



How Much Does Mobile App Development Cost?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BUILD YOUR APP

Everyone seems to have a great app idea

This is clearly evidenced by the more than 3 million apps available between the iOS and Android stores. However, simply having an idea isn't reason enough to build an app. There are some crucial decisions a company must make prior to seeking out an app development company. Even after selecting a development partner, product owners face a series of choices throughout the project which ultimately impact how much a mobile app solution costs.

So, how much does it really cost to build a robust mobile application in 2017?

This question is determinate upon many pieces of information you may or may not have. Here are a few of the decisions you, as the product owner, will need to address before moving forward with app development:



5 factors to consider before moving forward with app development

1. *Do you need a back-end?*
2. *Are you targeting multiple native platforms? iOS? Android?*
3. *Will there be a mobile web version of the app?*
4. *Do you have a set of requirements or features?*
5. *How many screen layouts will you need to fulfill the app's core functions?*

After answering these questions, the next step is to get a quote from an app development company. Like most products developed by skilled laborers, mobile apps can carry a hefty price tag. As the old adage goes, however, you get what you pay for.

While there are talented off-shore and near-shore development firms that build back-ends and mobile apps, it is important to consider the geography of any prospective team. There can be a lot of frustration when dealing with overseas teams, either due to misalignment of expectations, work habits, cultural differences and language barriers. While you may find inexpensive development, the overall quality could take a substantial hit. Some oversea shops may do a fine job, but pricing shouldn't be the only variable. Communication across multiple time zones requires a lot more effort.

Really, how much does app development cost?

It's rare to see a native app concept that can be built in less than three months. Assuming you are building for both iOS and Android, require a backend and have some level of UX design in the project, you could be looking at anywhere between 30-40 man weeks. And that's just for a slim feature phase 1 product.

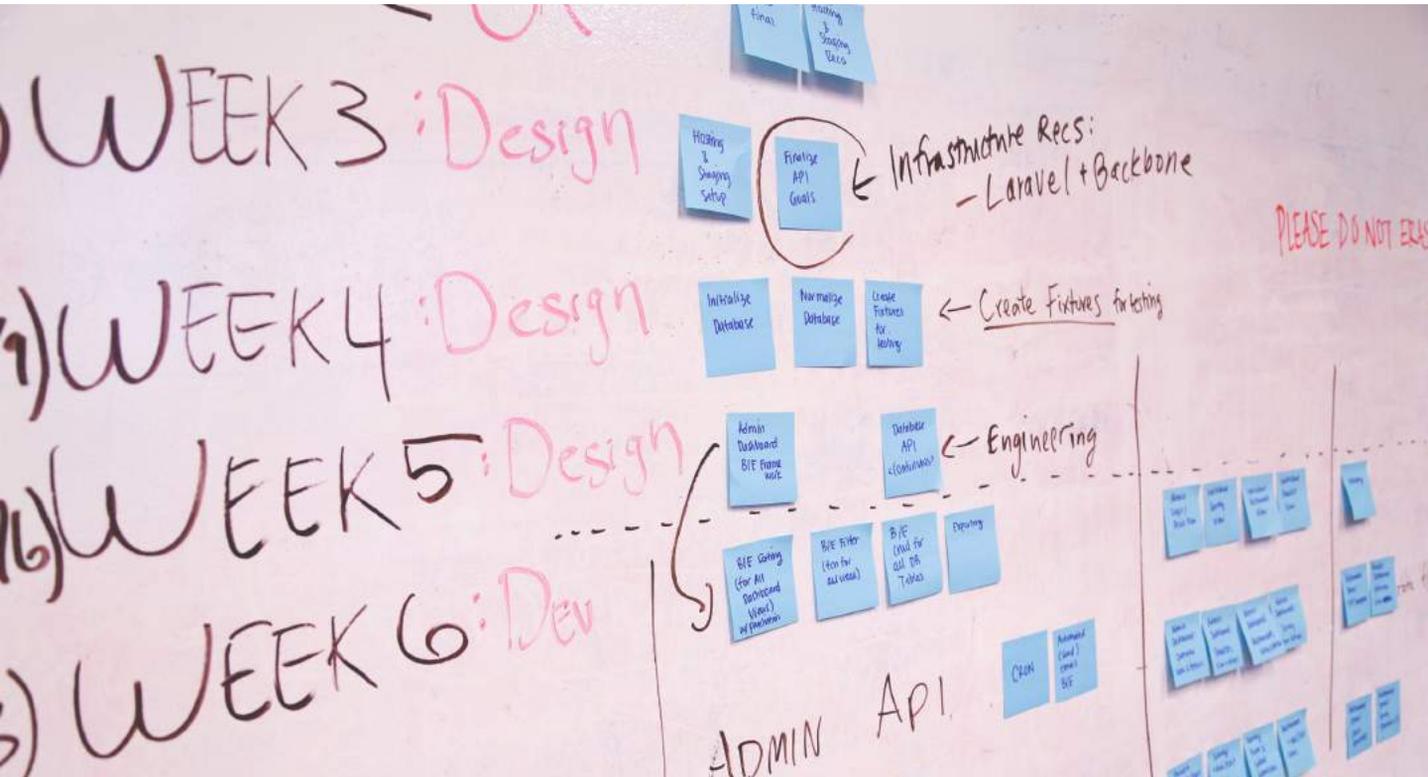
In this market, a decent app developer or UX designer expects anywhere from \$100-\$250 per hour, depending on the size of the development company, experience level of the team and general location of the talent. Let's be honest, you can build an app in Atlanta cheaper than Silicon Valley.



If a company wants a more robust app, prices can reach to \$500k and beyond. For companies with long feature lists, hardware integration or complex systems integration, development costs can rise to the \$3-5M range after multiple iterations.

Most SMBs and large enterprises budget for capital technology expenditures that can help them meet business and operational objectives. But development costs can seem overwhelming for startups who don't have experience developing software. That's why we recommend taking a phased approach to development, to all our clients, not just startups.

Developing feature sets in phases allows you to validate ideas and gather user insights before adding more features. It also allows a company to spread out their budget spend over several phases. By beginning with discovery and an interactive prototype, your team can prove a concept to potential investors or stakeholders for a much lower price point – with anywhere from 3-6 weeks of work.





Companies whose core business competencies are outside of mobile development tend to outsource the work and rely on the experts to deliver mobile app products on-brand, functionally robust and bug-free. They look at retainer deals and bring consultancies as their “in-house developers.”

When companies take the consultancy route, it allows the developers to learn their clients’ industries and better understand the client’s business needs. Research and the onboarding process gives developers a chance to offer best practices best suited to the client’s needs from an engineering standpoint. That’s part of the reason talented developers typically enjoy working for consultancies – developers enjoy challenging projects and don’t want to be pigeon-holed into any specific thing. They enjoy the chance to work for a variety of clients and learn about the many industries relevant to their clients’ businesses.

As it becomes harder for large brick and mortar businesses to attract and retain top in-house developer talent, outsourcing will become more prevalent. But don't let that dissuade you from jumping in if you have a great idea for an app. Having a great development team as your partner places you ahead of many entrepreneurs or even larger organizations that may not understand the complexities, time and effort that goes into building an app. We've helped many business owners bring their ideas to life, and we'd be happy to help you talk through your ideas too.





stablekernel

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

www.stablekernel.com

678-464-2657

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