How to
GROW YOUR MOBILE APP

Master user acquisition, activation, and retention plus tips for measuring and monetizing your app

1. INTRODUCTION

1.Introduction

First, let us start with a hearty "Welcome!" to AGN's "How to Grow Your App" ebook. If you're here to read our expert tips on how to grow your app, this means that you have either launched your app or plan to do so very soon, and we know how much hard work that requires, so we applaud you!

Now, if you've read our first ebook, "How to Launch an App," (and you if haven't, we highly suggest you do!) you've already gone through the essential steps of the app development and launch phase.

So, now what? You need to grow!

And that's what we'll cover in this app growth ebook. Our approach is based on the Customer Lifecycle "5 steps to success" AARRR framework:

1. Acquisition - acquire users from various channels
2. Activation - create a "happy" user exprience
3. Retention - keep your user long term
4. Referral - ensure users like your app so much that they refer others
5. Revenue - monetize your app
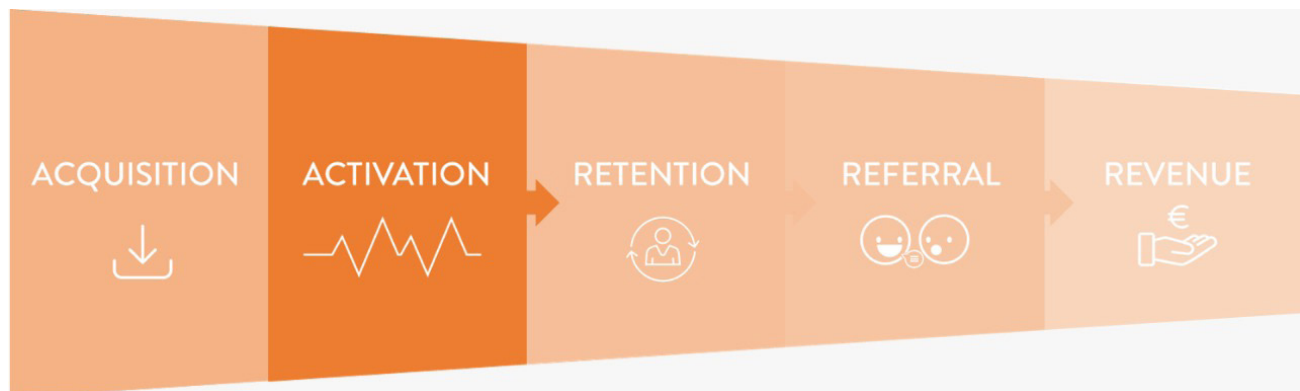
Here you'll find how these 5 steps relate to the app growth phase and will include industry tips, tricks, best practices and how-to's to help guide you to success.

To add more insights to this book we have also got to sections from mobile app platforms - Mobile Action, Apptweak, Adjust and mobile industry experts.

As you can see, we have a lot of important information to cover. So, let's get to it!

2.User Acquisition

There are various user acquisition channels to acquire app users based on your app's category and your target audience. In this section, we will cover the most widely used channels:

1. Paid Channels
    a. Facebook Ads
    b. Apple Search Ads (ASA)
2. Organic Channels
    a. App Store Optimisation (ASO)
    b. Content Marketing
    c. Social Media

Facebook Ads

Facebook ads are a great way to acquire users in large volumes at an optimal cost. We will share with you a step-by-step approach to how to build effective Facebook ads. Targeting the right audience and being creative with your ads and campaigns are the key to success.

Creative Brainstorming

1. Build your user persona

The very first thing that needs to be done is to identify three target markets. There is usually one primary market and two secondary markets. You want to build personas for your target markets that go beyond just identifying gender and age range. How do you build personas?

- Give your persona a specific name: Mia the Moving Millennial

- Then identify characteristics Mia may have: Where does she go to coege? How old is she? Is she single? What are her favorite shows? Does she have any pets?

- Provide info based on general information that's relevant to your persona's target market range. For example, Mia likes to recycle just like 60% of her friends between the ages of 25-33.

2. Create your concept idea/theme based on each persona

Brainstorm 4-5 concept ideas/themes for ads that target each of the 3 different audiences. One way to start this process is to focus on the three personas created and evaluate what values the persona/target group have in common. For example, many millennials are environmentally conscious; so, one theme for your ads can be recycling and being green. After identifying 4-5 themes, discuss with your team to select 2 or 3 themes that best suit your target audience and the product you're trying to promote.

3. Create campaigns and ads

These 2-3 themes will become your campaigns. Create around 10 ads for each campaign. The ads should be aesthetically pleasing - make sure there's a consistent color scheme and that the images used for the ads are high quality and non-generic. If you choose to include text in your image, make sure that the text doesn't overwhelm the image and vice versa. Facebook will also notify you once you've uploaded your image into Facebook ads if your creatives have too much text. Lastly, your company logo should be clearly visible on all your creatives.

4. A/B test your ads

Oftentimes, it's the small details that make the biggest difference. When you are uploading your creatives, try to create a call to action that's embedded in the creative. You can also test by running the same creative with a different background color or a different description. After allowing Facebook to run your ads for a day or two, you'll be able to clearly distinguish which ads are the winners of the group. From there on, you can pause the ads that did not perform as well and focus on the best performing ads.

Once you've established your audience and decided on the ads creative, the next part is to set up campaigns by following the steps outlined in the Facebook dashboard.

Here are a few tips for Facebook campaign setup based on our experience:

1. Check audience overlap

    When building your campaigns, Facebook will ask you to select an audience. We recommend building two different audiences - that way you can know which audience performs better. But, it's important not to have overlaps within your audience. Audience overlap can cause cannibalization and increase your user acquisition cost. Cannibalization within Facebook is when Facebook bids one of your audiences against the other. This results in expensive and ineffective installs and results.

    So, how do you check audience overlap? First, you must build your audiences. Next, go to "Business Manager" and select "Audience". After, you will be led to a page that looks like this:
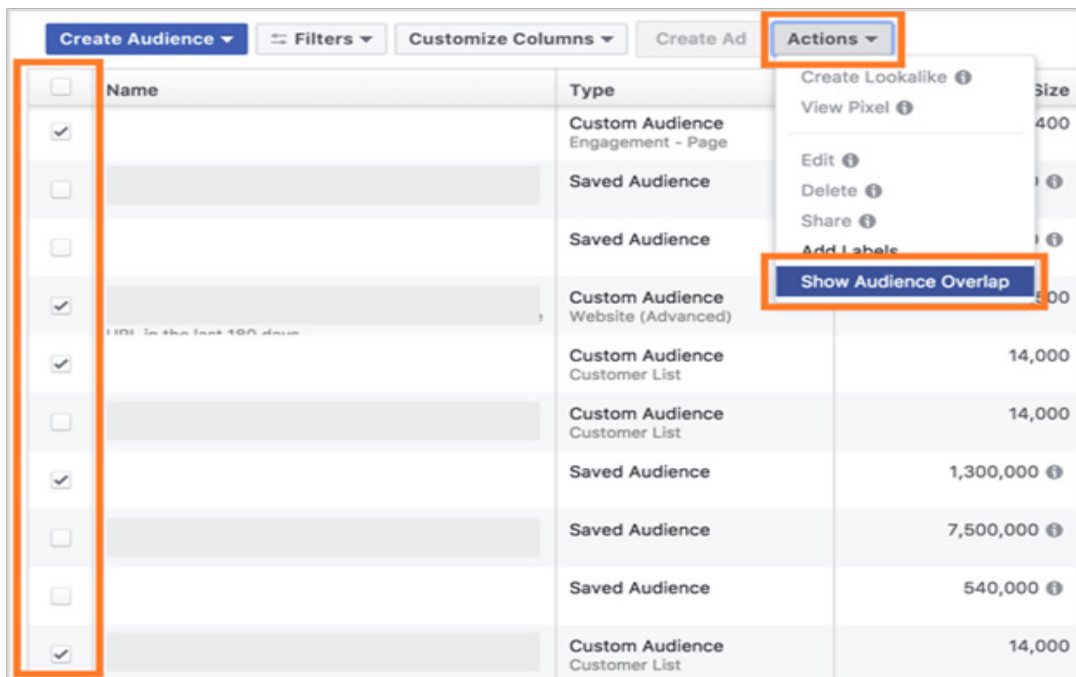
From here on, click on the little square box next to your audience name and go to the three dots on the top left side of your screen (image). Click on the three dots and a drop down box will have the option "Show Audience Overlaps." With this, you will be able to see how much overlap your two audiences have and adjust accordingly.

| Comparison Audiences		Overlap	% Overlap of Selected Audience	
My Other Audience 155,000,000 people		1,500,000 people	75%	›

2. Budget your test campaigns

Before you launch your campaign, you must budget your tests so that your cost doesn't go through the roof. We recommend just testing your campaign with $10 to start. You can invest more later once you've identified a few clear winners.

3. Creative upload

A tip for successful Facebook ad launch is to upload your creatives onto the Facebook text tool before creating an actual campaign. This way, you can check if your ad will be approved ahead of time and not waste any resources going back to fix your ads after already creating and launching a campaign. To access the Facebook text tool, go to: https://www.facebook.com/ads/tools/text_overlay.

Ongoing Optimization

It's important to give the Facebook algorithm enough time to learn. To do this, start with automatic placement for your ads and let Facebook tell you what's working best. Automatic Placement allows Facebook to place your ads in locations it thinks will yield the greatest results. Through data compilation and analysis, Facebook will learn within a week where to best place your ads and you will be able to see a clear picture of each
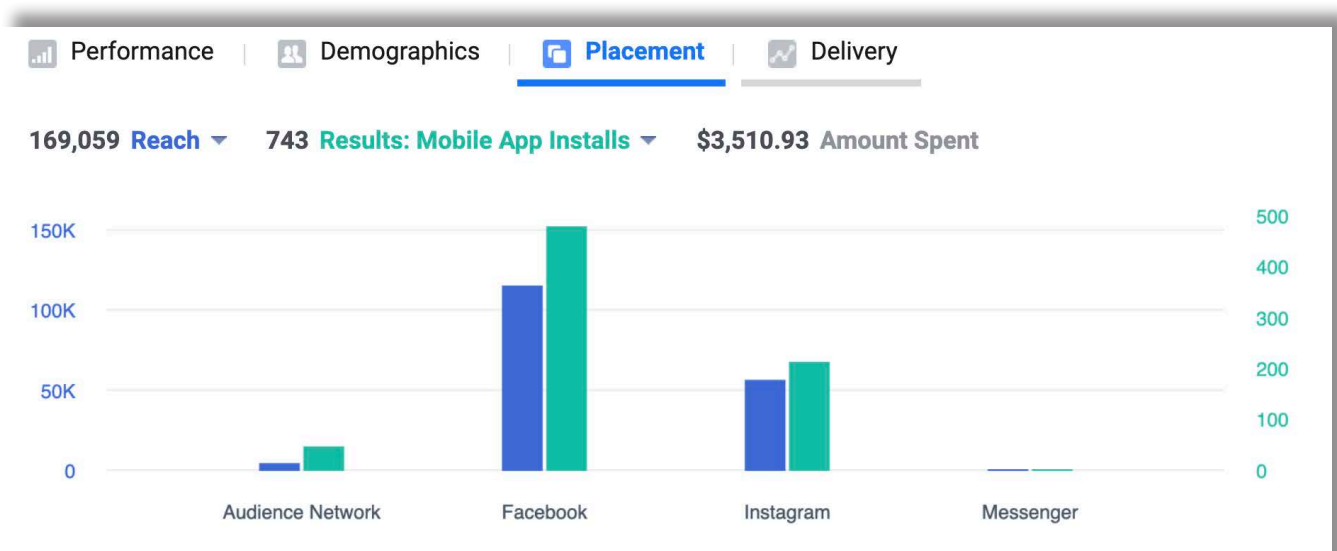
Apple Search Ads (ASA)

Apple launched Apple Search Ads as a marketing channel in 2016. Since then, they have been constantly growing. As of 2019, Apple Search Ads allows you to advertise your app in 59 countries. (https://searchads.apple.com/counries-and-regions/).
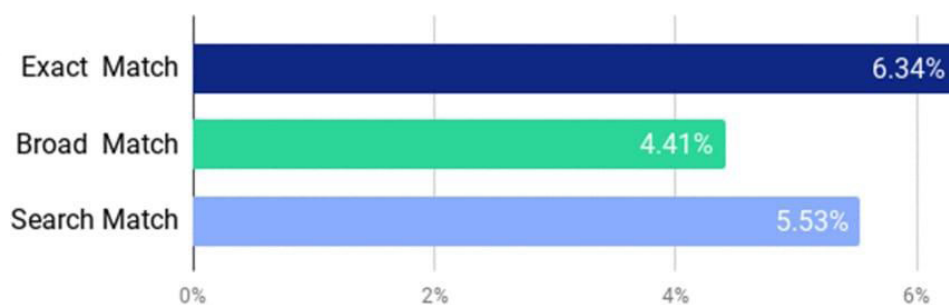
Apple Search Ads is a keyword-based channel that allows you to bid and show your app's ad for keywords that are relevant to your app. Since Apple Search Ads are always shown as the number 1 spot at the top of search results, your app will appear first when people search for those keywords in the App Store.

Importance of Apple Search Ads

1. Better Tap-Through Rate

ASA has a better Tap-Through Rate (TTR) and conversion rate than other channels. TTR is a good indicator of how relevant your app is to potential users searching for those terms. This is considered the very first step in improving your ad relevance and increasing downloads. When evaluating the TTR, make sure to check the benchmarks per category. TTR - as well as conversion rates - differ per app vertical and are a good starting point for measuring the performance of your keywords. Apple Search Ads are a great way to help you manage and analyze your TTR's movements.

Tap-through Rate (TTR) by match type

Exact Match — 6.34%
Broad Match — 4.41%
Search Match — 5.53%

SearchAdsHQ

MANAGE, OPTIMIZE & AUTOMATE APPLE SEARCH ADS
Based on 422M+ Impressions, 25M+ Taps, 12M Downloads, 1M Keywords

2. Brand Protection

Apple Search Ads can serve as brand protection for your app or game. Bid generously on your branded keywords to ensure that your competitors are not taking this valuable space from you. Running branded campaigns also increases your chance of being found by visitors who specifically search for your app name even if your app isn't ranked at the top..

3. Higher App Store Ranking

Obtaining a high App Store ranking is crucial and Apple Search Ads will support you in doing so. 65% of mobile downloads are sourced from a search on the iOS store and only a certain number of those are using Apple Search Ads as their mobile marketing strategy. Apple Search Ads help contribute to your brand authority, which supports an improvement of organic performance and ranking.

4. Lower Acquisition Cost

Apple automatically places ads with higher rankings and better conversion rates on the top of the search page. These factors of Apple Search Ads will lead to more organic results and - if your app is of high quality - better ratings and a higher number of downloads. Once you've reached over a 4-star rating, you can submit a request to be featured by Apple, which will further boost your downloads and decrease your cost. By using these tactics - boosting organic downloads and decreasing your acquisition cost - you minimize your need to purchase downloads.

Campaign Setup & Structure

1. Campaign Structure

When creating an account for keyword bidding, we suggest separating your keywords as an exact match into four campaigns: Brand, Generic, Competitor, and Discovery.
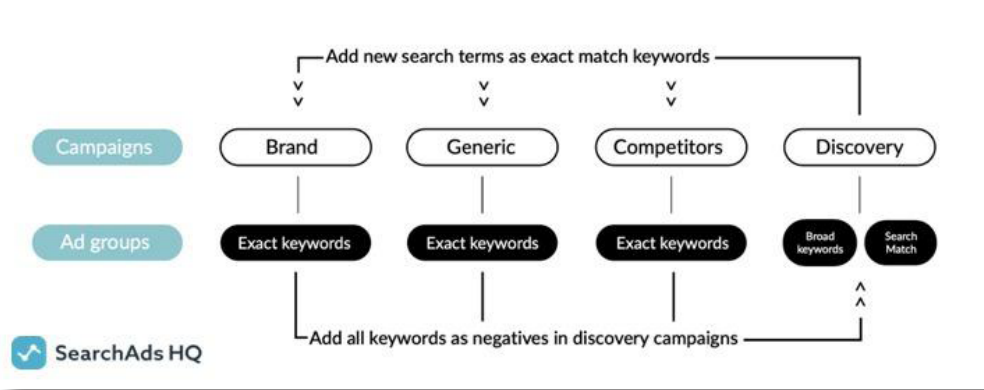
- **Brand keywords** are keywords that are related to your brand name. For example, any variations of your company name.
- **Generic keywords** are keywords related to your app. For example, if you have an app about the news, you should include keywords like "newspaper" or "daily news" in this campaign.
- **Competitor keywords** include the names or variations of the names of your direct competition.
- **Discovery campaigns** are used to find alternative keywords not included in the keywords you have already inputted into the other campaigns. To avoid ranking for the keywords you've already included in the campaigns above (remember you want to use this campaign to find new keywords), insert all your keywords from brand, competitor, generic campaigns as an exact match negative keywords. However, to find close alternatives to relevant keywords, add all of those keywords as a broad match into one ad group. After this is set up, turn on the search match for this campaign. That will help you localize search terms for which your app is relevant.

When setting Generic, Competitor, and Brand keywords, make sure that all your keywords are exact and the search match is off.

2. Ad Group Structure

After you set up your campaigns with at least 1 ad group, you can create more ad groups where you'll target people based on age, location, or device. Then, you can create different keyword bidding strategies based on your prioritization.

Campaign Optimization

1. Metrics for Optimization

The Tap-Through Rate (TTR), Conversation Ratio (CVR), Cost per Action (CPA), and Return on Advertisement Spending (ROAS) are all metrics to be aware of when optimizing Apple Search Ads campaigns.

Flo's Search Traffic
US storefront
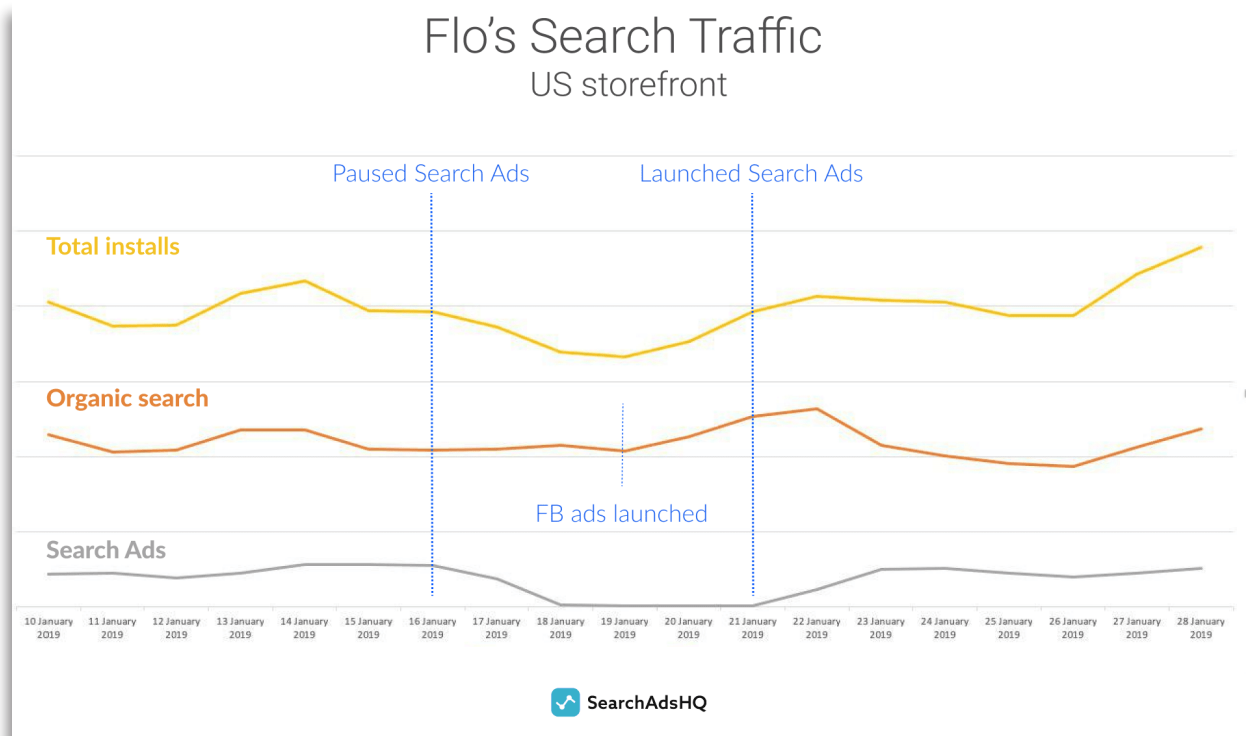
The best way to ensure that you are on top of your game when it comes to these metrics is to research your competitor's metrics. Once you know what the industry average for each measurement is, you can set your own benchmarks and manage your ads from there. If a ratio is too high or too low, explore possible reasons including: the screenshots are not favorable enough to the audience or your keywords are poorly managed (not accurate enough, bidding too low).

2. Managing Keyword Bids

To manage your keywords, set a budget that you don't want to exceed. Monitor the keywords carefully. Apple Search Ads will also tell you the strength and range of your bidding both numerically and visually with a color bar next to each keyword. Once the cost of a keyword goes beyond your limit, decrease the bids or stop bidding on that keyword completely.
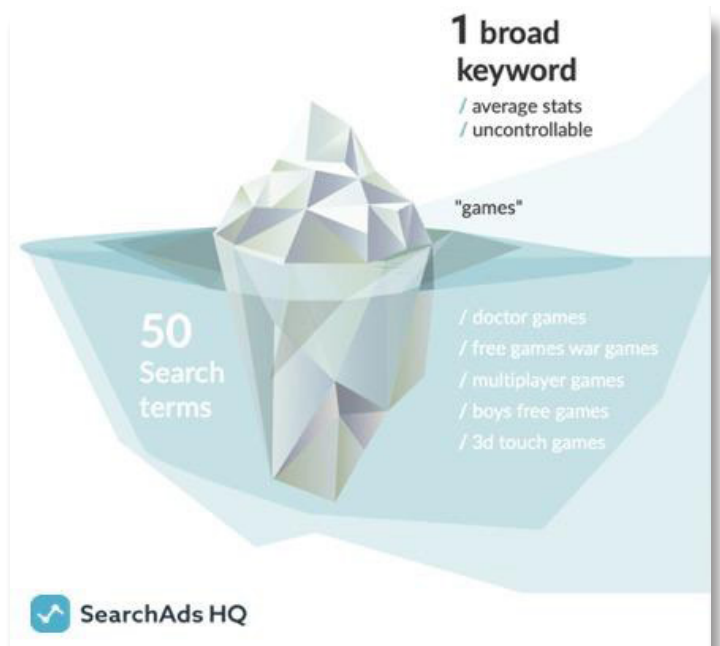
3. Managing Discovery Keywords

Analyze Discovery keywords every 14 days to explore new relevant keywords. After evaluation, place any words from search terms (that have enough volume) into particular campaigns and also allocate to your negative keyword list as needed. The negative keyword list will prevent your app from showing up for irrelevant terms.

Automation

When your campaigns get bigger, automation is inevitable. It is a crucial part of a long-term and cost-efficient ad operation. At App Growth Network we use automation to optimize your campaigns at scale. Based on your goals, various automation rules can be applied - like if a keyword is more expensive than X dollars, decrease the bids for that keyword. If CTR is lower than X% after X days, increase the bids by 10% keywords. This will save you both cost and time.

1 broad keyword
/ average stats
/ uncontrollable

"games"

50 Search terms
/ doctor games
/ free games war games
/ multiplayer games
/ boys free games
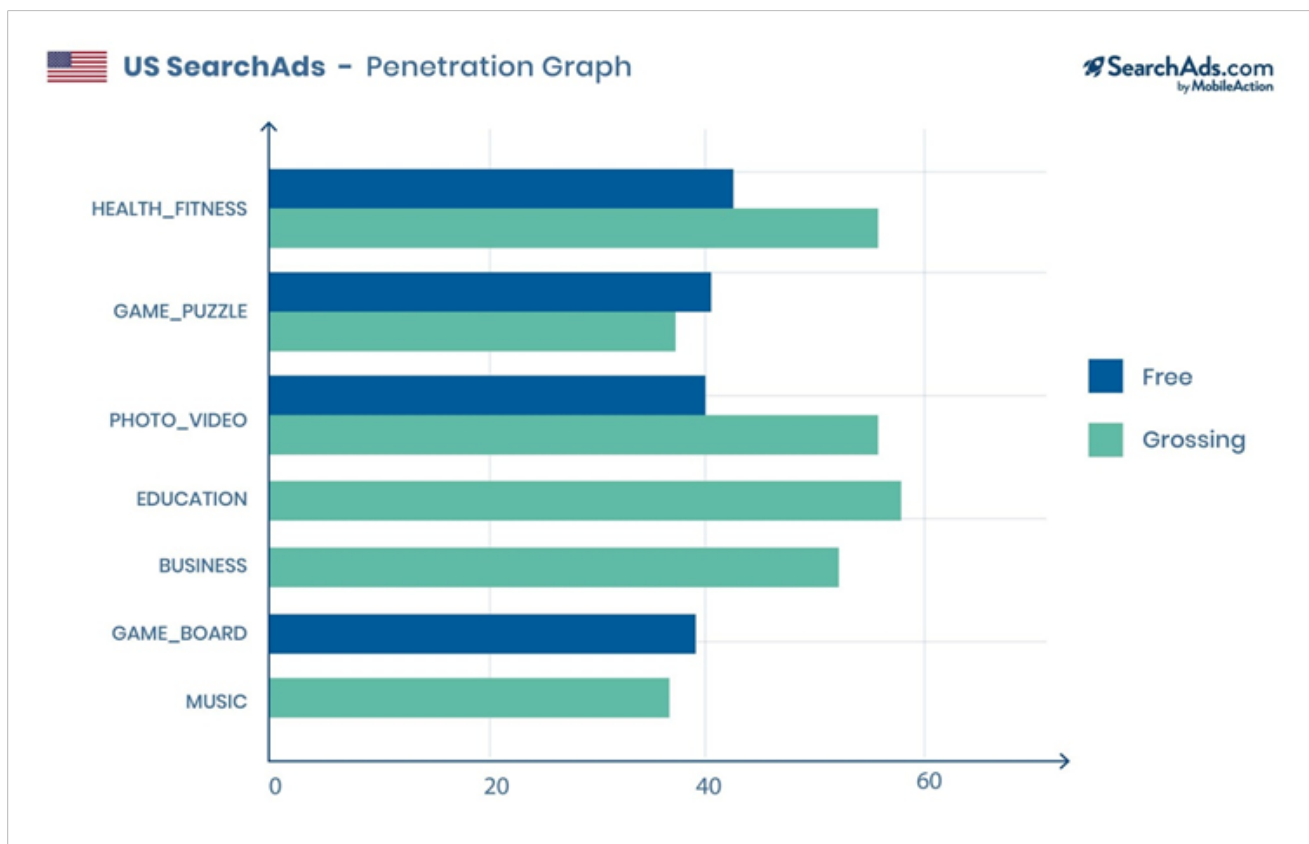/ 3d touch games

SearchAds HQ

App Store Optimization (ASO)

App Store Optimization is the process by which you set up your mobile app for success; through metadata changes, targeted app campaigns and more.

Here is a summary of tips that experts suggest for ASO:

- Focus not only on metadata but on specific display features of your app – ASO depends on it
- Consider iOS and Android differently
- Automate your ASO
- Go global & localize: leverage India, Russia, Brazil & China
- Backlinks: stick to quality, consider cross devices
- Get featured within the App Store/Google Play
- Test, test, test!

How To Improve ASO: Top 5 Factors Affecting ASO by Mobile Action

According to Apple, 65% of downloads come from search queries, which makes search a crucial channel for conversion. This means that increasing an app's visibility by ranking higher in search results is a must for every app publisher. Now, you might wonder whether to focus on organic growth or take the shortcut and pay Apple to increase your visibility. Well... without a doubt, Apple Search Ads is growing very rapidly, and investing in ASA is absolutely necessary for an app to rank in the Top Charts. According to data of SearchAds.com, an integrated ASA campaign management and optimization tool powered by MobileAction, over 50% of apps in the Top Charts in Education, Photo & Video, and Health & Fitness categories in US market use ASA to increase their visibility.

US SearchAds – Penetration Graph

🚀 **SearchAds.com**
by MobileAction

Legend:
- **Free** (dark blue)
- **Grossing** (teal)

Categories (top to bottom): HEALTH_FITNESS, GAME_PUZZLE, PHOTO_VIDEO, EDUCATION, BUSINESS, GAME_BOARD, MUSIC

X-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60

However, in the launch stage, organic growth (aka App Store Optimization) should be the primary focus for every app for several reasons:

- **It's cost-effective:** While you need to spend a considerable amount of money on ad campaigns or for ASA, you can conduct ASO yourself - provided that you know where to start. Because you know your app better than anyone else, you can come up with the best keyword list while thinking about the features you're offering and the keywords your competitors are using.
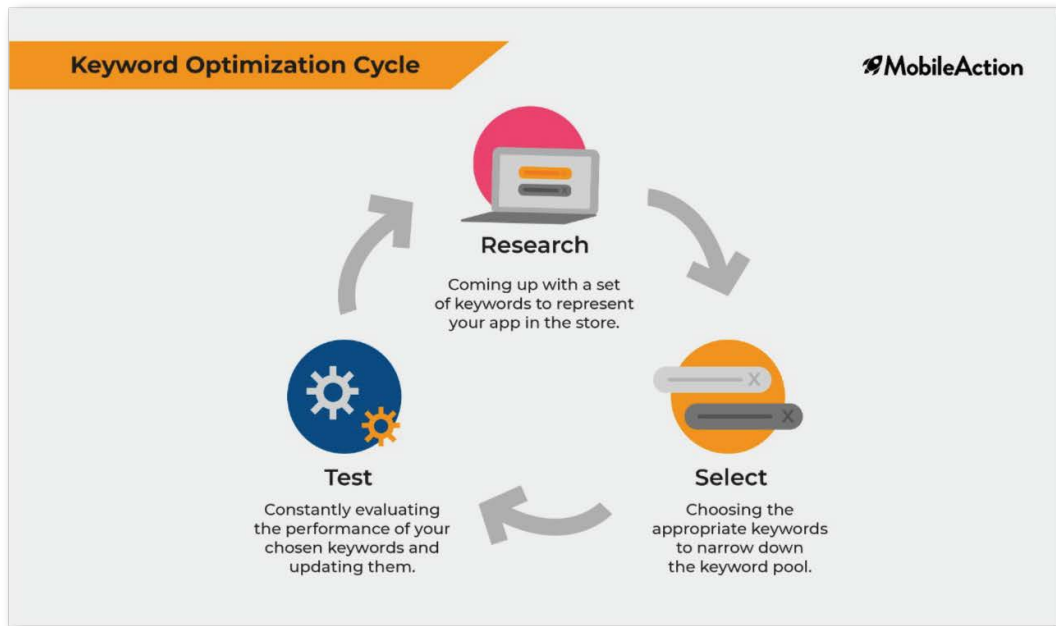
It requires a little bit of research and brainstorming, so you will need to invest considerable time, especially at the very initial phase. But, considering the possible returns, it's well worth the investment.

- **It brings high-quality traffic**: Users coming from a search query - which is your organic traffic - is the highest quality of traffic because they yield the highest retention rate. Plus, these users are likely to spend more money on your app. Combining these two factors, with an effective ASO strategy, you can have a user base that stays with your app for an extended period and also spends more money compared to others.

- **It works for ASA:** The Keyword Optimization phase of ASO is useful for finding the keywords that result in the most downloads for Apple Search Ads strategies, too. Since having the most useful keywords on hand will save both time and money when implementing ASA campaigns, having a well-grounded ASO strategy in place benefits you even more.

Consequently, organic growth is a determining element for overall success throughout an app's lifecycle. When growing organically, it all comes down to two things: increasing visibility and increasing conversion. Although these two are related - since high visibility also increases conversion - there are different factors affecting each phase. We'll briefly explain each one here:

1. Keyword Optimization

Visibility of an app depends highly on Keyword Optimization, which can be considered as the backbone of the whole App Store Optimization process. The Keyword Optimization cycle contains 3 steps: finding keywords, choosing and narrowing down your keyword pool, and testing your chosen keywords.

Keyword Optimization Cycle — MobileAction

Research
Coming up with a set of keywords to represent your app in the store.

Select
Choosing the appropriate keywords to narrow down the keyword pool.

Test
Constantly evaluating the performance of your chosen keywords and updating them.

Finding the right keywords to include in your app's metadata will increase the rankings and visibility tremendously. Keep in mind that your app will be constantly evolving to reach new users and markets - which means that Keyword Optimization also needs to be consistently reviewed to stay at the top and not to miss on potential users' needs. So, the cycle above is a continuous process to which all app marketers need to pay close attention.

2. Conversion Optimization via Creatives:

Once you make sure that you aced Keyword Optimization, the next step should be Conversion Optimization accomplished by optimizing the creative assets on your app's page. These creative assets include your app's logo, screenshots, and the video (if there is one). When your app appears in the Top 10 results for a keyword query, users will decide whether to tap on your app for more information within the first few seconds simply by looking at the logo and screenshots. That's why these creatives must be optimized to be the most memorable and to reflect the best functionalities of your app. Videos also have a great converting capability if created effectively. There is no one-size-fits-all rules for this, but checking your competitors' creative strategy always helps to guide ideas for your own app.

3. Reviews & Ratings

Reviews and ratings show how an app is doing and are a great indicator of the satisfaction level of its current users. Although they don't have a direct effect on the rankings, they are still considered an important factor because they indicate the user-experience level that your app offers.

4. Number & Velocity of Downloads

Although the weight of this factor on the rankings has been dropped in both app stores, it still affects the organic growth to a certain extent. When users view your app on the search results page, one of the determining factors that affect users' decision to download your app is, without a doubt, the number of downloads. For a recently launched app, it's probably a factor that can't be improved immediately. Nonetheless, a good download number is achievable with continuous improvements and with as few bugs as possible.

5. Retention Rates

Both app stores take into account the retention rate of an app, but Google approaches it in a more detailed way, as it also looks into the retention rate drawn from a keyword. In other words, Google checks the retention rate coming from a specific keyword when calculating your app's rank for that particular keyword. This is a precaution Google takes against Black Hat ASO tactics. To rank higher, it will always help to keep your retention rates as high as possible with a good customer support base.

The first two factors listed above - Keyword and Conversion Optimization - are the ones you can control. But the rest of the factors come as a result of either your ASO efforts or your app's capability of satisfying the needs of your users. Regardless of your priorities in cultivating growth for your app, keep in mind these five factors when you design your growth strategy.

ASO Case Study by App Growth Network for Heroes Job

- Organic downloads growth by 568% in a month using App Store Keyword Optimization

About Heroes Job

Heroes Jobs is a job search app which connects job applicants with the recruiter using the power of video instead of the traditional method of sharing a resume. The app is available for both Android and iOS. AGN started working with Heroes Jobs in July 2019.

Goal

In this case, our client's short-term goal was to dominate San Francisco and the Bay Area in providing attractive jobs to a Gen Z target audience.

The App Growth Network Approach

We followed a strategic keyword research approach. We performed an extensive audit, gathering around 300 keywords and built a systematic approach to choose the top 30 to target based on the client's business goals.

Other factors that contributed to the overall ASO growth:
· Download velocity
· Disciplined updates every 2 weeks
· Monitoring reviews from users
· Strategic updates on the keywords metadata
· Measure CVR to evaluate conversions App Store Page to Download

Results
- This visibility score graph shows the progression Heroes Jobs made in comparison with their competitors.
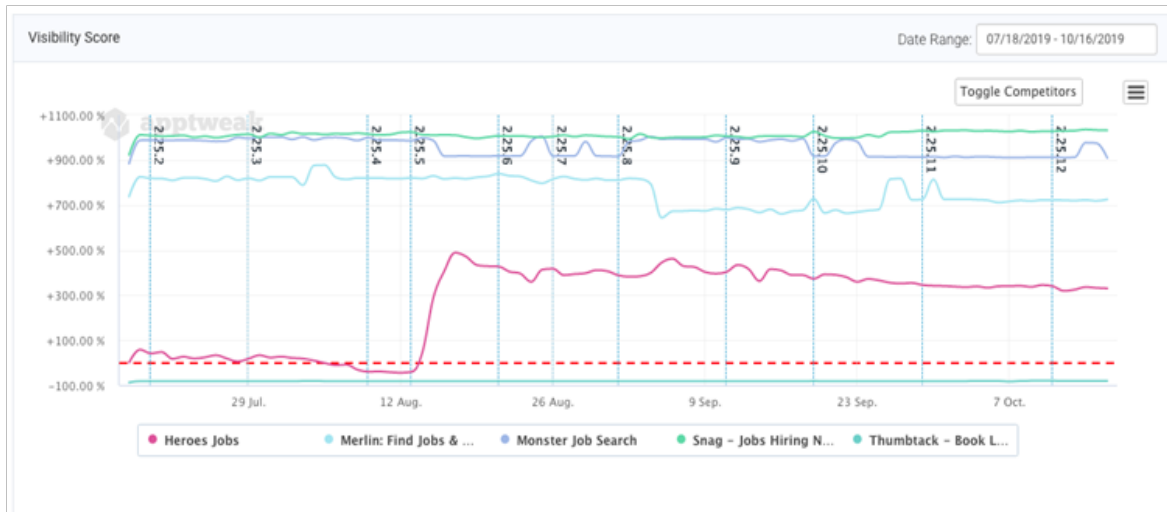
- This visibility score shows the correlation between the iOS updates performed and the increase in the overall app power.
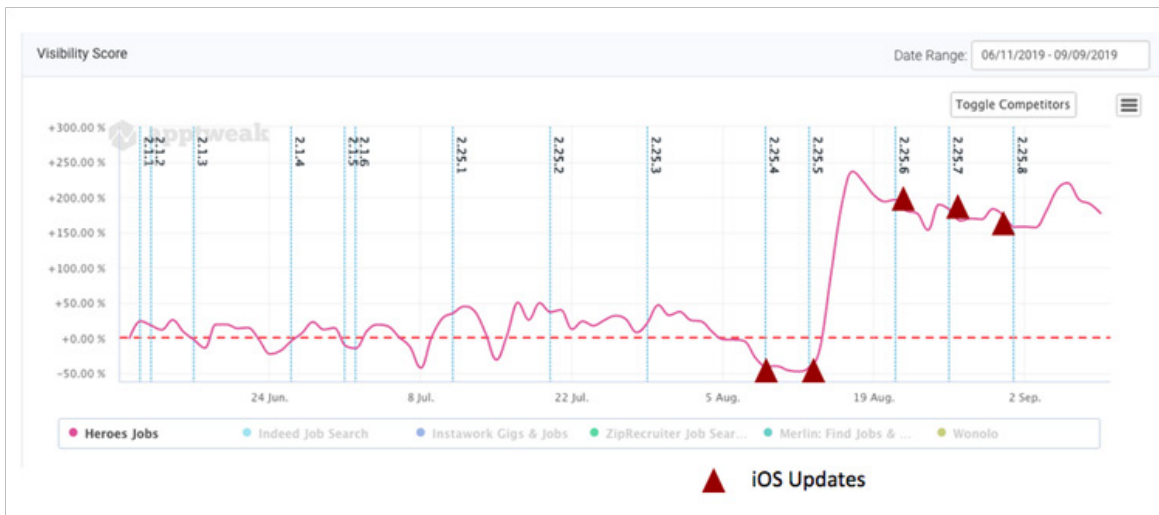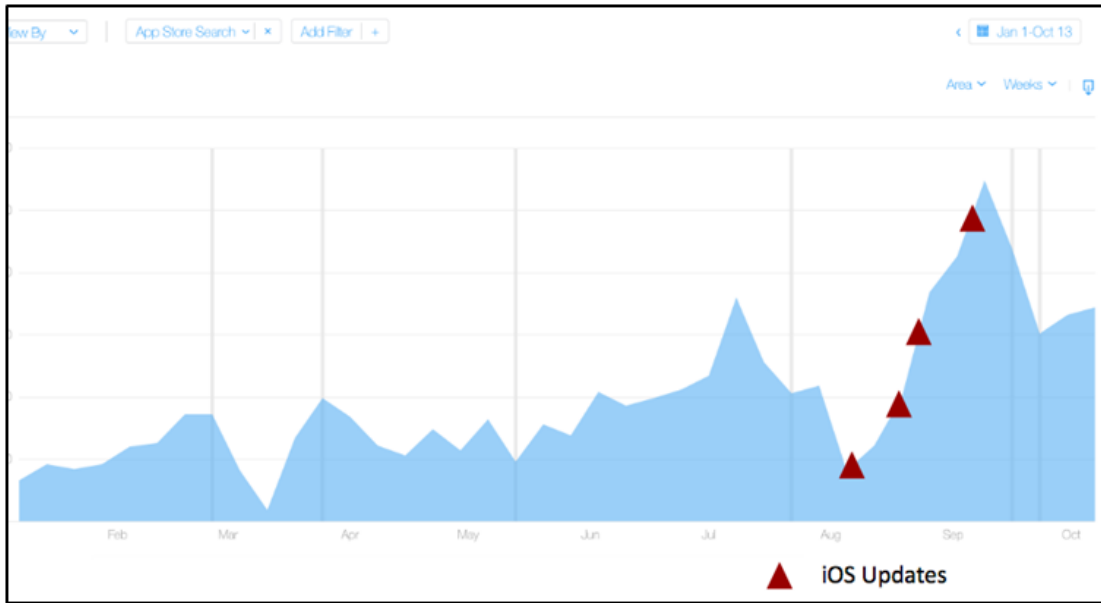

- For relevant keywords like 'simply hired' & 'job hiring' the app rank grew by around 490
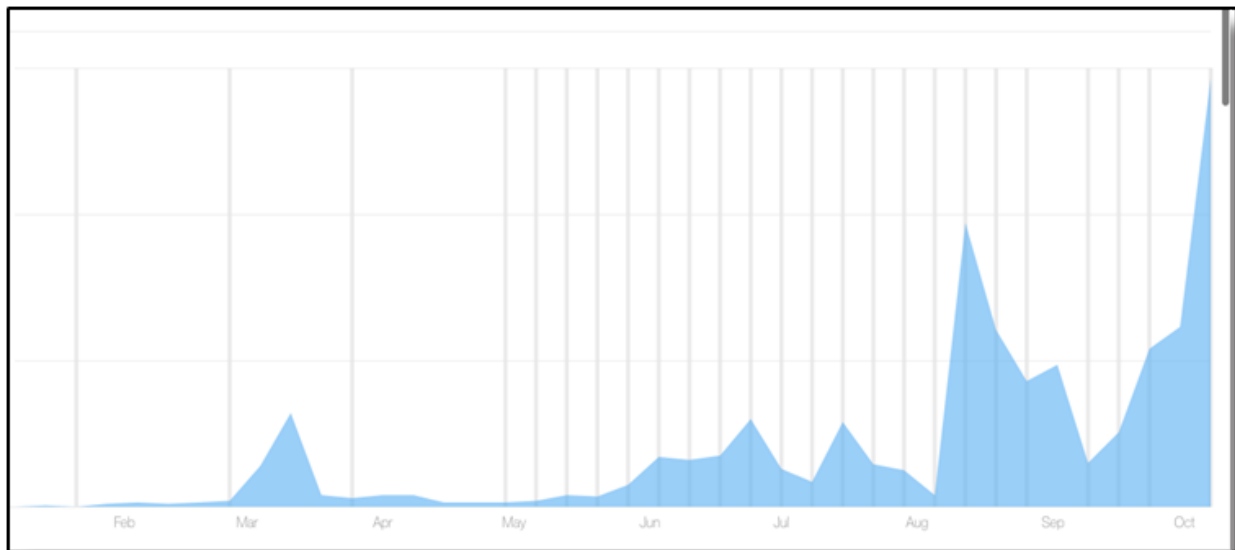

Top 10 ranking progression

Keyword	Vol.	Rank.		Keyword	Vol.	Rank.	
simply hired	32	9	▲ 492	jobs hiring	33	29	▲ 472
job hiring	11	16	▲ 485	hired	23	33	▲ 468

- App Store search increased tremendously from August onwards

App Store Search

- Organic search growth by 568% from July to August

App Units

If you'd like App Growth Network to help you master your ASO, reach out here!

How Search Ads can help boost your organic visibility in a keyword search by AppTweak

At AppTweak, we are frequently asked if running Search Ads on a keyword has any impact on an app's organic rank on that keyword. Since Apple has launched Search Ads, we've run a series of research tests to provide our users with an answer. Across all studies, we found **no significant proof** that bidding on a keyword sustainably increases an app's organic rank on that word. However, we find a hidden effect that has remained true across iOS 11, 12 and 13. By bidding on a word, you can **boost your app's position** among the **organic results** of that keyword's search.
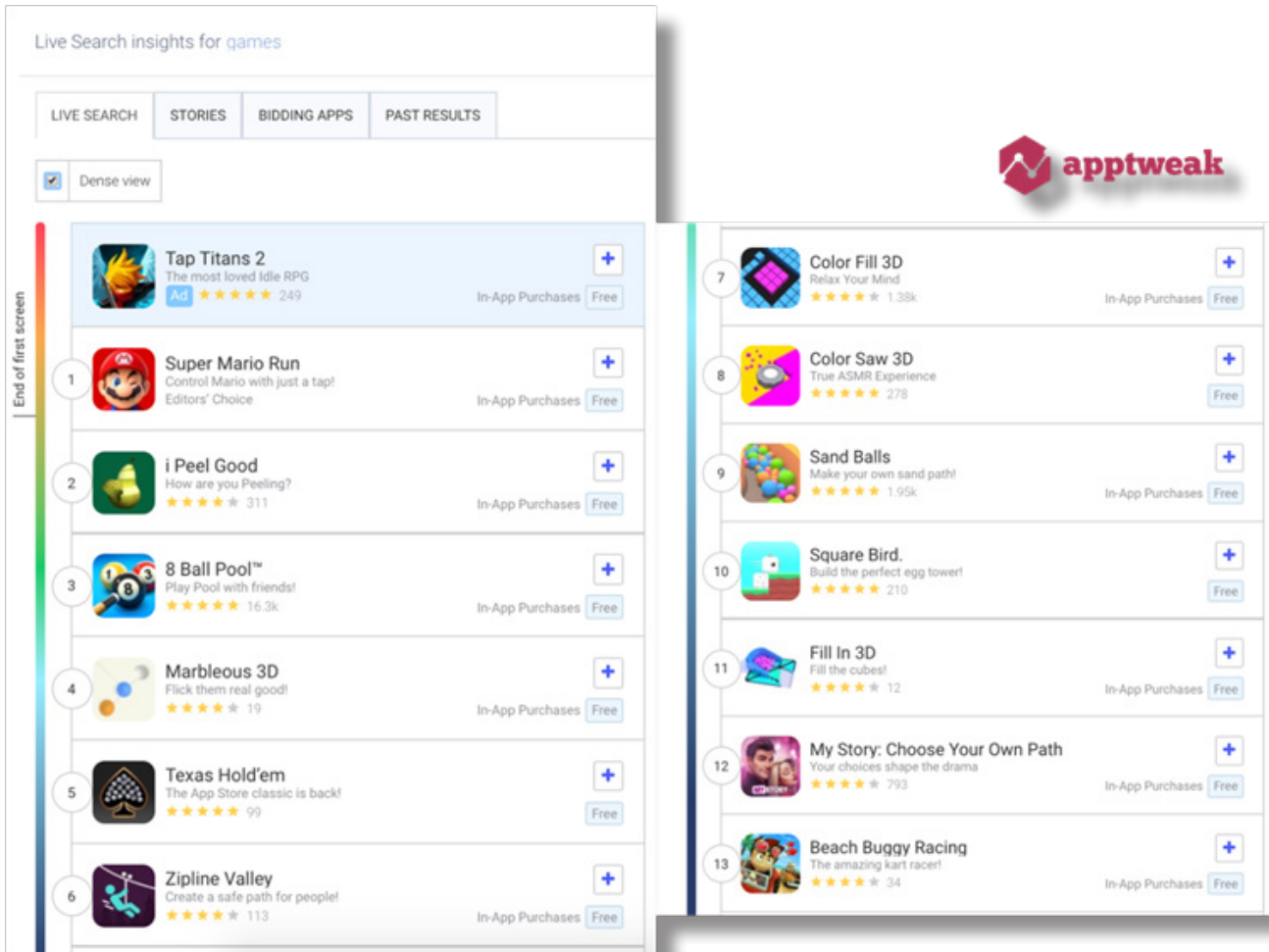
Bidding on a keyword can increase your app's organic rank to 13th position.

Here's how the trick works: when a user searches for a specific keyword on the App Store and your app is shown in the Ad Banner, Apple also shows your app in the 13th position of the organic ranks, even if your app usually ranks much lower for this search!

It's as if Apple gave your app a second chance in case your app didn't manage to convert on the Ad Banner, by also showing it among the organic results of the search keyword. Another way to see it is that your Ad is given double visibility:

- once, in the top position where it is clearly indicated you are paying to be there,
- and second in the 13th position, as if your app organically ranked n°13 for that keyword

An example is always easier to understand. We performed several searches on the word "games" on an iOS 13 phone. We then compared the Top 15 apps that appeared in the search results. Below, is a view of the Top 13 apps that normally rank on "games"

Source: AppTweak ASO Tool Live Search on "games"

We then compared these results with our phone. When we typed "games" the first time, we found an Ad for Toon Blast. When we scrolled through the results, suddenly Toon Blast was ranking after My Story, in the 13th position.
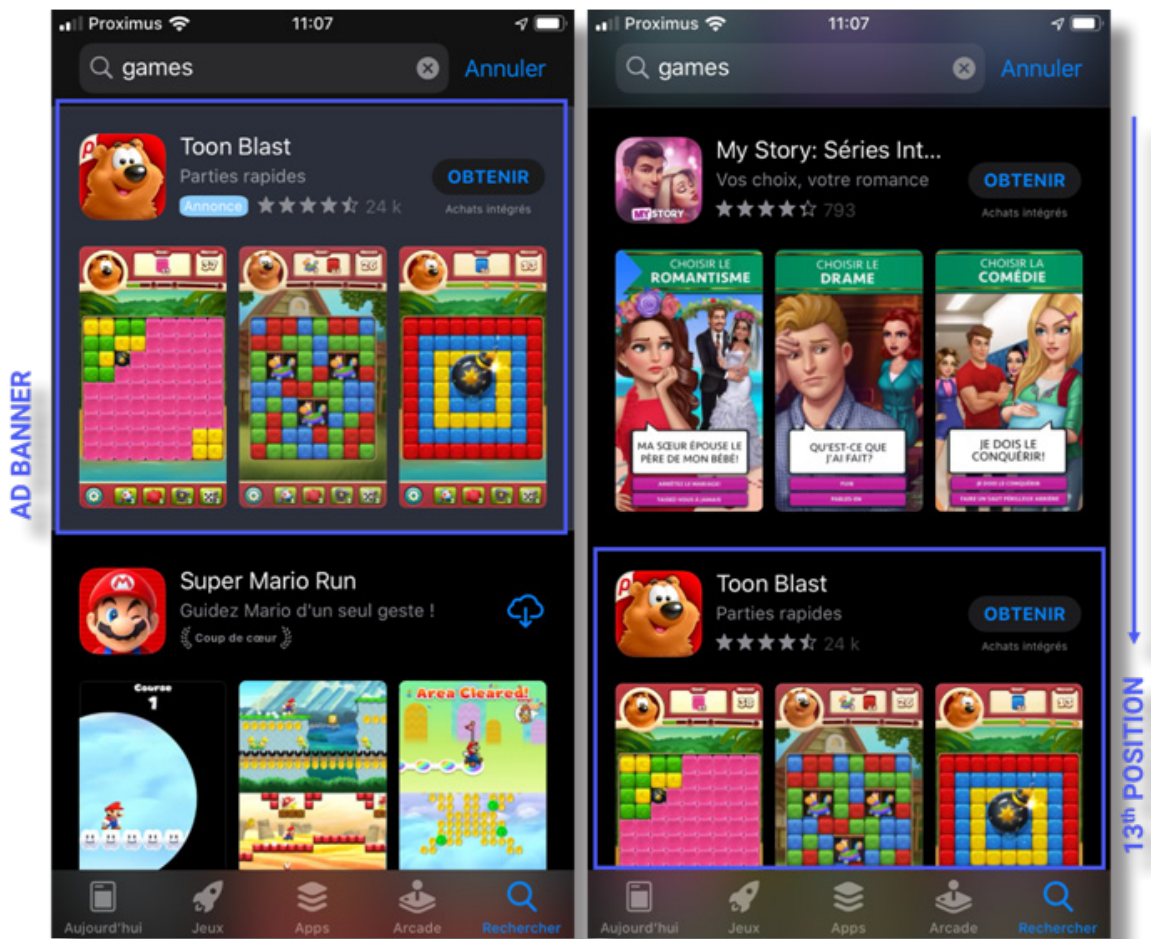
We repeated the exercise, but this time found an Ad running for Words of Wonders. As expected, this time, we found that same game ranking in the 13th position.
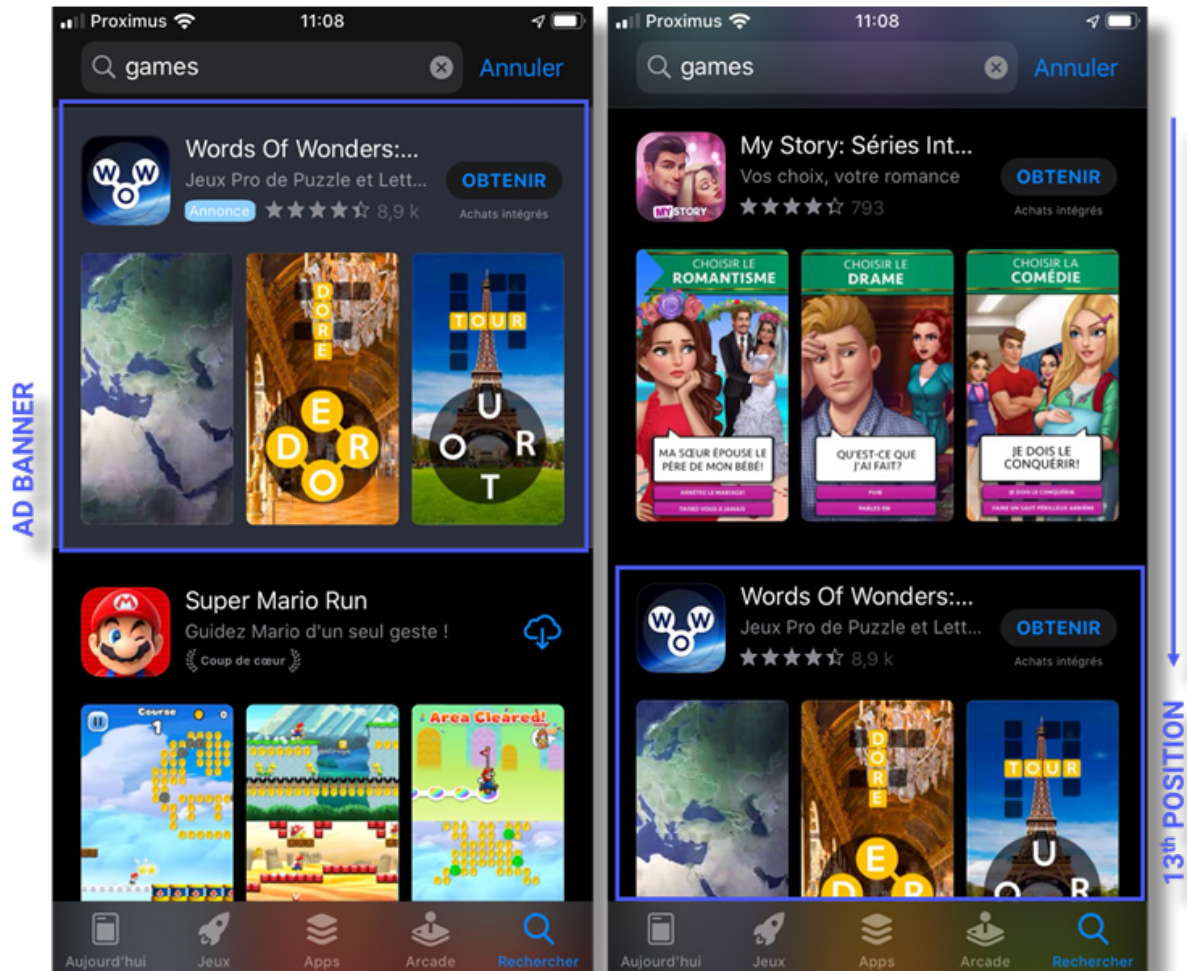
There are a few rules to take into account for this trick to work:

1. Your app has to rank sufficiently well on the keyword, if not, it won't be shown in the 13th position.
2. The app is shown in 13th position only when it is also shown in the Ad Banner. If another app appears in the Ad Banner, then the trick is applied to that app.

To illustrate, when searching the word "games", we once found an Ad for the game Bricks Breaker Quest. However, this game only ranks in 280th position for games; when we checked the 13th position, it wasn't there, leaving space to the app that usually ranks 13 on games.
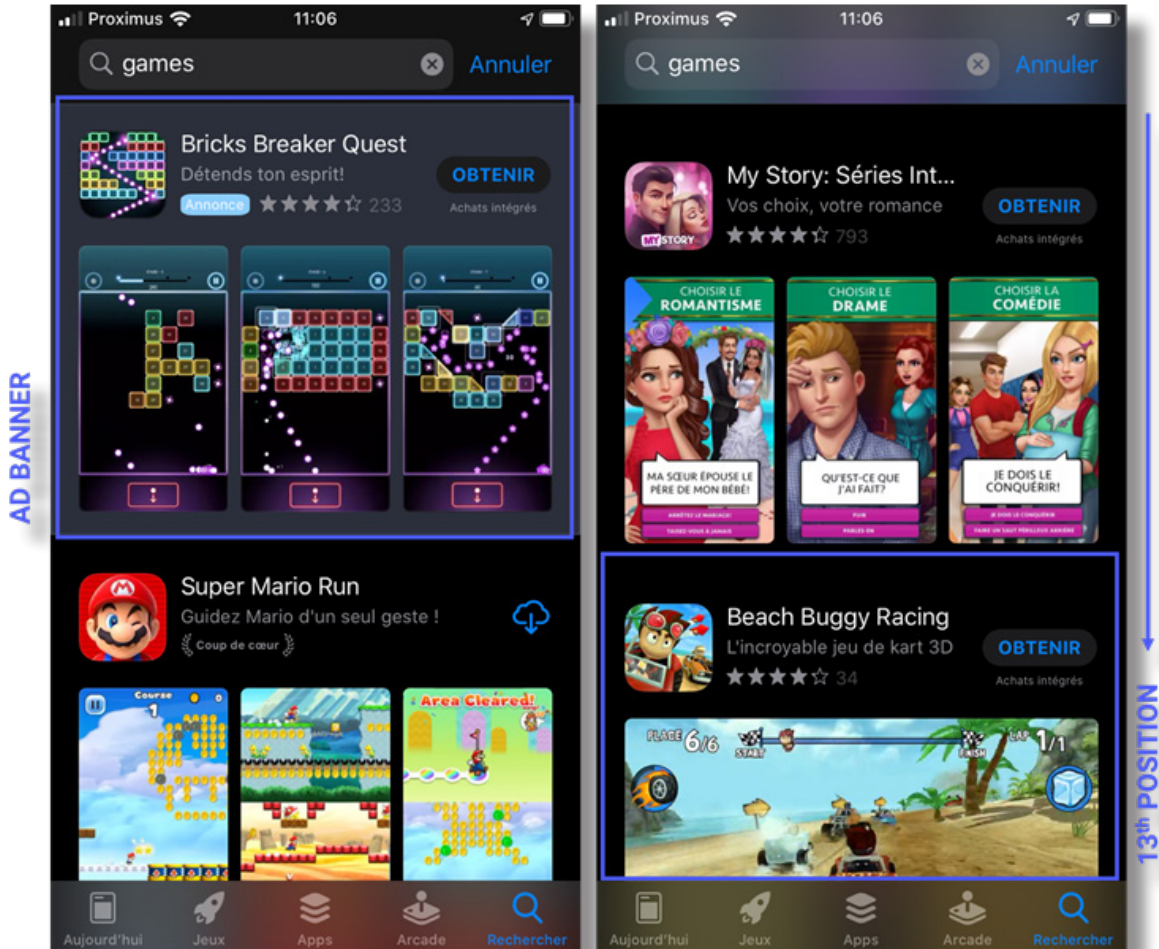
When we compared how the 3 games rank on "games" we found that Bricks Breaker Quest was in a much lower position than the other two, which probably explains why it didn't appear in the 13th position.


	Keywords	Vol.	Month. DL	Rank	Rank	Rank
☐ ☆	games	69	1697	284	109	75

Source: AppTweak ASO Tool - App Rank Comparison on the keyword "games"

## How Search Ads and Category Ranking are closely linked

According to our research at AppTweak, there is no strong correlation between running Search Ads on a keyword and an app's organic rank on that keyword. However, we have found that running Search Ads campaigns can directly impact an app's Category Rankings. Here are two apps that stopped running Search Ads campaigns and immediately saw a negative impact on their Category Rankings.

Example 1: App stopped Search Ads on July 26th
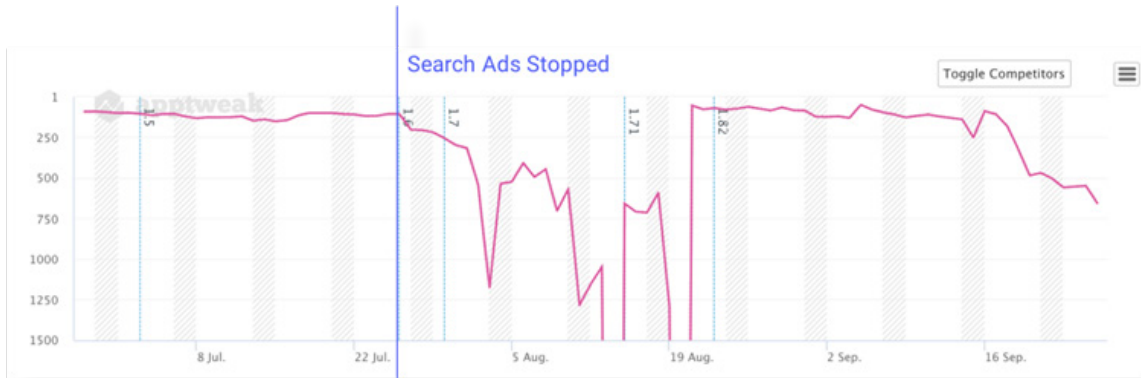
Source: [AppTweak ASO Tool](#) - Category Ranking History

Example 2: App reduced Search Ads budget on June 14th
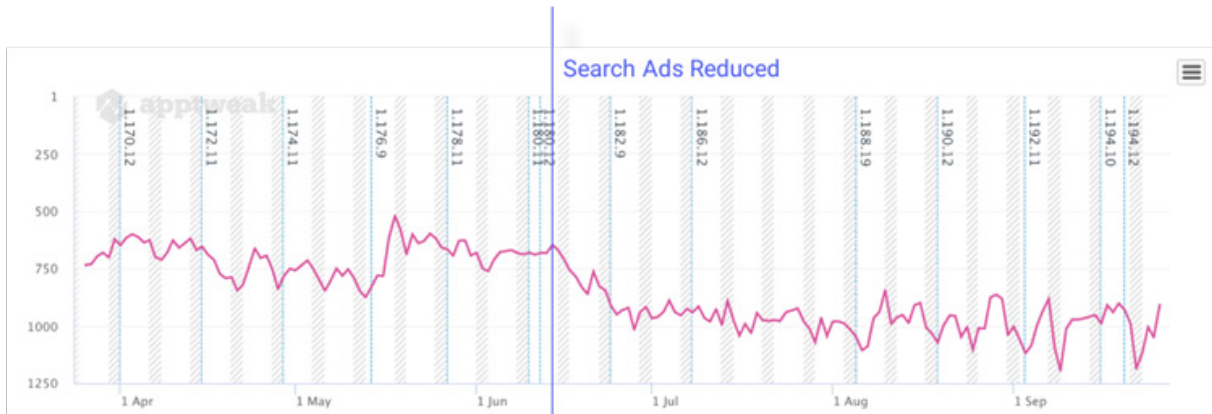
Source: [AppTweak ASO Tool](#) - Category Ranking History

However, we have proven at AppTweak that the main driver of an app's Category Rank is downloads velocity. Therefore, these drops can be explained by the fact that the apps suddenly lost downloads after stopping their Search Ads campaign which immediately translated into a drop of Category Rank.

Content Marketing Best Practices

You're probably aware by now that growing your app requires one main thing: standing out. We've been addressing several ways to do this, and content marketing is another essential component of this process.

But why exactly do you need content?

For one, you need it for ASO. If you're familiar with how content is a crucial piece of the SEO puzzle to drive traffic to websites, it works very much the same way for ASO to drive users to your app. In the app stores, content is limited to titles and descriptions. These are fundamental, but you need to take advantage of online assets - like blogs and website landing pages - to build awareness of your app and lead people to your app download page.

Also, over 85% of B2C marketers include content in their marketing strategy. This means that your competition more than likely is in the content marketing game, so you should be too!

As you embark on your content marketing journey, here are the 5 best practices to keep in mind:
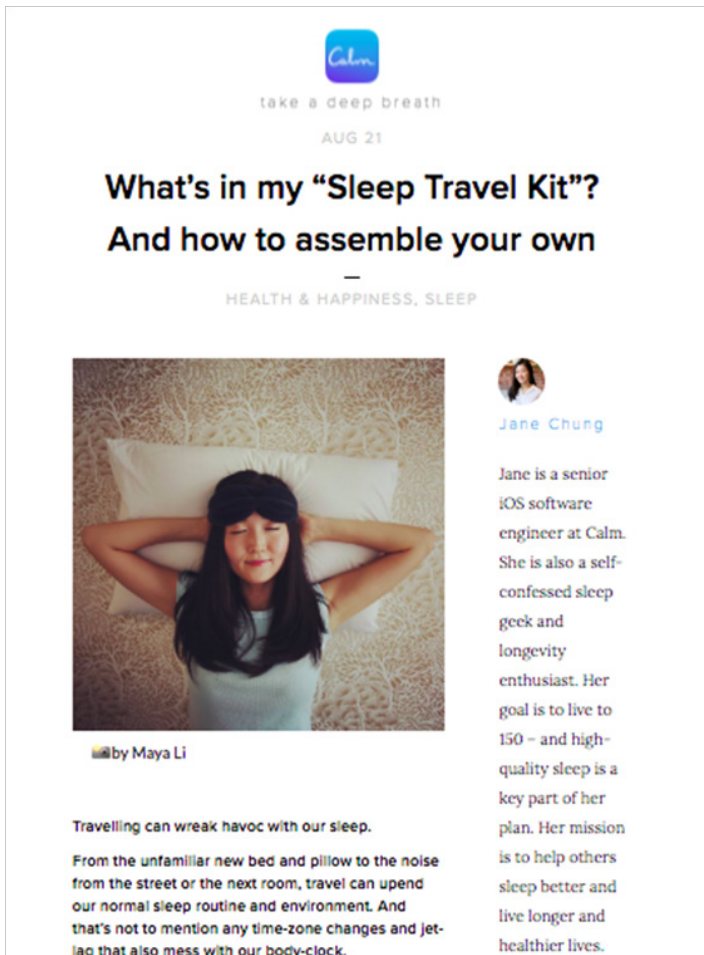
1. **Know your audience and build a relationship**

    This best practice tip is one you've seen in many different areas of marketing. It's because it's that important! You can't connect with anyone through content topic selection and social media posts if you don't know who they are and what they want/need.

    When you were developing your app, you hopefully developed your buyer personas as was recommended in our first e-book, "How to Launch an App." If so, brainstorm ideas and topics that these personas will find most interesting and useful. Use a tone and approach that both reflects your brand and resonates best with your target.

    If you haven't, you'll need to get to know your user base, stat! You must answer essential questions like, How old are they? Where are they located? What are their other interests? What brands do they like? What do they value most? How does your app address their needs or pain points?

    Let's take a look at a content example by a popular app that's got content marketing

Calm knows that the interests of its user base include healthy living, overall well-being, mindfulness techniques and self-improvement. This blog post on their website talks about exactly what its target user is interested in: improving health through quality sleep. Naturally incorporated into the article is a brief mention of how Calm plays a role in achieving this goal but is definitely not the focus of the article. Their blog section includes other relevant content like new classes or offerings, meditation recommendations and latest trends and news in the health space.

2. Create awesome content - and plenty of it

This may seem obvious, but to build awareness and to connect, quality content has to actually be created! Content comes in many forms: blogs, social media posts, white papers, emails, case studies, newsletters and videos. The most common are blog and social media posts, but don't limit yourself to these if you have the potential to reach users through other means. For an industry-specific app, creating a white paper or e-book may provide the opportunity to connect to your user base and provide them with something of value - leading to a positive impression of your brand, sharing with their network and, ultimately, increasing app downloads.

The more relevant touchpoints you have with your audience, the better your app growth will be. But this also means having a lot of content available that's tailored to that specific medium. Whatever strategy you decide best fits the needs of your app and user base, make sure that the content you create relates in a clear, useful way to what your app offers. The path from taking in your content to clicking on your proposed CTA should be a natural, seamless one for the user.

Important! Do NOT use content marketing to sell. Address what your target wants to know...not what YOU want them to know about your product! A call to action at the end is ok, but the content should not seem "sales-y" or you will turn off your audience.

3. Be consistent

Remember that there is a ton of competition and "noise" out there, so your target user may not hear you the first time you try to connect. You need to stick with it and keep communicating. The only way to do this successfully is by constantly providing content in a regular and timely manner. Content marketing is an endurance sport - you need to be in it for the long haul!

But being consistent - which translates into a lot of content creation - isn't easy to do. Be sure to have a plan and carve out the time for it. Whether it's you, a designated content team member or an outside resource that's producing the work - make sure it keeps on coming.

4. Actively distribute your available content

There's no real point in allocating resources to creating amazing content if you're not putting it out there for the right people to find!

The most popular way to distribute content is through social media. You've probably seen blog posts and articles on your own social media channels, so you know that this is common. Customer interaction with brands is most prevalent on Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat but other platforms like LinkedIn and Pinterest can be effective too. As you post your content across channels, make sure to include a clear CTA to download the app or to click through to a web page.

Here's a great example of a blog post shared on Fitness Pal's Facebook page.

Other ways to distribute your content is by establishing yourself as a leader in your category by answering questions on platforms like Quora that link back to your content. You can also explore paying to promote a post.

5. Measure and test

Just like with all things app-based, you need to measure results, tweak to optimize and test further. You should test out things like different titles and visuals. You may find that certain styles of headlines or formatting perform better than others. Or you may find that one content type produces the most impressions while another type yields a higher conversion rate. Besides just creating and distributing content, make sure you know how it's doing and keep optimizing!

So, some of you may be thinking, "What about users reading my content on desktop… how will they download my app if I link out from my blog content to the App Store?" That's a good question and one that can be easily solved with one of Branch's 'Text-me-the-app' link. Branch is an excellent third party tool that directs desktop readers to a highly convertible landing page, asks them to input their number, and prompts them to download your app (via SMS) in seconds. Now you can capture new app users even when they are on desktop!

Backlinks

Once you've created a killer content strategy the fun doesn't stop there. Enter your new trusty sidekick: 'backlinks'; SEO's best friend and still one of the biggest growth hacks for your app.

What are backlinks and why should I include them?

Backlinks are any links on a webpage that points to your website. It's as simple as that. The more quality backlinks you have leading to your site, the more Google believes you've got great content to share and rank it higher in the search results.

If backlinks are a necessary asset to your content marketing strategy how can you get them?

There's no other answer to this, other than hard work. However, if you get your good quality backlinks they will keep on repaying you for months to come. Let's dive into our steps to achieving stellar SEO using Neil Patel's new tools and SEO strategy which allows you to monitor (and steal) your competitor's backlinks 👁

1. Head on over to neilpatel.com/backlinks and put in one of your top competitors.
2. On the left click 'Top Pages' and look at all the backlinks that link back to those pages.
3. Find an article which your competitor's wrote that's similar or related to your industry and then…write a better one.
(For example, if the article is 500 words, write 1000, if the article is old and there are some 404s (the golden opportunity), make sure they're updated. The key point here is to make the content engaging and super detailed. Images and videos can also help with this.)

4. Email everyone in the list who linked to your competitor's blog post. Here you really want to sell why your blog post should be the one they link to. In particular you should identify the unique offerings: insights, knowledge, new tools that your blog post brings. This should help persuade them to edit their content and include your link. Put in the work, follow up and see the results for yourselves!

Social Media: Build Your Brand, Engage Users

Social media is a great way to connect with your audience. It's the perfect place to test your new ideas and get instant feedback from the people who use your app the most.
Once again, we've managed to sum up our insights into simple steps you can follow and become successful at implementing your social media strategies.

1. Choose your social networks

You have to decide which platforms are best suited for you. Do you benefit more from an update-style Twitter feed? Or maybe your users prefer visuals, making Pinterest a valuable channel. The social networks that you choose will depend on where your audience is. Hopefully, you've read the chapter on looking for your audience and have a clear idea of where they are.

Remember that these social networks will be used for business purposes and should be leveraged as tools to meet your goals and objectives. You need to be confident that you will be able to get your message across in the most efficient way possible, whether it's spreading awareness about your brand or having a two-way conversation and getting their feedback.

2. Decide on your content

Now that you know where you're going to connect with your audience, you have to decide on what you're going to share with them. There's plenty to choose from; you can do blogs, tweets, reshares, graphic designs, stories, videos or anything else that comes to mind. Pick the one you are most comfortable with, as you'll be doing this for an extended period. If you don't enjoy the process, the audience will feel the lack of authenticity they crave and soon leave you - and likely your app.

This is also the time to think about the tools you'll need to deliver on your content strategy. Will you be spending the bulk of your time typing and need a great keyboard? Are you going to make videos and need an awesome camera, mic and editing software? Do you need to know how to use Photoshop? The more of this you can plan, the easier it will be to reach your goals!

3. Make a plan

No matter what topic it is, you often hear that consistency is key. How do you get to that consistency? Planning!

After you know what you'll be posting and where you need to focus on three things:

- Campaign goals
- Publishing times
- Campaign budget

Establish your goal and make it tangible. Focus on one thing - maybe you want to increase your outreach or get more followers. For this you'd need a viral strategy with provoking content that's more likely to get shared across the web - maybe it's a great deal offer or just an inspirational ad. Or, if you're trying to build your community and want to engage them in conversation, then you'll want to implement a slower approach that shows your commitment.

Plan for when you're going to post all of your insightful content. Are you going to post on specific days, when your audience knows to expect news from you? Or are you going to randomly drop in and keep them on their feet? As always, there's no clear answer. But if you're uncertain, we'll talk about common posting times in the next step.

Budget! Maybe it's time to ask your boss for some resources to fuel your viral machine that will win the hearts of your app's users. You've planned the tools you'll need to generate content, and maybe that requires the purchase of a camera or software. You've also decided to spend money on services like Facebook Ads to promote your content and the list goes on and on. Budget accordingly, and you'll have numerical evidence of your cost efficiency as a top marketer!

4. Best time to post on different platforms

Let's break down the most common social media platforms, what they are used for and who uses them.

Platform	Audience	Prime time
Facebook	Almost anyone within the range of 13-60. Used both on mobile and desktop.	Thursday-Friday, 1-4 PM
Twitter	People commuting, idling or waiting for something, who don't mind catching up with the freshest buzz	Weekdays, 12-3 PM, 5 PM
Instagram	Generally younger audience, on mobile, active most of the day	Avoid Monday, Thursday at 3-4 PM
Pinterest	Artists, creative people who want to be inspired	Saturdays, 8-11 PM
LinkedIn	Professionals, use for work-related things, most likely to find your content during work hours	Tuesday-Thursday, 7:30 AM, 12 PM, 5 PM

5. Don't overwhelm your audience with content

Remember that just like with anything we like, there's the law of diminishing returns. Your audience will appreciate the quality content you're putting out, but if all of a sudden you start posting a lot - almost spamming - you're likely to see a decrease in your conversions. Go with your gut; think about how many posts you like to see from some of the sources you follow on the internet, or go off of analytics and act when you see a marginal decrease in tap-throughs.

3. User Activation & Retention

User Activation

User activation is educating the user about your app and making them experience the app 'aha moment' as early as possible.

In this section, we will share how to effectively activate users with examples from various mobile apps (clients of App Growth Network).

1. Showcase how your product can help users

Grabbing users' attention when they first open your app is the key to getting these very users to the next step of their app journey. So, upon opening, share how the app is solving a certain problem instead of talking about app features.

Here are screenshots from Tapping Solution that showcase how to communicate app core features in the tutorial section.
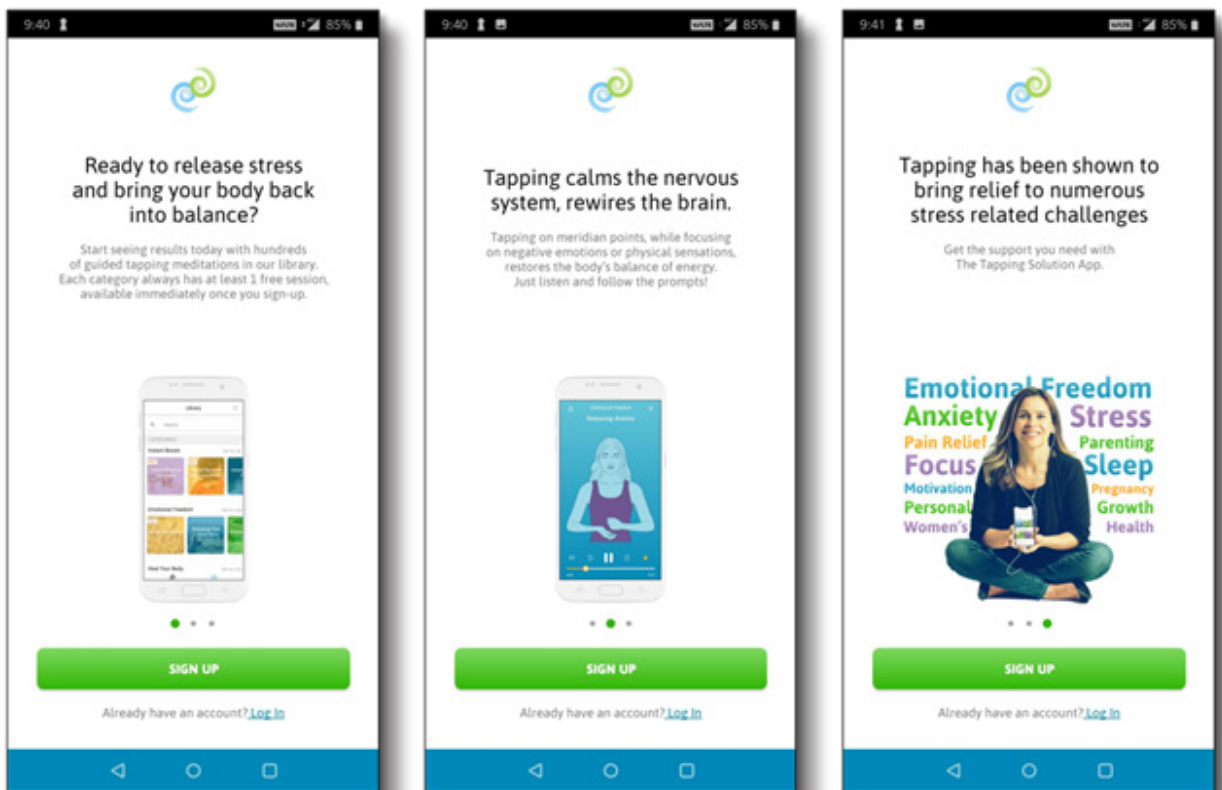
2. Simplify the 'Sign up' process

We recommend that you keep the sign up process simple if you want to increase mobile app engagement. This means asking a user add the minimum required input in the onboarding process. Ask for more details only as the user moves further into your app journey.

This process allows users to experience essential product features first. Once a user finds your product suitable for their needs, they'll be happy to invest more time and will be more open to sharing additional details.

Here is how Tapping Meditation designed its sign up process:

- The initial sign up is minimal. The app developers kept it even simpler by providing the option to create an account using Google/Facebook.
- Once a user provides their email and password, the app asks for their categories of interest so that only relevant content is shown to users in the app.
- The user then experiences a follow up 2-3 minutes introduction video to guide them through the session experience.
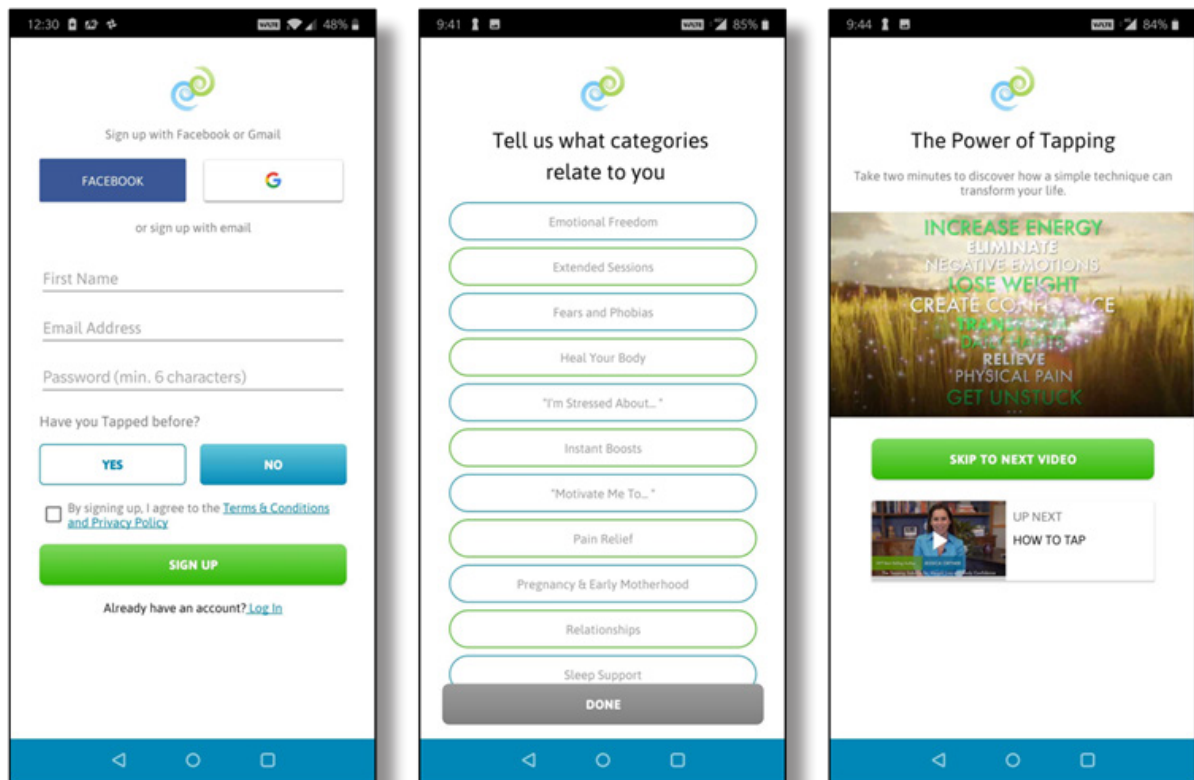
3. Walk users forward with tailored communication

Using your app analytics tools, check out users paths/screenflow along with the average time it takes for a user to move from one step to the next. In order to learn more about obstructions in your flow, we recommend building funnels to figure out the maximum drop off points along the path. It's worth trying to activate users who are inactive or haven't moved to the next step in the average time you've calculated.

This is how App Growth Network built a customer journey campaign for their document-focused app client using Braze. The goal of the campaign was to persuade users who had newly installed the app to complete the app registration. So, based on whether a user had registered or not, users were sent push notifications on day 1, day 3 and day 5. The messages specified how the app for document signing can help save time, keep documents organized and empower business.
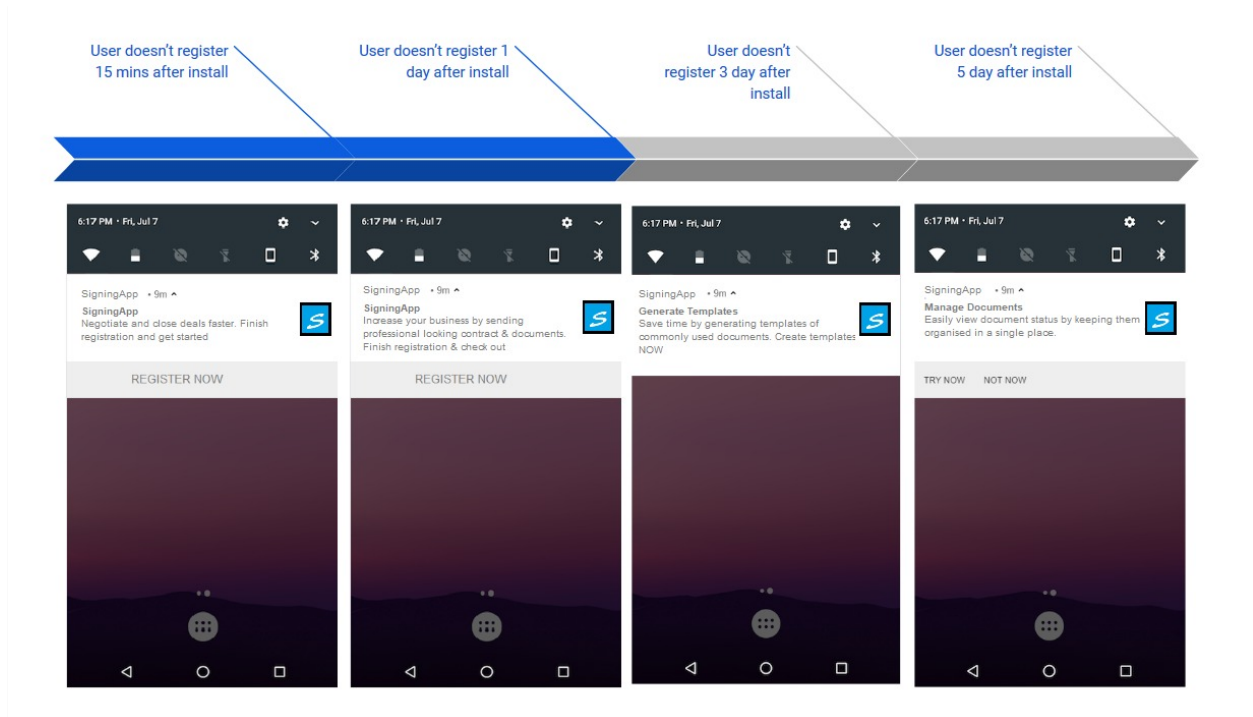
4. Let users experience all product features

Using a freemium model lets your users experience your app's core features for free at least once, decreasing their potential to churn from the app. If a user has experienced the app features first hand and stays over a period of time, there's a chance that they see value in your app and can be converted into paying customers. For example, Netflix, Linkedin, etc. offer a one month of free trial for the premium version.

Here is an example of another way of letting your users experience product features. Relax Melodies allows users to experience some part of each section for free and upgrade to paid/pro version for more.
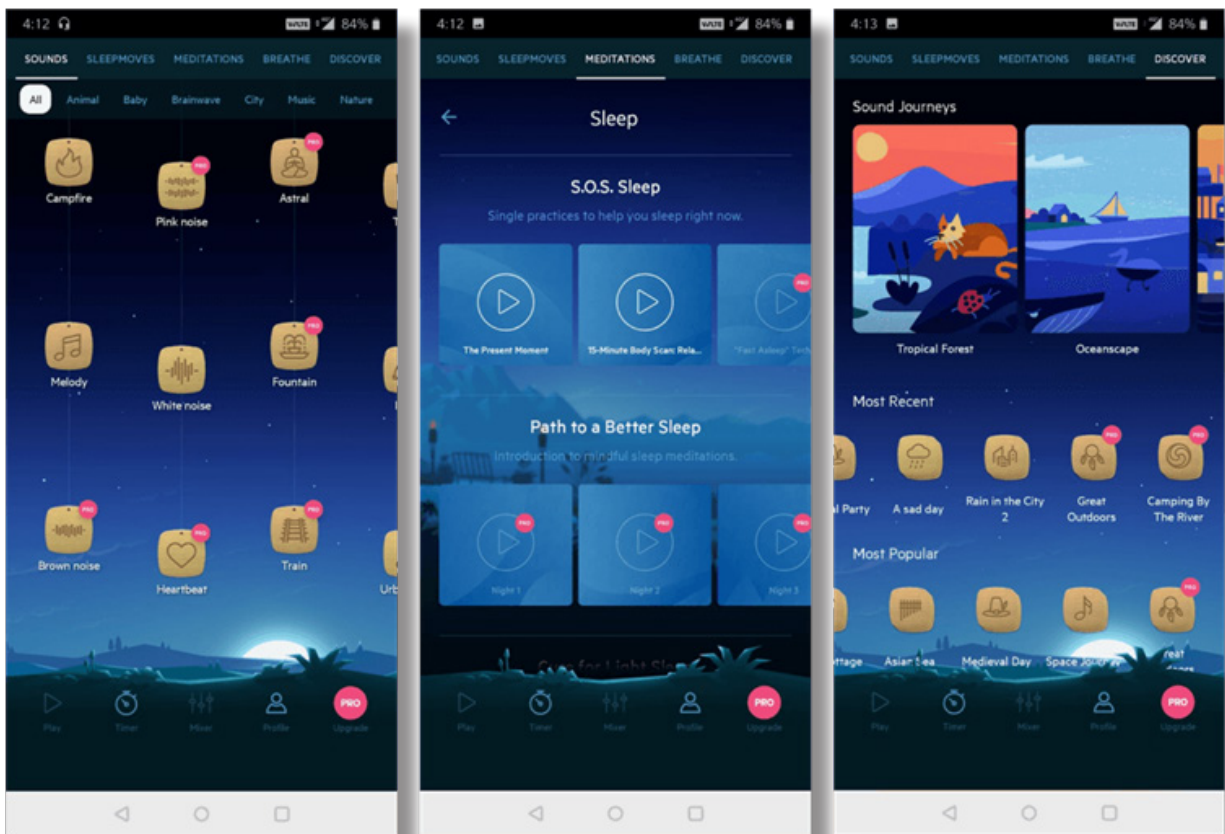
5. Ask for user permissions at the right time

It goes without saying that sending too many notifications won't improve mobile user engagement. So be sensible here and always ask user permission. Otherwise, you'll only annoy users and will result in multiple uninstalls of your app

Here is an example from Himoment where they ask for permission to access photos when the user is about to add a moment (What was the best thing that happened to you today?) instead of asking this at the very beginning
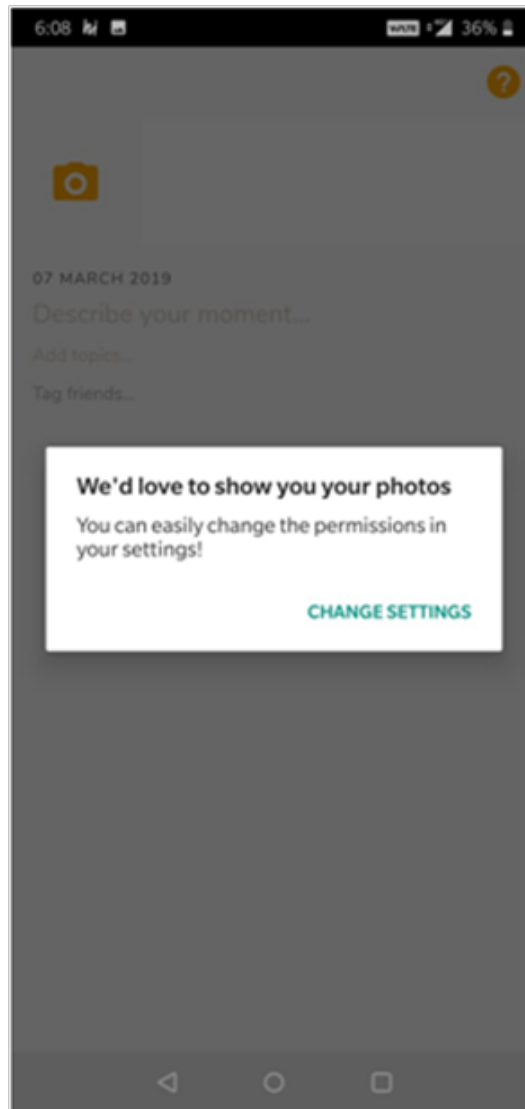
6. Multi-channel communication

User engagement is higher with personable communication. You can engage with users using multiple channels like email, push notifications, in-app notifications, retargeting on social channels, etc. The channel selection should be made based on the stage of a user journey and the communication that is being delivered.
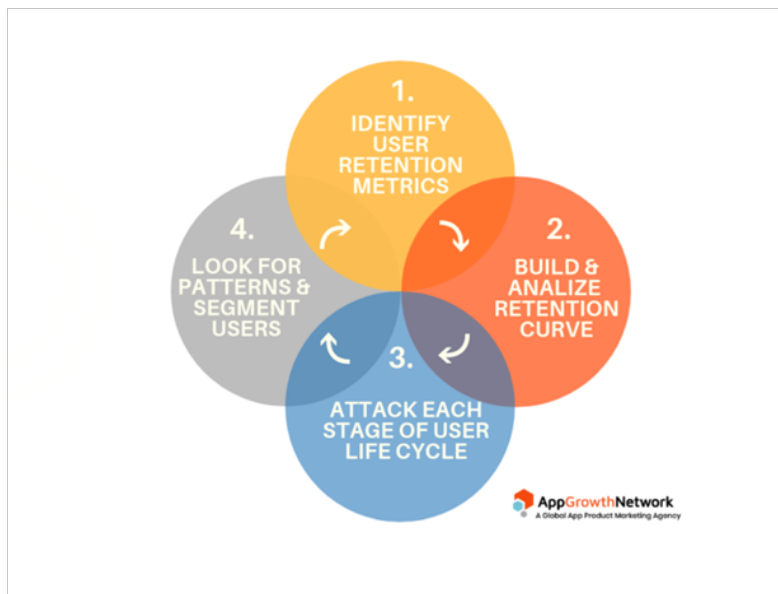
Retention

The longer you are able to retain a user, the more chances you have to increase user LTV (Lifetime Value). So here are a few best practices that will help you increase mobile app user retention and eventually improve overall mobile app user engagement.

1. Ongoing onboarding

Retention is all about being able to best serve your users and keeping your app top of mind so that they use it again and again. It's a continuous onboarding process. So in order to increase mobile app retention, engage with segmented users via push notifications or email. Target the users who were active on the app once but have not used the app recently.

For example, when it comes to e-commerce, it's a good idea to engage with a user who was an active buyer in the last 2 months but has since stopped buying things. You can send them an enticing product in which they had previously shown interest. It's a simple yet efficient way to make this user purchase again.

In the case of content apps, if users were active for 7 days straight but haven't opened the app in the last 3 days, you can try to send them an article link which is
trending in the category they're interested in. It might bring users to your app again.
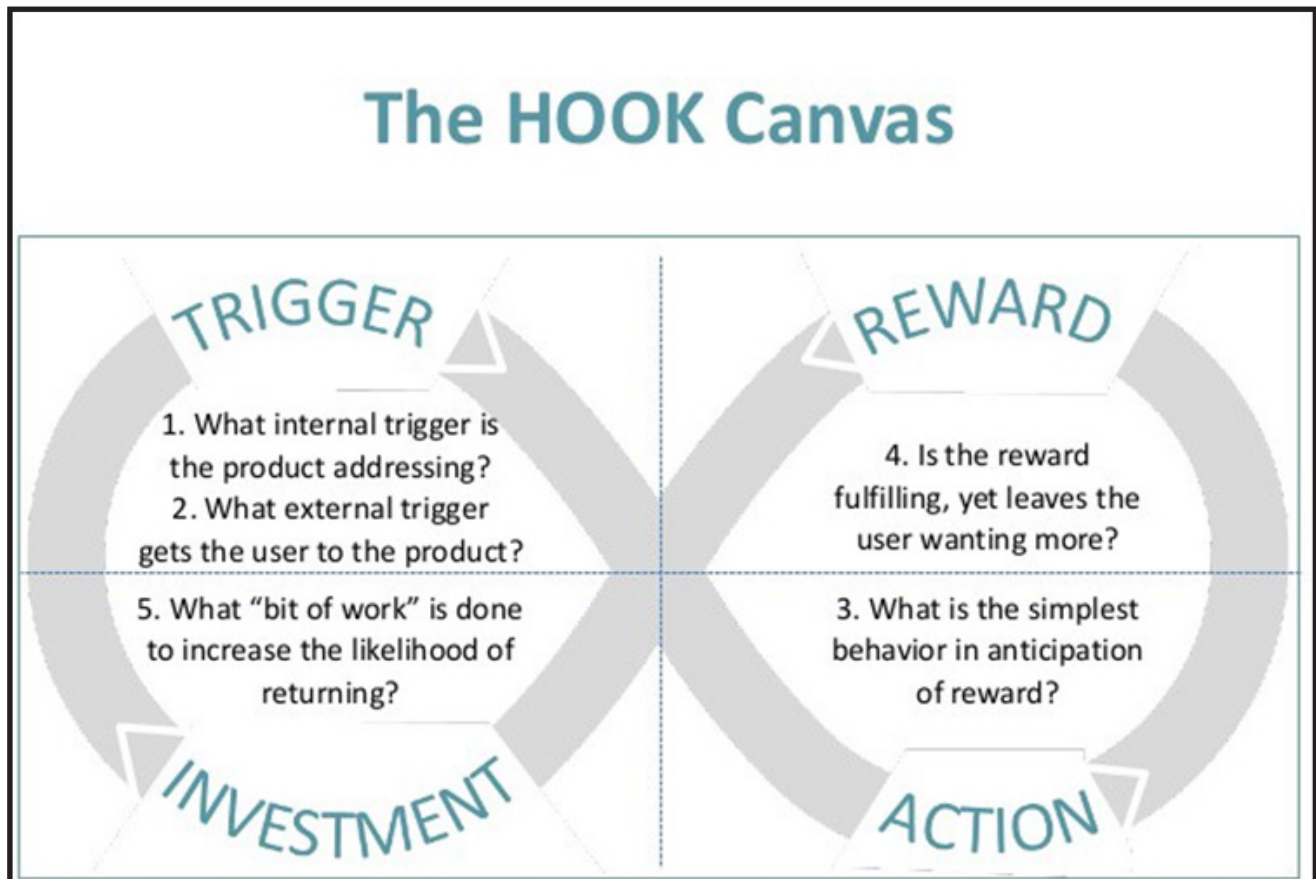

Being able to identify the right time and the right content to engage a user - without annoying them - is the key to increasing user retention and enjoying sustainable mobile user engagement.

2. Habit formation

Habit formation is one of the key mobile app retention strategies. Here is the HOOK Model by Nir Eyal which outlines the steps necessary for sticking to a product:

1. Trigger
2. Action
3. Reward

The HOOK Canvas

TRIGGER
1. What internal trigger is the product addressing?
2. What external trigger gets the user to the product?

REWARD
4. Is the reward fulfilling, yet leaves the user wanting more?

INVESTMENT
5. What "bit of work" is done to increase the likelihood of returning?

ACTION
3. What is the simplest behavior in anticipation of reward?

Amazon Prime is a great example that validates this model. For an e-commerce user, the best reward is to get a free product delivery within 2 days - a core offer of Amazon Prime. Every time a user buys something, the app offers the opportunity to subscribe to Amazon Prime for $99/year. Once the user has invested $99, they tend to choose Amazon over other platforms. To further validate their decision, with each new purchase, Amazon shows how much they have saved by subscribing to Prime.

Here is another example from Relax Melodies – user habits are built by setting a daily reminder at a fixed time. If a user has been active on the app but hasn't set a reminder, the app sends a push notification that offers to do it for them.
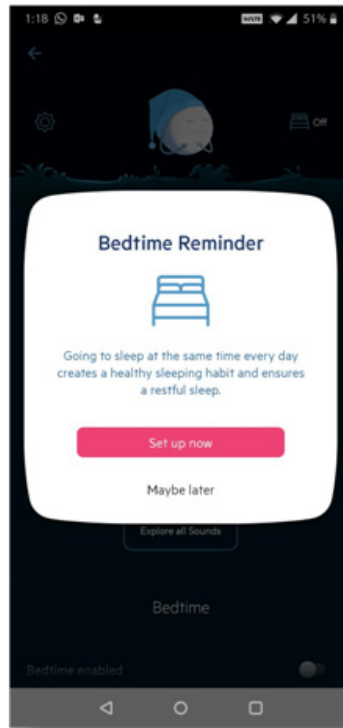
3. Communicating to customers that new features are coming

Always notify your users about new things that are being added to the product. When it comes to SAAS services, try to share new features that are in the pipeline. This keeps a user excited about the app.

Yet, it is important to time the communication right so it doesn't seem that it's just a bait and nothing is coming. Experiment and figure out the best time to communicate with your users about an upcoming feature: a few days before the launch, a few weeks or maybe months before.

Building the User Journey with Braze

For mobile apps - as mentioned in the previous articles - there are different methods you can use to engage with users and increase app retention, such as in-app notifications, push notifications, email and SMS. It's important that you build the customer journey and use the right channel at the right time when the user is most likely to engage. There are various mobile app engagement tools available in the market like Clevertap, Braze, Leanplum etc. As the scope of this book is limited, we can't cover all the tools, so we will focus on one.

In this section we'll share our experience of building user workflows using Braze Canvas to move users forward in their app journey. Canvas is a single unified interface where marketers can set up campaigns with multiple messages and steps to create a cohesive journey. These experiences can then be compared and optimized using comprehensive analytics of the full user experience.

1.Sign Up Canvas

Below is an example of how to build a canvas with the goal of having users sign up for the app. In this canvas, we use a combination of push notifications, emails and in-app notifications on Day 0, Day 1, Day 2, Day 3 and Day 7.
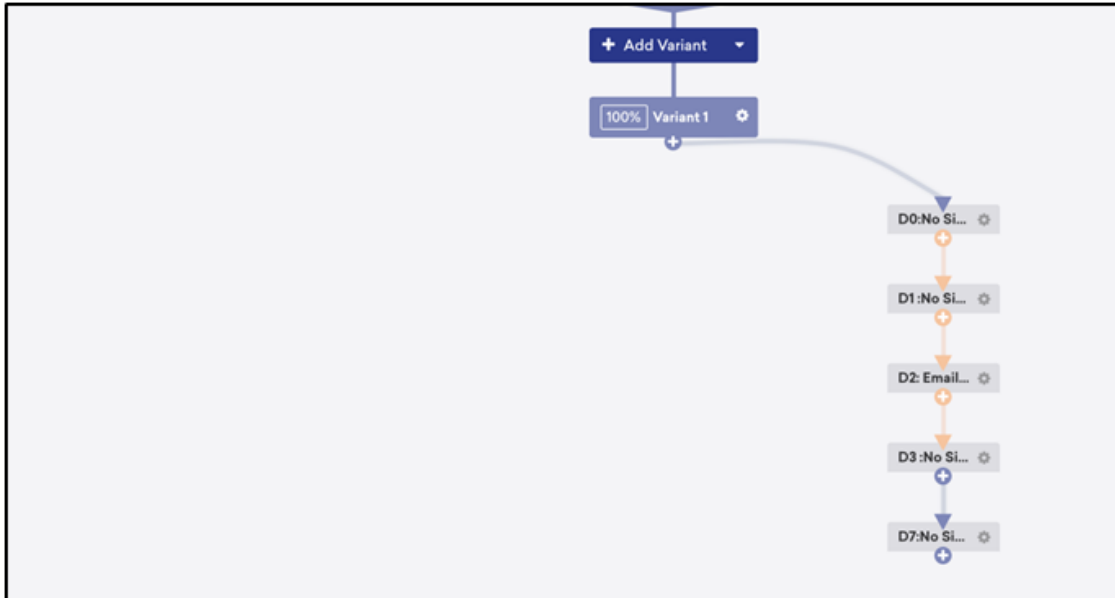
This tactic doubled the sign up rate of the app. Before running this canvas, the sign up completion rate was below 25% and after this canvas it increased to around 50%
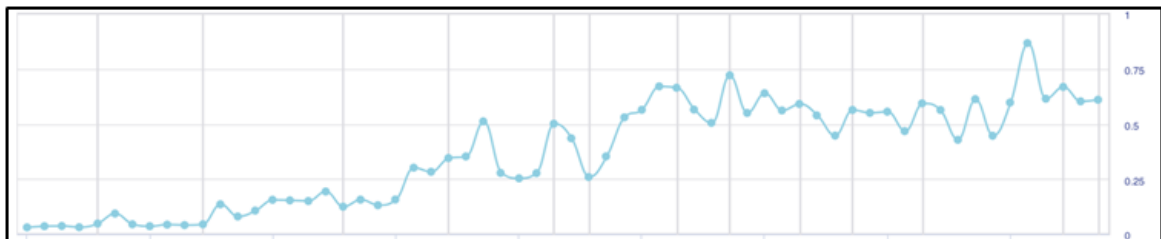

Sign Up Completion Rate

2. Onboarding Canvas

Here is an example of another canvas that was set with the goal of onboarding users and guiding them to perform the key event in app for activation. Along with sending messages, 3 content variants were set up to share different content with the user. This was done to test which content performed best and resulted in better open rates and conversion rates of activation goal completion.
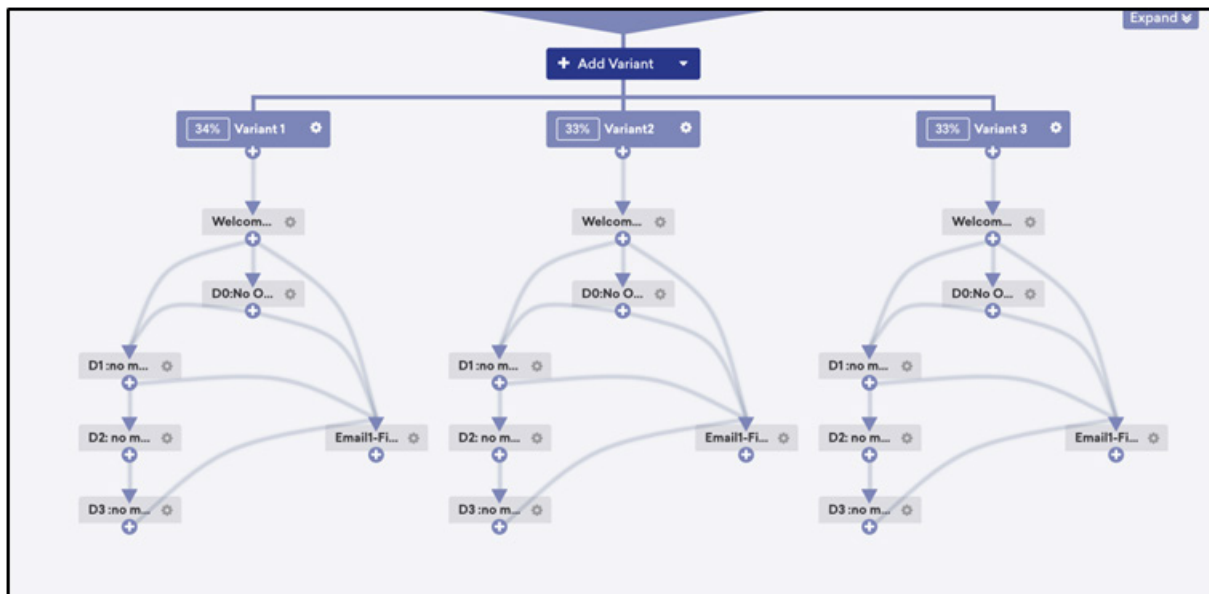
3. Resurrection Canvas

This canvas was built to re-activate users who had become inactive in the app by selecting the following audience: 'Used the app less than 3 weeks ago and last used the app more than 2 weeks ago'

Based on your app product usage interval, you can select the period of inactivity and try different messages to re-activate the users. We have seen that the conversion rate for resurrection is higher if there is an exclusive offering for these users - like freebies or limited period offers,
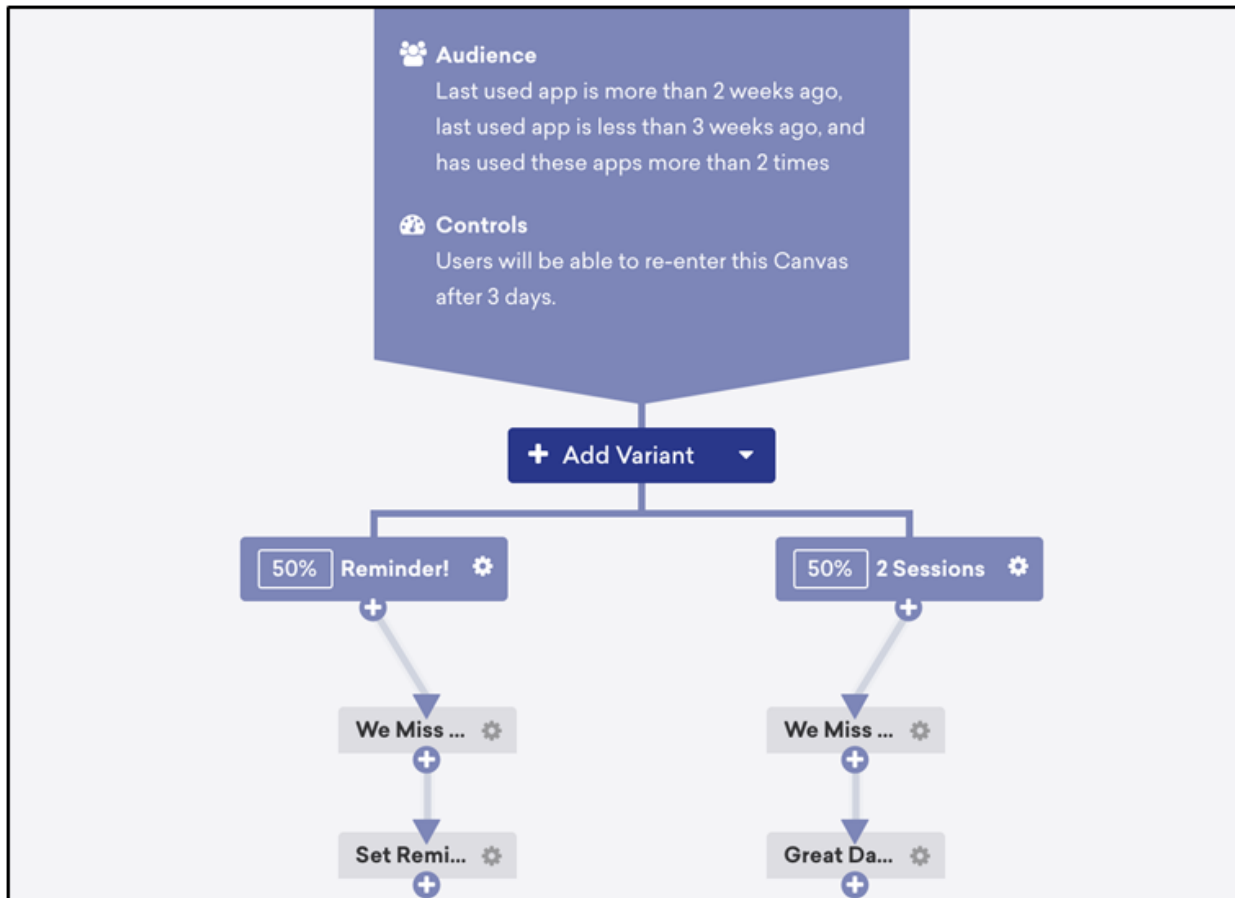
Apart from this, there can be different workflows that can be designed and tested to achieve higher user engagement and retention.
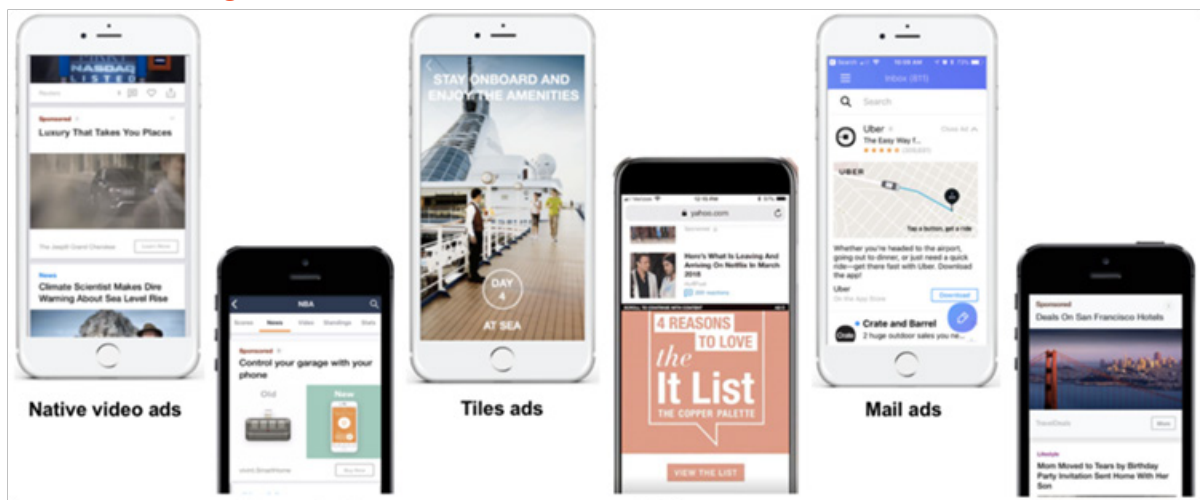
4. Revenue

Mobile App Monetization

There are 5 ways to get revenue from your apps:

1. Mobile Advertising
2. Free app with in-app purchase
3. Free app with subscription
4. Paid app download
5. Brand sponsorship

Mobile Advertising

Native video ads   Tiles ads   Mail ads

Getting revenue through Mobile Advertising means dedicating a section of your apps to run ads. The 2 essential parts of starting mobile advertising are: 1) selecting the mobile app monetization platform where the ads will run and 2) ad format

For mobile apps, there are a number of mobile app monetization platforms. The most used platforms are Admob, Facebook Audience Network, Ironsourc, Flurry, Mopub, Pubmatic, Applovin, and Vungle.

The ad formats for display ads are:

- Native Ads
- Interstitial Ads
- Video Ads
- Banner Ads
- Rich Media Ads

Free app with in-app purchase or subscription

In this model, users download the app for free and pay for an in-app purchase or subscription. Below are some of the top apps that offer user in-app purchase/ subscription for iOS
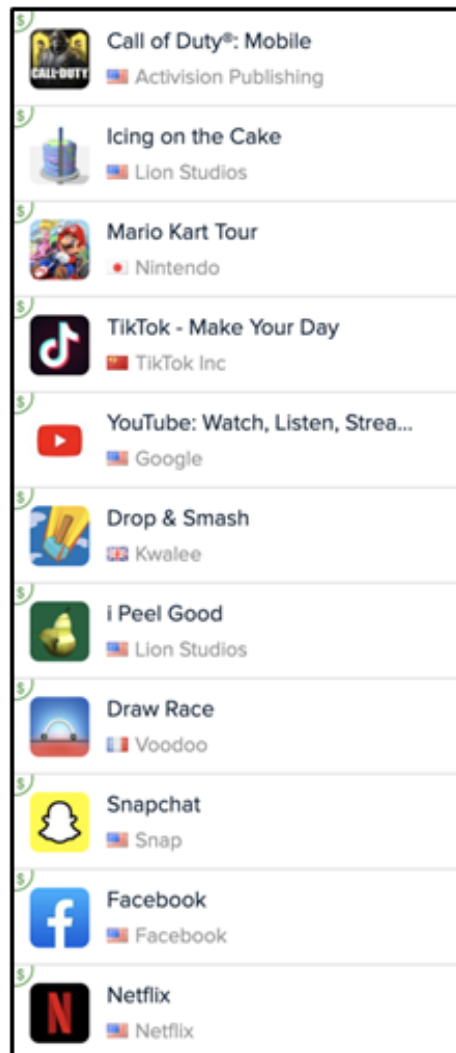
These apps are usual from categories like gaming (Mario Kart Tour) and content based apps (Netflix).

Premium Apps

Premium apps are ones where the user has to pay before downloading the app. Below is the list of top-ranked premium apps. These apps are mostly from the gaming category:

Brand sponsorship

This monetization method is particularly popular with apps that contain content addressing a niche market. For example, a financial investment content app can have sponsorship from an investment company to show their content at the top and capture most of the audience.

5.Measurement

Top 10 mobile app KPIs

The most important App KPIs to track can be categorized based on which part of the user journey you are evaluating. Here is the list of KPIs that should be monitored for each stage:

Acquisition

1. App Store Conversion Rate (CVR)

   This is the percentage of users who download your app from the total number of users who visited your app store page. CVR varies based on app category, app platform (iOS or Android) and country.

   - Average Value

     The average CVR in the US is 25.25% in the Apple App Store and 27.76% in the Google Play Store.

The graph below shows average CVR by category for the Apple App Store

Average App Store Search Conversion Rate - Apple App Store

Average App Page Conversion Rate - Apple App Store
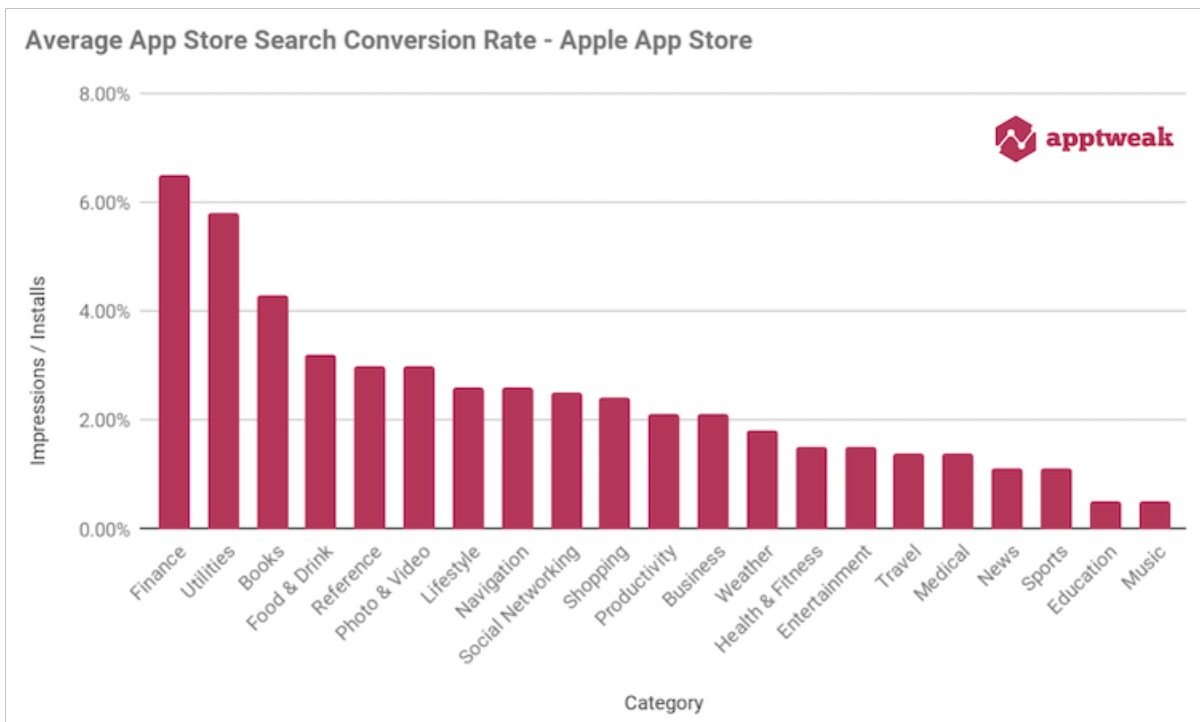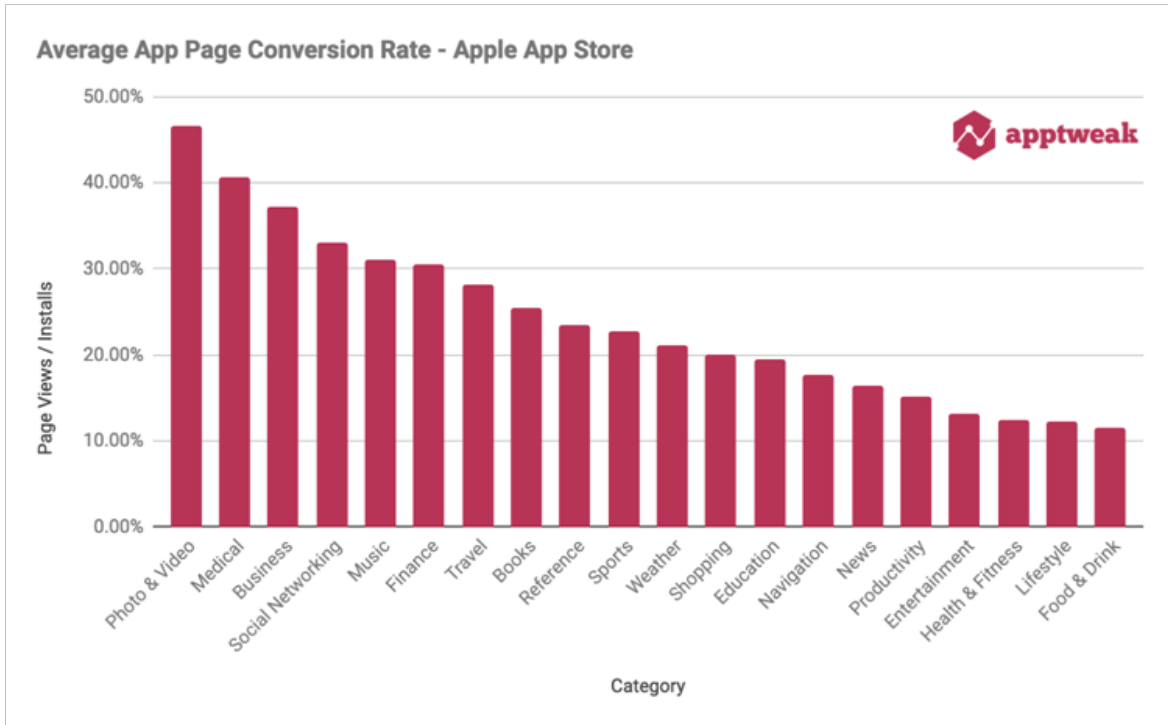
2. Organic Uplift

Organic uplift represents a correlation between organic installs and paid installs which means how many additional users will install the app due to paid activity.

There are various factors that affect organic lift like hidden virality/word of mouth and driving paid installs which propels app store visibility - hence more organic installs too.

- Historical average value
  Over the last few years, organic uplift has decreased due to increased competition and the fact that more space has been given to ad and featured content placements at the expense of organic placements.

The graph below shows the decrease in organic installs:

Share of Organic Installs Trend

Interquartile average, 11k apps with min. 10k spend per app per quarter

AppsFlyer

Legend: Android ● iOS ● Non-Gaming ● Gaming ● Overall
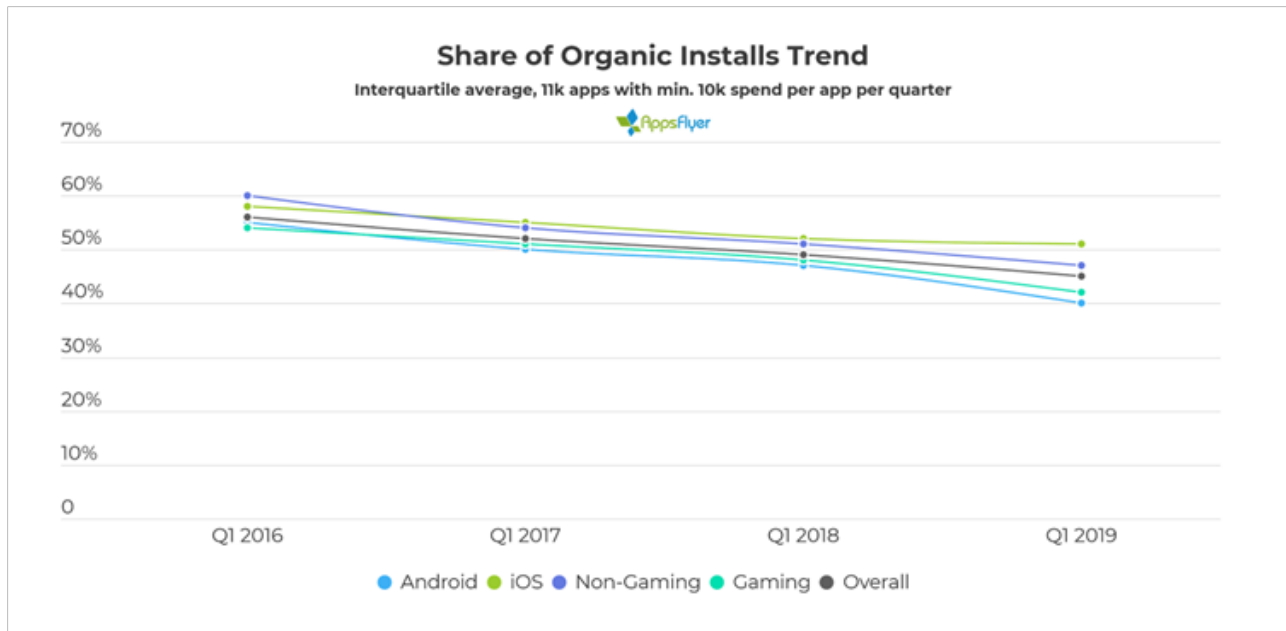
3. CAC vs LTV Ratio

CAC is Cost of Customer Acquisition and LTV is the Lifetime Value. A comparison of these 2 metrics helps to evaluate what the maximum cost for a user acquisition should be. The paid media sources for which this value is higher should be allocated more budget compared to media sources where it is low.

- Desired Value
  For an app to be profitable, CAC vs LTV should be greater than 1. When it is less than 1 it means that the app is losing money.

4. App Store Rating & Reviews

App Store ratings play an important part in App Store Optimisation. The higher the rating, the more users will download your app.

- Desired Value
  An App Store rating of 4+ is considered good. A rating lower than that is bad and often decreases the App Store CVR also.

5. User Engagement Funnel

It's important to track the funnel conversion rate for an app and engage with users where there is drop-off.

Here is an example of typical user flow for an ecommerce app:
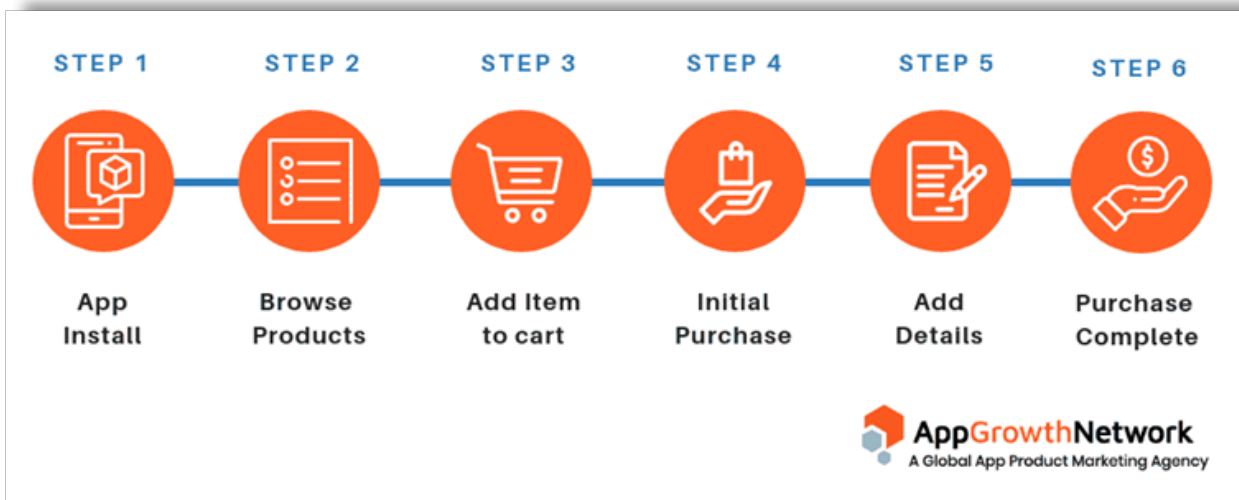
Check out the funnel points where users are dropping, analyze reasons for drop-off and make improvements in that step in order to increase your conversions.

6.Session Length

Session length is the amount of time spent by a user in your app. The time begins when the app is opened and ends when it is closed. The ideal session length for apps varies depending on the type of app.

Session length is an important metric to measure because it helps to determine whether the user is spending enough time on the app to trigger important action. For e-commerce, this action would be purchase; for travel, book a ticket; for meditation, completing a meditation session; for content, reading & sharing content. If a session length is not long enough, that means there's a problem that needs to be solved.

7. Retention Rate

This is the most important metric for apps. Even in our expert interviews, all mobile app veterans specify this as a must-measure KPI.

There can be different types of retention:

· N-day retention – users are active on a particular day after installing the app. It is the same as classic retention.
· Unbounded retention – users are active on a particular day or after that day. Sometimes also referred to as rolling retention.
· Bracket retention – users are active within a particular time period.

Based on the app type, you should select which retention to follow. For a gaming app, N-day retention is relevant - while for a movie booking or travel app, un-bounded retention is more relevant.

This is what typical retention curves look like - for app #1 retention is clearly high-er. Mobile app developers should always aim to move the retention curve up for overall app success.
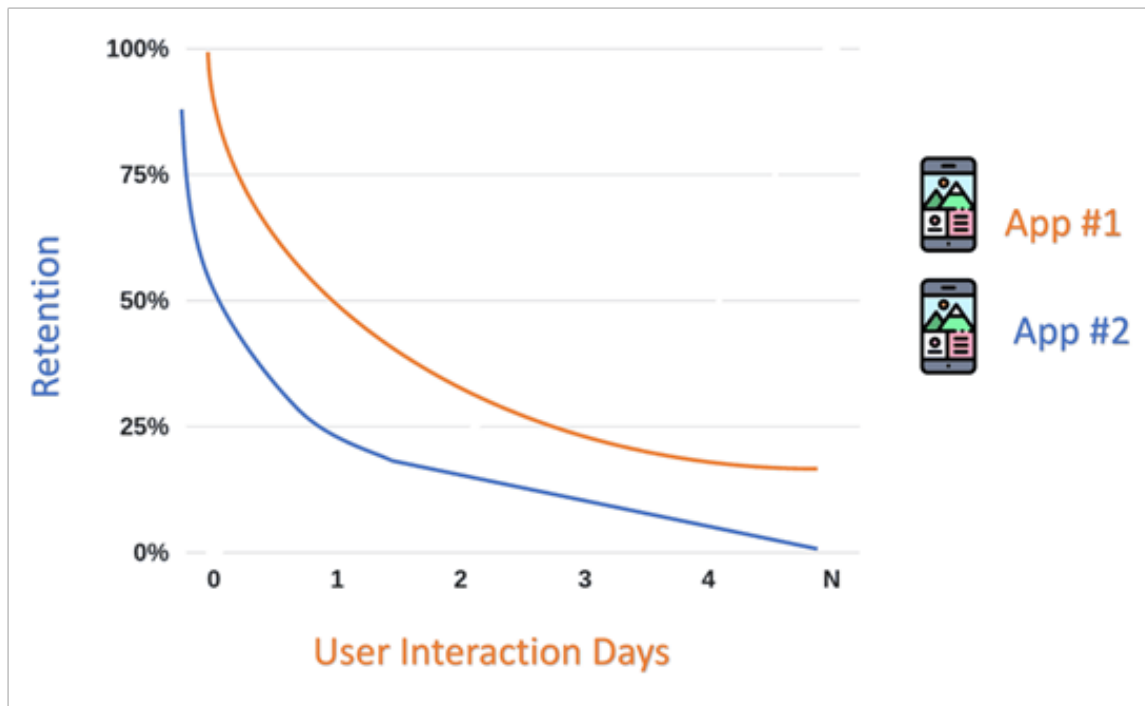
8. User behaviour cohorts

User behavior cohorts are important for analyzing retention based on actions in the app. For instance, new user behavior cohorts can be based on.

   a. Location
   b. Source of acquisition
   c. Device type

For a current user, it can be based on the frequency of performing a critical event. For e-commerce, it's order value while for food delivery it could be how many times a user places an order in a month.

Similarly, product behaviour cohorts can be created to help users achieve behaviour that increase retention.

Revenue

9. LTV

The lifetime value (LTV) is used to see how much revenue an average customer generates. This metric is directly linked to your business revenue, so it's very important. We cover details on how to calculate LTV in another session.

10. Free trial to subscription conversion
This conversion rate is important for apps that offer free trials, especially for SAAS apps.

Measuring success of advertising by Adjust

What is attribution?

Mobile attribution is the science of matching two data points, such as attributing ad spend to user engagement or installs based on certain variables. Attribution creates an understanding of what happens when a user interacts with a mobile ad.

Successful mobile app attribution covers the entirety of the conversion funnel. It identifies if a user reacts upon seeing an advertisement and if a user installs an app after seeing an ad. Attribution also reveals how a user behaves after installing the app. While mobile app tracking helps advertisers and marketers understand users, it can also help marketers identify relevant cohorts, identify groups that do (or don't) respond to creatives, and determine how they behave in-app by tracking key events.

Why is attribution important?

Attribution figures out the number of ad dollars spent on the number of conversions gained, and is important to determining the success of advertising campaigns. Without accurate attribution, advertisers, partners and app developers wouldn't know how much has been spent per ad, and how much a successful conversion pays out.

Attribution affects the entire mobile ad ecosystem, from determining how much ad space costs to how well a campaign has performed – another reason attribution is a fundamental component of mobile marketing.

Attribution and Adjust

By working with Adjust, you can understand media performance across multiple channels. Adjust clients can track their marketing channels and aggregate conversion data for in-depth analysis – whether that's via click or impression. You'll always know which ads delivered which users, along with useful contextual information such as which campaign creatives those users saw. Your incoming users are tracked and accurately sourced in real time.

Adjust has a fully dynamic partner setup, which means that you don't have to worry about partner-specific URLs and bulky network SDKs. You can add your campaigns directly into your dashboard and immediately begin tracking results across your networks.

Attribution is an essential part of mobile app success — make sure you're getting it right by working with us.

LTV and Churn Rate: Measure the Efficiency of Your Marketing Funnel

We use the lifetime value (LTV) to see how much revenue an average customer brings you. Naturally, you want your LTV to be as large as possible, but most importantly, it needs to exceed your customer acquisition cost (CAC).

To calculate LTV we need to introduce a couple of metrics - average revenue per daily active user (ARPDAU) and the churn rate. The churn rate refers to the number of people who have stopped using your service as a fraction of the total users. This may be hard to calculate depending on what you define as the 'churning point'.

Assuming your churn rate doesn't go over 100% (hopefully that doesn't happen), we can represent the LTV as:

$$LTV = ARPDAU * \Sigma\ (1 - Churn\ Rate)^{time\ period}$$

Which then simplifies to:

$$LTV = \frac{ARPDAU}{Churn\ Rate}$$

Note that the ARPDAU and the churn rate must be from the same time period.

You may also decide to adjust this value by multiplying by a coefficient to account for the variations in your churn rate.

A more advanced look at LTV would involve using Bayesian probability:

$$P(H|E) = \frac{P(E|H)*P(H)}{P(E)}$$

Saying that the posterior probability of an event is equal to the likelihood multiplied by the prior probability as a fraction of the marginal likelihood. It's easier to visualize the equation with a Venn diagram. We can suppose that H is the event that the LTV will reach a certain value, and E is an action performed by a customer in your funnel.

So how do we use these metrics to see how well your funnel is performing?

The churn rate is a good indication of how well you are retaining customers. By tracking this, you can implement strategies to get your customers to stay with your platform/service. Not only that, but you can also see in which time peri-od the churn is the greatest. This gives you insight into the reason behind it
- whether your customers are forgetting to renew their subscription, are leaving after the trial is done or simply dropping after a certain time of using the service.

The LTV shows you how much your customers are willing to pay over time - which is useful to forecast revenues - but also indicates which part of the fun-nel is bringing the most revenue and which part needs to be optimized. In the case of mobile apps, your funnel consists of users clicking on a screen. You can change certain aspects of the app to promote particular behaviors (like purchas-ing in-app bundles) and see how that affects the LTV and the churn rate.

Let's look at the example of Mint, the personal finance app. We don't have the data for calculating the LTV or the churn rate, but we can look at parts of their funnel to see what's effective and how we could improve the top of the funnel.

Attribution affects the entire mobile ad ecosystem, from determining how much ad space costs to how well a campaign has performed – another reason attribu-tion is a fundamental component of mobile marketing.

Because it has been on the market for over 10 years, Mint already has strong brand awareness (top of the funnel). It's also the Editor's Choice app on Google Play, so increasing the number of cold leads may be difficult. We can, however, look at the 'interest & consideration' part of the funnel. Of course, we can look at how changing the app preview images or adding more testimonials affects their LTV, but we can also just look at the reviews. Recently the app received a lot of negative reviews commenting on the redesign. These reviews mostly come from established customers who have been using the app for a long time. A possible fix is to change the design once again, and hope it works out. Or, a more effi-cient solution would be to introduce a tutorial guide that helps both new and old customers navigate the app faster and easier.

Another big thing that Mint has already improved on is in-app purchases. It in-troduced MintSights, a feature that gives the user more functionality for an extra price. This is a great move on their part because it gives new potential users an additional reason to choose Mint over other similar apps - while increasing Mint's revenue stream at the same time. The benefit is that it's a very organic add-on feature, as opposed to setting a price for the app itself. It's also smart because Intuit, the mother company of Mint, wants customers to use more banking tools available on their website - and the Mint app is a perfect getaway for that.

What Experts Say About Important App KPIs

Thomas Petit (Mobile Growth/Apple Search Ads Expert)
It's a combination of things. One thing I commonly ask or check first is day 30 or second month retention: if this value isn't double digits yet, there's likely a bunch of hard fixes required. Ratings & reviews give pretty good signals too and encompass many aspects, from crash rate to UI, monetization to support. For UA, the trend between organic vs paid over time is also very insightful, as well as how diversified your marketing mix is: relying too heavily on 1 or 2 providers is a risky bet.

Peter Jung (Growth Marketer)
I see retention as the main KPI to determine an app's health. Especially D1 retention, because churn is inevitable and we want to be at a high D1 retention percentage as it impacts the overall retention curve. I would say retention has to be at a healthy level before any paid growth is initiated. If users are not coming back to the app, that user is a dead user. It will cost more to resurrect that same user since we are starting from the negatives as we have already paid to acquire them.

Saulo Marti (VP Marketing at 8FIT)

- Paid to organic ratio
- CAC x LTV ratio
- Growth curve
- Unit economics
- ROAS
- Audience size and potential size

Arpit Patel (Head of User Acquisition at Psafe Technology)
I like looking at several front-end KPIs as well as backend KPIs to help me and my team to understand the overall trend of each cohort. One thing we heavily focus on is retention to understand our traffic and the users that we are acquiring. You can easily see a change in traffic mix or market condition shifts if the quality of the traffic changes over time.

Analyze the data from the top of the funnel to the very end of the renewal cycle. Taking a step back and asking yourself what KPIs matters to me and how do these KPIs impacts the overall growth of the app? There is no one size fits all approach here. Each app is unique.

KPIs depends on the type of app you have and also the type of revenue model your business supports. For example, if it's a gaming app then you want to consider marrying your front-end data with the backend data looking at engagement, retention, and paid CVR percentage. This should allow you to pick up on trends around your users as to how often do they convert into paid users, how far down the funnel do users convert? Are there certain trends relating to when a user converts (maybe when there's a too good of a sale to pass up on)?

If it's a subscription focused app, you would want to look at KPIs surroundings your conversion funnel, mobile web to app install and registration/trial start to a paid subscriber. Looking at each conversion metric with how users are engaging with the app and understanding the drop-offs between each conversion or even engagement. Is there a correlation between a specific event and when do the vast majority of the user becomes a paid user?

Sharath Kowligi (User Acquisition and monetisation, Mobile Games)
Retention
I like to look at Day 1 (~50%) and Day 7 (~20%) for early-stage products. And then Day 30 and Day 90 for more mature mobile products. The day 30 and day 90 benchmarks depend on the type of products. Frequency of app open(mainly for games) Are we interesting enough for people to remember us multiple times a day? The average American user opens their phones 80 times a day. If we can't even capture their attention 1/20th of the times, we must ask ourselves, how entertaining are we then?

Lucia Mrvová (Head of User Acquisition at Lingokids)
This is always a mix of different variables, depending on how well established the app is. For example, how long has the app been around? Generally I am on the lookout for the following: – Organic vs paid ratio (and how it developed over time) – Growth curve – Retention/churn (the critical points are Day 1, Day 7 and Day 30) – Conversion rates throughout funnel – Ratings & reviews – ROI (what's the break-even point and how has this developed over time thus far).

[Laurie Galazzo (CMO at Apptweak and ASO tools Pioneer)](#)

The most effective KPI you can use to measure your app's health & success is the retention rate. Depending on the size and nature of your business, you can look at various retention rates (7 days, 30 days, 60 days, etc.) The key focus is to invest in users retention before the acquisition.

As mentioned earlier, if your app does not offer a great experience or fails to retain and engage users effectively - it is probably time to rethink its features, design, or positioning. Your reviews and ratings are also a great indicator of success. Your average rating will give a clear indication of how "good" your app is to users. Today, an average rating under 4.0 is likely considered as a "bad quality" app. Make sure to regularly check your reviews to better understand what makes your users happy (or unhappy). Maximize and push the features that work; replace or improve the features that don't.

[Elsa Massoudi Aguilar (CRM Manager at OMIO)](#)

An Average Session Length or a Monthly Number of Sessions per User may be a significant KPI for a gaming app; however, for a travel app, it may not be a key determinant. The same principle can apply to Retention Rate. For example, on a travel app, you see customers book six trips a year using your platform and seem "loyal". However, in reality, they travel 12 times a year and book the other six times using other platforms. Alternatively, you may have customers that only travel once a year but will always book using your platform.

[Anton Tatarinovich(Head of Marketing at Splitmetrics)](#)

CAC to LTV < 1, if an app is supposed to bring in revenue. If acquiring one customer costs you more money than you earn from him – business is unsustainable for the long term.

Ratings — ideally 4+ stars. The market speaks to you, so why not listen.

Also, vital performance metrics like crash rate and render time, to make sure the product itself is healthy.