

COLUMNS

## Four standout expectations from branded apps: Part 1

March 27, 2012



By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

By [Frank Defino Jr.](#)

Many companies have rushed to capitalize on the mobile trend by creating an application that gets their brand in front of mobile users.

The problem is that often these branded apps have been created in a me-too fashion without a clear understanding of what makes for a great app that will accomplish the goals that the marketer set at the start.

The result: apps that are downloaded by only a few or that are quickly deleted or abandoned when they disappoint and, in worse cases, negative reviews that can damage the reputation of your brand.

Take a look at a [recent study](#) by Deloitte that found that 80 percent of apps created by global consumer and healthcare brands were downloaded less than 1,000 times.

App-happy to app-savvy

So how can marketers avoid the trap of being app-happy and instead become app-savvy? You have to focus on your user over your brand.

Too often, companies will develop an app for themselves without considering that the user ultimately determines the success of their app.

It takes more than getting your app into an App Store, marketing it well and making sure it works on every mobile operating system. You need to empower your user to engage with your brand on a higher level.

An app specifically designed for people who want to reach out to others with a greeting or message that will really wow them will have only get one shot to get it right. There are many important user expectations to consider when building your app.

In this two-part series, I will share four standout expectations from users that we have found help ensure success for a branded app.

Here are the first two to consider:

Expectation 1: Users download apps because they want to make it easy to do things on the go, not just because they want to interact with your brand

Smartphones and tablets are all about being able to do things with ease and speed on the go.

A customer may initially download your app because they like your brand, but that will not necessarily keep them using it.

There are a variety of reasons users download apps, but for the most part they want to make it easier to perform a task, gather information, engage with their social community or be entertained all from the convenience of their mobile device.

So if your app offers little more than a downloadable marketing message or in-app upsell with no additional value to the user, it probably will not remain on their smartphone or tablet for long assuming it is downloaded at all and may create a negative impression of your brand.

*An example of getting it right?*

Check out Apple's [own Apple Store App](#), which not only makes it easier to buy Apple products on the go and pick them up at a local retail store, but also uses geo-location to allow you to quickly make service appointments for Apple's Genius Bar and check in with one click the moment you enter your local Apple store.

Expectation 2: Users want to be able to do something with their apps that they cannot do just by going online

A large part of the appeal of smartphones and tablet apps is they make it faster and easier to do things than with a laptop.

In fact, when Steve Jobs introduced the iPad, he described it as a device "in the middle," incorporating a large screen similar to a laptop with the speed of operation and one-touch usability of a smartphone, something a laptop cannot match.

Your app should deliver on this promise otherwise there may be little incentive for consumers to keep it on their mobile device.

For example, an app for a travel magazine that only provides a way to subscribe to the magazine offers little added value.

*An example of getting it right?*

Recreational outfitter REI's [Snow Report](#) hits the mark by providing real-time data and notifications on ski conditions at resorts and enabling users to share that information with each other and their social media communities.

Understanding user expectations when it comes to your brand's app will help ensure that it creates the positive experience you want them to have.

In part 2 of this series tomorrow, I will cover two additional expectations that you will want to keep in mind when developing your brand's app.

*Frank Defino Jr. is vice president and managing director of [Tukaiz](#), a marketing services production company in Franklin Park, IL. Reach him at [fdjr@tukaiz.com](mailto:fdjr@tukaiz.com).*

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

American Marketer is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.