MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT
APP INDUSTRY REPORT

Data & Benchmarks for Your Mobile Growth Strategy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Why Data is the Foundation for all Great Apps</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Use This Report</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage &amp; Engagement Data</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention &amp; Marketing Data</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What You Can Do to Harness This Data</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOBILE MOMENTS IN MEDIA:
WHY DATA IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GREAT APPS
While mobile has dominated the tech conversation for the past decade, it’s easy to forget that apps are still a relatively new phenomenon (yes, phenomenon - with growth rates like these, it’s hard to say otherwise). Nowhere has this growth and disruption been more apparent than in the Media and Entertainment industry.

Social Networking companies are now built on apps, not websites; News and publishing giants are investing more and more in app user subscriptions rather than print sales; and Music and content streaming is increasingly taken on-the-go by active listeners.

Great app experiences are driven by the behaviors of users - that is to say, making your app successful means understanding how, why, when and from where your users interact with your app. Using a tool like Localytics, you can ascertain the usage, engagement and retention behaviors and specific attributes (location, gender, language, preferences) of each individual user.

But we’re firm believers in this: that apps can’t operate in a silo. Not only should your mobile presence be influenced by data you collect in the app, but also by ever-important data on industry standards, which represents overarching trends in your market.

This report aims to do just that, by providing insights into industry-wide data that help you better understand your users - and exactly how they use apps.
HOW TO USE THIS REPORT
For the purposes of this report, we define “Media and Entertainment” apps as Music, News, Sports, Entertainment, and Social Networking applications. In addition to industry-specific findings, we have included overall user behavior benchmarks to use as a comparison.

Some sections include some, but not all, of the verticals characterized in Media and Entertainment, relevant to when the data was pulled and the purpose of the report. The data in this study was compiled in 2014 and 2015, depending on the specific report.

Here are some ways we suggest using this report:

* Discover broader audience trends for your industry
* Tap into mobile usage, engagement, and retention findings to better understand your users
* Uncover important takeaways for optimizing your app experience based on the report findings
* Share the data with coworkers and management to facilitate discussions and determine next steps
There’s a reason we combined these two hugely important factors into one section: app usage doesn’t mean how many users have downloaded your app, and it isn’t meant to track first-time app opens. App usage is fundamentally tied to engagement - your user is only going to return and use the app more if he finds the experience engaging and valuable.

So we couldn’t possibly split these two up; they’re far too dependent on one another. Instead, we will use this section to highlight usage trends and engagement rates for Media and Entertainment apps so that you can see where the baseline is, how users are interacting with these apps, and when they are losing interest.
It’s common to make assumptions about when users are most likely to launch and interact with certain apps throughout the day, particularly when you take into account commuting schedules, work breaks, and late-night browsing.

But are those assumptions right?

When it comes to Media and Entertainment apps we have found that, yes, for the most part, they are right.

Let’s start with News apps. The prevailing theory is that users are more likely to open News apps in the morning—typically during their daily commute into work, and to catch up on any important overnight developments.

The data backs this up: News app usage peaks daily between 5am - 9am. This behavior really hasn’t changed in the past few decades; people generally like to start their mornings with the News. It’s simply the medium that has changed. Apps have replaced printed newspapers, but the trend of catching up on the morning News has remained the same.

![Time of Day by Category](image)
What’s newer is the concept of evening activity and late-into-the-night entertainment, brought on by streaming apps like Netflix and the end-of-day need to catch up and unwind.

Entertainment apps in particular show strong usage throughout the night into the early morning hours. Most apps dip to around 20% between 2am - 5am; Entertainment apps kept strong around 50% usage during these hours. Just one more episode?

Similarly, Social Networking apps are hugely popular in the evenings from 7pm onward. It makes sense that by the end of the day, users are looking to catch up with friends and the events of their day, and interact with more entertaining content as a way to relax.

While this information may seem to be common sense, there are practical applications for product managers and marketers. Most people fall into a similar routine during the day, which means you can predict when they will be engaging with their apps.

How to Use This Data:

- News apps: Optimize your ad campaigns to target mornings when users are looking to interact with News from overnight, and might be looking for a new publication to browse
- Social Networking apps: Provide timely content updates throughout the day to maintain interest and prepare for spikes in the evening
- Entertainment apps: Concentrate your content in the early evening, and guide your users to actions you want them to take
Each year, we’ve seen time in app increase - another proof point for the growing importance of creating apps that stick. In 2014, many Entertainment apps shot well above the average 21% growth rate that we’ve seen across all apps.

Music apps saw the greatest increase at a whopping 79% - an increase of an incredible 64 minutes per month compared to last year. This most certainly supports the shift we’re seeing of downloading from web-based platforms like iTunes to streaming in Music apps such as Spotify, SoundCloud and iHeartRadio.

These apps offer greater flexibility around genres, playlists, and radio features, making for easier listening with more options and fewer required actions.

Many popular Music apps also incorporate a social component, allowing people to share their favorite playlists. This strategy could account for their ability to keep users in-app longer by engaging them further with the content and encouraging sharing with their
Social Networking apps also saw a huge jump in time in app with an increase of 49%. As social apps become more prolific and in some cases more advanced, it’s no surprise that users are responding by spending more time in these apps.

Pinterest, for example, encourages browsing behavior, and there is a (seemingly) unlimited number of pins you can search for and scroll through to pass the time. However, despite the increase in time in app YoY in Social Networking apps, users of these apps typically exhibit “snacking,” behavior, and the actual minutes spent in a given session in these apps is typically far lower than others (more on that, in the next section).

Sports, Entertainment and News apps, too, saw time in app increase at 16%, 22% and 14%, respectively. This bodes well for publishing apps, who have long struggled with new and effective mediums for sharing content with readers.

As brands evolve their app offerings, make reading and browsing easier, and start to utilize messaging as a way to engage users, increased time in app is the result. Content can no longer be static as users are requesting more and more.

How to Use This Data:

- **Music apps**: Take advantage of longer in-app listening times by engaging users proactively with more relevant content (playlists, friend recommendations, social shares) that keeps them in-app longer
- **Social Networking apps**: What features differentiate you from your competition, and how popular are those features with your users? Now is the time to double down on any popular use cases that set you apart
- **Publishing apps**: These early engagement signs are a good indication that your app users are looking to interact with more content - think of easier and more efficient ways to serve up that content and make it discoverable
Recall that “snacking” behavior we touched upon in the previous section? Here’s where it really presents itself.

Users who open certain apps frequently, but for only a few minutes at a time, are demonstrating snacking. This is typical of users who open the app again and again to get new or updated information, but not to browse for extended periods of time.

Social Networking apps reign king in this kind of behavior. Because while time in app in Social Networking apps did improve substantially YoY, the average session length still clocks in at only 2.5 minutes. Social apps are typically launched over 25 times per month, the highest of any app type; during the same time frame (August 2014), the average number of app launches across all apps was 10 per month. Even now, the highest that number has hit is 11 - still well below the Social Networking average.

App Engagement

Source: Localytics, August 2014, not all categories represented
News, Music and Sports apps also had app launch rates well above the cross-vertical average. This is likely due to the timely nature of News and Sports apps, and the listening habits of users at different points throughout the day of Music apps.

The average number of app opens per month of all Media and Entertainment apps was just over 16 - again, well over the average of all apps at 11. This shows a high level of interest in “checking in” on quickly and more frequently. Users are looking for the latest news, posts and friend updates regularly, which has lead to more app launches in this category across the board.

SOCIAL APPS ARE TYPICALLY LAUNCHED OVER 25 TIMES PER MONTH

When it comes to session length in Media and Entertainment apps, Music clearly dominates. Music apps are commonly used during commutes and downtime, so it is no surprise that they typically have highest app session length, which helped drive increased time in app from last year. When users are using an app to actually listen to music or podcasts, they’re inherently going to have longer sessions. That being said, Entertainment, Sports and News apps all had fairly impressive app session lengths, showing that content could be the key to engaging users during their session.

How to Use This Data:

- Social Networking apps: Don’t shy away from snacking behavior - sometimes it’s better to engage the user on their terms (quick “bites” or updates more regularly) than it is to aim for longer but more infrequent sessions. Instead, ask yourself: how can I optimize the experience for sessions that are only a couple of minutes?
- Music apps: Use email marketing to re-engage app users during typical downtimes throughout the day - that way they have additional purpose when they launch the app later and more to do in-app
- Sports apps: Sports and News apps have a similar average session length, but Sports apps can go beyond just publishing into new feature territory. Look to increase session length by thinking beyond just engaging content and into personalized experiences and new features
Something we’ve seen across all of the apps we survey is that users tend to spend more time on apps when they are using devices with larger screen sizes (here defined as at least 5”), be it a slightly larger phone or a tablet. In fact time in app is 34% higher on large screen devices overall.

And while this rings true for all apps, it is most popular in Music apps, which shows over double the time in app for large screen devices.

Needless to say, this is pretty surprising.

Most Music apps are simply used for listening to streaming or downloaded Music - why would users prefer a larger screen for this, when the added space doesn’t add much to the UI functionality?

This may be because more Music apps are involving a social component for sharing playlists, commenting and liking. Incorporating social features in any kind of app are often a fantastic way to keep users coming back to an app, and can have an impact on engagement - especially when this feature is easier to use on larger screen sizes.
It could also be that users enjoy having Music apps on and playing while using their tablets to browse for longer periods of time. It might be worthwhile to update your app to support the new split screen functionality in iOS9, which will allow for longer sessions “in the background” for things like music apps.

Another theory comes down to visuals: many Music apps feature album covers or playlist visuals that, when viewed on a larger screen, have a great impact on aesthetic than when seen on a smaller device.

Less surprising is that News and Entertainment apps also see slightly higher time spent in app on larger phones, and Sports the second-highest at a 90% increase. These apps, which rely so often on readable content, easy navigation and the ability of a user to navigate between multiple articles or elements presented on the screen at once easily benefit from the added screen size.

Bigger devices mean larger font options, a better view of article grids or lists, and more room for scrolling, pinching and zooming. Content often lies at the heart of these apps, and making that content more visible proves to be a huge benefit in increasing usage.

Of the Media and Entertainment apps included in this report, Social Networking apps saw the lowest increase in time in app on large-screen devices at only 19%. Social apps really don’t need the added screen size to deliver bite-size information, especially as they are being increasingly built for snacking behaviors on smaller screens.

TIME IN APP IS

34%

HIGHER ON LARGE SCREEN DEVICES

How to Use This Data:
• Music apps: Incorporate relevant social sharing features for users from large-screen devices to capitalize on this higher time in app, and make sure your UI takes into account visual representations of albums or artists
• All Media and Entertainment apps: Consider developing separate phone and tablet apps, each optimized for that individual experience. This will give you the flexibility to create unique features or functionality for larger screen sizes and the users who are spending more time there
SPORTS, NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT APPS HAVE AN ABANDONMENT RATE OF 23% AND 20%, RESPECTIVELY, WHICH IS SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN OR AT THE 20% AVERAGE ACROSS ALL APPS. THIS IS LIKELY DUE TO THE VARIETY AVAILABLE AND INHERENT COMPETITION AMONG THESE APPS. BOTH OF THESE CATEGORIES RELY HEAVILY ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS TO ENGAGE USERS OR RISK LOSING THEM TO A COMPETITOR.

Alternatively, Social Networking apps have the smallest percentage of apps only used once. These apps rely more on outside content that is consistently updated, such as friends’ activities, and this dynamic nature serves to bring users back quickly and often. For Social Networking, the tremendous influence and addictiveness of social networks brings in repeat users.
For certain categories, marketers must react even more quickly to re-engage users before they’re lost. In Social and Entertainment apps, the data shows that if a user doesn’t try the app again within 12 hours of their first launch, there is greater than a 50% chance he will never open it again. News apps, on the other hand, have some of the longest intervals between their first and second app launches: the median churn risk window for this category is almost 24 hours. Even if a user doesn’t launch a News app again for up to seven days after his first use, there is still a 59% chance he will return later. This may reflect news cycles that are sometimes multiple days between big events.

How to Use This Data:

• Social Networking apps: From the get-go, make it clear how the user can add friends, interact with them, and post easily. Without this, you risk creating roadblocks. Plus, getting the user to post something in their first session can be a tactic for retention
• Sports apps: Try to learn early on what sports, teams, players and information your user is most interested in - preferably in his first app session. Or, if you’re more feature-focused, prompt him to create his first Fantasy Team league or connect with other users from the get-go
• All Media and Entertainment apps: Continue to improve your UI. If a users’ first app experience is difficult to navigate or hard to find the value in, chances are he’s not coming back. Instead, invest in creating a fluid and helpful onboarding process that helps users get a quick understanding of how to use the app, and, most importantly, how to find exactly what they are looking for
When thinking about app marketing, it’s crucial to consider this: marketing isn’t just what you do to promote your app to new users and gain downloads. It’s also about how you use messaging strategies, automation and user data to engage, grow and retain your relationships with users over time, and keep them coming back to your app again and again.

That’s why app marketing has to be closely tied to retention data. Your marketing efforts are going to be measured against how well they retain users over time - either by improving user lifetime value or by creating long-term loyalty.
A critical piece of the app marketing puzzle is securing the push opt-in. Most apps attempt to do this from the get-go with the goal of getting as many users as possible to opt-in. The general consensus is that opt-in rates tend to be low, but that’s actually not the case - in the average app, 52% of users opt-in to push.

News apps have the highest opt-in rate, which is easy to believe when you consider that breaking News is often delivered when a user is outside of the app. But what’s clear here across the other Media and Entertainment app types is that when it comes to Entertainment users are welcoming app notifications into their phones with open arms.

How to Use This Data:

• News apps: Avoid taking advantage of user interest by sending push messages for every new article. Instead, concentrate on breaking news and articles that might match individual user interests based on their past viewing history or favorited sections.
• Sports apps: Consider allowing users to opt in to receive only certain information, like that related to their favorite teams or particular sports.
• All Media and Entertainment apps: Create custom opt-in screens instead of the template provided by the App Store. You can highlight the benefits of opting in and what kind of information the user will receive, plus you’ll be able to launch the screen at a time other than the user’s first app open.

---

**Push Messaging Opt-In Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Opt-In Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networking</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Localytics, August 2015, not all categories represented.
Push messaging has long been a key tactic in engaging users beyond their first sessions. It's a way to surface important information, highlight relevant content and offers, and to personalize messages based on individual user interests. But constant, broadcast messages can be bombarding and intrusive to users, causing marketers to put a pause on push marketing. What we've found is that, when done right, push messages can actually be hugely impactful on bringing users back to the app and providing value.

Music and Sports apps, to start with, have 94% and 118% higher engagement rates, respectively, in users when push is enabled. Let's be honest: that's incredible. These apps see more launches and longer sessions as a direct result of push messaging - which means the content surfaced in these messages resonates with users, bringing them back into the app and improving engagement metrics across the board.

Less surprising was the effect push notifications had on boosting engagement in Social Networking apps. Social Media apps are built for push messages - all of the content relevant to users presents itself in a bite-sized package, perfect for notifications that lead to more app launches.

The impact on engagement in News apps was slightly lower, but still

% Higher Engagement With Push Enabled

Source: Localytics, August 2015, not all categories represented
impactful. When you’re looking at a 28% increase in user engagement simply because they opted-in to receive information from you, that’s a clear win. There’s an open opportunity there for News apps to use push to better engage users with the right content.

User retention rates also increase with push enablement - to the tune of 56% long-term across all apps past 11 app opens. It’s important to note in particular how tactics like push can be used to re-engage and retain users after they are over the initial “honeymoon” phase.

While it’s crucial to capture their attention early and often, as your app ages there are more opportunities to use push to bring users back into the app - potentially when they’re at risk of churning.

---

**PUSH MESSAGES IN MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT APPS HAVE AN AVERAGE 5% CLICK THROUGH RATE**

One way to think about push messaging is in how you can utilize it to create transactional or highly-personalized 1:1 relationships with your users.

Transactional push notifications, for example, are specific to individual users based on something they’ve completed in-app, such as a notification that their Thai takeout will arrive at 8:45pm, or that their Uber is on its way.
This creates additional interactions with users that aren’t conversion-based, but rather information-based.

Looking specifically at Media and Entertainment apps, we see that the delta is still there. Users of apps in this vertical tend to return more often to apps that are using push messaging as an engagement technique.

What this data shows is that Media and Entertainment app users are ready and willing to respond to and engage with push notifications that are relevant to them, giving you a clear step forward in harnessing this by considering how push messages will fit into your strategy and creating marketing campaigns that work to engage and retain your users.

How to Use This Data:

- Sports apps: Use user profile data that includes factors like: favorite team, favorite sport, app usage during different seasons, is/isn’t a ticket holder, etc. Better personalization, based in data, and used to send relevant push messages will increase retention
- Music apps: Don’t overlook the importance of the “new” - new playlists, releases, and artist updates could just be what drives that lift in engagement with push enabled users
- Entertainment apps: Use content to your advantage. Here, push is a great tool for bringing really relevant content to the surface for all users. Did a user binge-watch the last season of a favorite show? Let him know when the newest season is available

Source: Localytics, September 2015, not all categories represented
One thing we love to tell people about push messages is that these notifications have a high click-through rate (CTR) - because they are often surprised! Let's take a look at the average email CTR based on data from MailChimp compared to push messages:

- Avg. email CTR: 2.8%
- Avg. broadcast push CTR: 4%
- Avg. segmented (targeted) push CTR: 7%

At first glance 7% might not seem high, but think about the industry surrounding email: it’s a proven and hugely successful tactic for both web and mobile marketing that almost all brands employ today. And the average CTR is just under 3%.

Push is majorly underutilized and undervalued in mobile today - and really, you need to hop on this bandwagon. Because the truth is, especially if you’re a Media and Entertainment app, you’re missing out on a powerful conversion opportunity.

The average CTR across all Media and Entertainment apps, including both broadcast (notifications sent to all users) and targeted (notifications sent to a segment of relevant users) push, clocks in around just over 5%.
Again, this is including broadcast push messages, which go out to all of your users, and are often the cause of push’s negative connotation.

Media and Entertainment apps are only out-ranked in push CTR by Games and Travel/Lifestyle apps. They do, however, see better CTRs than Retail apps, which is surprising given the frequency of sales and special discount notifications in mobile eComm.

So, push messages really serve two purposes for your app:

1. To meet user expectations by highlighting targeted and interesting content, and
2. To boost usage, engagement, retention and conversions across your app

How to Use This Data:

- All Media and Entertainment apps: Track the right user data, including in-app behavior and information provided across channels like email, physical stores and the web, to pull together complete user personas and send highly-targeted campaigns suited specifically to them

This number could be boosted by Social Media app notifications, which are almost always transactional (completely personalized to the end user) with notifications specific to their account.

But by this point, and using clear data, we see that users are now asking to be engaged - and they are interested in apps surfacing relevant information up to them, instead of having to search or seek it out. These CTRs are indicative of that desire.
SEGMEMTED PUSH MESSAGES ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL AT CONVERTING A CLICK

Marketers who segment their push messages, compared to those who blast them to all users, see significant improvement in engagement. Our data shows that broadcast push messages are only opened by 3% of users.

This year, research showed that of people who open a push notification, 54% of users convert from segmented push compared to only 15% for broadcast messages – that’s a 3x improvement in push messages that are informed by your app user analytics.

How to Use This Data:

• All Media and Entertainment apps: Favor segmented push messages over broadcast messages. When you send targeted notifications, users are getting information presented to them that actually enhances their app experience. This means that instead of feeling as though you’re trying to push them back into the app by bombarding them with constant notifications, users can feel instead that they are being hand-delivered information relevant to their interests

However, this rate increases to 7% if the push message is segmented by user behavior and preferences. In other words, segmented push messages have over double the open rate as push messages blasted to everyone.

A push message – generic or targeted – can certainly bring a user back into the app, but it doesn’t guarantee that the user will actually complete the action you set out for them to do.
In-app messaging today is kind of overlooked - OK, mostly overlooked - by most apps. Unlike push messaging, it hasn’t garnered much attention, and the tactic has too often been confused with mobile ads.

That’s a real shame, because in-app messaging has showcased some of the best marketing results we’ve seen in mobile to date.

Specifically, that apps using in-app messaging have a substantially higher retention rate than those who don’t. For example, these loyal users return to the app 3.5X more often in their third month of using the app. This means that these app owners are retaining nearly 50% of their users three months after their initial engagement, thanks in part to the effectiveness of their in-app messages.

We know that the app abandonment risk is high, and that retention is a crucial metric to track to better understand the stickiness of your app and if your users are becoming lifetime customers.

In looking at this data, we see that apps across the board who are using in-app messaging see higher average retention rates at 30, 60 and 90 days.
So how do these retention rates change for Media and Entertainment apps?

There’s less of a gap, but the numbers are still clear: apps in this vertical who use in-app messaging are going to see better retention rates than those who don’t use the tactic. Media and Entertainment apps that utilize in-app messaging see a 12% higher engagement rate in a user’s first month of usage, 10% higher rate in the second month, and at three months and onward, a 9% higher rate.

What’s important to highlight here is the opportunity media and entertainment apps have to start using in-app messaging as a way of adding contextual value to the user experience. Instead of only serving up mobile ads (if that is your monetization model), integrate into your strategy in-app messages that showcase information, content and offers to the right user at the right time.

How to Use This Data:

- **Music apps**: Use in-app messages to recommend playlists to users based on their listening history, announce new album releases, or notify when a friend has joined the service - all while the user is currently engaged in their listening experience.

- **News apps**: If you monetize using paid subscriptions, you can use in-app messages triggered after someone has read 3+ articles in-app within a day and message them a special offer or discount off of the service.
Not only is in-app messaging beneficial for boosting retention rates in your app, the messaging technique itself also sees one of the highest CTRs when it comes to digital marketing. The CTRs in the above graph are for in-app messages that aren’t automated or triggered on in-app behavior, but rather messages that are sent upon app open. This means that even in-app messages that aren’t personalized to the user experience still have a surprisingly high CTR.

Our theory? When it’s clear that in-app messages aren’t actually ads, their value because that much more apparent to the end user, and the content more relevant. Of the Media and Entertainment apps we surveyed, News apps actually had the highest CTRs at 16%, followed by Social Media at 12%. News apps are iterating rapidly, potentially evolving their subscription strategies to include prompts and special offers via in-app messages. In-app messaging is still a new tactic for many marketers, so we’re starting to see creative use cases and examples across these verticals that aim to engage and convert users.

But in-app messages are most powerful when they are automated based on an in-app action (here, called an “event”) a user takes; essentially, when the message is automated in response to an
app users’ behavior (see the above graph for comparison data). Sports apps see the biggest impact when it comes to CTR lifts, experiencing an impressive 14% lift when in-app messages are triggered by an event. As we’ve discussed in this report, many Sports apps are also content-centric apps, delivering a wide variety of content personalized to their fans, such as scores and team updates.

Among the Music apps surveyed there was a 7% increase in CTRs in automated in-app messages. Similar to Sports apps, this could be a factor of showcasing relevant content, for example, a in-app message that directs the user to a friend’s playlist after they have followed 3+ new users. The only two that don’t see a substantial lift in event-based in-app messages are Social Media and News apps.

What we see so far is a promising shift to mobile marketing automation and an underutilized (and effective) tactic for promoting conversions.

How to Use This Data:

- **Entertainment apps:** Identify your most important user segments and the actions they take. Do you want to prompt certain app users to subscribe to premium content? Create a segment of users and set up your campaign to trigger after they have completed a certain number of events in-app
- **Sports apps:** If you haven’t already, start tracking your typical user flows - Are they moving from article to article, or from individual team pages to score highlights? Use this to determine when to trigger an in-app message and what content will speak to the user in that given flow
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HARNESS THIS DATA

29
1. GET PROPER TRACKING IN PLACE (IF YOU HAVEN’T ALREADY)

This data is great for understanding what’s happening in your industry, how your target audience is behaving, and the various ways they use mobile and web apps to interact with brands. It gives you a solid foundation for understanding adoption and abandonment rates and discovering how users respond to push and in-app messages as an extension of the app experience and an additional brand interaction.

Next is to supplement this data with your own data - analytics specific to your app, your users and your marketing efforts. This will help inform your app roadmap and prioritization of features, create personalized experiences, and run relevant, smarter marketing campaigns. In order to truly differentiate your app and ensure that the experience is worthwhile, you need to have hard data directly from the source: your users!

In order to do this, you can implement an app analytics solution that tracks usage at every stage of the app user lifecycle: acquire, engage, grow and retain. Specifically:

- How users are discovering your app, and which sources are the best for bringing in users with a high lifetime value
- How users are interacting with your app, including which features are most popular, how they are navigating between screens and within app funnels, and what events they are converting on
- How frequently users are engaging with your app, and for how long
- How users are responding to in-app messaging, push notifications and email marketing campaigns, in terms of initial campaign results and ongoing retention data
- How users are contributing to revenue or long-term engagement, and how likely they are to become lifelong users
2. SET SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS FOR PERFORMANCE

With industry-specific metrics on hand and analytics tracking in place, you’ll have a wealth of data to learn from. The trick is to use this to better prioritize the work you’re doing to grow your app, and to set benchmarks for performance relevant to your app.

Is your short-term goal to increase the number of new users? Is it to optimize your app screens for a smoother experience? Or is it to start improving in-app conversion rates? Naturally, you’re going to want to do all of this at once - but each needs a benchmark of:

• Where you are currently - what are your numbers, and historically what have they been? Have you been improving, or remaining stagnant? How hard has it been to move the needle in the past?
• Where you want to be - what is a reasonable goal based on industry data, based on our historical data, and based on where our customer relationships are today?
• Where the middle ground is - with the resources you have today, what is a fair number to hit, and what will it take to get there?

Otherwise, you run the risk of trying to do too much in a disjointed effort, without using the right metrics as the foundation.
3. OPTIMIZE FOR YOUR APP’S STRENGTHS & DOUBLE-DOWN ON WHAT WILL WORK

Great apps don’t offer a one-size-fits-all experience.

That’s why while all of the apps we surveyed for this report fall under the Media and Entertainment category, they sometimes have vastly different data points, representing vastly different user behaviors.

Consider the “snacking” of Social Networking users, or the late-night viewing habits of Media users. When there’s a trend you should treat it like a wave and ride into it, instead of paddling away. If your users are most likely to be browsing content on the commute home, choose that as the optimal time to try out different in-app messaging campaigns. If app users have a low frequency of sessions, but long session lengths when they are in-app, determine which features are engaging them the most, and make them better.

Create stronger experiences around what you know about your users and their behaviors, interests and regularities.
When it comes to app marketing, what we’ve found is that the content or offer showcased in an in-app or push message needs to speak to your users and their individual interests. We discovered that segmented push messages have almost double the average click rate as broadcast notifications, and that users respond to information that’s relevant to their experience.

Given the popularity of push messages as a marketing tool, they’re a good indicator of what does and doesn’t work in app marketing. This year, push notifications are signaling that targeting and personalization are the clear winners in app marketing. In order to execute on this, you need to know app users in and out and what their expectations are to effectively personalize.

Your app users are people, and they consist of more than just their in-app behavior. Increasingly, your audience is interacting with your brand in a number of different ways – some of which aren’t even traceable. The most effective way to gain a complete view of your users is with cross-channel analytics.

When you have the full view of your visitors, you can personalize the campaigns they receive so that their needs or interests are met. When you do this, conversion rates tend to increase, and retention rises.
CONCLUSION

When it comes to your app, you need to be constantly evolving.

We’ve seen the app industry rise and change rapidly, with user expectations leading the charge and their experience at the forefront of what constitutes success.

What you need to do this successfully is the right data. The right data will strengthen your efforts, give you better visibility into what your users really want and who they actually are, and how to create the best possible relationships with them as customers over the course of their lifetime.

App usage is only going to continue growing; along with it, user expectations. Rising to meet these expectations, treating your users as people along a journey, and identifying the value in your app are all key to keeping your app useful and relevant. How are you going to accomplish this?
READY TO ENGAGE USERS WITH STRONGER APP EXPERIENCES?

We’ve got 10 ways you can do this - in under 10 seconds. In this eBook, you’ll be given tactics that are proven to work, and can help engage users sooner in their app experience.