COLUMNS

How the post-install event is key to app marketing

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Over the last few years, app marketing has been driven by the measurement of downloads and installs.

Initially, app marketers generated thousands, even millions of installs, and all was good in the world of app marketing. But with hundreds of new applications uploaded daily to the various app stores, many apps generate little or no activity after the initial installation.

Pillar to post
In the same way that the measurement of clicks has lost its significance in banner advertising when better technology enables analyzing the sales path, the measurement of installs is losing its importance in app marketing.

And as attribution and conversion have replaced the click as the metrics to be analyzed and optimized in digital marketing, it is time to move beyond the install to find a new currency through which to analyze and optimize app marketing. It is time to consider the Post-Install Event.

A post-install event is any event or action taken by the user after she has downloaded the app.

Post-install events can include an app start, registration, usage metrics such as time spent or pages viewed, achievement or level, app content views, adding items to cart, and making an in-app purchase.

In fact, different types of apps encourage different post-install events.

For example, post-install events for a social networking app such as Facebook will include posting a status update or an image, liking, commenting on or sharing or signing up for a group or game, whereas post-install events for a news app such as The New York Times or Quartz will include reading an article, commenting on an article, sharing an article, time spent on site or buying content.

How can app marketers use post-install events to improve app performance?

Indicator light
First, app marketers need to determine which post-install events are the best indicators for future conversions and revenue. This is done by analyzing all post-install events and uncovering the events that correlate with conversions and revenue-generating actions.

Next, a value must be determined and assigned to each post-install event that is a proven key performance indicator (KPI).

For example, if putting an item in a shopping cart or sharing/liking/commenting X times/week have been

determined as the post-install events with the greatest propensity for future revenue, then, like with any currency, the app marketing team needs to assign a value to each of these post-install events. This value will be derived by the revenue these actions generate.

Therefore, if a user who shares three-plus articles per week generates $4-$8 in monthly revenue from content subscriptions, on average, the value of such a user is $6 per month.

Once the app marketing team has identified and assigned a value to each key post-install event, the team's next step is to analyze and optimize the various ad channels to target ad spending on the most effective ad channels.

By tracking how many and, more importantly, which types of users according to post-install events each ad channel delivers, it is possible to optimize ad spend across the various ad channels to generate the most users with the highest lifetime value at the lowest cost per user.

GIVEN THE DYNAMIC nature of digital marketing, app marketers need to continuously analyze and optimize their campaigns because user actions, KPIs and performance will change based on the app's development, seasonality, category and market dynamics, and ad channel dynamics.

With digital marketing becoming mobile first, it is important to develop more effective metrics for analyzing and optimizing mobile marketing.

The post-install event provides app marketers with a tool to correctly optimize app-driven marketing based on actual conversion metrics.

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