



MATCHMAKING APPS

DATING AND BEYOND

HOW TO MAKE A
MATCHMAKING APP
SUCCESSFUL



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INTRODUCTION

What is a matchmaking app? The first thing that comes to mind is most likely an app that's used to make a love match - like Tinder or Bumble - that aims to match you with a partner for life, or at least a coffee date. But let's consider matchmaking as a greater field than this.

Many of today's apps have a matchmaking element - where one group is seeking the other - like in ride-hailing or networking apps. Even a tourist looking for a taxi or a recent graduate looking for a job would use a matchmaking app. All humans seek to connect.

We at AGN know through experience that it's vital to market and optimize an app for the best quality and ratio of users. For example, this means having the right ratio of women and men for a dating app like Tinder. For a job search tool, the ratio of employers and job seekers is the most relevant. For a social networking app, the number of installs and engaged conversions that turn into conversations are what matter most.

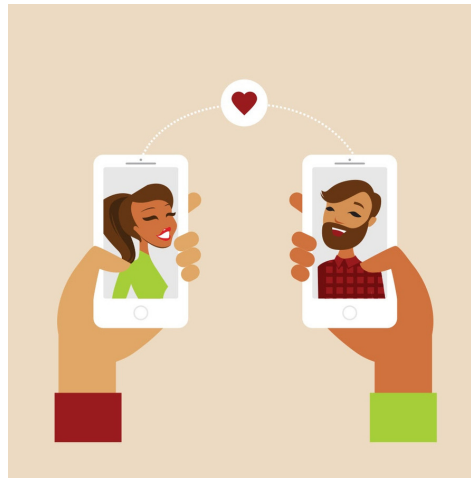




App marketers then need to understand their target audience and broad market effects. COVID-19 has further increased the propensity for people to use mobile apps to stay connected and feel well-matched. Once quarantine and social distancing prohibited physical interaction, this became more clear. After all, feeling connected - even if on a mental or emotional level - is a basic human need.

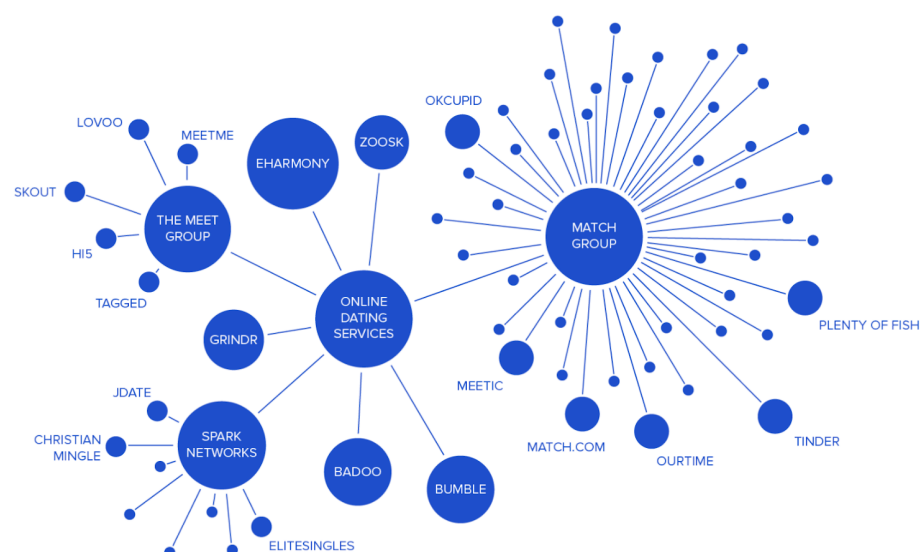
Entrepreneurs and marketers leverage this need to connect when creating and advertising new matchmaking apps. Even though the basic foundation seems simple, matchmaking can be a challenging process because humans base their connections on various criteria and prerequisites. In this e-book, we will discuss some challenges and accomplishments we faced when conducting product marketing for matchmaking apps in various categories.

CATEGORY #1: THE DATING GAME



It's safe to say that all the hype around dating apps is more than a passing fad. A report from late 2019 forecasts that the dating app market is expected to surpass the \$8.4 billion market cap by 2024. That's more than the GDP of countries like Barbados and Monaco!

Now that we've got your attention, let's dig a bit deeper. If you're about to launch a new dating app, it's essential to understand your position in the market and identify the features that will set your app apart. Remember that there are a lot of competitors and you'll need to have a "hook" that helps you reel in the right prospective users. Here's an overview of the biggest players in the game:



(Fortune)

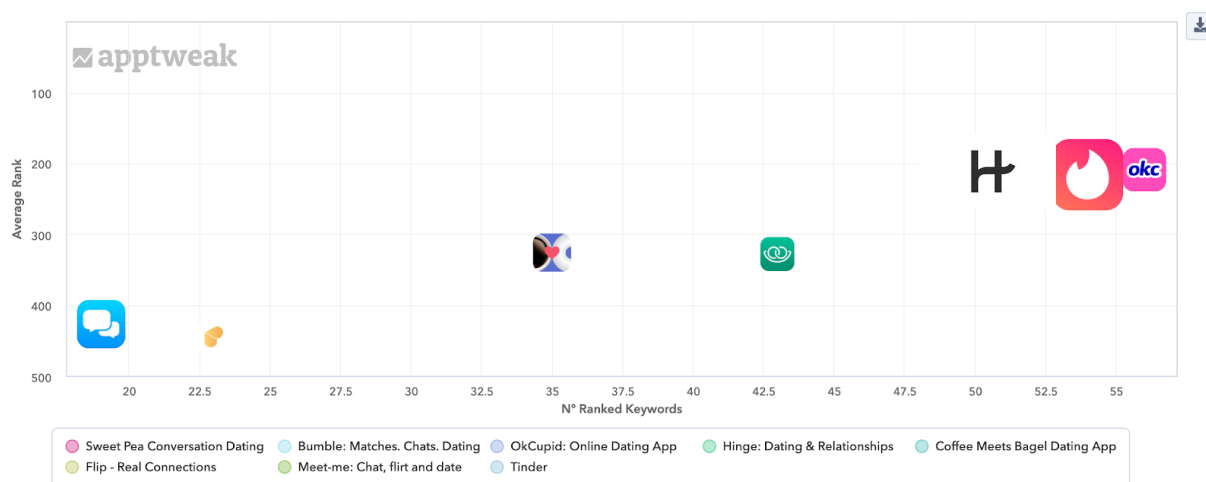
Another issue you shouldn't overlook in your preparation process is privacy and security, as over 61% of users are concerned about malware and leaked personal data.

Let's take a look at a real-life example by analyzing one of AGN's clients: a dating app called Sweet Pea. Sweet Pea focuses on conversation dating and lets the users add a wide variety of details to their profile. One of their engagement strategies is using ice-breaker questions to incentivize fun conversations.

We learned that it's essential that matchmaking apps have an excellent engagement strategy - in addition to quick and rapid growth - to attract as many users as possible. To do this, we conducted in-depth analytics of generic and competitor keywords for dating and identified the top 3 keywords to focus on in our business strategy.

Through thorough research, regular monitoring and tweaking, these ASO efforts generated great results. Sweet Pea - when talking about keyword positions - ranked higher than some key competitors like Coffee Meets Bagel.

Here's a graph below comparing it to some competitors:



CATEGORY #2: THE JOB HUNT



Despite the adverse effects of COVID-19, job seekers and employers are getting back out there - giving way for job search apps to surge in popularity.

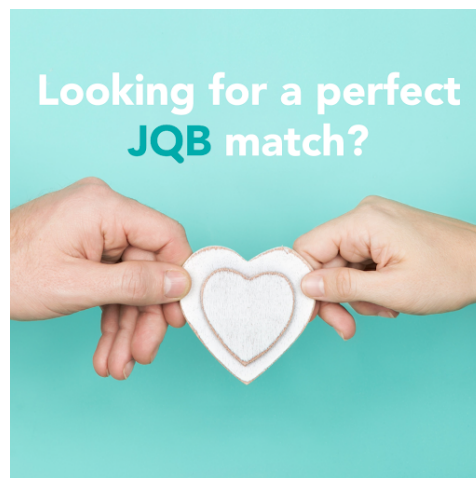
Most of the big players in the job searching and recruiting space have apps - like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Monster and Indeed. But if you do a quick “job search” search in the app store, you’ll see plenty of other apps in this category. As is the case with all others, this too is a competitive space.

AGN partnered with a new app that instantly matches employers and job seekers and allows them to communicate directly with one another via direct messaging. It facilitates a faster hiring process and a more convenient job search by letting users chat with employers from the palm of their hand.

To make a job search app successful, it's important to know the target's pain points and effectively communicate the app features that solve this problem. By conducting qualitative research interviews, AGN determined that a major challenge for job seekers is getting a quick response from hiring managers, while hiring managers struggle with finding quality job candidates on new platforms.

After more research, we also established that Facebook and Google were the best channels to attract the quality users that are needed for engagement and retention. The target included tech and white collar employees.

Knowing these two things - the right messaging and the right communication channels - we developed eye-catching creative that achieved positive results at favorable CPIs of \$4.40 (FB/IG) and as low as \$.90 (DSP).

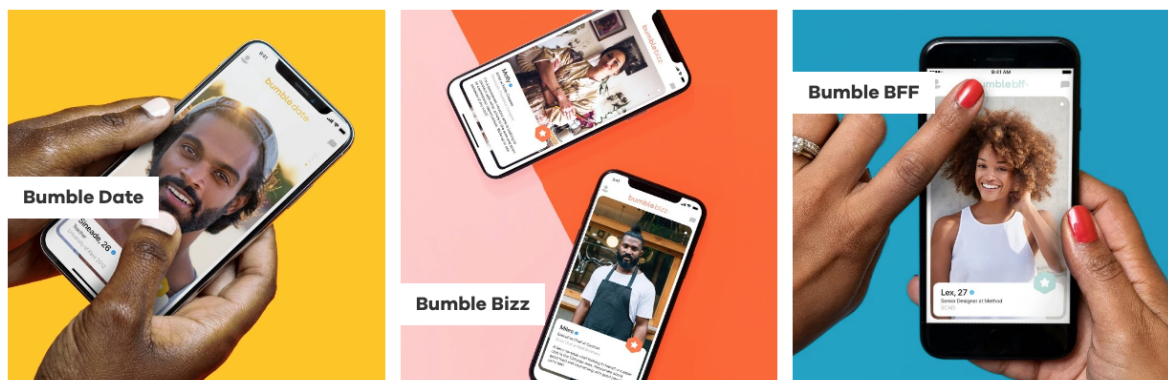


Just like for dating apps, job search apps need to find what makes the app unique compared to others in the category. By highlighting the specific features that address the target's pain points, you will create a more memorable, relevant connection quicker and better than your competition.

CATEGORY #3: THE NETWORKING GOAL

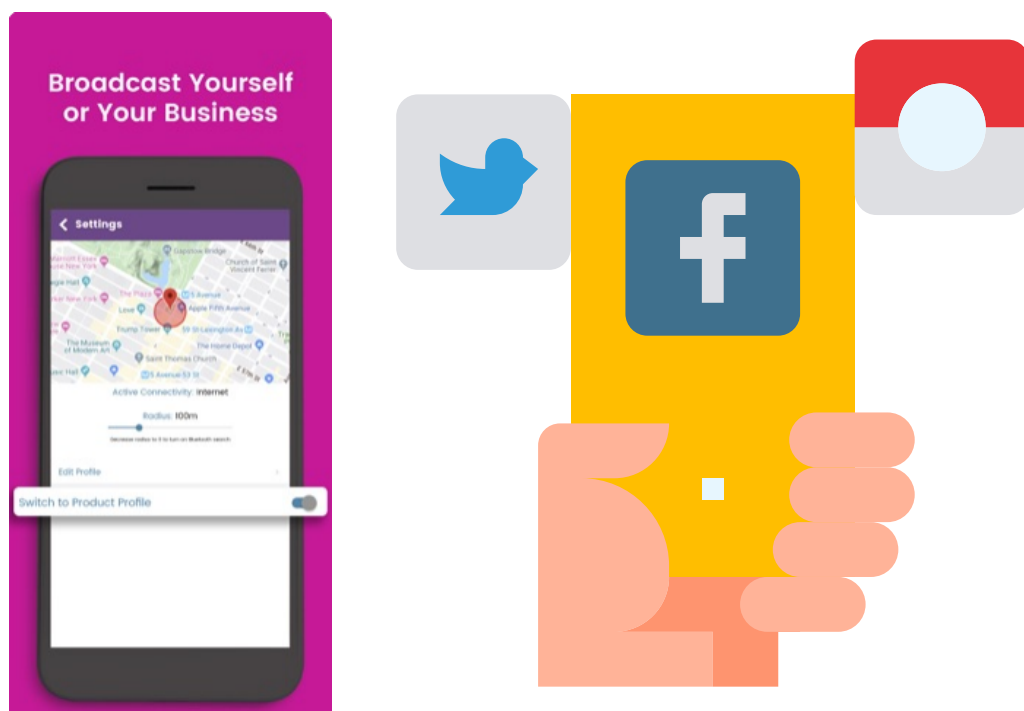
There are millions of individuals who “want to meet new people.” This is not limited to romantic relationships or finding that special someone to walk down the aisle with. Someone moving to a new city - single or married - wants to meet new friends. Or an eager entrepreneur wants to get more local business contacts for possible leads. These are all networking opportunities, and there are apps that facilitate these types of matches.

Bumble, best known as a romance/relationship matchmaking app, also includes a networking component. It gives users the option to use the app for finding a date (Bumble Date), finding a networking connection (Bumble Bizz) or finding a friend (Bumble BFF) - or a combination of all three.



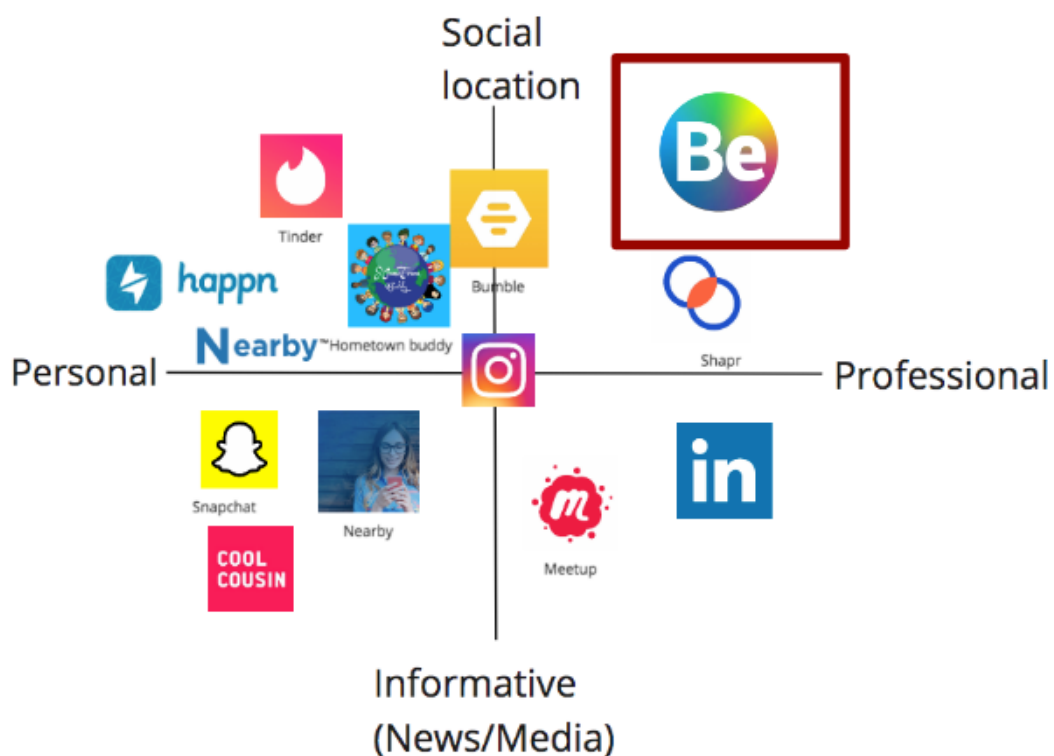
If you're looking to start an app that connects people one-on-one, beyond just dating, you'll need to highlight what sets you apart from one of the big guys, like Bumble.

For example, AGN conducted research for a new social networking app, BeApp, that shows users people of interest - whether for love, business or friendship. BeApp lets you “beam” your social media accounts to people in your vicinity.



This social media account-sharing component does a couple of things. One, you become discoverable by possible dates, friendships and can find new places when you visit a new area or want to expand your social circle. It also makes getting new followers easier and helps business networking by letting you share your business or services to get new customers.

After creating a positioning map based on the most current market research, we determined that new opportunities lay in two main areas: one, in targeting small business as a free/low-cost professional tool to market locally and, two, as a social tool to form small communities in cities to help the app grow organically.



We paired these findings to provide key ASO recommendations, which included targeting lower-volume keywords that showed potential - like “near me”, “people”, “accounts” and “broadcast” - growing them to increase appearance in search.

HOW DO I MARKET MY MATCHMAKING APP?

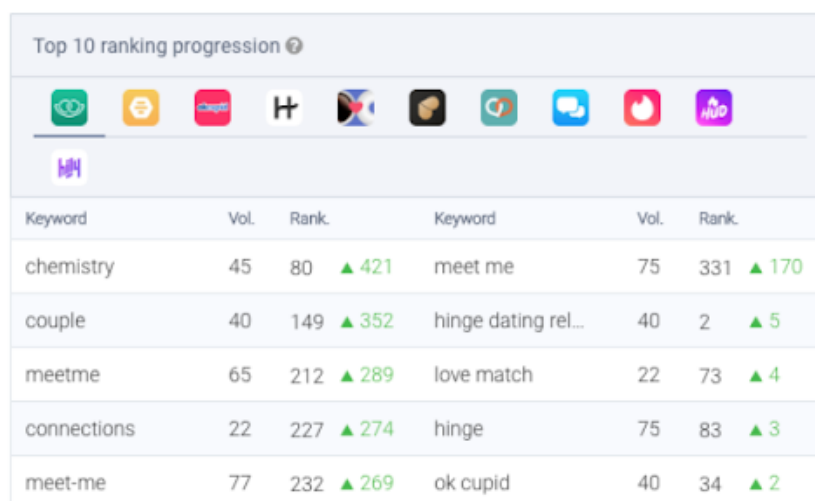
ASO

ASO is the face of your app in the app store. Just like you would judge a restaurant by its appearance when walking past it on the street, users judge your app while browsing for new apps. Needless to say, it has to be the best it can be.

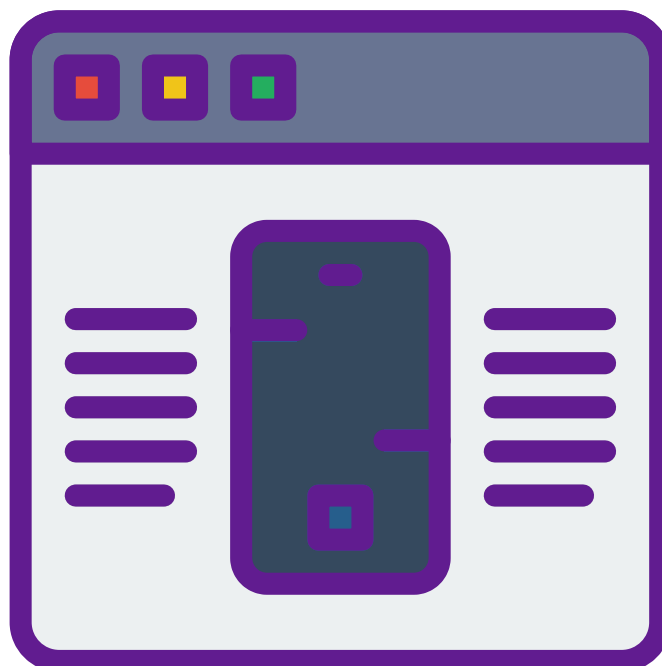
Keywords and Rankings

First, you want to research your potential keywords that relate to brand, industry or features. At AGN, we have a team that constantly monitors keyword ranking progressions using different tools like AppTweak and MobileAction. For example, we identified how dating apps rank for generic keywords like “chemistry” and “meet-me” that give you the most exposure to users. It is especially important to monitor for generic and branded keywords to identify new threats and opportunities.

Top 10 ranking progression ⓘ



Keyword	Vol.	Rank	Keyword	Vol.	Rank
chemistry	45	80 ▲421	meet me	75	331 ▲170
couple	40	149 ▲352	hinge dating rel...	40	2 ▲5
meetme	65	212 ▲289	love match	22	73 ▲4
connections	22	227 ▲274	hinge	75	83 ▲3
meet-me	77	232 ▲269	ok cupid	40	34 ▲2



App Name, Title and Descriptions

At AGN, we suggest adding one or two keywords in your app's name because it affects the store algorithm. Also, by including highly searched keywords in the name, people are more likely to guess what your app is about for a faster hook. If you don't like it, or it's not working the way you had hoped, you can always change the title to something more effective. Also, don't forget to include these keywords in the app's description - while many people skip reading the description, the algorithm does not.

Icons and Screenshots

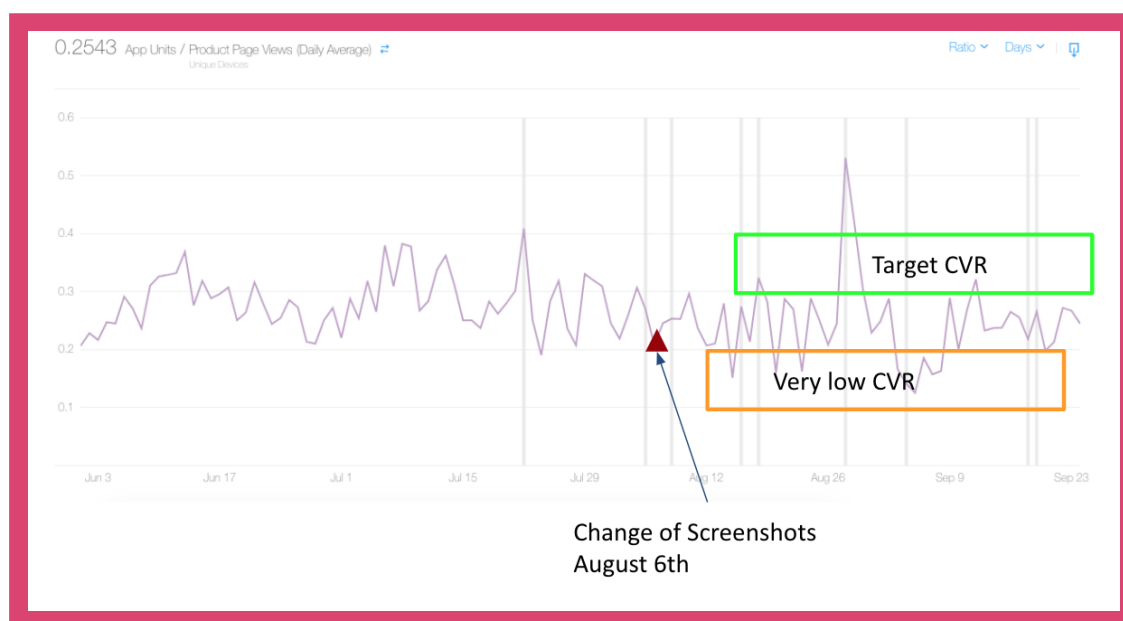
Other key areas of ASO are your app icon and screenshots. Once a user taps on your app to view the store listing, most likely they will use the screenshots to figure out what your app is about and how it functions. Research your competitors to see what works for them, adjust for your app, include calls to action, and, of course, A/B test for best results!

For example, A/B testing screenshots proved that it can make as much as 30% difference in conversion. We conducted an A/B screenshot test with one version that included people with a white background and another version with a dark background and no people. The screenshots with people had an average daily conversion rate of 68.2%, while the variant without people on a dark background only had a conversion rate of 47.2%.



Please note that you need at least 2 weeks to analyze the changes in the conversion rate on the app store. Then, you can tell if you have a conversion rate that is lower or closer to your target conversion rate on the app store (see below).

We have also conducted creative screenshot testing with Apple Search Ads. We released colorful screenshots that looked great to the team and client. However, ASA testing helped to determine that the original screenshots had a much better conversion rate.



Localization

It's also important to plan for expansion to other countries. As you move into app stores around the world, you'll need to quickly adapt your app's language to that of the region. Remember that localization is not the same as simply translating your app's text. It requires understanding of the local culture and how they will perceive the app. A bad localization in a new market can be a deal breaker for future success. We often work with apps to localize them for Mexico and European app markets.

Reviews and Ratings

Reviews and ratings also tell users what to think of the app even before they download it, so keeping those positive helps a lot. However, this can be challenging if you have a dating app. Matchmaking apps serve a more personal and perhaps sensitive function, and users expect great service and privacy. So if their standards aren't met, they will express that in your reviews. Most matchmaking apps have largely negative reviews, even if they have decent ratings of 4+ stars. There are only a few apps that manage to keep their reviews positive.



User Acquisition

Target Audience


Identify a problem you would like to solve and figure out who encounters this problem regularly. This is your target audience, which you can also break down into more detailed personas. Starting with good market research and discussing the marketing strategy within teams is very important for this stage.



For example, when looking at the dating game, some reports suggest that 61% are male and 39% female. Looking deeper, you'll also find that 85% of online daters are under the age of 34. And if you're an app like Bumble, where only women can initiate a conversation, you would focus on attracting the 39% of women to your app. These will be your quality users, who will bring in more male users organically.

If you're a job search app, your task is to attract both the eager job seekers and busy hiring managers. And if you are a social app, your goal is to find ideal locations to target and scale the campaigns.

Target Personas

 <p>Anna Instagram Influencer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 years old • From Toronto, but frequently travels around the globe • Lifestyle and travel social media guru • Uses 50+ social media and photos editing apps • Looking to grow her social media following and outreach 	 <p>Ben UX design professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 years old • Based in Vancouver, BC Young IT professional • Uses LinkedIn, Meetup, Shapr, Eventbrite • Looking to network and connect with people nearby at professional events 	 <p>Charles Coffee shop owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 years old • Owns a coffee shop in Gastown, Vancouver • Looking to connect with his coffee shop visitors and check the traffic • Happy to share the magic wifi password access with coffee shop visitors
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Identifying certain personas to target is essential because this will influence your decision on which advertising network to pick. Facebook may be better for an older population while TikTok will attract lots of young people to your app. Choose wisely!



User Experience

A good user experience should be the priority for all apps. It's important to check every step in the user's interaction with the app from the signup process to activities and settings that the user sets. One way to improve UX is by having an effective onboarding tutorial that clarifies the key app value proposition and the problem it's solving. Another way to increase engagement is to have good push notifications. At AGN, we help with analyzing the full product marketing life cycle. We also track events when focusing on the quality of users rather than quantity.

Marketing Channels

When the product is ready for launch, it's time to consider marketing with the the major channels. We tested the following channels with one of our clients:

- Google
- Facebook/Instagram
- Apple Search Ads
- Reddit
- Display Network
- LinkedIN



For this client, Google UAC and Facebook/Instagram were among the channels tested, and the main difference we found was the type of content that was preferred in each. UAC was most effective with converting users using video ads played on YouTube, which reached a varied but targeted audience. For Facebook and Instagram, static images, GIFs or a carousel-style set of creatives worked best.

Google's UAC and MiniMob DSP were great for our budget as they brought greater volumes at a low CPI. On the other hand, Facebook's network brought in more engaged, quality leads. Balancing these two with other channels gave us the best opportunity for a boost in the App Store and Google Play.

To optimize the client's campaigns, we took the following steps:

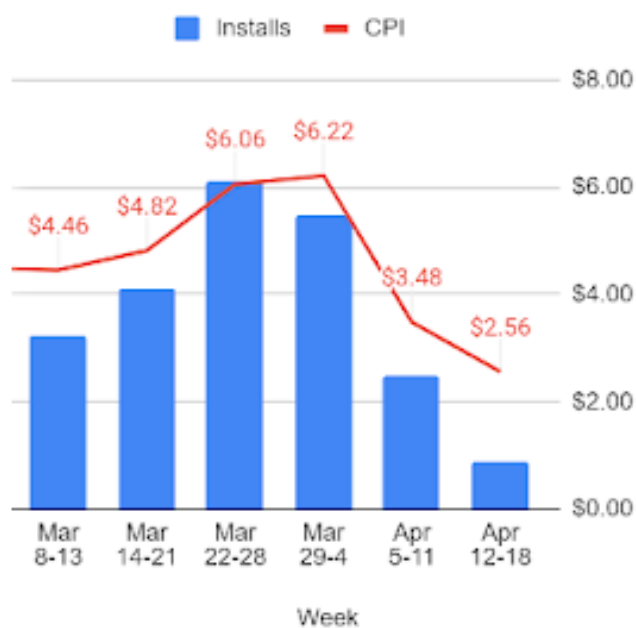
- Fixed the Audience overlap for FB
- Rewrote all ad copy
- Created new graphics for the banner ads
- Worked with Google to mark certain keywords as negative in their backend
- Rewrote the App meta for Android to attract the right audience, since UAC has no audience option and highly relies on meta
- Daily monitoring of the campaigns and biweekly bid optimizations as needed, CPI vs. CP in-app actions



UAC CPI Mar-April 2020



FB ads CPI Mar-April 2020



As a result, our team was able to gain a healthy and steady 20% month-over-month CPI reduction on UAC along with a 50% CPI reduction for Facebook. Running great marketing campaigns is an art in itself.

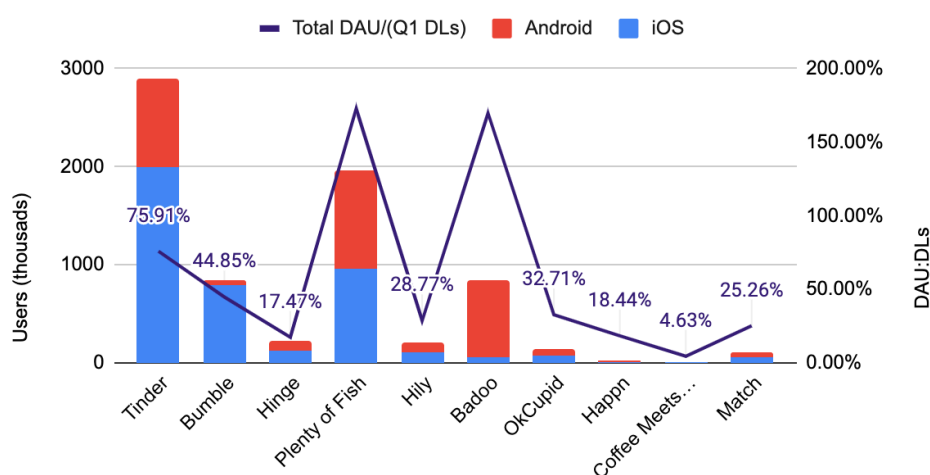
Retention

Let's take another look at which apps are the most popular in the dating genre, and which have the most daily active users. The graph below shows the values for the first quarter of 2020 with this ratio. Dividing daily active users by the total downloads in the same time period gives us an idea of how many users actually use the app compared to the number of people who install the app.

For example, PoF and Badoo have more daily active users than they did downloads in the past quarter. This can mean that their growth either slowed or that they are focusing more on retention, not just install volume.

Daily Active Users

Higher DAU:DLs ratio is better



Monetization

Even before you have your app, it's important to select and plan out your monetization strategy or business plan to make sure your investments pay off in the future. Similar to a lot of apps out there, the monetization strategies common in the matchmaking apps fall under four categories:

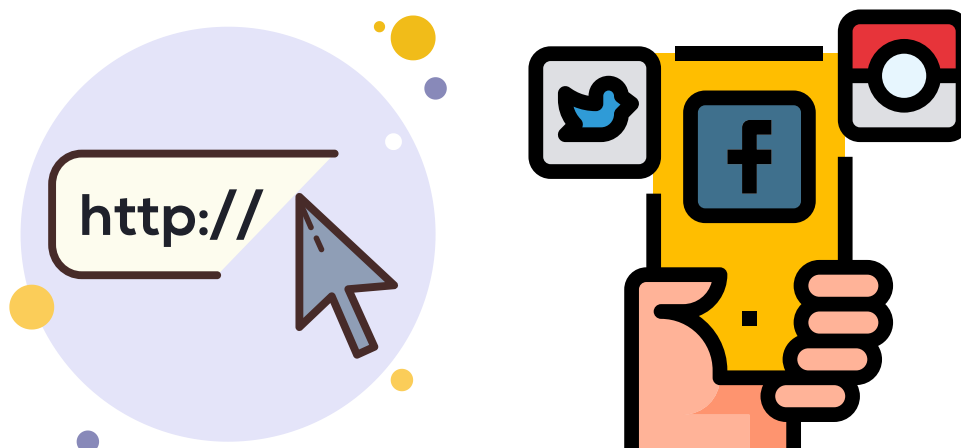
- Subscription
- Freemium
- Partnerships
- Ad Revenue



Advertising within apps is also sometimes considered but is not as popular as the above-mentioned strategies.

Web & Social Media Presence

This is all about having a great presentation and creating a feedback loop with your users. After all, they have the most insights into your app



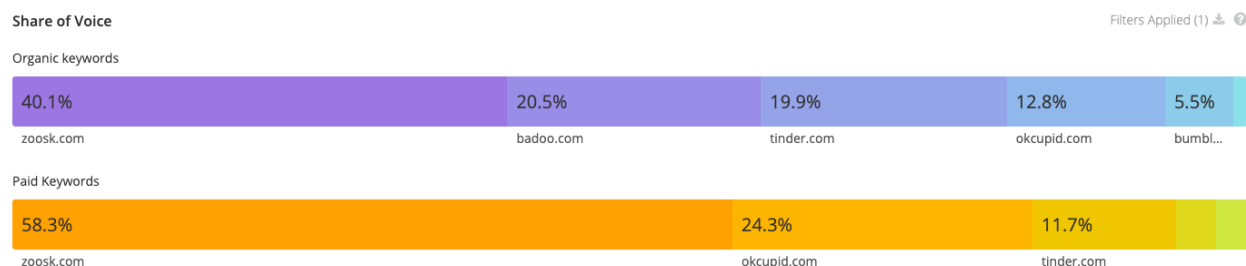
Landing page

We focus a lot on ASO, but having a web presence is just as important, and having a great landing page that converts is essential. It's possible that you will still get most of your users through the app store or some ad channels. But if you have a great landing page that conveys to users the key features of your app, they're more likely to download it. And in 2020, when you can make a website for free through various platforms, users expect to see a website that instills trust in your product.

Blog

This useful tool can often be overlooked, but there are many benefits to running a consistent blog alongside your app. For one, all of your content, keywords, and news will be on the internet - accessible for anyone to find - adding to your SEO and general visibility. You will also build up a huge catalog of knowledge that you can reuse for other side projects, newsletters and user engagement.

Share of voice for web based keywords:



Share user-generated content

User-generated content is an effective way to share your message in a manner that your audience will see as authentic. Because of this authenticity, user-generated videos on YouTube get 10x more views than branded content, and 45% of people will unfollow a brand if they do too much self-promotion.



Though most matchmaking apps have different targets, they share many important marketing mechanisms in common. The basic goal of matchmaking apps is to replicate human connection in the digital world. Through good ASO, UX, and advertising, we can identify best practices for launching and growing a matchmaking app.

Elements of the app's presence play an important role - from title to screenshots. Then, it's necessary to identify the target audience that will help ensure the quality and ratio of matchmaking targets, such as with job seekers and employers. Next, focusing on user acquisition platforms - like Google and Facebook - helps find new users to try out the app, as well as attribution trackers that help to check the source and quality of new users. This is further supplemented by analysis of the UX and retention funnel.

The human tendency to connect and match in the digital world is only going to increase in the upcoming years. Due to COVID-19, the world was forced to turn to digital to connect online - whether for finding work, love, or just forming a meaningful social connection.

<https://www.mobindustry.net/top-10-dating-apps-in-2020/>

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-dating-apps-market-is-expected-to-surpass--8-4-billion-by-2024--300967392.html>

<https://appgrowthnetwork.com/case-studies/business-app-client-case-study/>

Ebook Contributors



Jennifer Sansone

Content Marketing
Manager



Natalia Becker

North America
Digital Account
Manager



Aleksei Fekliksov

Data Scientist



Jennifer Graham

Creative Campaign
Manager



Fouad Saeidi

CEO & Founder