MILLION DOLLAR
APP CHECKLIST

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IDEA VALIDATION

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IDEA VALIDATION

The app development process starts with ideation or coming up with an idea. You must think of a problem that your app will solve and what features it would have. The next step is idea validation. Launching an app without validating it is like shooting in the dark. It is important to know beforehand if the audience faces the issues that your app will solve and whether they will use it for this purpose. Interviews with potential customers might be one way to validate your idea. You may even create a demo to share with people. You can even buy a lading page and buy google ads to ask customers to sign up for a newsletter to seek feedback and information about user interest.

☐ Have you identified the problem you're solving?

☐ Have you defined your target audience?

☐ Have you defined Your App's core functionality?

☐ Have you searched through the app store to see if similar apps are already on the market?

☐ Is this the right time to launch your app?

☐ Do you have the required team, skills, and resources?

☐ Have you talked to experts and laymen about your idea?

☐ Are you willing to change your idea after discussing it with others?

DR⚡FT

Drift is a sales technology company known for popularizing conversational marketing. In three years, the company has gained 100,000 companies as clients. David Cancel, the CEO, recalls the secret of their success in these words "we were basically validating that, from working since day 1 with a handful of groups of customers". After interacting with the target audience for an extended time, the company developed the minimum viable product.

Takeaway

Idea validation is the first step in app development, as shown in the case study on Drift. It is a way to confirm if a problem exists that your app can solve. It also tests if people will be willing to use your app to solve the problem.

MARKET RESEARCH

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MARKET RESEARCH

Market research is based on analyzing the present situation of the market. There are several benefits of studying the market. It is a way to understand the needs of the customers so that your product can address them. Market research is also a means of studying your competitors. You can determine the pros and cons they had to deal with to develop a unique selling proposition. You must also see if the market is too saturated with a lot of competition. At the same time, you must market trends to better understand the scope your app has to be successful.

- [ ] How many competitors do you have?
- [ ] How much revenue are your competitors making?
- [ ] How long did it take for your competitors to scale to their current performance?
- [ ] Conduct Gap analysis to create a Unique Selling Point
- [ ] Define the features your competitors Offer on their app
      Read reviews on competitor apps
- [ ] Decide an app monetization strategy through competitor analysis

Plai

According to ChromeInfotech, 25% of the apps they developed for their clients failed because of insufficient market research. This is why Plai, a performance management software company, decided to conduct thorough market research before development. They identified their competitors, including Lattice, 15Five, Impraise, and Small Improvements. They analyzed factors like position, size, target audience, value proposition, and the features of the apps. This allowed them to understand the market and the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors.

Takeaway

As the case study on Plain shows, through market research, you can study the industry you want to operate in. By knowing your rivals, market share, and size, and market growth, you can boost your decision making.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

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TECHNICAL VALIDATION

After the ideation phase, the app development process begins. To develop the app, it is important to figure out what it needs for its development. Simple questions like which programming language to use are important to be clear on. Each language has its perks and cons and will impact your final product. Startups should also figure out how their app will reach customers and how they will use it.

- ☐ Decide if your app belongs on the app store, Play Store, or both?
- ☐ Decide if your app have to be Native or Hybrid?
- ☐ Identify which programming language to use for your app development
- ☐ Create a technology stack requirement for development
- ☐ Will Your App Need A Cloud-Based Infrastructure?

IKEA

When Ikea decided to make an app for its furniture, they had a difficult task ahead. The app was ambitious. Users could take images or video of their house, upload it on the app, or on live video, and virtually place Ikea furniture in their homes. The app's complexity drove the company to identify all its technological needs. The company used both Unity Engine and ARkit to make the app useable and accessible, as well as several coding languages to create it.

Takeaway

As the case study on IKEA demonstrates, by identifying all of your technological requirements early on, you can avoid any issues in the development phase.

UI REQUIREMENTS FINALIZATION

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USER INTERFACE REQUIREMENT

This stage is about turning your app idea into something the users would enjoy interacting with. What your app looks like and how easy it is to use are important factors. Companies lose and gain customers because of how their app looks and feels. It is important to design an aesthetic and efficient interface. According to Nate Bolt, founder of Ethnio, a user interface research company, a good user interface directs consumer behavior. This is why apps that are often disliked continue to be popular.

- ☐ Do you have wireframes ready?
- ☐ Which orientation, portrait or landscape, will your app have?
- ☐ Finalize the flow of your apps through app screen designs.
- ☐ Are Your CTA's optimized to attract your target audience?
- ☐ Do you have a logo for your application?
- ☐ Have you Designed other branding elements for your application?
-   Is your app easy to use?
- ☐ Does your app follow a common sense trajectory?
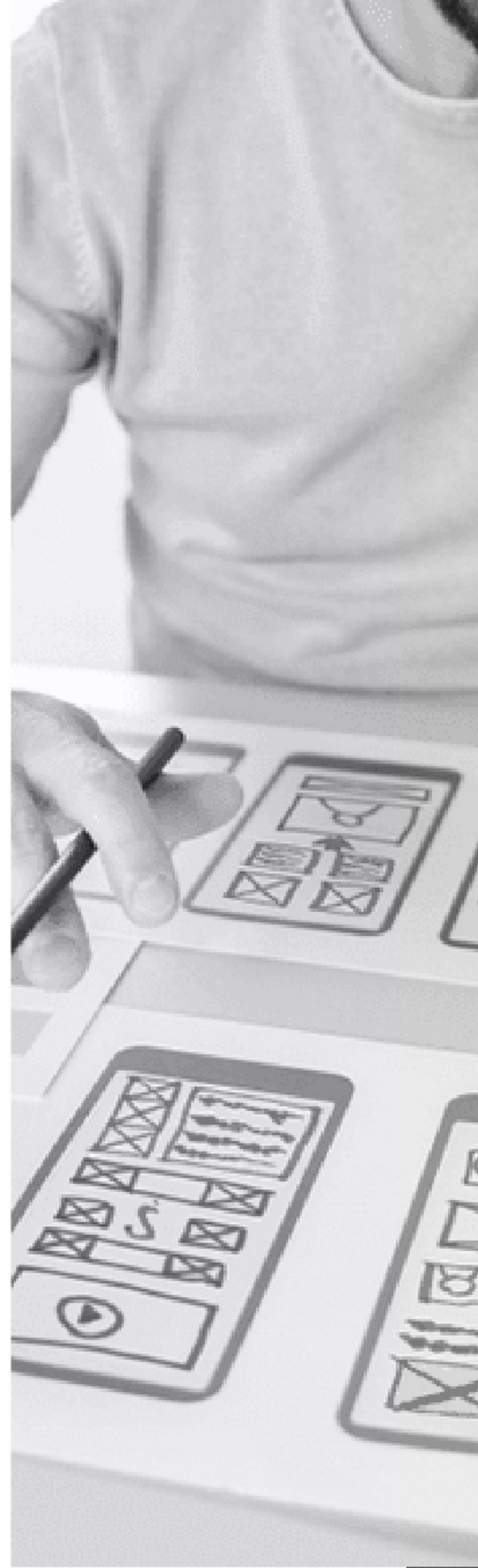
Instagram 📷

In recent years, Instagram has expanded itself into a multimedia app with new features such as stories, screen sharing, IGTV. The app also changed its much-beloved scrolling model to an algorithm. Even though there has been a lot of public outcry on social, most users did not stop using the app. In fact, the app has gained 200 million monthly users since 2017, capturing the market from competitors like Flickr. Nate Bolt believed that Instagram was successful because of the app's investment in perfecting its user interface. The app uses aesthetic colors, a user-friendly interface, and even changed its logo.

Takeaway

Instagram's domination is due to its investment on developing an excellent user interface. Your company can keep users busy and bring in new users by making sure that your app's user interface is top-notch.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

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DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

After figuring out your user interface, your compan can start developing the app. There are several important things to consider. This stage is all about how you will create and design your app. To turn your product idea into something available on millions of screens, you need to address the development requirements for your app.

- ☐ If you're making an app in-house, do you have the team to take on app development?
- ☐ If you're hiring a mobile app development company, have you followed the steps to identify the best app development company out there?
- ☐ Do you have a cost range for your mobile app development project?
- ☐ Do you have a time line for your mobile app development process?
- ☐ Do you have an app development model in mind, such as Agile, Waterfall, or Lean?
- ☐ Do you have a prototype made for your app?

NETFLIX

Netflix was founded in 1997 as a media rental company. The company had a successful business model and grew dramatically. But it was not very profitable. Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, decided to expand the business into streaming services. To shift from DVD rental to online streaming is a big leap. Hastings focused on identifying all the resources needed and the costs of developing the streaming service. Planning ahead is why Netflix was able to dominate the streaming industry in the age of piracy and torrents.

Takeaway

Netflix did not come to dominate online streaming in a fortnight. The app's success was due to preparation and identifying all the development requirements at the right time. Your company should take care of the development requirements because your app's success depends on it.

BUDGET AND PLANNING

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BUDGET AND PLANNING

After identifying technological and development requirements, it is important to create a budget and a plan of action. One of the main reasons that startups fail is inadequate planning and budgeting. It is important to identify a goal early on. Based on what your objective is, you must devise a budget. Businesses need to be aware of all the costs associated with developing and running an app. It is also important to plan every step of the process for optimum execution and ideal outcomes.

- ☐ Did you account for the cost of developing the app?
- ☐ Did you account for the cost of running and maintaining the app?
- ☐ Did you account for the administrative costs?
- ☐ Did you strike a good balance between costs and quality?
- ☐ Did you plan all the stages of the process?
- ☐ Did you set aside funds to cover up in case of losses?
- ☐ Did you account for the cost of security?
- ☐ What is your business model?

Disney

Disney owns some of the most popular and successful studios and franchises. But developing a new business is tricky even for industry giants like Disney. When the company decided to invest $500 Million Dollars on a new streaming service, Disney+, company executives focused on planning and budgeting. They planned ahead to account for losses in the first few quarters due to intense competition from Amazon and Netflix. Creating a thoughtful budget allowed Disney+ to remain in the market for long enough to mature. Today, the company has nearly 500 million paid subscribers.

Takeaway

As Disney+ shows, making money is not the only way for your app to survive early on. As long as you plan your every move and set aside a budget to keep your operations running, your app will be able to stay on the market and grow.

MONETIZATION STRATEGY

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MONETIZATION STRATEGY

The most important measure for your startup's success
in the amount of money (revenue and profit) made. Many brilliant app ideas fail be-
cause of a weak monetization strategy. It is important to develop a monetization strategy
from the start so that your app can be developed, designed, optimized, and marketed
accordingly. There are several options to choose from, including in-app advertising,
in-app purchases, freemium, and paid apps.

- ☐ Does your company use email lists to engage with users?
- ☐ Does your company issue a newsletter to engage users?
- ☐ How will your company develop an advertising campaign?
- ☐ Does your company use sponsors and partnerships?
- ☐ Does your company have multiple payment modes and options?
- ☐ Does your company use in-app advertising?
- ☐ Does your company use in-app purchases?
- ☐ Does your company offer a freemium service?
- ☐ Does your company use a paid app?
- ☐ Does your company regularly review its monetization strategy regularly?
- ☐ Does your app share user data with external parties?

Spotify®

With the ability to torrent and download music
for free, it was hard to imagine a paid stream-
ing service would be successful. Yet, Spotify
was able to dominate the play store and app
store. According to the Harvard Business
Review, the key to Spotify's success is its smart
monetization strategy. It effectively deployed
the freemium model by offering a free version
of the app for a few days with the option to buy
premium after. Simply put, Spotify gets users
settled into using the app before it asks for
payment. The company also uses constant
A/B testing and analyses user data to improve
its service.

Takeaway

If Spotify's story tells us something, it's that
companies need to figure out their monetiza-
tion strategy from the start. You can design and
market your app according to your strategy
and grow your company.

RIGHT APP DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

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RIGHT APP DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

.com

The market for apps is lucrative but also competitive.
One mistake and your app can end up in the dustbin of history. It is important to audit your team to determine whether your company has the resources and skills to develop the app in-house. Generally, an external company can develop a better app much faster than in-house teams. Many businesses develop their apps through other companies because the higher costs are worth it. The money spent is reflected in the app quality. It is important to identify the right company to develop your app for ideal outcomes.

- ☐ Did your company check out and compare portfolios of app development companies?
- ☐ Did you check client reviews for the app development companies?
- ☐ Did you prioritize quality over price?
- ☐ Does the company welcome new and innovative ideas?
- ☐ Is the company interested and experienced in your industry and app type?
- ☐ Does the company make apps for the platform (App Store or Play store) you have in mind?
- ☐ Did you keep improving user experience in mind?
- ☐ Does the company have a culture of testing?
- ☐ Is your company open to accepting mistakes?

Tekrevol was approached by RE4SALE with a plan to transform their conventional business model into a digital one, through mobile app development. Having looked at multiple companies, what made RE4SALE choose Tekrevol wasn't cost-effectiveness, rather it was an alignment of vision that struck a chord. Tekrevol was able to meet the vision, add value to the product, and create a solution that solves all of the client's problems. As a client, you shouldn't just look into the portfolio, but look for a company with whom your vision aligns.

Takeaway

The app you app is developed can have a vast influence over its success. Follow RE4SALE's example and try to find the developer most suited to your needs and recognizes and adds value to your vision. And remember, quality over price!

APP PERFORMANCE METRIC

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APP PERFORMANCE METRIC

After determining whether your company will make the
app inhouse or hire an external developer, you need to identify app performance met-
rics. This stage is important because it helps with detecting anomalies, troubleshooting
problems, understanding patterns and trends, optimizing resource utilization, and gath-
ering insights from consumer experience. It helps you measure the performance

- [ ] Have you checked how your app behaves during low battery, Airplane mode, fewer network zones, and even on less storage?
- [ ] Is there any web-service that your app is designed to provide?
- [ ] Does your app have a server-side component?
- [ ] What's the scalability of your app – horizontally as well as vertically?
- [ ] Does your company use in-app advertising?
- [ ] Are you notified when your app crashes in real-time?

SUPERCELL ID

After developing Clash of Clans, Supercell
found great success. Today the company has
established itself as the developer of several
popular mobile games. But gaming apps are
vulnerable to flaws and bugs. Angry fans can
very quickly take to social media when glitches
take the fun out of the game. This is why Su-
percell devised abroad and well thought out
app performance metrics. The benchmark for
the company's success is regularly checking
the games for flaws to improve user experi-
ence.

Takeaway

If Supercell can teach you one thing, its that
you must develop app performance metrics
during the developmental phase of your app.
This way, you can resolve many of the glitches
and bugs even before your app hits the
market.

SECURITY

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SECURITY

One of the biggest problems facing the app development industry is security. Even technology giants such as Facebook and Twitter suffer from data breaches often because of lags in their security. Security is also one of the main issues that customers care about. It goes without saying that your app should not only follow industry standards but also aim to raise the bar in protecting user privacy.

- ☐ Do you have a secure sockets layer incorporated in the project?
- ☐ Does your app have a two-point user authentication in place?
- ☐ Do you have control over who would have access to your app?
- ☐ Will there be sub-admins?
- ☐ Does your app comply with industry security standards, like HIPAA or PCI DSS
- ☐ Is your payment gateway integration done, right?
- ☐ Does your app utilize an HTTPS – SSL/TLS Security Layer?
- ☐ Does your app protect local storage data?
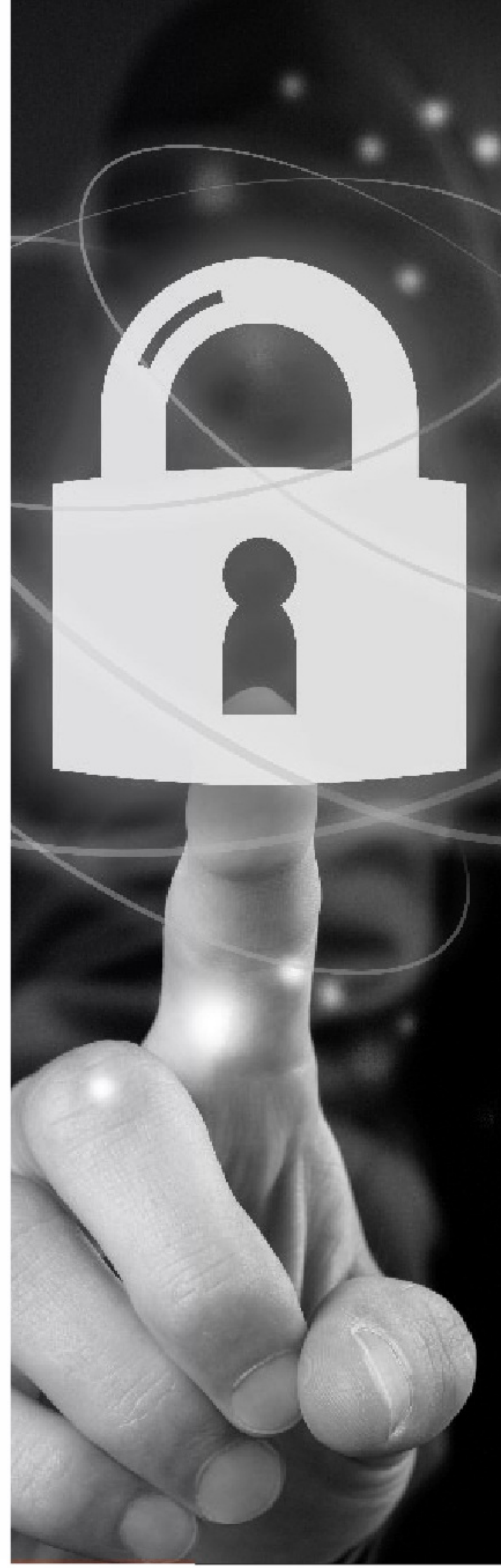
WhatsApp

WhatsApp is, by far, the biggest messaging app with over two billion users. With people sharing personal data, messaging, and calling through the app, privacy and security became serious problems. In response, WhatsApp introduced the end to end encryption for calls and messages. This increased consumer trust in WhatsApp over its competitors, including Telegram. The move was so successful that Facebook announced it would introduce end to end encryption on all its messaging apps.

Takeaway

Security is the number one concern for most app developers and users. Given the risks involved, follow WhatsApp's example and raise the bar by giving your app premium security features.

APP MARKETING STRATEGY

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APP MARKETING STRATEGY

An app is as successful as its marketing campaign.
Every day new apps hit the market, but ones with an effective marketing strategy are the ones that we remember. It is important for companies to figure out which strategies they will use since there are many options to choose from. Some companies use affiliate marketing; others use social media or websites. Some even use incentives for user reviews to market the app or offer free giveaways.

- ☐ Do you have an App localization Strategy?
- ☐ Do you Have a Search Engine Marketing Strategy?
- ☐ Do you have an App Store Optimization Strategy?
- ☐ Do you have a brand activation strategy?
- ☐ Do you have a content marketing strategy?
- ☐ Do you have a video marketing strategy?
- ☐ Do you have partnerships and collaborations in place?

GEARS

Flappy Bird topped the play store and app store charts soon after its launch. Many attribute the app's success to the addictive nature of the game. However, others have also considered Flappy Bird's marketing strategy. The app effectively used play store and app store reviews to advertise itself. After every round of play, an option to review the app would appear where the play button was. Many people would click it by mistake. Soon, reviewing Flappy Bird became a trend, giving the app free publicity.

Takeaway

A good marketing strategy can be a guaranteed way to success. Learn from the story of Flappy Bird by dotGear's and think of creative ways to publicize your app.

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ASO

APP STORE OPTIMIZATION

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ASO

Even with the best marketing strategy, your cam-
paign will not reach everyone. Many users will have to find your app on the play store or app store when they search for similar services. Your company must develop an effective app store optimization strategy to increase your app's presence on the store. An effective branding strategy is one way to increase app downloads. Adding the right keywords in the app description is another way to attract users. But there are several things that you can consider.

- ☐ Does your app target relevant, high-volume keywords?
- ☐ Does your app have a unique, captivating app title that utilizes title tags?
- ☐ Does your app have a description that emphasizes core features via high-volume keywords?
- ☐ Does your app engage creatives (screenshots and preview videos) that highlight the app's functionality?
- ☐ Have you crossed over the various multilingual app challenges?
- ☐ Does your App icon follow the app store guidelines?

amazon.

Amazon's owners Jeff Bezos is the richest man in the world. There are several factors that contribute to Amazon's success. But for the company's online shopping venture, app store optimization was the key. When the online shopping app's name was Simply Amazon, the company received only 2.12% of global traffic for the keyword "shopping." The company then rebranded the app, adding the high-volume keyword "shopping" next to the powerful brand name "Amazon." Through rebranding, the company now receives nearly 10% of global traffic for the keyword "shop-
ping."

Takeaway

To get maximum engagement from users, optimize your app for the app store. This way, you will be able to reach more customers and increase users. If you don't believe me, you can just ask Jeff Bezos

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ASO

APP STORE PERFORMANCE METRICS

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APP STORE PERFORMANCE

In order to optimize your app for the app store, you need to figure out what are the weaknesses. Using app store performance metrics can help identify where your app is suffering and help your company improve. There are several tools that you can use to figure out how many times your app is download and how many users delete it. You can also analyze how users use the app to improve their experience.

- ☐ What is the number of your app downloads?
- ☐ How many new visitors are on your app?
- ☐ How many active users are there on your app at any given point of time?
- ☐ What is the average session interval of your app? The time gap between when a user opens an app and when he starts using it?
- ☐ Do you know of the time users are spending on your app?
- ☐ Do you know at what stage are they leaving your app?
- ☐ Are you able to calculate the Lifetime Value of a user?
- ☐ Do you know how many people are your app able to convert in buyers?
- ☐ Are you tracking the app store ratings and reviews daily?
- ☐ Have you fixed time for support response?

MOBILEDEVHQ

Ian Sefferman, CEO of MobileDevHQ, identified ASO as the key to the company's success. "ASO is not a simple process, and you might not see the impact overnight, but if you're willing to invest in it, the outcome can be incredibly worthwhile."

To invest in app store optimization means to develop a list of metrics. Sefferman developed an exhaustive list of metrics to analyze his app's performance on the app store. He also identified the correct set of tools to measure the app's performance. This is why the company is known for developing several successful mobile apps.

Takeaway

To optimize your app for the app store, you must develop metrics to measure your app's performance. This way, you can identify where your app is lacking and improve it like MobileDevHQ.

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

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MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

The best way to keep users engaged with your app is regular updates. Updates bring in new users. Adding new features or fixing problems also gets existing users to use the app with a fresh interest. Your company must also fix bugs, flaws, and incorporate user feedback to stay competitive. Maintaining and updating your app improves user experience and tell customers that you care.

- [ ] Do you update your app apps based on changes to various programming languages (such as Swift, Objective C, Java or HTML5)?
- [ ] Do you change style, design and usage patterns?
- [ ] Do you maintain the app infrastructure?
- [ ] Do you incorporate user reviews and customer feedback in the app?
- [ ] Do you fix all the reported bugs and flaws?
- [ ] Do you regularly improve the security features of the app?
- [ ] Do you frequently introduce new features to keep users interested?
- [ ] Do you update the app as your company expands?
- [ ] Do you rebrand your app through updates as your business grows?

UBER

Uber dominates the market of ride hailing services. But the company has recently expanded into several areas including the food delivery market with UberEats. The company also offers exclusive services such as Uber-Chopper and UberBoat. While expanding the app and the company's business, Uber rolled out regular updates and maintenance. The company accounted for user feedback, fixed flaws and improved service and user experience. Uber maintained quality while growing as a business which is a key factor in the company's success.

Takeaway

Apps are increasingly getting more complicated. This requires constant maintenance and updates to keep them running smoothly. Uber's expansion teaches us that the key to success is investing in updates and maintenance.
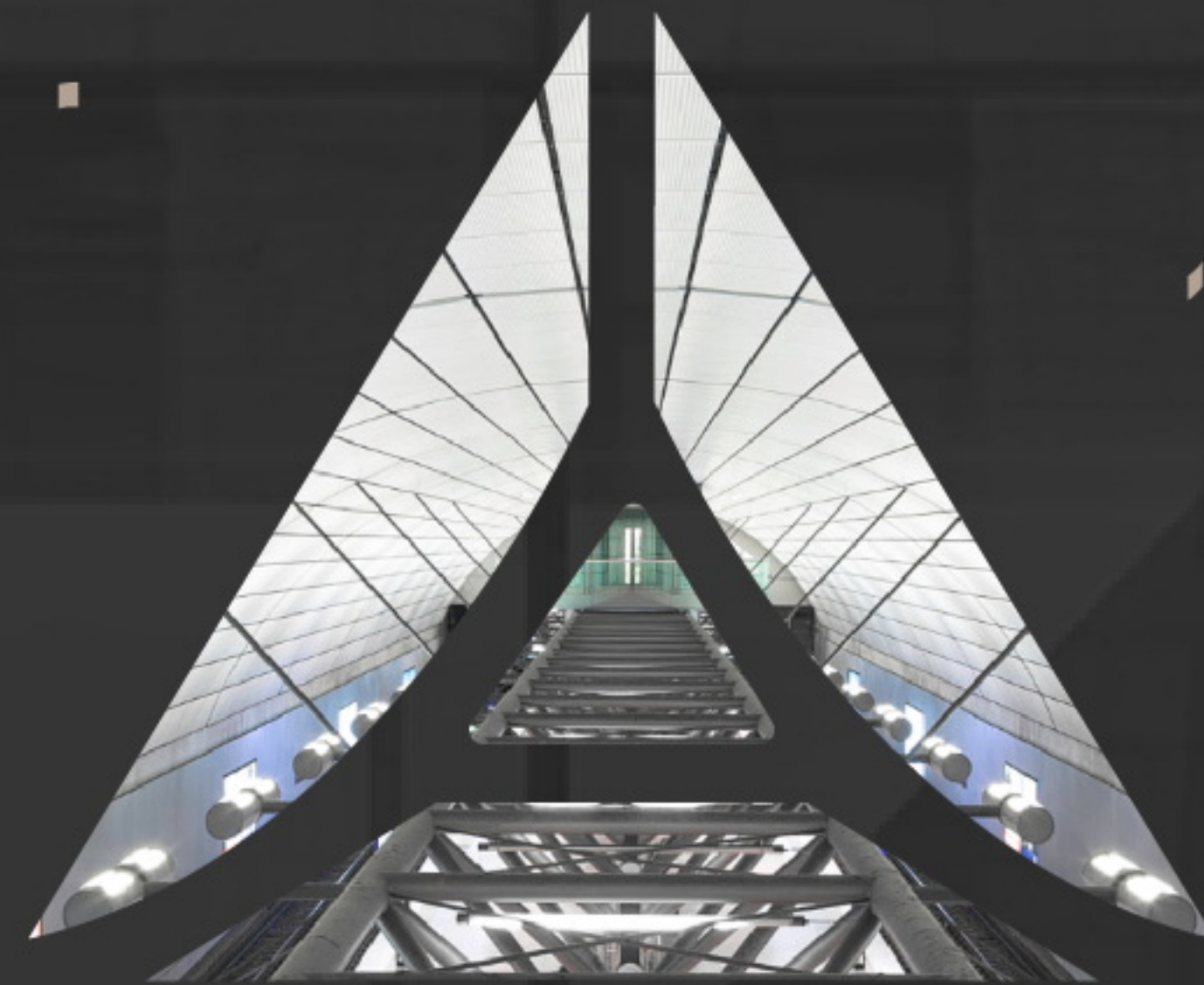
DRIVE TO IMPROVE:

The final thing on the app Development checklist is that you must have the drive to improve. No business is successful on its first day and all companies make mistakes. What is important is that you remain committed to the task and learn from your mistakes. Hear critique from customers and clients, friends and strangers. Test and maintain your app constantly. Work on boosting the app's quality. With a drive to improve, you can grow your business even if you get some things wrong at the start.