
TIP

Use deep links to lift email performance on mobile.

Once you choose to optimize your emails for mobile and mobile apps, you start to realize how many challenges mobile presents for email.

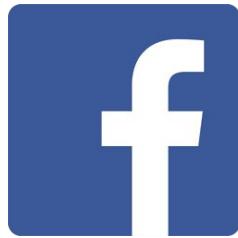
Different platforms, email clients, and devices handle emails in disparate, unpredictable ways. “Responsive” email design is stuck in the 2000’s, with complicated nested div and table structures and inline styling (a taboo in contemporary web design) to make emails on mobile look good.

Deep linking is also a valuable tool to increase activation. **Instacart increased its conversion from email six-fold** when they sent users directly into the app using deep links, instead of sending them to the mobile web.



Social Media

In one way or another, social media should be a part of every mobile growth professional's user activation plan.



Facebook reports 26% of users that clicked on an ad made a final purchase.



52% of retail paid clicks on **Google** were product listing ads (PLA).



Pinterest's ads have seen 12% increase in buying over the last two years.



TIP

Boost user activation through social media with deep linking.

Deep linking is also essential for strong activation results from social platforms. Simply put, deep linking directly routes social media users with your app to the specific content of interest. **If an app downloader experiences less hassle when being routed to an app, that downloader is far more likely to activate.**

"We at Branch recommend that you **consider your native app a sanctuary from the tyranny of fragmentation**, and that you continue to upsell it at every opportunity."



Alex Austin

CEO @ Branch



TIP

Use relevant app content to retarget app downloaders through social media.

Facebook's mobile retargeting allows you to find and advertise to users that previously visited your website. With mobile retargeting, the visitor to your site may have previously been on a desktop, but now conveniently sees your ad in his or her Facebook mobile app.

This is a powerful mobile marketing tool for converting **potential users** and **app downloaders** to **app users**.



Tyler Narducci

CleverTap

["How to Leverage Social Media to Drive Downloads of Your App"](#)



Mobile Ads

In an increasingly mobile world, **mobile ads are an excellent way to re-convey value and bring your mobile app to the top of app downloaders' minds.**

Here are five tips for optimizing your mobile ad campaign:

- 1 Leverage multiple networks to maximize volume while minimizing acquisition cost.
- 2 Ensure high-quality leads with blacklists.
- 3 Target users at times they show the best click, install, and activity rates.
- 4 Analyze campaign results by device, and then target by device.
- 5 Optimize for the right KPI.

Ioana Cailean

Trademob Blog

"5 Ways to Optimize Your Mobile Ad Campaign"



TIP

Be certain of where, when, why, and how your app is relevant.

“Especially when you have a very limited budget, it’s important to **identify the point in the app journey** where your app becomes relevant to your customer.”



Avantika Agrawal

Product Manager (Mobile) @ Birchbox



TIP

Know where you advertise, and advertise where you know.

"Any **localized ad** will cost you more, up to four times the price of national ones (at least in the US, and especially in high-GDP cities). So I would always avoid localizing ads.

Also, **if you are not local, how can you guarantee relevant content?** For example, it took us a while to understand that we get high rates of negative feedback (and pay more per action) if women's heads are not covered when we advertise in some countries."



Maor Ben-Gur

Co-Founder @ Robotix Media



Partnerships

"With the explosion of the number of apps, app experiences have become commoditized. What matters more to the user is the actual content of the app and less so the shell that delivers it. A user might only use an app once for a video before moving on. **We need a new method of native app access that facilitates smooth app to app transitions and breaks down the app adoption barrier.**"



Alex Austin

CEO @ Branch

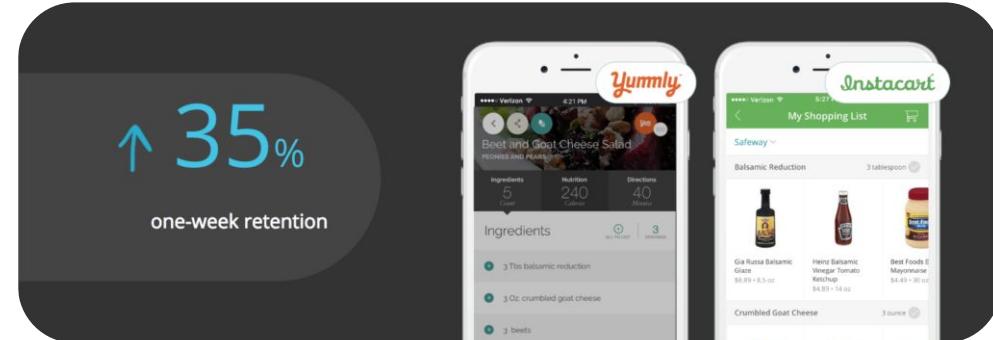


TIP

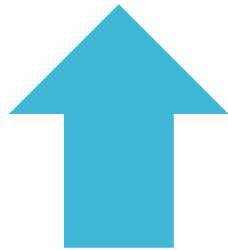
Propose a symbiotic app-to-app partnership experience.

Example: **Yummly** (a recipe app) and **Instacart** (a shopping app). When a Yummly user finds a recipe they want to make, they can shop for all the ingredients through a link that takes them to Instacart, with all the ingredients automatically added to their cart.

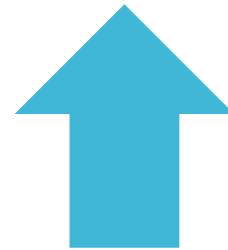
If Instacart isn't installed yet, the user is taken to download it and the ingredients are still added once Instacart opens.



Web-to-App Routing



30% higher mean purchase amount for users referred from banner purchasing in-app compared to the mobile web.



5.6x higher purchase rate from banners compared to mobile users.

Moving users from mobile web to app is clearly critical—but how can it be done?



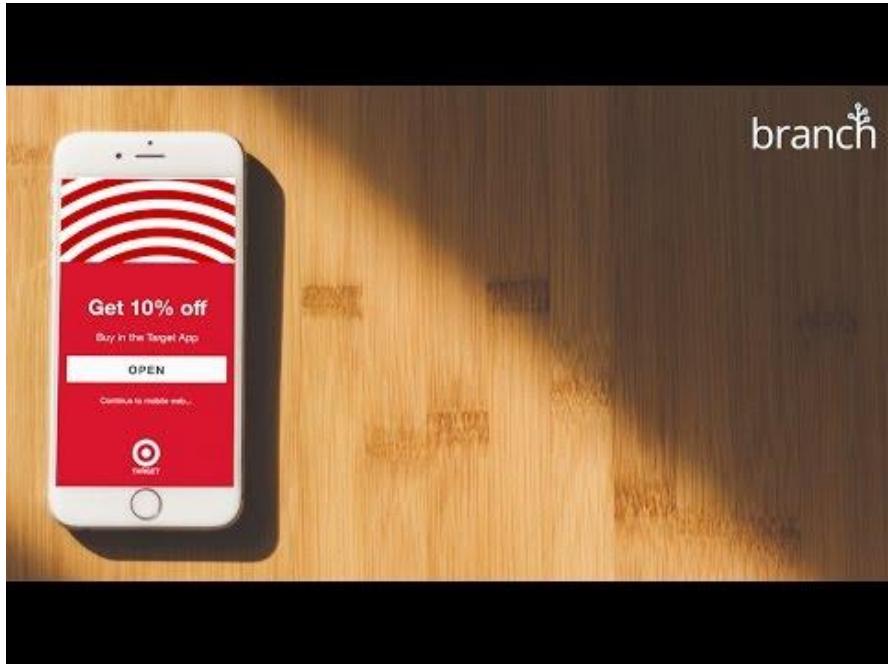
Deepviews

A **Deepview** is a mobile web splash page that gives a preview of the in-app content behind a given Branch deep link. When a visitor clicks on one of your links and does not have your app installed, you can show them a Deepview instead of sending them directly to the App or Play Store.

Deepviews are discoverable in all search portals (Google, Apple Spotlight, Bing, etc.), opening up new mechanisms for people to find your app, and driving much higher conversions to install than sending visitors to the App/Play Store directly.



AMP Journeys



Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) are a way to build pages that serve static content so that they load in Google search results much faster. As such, **AMP pages often appear at the top of mobile search results.**

AMP pages make it difficult for users to go anywhere except back to Google search. **With AMP-compatible Journeys, you can convert mobile web traffic to your app while taking advantage of extra traffic from AMP pages.**



Push Notifications

Push notifications are perhaps the most polarizing feature in the app world. Some users loathe these messages that continually pop-up on their screens, considering them annoying and irrelevant.

"This is an easy channel to burn. When you can, try to give good context when sending the push. Make sure to personalize it and make it more relevant to the audience."



Zaid Al Husseini

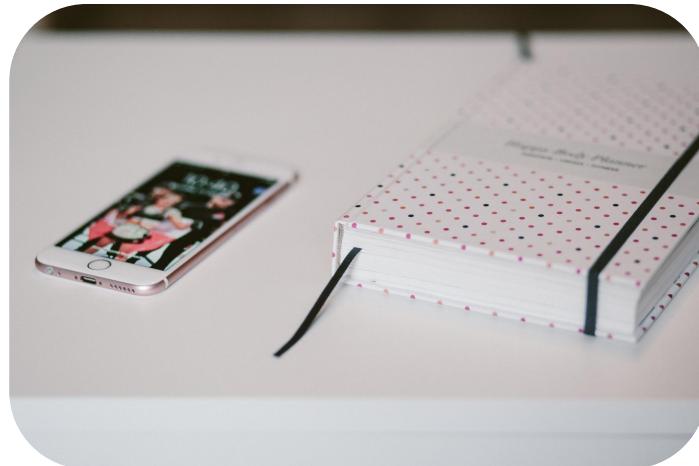
Former Vice President of Product @ Trip.com



TIP

Use push notifications to encourage users to purchase.

The industry norm for accepting standard push notifications is **32%**. (Keep in mind this varies across industries.) **Communicating the value of push notifications with an aesthetically-pleasing request interface can raise the opt-in rate to 50%.**



TIP

Use push notifications to encourage users to purchase.

Nordstrom still sees 90% of sales take place in store because they **encourage app users to buy in-store with push notifications and alerts through the app.**

Nordstrom card members with Notes linked to their accounts will be alerted via the app when they're near a store and have Notes to spend. Additionally, app users with in-cart items will be notified when near a store that has that item in stock.

Nordstrom benefits from its app's unique ability to **target** and **re-engage** customers, and ultimately get them purchasing.



TIP

Use push notifications to encourage users to purchase.

"To optimize user activation, Flexjet leveraged push notifications. A series of pre-flight push notifications provides access to relevant information at the right time for the super-busy executive. We also send push notifications with invitations to regional events organized exclusively for our users—they can easily RSVP from within the app. **In the six weeks since we've released the app, we've seen 25% activation from our thousands of existing clients. Plus, the contextually relevant push notifications have resulted in a 40% influenced open rate.**"



Jonathan Levey

Senior Digital Marketing Manager @ Flexjet



TIP

Remember that push notifications are forever.

"KAYAK is always really careful about push notifications because **with push notifications, you have one shot.** If you mess it up, you may never get to meet your customer again. We always tested with a very small subset of users first, to see what would happen. That was always really important and informative."



Vinayak Ranade

Former Director of Engineering, Mobile @ KAYAK



Data Collection

Do your app users respond more to push notifications or emails?

What are your app users' incentives for downloading and activating your app?

How can your onboarding process better cater to those incentives?

Data collection across activation metrics has never been more necessary.



TIP

A/B test until you've found the right activation formula.

To identify an optimal strategy for converting mobile web visitors and app downloaders to app users, you should experiment. Test, for instance, **different banners for different users**. Find the incentive that most resonates with your users, and design banners—not to mention the user's initial experience with your app—in response.

“Try more, fail more, and learn more. That is how you can succeed in the world where mobile becomes main necessity.”



Bayu Adi Persada

Senior Product Manager @ Bukalapak



TIP

Never get comfortable with the same toolset for too long.

"The best thing you can do is keep up with the latest and start developing your own perspective for how the industry is shifting. **Never get comfortable with the same toolset for too long.** In such a young space, that perspective becomes valuable after just a few years."



Al Harnisch

Director of Strategy & Growth @ Prolific Interactive



“Activation is mostly about **removing friction**.”



Stella Chen

Lead Product Manager @ Close5



Engagement



Engagement

Forbes estimates that **acquiring a new user is between six and seven times as costly as retaining an existing one**. And the cost is rising.

Mobile users are raising expectations and lowering patience levels.

According to Quettra, the average app loses **77%** of its daily active users (DAUs) within the first three days after the install, and **90%** within the first 30 days.



The Main Challenge

“If you as a consumer have a really engaging, immersive experience, you gravitate to that product. But on a repeat experience, you switch back to the mode of **skepticism**.”



Georgie Mathews

Senior Product Manager @ Amazon



Create an Experience

How do we as mobile growth professionals fight the early-dropoff trends? How do we keep exciting app users?

Studies show that the brands most successful in mobile growth **create experiences** for their users through branding, social media display, smart routing, deep linking, and attribution.



Lila Strominger

Project Manager @ Branch



TIP

Create an experience by delivering a good first impression.

"The importance of the first three days cannot be overstated. Within the first three days, apps either win or lose the user retention battle. We have gone through tons of mobile growth charts—time and time again, **the difference between successful and unsuccessful apps comes down to the first three days of the app experience."**



Mike Molinet

Co-Founder @ Branch



TIP

Don't underestimate the value of smooth onboarding.

"I think a lot of us overlook onboarding as a potential driver of mobile growth. You're educating your customers, and you're showing them the app—and, in doing so, **you're inspiring and driving retention.**"



Avantika Agrawal

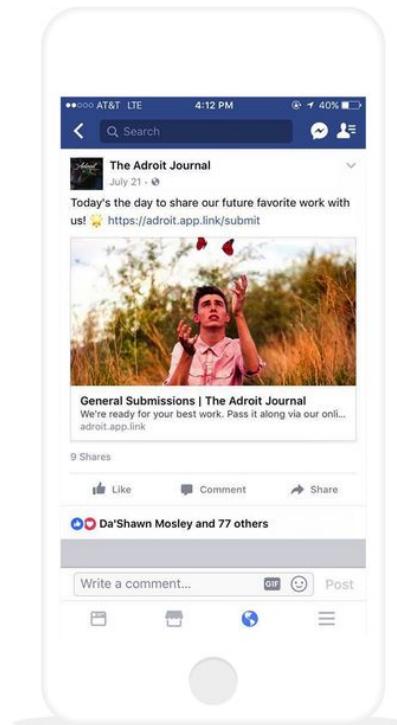
Product Manager (Mobile) @ Birchbox



TIP

Create an experience by optimizing your social media display.

Any link posted on social media should have **images**, **titles**, and **descriptions** suited for sharing, plus a short or vanity **URL**.



TIP

Categorize users prior to designing and implementing personalization.

“Bucket your users into quartiles. Whales should be your most valuable users, minnows should be your least valuable, and the middle two quartiles should be between. Develop user journeys for each of those buckets. That's the simplest way to start personalizing your app.”



Chuck Nguyen

Senior Marketing Manager @ DoorDash

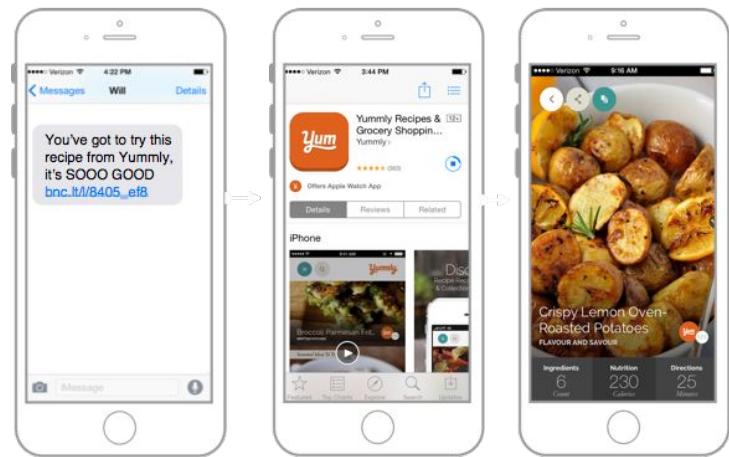


TIP

Create an experience by integrating deep linking.

If you want to share a recipe from Yummly with a friend, for example, **you can send a deep link** that brings your friend directly to that recipe in the app, even through the install process.

Without a deep link, your friend would have to find the Yummly app in the App Store or Play Store, open the app to the .homepage, locate the Search function, and then try to find the same recipe you found.



TIP

Create an experience by integrating deep linking.

When a link opens your app, it should deep link directly to the specific content in the app that the user was expecting—even through the install and onboarding processes. This increases conversions and engagement because it provides a better, faster user experience.

“Serve your users the best experience *quickly*—**speed is a huge issue on mobile**. Serving users a deep link can only help.”



Tabir Akhter

Deputy Social Media Director @ BuzzFeed



TIP

Create an **experience** by enabling push notifications (if you haven't already).

We've already discussed the benefits of employing push notifications for user activation. Now let's talk push notifications and engagement.

"If someone's going to defect upon receiving a push notification, they probably aren't invested enough to be an active user. That's of course not to say you should let them go—one way to think about it is, '**can we get users engaged enough to appreciate push notifications, rather than tolerate them?**'"



Tessa Jacocks

Director of Growth @ Bumble

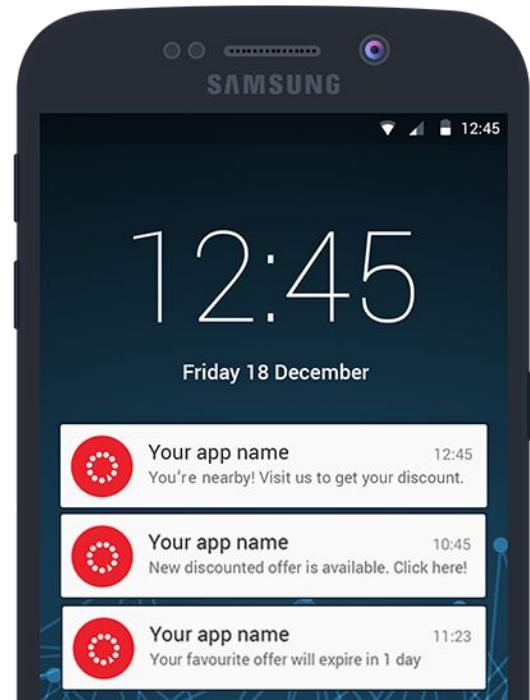


TIP

Enable push notifications (if you haven't already done so).

According to Localytics, users who have enabled push notifications open an app an average of 9.3 more times per month than those who don't, representing a **171% increase in engagement**.

And 30-day retention increases from 17% to 44%.



TIP

Consult the RRF framework when designing push notifications.

Reach: How many users will qualify for a notification type? The most impactful notifications have the potential to reach the entire user base.

Relevance: The more relevant the notification, the more likely users will engage with it. Ensure that the content is tailored to the explicit or implicit signals from the user.

Frequency: Events that can trigger notifications occur with different frequency, often dictated by external factors. High-frequency events are fundamentally desirable.



Andy Carvell

Partner @ Phiture



TIP

Give your users the power to control what push notifications they receive.

"Let people turn push notifications off. Make it so that your push notifications are segmented, so users can pick which push notifications they want to receive.

"When it's a user's choice, pushes become meaningful content, rather than nuisances in the middle of the day."



Dane Regnier

OS Developer, UI/UX Designer @ Backspace



TIP

Consider push notifications as a tool for retargeting users.

It should come as no surprise that, other than their own, **the content that app users best respond to is content with which they've already engaged**. Apps around the world are acknowledging that leveraging this content can lead to heightened engagement.

Take **eXtra**, Saudi Arabia's leading consumer electronics retailer. [Kissmetrics reports](#) the company is experiencing 100% year-over-year mobile growth. Within six weeks of switching from email engagement strategies to retargeting through push notifications, **eXtra users were returning four times more, and spending twice as much time engaged**.



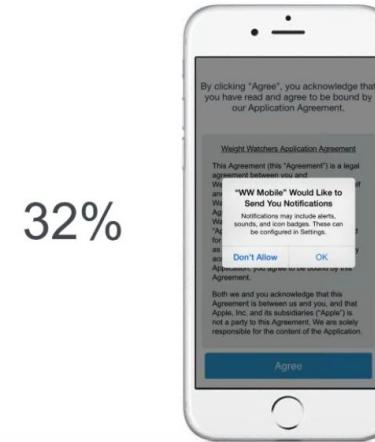
TIP

Optimize the effect of push notifications by focusing on the right components.

The industry norm for accepting standard push notifications is **32%** (though this varies across industries).

Studies show that communicating the value of push notifications in conjunction with an aesthetically-pleasing request interface can raise the opt-in rate to **50%**.

32%



50%

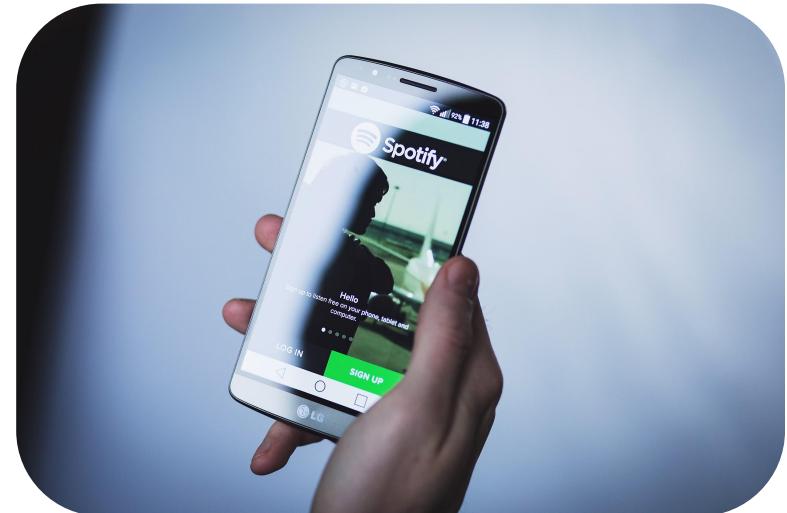


TIP

Also enable and optimize in-app notifications.

In-app messaging can **more than triple** user retention rates. Your in-app messages should follow a similar strategy as your push notifications.

Because only in-app users may receive in-app notifications, this approach can only be used to engage, rather than re-engage. **It is pivotal that the user flow is not fragmented or worsened by these messages.**



TIP

Never stop experimenting.

"We treat every notification as an experiment and measure whether they increase the retention of our users, or just waste their attention."



Casey Winters

Former Product Lead, Growth @ Pinterest



TIP

Create an experience by using data to catalyze engagement and growth.

“Cross-functionally, your teams and departments need to be aligned on the metrics. I don’t just mean DAUs or MAUs. You can look at any billion-dollar company—they’re not growing because they have tons of new users every month. They’re growing because they have users that return day after day, and month after month.”



Akio Bandle

Senior Product Manager @ ZipRecruiter



TIP

You learn more from quick tests than large ones.

"When you are ready to begin testing, remember that **you will learn more by testing faster than by testing bigger**. If a test takes months to build—and months to test—you may have wasted precious time getting one result (which may be a failed result), when you could have built ten smaller tests and gotten ten results in the same amount of time."



Boone Spooner

Principal Product Development @ Caavo



TIP

Treat your users like the people they are. Listen to them!

"Your audience consists of people—your product should treat them the way that you would like an app to treat you. When you design an app, design it for your audience, and then growth will follow. Too often a business will design an app for the business, or the needs of the business, at the expense of the audience."



Jeffrey Storey

Director of Mobile Product @ SlickDeals



TIP

Create an experience by prioritizing retention.



Many apps do not have revenue and don't plan on flipping on the monetary switch anytime soon. For these apps, **decreasing the cost of customer acquisition (CAC) is just as important as optimizing monetization.**

A decreased CAC may allow these apps to reach a point where this is another, non-monetary value in the network they've created. Whatever the reason may be, **decreasing CAC is always on an app developer's or marketer's mind.**



TIP

Create an experience by optimizing email marketing.

Emails are a great way to engage and reengage users, **but only if optimized effectively.**

In fact, **92% of users** will leave a site instead of resetting or recovering their login info.

Listen to your users, so you can provide them ideal content with an ideal cadence.



TIP

Create an experience with a giveaway and a survey.

Hosting a giveaway in conjunction with a survey opportunity allows you to boost awareness and evangelism of your app while also collecting useful feedback.

Before spending a sum of your budget, set goals you intend to accomplish during your survey campaign and pick giveaway prizes relevant to your target audience.



TIP

Growing user engagement doesn't automatically mean burdening your users.

"Anything that can produce a 1:1 interaction with a less active user is good. This applies to new users, too. For instance, we send a notification to existing LinkedIn users when someone in their address book has just joined LinkedIn, and invite them to add the new member to their network. This is pretty effective because it makes total sense from the standpoint of the existing member, and makes it easier for the new member to grow their nascent network."



Liz Li

Group Partner Manager @ LinkedIn



“Your most valuable customers are in the app space, so you may want to treat them differently. We have features available in our apps that aren’t available online. **That’s intentional.**”



Kyla Robinson

Senior Product Manager @ Saks Fifth Avenue



**“If you’re acquiring users but not retaining them,
you’re lighting money on fire.”**



Andrea Slobodien

Product Manager @ Smule



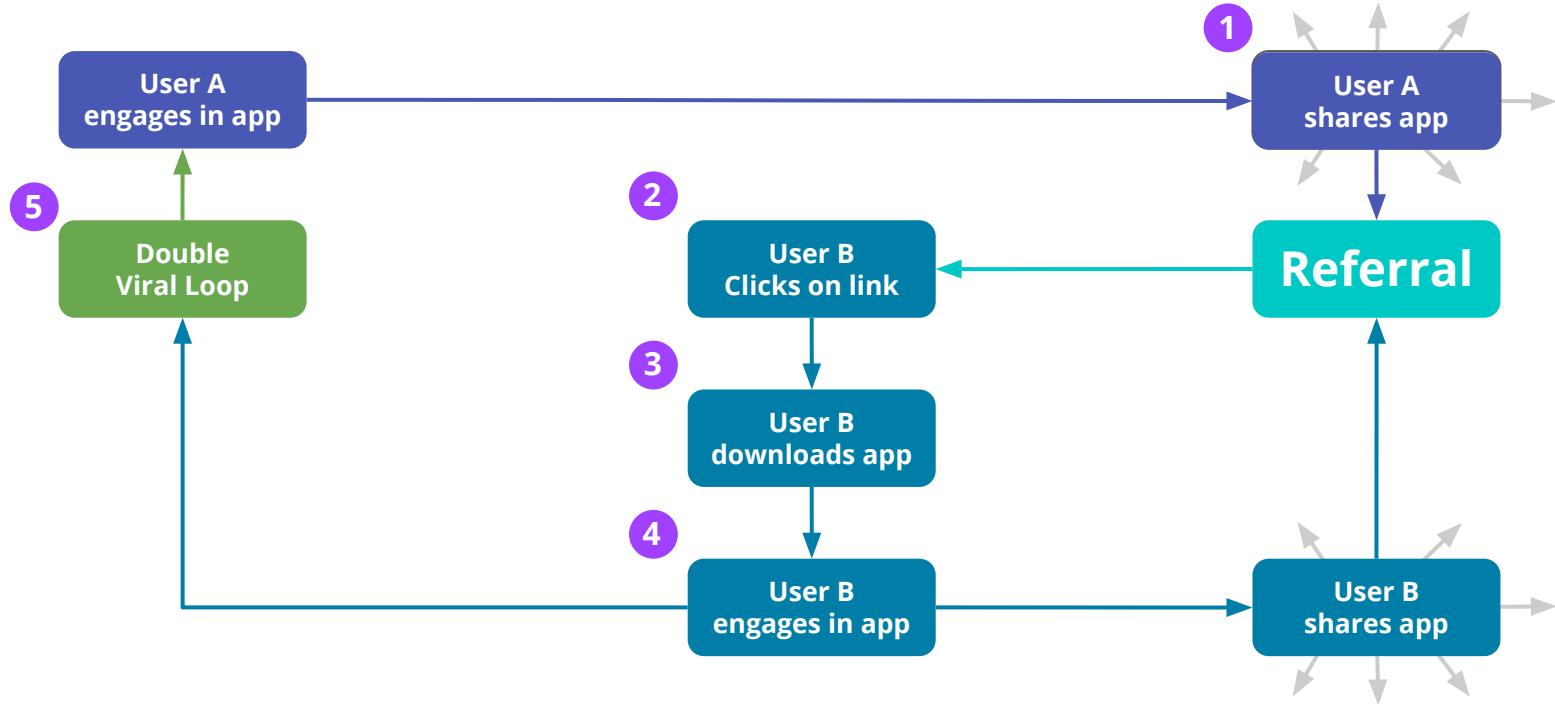
Referral



By **engaging advocates, influencers, ambassadors, and brand fans**, and getting them to help spread the word about a mobile brand, brands have seen **unparalleled growth**.



The Virality Loop



TIP

Don't limit your scope to infectious virality.

Most companies get caught up in **infectious virality**—the kind of virality where users bring friends so the experience is better for both.

But there are two other types of virality that turn core users into evangelists.



TIP

Not all virality is created equal.

Word-of-Mouth Virality: having your users describe their great experience to their friends. Be careful which words you use in the product or when talking to the press because these words will impact how your users will describe it.

Demonstration Virality: having your core users share content from your product. These shares only happen if they are authentic and naturally happen in your product.



Josh Elman

Partner @ Greylock Partners



Double Viral Loop

The concept of the **double viral loop** was first described by Josh Elman. By tracking when referred users engage with your app, you can notify the referring user of activity. Knowing a friend engaged will likely trigger them to come back and interact with the app, making them more likely to keep inviting other users.



TIP

App content should incentivize virality, use emotion, and appeal to ego.

The most viral part of your app is its content. Apply basic principles to make sure your content goes viral: give **incentives**, use **emotion**, and appeal to **ego**.

But keep in mind, not all content is created equal. The more engaging your content, the more likely it is to drive virality.



Mada Seghete

Co-Founder @ Branch

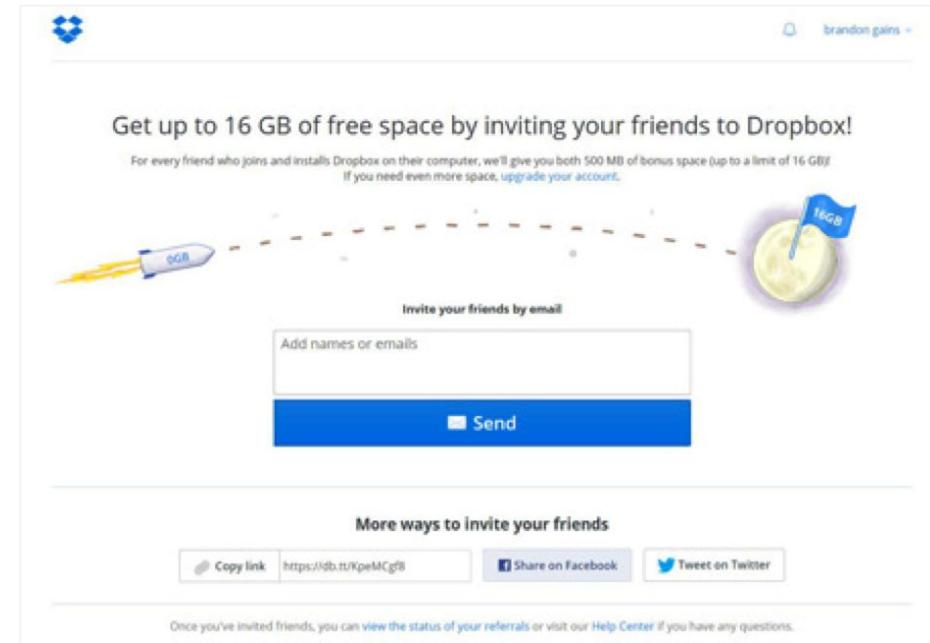


TIP

Incentivize virality with one-step sharing and two-sided referrals.

One-step sharing optimizes user sharing because it truncates the effort required to share.

Two-sided referrals optimize user sharing because they provide benefits for both the referrer and the referred.



TIP

Don't give referrers money, give them your product!

When incentivizing, it's important that you optimize user investment in and appreciation of your brand.

"Rewarding your users with more product and getting them to use your products more after bringing in new users is a **win-win**."



Alex Potichnyj

Director of Marketing @ Checkout51



TIP

Incentivize virality by appealing to user ego and emotion.



Ego is often the biggest driver of virality. People share what makes them look smart, likeable, or attractive.

Strong **emotions** like anger or surprise can drive a lot more clicks than happy emotions.



TIP

If you aren't remarkable, you'll be unremarkable.

"Good won't get you referrals. You have to seem cool. You have to be that guy who brings the beer to the party."



Dan Dumitru

Former Head of Acquisition @ Postmates



TIP

Integrate deep linking into text-sharing features.

Coffee Meets Bagel used deep linking to help track and attribute the performance of each channel. With their permission, we've pulled and analyzed the data from the invite options.

We compared **App Invites** to **SMS** because both send direct messages to selected contacts.



SMS

Share click to new user conversion rate.



App Invites

Share click to new user conversion rate.

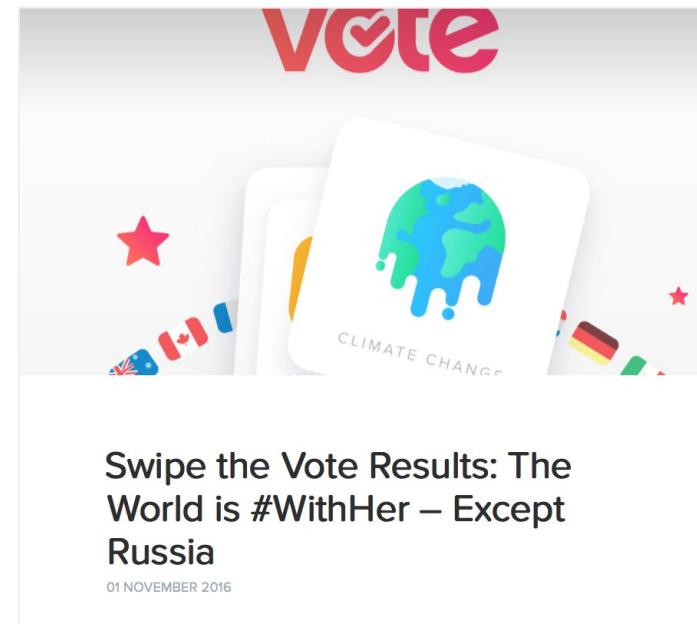


TIP

Generate shareable external content.

If the content outside of your app resonates with your users and drives additional value, it can drive enhanced engagement on social media and other content-sharing platforms.

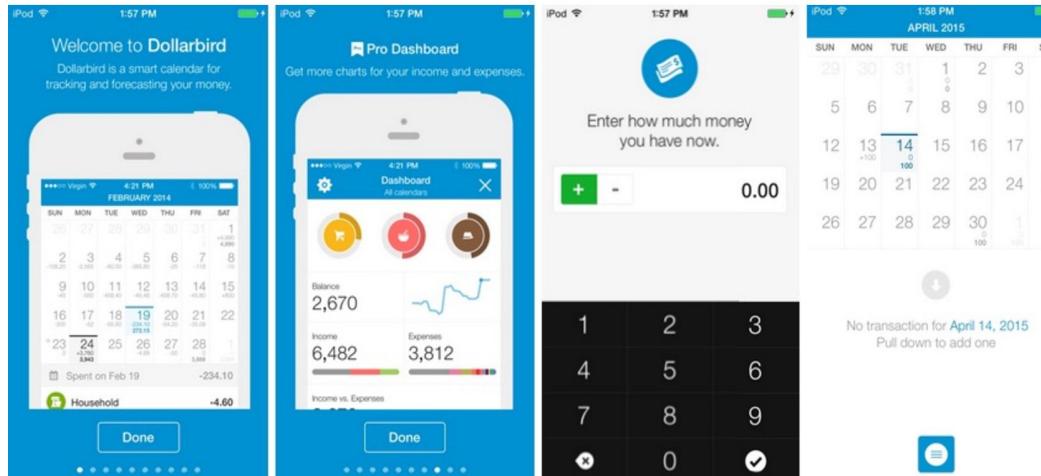
Example: ["Swipe the Vote Results: The World is #WithHer — Except Russia"](#) on the Tinder Blog.



TIP

Ask yourself if you need a login.

56% of users reported that they have not signed up for an app or service because the registration process was too time-consuming. As we mentioned earlier, an important question to ask is: **Do we even need logins?**



Dollarbird doesn't use a login or profile



TIP

Pick your referral metrics carefully, and don't stray from them.

"It's really tricky to figure out—is your referral program successful, or does it just *look* successful?"



Helen Ouyang

Product Manager @ Virgin Mobile



TIP

Leverage deep linked referrals.

One key element of **Fynd**'s in-app referral program is the personalized onboarding for new users. By using deep links, Fynd ensured that a new user's first screen is customized to their journey into the app.

It also removed the hassles of using referral codes, as they're embedded in the referral's deep link. In fact, the referral links even work seamlessly across all channels.

Deep linked users shared links 7.8 times more often than those who arrived from other channels.



“When designing your strategy, think about superpowers.
Which superpower will your app provide?”



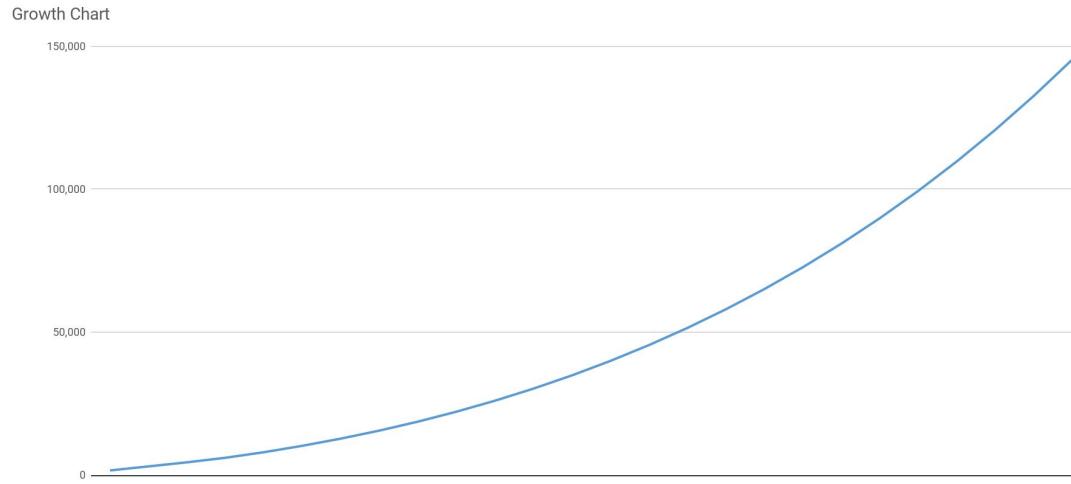
Alexandre Jubien

Independent Consultant in Mobile Strategy



Mobile Growth Modeling Calculator

5% increases in retention and user acquisition rates can lead to a **220,000 user increase over 6 months.**



Check out our mobile growth modeling calculator [here](#).



The Mobile Growth Stack

	Channel	ASO	PR/Social Media	Paid Marketing	Organic Growth	Partnerships	Content Marketing	Referrals	Mobile Web & Web	Email Lists	SEO
ACQUISITION	Metrics/Analysis	App Store Analytics	Campaign Measurement	Install Attribution	Event Tracking	Attribution Linked Cohorts	Content Analytics	Attribution Linked Cohorts	User Analytics	Email Metrics	Rank
ACTIVATION	Channel	Push Notifs.	In-App Notifs.	Retargeting	UI/UX	Onboarding Tutorial	Community	User Support	Personalization	Deep Linking	Email
RETENTION	Metrics/Analysis	A/B Testing	User Segmentation	Campaign Measurement	Event Tracking	Heat Maps	User Analytics	Time to Resolve	Conversion Funnels	Attribution & Analytics	Activate Email Metrics
REFERRAL	Channel	Offers & Discounts	Cross-Platform Linkages	Marketing Automation	Push Notifs.	Drip Emails & Newsletters	App Performance	Lifecycle Marketing	Personalization	Deep Linking	Retargeting
	Metrics/Analysis	Segment LTVs	Screen Flows	Conversions	A/B Testing	Drip Campaign Analytics	Performance Analysis	Funnels/ Cohorts	Event Tracking	Attribution & Analytics	Churn
	Channel	Text	Blog/Multimedia Content	Content Sharing	Widgets/ Embeds	Email Contact List	Promo Codes	Word of Mouth			
	Metrics/Analysis	Clicks/ Conversions	Shares	Shares & Conversions	Clicks	Invites Sent & Accepted	Conversions	Organic Growth			



There's never been a more exciting
time to be in mobile.

Just keep building.



Alex Austin
CEO @ Branch



APPENDIX

Branch & Mobile Growth



About Mobile Growth Community & Experts

Our **mobile growth community** is comprised of 25,000 app developers and mobile marketers who are trying to make a business in the mobile ecosystem. We were recently named the largest mobile marketing community in the world!

The global community started in 2014 in Silicon Valley. We host events in cities and countries all over the world, including San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, India, Berlin, London, and more.

If you are interested in joining our community or attending a meetup, visit our online community.



Join The Mobile Growth Community



Join our online community

Attend a meetup

Follow us on Medium



17

December 4th & 5th, 2017

branchout

San Francisco

Bridging Mobile Journeys

The two-day event dedicated to overcoming mobile fragmentation, building optimal cross-platform experiences, and measuring ROI.

[Register now](#)

About Branch

Branch provides solutions that unify user measurement across different devices, platforms, and channels, and deliver a seamless customer experience no matter where the user comes from. The introduction of mobile has divided today's businesses, causing inaccurate attribution and links that don't work, leading to wasted marketing spend and broken customer journeys. Branch provides a holistic view of various user touch points and ensures that links take the user to the right place on the website or in the native app.

Branch is used by many of the top brands in mobile, including Airbnb, Slack, Reddit, Target, Starbucks, Amazon, and thousands more.



Where to use Branch to fuel your growth in mobile

VIEW FULL SCREEN

ACQUISITION

Web to App (Journeys)



Convert web visitors into app users with custom, targeted banners and interstitials

Acquisition Ads

Measure the performance of your campaigns, deep linking where appropriate using Branch's Universal Ads platform



Social Media

Deep link and track all engagements across all major social platforms

Organic Search

Feature your app content on Google's organic search and AMP pages, even if you don't have a mobile website



ACTIVATION

Auto-Login



Automatically log users into your app when they install or open it for the very first time from an email or website

Custom Onboarding

Personalize your new users' onboarding process by tracking their origin up to and through the install process

Deferred Deep Linking



ENGAGEMENT

Email



Deep link your users to the right page in your app all while measuring the full, cross platform performance of your campaigns.

Push Notifications

Deep link your users to relevant content straight from push notifications on their device

App to App Experiences



Drive engagement and growth by allowing users to deep link directly between connected apps by using contextual data

Re-engagement Ads

Track the performance across all the networks as you drive users back to your site or app from ads

REFERRAL

Referrals & Invites



Build a powerful referral program without codes all while measuring the k-Factor of your mobile business.

Content Sharing

