

# A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO BUILD A KILLER APP





# Contents

1 Introduction

2 Step 1: Generate an app idea

3 Step 2: Do a market research

4 Step 3: Plan functionality & features

5 Step 4: Create visual design

6 Step 5: Build the app

6 Step 6: Testing

7 Step 7: Launching & Submitting the App

8 Step 8: Market the App

9 Step 9: Get Users' feedback

9 Step 10: Introduce new features

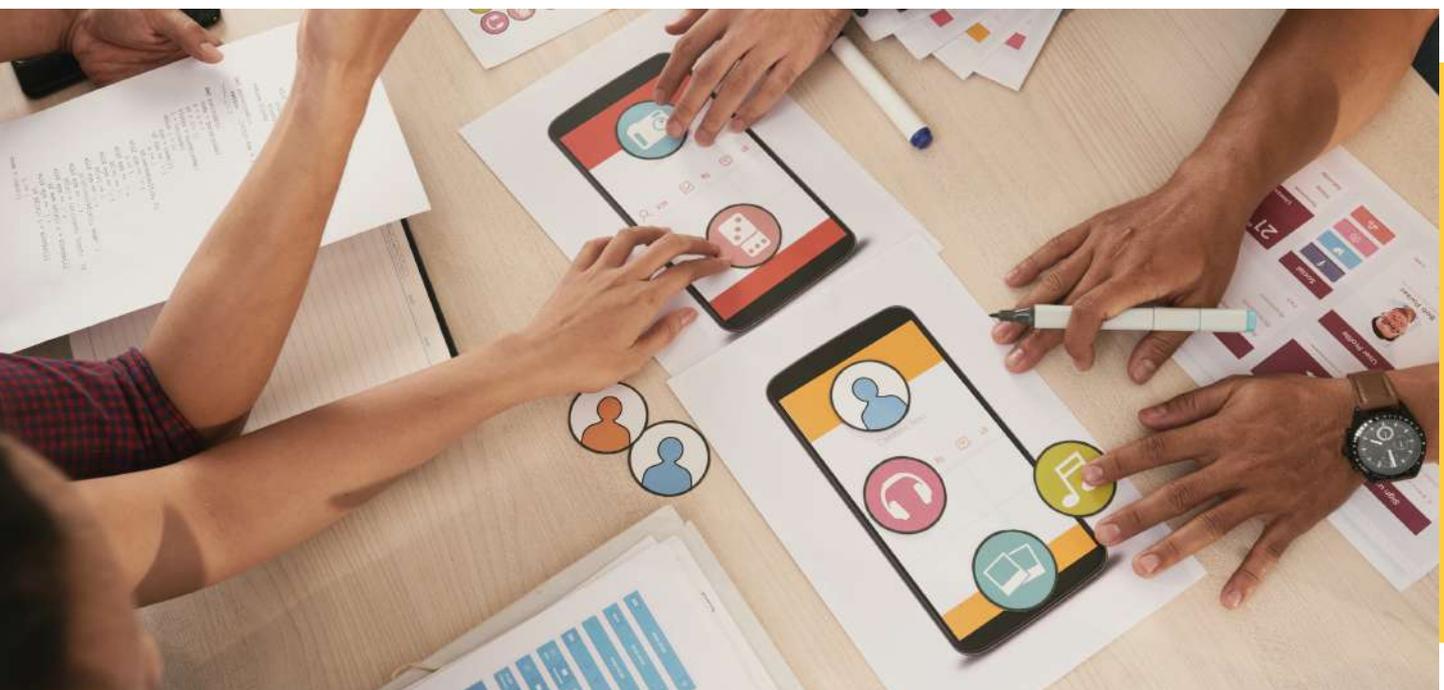
# INTRODUCTION

Mobile applications are the milestone of today's tech business. The world is moving towards mobility more and more, and people are now spending more time on mobile applications rather than on websites. Recent research data shows that the average person spends almost 90% of their mobile time in apps vs. the mobile web. According to eMarketer research, users, on average, spend two hours and 22 minutes per day using mobile apps while just 12 minutes browsing the web on their mobile device.

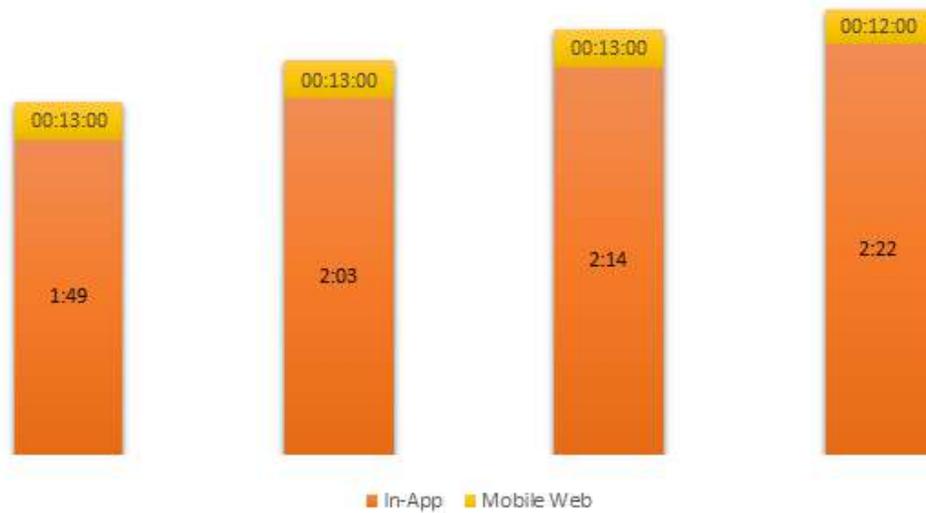
Following this trend, Industries and business areas not related to mobile in some manner are scarce. Consequently, businesses and entrepreneurs are seeking new opportunities to establish new businesses or expand their current services via mobile applications as they are considered as one of the leading modern era sales channels to reach more customers and increase sales since mobile device are now in everyone's hands. Apps can be developed as an extension of your existing business or used to create a new business from scratch.

They bring better user engagement, boost upselling and cross-selling strategies, improve communication, etc. Thus, for businesses, there is no better way to invest than on the cloud-based web and mobile applications.

Each day thousands of mobile apps are published to the Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The potential use cases for mobile apps are seemingly endless. From business management and communication apps to eCommerce apps, fitness apps, social network apps, games, and more, there is an app for every use case. Today, the total number of mobile apps on the planet has reached 9 million. Google Play Store has the biggest number of available apps at 2.56 million while Apple's App Store is the second-largest app store with almost 1.85 million available apps for iOS devices. Although each app has built with a specific purpose in mind and targets different audiences, if professionally built from scratch, is followed a fairly similar mobile app development methodology. In this article, we would like to share our experience to help you understand this process and make a killer mobile application by outlining a summary of each stage.



Average Time Spent per Day with Smartphone Internet,  
In-App vs. Mobile Web, 2017-2020  
Source: eMarketer



# STEP 1: GENERATE AN APP IDEA

Every app starts with an idea. If you already have an app idea, then you are set to start but if not, you need to find one. Although you don't have to think about a big, ground-breaking or clever idea. Instead, what you need is a problem and they are everywhere! Successful entrepreneurs solve problems in a way that we could not have imagined. When you look around you, every product and service you use were all created to solve a problem. You wanted to carry all your songs in your pocket, you got an iPod. You wanted to get from one place to another faster, you got Uber.

Simple problems created the most revolutionary solutions which led to the establishment of some of the famous brands that we know today.

So, look for problems in your daily life and list each one of them. Once you have an exhaustive list, then start to think on how you can resolve them and shortlist the ones that make the most sense. Then start sketching, make a list of features which helps to solve that specific problem, and see if the idea comes to life on paper. However, if you didn't manage to come up with an app idea from scratch, there are a few other ways to help you come up with your app idea.

Sometimes there is rarely a completely new idea that is born from nothing, however, there are over 4 million apps in the Google Play and Apple App Store combined. One way to come up with a great app idea is to put a twist on an existing idea or try to combine elements from various apps that you like.

Think of a few apps that you use very often and see if there is a way that you could take the most useful features and meld them together to form a new type of app.

Another way to come up with an app idea is to improve the exciting ones. Have you ever used an app and thought, "It would be awesome if the app had that certain feature"? If so, that's the creative spark of a really good potential app idea! There's always room for improvement so if you thought that an app was sorely lacking a useful feature, chances are that you weren't the only one to think that and if the original app developer isn't constantly updating and improving the app, then there's an opportunity for you to create an even better app and gain your market share. You can also check reviews in the app stores to find out what other users think this app is lacking or what can be improved in that regard. As listening to users' feedback and improving an app based on reviews is probably the singular driving force to the success of it.

One last important tip is to make sure you don't overestimate the importance of ideas because your app's success is determined not only by the idea but also by how that idea will be executed. Making an app that works well is more important than finding a unique idea. So rather than bothering yourself and wasting time on finding the perfect idea, make sure that your app's concept is practical and works smoothly on the targeted platforms.

## STEP 2: DO A MARKET RESEARCH

The next step is to figure out if the problem that your app solves is being solved by other apps and validate your idea to make sure that it has a chance to thrive in the app store. At this stage, which includes the overall market research, competitor research and especially user/customer research, your app idea starts taking shape and turns into an actual project. Market research is often skipped by app developers, even though it's an important stage of creating an app. You can save yourself time and effort down the line by researching upfront as it can ultimately save you from making a lot of mistakes at an early stage.

By doing some research and finding insights, you get an idea of the demand for the app you are making and it helps you fill the gaps your competitors had left before you create and test your app. Sometimes, you need to try to look at your idea from the customers' perspective so you can assess the needs of potential customers and have a better understanding of their behaviour.





Two types of market research are especially helpful:

- Finding out what mistakes your competitors are making
- Finding out if people are looking for an app like yours

You can find all these insights by doing simple market research and competitor analysis. One of the ways to get started with your research is identifying your top competitors, comparing their marketing & sales strategies, determining their unique selling points and analysing their apps' performance. You might also need to scroll through the ratings and reviews of any competing or similar apps you may find and take note of the following:

- App Name
- Feature set
- Price/monetization scheme
- App publisher
- Last updated
- Ratings and Reviews
- Downloads

You might want to create a matrix or spreadsheet to keep track of your results. This research helps you to create the starting point for the features to include in your app and which ones to focus on first. Based on your research you can find out which features are currently missing in similar apps and what the customers are looking for in this type of application category.

## STEP 3: PLAN FUNCTIONALITY & FEATURES

Let's move on to the third step to create an app. After you are done with the market research, the third important thing that comes into play in planning your app's functionality and features. Here you will use some of the data which you gathered on your competitors (what they are lacking or innovating) and write down all the functionalities you want to add and features needed to achieve the solutions and get the expected result. When writing features down on paper, remember to be as detailed as possible. Include how the user will interact with that specific feature as well as all the features envisioned. This will help your developer to clearly understand your expectations.

Just remember, adding irrelevant features won't do any good and affects the performance of the app. At the initial stage, we recommend you to make sure you only list down the features that will add value to your app. Once you release the first version and got the feedback from your users, then work on the remaining features. Based on that feedback, you release an update to your app with more features and again, get it into the hands of users for feedback.

You repeat this cycle over and over and eventually arrive at a product that perfectly

fits what the market wants. This strategy will help you and your developer team to focus entirely on a specific set of features on each stage and maintain a stable and smooths app releases. Contrast this with spending a ton of money and time to build something packed with so many features then finally launch it only to find out that people didn't want it.

So, take a look at all of the features you wrote down and think about what a first

basic version would look like. Make sure that the app can still be useful to your audience and solves the overall problem but do not build features in the first version that are "nice to have" and can always be added later as an update. Any feature that doesn't directly contribute to serving the overall purpose of the app can be considered for the next releases. This will help keep the initial costs of development down and also help you get to market quicker.



## STEP 4: CREATE VISUAL DESIGN

Now that your project is taking shape, it's time to bring your app to life visually by making a graphic design for your app. This will become the foundation for your app's development, so it is a crucial step. Your app's design includes pixel-perfect visual details, graphic effects, image assets, and sometimes even animations and motion design.

There are three main ways to make an app design:

- Do it yourself with a graphics template: If you want to go it alone, you can either design the app from scratch or use pre-done design templates and create a custom app design.

- Hire a professional graphic designer: You can use the freelancer websites to hire professional graphic designers to deliver a much more unique and sleek visual.
- Ask the app development company to do it for you: Some of the app development company and programming studios such as Smarty Studio have their in-house UI designers which can design your app visuals alongside developing the application.

Remember that the user interface and user experience (UI/UX) of the app will be hugely impacted by the work that you do in this step as the design is not just about how your app looks, but it's about how a user will interact with the app. That's why it is recommended that you get some help from a professional graphic designer who has proven work designing app UIs as it is very important to have a slick, professional-looking app. Once you have your app design done, you can proceed to build your app.



## STEP 5: BUILD THE APP

This is the stage where your app brings to life from the design and features document that you created in earlier stages. Just like the previous step, you have a couple of options to make your app. You can either hire a freelancer or an app development company. The difference is that an app development company like Smarty Studio will provide consulting and project management services whereas a freelancer will look to you to provide direction. Although hiring a company will cost a lot more than working with freelancers but the development company are more suitable options for early-stage startups and SMEs tech projects. Seek a development company that has great design talent and a solid development team. While hiring a developer, go online to check on their credibility and the apps that they have created. If you liked an app they created from their portfolio, chances are,

they could be the right one for your product.

## STEP 6: TESTING

After the development is done, it's time for quality assurance engineers to test your mobile application to ensure there are no bugs and errors. In software development, a "bug" is something that's causing the app to not work as expected. Software testing plays a considerable role in mobile app development, improving and cleaning the final product. You want to solve as many critical bugs before launch as possible because the first impression for a user is very important. If your app crashes or doesn't function then there's a high chance that the user will uninstall your app right away.



Mobile App Development Testing Process

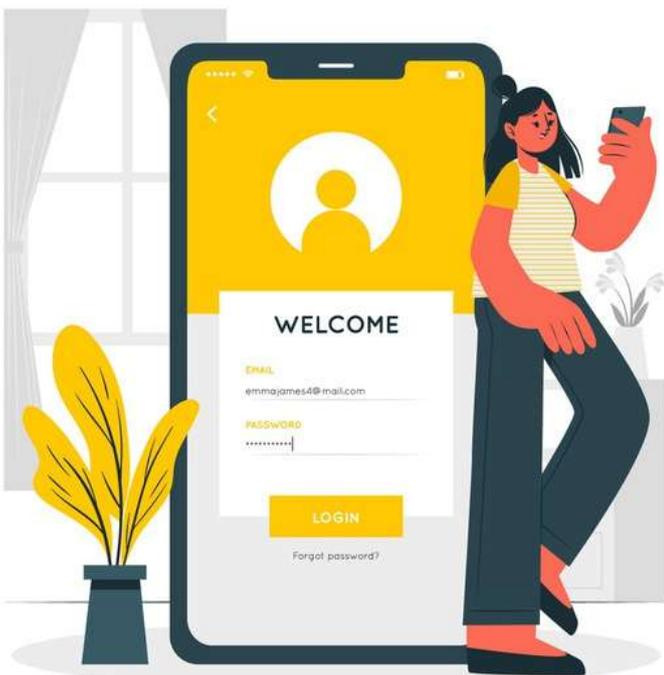
This is the stage where your app brings to life from the design and features document that you created in earlier stages. Just like the previous step, you have a couple of options to make your app. You can either hire a freelancer or an app development company. The difference is that an app development company like Smarty Studio will provide consulting and project management services whereas a freelancer will look to you to provide direction. Although hiring a company will cost a lot more than working with freelancers but the development company are more suitable options for early-stage startups and SMEs tech projects. Seek a development company that has great design talent and a solid development team. While hiring a developer, go online to check on their credibility and the apps that they have created. If you liked an app they created from their portfolio, chances are,

## STEP 7: LAUNCHING & SUBMITTING THE APP

You've made it to the finish line and brought your idea to fruition. As your app is now completely developed and tested, the final chapter in app development saga arrives. Releasing a native mobile app requires submitting your app to the app stores, Apple App Store for iOS apps and Google Play for Android apps but first, you must register for a developer account with the respective app store. Whether it's PlayStore or App Store, make sure you strictly follow the guidelines of the app stores. You have the option of registering as an individual or as a company if you already have one formed.

There are also videos and tutorials available online that explain this stage in detail. This will improve your app store optimization score and help you make the most out of your app.

However, this is not as easy as it sounds. According to a report by CNBC, Apple's AppStore rejects over 40% of app submissions every year. While PlayStore rejected at least 55% of app submissions. There are various reasons for this rejection like crashes, bugs, privacy policies, software compatibility, and minimum usability. Thus, it would be better to ask your app development company to submit your application as they understand all the guidelines and policies required to publish an app. We research the specific permissions and requirements that our client's app needs to fulfil and guide them accordingly. If you want to get more information regarding this, feel free to contact us. We'll be happy to tell you about the documentation and process of launching an app.





## STEP 8: MARKET THE APP

As your app is now submitted to the app stores, it's time to market it for maximum exposure. It is a common myth that good products don't need marketing, but that's not true. Marketing is the voice that tells users who you are, what you stand for, and how you're different from others. Marketing helps to make change happen. Changing from an old solution to a new one, for instance. Android and iOS are very different concerning marketing apps but there are a few different ways to market your application no matter what is the platform:

Software companies usually have a huge budget for promotion and marketing these days. The best way to start is to select a couple discussed marketing methods and assign a certain budget for your marketing efforts. Then you can use integrate analytics to measure the success of your marketing plans. By reviewing app stores analytics or using third-party tools you can track downloads, user engagement and retention for your app to make sure you are moving in the right direction.

Create landing pages	Social media marketing
Optimise your app stores search results	Influencer marketing
Get featured in the app stores	Run a paid-to-free campaigns
In-app advertising	Publish app-related articles



## STEP 9: GET USERS' FEEDBACK

Once you market your app and it has found its way to users' devices, the first set of customers' usage and behaviour will give you insights into how to improve and enhance your app. Enhancements and changes are constant, so keep an eye on user feedback and keep building. Take the criticism positively and encourage users to provide your company with feedback and suggestions for your app. Prompt support for end-users and frequently patching the app with improvements will be vital to keeping users engaged. Unlike web apps where patch releases can be available to app users instantly, mobile app updates will have to go through the same submission and review process as the initial submission. Moreover, with native mobile apps, you have to continually stay on top of technology advancements and routinely update your app for new mobile devices and OS platforms.



## STEP 10: INTRODUCE NEW FEATURES

You built the first version with limited features and only the core offering. Now is the time to evaluate the current app flow and introduce the remaining features that were left out in the initial release. You would know through analytics and users' feedback whether you need to build upon the current features or introducing new concepts to the application.



We hope you found the article useful and got an answer to your question – how to build a killer app. The highlighted app development stages are not sacrosanct, but rather a guideline to building your app most effectively based on our experience.

However, if you or your clients need any guidance from a professional app development company, you can get in touch with us at Smarty Studio. We have brought together the best-dedicated iOS, Android and Web developers to provide programming services for Start-ups, SMEs and Enterprises. By working with our in-house programmers, designers and business strategists, you will have access to a full-cycle project developing services which include consultation, expert business analysis, design, build and support of your project from idea to launch and beyond. With experience from many projects since 2013, we have helped many early-stage tech start-ups and Innovator/Start-up visa applicants with the development of their projects.

In any case, if you have an app idea and like to hire us to turn it into a reality or if you are a business which works closely with early-stage tech start-ups and Innovator/Start-up visa applicants and looks for a partner to provide app development services to your clients, feel free to discuss all your queries with our business consultants. Just fill the contact us form and we will assign our best resource who can help you out.



# START BUILDING YOUR APP

## BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION



3 More London Riverside, London,  
SE1 2RE, United Kingdom



+44(0)203 637 4716



[www.smartystudio.co.uk](http://www.smartystudio.co.uk)



[studio@smartystudio.co.uk](mailto:studio@smartystudio.co.uk)