

Five Tips for Maintaining Branded Mobile App Engagement

Author : Dennis Mink

Date : October 1, 2015



It's no surprise that mobile is becoming a dominant force in **marketing**, with global spending on apps expected to hit [\\$35 billion](#) this year. And, it's no wonder **brands** are scrambling to get a piece of the action: 86% of mobile usage is spent in apps, according to the [Mobile App Engagement Index](#).

But there are [1.3 million apps](#) to choose from and only [224 million monthly active app users](#) in the US, so **brands** are also working hard to figure out how to get—and hold—consumers' interest.

With so much competition for time and attention, building a **branded** app is only half the battle. Maintaining engagement is critical for justifying the investment and making the app "sticky" enough to do its job. In other words, the adage "if you build it, they will come" certainly does not apply.

Although the amount of time users spend on apps is skyrocketing—now over 30 hours per month—the average number of apps they use is growing only slightly, now at 26.8, up just 0.3 over the year prior, [according to](#) Nielsen.

If 27 apps is the saturation point for consumers, becoming one of those favorite apps is a tall order. Breaking into the top 25 requires cracking the engagement code with a savvy mix of **design**, promotion, and technical prowess.

To help increase your odds, here are a handful of tips for helping to maintain engagement for your **branded** app.

1.

Create a killer app your customers will love

You get only one shot to make a great first impression. Though app usage accounts for [over half](#) of all time spent with **digital** media, consumers are fickle, deleting more than 70% of apps they install—within the first 30 days.

To keep consumers engaged and keep them coming back for more, offer fresh content,

features, or interactivity that your target market will genuinely appreciate. Optimize the user experience so that the app is easy to navigate and use.

And if you've got less than a four-star rating in the app stores, figure out what's wrong, update your app, and release a new version as quickly as possible.

2.

Use promotions and gamification

People love promotions, opportunities to score a great deal, and the option to win prizes. Since mobile is the dominant media channel, and mobile ads perform [up to five times better](#) than online ads, create mobile-specific promos that only mobile app users can participate in. Doing so creates a feeling of exclusivity that prompts participation.

Gamification can also help to drive engagement. Ask users to post selfies interacting with your **brand**, to go in-store to claim a mobile-exclusive deal, or to get their friends involved for an even bigger reward.

3.

Incorporate social hooks

Across all age groups, people spend more time in **social** networking and messaging apps (total mobile engagement on **social** is [up 55%](#) in the past year). **Social** apps also convert [76.3% of all installs](#) into registered users, so there's a major advantage to adding **social** elements, which foster engagement among your target audience, as well as directly with your **brand**. And, in case you hadn't already, make sure your mobile content is easily shareable with built-in integration across all the major **social** networks.

4.

Run a mobile re-engagement campaign

To keep from losing consumers after the download, mobile retargeting ads are a great way to get users back into your app and re-engaged with your **brand**. Retargeting ads have a very strong performance record, including high click-through rates and ROI.

Retargeting ads are available through all the major mobile platforms, including **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Yahoo**, **Google**, and smaller ad platforms, and they give you an opportunity to remind users what enticed them to download your app in the first place.

5.

Use push notifications to maintain top-of-mind awareness

Admittedly, push notifications can be a double-edged sword. When done right, they are incredibly effective at drawing consumers back to your app. In fact, users who enable push messages are up to [three times more likely](#) to launch the app in the first four months post-install.

However, similar to email **marketing**, it's important to give users the option to customize push notification settings to put them in control of what they receive, so as not to become annoying or overwhelming.

And, of course, create push notifications that are relevant to your users. For example, a snowboard company can send alerts about local snow conditions, or a running shoe company could send a daily reminder to go out for a run or an update on steps taken throughout the day.

* * *

With the average cost of building a **branded** app ranging from \$50,000 to upwards of \$1 million, depending on the complexity of the app, getting the biggest ROI comes down to user engagement—no matter what your budget.

The priciest, slickest, and sexiest mobile app is worthless if it doesn't fulfill its strategic objective of keeping your target audience engaged with your **brand**.

Whether you're still in the app planning stages or you've already deployed an app, formulating and deploying an effective engagement strategy will ensure your app earns its keep.`

//