# 5 WAYS A MOBILE APP CAN IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS

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## SUMMARY

Given the ubiquity of mobile devices and ever-expanding usage of apps, businesses of all kinds should consider whether an app of their own can have a meaningful impact on their goals. Apps can be used to engage the "people" of their business – meaning their customers as well as their staff – though it should not be taken for granted that all apps are successful. This paper explores the ways in which mobile apps can be used to improve both internal and external operations, and how businesses should determine whether having an app developed for their needs is the right move for them.

# WORLD WIDE MOBILE

There is no refuting that the world is going mobile. Much has been reported about the increasing dependence on mobile devices by consumers for almost everything they do. Ordering food. Scheduling a taxi. Finding a date. Watching television. At least 2.1 billion people throughout the world will own a smartphone by 2019, and a majority of those users will spend their time doing all of these with just the tap of a thumb from their mobile device.

Furthermore, not only is everyone spending more time on mobile than desktop, but they're also spending that time inside of an app. According to ComScore's report **Global Digital Future in Focus 2018**, app activity "accounts for over 80% of mobile time." The percentage of "mobile-only" users has greatly increased over the past year alone, making up almost 30% of users across global markets.

With everyone's attention on mobile, businesses of all kinds – manufacturers, retailers, restaurants, medical practices, and more – may want to capitalize. It is therefore critical for them to evaluate exactly what benefits that will bring and whether having an app is to their ultimate advantage. Whether to interface with their customers and improve sales and marketing, or to streamline their internal operation and provide tools for their staff—or both—the potential uses for an app can be many. Here are five ways using a mobile app can impact your business meaningfully.
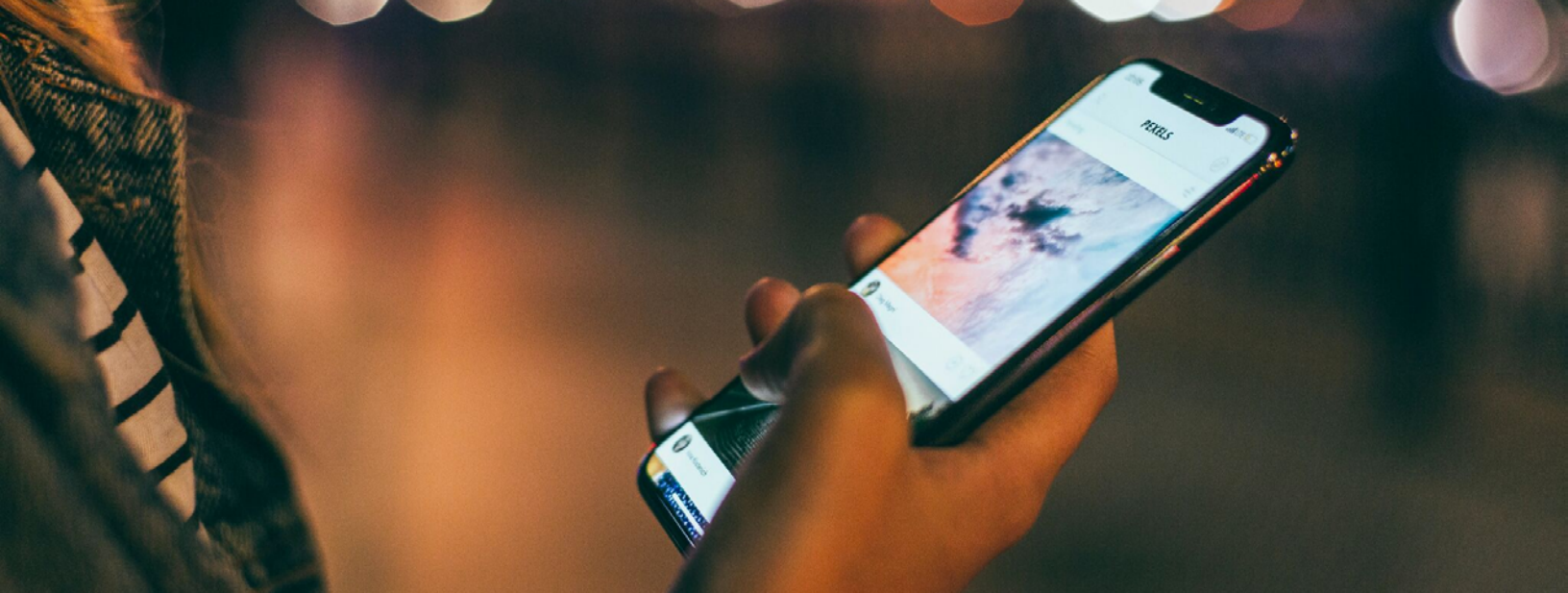
## COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

*to facilitate transactions and keep your brand at the forefront of their minds.*

When consumers make a decision, they want it to be easy. You want it to be easy, too, so you can create a clear path to conversion and encourage future business. Providing your customers with a simple way to order and checkout, right on their phones, is going to engage them more. Allowing your patients to automatically schedule appointments and leave feedback will make their lives more convenient. Using a scanning code on the restaurant bar or table will provide your customers with a way to pay immediately and curate their dining experience.

Whatever your business and whatever your goal - with a mobile app, you can control and keep the attention of your users. In a world filled with ads and distractions that take users away from you, you can benefit from features like push notifications to keep users up-to-date on promotions and offers. A mobile app can simplify and personalize your customer experience, let you drive the conversation, and pave the way for good branding while you're at it.

*Zappos has a mobile app that keeps the conversation going with their customers by allowing users to track orders and collect rewards points, and by pushing notifications automatically to their mobile devices when items come back into stock. Zappos is known for having happy customers, and its dedication to "building positive relationships with their customers is perhaps their greatest driver of success."*

## COLLECT DATA ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

*to improve your customer experience as well as your marketing efforts.*

Mobile apps are also an easy way to aggregate and leverage data from your customers to improve sales and marketing. These apps can compile reports and show you every single stat you require, including demographic insights like where your customers are located, their age, and when and how often they shop. They can also share transactional behavior, such as your customers' preferred payment methods or where users fall off of the purchasing chain. Data collected from your app can provide useful intelligence for your business and help you understand your customer base.

**EQUINOX**

*Equinox uses their mobile app to collect meaningful data about their guests - where they check into clubs, the classes they take, their fitness goals, and even the bikes they prefer to use in spin class. Gathering this data allows them to link behaviors and predict what individual customers would like to do next, or what offer they're more likely to try. With multiple data points and over 80% customer engagement with their app, Equinox even developed an app from scratch to integrate this data with a sales CRM system.*

## AUTOMATE OPERATIONAL TASKS

*to streamline the way you run your business.*

More and more, mobile apps are being used by businesses to manage their employees and streamline internal functions. Aside from customer experience and satisfaction, the operation of a business itself can make or break your cash flow. For example, restaurants need a centralized place to schedule staff, post vacation hours, and alert teams about upcoming events. Production facilities that manage temporary workers and multiple departments need a platform for assigning tasks and work schedules. Employees – of any kind of business – need a place where they can work on the go and not be restricted to a desktop environment. By having their own mobile app developed, startups and enterprises alike can optimize employee productivity and automate day-to-day operations.

**Genentech**

*Genentech, a biotech company based in South San Francisco, was ahead of its time about eight years ago when they created "On The Road" – its own office app to "help its pharmaceutical reps record the results of their sales visits to physicians" while working out of office. Particularly for employees that are mobile and not sitting at their desk all day, a customized business app helps increase productivity and in the case of Genentech, the number of sales calls being logged every day doubled. Since then, Genentech and other biotech companies have developed multiple internal apps to improve and streamline business functions.*
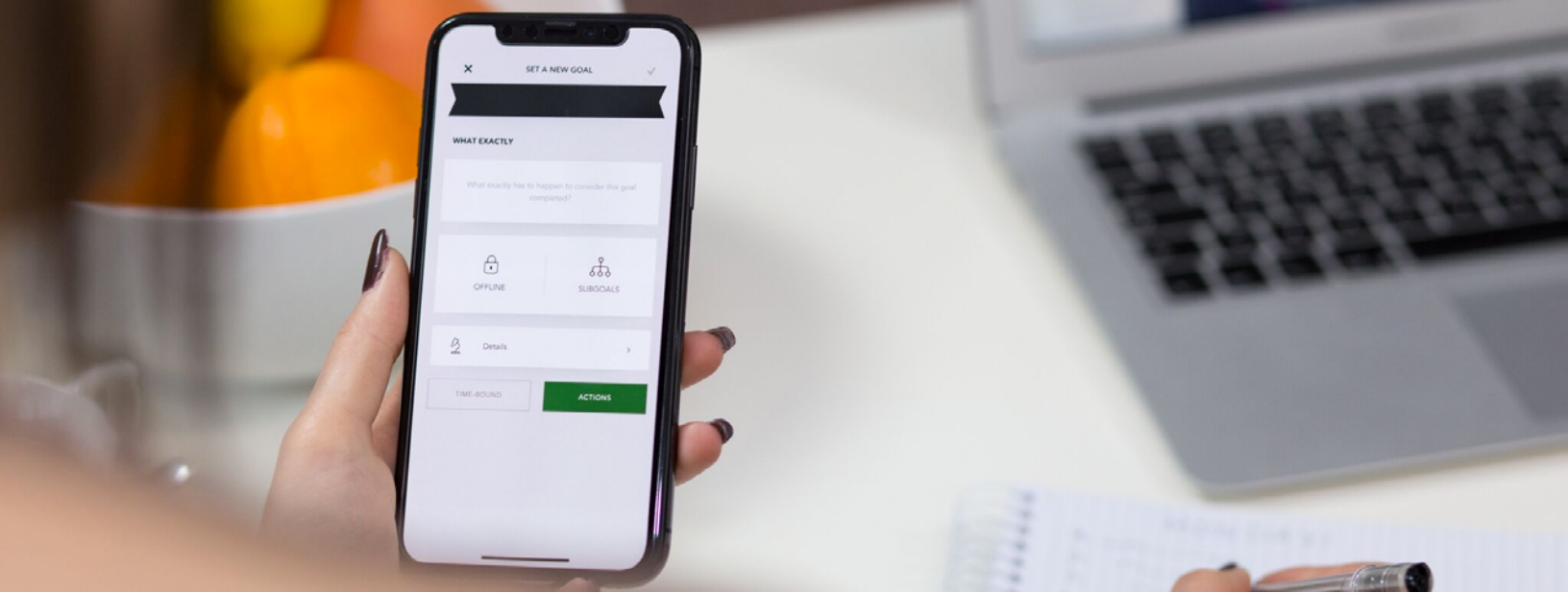
## FACILITATE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
*to improve employee engagement and performance.*

Members of your staff are just like anyone else – they enjoy social media, they connect with friends through messaging, and they have their phone on them everywhere they go. Years ago, phones would have been a distraction for workers or students. Now, they provide a unique opportunity that many businesses are taking advantage of: to reach your staff where they can engage the most. Memo notifications, instant messaging, performance reviews, rewards, training tools, newsletters – these can all be done within an app to help the members of your business connect with each other and continue to learn, as well as just make work fun! Your employee retention will thank you.

## Uber

*Uber in the past year has developed uChat, its own chat-messaging app after being dissatisfied with popular ones in the market. The company created its own app so that it could customize according to the size and needs of its users – uChat allows more than 70,000 employees at once to communicate. If there's something your business needs that it isn't out there, create it. Whether small or large, businesses can benefit from developing a mobile app that is customized and tailored to their specific business needs.*
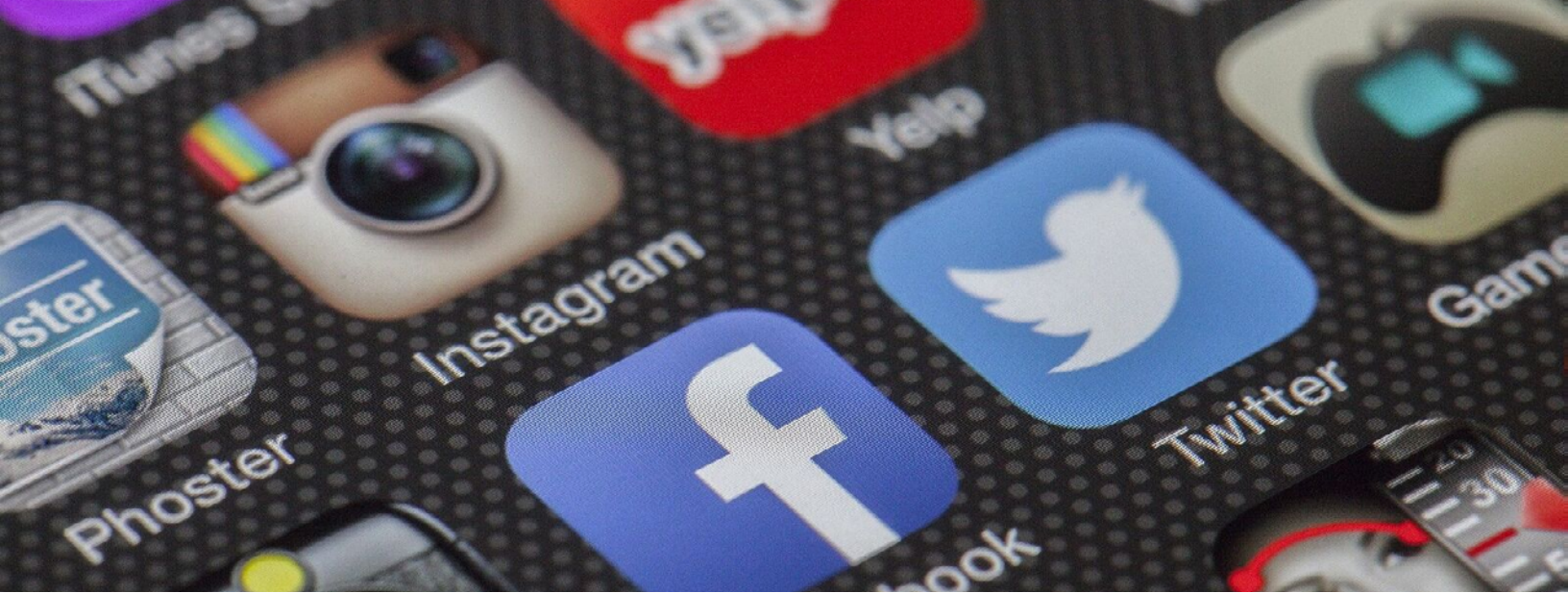
## KEEP YOUR BRAND COMPETITIVE

*to target your audience and build brand loyalty.*

There are millions of apps in the Google Play Store and App Store, and a majority are from businesses seeking to achieve the uses described above. If the competitors in your industry are using their own apps – and if those apps have high engagement, something you can find out yourself in these app stores – you won't want to be left out of the mix. Moreover, if your competitors don't have an app, you have the benefit of being able to speak to your target audience where your competitors aren't. With loyalty or rewards points that you can offer in-app, you can keep your business front-of-mind and attract more consumers – ensuring your company is on equal (or better) footing with similar businesses in your field.



*AMC Theatres is well known for continually updating and redesigning its mobile app to remain at the top of its industry. Not only can customers purchase tickets and order concessions via the app, but they can also participate in contests, earn loyalty points, and receive reminders for upcoming movies. Having a mobile app alone doesn't keep their brand competitive; staying abreast of what the competition is doing, as well as testing and updating their app with new features, is what keeps consumers engaged and coming back for more.*

## WHAT'S NEXT?

By developing mobile apps to address specific needs, businesses are enabling consumers to shop with them, read about them, and interact with them digitally as well as physically. Apps can also serve to improve operations and streamline internal communication. In deciding whether to develop your own app, it is worth examining if and how these five uses can benefit your business. From there, the questions necessarily become: what kind of app do you want to build, how do you build it, and who is the right app development team for the job? You can learn more about mobile app development by visiting our website – we're nerds about code and happy to share what we know.

**LEARN MORE**

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