15 TIPS

FOR LAUNCHING A SUCCESSFUL MOBILE APP

Many of us have dreamed up great ideas for mobile apps. We're sure we can develop an app innovative and unique enough to generate broad appeal, to achieve star power above all other apps in its class.

In order to know whether you're succeeding, you'll need to set some goals.

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RLMOBILE
TECHNOLOGY

The Month Before

Define success. In order to know whether you're succeeding, you'll need to set some goals. Keep it simple, to start, by placing goals around active install rates, number of reviews and average rating score.

Create a video. Video is one of the most expressive and effective ways to show off your app's interface and capabilities. Consider creating a video that demonstrates its features and workflow. And you don't necessarily have to invest in a production team — by using a smartphone screen emulator, Simfinger (free) and iShowU HD ($60 for Pro), you can easily create simple, professional-looking video tutorials that showcase your app's coolest features.

Decide where you want to be. If you're launching an app for Android, don't try to submit your app to every store. Centralize your user base and focus your promotions to drive all potential users to one store. This will allow your app to get higher ratings, higher ranking and more visibility. Also, fewer distribution channels makes it easier to update and track. Start with an official smartphone market, then expand to others once you start to build awareness.

The Week Before

Draft and finalize your content. Make sure your press release, blog post, newsletter copy and even the text for your tweets and Facebook posts are all drafted, proofed and finalized in advance. Don't leave this to the last minute! You'll have plenty of other things to think about the day before you launch.

Get to know the press. Reporters and bloggers can help you extend awareness of your app to scores of potential new users. Research the publications that cover and review apps that fall in the same category as yours, and make sure you know who at each publication would be most excited about your app.

Two to Three Days Before

Reach out to press. Ideally, reporters and bloggers should be able to publish content about your app right when it launches, so you'll need to let them know in advance. Choose a handful of reporters to reach out to pre-launch, and be sure to let each know the specific date and time that the app will be released. Reserve time to answer questions and make yourself available to the press the day before and day of your launch, should they need any additional information. Remember that you'll want to reach out to your full list of researched reporters on the day of launch.

Offer a sneak peek. If you can offer media previews of your app, do it. Allowing reviewers to play around with your app before it's available to the public helps make their articles more in-depth and informed.

Organize and finalize your visual assets. The more visuals you have, including artwork, logos, screenshots and video, the prettier and more dynamic your resulting articles and marketing collateral will look, and the more interesting and communicative it will be to your audience. Make sure every reporter you're in touch with has access to all assets before your app is released.

Post-Launch

Reach out to everyone on your press list. Hopefully you'll get plenty of positive press the day of launch. To boost awareness, reach out to your expanded list of relevant reporters and bloggers and let them know about your launch. Be sure to send information about your app to the big app review sites and any other publications you think would love to know about it.

Tap your existing users. If you're launching on a new platform, be sure encourage the fans you already have to help you spread the word. Leveraging your existing community to evangelize your product can have an immense impact on your launch. Reach out to your existing user base via blog, social media, newsletter or all three, and be sure to specifically ask users to help you spread the word. Consider a refer-a-friend campaign to boost response.

Be social. Tweet and post to Facebook right when your app is released and a few more times throughout the day. Try a retweet campaign coupled with a giveaway-specific hashtag to boost Twitter activity and capitalize on the excitement of your launch. And don't forget to monitor all social media channels closely; respond often with a simple "thanks" or retweet users when appropriate.

Launch Day

After your fantastic launch, how can you sustain the momentum and prevent your app from dipping under the radar?

- **Paid advertising**. If your app is hot, oftentimes paid promotion campaigns will keep it visible and extend the momentum that your launch, users and press attention have already garnered. But take advantage fast, and make sure the campaigns are live within a few days after launch.

- **Don't drop the press**. First, right after you launch, don't forget to thank participating reporters for their interest and time. Second, as you continue to develop and add features to your app, be sure to keep reporters posted.

- **Partner up with other app developers**. Integrating with other apps can be a wonderful way to both expand the capabilities of your app and get it in front of brand new, already engaged audiences. In order to choose the right integration partner, think first about what is most valuable to your existing users. Don't choose your partner purely based on the size of its user base — often, that's not most important for the earliest stages of awareness. If both your app and your integration partner's app are useful and smart, you'll be able to grow together.

- **Continue to engage your users**. Be active on social media: Ask your users questions and respond to their inquiries, ideas and feedback right away. If they make recommendations that you implement in a future update, be sure to thank them for contributing