

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR APP



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Introduction

Congratulations! For taking the first BIG step towards building your first app.

Did you know that if you folded a piece of paper 50 times, its thickness would be $\frac{3}{4}$ the distance from the Earth to the sun? It's true!

Well Mobile App Development is the same. Why? Because small hinges swing big doors. There are 10 factors that need to be covered in app development and the idea is only ONE of them.

What we'll do in this report is explore those 10 factors in detail so that you know what to look out for when developing your own app.!

But before all that, let me introduce myself. My name is Logan Merrick. I'm one of the Directors at Buzinga Apps, along with my good pal and business partner, Graham McCorkill.

We develop apps and consult for High-Capital Individuals, Business Corporations and Government Departments all over Australia. And this year, we open our doors to helping other, smaller investors as well.

Working on things like Social Media apps, Game apps and Music apps.



1. The APP Idea

What makes someone want to download your app? Simply this: It has nothing to do with the way it looks, how it feels or anything else along those lines. What it comes down to is the following:

- Who is your target audience? And;
- What problem are you solving for them?

So let's take a look at your app idea:

Who Is Your Target Audience?

Firstly look at your concept. Tell me, who do you intend to market this application towards? Who is going to be using this app? What's their age (range)? What are their interests? Where do they live? What is their estimated income? Do they work? If so, is the app idea related to what they do? Define your audience as much as you can so that you can target the app directly to them and penetrate the market like a pen through a piece of paper.

What Problem Are You Solving For Your Users?

What does your application do for your users? When are they going to use it? How many times a day will they use it? This part needs to be really honed out in order to make your users love, share and reuse your application on the regular basis. Getting your app downloaded is only the first challenge. The second challenge is getting your users to sell it to their friends and family.

Technical Feasibility

While you're at it, it's important to check that the ideas you propose to use in your mobile application are even feasible? As in, are there any technical, physical (or MORAL) boundaries to this concept.

If you need any help with finding out if your idea is doable just flick me an email: logan@buzinga.com and I'll get my team to run a feasibility check on it for you.

To give you an example of how to apply the above to your mobile app idea:

Let's say your application idea is a social media platform for mums with young kids to meet other mums.

- The target audience is 'first-time-mums' with a baby between the ages of 1 month to 12 months.

- You are providing a platform where your user base can engage, meet up, share tips, spend time together as they would probably have a lot in common.

- The application gives them full access to profiles, etc. and they can upload baby pictures, tips and advice to share publicly or with friends. All data and correspondence would be directed through a web-service that stores all the profile information, etc.

This is a totally viable concept, with a niche, that brings women together on the mobile space....hmmm maybe I should develop this app myself.

Take a second look:

Now that you have analysed your idea a little closer, rate your app idea on a scale from 1 to 10. 1 being "not-viable" and 10 being "The-New-Facebook!"

If your app idea lands higher than 7 then you've got a good chance. In all other cases, it's time to go back to the drawing board. Also keep in mind that your idea may be a 5 now, but after a Strategy Session with my team you're app is most likely going to end up between 7-9.

Reading through the other 9 factors may also help you improve your app idea.

2. Working With The App Marketplace

The App Marketplace can be your best friend or your absolute worst nightmare, depending on how you play your cards. If you do the wrong thing it doesn't matter how mean or nice you are, you'll get more positive results from banging your head against a brick wall. "Their store, their rules."

The App Marketplace

An App Marketplace is an online store where users of smartphones can go to download apps. This is where your app will be found by your users when the app is complete.

The most common app marketplaces are:

- Google Play (Android) – HTC, Samsung, etc.
- The App Store (Apple) – iPhone, iPod, iPad.
- Windows Marketplace (Windows) – Nokia Lumia, etc.
- App World (Blackberry) – Blackberry devices.

Each marketplace provides a different set of guidelines. You as a developer need to adhere to these guidelines in order to get your mobile app approved and published on their store.

So not only do you need to develop an app, but you also need develop it in a specific way to get it approved by the app store. I won't go into describing what is said in the guidelines as the marketplaces do go into a fair bit of detail themselves. It is dead-set boring to read through it all. There is a lot of reading material and the worst part is that it's updated almost monthly. So the real challenge is staying on-top of the updates.

To get your copy of the Guidelines you need to open a developer account and download it from the Marketplace website.

So what marketplaces do you need to focus on?

The main two marketplaces you need to focus on are Google Play (65%) and The App Store(25%). Between the two of them they cover 90% of the smartphone market.

Each App Store supports a different operating system, meaning that if you want to develop for the Android OS then Google Play is the app store for you. You can develop cross-platform which means you can potentially release your application on more than one app store, however, going down this road requires a more advanced understanding of mobile app development and personally I don't recommend it.

Why would you focus your attention anywhere else other than Android, the 65% majority? The answer is, even though Apple holds a smaller market-share at the moment - and not looking to be fighting back at any rapid speed - their apps still make more money...by far. iOS users pay for more mobile apps than the users of any other platform. That means that as an app developer you can make more money if you develop your app for The App Store.

Here's the catch. The App Store has much stricter guidelines and it can be hard – if not impossible – to get an app through the App Submission Process if your app doesn't follow the guidelines.

In nearly all cases, aim to develop your app for The App Store first as the revenue is higher. However, if after reading the guidelines your app does not match their approval criteria, then move on to Google Play.

Don't take a gamble on this one. 4 times out of 5 it won't be ruled in your favour.



3. High Impact Marketing

Just like for any other business venture, marketing is the make-or-break point. Without an effective marketing campaign you can kiss you reduce your chances of getting your app found.

Did you know that without an effective marketing plan, you have about as much chance of finding success on the app store as winning the lottery... your chances are slim to none, and I don't like those odds. So let's talk about Marketing.

Pre-launch marketing

Set up your social media accounts like:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- YouTube Etc

Start building a user-base. There is plenty of reading material on this and if you need any help it's worthwhile checking out these guys: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com>

It's worthwhile setting up a website as well. If for nothing else than at least you look a little bit more legit. Use the website for blogging, FAQ's and showcasing screenshots of your app, etc.

Your website should also be linking your users to the Marketplace to download your app.

Video marketing is also highly effective. I create app videos for all my clients apps to either showcase designs, or explain how the app works. These can be used to attract users to a website or marketplace.

Post-Launch marketing

So you've got all your pre-launch marketing put together. Your social media sites are pulling people in.

You're engaging your audience and they trust you. Now you need to launch the app! This is the first part of your post launch marketing campaign. Effectively your audience are 100% online based. The best way to hammer your message home to your audience is to draw them all into your "Funnel".

Funnel

This is what I call it when you start to draw people from your social media accounts using an honest and educational approach into you're the Marketplace where your compelling and interesting app description seals the deal for you!

Let's break that process down a little:

At this point you will have followers on your social media platforms and website who listen to your advice and share your content. So on the day of your launch simply guide them through to the Marketplace where they can find your app.

You can blog about your app when it comes out as well. Post launch, you will be able to blog about stories of people using the app, FAQ's, etc. Post an awesome Facebook update that draws your users in to your landing page. GET CREATIVE!

App description

The description of your application is a massively important selling tool and if used wisely you will draw in the right kind of people that will love and appreciate your application, and in turn share the app with their friends.

Highlight all the key features and benefits in a way that speaks to your audience. Remember, mums of new born babies communicate differently to punk rockers looking for a Punk-Rock-Gig-Locator. My definition of marketing is to mark your target and hone in on them and no one else.

Targeted marketing = Effective

4. User Interface Design

Graphic design for Mobile App Development is not the same as designing a logo or a poster. In app development we call it User Interface design because the designer is doing so much more than just whipping up graphics. It's a process of testing the design and the screen flow to ensure that the functions that will be used the most are easy to access. It's about guiding the user through the processes. Making the experience intuitive is essential as people have a tendency to give up on apps very quickly if they can't figure them out.

Trends

Apps move in trends like seasons so it's important to make sure you stay up with the latest. Look at the popular apps like Facebook, Twitter, Angrybirds, etc. It's best to draw inspiration from an app that's popular within your category. For example, if you are developing a social media application then look at apps like Path, Instagram, etc.

We are seeing a trend moving towards depth in the design brought on with the use of clean cut graphics, sharp lines, smooth gradients, and bold primary colours that make for a really professional and user friendly look.

Buttons/Text/Graphics

If you are planning on international expansion it's important that all graphics, like buttons for example are made using icons with no writing. A camera icon can be used to represent the action of taking a photo, or an envelope icon to symbolise a messaging function.

This will reduce your workload when expanding internationally.



5. An APP Or A Business?

Before developing your mobile application you need to really think hard about what you're getting yourself into. Apps can be a lot of hard work and a lot of apps aren't just something you can stick on the app store then sit back and watch your money roll in. Some applications require a business to run the back end, sales, marketing, customer relations, etc. In these cases, the application is just a product and the business sells the product.

In this chapter, I want to explain the difference between an application and a business. I'll give you examples to help you clearly distinguish between the two.

An Application

Angry Birds is a perfect example of a self-sustained app. The game was released on The App Store and the guys directed a light marketing campaign (back in the early days) to drive downloads. The app took off and made \$10 million in its first year!

This is one of the only apps on the app store that in itself is just an application. Sure it's developed and driven quite actively by Rovio, which today is a lot more than just an app development company but the concept it-self is a standalone application.

A Business

A business like LinkedIn provide their service through a website as well as an online application that helps professionals from all various industries connect and 'link' up.

The back-end of apps like Linked in, Urban Spoon, Facebook, etc. is run by a business with staff ranging from customer service representatives and admin staff, to graphic designers and marketing experts, to development teams and management staff.

So how does this affect you?

Going back to the beginning, when developing your application, you need to have a firm grasp of the kind of work that might be necessary in the back end. Do you need to get out there and sell a product? Do you need to hire staff immediately? If so, will you need to get an office space?

There is a lot to consider and it's important to get this part right.



6. Monetising Your APP

Your app needs to make money, otherwise it simply becomes a very expensive and potentially time-consuming hobby... And I'm pretty sure you're reading this because you want more time.

There are 4 main ways to monetise your app:

- Pay Per Download
- Advertise
- Light & Full version
- Freemium

Each monetisation strategy suits a different type of application. The strategy you choose and how you implement it is going to have a major impact on whether your app is successful or not.

Pay Per Download

This is the simplest and most commonly used monetisation strategy where the user will simply download the application and pay through the app store. The app store collects a cut (normally 30%).

This has always been a popular way to monetise your application however it really depends on the model and sometimes a free demo (light & full version) wouldn't go astray as people are getting more and more sceptical.

Most paid apps range from \$0.99 – \$2.99 but can go up as high as the developer wants. Just be careful not to price yourself out of the market. \$0.99 is a pretty good price that you normally won't hear any complaints about. Unless of course the application offers no value at all, so the users complain that they had to pay for it at all. Fair point...

The best thing to do is to have a look at your nearest 5 competitors and price yourself accordingly.

Advertising

I'm talking about banner-ads. You know those really annoying banners advertising something you couldn't care less about, that sometimes appear at the top or the bottom of certain free apps?

You know the ones that you accidentally click that take you to some website that has nothing to do with what you were doing? Yeah those ones!

Banner ads can be really effective and I know plenty of people now who make a good living from using banner ads as their primary monetisation strategy.

Ads pay per impression and per click. The definition of an impression is when the ad is viewed in the app. A click is when the user taps the ad, be it accidental or not. This is how it's calculated:

\$X = impressions x 1000 | \$X = 1 x click | X-value is what you get paid and can vary.

You can source the ads from an agency like Admob (Google) or iAds (Apple) which is a free service. The best thing is that they do all the hard work. And just like the Pay Per Download model, they'll take a 30% cut.



Monetising Your APP contd

Light & Free Version

Historically the light version would be a dumbed down version of the complete app. Nowadays, it's normally the same application but with banner-ads. It's designed this way so that the developer makes money from the application whether the user pays for it or not. And the users get frustrated with the ads but love the value of the app so they have no choice but to pay for the full version to get rid of the ads!

Not a bad move right? Is that maybe why Angry Birds use this model in their games more than any other? *HINT*HINT*

In-App Purchases

If you liked the last three then this one is really gonna tickle your fancy!

In-App Purchases is where your users buy something within your application using real money! It's not a good model for selling your own product as the App Store will still collect 30% of everything you make. But that has never stopped anyone from selling virtual goods!

In an application, you can sell tokens, coins, pretend gold (whatever label you want to put on it), that the user pays for with real money through their account with the app store.

Slotomania is an app that lets users buy pretend money in a virtual casino. They would then sit on a virtual slot machine in their mobile phone and gamble this money away with the full understanding that once their money has been transacted into the app, there is no way they can EVER claim that money back. Even if they win!

And the crazy thing is that Slotomania sat as '#1' on the chart for the 'Top Grossing' apps on the Apple App Store for 6 months in a row! There is no argument that this app made several million dollars in that time.

In-App Purchases are widely used by the worlds most successful apps, including AngryBirds, TempleRun, SkiSafari, Dragon-Vale, 4-Pics-1-Word and make up for 78% of total app revenue in USA and 90% in Asia.

How does this affect your app?

Your selected monetisation strategy, or combination of strategies, has to be selected carefully. Because if implemented incorrectly it can really turn your users off. And the wrong monetisation model for the wrong kind of app is a recipe for disaster.



7. The Development Process

There is a different methodology (or process if you prefer) for all different types of software development.

The most successful development process used in Mobile App Development is the SCRUM methodology which is now used widely by most cutting-edge app development teams.

The SCRUM Method

SCRUM in simple terms is an iterative process where a developer put together a list of user-scenarios and map out the functionality of the app based on those scenarios.

The team go to work on the project and meet every day/week to discuss the progress so far.

Step 1: The Building Plan

The first step of any developing any application, custom made or not, is to get a clear plan of what you want the result to be.

The SCRUM methodology supports minor changes throughout development. So if you haven't got the perfect idea of your application teed up by this stage, don't worry, it's not the be-all and end-all.

Step 2: Graphic Design

This is where the screens are mapped up and designed to reflect the final product.

All graphics are designed and spliced into the code so it's important that the developer receives these files in the correct file formats (PSD, JPG, PNG, etc.), itemised – not as a whole screen. All elements have to be supplied individually.

Step 3: Development

This process can take anywhere from 3 weeks to 6 months depending on the size of the project.

The developer codes the application to a fully functional Beta version then at each milestone the app is tested and tried.

Step 4: QA & Final Testing

The application is put to final test to make sure it's robust. There are a number of different tests that the developer put the application through. The application doesn't proceed to the next step until it has passed each test.

Step 5: Launch

The application is submitted to the Marketplace. A lot of people get caught out at this point as the Marketplaces (certainly The App Store) don't make it an easy process. This could be an iterative process. If the app is rejected then the developers take the app back with any feedback and make adjustments. Then submit the app again.

Understanding your methodology and following a specific plan can mean the difference between a smooth ride to the app store, and an absolute bomb-mess on arrival.





8. Define Your Overall Strategy

In app development there are some advanced strategies that can be used to really maximise your success. It pays to define a strategy early on so that you're not left wondering what to do when the time comes.

The strategy you choose is going to depend on what your goal is, or as I've alluded to in this report, Your Desired Result.

Are you the kind of person who wants to develop a great big App Phenomena like Angry Birds, LinkedIn, WordsWithFriends, etc. In that case you may need to look at an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) approach, where you develop the bare minimum, test it on the market and invest more later when the app proves market viability.

If you simply want to build a strong passive income then all you need to do is develop a cluster of small apps and optimise your marketing approach to get a higher, more consistent return. The idea is to start making between \$50 - \$100 a day per app and when multiplied by 10 apps your income starts looking more like \$500 - \$1000 a day... Passive income.

Be clear on what you want, and then define your strategy to get there.



9. A.B.U - Always Be Upgrading

Upgrading your app is imperative to its success. Simply refining graphics, adding in-app purchases or inventing new ideas to improve the gameplay can go a long way in keeping users engaged.

It's the user engagement that drives traffic and the Marketplace will naturally rank your app as less important as other apps if you don't keep it regularly updated.

This is something you need to think about when engaging an app developer. Because it's much easier to use the same developer who developed your app upgrade it as well.

Developers don't like to meddle with each other's code because the only time they ever get to is when another developer didn't provide a good experience. And normally that's because the app wasn't coded well which means the app has bugs and other issues that need to be fixed.

Make sure that the team you end up working with is one that can handle your project.



10. Observe, Learn & Implement

I still come across people who want to get rich by developing mobile apps. And when I ask them what their favourite application is I normally get “Email” or “the Camera”...

If you want to develop a apps you need to have an in depth understanding of what makes a good application.

I’m not just talking about cool functions and features, I’m talking about the look and the feel, the monetisation strategies, the usability. Look at why you like certain apps and not others by comparing two apps that seemingly do the same thing.

If you want to create the New Facebook you first need to understand what makes Facebook so good. Why do people like Facebook so much? Why are we so addicted to it. Then you can start looking at whether or not you have the capability of overthrowing a super-power like Facebook...

Find a gap in the market. That’s how the best apps are created! The idea of Instagram came from Twitter. It’s a completely different company but they saw an opportunity to create a social media application dedicated to photo sharing. And last time I checked, they weren’t doing too badly either...

Observe, Learn and Implement.

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Buzinga Apps is a team of professional custom app developers with over 50 years of business and marketing experience working with people and organisations from all industries. We'll help you brainstorm your idea, design your killer graphics and guide you through launching and marketing your app.

Are you looking for advice and guidance through process of developing an app? Do you want to work alongside a dedicated team to create your perfect application? Then you're in the right position to work with us here at Buzinga.

Contact us today to book your FREE Strategy Session:

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