

COLUMNS

6 key reasons why a new app fails

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Launching a new application can be scary. And for good reason. Most businesses invest between \$50,000 and \$1 million in developing their new app, according to Kinvey's survey on the State of Enterprise Mobility (2014).

And yet, many new apps fail sometimes as soon as they launch. They get released with great fanfare, then fizzle out. Or they get downloaded only to be deleted later. Even worse, they sit on your customers' devices in limbo, and never get opened or used.

So why does this happen? And how can you prevent it from happening?

Reason #1: The app does not meet your customers' needs

How do you know what your customers really need in an app? By studying them, observing them, and talking to them ideally, before you start designing the app.

Find out what you can offer your customers through an app that excites them and keeps them coming back again and again, for the long-term. Is it rewards? Freebies? Deals? Coupons? Entertainment? Insider information? Ease of access?

Avoid the pitfall of making a duplicate of your Web site which many companies mistakenly do.

Reason #2: Failure to define your business goals with the app upfront

Every app has a business goal. What is yours? If you do not define your business goal with the app, you will never achieve it. Do you want to:

Increase product sales?

Build long-term relationships with customers?

Improve brand awareness?

Get customers into your store?

Simplify the purchase process?

By aligning your customers' needs with your business goals, you have a much better chance of creating a successful app.

Reason #3: Failure to create a post-launch communications strategy

A good app does not just sit on a smartphone. It communicates with the user frequently.

Many businesses do a great job of designing and creating an app then stop.

But post-launch communication is the most important part of the process.

Building the app is only the first step. Once it is done, you will need to use your app to communicate with your users.

It is important to budget for a post-launch communications strategy. Ask yourself:

How do my customers like to be communicated with?

What motivates them to buy?

What is the best way to keep them engaged with the app, again and again?

Then design an engagement strategy that meets their needs and your business goals. Plan to touch every customer at least once a month. Use:

Push notifications

Rewards

Coupons

Deals

Freebies

QR code scans

Text messages

Alerts

Reason #4: Your organization is not on board with app launch

Is everyone at your organization on board with the app launch? Before the app launches, you will need to educate and get buy-in from every department, including the IT team, marketing, executives, sales, customer service and cashiers.

Every person at your company needs to be able to talk about the app, support it and promote it with customers. Otherwise, your team is working against itself.

Reason #5: Boring, stale content

Let us face it: no one wants to use an app that has the same content, appearance and user experience over and over again. It is boring. And in the world of apps, boredom is a killer.

Customers want new, different, bold, memorable. A big part of the post-launch phase is creating new content that excites them and keeps them coming back, year after year.

Once you launch, study your customers to see what they engage with most by looking at reports on their behavior, generated through your mobile platform.

Plan to switch up your content and message delivery at least four times a year. Keep your customers coming back with exciting, engaging content that changes regularly.

Reason #6: Nobody knows about it

Sometimes a company launches an app then fails to tell customers about it.

You will need to persistently and patiently communicate the news about your new app to users for at least one year after release. Tell them where to download the app, and one reason why they should download it.

The best way to do this is by organizing a structured marketing campaign in advance, just like you would do for any new product launch.

Come up with a strong message, like: "Download our FREE app at our Web site, www.XYZCompany.com, and start receiving members-only deals."

Better yet, offer a reward just for downloading, such as: "Download our FREE app and get \$5 off a new t-shirt!"

Repeat this message wherever your customers interact with you, such as:

Emails

Receipts

Web site

Store signage

Banner ads

Facebook ads

Checkout process

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