

COLUMNS

3 factors to consider when evaluating an app idea

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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The mobile applications environment has changed the way we do every day life: People are spending 65 percent more time in apps than they did just two years ago.

Customers want the most up-to-date features, innovation and forward-thinking capabilities across all of their devices. Users expect that every new app downloaded and every new release provided will add convenience and ease to their life.

Customer expectations mean that businesses need to launch apps that are solving problems that users did not even know they had and making even complex activities and interactions simple and enjoyable.

A recent study revealed that 80 percent to 85 percent of the surveyed marketers and IT professionals find mobile apps to be "extremely important" to their marketing strategy. And the Adobe Digital Index shows us that seven out of eight mobile launches come from a smartphone and 92 percent of our respondents consider their smartphone their primary device.

The case for mobile is evident, and what is more important than ever is how to stand out amidst the 1.6 million apps in Google Play and 1.5 million apps in the AppStore (as of July 2015). Battling for attention means staying ahead of the curve and knowing how to give users what they want.

Below are the three most crucial factors that must be taken into consideration when evaluating an idea for an app. Without these factors, you risk limited adaption and ultimately, your app's demise.

1: Focus on the user experience

A prime example of a user-focused strategy is the Google wireless router.

By providing a mobile app that makes setting up a wireless router easier and is practically automatic, Google demonstrates it truly understands the ease-of-use people expect.

The app combines insight and innovation, transforming a devices previously perceived by many as complex and for "tech geeks" I can say this because I am a self-proclaimed "tech geek" into one that is accessible and user-friendly.

The Google wireless router hits on all aspects of the "mobile engagement trifecta" it attracts users, displays understanding of their needs and desires, and it will create and retain loyal customers.

The companies that successfully embrace app development from the user experience perspective also harness the insights and data obtained through increased customer interaction.

These companies strengthen brand awareness and loyalty by showing their users that they understand their needs and desires and are focused on providing solutions that improve customers' experiences through easily-accessible, easily-navigated apps.

#2: Embrace a user-centric perspective

A brand's mobile app strategy consists of much more than app development. It is about an answer to a problem and an experience that will retain user interest over time.

People expect apps that improve the speed and efficiency of everyday tasks are personalized and frequently updated with new content. To offer this, companies need to embrace a user-centric mobile management strategy.

Every company should be thinking about their next mobile app as a dynamic connection to their customers or audience.

A key app genre that is based almost entirely on user perspective is the transportation apps sector.

From Uber and Lyft to public transportation apps such as Transit App, successful transportation apps give users online and offline access to key information schedules, locations, travel planning, rate information, payment options, maps and more.

Getting from one place to another becomes a matter of a couple of screen taps, and all the information needed is immediate and accurate.

In some transportation apps, information is aggregated from other users to increase usability and relevance all providing the best possible user experience.

Instead of companies asking themselves what they can offer through their apps and choosing limited features based on internal desires, they must look at what users want and provide it to them.

#3: Valuable access

Many home security companies are launching user-centric, app-based monitoring and controlling for home security and home automation systems.

Instead of requiring that users learn confusing keypads with limited features, apps make enabling and disabling the systems possible through just a tap of a screen, regardless of the user's location.

People can check in on their home with security camera access, customize alerts and even monitor their thermostat all from one of their devices. This approach to user-based access is key to both attracting and retaining those users and is what people expect from apps.

IT WILL TAKE a lot of flexibility for businesses to keep up with the pace of change that we are seeing in the mobile apps space. But the benefits are obvious: consistent customer engagement, smart data and analytics, and more opportunities for conversion.

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