



Does My Brand Need an App?

SOLVE YOUR TOUGHEST BUSINESS CHALLENGES WITH MOBILE

“Mobile First”

How does mobile drive engagement with your customers or your employees?

How does it help your brand differentiate itself from your competitors?

Who is the app intended for?

“Mobile first” has become the rallying cry as more people consume information through a smartphone than any other device.

What does it mean? Mobile first began with a responsive web design that ensured a company’s website provided a first-class experience on anyone’s mobile device. Content creators, web designers and developers considered the information a visitor on-the-go would like to consume and presented it in a way that made sense on a smartphone. Now, mobile first takes into account every consumer’s touch point with it’s key audiences – making sure you deliver the right message at the right time to the right person in a way that makes the most sense.

You can’t overlook any of your channels. An app can benefit your business, and a mobile app strategy should be a pillar of your communications efforts. But first, brands need to seriously consider the Why?, the How? and the Who? behind their app. The app needs to add value. It needs to solve a problem.



Solving Business Challenges

Mobile apps have the power to provide answers to serious business challenges. Some include:

- *Improve operational efficiencies*
- *Increase profit*
- *Streamline processes*
- *Enhance internal communication*
- *Reach external audience*
- *Build a strong brand*
- *Create brand loyalty*

Ask yourself if the app meets a need that will earn a spot on the front page of your target user's mobile device.

Does it provide enough value that a user needs it at their fingertips at all times? Does it meet a need in the right moment?

If you aren't thinking about what the ideal time and platform is for your user, your application will fall short. It's not about checking off the box for an app. It's about defining a mobile app strategy that delivers bottom-line business results by giving your users something of value.





GETTING STARTED

How do we create a mobile app strategy that delivers business results and is scalable for the future?

1. Define Your App's Purpose

Is your app designed to inform your users? Interact with users? Offer new services?

According to McKinsey, 56 percent of CIOs see stronger demand for mobile device support from employees. Forty-two percent of mobile workers are using smartphones or tablets for work-related activity in the evening hours rather than a laptop.

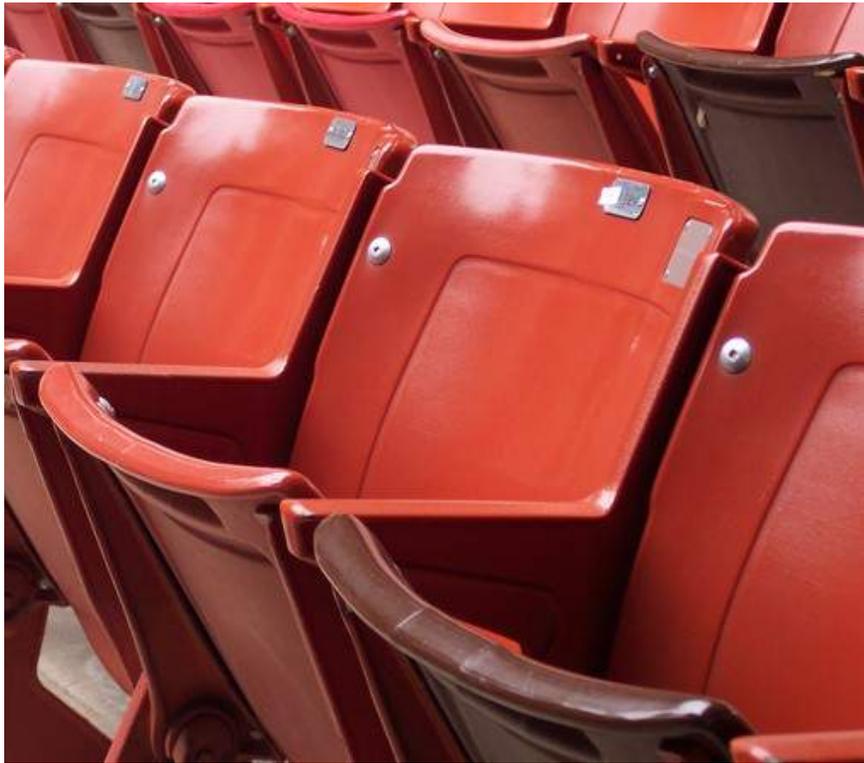


Discussion:

- How will an app enhance your relationship with your audience?
- Is your app intended to create efficiencies across your enterprise or are you seeking deeper brand engagement with your customers?
- What features make the most sense for your audiences?

2. Define Your Audience

Multiple platforms offer different ways to engage with different audiences. Which is right for you?



Discussion:

- Is your app intended for use in the enterprise? Your workforce may already have company-issued devices that will determine the right platform.
- Does your company have a BYOD (bring your own device) policy? Find out the percentage of usage across iPhone, Android, iPad, tablet or other devices within your workforce.
- If your sales force will use the apps for product demos or presentations, a tablet application may be the right choice.
- Are consumers your intended audience? Research can help you determine which platform is the best fit for your intended audience if you aren't starting on both iOS and Android.

3. Determine the Right Technology



We are native purists, but that doesn't mean other options don't offer value. If you have a limited budget or need to go to market quickly, a cross-platform solution may be the right one for you.

Discussion:

- Native apps are written in a specific language such as Java, C# or Objective-C depending on the operating system.
- Cross-platform apps are designed to work across multiple operating systems using a single codebase such as HTML 5, JavaScript, Ruby or Python, but they don't have all of the functionalities of native apps.
- Hybrid apps are built for cross platform, but it includes native plug-ins that will give a user a more native-like experience.
- Web apps render inside a browser and are very similar to websites, except that they do something (Think Facebook, Google Docs or Hootsuite).

4. Follow the Data

Mobile device analytics will help you determine how users engage with your app, what features are popular and other pertinent information.

By measuring how users engage with your app, you can easily determine how it performs and ways to improve the app with better features and better content.



Discussion:

- Analytics can help determine number of users, who is active, location and the length of sessions.
- Knowing what features are most popular will help to decide future features to build out based on level of engagement.
- You can also determine customer journey through your app and what factors influence the content your user consumes.



WHAT NOW?

You've determined an app is the right move for your company. It's time to write a budget and engage your team so that everyone moves forward with one vision.

Mobile as an Investment

Building an app is an investment. Amazing developers aren't cheap.

If your app is the primary way your customers will interact with your brand or if it serves as your sales force's biggest tool, it needs to work seamlessly.

You wouldn't trust your company's finances to a new accountant; so don't trust your app development to an off-shore development team or a computer science graduate right out of school either.

The key to success is to make sure all decision makers in your organization are on the same page about technology budget, product strategy and partnerships.



Stakeholder Alignment

The success of a brand's app often involves the best ideas of those who know your business and your customers best. It's time to rally the troops!

To find out the best advice on choosing an app development partner, check out our [guide](#).

Bring your teams together. Your analysts, your marketing folks, your IT staff, your product teams, your HR representative.

Listen to what they have to say. They'll likely be aware of certain challenges or see opportunities to engage with customers that could easily be addressed through a sound mobile app strategy.

Once you achieve stakeholder alignment and have the buy-in of your internal decision makers, you can then determine which mobile app development partner is right for your company.





stable kernel

Founded by Joe Conway, author of the best-selling iOS Programming: The Big Nerd Ranch Guide, stablekernel is an Atlanta-based mobile app company offering end-to-end development services to craft smartly-designed software that connects brands directly with their users – across tablets, smartphones, desktops, wearables and the Internet of Things. Our team of developers takes clients from strategy through design, development and deployment, ensuring timely delivery of the highest quality apps.

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