Are Mobile Apps the Answer For Your Business?
Based on articles in Website and Marketing Trends Magazines

You probably remember when the phrase "There's an app for that" caught on as a fun sub-culture slogan a few years ago. But at the time, very few people could have predicted just how much of an impact those five words would have on the future of Web business.

The latest on mobile apps shows that they have completely changed the way that many people use the Web. The average mobile-device user spends more than 2 hours a day using mobile applications. The youth of today spend longer, but we are mainly talking about people over the age of 20. That means that users are spending 25% more time on mobile apps than they are on the actual internet.

If you think a Mobile app would be good for your business, perhaps these guidelines could help you determine if a mobile appis best for your business.

Identify Your Class
There are three basic app classifications that businesses can offer—business, information and utility.

Entertainment apps, usually in the form of games, are pretty straightforward in their purpose. This is by far the most down-loaded app category, and could make a lucrative option for many businesses. Unfortunately, developing entertainment apps can be both difficult and expensive, and the practice is probably better suited for raising awareness than it is for generating immediate revenue.

Information applications, however, can work really well for certain brands, namely those already in content publishing. These types of apps can be useful for any company that has important and/or interesting information to share with its audience.

Finally, the broadest app category is the utility classification that exists to serve a specific function for both the brand and user. This can include anything from a mobile e-commerce solution to catalog apps to account management and much more, depending on the nature of the business and the goal of the app.

Know Your Solutions
Drag-and-drop app tools such as iBuildApp, TheAppBuilder and Tiggr enable users to select a template, customize the general design and create content within an app. But a better investment might be found in application frameworks that offer broader functionality and greater flexibility while also acting as excellent learning tools. Three worth framework services include: Appcelerator, RhoMobile, and Sencha. Do the research, read articles on business's experience building and using apps, and the latest, easiest and less expensive ways to design your own. Also, be aware of trends in your customer profiles, and if another business in the same industry as you has already built and been using an app, check them out and see if it worked for them.

Apple has revealed that over 25 billion applications have been downloaded from its famous App Store for iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch users. The App Store boasts over 550,000 free and paid apps, and the highly popular touch-based game AngryBirds reigned supreme as the most downloaded paid app. (as of June 2012, but has lost its top slot as of this past year, as Mindcraft is growing in strength and usage) Over all, 17 of the top 25 paid apps were just 99 cents, including two stripped-down versions of AngryBirds. As far as free apps go, the most downloaded was—no surprise—the Facebook social networking app, closely followed by Pandora, Skype, Netflix, Twitter and Instagram. And keep in mind that these statistics and app ratings change almost daily, influenced by trends that keep changing all over the world.

Information applications can work really well for any company that has important and/or interesting information to share with its audience. Many times, combining their app with mobile advertising can bring huge increases to their businesses. This varies with the type of business, and current trends. If you have a game that could increase in popularity (but then decline as interest declines), your investment in building an expensive app and combining it with mobile advertising, could be an investment that may only bring good payback for 6 months to a year. Interest and trends change frequently. If you are looking to make such an investment, do more research into your market trending reports, and also discover ways to keep your app and advertising fresh as you try to expand your marketing and keep the pull strong.

Spread The Word

Having a mobile application, whether it's an entertainment, informational or utility app, can be a huge boon for your business in terms of driving awareness and deepening levels of consumer engagement. Depending on the nature of the app, it can also help drive conversions.

The three mobile application framework services previously mentioned, as well as the many other similar offerings on the Web, can give business owners the user-friendly development experience they need while also allowing them to build highly functional and flexible apps for consumers.

In the end, the most important thing is to have a good idea that helps a company connect with users and gets them to use an app that will ensure more attention paid to your brand.

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