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Key Building Blocks for Mobile Apps

There are mobile apps for just about every service and every need, and right now you're considering developing a new app for your business, but you're concerned about overcrowding in the various ecosystems.

It is a smart concern, one we have all the time when thinking of new apps and taking new development angles. An app isn't something to rush into blindly because it isn't a magic bullet to solve company problems, it is a tool (just one of many that you should look into, I might add) that can help you leverage existing efforts and improve your performance.

With that in mind, let us suggest a few things to consider before jumping in head first to the mobile app world.

Do Your Homework

With the millions upon millions of apps available for smartphones, tablets, and even PCs (not to mention those more-niche markets like TVs and refrigerators), there's a chance that your idea isn't new.

Don't let that discourage you though! There is always an improvement to be made and a new approach to take; all this really means is that you have to do your research. You already knew you needed a programmer, because coding is obvious, but first you need to find someone who can dig through platforms and websites to find your competition.

There are a lot of great resources on the Internet, many of which are free or have tiered models that show you some information from free. Distimo (<http://www.distimo.com/>) provides a wide variety of app research and services, from analytics of your apps, general trends, daily download numbers, and conversion tracking from discovery through app launches.

There's a lot of research out there from companies like Strategy Analytics (<http://www.strategyanalytics.com/>), but one trick is to have a live person look for similar apps on their favorite devices. This will give you an idea of how users discover content and what they're likely to see when searching for your app (by category or general use) after you launch.

Web Based or Native Apps

Part of your research needs to include what kind of app to use, and that means understanding the difference between native and web apps.

In its most basic form, a native app is designed specifically for each different operating system, such as Apple's iOS or Google's Android. These apps work whenever the device is on, and typically don't have restrictions like needing Wi-Fi or often even needing an Internet connection.

Web-based apps will need an Internet connection because they are run through a browser, think Safari, Firefox, Chrome, or the default "Browser" apps on many other systems.



There are pros and cons for each of these, and they can vary depending on the sector you're in. Typically, native apps have more features and can better access the device you're using, while web apps don't often need to be developed for multiple platforms or screen sizes and don't need to be submitted to and approved by an app store. The development of web apps is also a bit simpler and quicker, in general.

Look around for blogs about your industry and see if you can find existing resources that share pros and cons of these approaches. People like to share their knowledge, and once you learn you will to, so get checking.

For example, if you're thinking about designing an app for a specific conference or event, the folks at Cvent have a great post and infographic to help you understand why people may love (or hate) either approach: <http://blog.cvent.com/blog/kevin-long/native-apps-vs-web-apps>.

How Will Your App Look? Draw It!

When doing your homework, you had to put the use of your app into words so you or your employees would know what to look for. The next step is to put your app into pictures.

This step can help a lot before you start to design an app, but it is overlooked surprisingly often by people who go the route of self-creation. Draw a very basic design of your app: that old bar standard of pen on a napkin is a worthwhile start!

Draw a big rectangle to represent the phone itself, you don't want to forget the phone part! People will be holding their device when they use your app, so make sure the buttons and everything else you have are designed with that in mind.

Draw the buttons and other minimal things your app needs (menus, text boxes, etc...) to get a feel of what you want and what looks right. If you have 27 features that your app "just has to have!" then use a few drawings to figure out the best place to put a menu and list — nothing has enough real estate to fit all 27 comfortably.

How Will You Market It?

When building your app, one thing to keep in mind even before creation starts is how you will spread the word when you're done.

If you have a dedicated customer-base and you only want it to reach them, then privacy and security play a much larger role in your app development than someone making a poker game app.

If you want to have your app reach as many people as possible, it should include a lot of social media integration and support for features like QR codes.

These thoughts are one area where it really pays to talk to developers (hey, that's us!). We can point out issues that also face you down the road, such as strategies around updates. You have to know how to push content to your users so they actually update apps without running into issues of frustration through too many upgrades, not enough improvements, or the use of push notifications.



Let Us Know

The best thing to start with is just asking questions, and you can start with us! Let us know what you're looking for, concerned about, and confused by, so we can offer suggestions before you get in with any app too deep. Email us your thoughts or head over to <http://www.mobileapp-development.com/> and see what we can do for your next project!

Our Clients



Our Testimonials

"We're delighted with their aptitude and skill sets. Their communication with us has been focused and productive. In a very short space of time, we've come to feel that they are part of InnerWorkings and have almost forgotten that they work with APRO Software."

Robert Brady – VP of Operations, Ireland., Innerworkings



"Thanks to APRO we could see our expectations for the Message Analyzer product come into life. We especially value the technical expertise of the team and their overall innovative approach to creating solutions. They have always resolved our requirements to our best satisfaction."

Pavel Tuma, product manager, T-Mobile



"It looks really great, thank you! I am very impressed from your team achievement during time we work together!"

Mihail Mihaylov, Fifthplay, Project Manager



"We have cooperated with APRO company for a long time and together we have completed several projects in the IT field, simply because the people at APRO know how to externalize our visions and bring them to reality. APRO is a company with a truly professional approach to its customers and it always fulfills our assignments."

Karel Pavlicek- IT manager of Peugeot CZ



"I must say that at all times I have always been served with high professionalism by APRO team workers – any time and over any problem that we resolved."

Jan Kadlec - Renault Trucks CZ, System Specialist



"The created web application helped to enable access to data in our internal system for external parties, either customers or suppliers, thus greatly improving all processes related to car order management."

Michal Bašta - Application Analyst, LeasePlan ČR, s.r.o.

