



Getting Started



Introduction

When Steve Jobs introduced the first iPhone to the public in June of 2007, he released a technology that would shape our lives for years to come. Today just about everyone has a smartphone and we navigate these marvels of technology through Apps.

With over 64,000 apps going into the App stores every month you wouldn't be the first to think "I want to build an APP".

Research has shown that over 52% of people looking at their digital marketing strategy include their own mobile app in the planning. A major reason for this is that web sites rely on users to go and find them. Then you need to rely heavily on other communications methods to be proactive.

With the mobile app all your information can be in the one place whether it is static information, forms, surveys, e-commerce or communications and you can be proactive and feed information out to your audience. You can also tailor what the user sees to create a completely personal experience.

But how do you get started?

There are typically 3 different people that go to the BuildAnApp website;

- The first has a clear and detailed picture of what they want from an app. They have already mapped it out both in their head and on paper. In short, they have everything planned out and ready to go.
- The second has a rough idea what they want but, hasn't sorted the detail yet.
- The third has no idea, but figure that they should have a mobile app.

If you fit into the second or third group, whether this is for yourself, or a client, the first thing you need to do is to plan your app. What do you want it to do? How will it look? What are your goals and how will the app help you achieve them?

On the BuildAnApp website we have all the tools you need to build your app, with the expectation that you have planned out your app first. We do however have some online app planning tools on the way. In the meantime, here are some ideas to get you started.

Planning Your App

The first thing is to set out your Goals

Can you clearly identify half a dozen key objectives that will help you achieve your goals?

Who are your target audience?

Probably one of the most important questions. If you know your target Audience, then you can start to design the app based on what they want or need.

How can a mobile app help you achieve your goal?

Knowing what your goals are and who your target audience is, will naturally lead to “what do you need in a mobile app” to help you achieve those goals?

In most cases good communication is required to achieve any goal.

The first mobile phones had this covered by allowing you to speak to other phone users wherever you were. SMS was introduced to allow you to send text messages. SMS is heavily used but is considered by most to be a very personal space. Uninvited SMS messages are considered to be invasive. With the mobile phone moving to a smartphone, we now have emails and a myriad of apps like Messenger, Line, WhatsApp, Skype and Viber that will help you communicate.

Emails have become the prime vehicle for spammers and people who want to distribute viruses. Consequently confidence in Emails is starting to wane. Emails have to go through firewalls, spam filters and mail server rules that make it easy to miss important emails.

The WhatsApp, Viber etc. are all readily available for anyone to use and require each user to accept a request before communications can occur.

With the BuildAnApp solution you can take all of this one step further. With the Chat feature you still need to make a request and have it accepted to “Chat” to another app user. However the app owner has complete control over who can communicate with who with and add that next level security. From the website the app owner can send out news, surveys, forms, updates, vouchers, tickets and more

How would you use these tools to help you achieve your goals?

What are the main tools that you want people to use in your app?

This will help you design the home page of your app. Which tools will help you achieve your goal?

- What information do you need your users to have at their fingertips?
- Are the communications tools a key?
- Do you need forms, or Surveys as a key?
- Is e-commerce a key?

App Design

Once you have worked out what you want the app to do, now you can start to design it.

If you have a website already, then it is best to keep the look and feel consistent with your website.

You want to keep the home page clean and easy to navigate, with the most used tools easily accessible. This is the first place people will be taken when they open your app. So you need to present the tools that meet your objectives clearly.

Are Icons or Menu's better for you on the home page?

As Apps are accessed via Icons, if you have been able to identify half a dozen key features, it is best to present access to them via "Icons" or Buttons" on your home screen. If you have more than that, using drop down menus might be a better option, which also leaves more room to have a "Hero" image that portrays the "feel" for your app. Of course you can use both!

Images

Apps are very visual. A good design will often make the difference to the success of your app. This means that making sure that you have the right images is very important.

Although we have a gallery of some free backgrounds, buttons and icons, you will more than likely need to obtain the images you want for your app. If you already have a website, more often than not you can grab images from there. Otherwise there are plenty of sites you can go to that offer both free and paid images. For things like buttons, if you're not a graphic designer, PowerPoint is a great tool for creating buttons, even 3D ones. Although you may need other graphics tools to add text or crop your images.

E-commerce

When looking at e-commerce, which is also referred to as m-commerce if via a mobile app, the determination on how you tackle it starts with whether or not you have a web based e-commerce solution. If you do, then the quickest, cheapest and easiest option is to simply add a link from your App to your web based e-commerce. This then negates the need to try and synch your products, create new payment methods and pretty much re-invent the wheel.

If you don't have a web based e-commerce solution then you need to ask yourself whether you intend to or not. If you do, then it is best to either look at doing that first, or looking at a fully integrated solution for both mobile and web.

For the fully integrated solution we work with our country partner in the Philippines called Xtendly who have a web based e-commerce solution. The integration is there so that every time you update the web solution, it automatically updates the app. This way you can have a native app solution that can work with all the functions and features of the device it's used on as well as a full blown web based solution.



For the Mobile app only e-commerce, which works particularly well with industries such as Restaurants, the native mobile app solution is the only way to go. If you later decide to go web based as well, you can always go the fully integrated route.

Need Help?

To help you get things moving, we have put together an Excel Spreadsheet which you can use to answer your basic questions and a PowerPoint file to help you put together your basic app design. Using PowerPoint of course means that you can also use it to present your app design to your team.

What if you can't find the features you want?

If you can't find the features that you want, then simply ask. Download the BuildAnApp Own app from the stores and use the "Support Request" form to submit a request. More often than not we can build in that feature for you, or if needs be, build you a completely bespoke app.

All sound too hard?

For many all this sounds too hard. Building a tool that is highly reliant on graphics can be quiet daunting. That is why we have built a network of Country Partners and Resellers to help. Our Resellers are typically digital marketers, or web designers. So they know this space and are well equipped to help you go from idea to reality. If you have a web team that you already work with, let us know and if they aren't already a Reseller, we can look at setting them up as one.

Using our platform our Resellers don't need to be mobile app developers any more than you do. The simple drag and drop technology makes it easy for anyone to build an app once they have everything they need ready to go. What we can provide is a quick and easy to use platform that can provide you the app that you want, and keep the costs down. If you need the help of a Reseller, then just let us know and we'll find someone close to you who can help.

So give it a go ... BuildAnApp 😊