APP MARKETING

DISCOVERY, DOWNLOADS, ENGAGEMENT

bitly THE POWER *of* THE LINK.

APP MARKETING

DISCOVERY, DOWNLOADS, ENGAGEMENT

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DISCOVERY, DOWNLOADS, ENGAGEMENT

When they're using apps, **80% of mobile users** spend their time on the same five apps. Apps from Google and Facebook dominate that list. Brands hoping to enter the app marketplace are fighting for that remaining 20% and it's not an easy battle. App marketing is complex, because it spans multiple channels, analytics systems, and software systems.

So where do you start? And once you have an app, how do you make sure that people keep downloading and - more importantly - stay engaged? In this guide, we'll take you through the basics of deciding what your app actually is, how to scale and market it, and how to track meaningful results. We'll interview experts, show cool use cases, and highlight plenty of stats along the way.

TO APP OR
NOT TO APP

In all the craze to "go mobile," a lot of companies end up overlooking the most important question: do I actually need an app? And if I do, how do you create one? We discussed this issue with Cezar Cocu, an iOS Developer at Peloton Cycle.

THE DEV CYCLE FOR A CYCLING APP

Peloton Cycle offers carbon steel exercise bikes that can provide riders with an engaging, social experience every time they work out. The brand worked hard to bring riding to the next level with instructional videos, live classes, user profiles, and video chats.

Peloton has showrooms in major cities like New York and Los Angeles, but their website is the biggest sales driver. So, as conventional eCommerce wisdom goes, you might expect them to build an app that provides users with an easier buying experience and leave it at that.
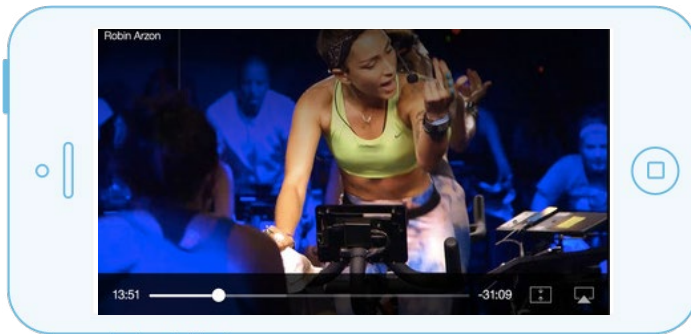
But, according to Cezar Cocu, Peloton's iOS Developer who's been on both the agency and in-house side of app development, that's the wrong approach.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS & SECONDARY APPS

"Companies have to ask themselves what role the app will play. Would it be a core media app like Buzzfeed? Or is it more of a side project or does it serve a secondary function like reservations or registrations?

If your app is going to be a primary part of the business, whether as a marketing or service tool, you should hire an in-house developer. If you just need an app to create a better customer experience when they're checking out or grabbing a table, you could choose an agency.

If you choose an agency, just make sure that you come to the table with a fully laid out concept and plan for the app. If you ask an agency if you need an app, they're going to say yes."

CEZAR COCU
IOS DEVELOPER, PELOTON CYCLE

THE CRITICAL CONTENT PLAY

Peloton found that the real way to get people interested in buying a bike was to connect with audiences who are passionate about riding and are curious to learn more. This goes back to Cocu's philosophy that apps need to drive value.

"It takes a lot of mental effort to download an app," Cocu says. "You have to go to the store, click download, you'll get asked for your password. Half the people don't remember the password. And then you download it and, if it's not useful, it just sits there."

**HERE'S HOW THE PELOTON TEAM GOT APP USERS ENGAGED**

1

FOCUS ON LIFESTYLE, NOT PRODUCT

The core audience for Peloton is people who are interested in regular cycling, spinning, and tracking their fitness.

Rather than making an app that sold the product, the team made an app to help this audience with their everyday lifestyle. This guarantees that the app becomes a part of the users' daily or weekly routine.
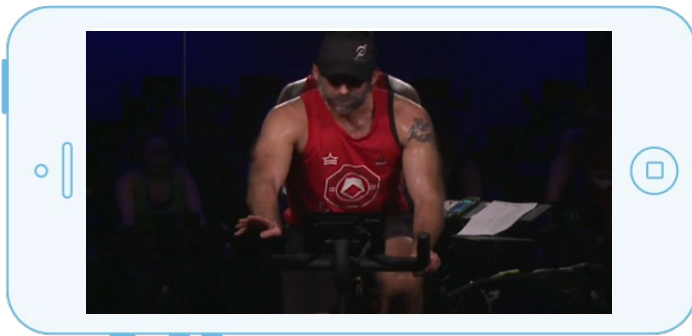
USE IN-APP MESSAGING

While the Peloton App is free, the team offers paid subscriptions for exclusive video content. Live streaming videos of Peloton classes tend to be most popular, since users can experience spin classes in their own homes.

There's a two-week free trial for these subscriptions and, afterwards, these streaming classes become alternative revenue generators for Peloton.
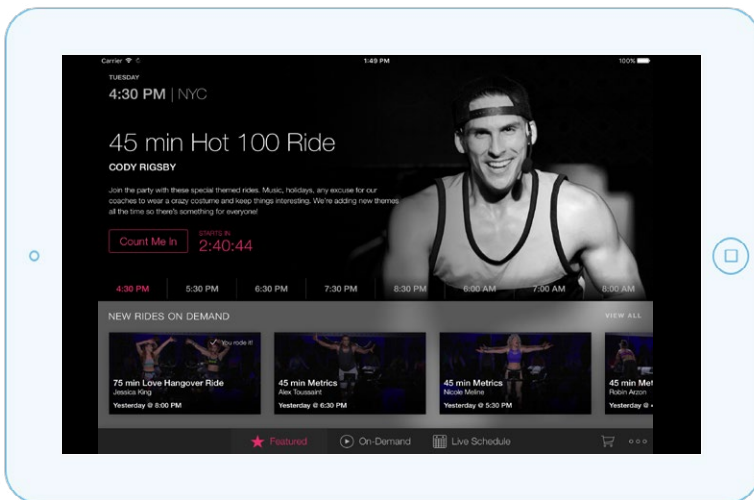
3

GET IN-APP ANALYTICS THAT WORK

After you've developed an app, you'll want to track the results. There are a lot of solutions out there. Peloton uses Adjust and an in-house analytics solution. Other companies, like The Associated Press, often employ deep linking technology that determines app store visits, installs, and opens.

According to Cezar Cocu, tracking in-app purchases can be the most difficult part.


Source: VentureBeat

4

OFFER NEW VIDEOS & NEW CONTENT

Peloton has an in-house video team that develops fresh new video content on a regular basis. "It's all about the videos. It's like Netflix, the app just shows the content and gets out of the user's way," Cocu says.

New videos help guarantee that users are going to stay engaged. Because once you've actually gotten a download, re-engagement is the hardest part.
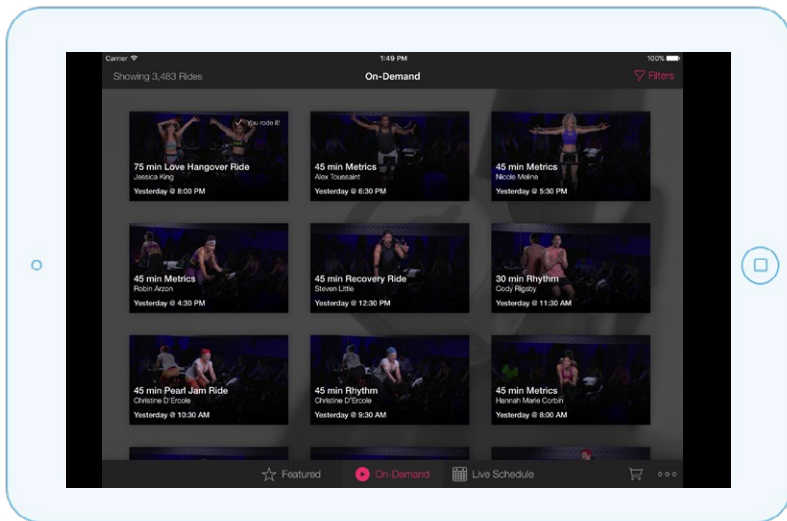
APP STORE OPTIMIZATION

App Store Optimization (ASO) is search engine optimization for your app. Your app is competing against millions of other options in the app store, so you have to optimize the app description, keywords, meta data, and everything else to make sure your app comes up first.

ASO can take a lot of time to produce results, but the results are well worth it. Here's how people discover apps, and how you can boost your rankings.

THE THREE FACTORS

"Just like search engines, your app needs to be easily found when users look for apps like yours. In order to be the top result, you need to use the right keywords, titles, and descriptions.

The keywords need to be unique and relevant. The title should explicitly reflect what your app does, but in a concise and catchy way. Don't use special characters. Finally, the app description must be accurate, engaging, and easy to read.

The first three lines of the description are visible in the app store, so use these as an elevator pitch."
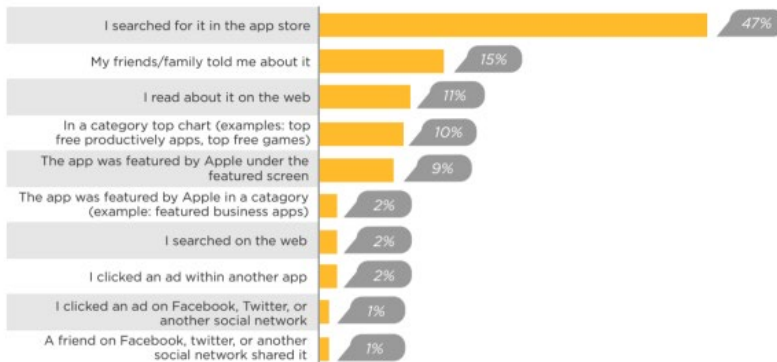
ZACH CUSIMANO, @BIZNESSAPPS
COO, BIZNESS APPS

THE DISCOVERY PROCESS

Research from TUNE discovered that the number one way people discover apps is through search. Specifically, by browsing through the app store. That's far higher than speaking with friends or family (15%), finding apps on the web (11%) and looking at top charts (10%).

Where U.S. iPhone users found the last app they download

|	
I searched for it in the app store	47%
My friends/family told me about it	15%
I read about it on the web	11%
In a category top chart (examples: top free productivity apps, top free games)	10%
The app was featured by Apple under the featured screen	9%
The app was featured by Apple in a catagory (example: featured business apps)	2%
I searched on the web	2%
I clicked an ad within another app	2%
I clicked an ad on Facebook, Twitter, or another social network	1%
A friend on Facebook, twitter, or another social network shared it	1%

Since so many users are finding new apps in app stores, app store optimization (ASO) is critical.

Here's the breakdown of how to optimize your app in the app store:

THE ANATOMY OF ASO
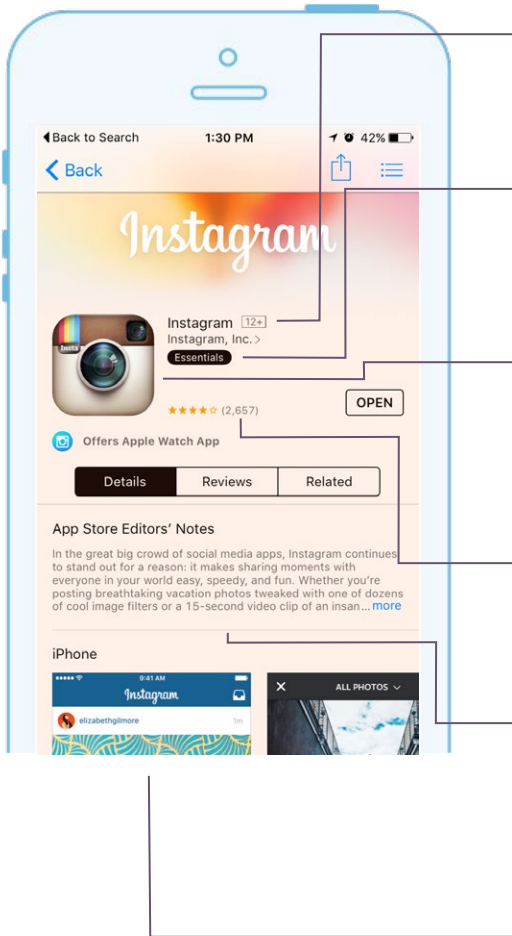
TITLE

The title is the cornerstone of ASO, so think carefully the name of the app.

CATEGORY

Category matters. Peloton, rather than eCommerce, categorized their app as "Health & Fitness."

ICON

Your icon should be distinct and convey the app's function - it's the button users will press the most.

REVIEWS

Reviews & downloads have a huge impact on how your app is ranked.

DESCRIPTION

Research target audiences, discover what they want from an app, and what keywords they might be using to find those apps.

SCREENSHOTS

Include screenshots of your app in action.

LOOKING BEFORE
YOU LAUNCH

"Tactically, one of the areas where app marketers fall down most is with postbacks. Postbacks are data hooks provided by services like Google Analytics, which allow analytics tools to trade conversion data with ad platforms. When configured correctly, app marketers can deploy ads with tracking variables to the appropriate app stores, passing postback hooks with the ad.

As part of the user click, the ad network sends the user through Google Analytics to track the app's identity, and then if/when the user installs the app, the Google Analytics mobile SDK reunites the ad data with the app identity, letting the ad network know the ad did its job.

It's all too easy for marketers to blindly launch ads promoting their apps. If they want insight into conversion data to make the most of their app launch budget, they MUST configure and deploy postbacks correctly."

CHRIS PENN, @CSPENN
VP OF MARKETING TECHNOLOGY, SHIFT COMMUNICATIONS

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

You have an app. You know what you need to do to optimize your app to maximize discoverability in the store. But what about actually getting people to the store? And how can you get the downloads you need to make the whole process worth it?

APP PROMOTION
FOR FREE

"The majority of app developers are small businesses or individuals who typically have little-to-no resources for the promotion of the app. Many struggle to get noticed when competing with well-known brands backed by multi-million dollar advertising campaigns. The notion of making an app that goes viral based on its own merits—or consumers just stumbling across your app in the app store—is unrealistic. Users need to know about your app before heading to the app store.

When dealing with limited marketing budget, substitute "elbow grease" for advertising dollars. Reach out to digital influencers (bloggers, reporters, social media personalities) who recommend apps to their audiences. Ask them to try your app and hopefully write about it. Promotions such as "free app of the day" (even if you want to charge for download) can help stimulate trial and word of mouth."

JOHN DINSMORE, PHD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RAJ SOIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

THE APP
LANDSCAPE

The app landscape is intimidating. There are millions of apps in the app store and 60,000 are added every month. **More than 80% of those apps** aren't listed on any charts at all, making them what Apple calls "zombie apps."
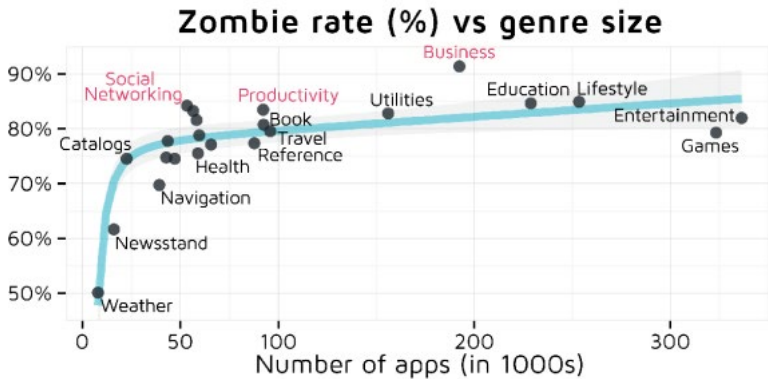
Source: Localytics

A strong promotion plan that can help boost your app to the top right as it's launched. But what does that promotion plan look like?

We interviewed Bob Bentz, president of mobile advertising firm Purplegator, to find out.

1

SOCIAL MEDIA

"There is no doubt about the power of creating buzz on social media for an app launch. It is an important part of the initial publicity required," Bentz says. "And, nobody does app marketing better than Facebook, which earns a significant part of its ad revenue from brands pushing app downloads."

Source: TechCrunch

Facebook Ads can be a great way to target the right users to promote app installs and engagement, especially for B2C apps.
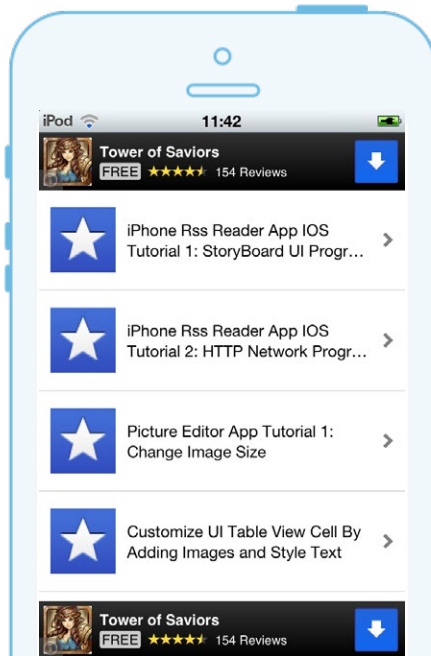
2

GOOGLE ADMOB

"Google AdMob might be the best place to promote, since it enables an app marketer to advertise within other apps that consumers have already download-ed," Bentz says.

AdMob provides promotion capabilities that can help with cross-app installs and in-app purchases, all the while showing the analytics through visual flow charts.

3

TV

"If the app has a huge budget, it may very well be television that results in the most downloads," Bentz says. "'Game of War' did a great job of promoting its app with Kate Upton and Mariah Carey as the stars of the commercials."

That, of course, depends on budget. But even smaller companies may want to think about influencer marketing, which we'll talk about next.
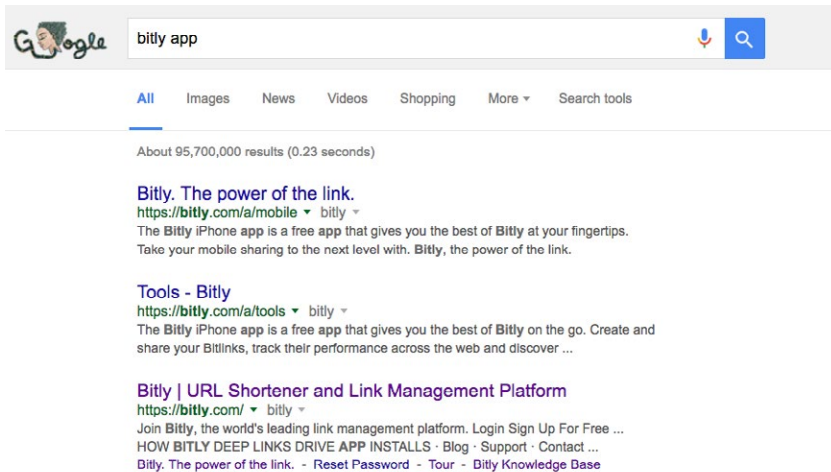
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CONTENT & SEO

"Find the URL of the app download in the iTunes or Google Play listing for the app," Bentz says. "Then link to the app store URL listings. The goal is to get multiple rankings on the search engines for the app. Those rankings might be the page on the business website that promotes the app download and the app stores' direct URLs for the download."

5

ALTERNATIVE APP STORES

By thinking outside the box, brands can discover new channels that might yield great returns. For iPhone and Android apps, Bentz recommends listing your app internationally.

"There are 100+ countries where the app can be listed and that can be great for populous countries like China and India. Amazon, Kindle, Nook, AppBrain, and GetJar are a few alternate places where an Android app can be marketed in addition to the Google Play Store."
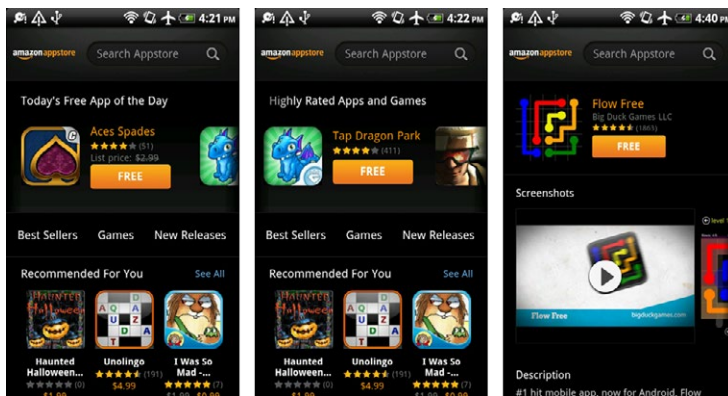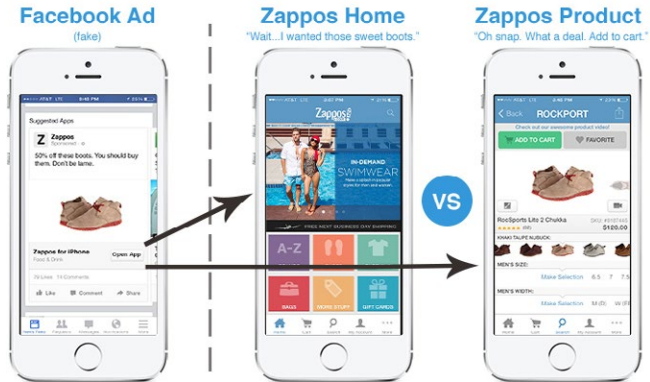

Source: TechCrunch

SMS CAMPAIGNS

"One of my favorite ways to get downloads is to run text-to-download campaigns. You can run them on the web, so a user can send a text to themselves. Or, you can do it on the ground... for us, we have people SMS the word VENICE to 444-999 for a free download link."

EVAN WHITE, @YOURFRIENDEVAN
FOUNDER, EVAN WHITE PR

ADS + DEEP LINKS

Source: Sarlitt

Keep in mind that most users are going to be using social apps rather than mobile web. By using mobile deep links, you can send users to a specific location within your own app rather than the mobile web. You also won't interrupt the mobile experience by sending visitors to the mobile web from a social app.

DEEP LINKS

The acquisition cost for an app download is called a cost per install (CPI). A CPI is not cheap. Salesforce pegged the average cost of a CPI in the US at $3.39. But there is a way to drive installs organically: the deep link.

If you can make sure that all of your links drive people directly to your app or prompt a download in the app store, you'll see a big difference in adoption.

THE CASE FOR DEEP LINKS

Getting a user to download an app can be a difficult process. That's why Facebook and Google can charge so much for paid ads on their platforms. But, with an average CPI of $3.39, paying to acquire customers isn't sustainable for most brands.

Deep links can save you tens of thousands of dollars if you use them to promote app installs and engagement organically and programmatically.

Deep Links

Deep Links allow brands to send visitors directly to a personalized landing page within an app.
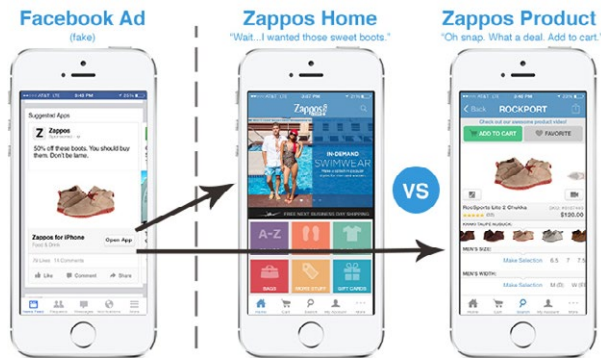
Source: Sarlitt

Here's how one of the biggest media companies in the world used Bitly Deep Links to save money and boost downloads:

TV NETWORKS & ORGANIC PROMOTIONS

With Bitly Deep Links, both TV Network A and TV Network B were able to promote links across Facebook, Twitter, email, and more, tracking results from start to finish.

TV NETWORK A	TOTAL
CLICKS	130,413
OPENS (IOS)	22,195
OPENS (ANDROID)	43,107
FACEBOOK REFERRALS	49,585
DIRECT/EMAIL	80,518
TWITTER REFERRALS	213

TV NETWORK B	TOTAL
CLICKS	58,907
OPENS (IOS)	9,697
OPENS (ANDROID)	19,111
FACEBOOK REFERRALS	17,304
DIRECT/EMAIL	3,019
TWITTER REFERRALS	649
HOMEPAGE REFERRALS	36,624
CLICKS TO APP STORE	4998

47% of clicks brought users who had previously downloaded the app to view the episode within the app.

33% of clicks brought users who hadn't downloaded the app to the mobile web.

8% of clicks brought users who didn't own the the app to the app store so they could download it.

THE RESULTS

The media company concluded that Bitly Deep Links have a huge impact on app downloads and app opens. With Bitly Deep Links, the team discovered that:

76K OPENS   **$17K VALUE**   **5K INSTALLS**

- At an average rate of $3.39 Cost Per Install for paid mobile user acquisition, organic app installs from deep links netted TV Network B a value add of approx. $17,000
- Android users are 2x more likely to open and use apps than iPhone users
- Facebook referred 38% of app opens for TV Network A and 29% of app opens & installs for TV Network B via deep links

Bitly Deep Links enabled the media company to promote app installs and re-engagement organically across social, email, and web. That helped reduce spend on paid while creating seamless omnichannel campaigns linking directly to video content.

DEEP LINKING
& PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

"Deep linking should be considered for every app marketing strategy. Let's say your app specializes in retail. When a user clicks an ad displaying an offer on shoes, a deep link will direct them straight to the sale screen within your app. This is an effective way of increasing your conversion rates and improving user experience.

You can also use deep links with social media. Music apps do a great job of encouraging users to share favorite tracks via social channels. By deep linking shared posts to in-app-content, you can employ social media as a powerful tool for driving organic user acquisition and retention.

Finally, try push notifications. If, for example, you have a breaking news or sports app that reports on live events, you can use push notifications to send users latest headlines or final scores of games. In these cases, your deep linking could direct the user to that specific news story, or take them directly to the results screen of their chosen sport event."

DIEGO MELLER, @DIEMEL
CEO, JAMPP

REVIEWS: PRESS, DISCOVERY, COMMUNITY

If you build the right app and pitch the right reporter, you may never even have to spend one marketing dollar. Or, if a few big influencers discover your app, they could promote it to their audience free of charge.

By leveraging the press, influencers, and reviews, brands can save budget and build loyal app users that help boost rankings in the app store.

APP PROMOTION
FOR FREE

"We soft launch our apps by publishing without advertising to get a few users to download and provide feedback. We like to use Android ExchangeReviews, where developers provide feedback. Next, we install and review our app objectively.

App users frequently say things that we didn't think of initially. These optimizations do not always seem logical, so sometimes we intentionally let a mistake go into an ad network to see how it may perform.

We drive traffic to the app pages from in-app ads through AdMob, Microsoft Ads and iAd. We also link from our website app pages, Facebook app pages, and from search marketing campaigns."

DIRK GARNER, @DIRKGARNER
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, GARNER SOFTWARE

FINDING YOUR INFLUENCERS

TOOLS TO USE

Klout

BuzzSumo

Followerwonk

Inkybee

Commun.it

Influencer marketing has gotten really popular really fast. And no wonder - one report has found that, for every dollar spent, **influencer marketing pays back $6.50**. With so many different social networks and publications, it's often more effective to locate a handful of individuals who already have well-established communities and work with them to promote your app.

You can find your influencers by searching social media channels and using keywords and hashtags related to your industry and target audience. Search Google News for the latest trends and articles about your app category and see if you can get in touch with bloggers, celebrities, and thought leaders in your space.

Have them try out the app, review it, and promote it across their different channels.

THE IMPACT OF APP REVIEWS

In one survey, 86% of consumers said they would hesitate to buy if they saw negative online reviews. The same goes for apps. As research from Kahuna shows, moving from a rating of two or three stars improves conversion by 240%, while an app rating of four or five stars improves conversion by 540%.
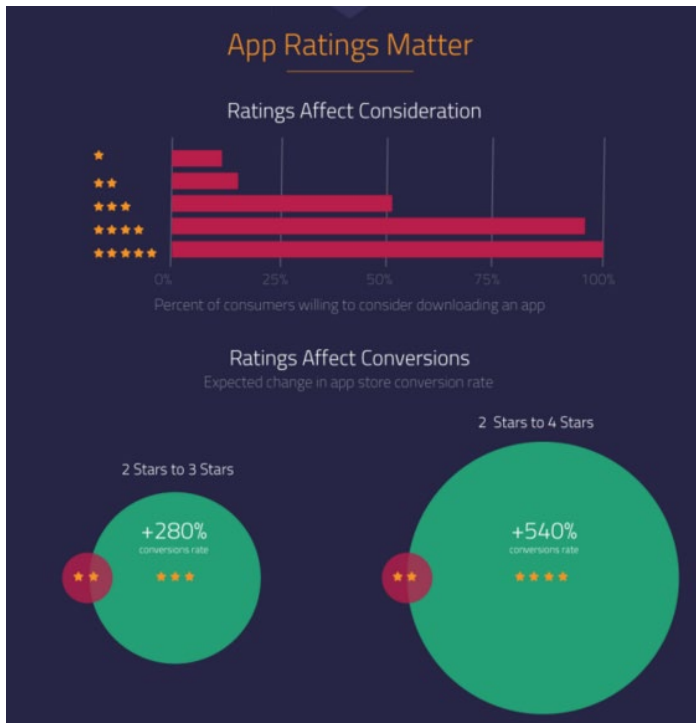
THE IMPACT OF APP REVIEWS

So it's obvious businesses need to think strategically about how to prompt happy users to review the app. That means investing in a combination of event-triggered push notifications and in-app messages that are personalized and sent at the right time.

To really prompt reviews and engage app users, though, you need to focus on pulling people back to the app itself and personalizing the experience. That's where push notifications come in.
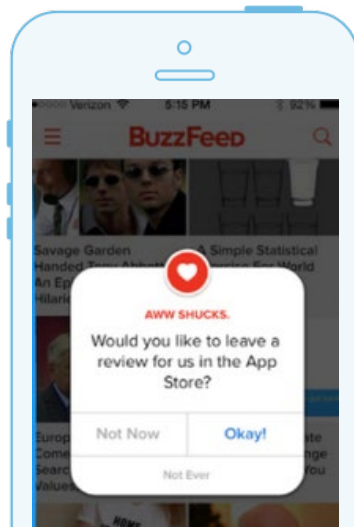
PITCHING
MEDIA SOURCES

"One of the best ways to drive app store traffic is news and reviews about any new app. People want to hear about new apps from media sources they trust, including their friends on social media.

Reviews are great, because you get exposure and hopefully a bit of endorsement if the media outlet likes the app and what you're doing.

But make it easy for them — create good, clear press materials, reviewer's guides, and make sure you provide all the pieces they will need to do their jobs including good high res screenshots of your app at its finest."

SCOTT ROBERTSON, @ROBERTSONCOMM
CEO, ROBERTSONCOM

THE POWER
of PUSH

Push notifications are a key part of re-engaging app users and encouraging them to come back. *Research shows* that apps that use push notifications drive 88% more app launches. That said, only 52% of app users enable push notifications.

When it comes to push notifications, social media networks are light years ahead of everyone else. But they also have an unfair advantage: when you notify someone that another app user has interacted with their content, they'll want to enter the app and engage.

1

CNBC: NEW CONTENT

Content is a big reason users come back to the app. News apps in particular, like CNBC, often use push notifications to send users the latest headlines. If you can personalize the headlines for each category, you can guarantee that you're sending the most relevant and interesting content. In turn, that will boost app engagement and retention.
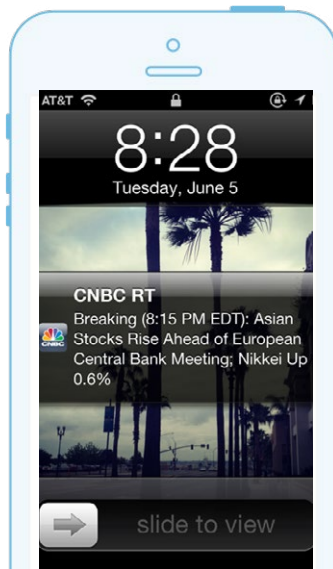
2

LIFT: TRACKING STATS & GOALS

Health apps have an interesting play when it comes to keeping people engaged. Lyft users can expect a frequency that's personalized to how often they interact with the app. So if people constantly swipe into the app from notifications, they will receive regular updates. If they ignore or delete the notifications, the frequency will taper.
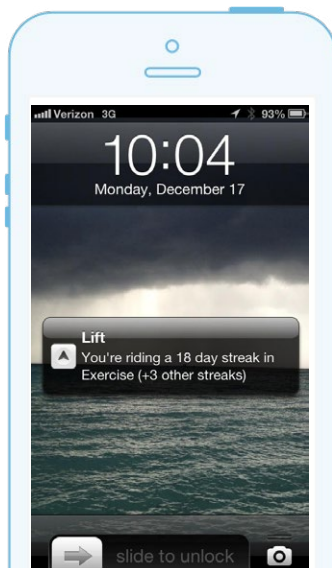
3

GATE GURU: LIVE EVENT NOTIFICATIONS

Event-driven push notifications can drive a user to action. Here, Gate Guru updates users with only the most relevant information for the day of their flight. These kinds of notifications can represent a spectrum of events, whether it's letting a user know about a reservation or an upcoming concert.

(4)

TRULIA: PERSONALIZED NOTIFICATIONS

If your app is serving as a virtual assistant of some kind, make sure that the push notifications are personalized with that information. Trulia's app automatically alerts users whenever there's another rental listing that matches to their preferences. By asking users for some details about what they want out of your app, you can create individualized push notifications that are geared to their preferences.
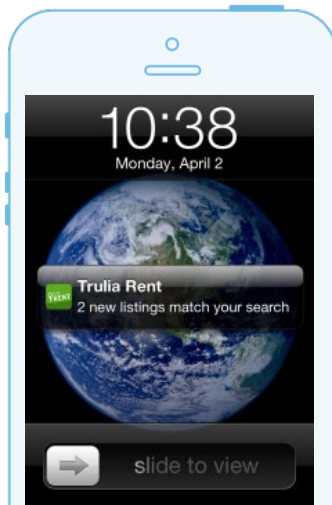
5

OASIS: PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ecommerce brands have one thing that's going to interest app users above all else: sales. But only if those sales are personalized based on previous purchases and browsing history. You don't want to bombard users with irrelevant information. Oasis promotes very specific sales deals through the app. That can lead to higher engagement and, hopefully, higher conversions.
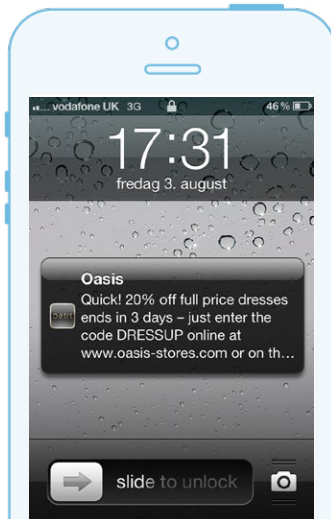
AN APP-FIRST
BUSINESS MODEL

Significant changes are happening across the mobile landscape. Apple recently rolled out Universal Links with the launch of iOS9. Google did the same with Android App Links. These new deep linking technologies allow brands to seamlessly redirect users from a landing page on their mobile browser to their installed app. With Apple's Universal Links, we are seeing brands like Pinterest direct app users right into the app… even if they type Pinterest.com directly into the Safari browser.

By making it easier for mobile users to install and engage with apps, Apple and Google are taking one step towards creating a better mobile experience for all.

So now is the perfect time for brands to think about how to create and deploy an app that helps them build stronger customer relationships that can lead to better engagement, loyalty, and conversion.

LEARN HOW BITLY DEEP LINKS CAN HELP AMPLIFY & MEASURE YOUR APP MARKETING STRATEGY.

Get in touch at **brands@bitly.com**.

bitly THE POWER *of* THE LINK.