



the mobile growth handbook

2019



More than 150 new tips, stats, growth stories, and best practices to drive cross-platform mobile growth.

| Fourth Edition

What's Inside This Year's Edition

- **150+ tips** to help marketing teams acquire, engage, and retain app users in a cross-platform world
- **A data-driven view** of the mobile landscape, including all the statistics you need to know to drive growth in 2019 and beyond
- **Mobile growth strategies** from the world's top brands like:



>> Find out what Adobe, Spotify, Yelp, and Verizon are doing to drive mobile ROI.



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03 Retain

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Referrals, influencers, and affiliates drive results — but only if you can attribute those efforts.

05 Attribute & Optimize

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Conclusion

The future of mobile growth is cross-platform.

>> Mobile Growth 2019

Introduction



A Look at 2018: A Year of Explosive Mobile Growth

2018 was a record-breaking year for app store acquisition and engagement. As smartphone usage grew across the globe and in key emerging markets like India and China, users spent more time on their phones and in-app than ever before.

But if 2018 represented a year of rapid adoption and usage of apps, it brought with it the painful fragmentation of user engagement and measurement.

Companies big and small reported it was harder than ever to capture the attention of app users in a saturated marketplace, and were challenged to provide user experiences that didn't break across platforms and devices in order to drive installs, conversions, and ROI.

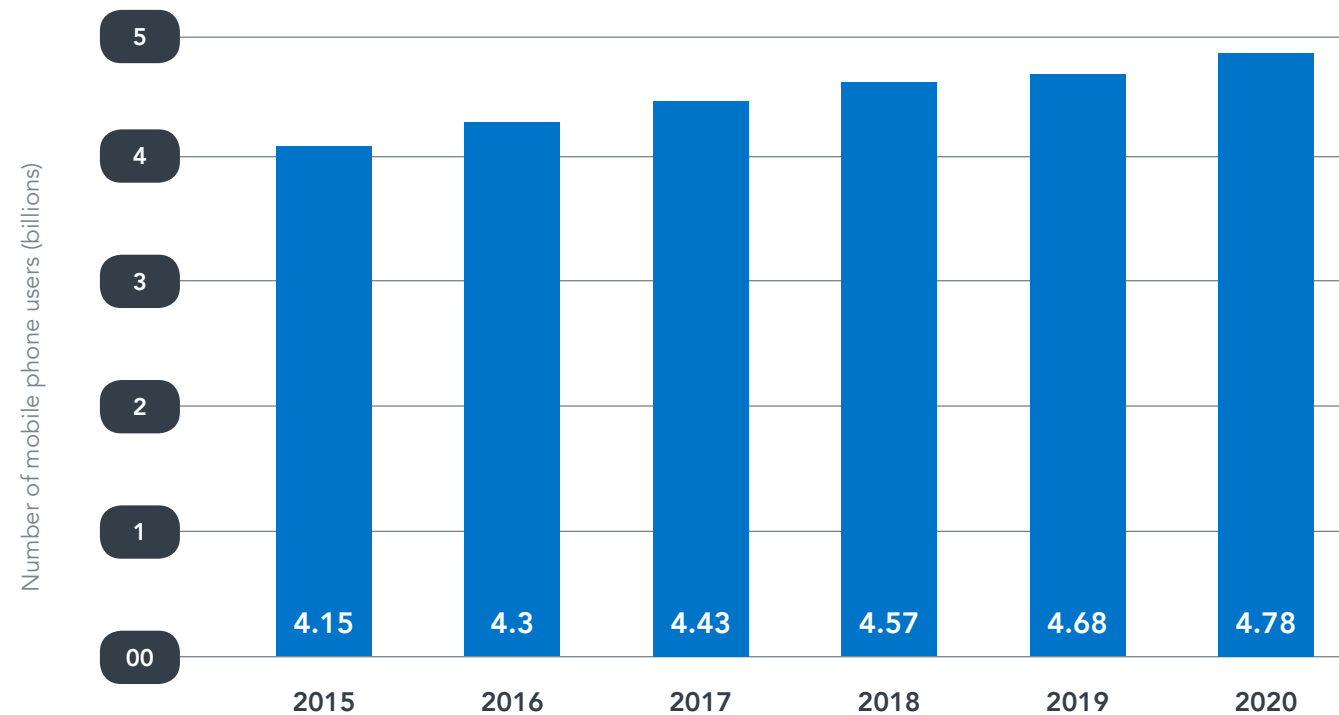
>> Companies big and small reported it was harder than ever to capture the attention of app users in a saturated marketplace.



2019 and Beyond: App Spending & Usage Will Grow

The good news: 2019 brings the continued dominance of mobile, along with increased app store spending. The number of mobile phone users in the world will near five billion by 2020.

Number of Mobile Phone Users Worldwide from 2015 to 2020



Source: **statista**



App Downloads and Spend: Also on the Rise

The State of Mobile 2019



194B

Worldwide downloads
in 2018



\$120B

Worldwide app store
consumer spend
projected for 2019



2X

For context,
that's double the size
of the global box
office market

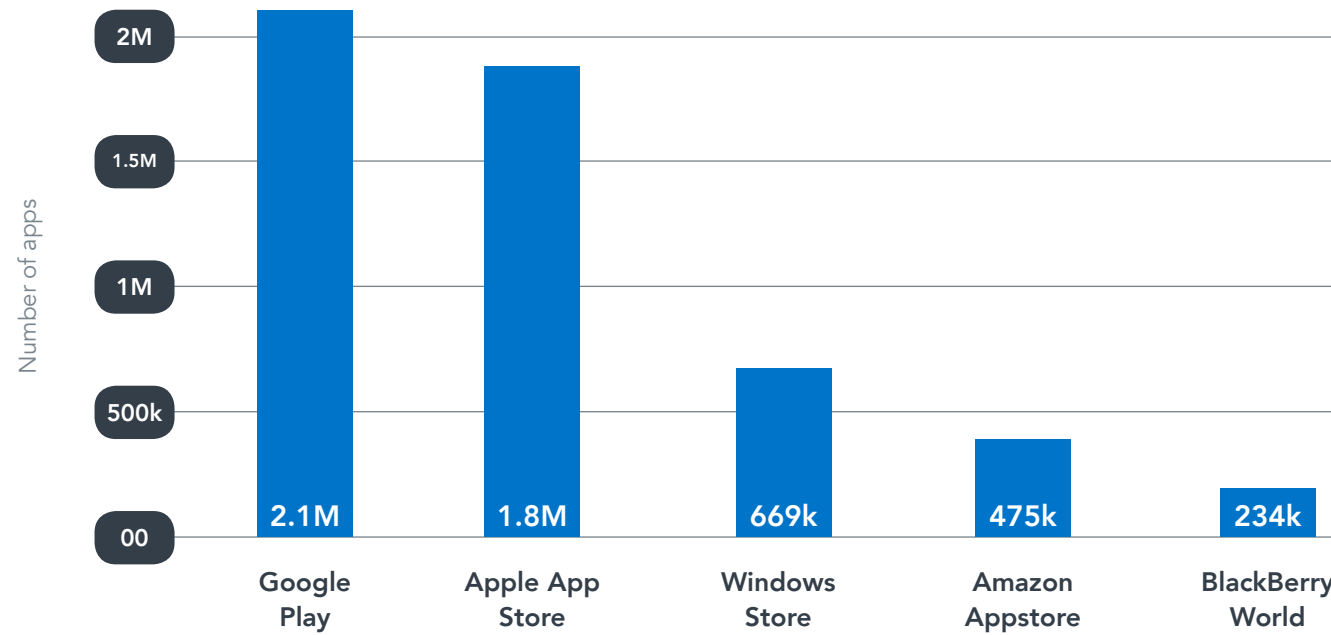
Source: *App Annie*



...and Now There are More Apps Than Ever

As of Q1 2019, Statista reported there were 2.1 million apps in the Google Play Store, and 1.8 million in the iOS App Store.

Number of Apps Available in Leading App Stores as of Q1 2019



Source: **statista**



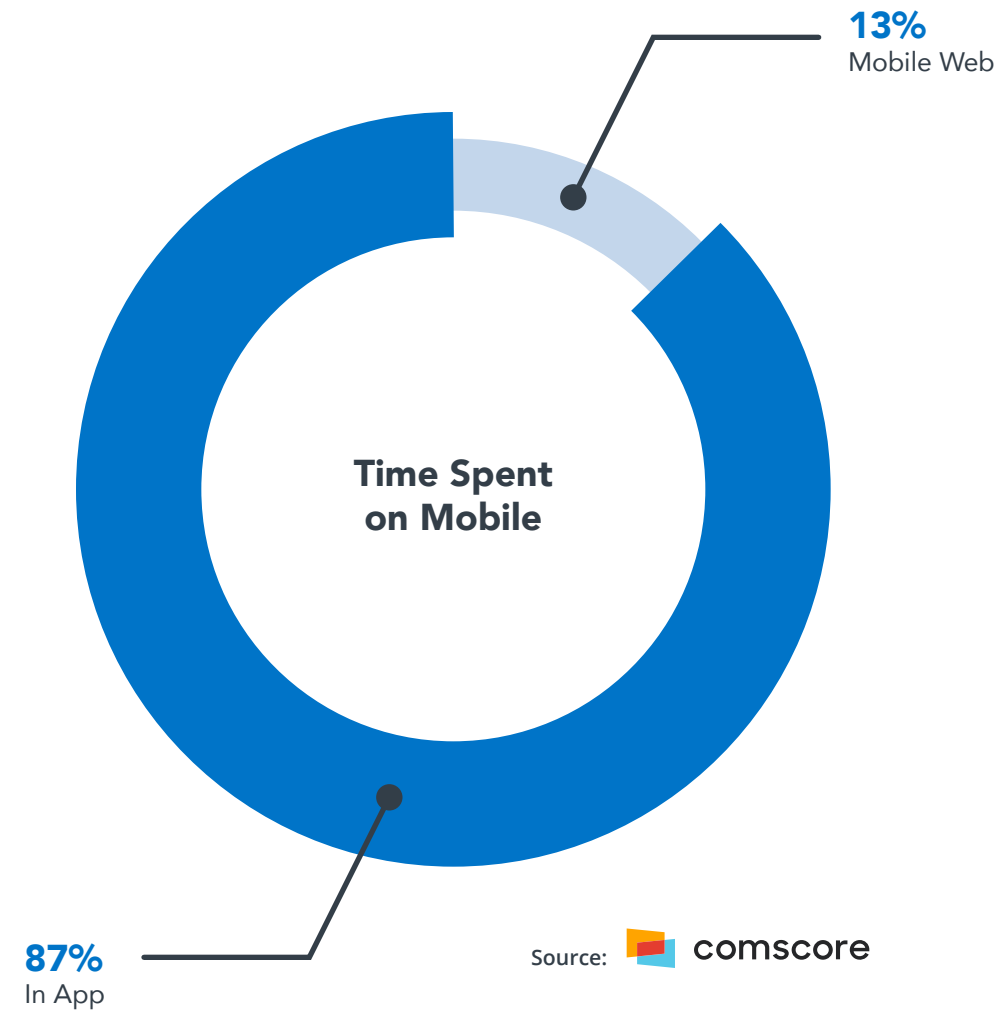
For Every Hour on the Mobile Web, Seven are Spent In-App

According to eMarketer, the average U.S. adult spends 3 hours and 35 minutes on their mobile phone per day — and apps account for roughly 90% of internet time on smartphones and 77% of internet time on tablets.¹

To put that into perspective: For every hour spent on the mobile web, users are spending seven hours in-app.

These data points suggest an important trend: More apps are available than ever before, and consumers are spending more time and money in those apps.

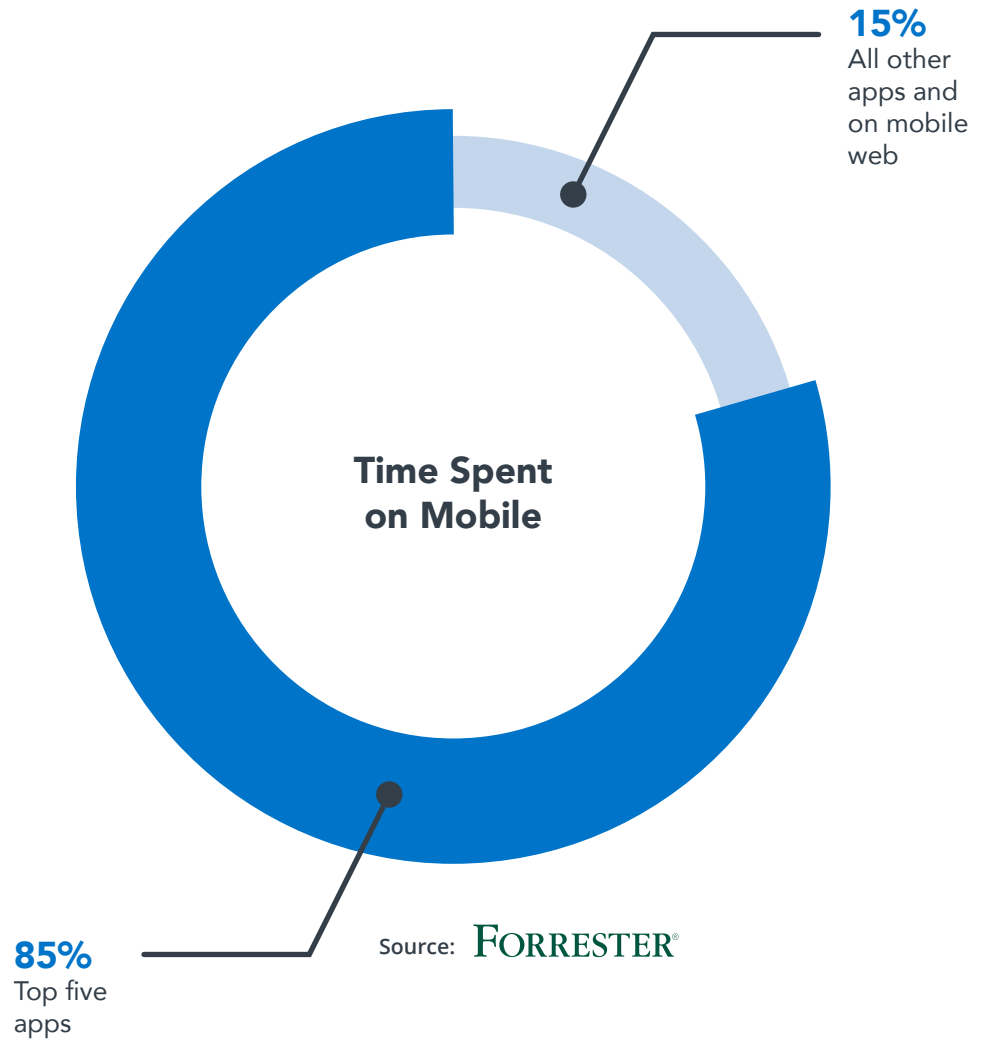
¹<https://www.emarketer.com/content/mobile-time-spent-2018>



The 2019 Challenge: Capturing Attention and ROI

But that doesn't mean it's easy to capture those users and turn them into loyal app fanatics.

In fact, Forrester reported that users spend 85% of their time in their top five apps — and only 15% of the time in other apps and on mobile web. In short, the app market is full of potential — but it is a highly competitive space for companies vying for those installs, conversions, and in-app revenue.



branch



Alex Austin
CEO

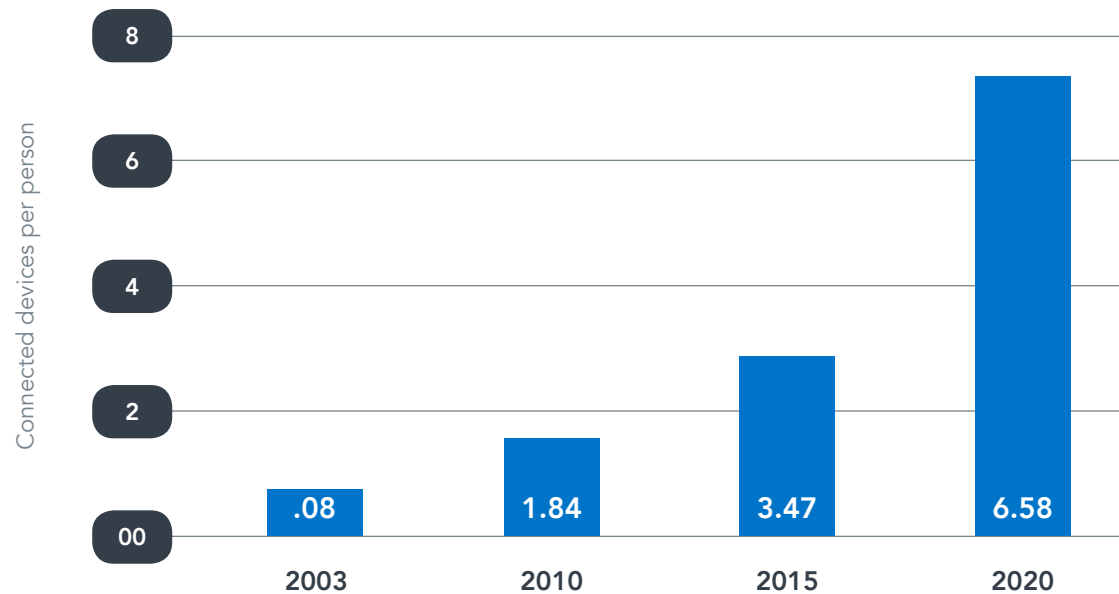
“Mobile is definitely the most exciting platform of the hour, but companies must think ahead to five to 10 years in the future. Users are spending substantial time in apps found beyond the phone — on smartwatches, televisions, and cars. We also can’t forget the existing touchpoints, such as in-store and desktop. To succeed in mobile, you must think cross-platform.”



The Domination of The Cross-Platform User

As users continue to use more devices and channels to engage with brands, only the companies that create and implement a cross-platform approach to mobile growth will capture the revenue on the table. **Case in point:** Statista reports that by 2020, the average consumer will have 6.58 connected devices. As a result, no two user journeys are the same.

Number of Network Connected Devices Per Person Around the World



Source: **statista**



No Two User Journeys are the Same...

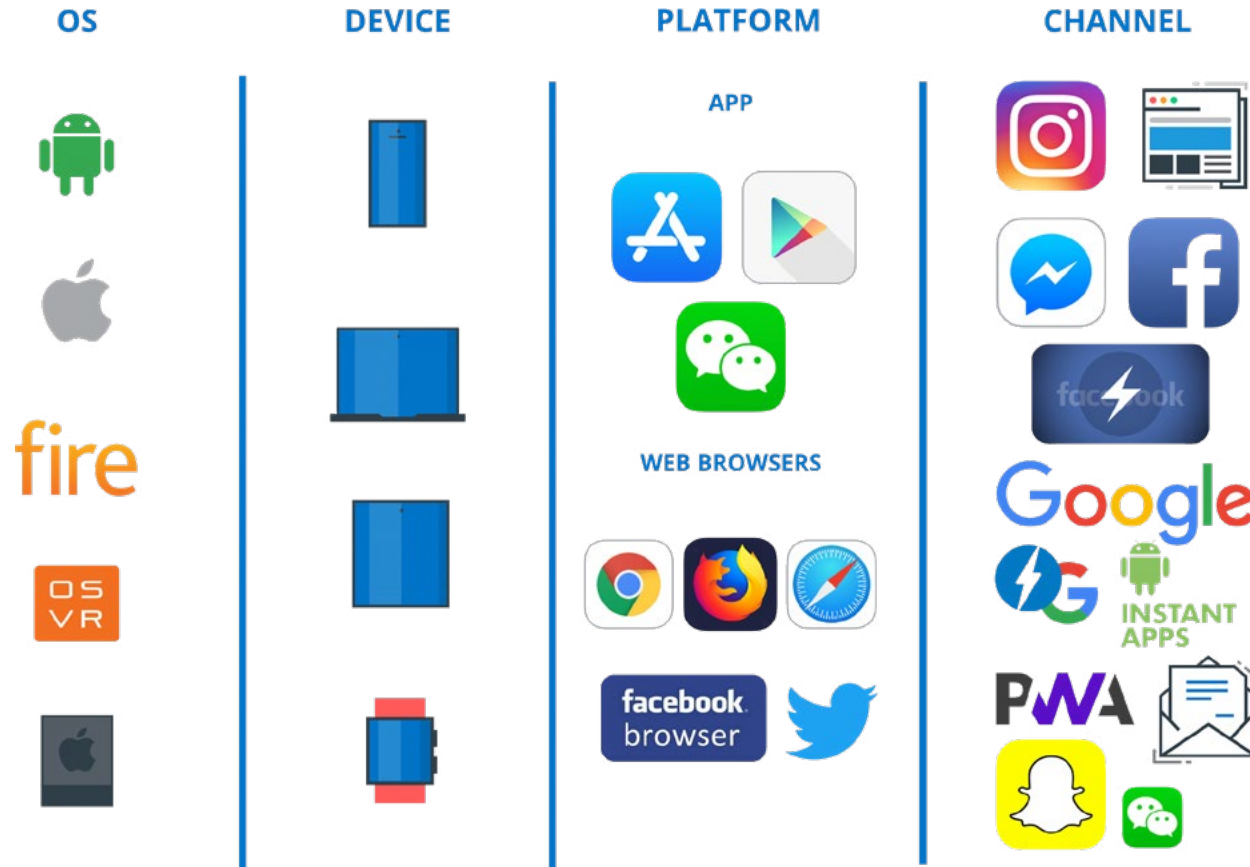


Leslie: Starts her journey on desktop, and while scrolling through social, sees a dress. She clicks the link, but doesn't buy the dress. Two days later, she is retargeted with an ad on mobile, downloads the app, and purchases the dress.



Steve: Starts his search on his smartphone for his favorite TV show, The Last O.G. He lands on the TBS mobile website, and is prompted to download the app. He clicks to install the app, but gets distracted and doesn't complete the process. Five days later, he downloads the app directly from the app store and watches his favorite episode.

...and the Mobile Landscape is Fragmented



>> More operating systems, devices, platforms, and channels make it harder to understand the user journey.



The Biggest Challenge? Users Don't Care

Users don't care that the mobile ecosystem is fragmented. They simply want seamless experiences that ensure they are recognized by trusted brands across devices.

And brands that don't respond to those needs will find themselves losing users, even after they've been acquired.



The New Threats to Mobile Growth

Broken User Experiences: Without a rock-solid deep linking foundation, it's harder to seamlessly drive users into the app from every channel, even though the native app is where they engage and convert at a higher rate.

Increasing Fragmentation: With more devices and more system updates than ever, mobile marketing teams and developers have to solve for every phone, OS, and edge case when it comes time to drive users into the app.

Inaccurate Attribution: Strala reports that only 11% of marketers feel very confident in their current attribution models.¹ Legacy mobile attribution technologies were designed to

passively measure a single channel or platform. As a result, the inability to accurately tie channels and campaign performance to mobile growth leads to inaccurate data and wasted marketing spend.

Mobile Fraud: Fraudulent clicks and installs are eating away at marketing budgets. 21.3% of iOS app and 26.9% of Android app installs are fraudulent, according to Interceptd.² Worse yet, Juniper predicts mobile fraud will cost marketing teams \$87 billion by 2022.²

These new challenges will be crucial to solve for companies that want to thrive in the mobile-first, cross-platform world.

¹<https://www.strala.com/guides/2019-marketing-benchmark-report>

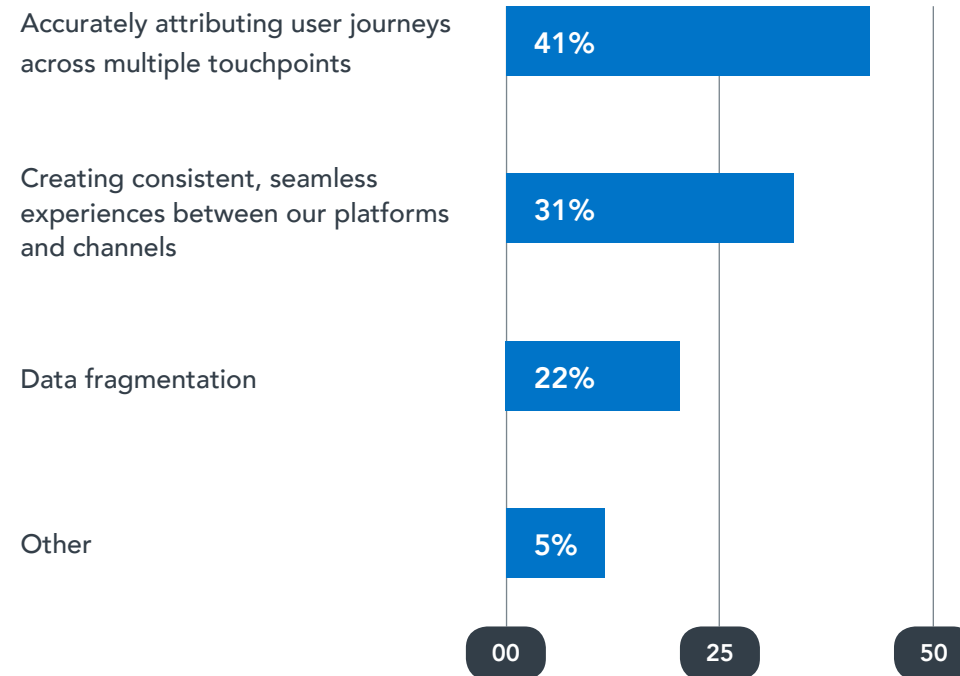
²<http://www.businessofapps.com/ads/ad-fraud/research/ad-fraud-statistics/>



Marketers are Feeling the Cross-Platform Pain

This year's Mobile Growth Survey found more respondents were struggling to accurately attribute user journeys across touchpoints, and create seamless cross-platform experiences.

What is Your Biggest Cross-Platform Challenge Right Now?



Source: **branch**



Succeeding in the Cross-Platform World

As users become more cross-platform, they expect the same of their digital experiences.

Branch's 2018 Industry Report found that **cross-platform users spend 2.2X more than users who interact with a company via one platform.**¹

In addition, **cross-platform users have a 8.16% higher retention rate.**¹

Today's users are also more demanding: They expect personalized experiences on every channel and platform, from email to social to organic search to the app. According to Google, 62% of people expect a consistent experience every time they

interact with a brand — no matter the device, channel, or platform.²

Marketing teams are now expected to be able to recognize and personalize cross-platform experiences across the entire user lifecycle or risk losing their users. Without sophisticated targeting and personalization, acquisition and retention campaigns will fall flat.

Simply acquiring a user using cross-platform personalization is no longer enough. Now, marketers must be sophisticated enough to first understand, then respond to user needs across channels and platforms throughout the entire lifecycle.

¹ <https://branch.io/resources/white-paper/?res=The+Branch+Industry+Report%3A+Mobile+Trends+in+Focus>

² <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/advertising-channels/mobile-marketing/consumer-behavior-mobile-digital-experiences/>



Adopting the Cross-Platform Mindset

Bottom line: In order to be competitive in 2019 and beyond, teams must develop cross-platform strategies that acquire, retain, engage, and turn users into loyal app advocates.

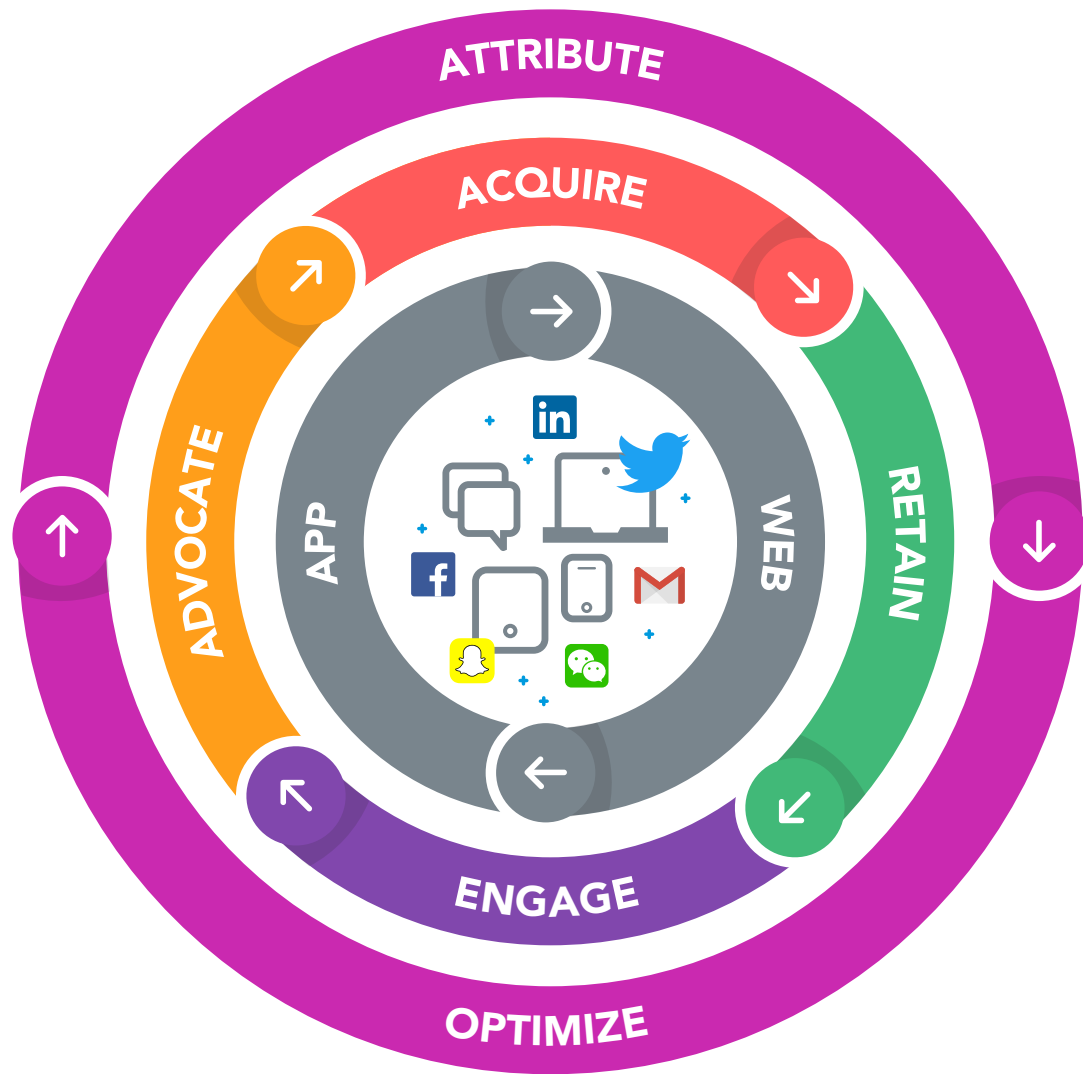
Just as critical is the ability to measure the performance of each marketing channel and platform by accurately attributing in-app events.

In short, the world needs a new mobile growth framework that will drive LTV and cross-platform revenue.

>> The world needs a new mobile growth framework that will drive LTV and cross-platform revenue.



Introducing the New Cross-Platform Framework for Mobile Growth



The Framework for Cross-Platform Success

From acquisition to retention, engagement, and referrals, brands must be able to accurately attribute and optimize across channels and platforms, throughout the full user journey.



branch



Mada Seghete
CO-FOUNDER

“The new era of mobile is cross-platform. In working with the world’s top brands, they all have one thing in common: They approach mobile growth by driving users to the app from every channel — and they are able to accurately measure and iterate on the performance of those campaigns across multiple platforms to drive engagement and revenue.”



>> Section One

Acquire



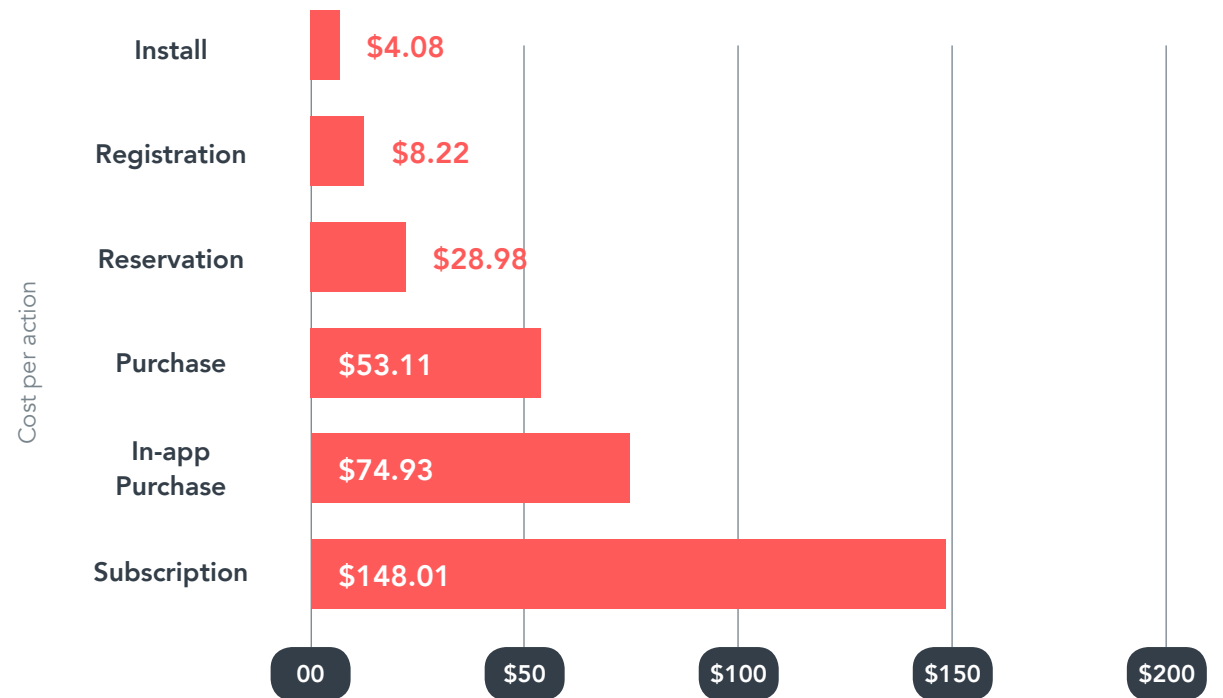
Organic and Paid Acquisition in a Cross-Platform World

With the emergence of smartphones and apps came a hyper-focus on user acquisition. Marketing teams had a single KPI in mind: **Get installs**. But as marketers invested more in acquisition, costs began to skyrocket.¹

But this isn't the entire story. In fact, research from TUNE indicates that every paid install drives an additional 1.5 organic installs. Often, apps that run paid campaigns find themselves near the top of the list in app stores as a result of paid installs.² As paid acquisition costs continue to rise, marketers must revisit their acquisition strategies to drive users from every channel into the app.

Striking the right balance of cross-platform organic and paid acquisition is critical to keeping marketing budgets in check.

Global Mobile App Acquisition Costs (August 2017)



Source: eMarketer™



¹ <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Cost-of-Acquiring-Mobile-App-User/1016688>

² <https://mkt.tune.com/tmc-better-together-ebook.html>

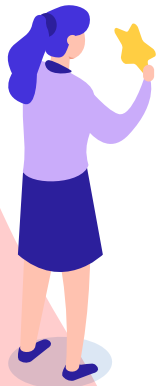
wish



Stella Wu

(FORMER) GROWTH PM

“There’s no secret sauce for you to get a lot of downloads. The goal is always quality users, because you can get a lot of downloads from an incentivized campaign — but it’s no good if those users aren’t going to make a purchase.”



1.1 | Acquire - **Organic****Organic Acquisition: Low Cost, High Impact**

Branch research has found that organic channels (such as email, smart banners, and referrals) are up to:

4.4x

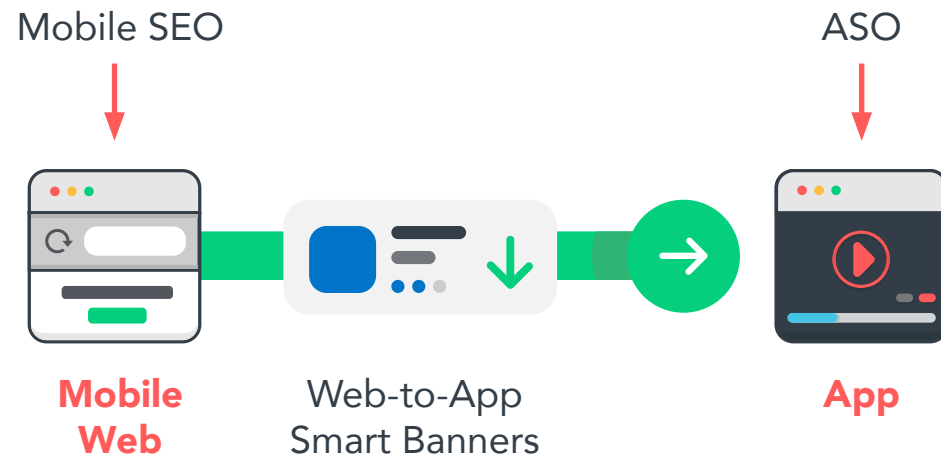
more effective at driving purchases than paid acquisition channels

Here's why: Users who find your company organically usually have a much higher intent, and are more likely to convert.



Driving Cross-Platform Organic App Growth

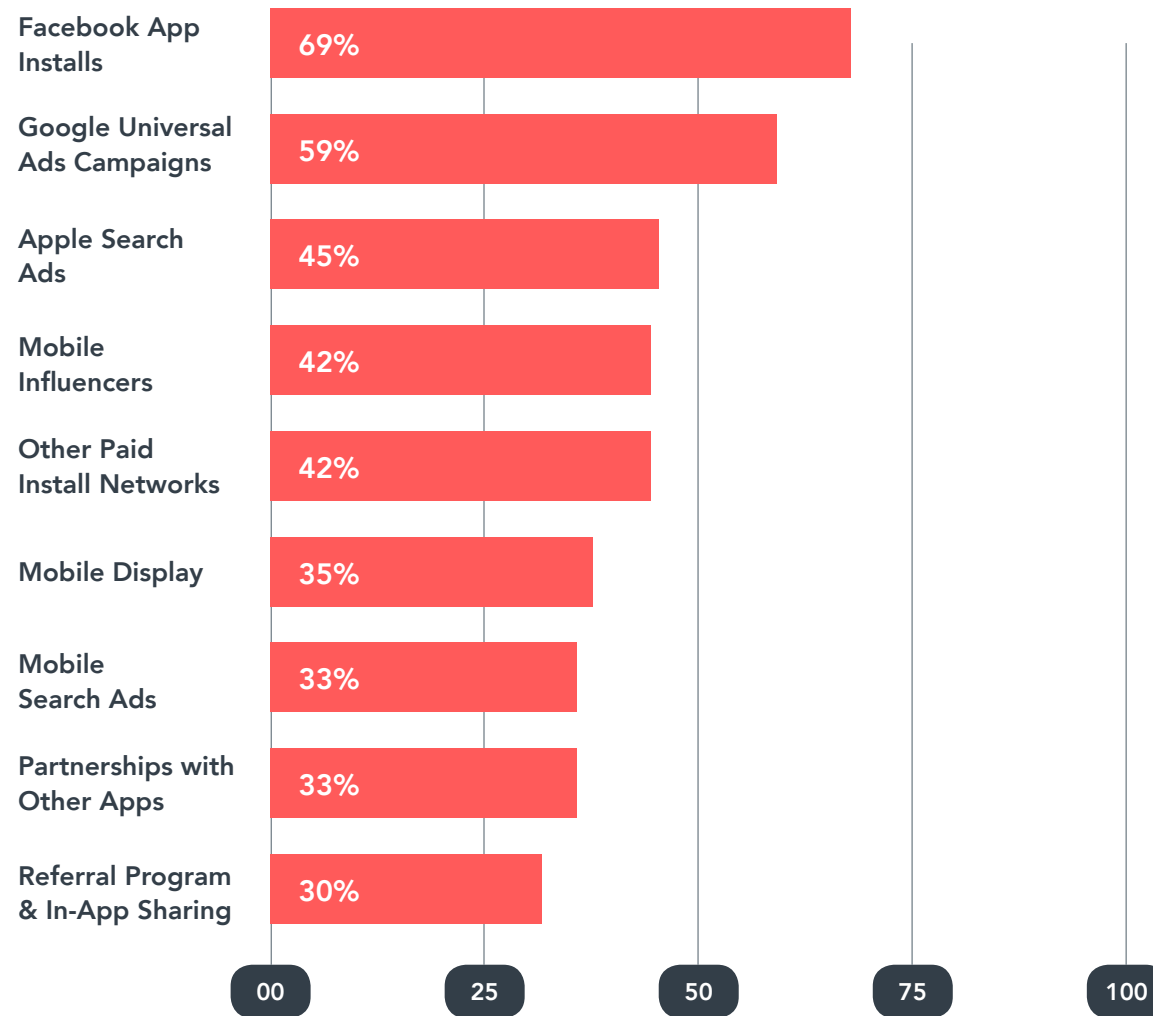
Everyone knows Mobile SEO and ASO are both key ways organic users find their ways to your brand. Cross-platform web-to-app Smart Banners help brands convert organic mobile web visitors into app users — where they are **3X more likely to engage and convert.**



>> Converting mobile web traffic into app users is a crucial part of mobile growth.



Which Channels are Your Team Members Relying on to Attract Users to Your App in 2019?



Source: **branch**



Mastering the New Age of Mobile SEO

It used to be enough to ensure your website was optimized for SEO on desktop and responsive on mobile. But those days are long gone, thanks to the rising popularity of searching on mobile phones.

Wordstream reports 52% of global internet traffic comes from mobile devices, and 60% of Google searches are done via mobile devices.¹ This shift in searching behavior has had a direct impact on how search engines crawl, rank, and display results on both desktop and mobile.²

Case in point: At the end of 2018, Google announced that it was boosting mobile-friendly pages in its search results. Now, Google will also make mobile-first indexing the default for all new domains.³

The result: Any company that isn't putting mobile SEO first is sure to lose traffic, users, and ROI. Let's take a look at how you can make sure you rank on mobile.



Branch & Your Mobile SEO

Did you know that you can use Branch to assess which SEO queries lead to app downloads? Our clients use this feature to capitalize on SEO. Want to find out more? [Contact Branch Sales today.](#)

¹ <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2019/02/07/google-search-statistics>

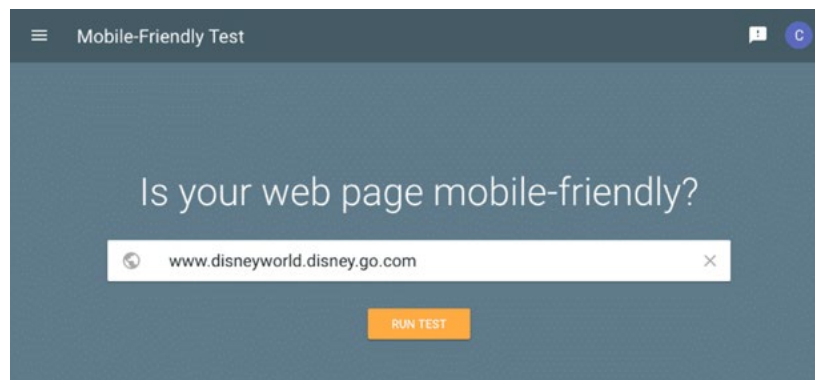
² <https://webmasters.googleblog.com/2015/04/rolling-out-mobile-friendly-update.html>

³ <https://techcrunch.com/2019/05/28/google-makes-mobile-first-indexing-the-default-for-all-new-domains/>

Test Your Website's Mobile-Friendly Status

Google offers a Mobile-Friendly Test, which analyzes any URL to determine how well it performs on mobile.¹

This is a quick, easy way to double-check how the mobile website is performing — and what tweaks or adjustments need to be made for optimization. It's a good place to start.



¹ <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

² <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/feature/testmysite>

Another great option: Test mobile site speed using Think With Google.² 53% of visits are abandoned if a site takes more than three seconds to load — and that means all those mobile SEO efforts will have gone to waste.

PRO
TIP

>> Don't let your mobile SEO efforts go to waste.



Cover Google's Mobile Bases

Google's latest mobile-first indexing update essentially penalizes any web pages that are only optimized for desktop — and this change is also reflected in desktop searches. **That's right:** A more mobile-friendly web page will get higher ranking even on desktop searches.

PRO
TIP

Three Steps to Ensure Your Site is Mobile Optimized:

Step 1: Let Google crawl all your code

Unless Googlebot can crawl all of the code on your website, it's likely to penalize your ranking. Check your robots.txt file or use the Google Search Console to see if you're blocking any code in the Blocked Resources section.

Step 2: Disable full-page pop-ups

One of Google's latest updates dislikes pop-ups — especially for users on mobile. If you still want to leverage them, a few tools (like Branch's Journeys) can help get the job done without hurting SEO. Just make sure your pop-ups aren't preventing you from ranking high in mobile SEO by going through [Google's guidelines here](#).

Step 3: Let mobile users see all content

Blocking certain pieces of content or features for mobile users will no longer help improve the experience because it could penalize your mobile SEO. Faster page loads won't help if Google determines you're suppressing content for mobile users and drops your ranking.



Determine The Best Keywords

Appearing at the top of the search results on Google or Bing has never been more important. On desktop, it is likely users will see a few of the results. But on mobile, the top result takes up the majority of the screen — lessening the chance that users will scroll to find you.

PRO
TIP

Four Keys to Keyword Success

1. Hit The Big Four

Great keywords for SEO respond to user intent. User intent is often navigational, informational, investigational, or transactional. Ensure any SEO keyword strategies respond to these user search needs.

2. Be Specific

Most mobile SEO campaigns fail because keywords are too broad, don't capture enough traffic, or are too competitive.

3. Be Local

Instead of using a broad term, try working in local aspects since mobile users are often searching for nearby results. **Example: Instead of "tacos," try ranking for "Los Angeles tacos."**

4. Focus on LSI

Latent Semantic Indexing can help bolster mobile SEO by guiding users to the right content through pre-populated language in Google Search. Try using a tool like [LSI Graph](#) to ensure keyword targeting responds to these queries.



Ensure Descriptions are Optimized for Mobile

Everyone knows how important keywords and descriptions are for optimizing search for desktop. On mobile, you likely have more space to work with when it comes to the title tags and descriptions that appear in search results. Here's the breakdown, according to BackLink:¹

Desktop

Title: Approximately 70 Characters

Description: Approximately 155 Characters

Mobile

Title: Approximately 78 Characters

Description: Approximately 155 Characters

The result: Some titles and descriptions will be truncated on desktop, but show up entirely on mobile. It's worth reviewing regularly to make sure you're presenting the best copy for users on both devices.

¹<https://backlinko.com/mobile-seo-guide>

PRO
TIP



App Store Optimization

App stores continue to be a major driver of app discovery.

Statista projects that by 2022, the number of apps downloaded from app stores every day will reach 707 million.¹

App store optimization can help an app capture high-quality traffic based on app title, related keywords, ratings, and more. That's why it's crucial to get ASO right.

But there is a challenge: **Almost 90% of app store searches are branded** (people looking for a specific app by name), which means users are often looking for apps they've already heard of.² This is just another reason it's so important to ensure your mobile web users drive into the app, in addition to optimizing your app store presence.

>> By 2022, the number of apps downloaded from app stores every day will reach 707 million.



¹<https://www.statista.com/statistics/271644/worldwide-free-and-paid-mobile-app-store-downloads/>

²<https://blog.branch.io/i-studied-the-top-500-app-store-keywords-so-you-wouldnt-have-to/>

Get the ASO Basics Right

Title tags, eye-catching screenshots, attractive app icons, and engaging app descriptions can all help improve an app's spot in the stores.

PRO
TIP

Improve Your App's Spot in the Stores by Focusing on These Five Areas

Name, URL, Subtitle

The value of the app has to shine through here, including app differentiators — and reflect high-value keywords that align with how users search for the app.

Keyword Fields

Check in on app keyword fields at least once per quarter and update them to respond to any changes in user search behavior. There's nothing set-it-and-forget-it about these keywords because their impact on app discovery is so important.

Icon Design

For any companies out there thinking about skipping this step, remember how fickle the highly engaged millennial app user is: Comscore reports 21% of millennials said they deleted a mobile app because they didn't like the app logo.¹

Screenshots

The screenshots and thumbnail images used to promote an app directly impact the click-through rates (CTR) of impressions compared to clicks to extra app pages. Test and iterate to find the right screenshots.

Ratings & Reviews

Building trust is key to driving downloads — so make sure to generate regular app reviews, and respond directly to any negative reviews left by users.

¹<https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/5-Interesting-Facts-About-Millennials-Mobile-App-Usage-from-The-2017-US-Mobile-App-Report>



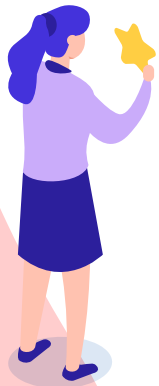
APPFOLLOW



Olga Padulosi

HEAD OF MARKETING

“Always monitor your user reviews — and be sure to reply to those reviews, especially the negative or featured ones. If you do, you’ll see your conversion and retention rates grow. After regularly posting responses to user reviews that addressed their pains and let them know they were heard, we saw a roughly 27% increase in app ratings — and happier users.”



Keep Your App Content Fresh

The top apps in the app store are constantly evolving to reflect changes in technology, new features and improvements, and user feedback. That means everything from the app description to the titles and copy should be reviewed at least once per quarter to make sure content reflects the core value proposition of the app.

Remember, you're not just competing against the next big company in your industry.

You're competing against mobile-first companies like Uber and Amazon, who provide best-in-class app experiences and content.

>> Remember, you're not just competing against the next big company in your industry.

PRO
TIP



A/B Test Your Way to ASO Success

To keep a finger on the pulse of the app store, A/B testing app page elements can help determine which designs and messaging have the most impact on downloads and conversions. **A few examples:**

- **Apptentive** recommends A/B testing which screenshots are displayed on the page to see what appeals to users the most.¹
- **Apptamin** recommends trying videos on the app store page to see if users are more likely to engage with content — then install and convert.²
- A/B testing keyword fields to improve key metrics like **CTR and CRO** can help drive value from every area of the app store.
- Leverage **split-testing tools** to A/B test your app page on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

¹<https://www.apptentive.com/blog/2017/07/05/how-to-ab-test-your-app-store-page/>

²<https://www.apptamin.com/blog/ab-test-app-page-creatives/>

PRO
TIP



Optimize for International Installs

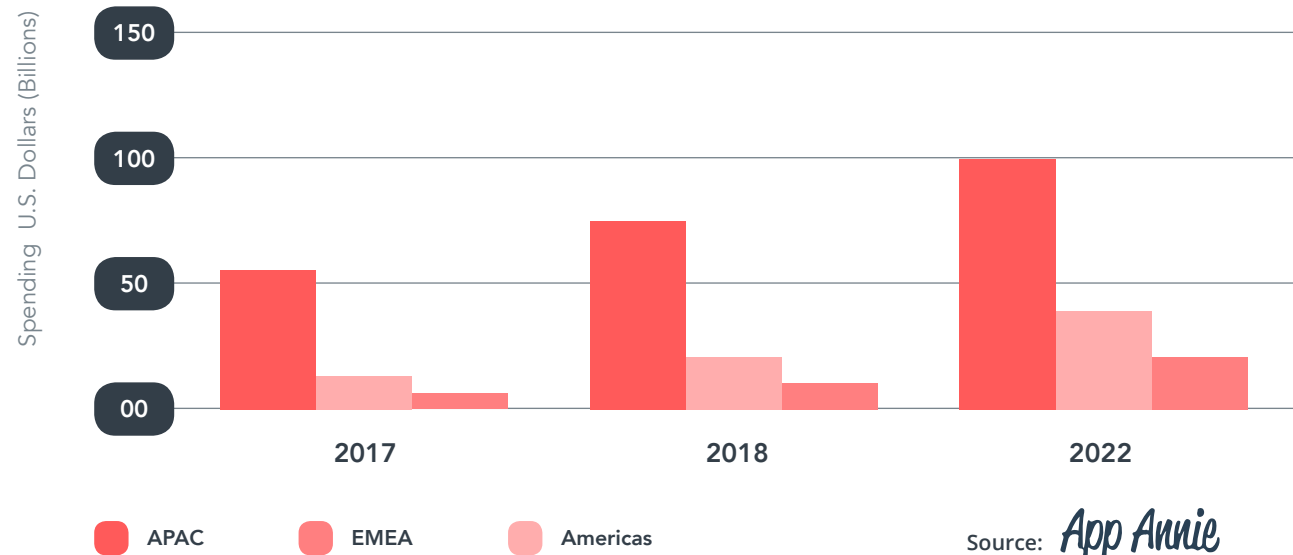
It's critical to go beyond the U.S. when looking for new installs — especially in APAC and EMEA.

Localizing app store pages to target key markets using in-market search keywords can drive more international installs, with some companies seeing a **300% increase in downloads** as a result.

With results like that, it's worth selecting two or three regions to test and target.

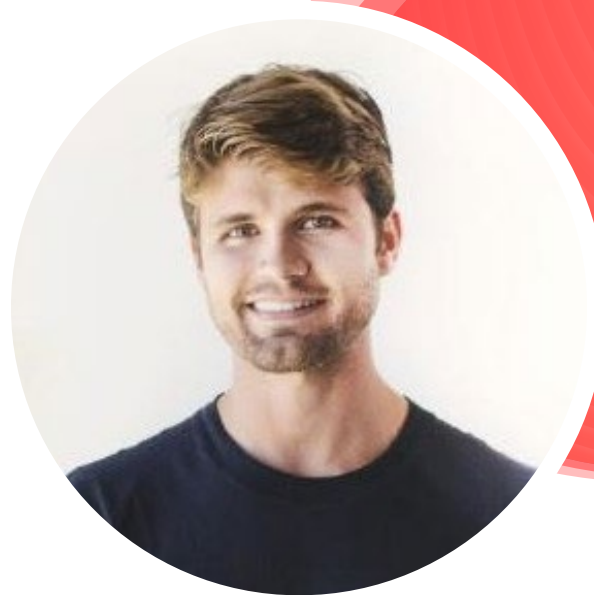


Worldwide Consumer Spending on Mobile Apps in 2017, 2018, & 2022 by Region



Source: *App Annie*

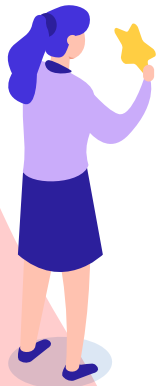




Andreas Homer

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

“Everything — from title to description to the color of the screenshots — can affect the success of your ASO efforts.”



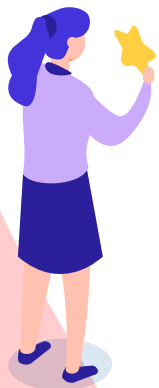
glassdoor®



Jordan Girman

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF USER EXPERIENCE

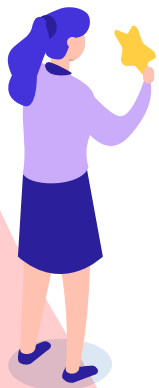
“With a focus on organic growth, content is a huge driver. When people download the app, we’ve found it is due to a catalyst (i.e. losing a job, career shift, etc.). So now we can focus content directly towards those scenarios, which has caused a significant uptick in installs.”





Jessica Messinger
HEAD OF GROWTH

“When we say acquisition, it’s not always about finding people who have never heard of you. Always make sure you are looking at the whole funnel, and finding pockets of people who just need a little push.”



Paid Acquisition: The New Landscape

Paid acquisition is a critical component of any marketing strategy that drives app growth.

But there's a Catch-22: Paid acquisition offers a consistent source of new installs, but costs continue to rise for high-quality users with LTV.

A few trends are coming clear for 2019, however.

>> Paid acquisition is critical — but more and more costly.

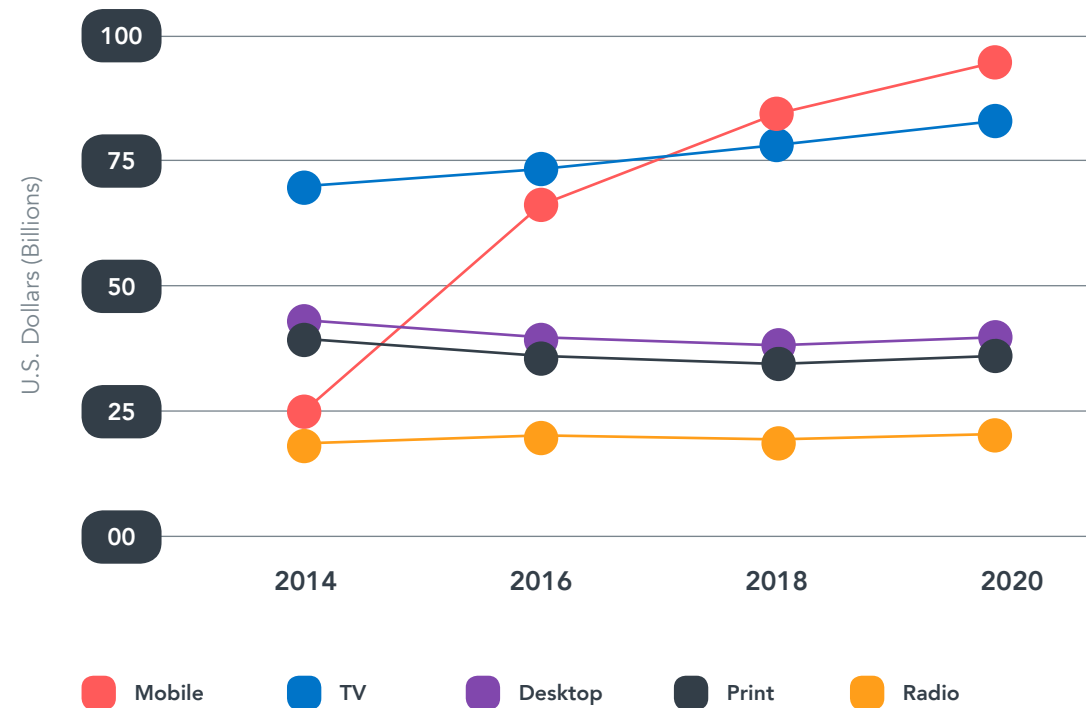


1.4 | Acquire - Paid Acquisition

Ad Spend has Migrated to Mobile

In 2018, global ad spend reached \$629 billion.¹ But spending on mobile ads jumped substantially, indicating a shift in the market.

Ad Spend by Device/Medium



Source: eMarketer™

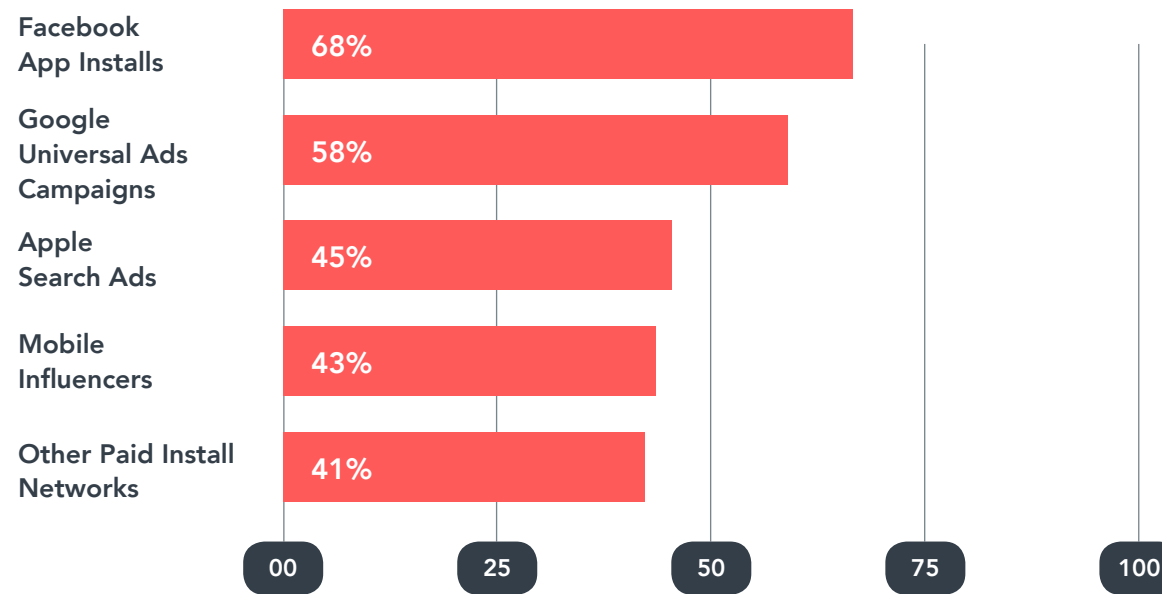
¹<https://www.emarketer.com/content/mobile-ad-spending-to-surpass-all-traditional-media-combined-by-2020>



Marketers are Still Focusing on Paid Installs

This year's Mobile Growth Survey found that respondents were most likely to rely on Facebook, Google, and Apple to drive installs heading into 2020.

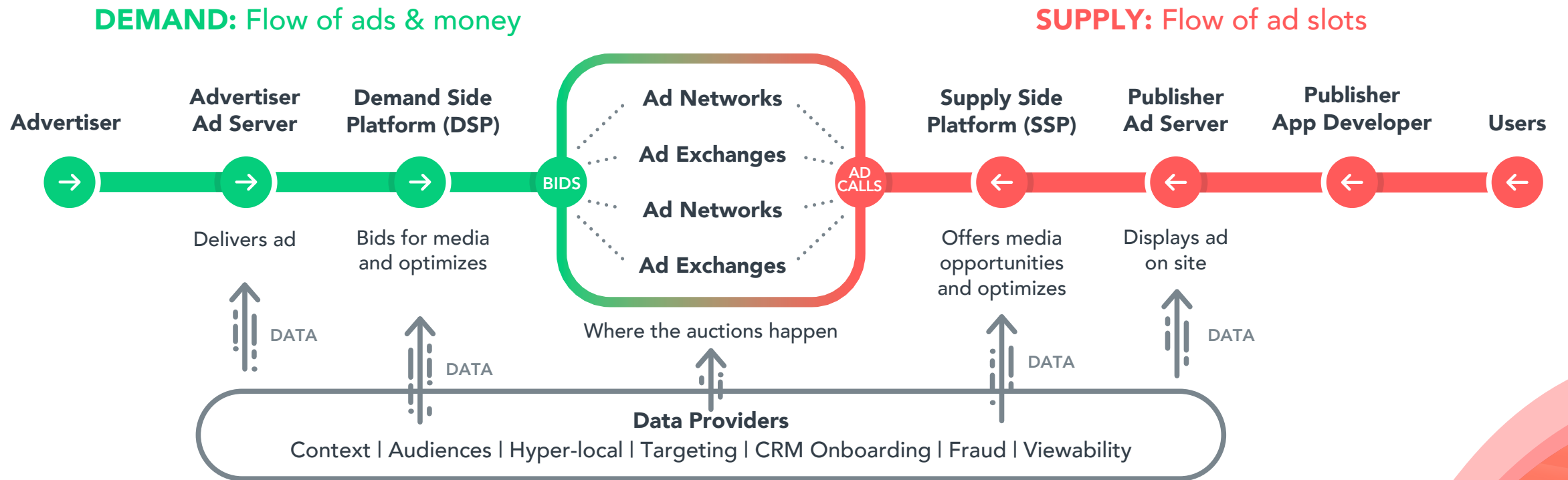
Which Channels are Your Team Members Relying on to Attract Users to Your App in 2019?



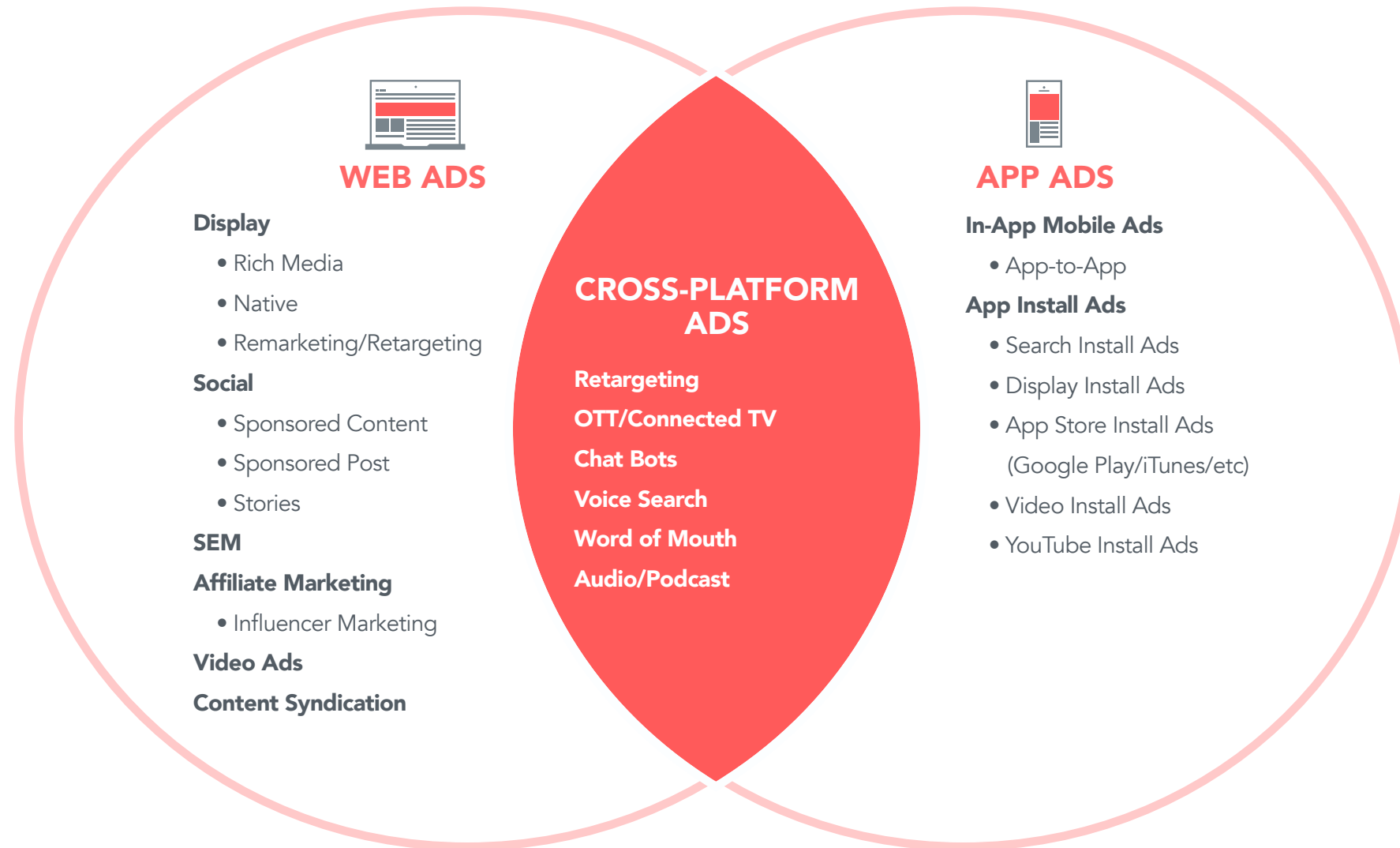
Source: [branch](#)



...and the Ads Ecosystem is Growing More Complicated Than Ever



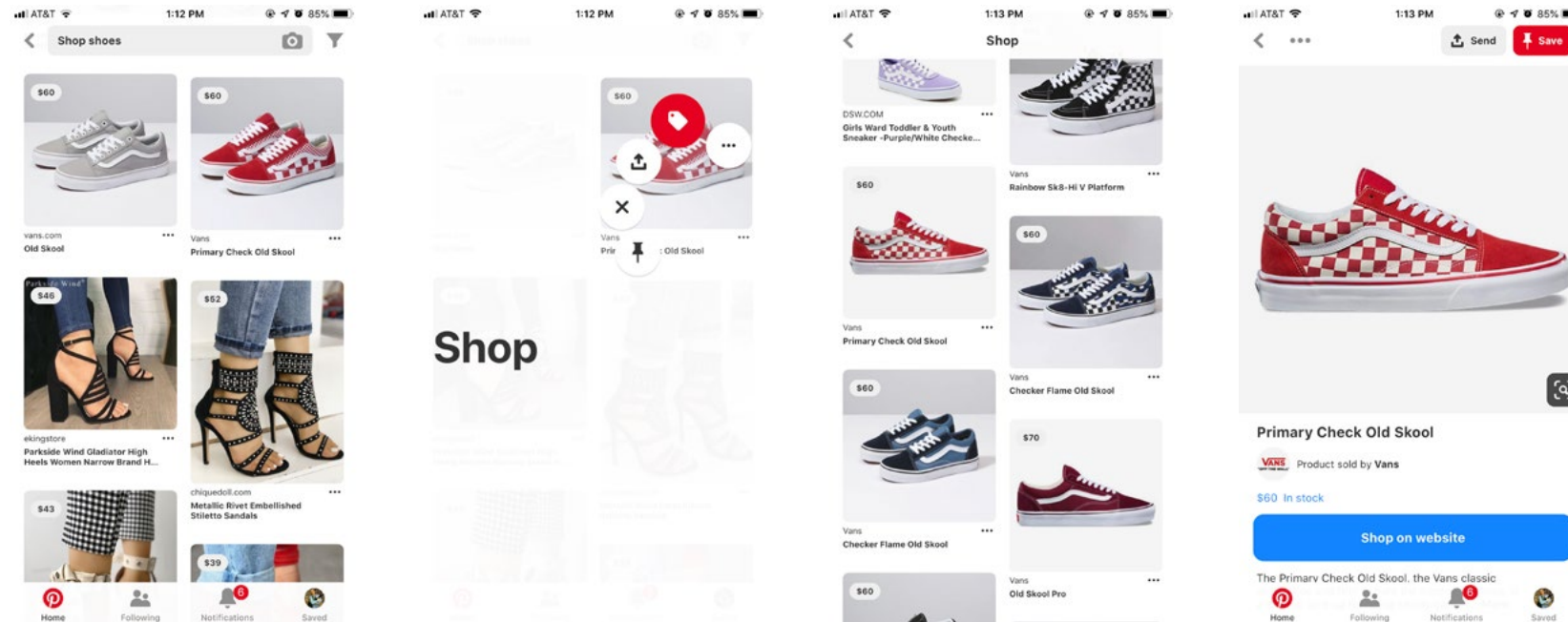
...and Paid Ads are Now Cross-Platform



Pinterest Masters App-to-App

More proof cross-channel ads are important: Pinterest is now rebuilding its infrastructure to make both its mobile app and website more shoppable. With these new features, users can check for pricing, product availability, and even be linked directly to a retailer's website.

The result: Pinterest is creating an app-to-app experience that drives sales.



Deep Link Paid Ads for Success

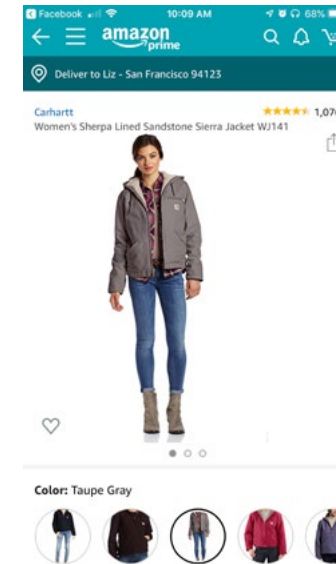
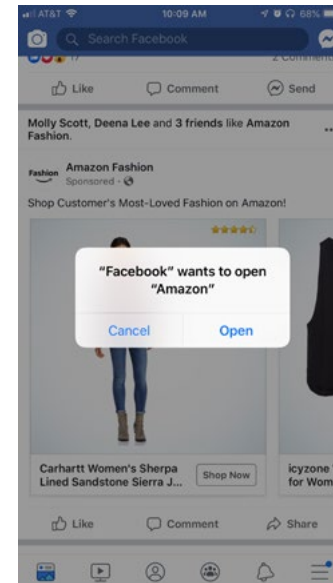
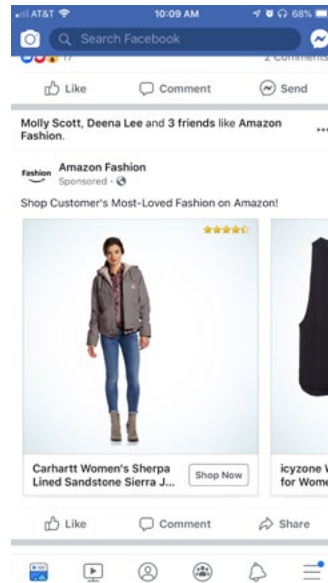
Paid ads driving users to install an app are only as effective as where the user lands. If a user clicks a paid ad and lands on the mobile website, for instance, there's a higher chance they will bounce.

One solution: Deep link paid ads directly to the appropriate app store — or into the app if the user already has the app installed.

The result of a seamless experience from paid ads into an app: Some brands have seen an increase in click-to-open rates from 50% to 93%.¹

¹<https://branch.io/resources/case-study/?res=Checkout+51+Drives+a+93%25+Click-to-Open+Rate+with+Deep+Linking+in+Ads>

PRO TIP



Get More ROI From Your Paid Ads

Branch's Universal Ads ensures your paid ads are deep linked directly into the app, helping our clients drive more in-app engagement and conversions.



Refine Your Ad Targeting

Paid ads are only as good as the targeting behind them — and if you aren't leveraging data to segment and target users based on product interest, location, online behavior, and any other data available, your ads will not perform optimally and it will affect your bottom line.

To refine your targeting, think about your customer persona and the context of when/where they might be interested in learning more about your product.

Types of Targeting Ad Networks

Can Provide:

- Search behavior and keywords
- Websites visited (contextual)
- Vertical targeting
- Geofencing (targeting a specific radius from an address)
- Geotargeting (targeting a specific demographic within a radius of an address)
- Affinity targeting (psychographics/interest)
- Lookalike audiences
- Follower targeting (target the followers of a certain influencers)

PRO
TIP

>> Paid ads are only as good as the targeting behind them.

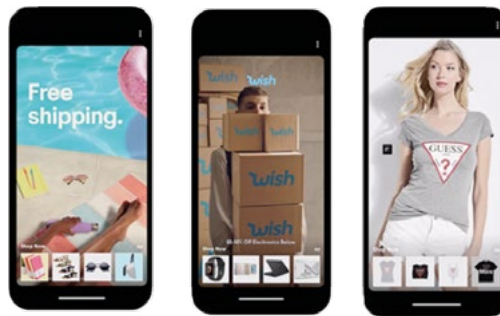


New, Dynamic Ad Units Help Drive Engagement and ROI

Paid ads will drive low engagement if you don't give users a reason to click. New types of ad units can drive product awareness — and show users more than one product to drive a higher chance of purchase.

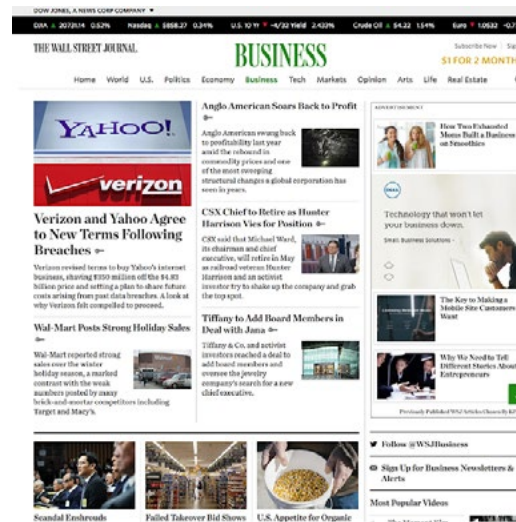


Shoppable Units



Maximize your ad real estate while promoting multiple products in one unit.

Hybrid Native + Static Banner Units



Need to further promote multiple contents to establish thought leadership? These hybrid units give your user/audience an option to pick between multiple different blogs/articles.

Rich Media Unit/Interactive Media



Use your ad unit as an extension of multiple promotional offers with a scrollable rich media and many other rich media unit options.



Test Facebook Dynamic Ads

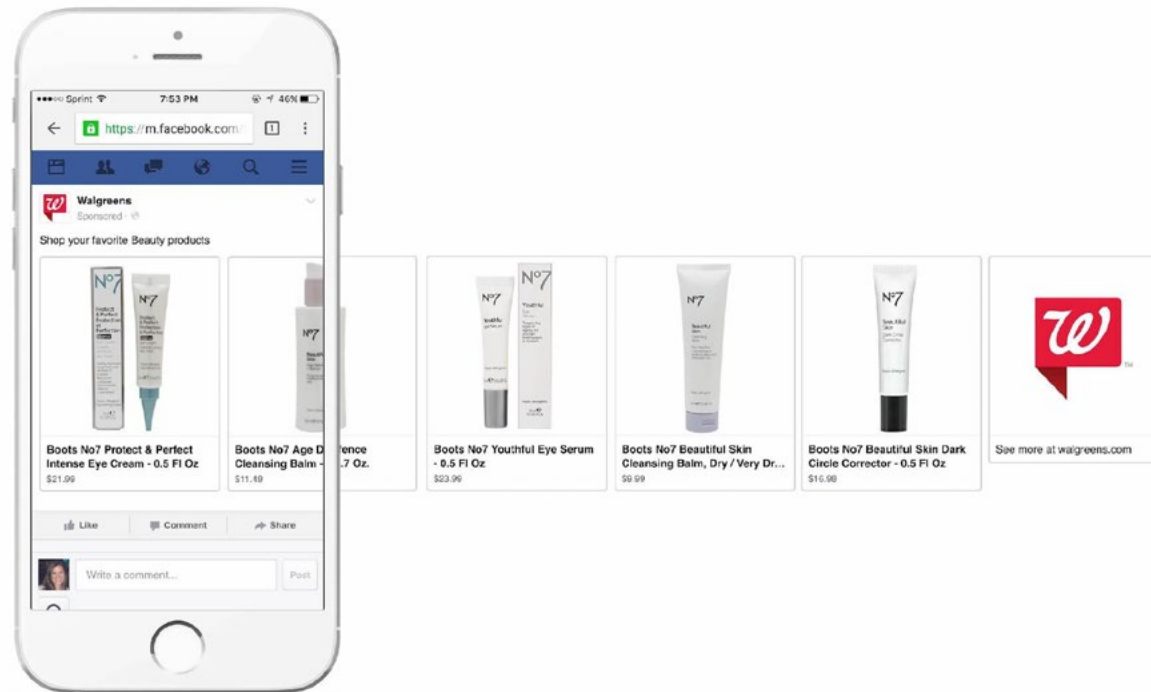
Facebook Dynamic Ads are a great option for retargeting users. Dynamic ads such as these have a 2x CTR and 50% lower CPA than static ads.¹

Here's why: Using a digital product catalog, these ads automatically show the right products to users who have visited your website, app, or other channels. Second, they enable personalized content tailored to user interest, as well as the ability to retarget users who haven't completed a sale.

Since marketers are planning to drive more installs and budget toward Facebook in 2019 and beyond, these ads are worth a test to drive brand interest.

¹<https://help.adroll.com/hc/en-us/articles/224328788-Dynamic-Ads-FAQ>

PRO
TIP



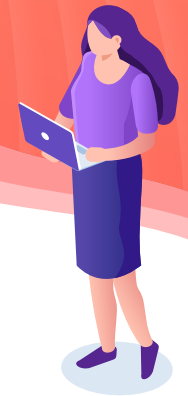
Paid Search: The Evolving Landscape

With Google reporting the average user makes three to four searches per day — and that the search engine behemoth generated \$5.24 billion in U.S. digital display ad revenue in 2017 alone — there's good reason to keep paid search ads in your mix.¹ Paid search ads capture users by placing brands in top placement positions once a search query has been entered. Again, a mobile-first approach to these ads is a must.

According to Kenshoo, mobile search ads continue to grow in impressions by +36% and clicks by +25% year-over-year across both keywords and shopping campaigns.² This is a sign that users are searching for more products and services on their phones — and

they are more likely to make a purchase via smartphone than ever before.

Platforms such as Apple Search Ads, Google Adwords UAC, and Facebook are great ways to increase visibility. They get your app in front of potential users with premium positioning, driving brand awareness and increasing app installs conversions.



¹<https://kenshoo.com/monday-morning-metrics-daily-searches-on-google-and-other-google-facts/>

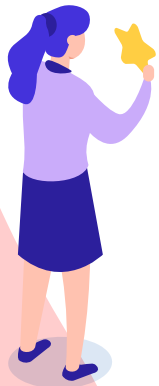
²<https://kenshoo.com/digital-marketing-snapshot/>



Ali McCourt

SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER

"50% of search is brand, 25% is keyword. On mobile, play around with Google experiments to test your creative live."



Paid Social: Maximizing the ROI of Social Ads

The options available for social advertising continue to increase, from paid ads on Facebook to sponsored Instagram ads to Snapchat stories. Even promoted posts on Twitter can help drive awareness and installs.

Here, buying personas are essential: Certain users are more likely to watch a Snapchat story, while other target demographics are more likely to use Facebook, and still others will want to engage via Pinterest.



Snapchat

Total Number of Monthly Users: **300 million+**
Percentage of Users 18-24 Years Old: **78%**



Facebook

Total Number of Monthly Users: **2.23 billion**
Percentage of Users 18-29 Years Old: **88%**



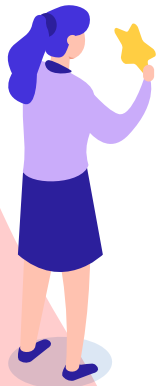
Sources: • <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/snapchat-statistics/>
• <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/facebook-statistics/>



Tanvi J. Gupta

GROWTH MARKETING MANAGER

“We used Facebook’s Campaign Budget Optimization to automatically invest budget in the top performing ads. We quickly saw a 10% drop in CPI, and improved post install app events conversion rate. We were also able to identify some of our top audiences using CBO.”



PRO TIP

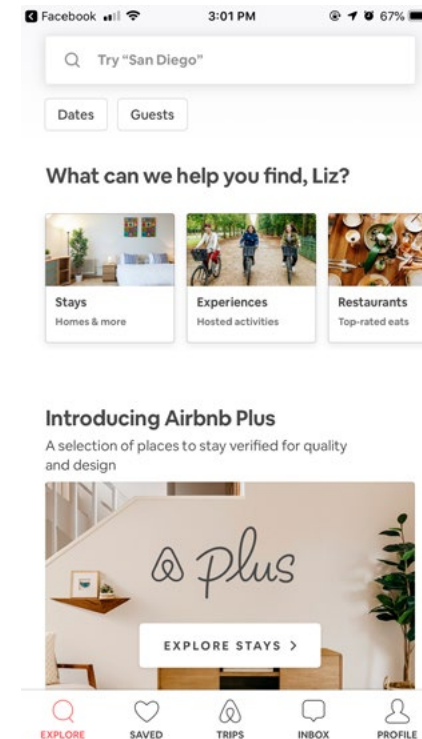
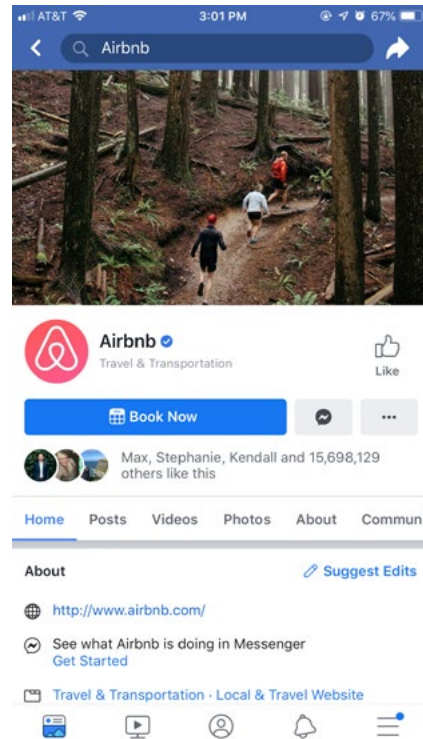
Deep Linking From Paid Social Ads to Drive Revenue

Similar to paid install ads, if social ads and promoted posts don't land users within the app, they won't perform as well.

Once again, cross-platform matters — whether that's driving a user from a paid ad into the app or from a social channel into an app.

Whether the focus is on organic or paid acquisition — or striking the right balance between the two — marketing teams have to ensure there's a seamless cross-platform experience that drives the user from every acquisition channel into the app or to the right app store for download.

Without that in place, organic interest and paid installs will likely go to waste.

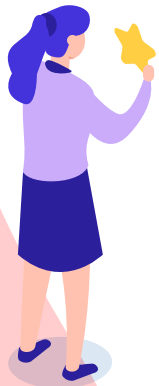




Andrea Slobodien

(FORMER) PRODUCT MANAGER

“There’s no such thing as a quick win in paid acquisition. If you acquire a user and then the user disappears, you’re basically lighting money on fire.”



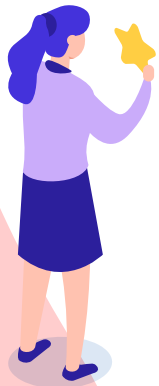
verizon^v



Adam Lauer

BRAND GROWTH DIRECTOR

“Show vs. tell. There are a ton of ads out there asking people to download now. Instead of telling potential new users to download, show them why they should. Videos and interactive demos are more engaging and capture attention while giving a taste of your app experience.”



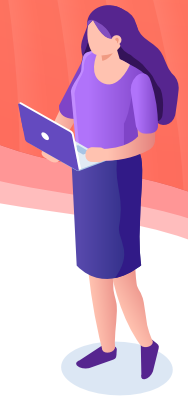
Mastering Mobile Web to App

The good news: Mobile web is great for driving acquisition, whether it is paid or organic. Both channels can both deliver high-quality installs — especially when users receive a seamless cross-platform experience that delights them and drives them to convert.

Branch research found native apps drive 3x more sales than their mobile web counterparts¹ and in-app transactions continue to grow 22% year-over-year², according to Criteo.

If that's not enough incentive, consider this: Over 85% of all mobile website carts are abandoned, according to Mobile Marketer.³

Bottom line: Users engage and convert more within the app, so ensuring your paid and organic efforts drive the users there is key to driving ROI.



¹ <https://blog.branch.io/the-ultimate-guide-to-cost-effective-mobile-user-acquisition/>

² https://www.criteo.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/18_GCR_Q1_Report_US_ENG.pdf

³ <https://www.mobilemarketer.com/news/retail-apps-how-to-calculate-roi/550826/>

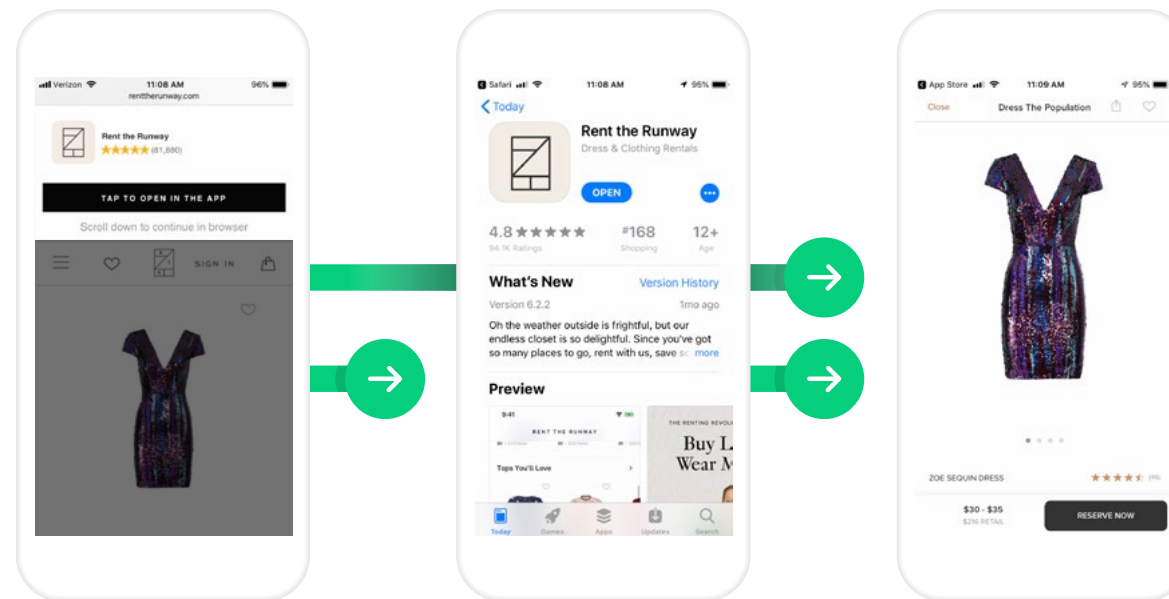
Leverage Smart Banners on Mobile Web

Capturing a user on the web costs 82% less than driving an app install.¹ By leveraging organic channels to first route users to your website, you can then convert them to app users and significantly lower your overall app user acquisition costs. That's where smart banners come in.

A smart banner is a banner displayed at the top or bottom of the screen that gives users the option to download or open the app from a mobile website. When a user clicks the banner, the smart link will automatically open up the app if it's already installed or fall back to an app store page if not.

¹ <https://branch.io/journeys/>

This is one of the best ways to turn high-intent organic search visitors into engaged app users, but smart banners are just scratching the surface of the cross-platform opportunity.



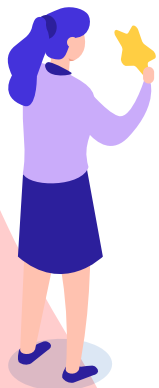
PRO
TIP

branch



Mada Seghete
CO-FOUNDER

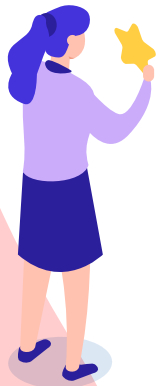
“You can’t just put a banner on a mobile website and think you’ll acquire users. You have to court them. You have to respond to their needs first. We found brands using personalized mobile web banners that responded to user context outperformed static banners when it came to app acquisition.”





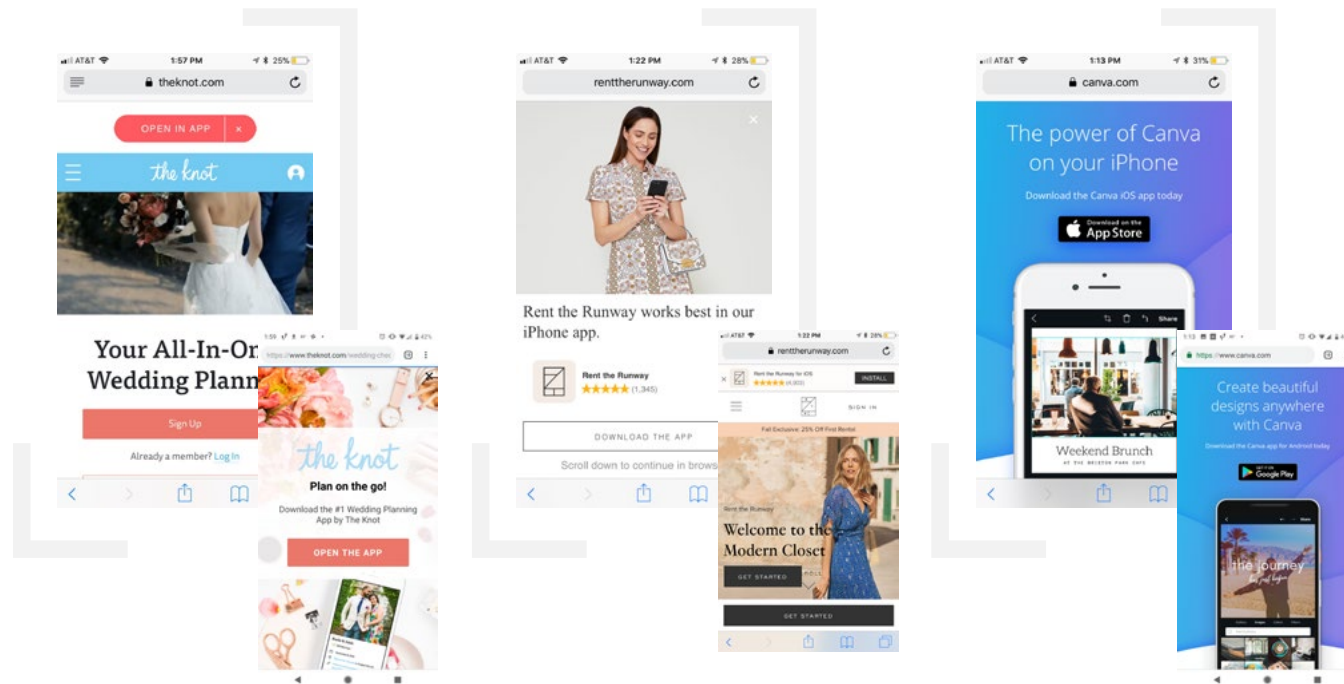
Thibault Imbert
DIRECTOR OF GROWTH

“We wanted to ensure users landed within the app from every channel and campaign. We realized some users were dropping off on the journey. So we began deep linking from our acquisition channels into the app and saw a 95% increase in conversions for Adobe Spark.”



Personalized Banners Drive Cross-Platform ROI

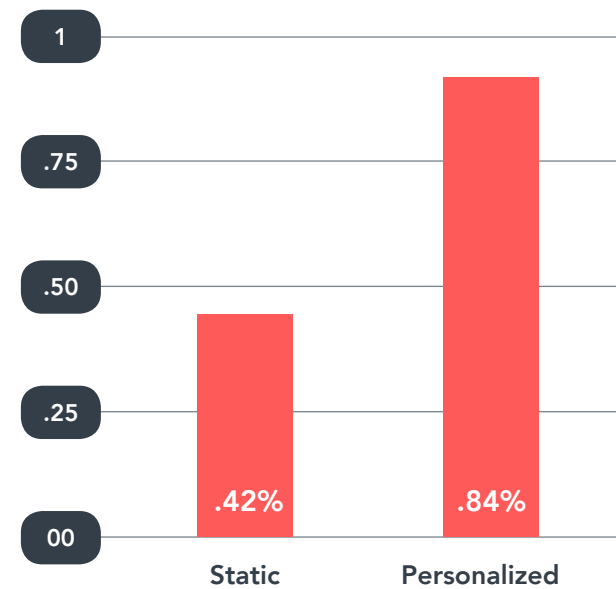
Branch research found that smart banners that were personalized to respond to user interests and locations with customized creative and messaging improved view-to-install rates by 2X.



Here, brands like The Knot, Rent The Runway, and Canva are responding to factors like user device, user acquisition channel, page visited, and more.

PRO TIP

View-to-Install Rates for Static vs. Personalized Smart Banners



source: **branch**



>> Section Two

Engage



Engaging App Users in a Cross-Platform World

High user acquisition rates mean nothing if those users don't return to the app to engage, convert, and advocate.

And in a cross-platform world, users have more channels than ever through which to engage with companies. As a result, marketers need cross-platform strategies to keep users engaged and drive them into the app to keep improving KPIs like LTV, daily sessions, ARPU, and MAUs.

Let's Take a Look at the Numbers:



Of users only use an app once¹



Of all app users churn within the first 90 days²

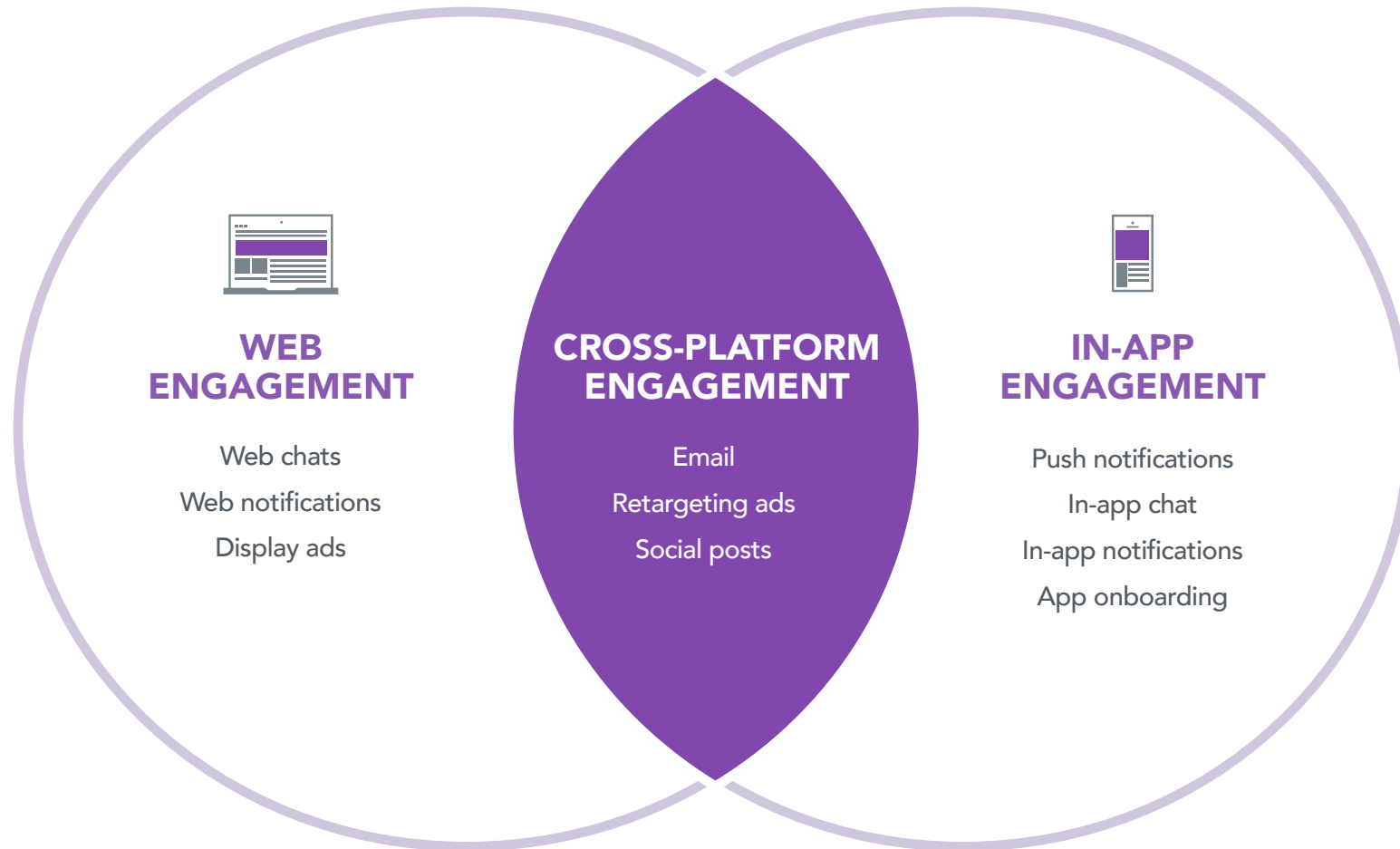
¹ <http://info.localytics.com/blog/21-percent-of-users-abandon-apps-after-one-use>

² <http://info.localytics.com/blog/mobile-apps-whats-a-good-retention-rate>



Source:  Localytics

The Cross-Platform Engagement Paradigm Shift



>> Engagement strategies can no longer be single-channel or single-platform since users are not.

Attribute Across All Touchpoints and Platforms with Branch

Deep linking across search, ads, emails, social posts, mobile web, and referrals helps ensure attribution is as cross-platform as today's users.

Branch's deep linking and attribution solutions help companies determine which channels and campaigns are driving conversions.



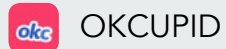
Braze Tip: Trigger Campaigns Based on User Actions

Consumers are 1.6x more likely to make a purchase from brands that communicate with them in ways that feel human, according to the Braze Brand Humanity Index (BHI).

Braze research found that triggering marketing campaigns based on customer actions boosts conversion rates by 888%, compared to basic, time-based scheduling.

One way to make your brand's communications feel more human:

Embrace action-based message scheduling.



Michael likes you!

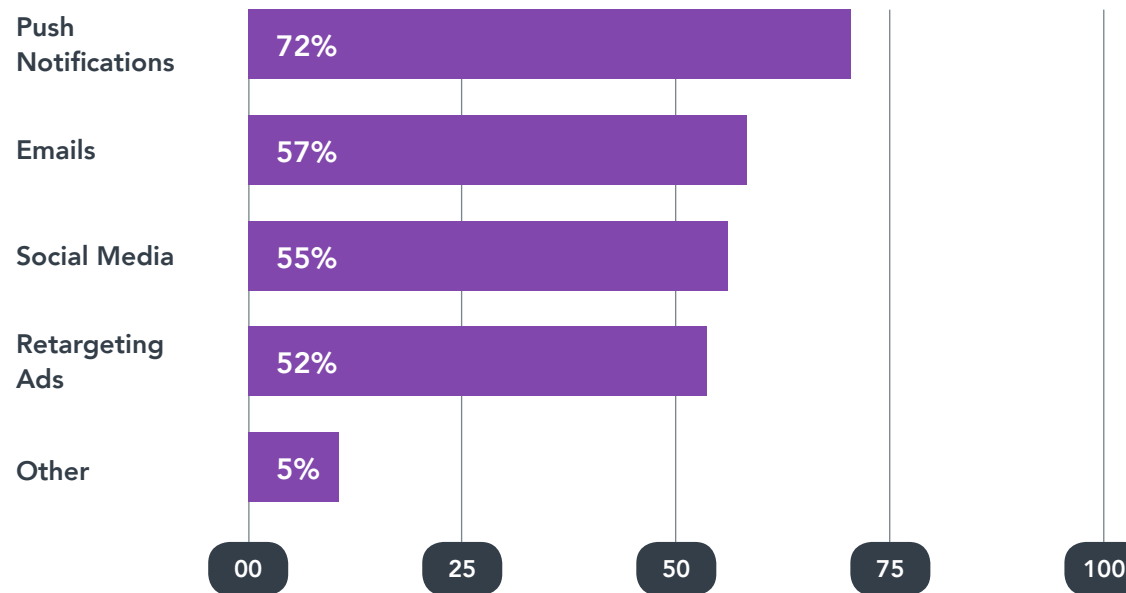


>> Braze found triggering marketing campaigns based on customer actions raised conversion rates by 888%.



What are the Tactics Your Team is Using to Motivate Your Mobile Users to Re-Engage?

In this year's Mobile Growth Survey, respondents said they would largely rely on push notifications and emails to engage users.



Source: [branch](#)





Preeti Dalwani
VP GROWTH

“It’s important to keep acquisition and engagement together. When you separate these two parts of the user journey, it’s easy to get siloed — and forget how critical engagement is to your growth.”





Myles Kleeger

PRESIDENT & CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER

“Human communications that connect emotionally with your customers drives the engagement, purchase behavior, and loyalty we’re all striving for. But don’t conflate ‘human communication’ and ‘emotional connection’ with quippy copy. Consumers are looking for helpful, authoritative, responsive, thoughtful, and supportive communication.”





Chuck Nguyen

(FORMER) SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER

“Bucket your users into quartiles. Think of whales as your most valuable users, and minnows as your least valuable users, and group the middle two quartiles. Then develop user journeys for those buckets. That’s the simplest way to start personalizing your app.”

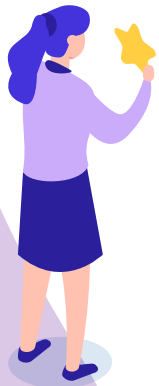




Carla Manent

SENIOR APP MARKETING & COMMERCIAL MANAGER

“Identify customer pleasure moments when a user is interacting with your product or service — and prompt them to leave reviews at this point. Build this functionality yourself or use tech services to help.”



Effective Onboarding: The Challenge

Effective onboarding helps users understand, explore, and get started with an app as quickly and easily as possible. Bad onboarding can cost a good app everything.

A few of the negative impacts:

- Drop off after installs and signups
- Low conversion from free trials to paid product purchase
- High churn rate
- Low level of subscription renewals

On the flip side, a good user onboarding process has the potential to **increase engagement up to 4x.**

Let's take a look at how to master onboarding.

>> Bad onboarding can cost a good app everything.



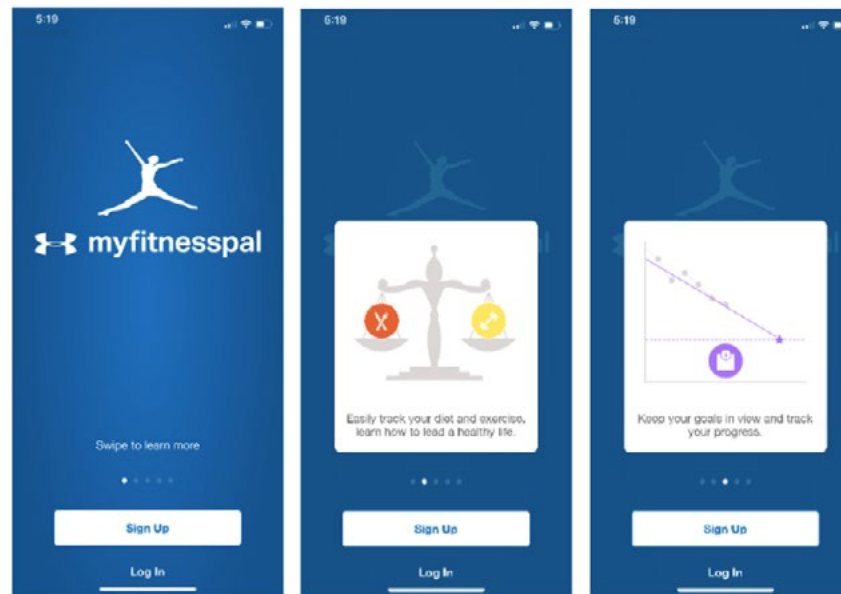
Get Your Welcome Screens Right

No user wants to scroll through 100 welcome screens. So choose a few welcome screens — and choose them wisely.

Make sure they display:

- Clear, concise copy
- Key benefits
- Important user-focused features
- Progress bars that let users know how much time they have left in the process

Of course, every app and every user base is different, so it's worth testing how many pages — and which pieces of content — will work best.



One great example of onboarding:

MyFitnessPal offers a simplified flow that shows clear benefits to the user.

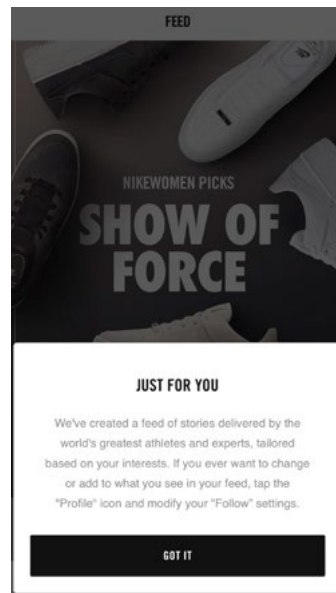
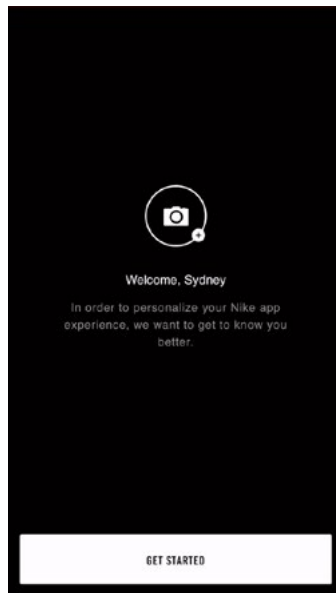
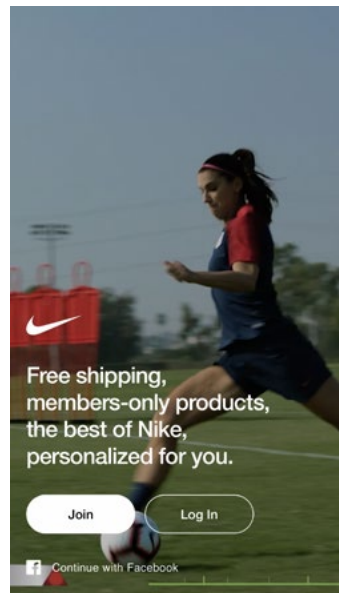


PRO
TIP

Personalize the Experience

Epsilon research estimates that consumers are 80% more likely to make a purchase when a website/app experience is personalized.¹

Users share lots of information about themselves before they download an app — so use that information to greet them by name, or respond to their location if known.



» In this example, Nike greets a new user by first name, then personalizes the onboarding experience with creative copy.

¹ <https://us.epsilon.com/pressroom/new-epsilon-research-indicates-80-of-consumers-are-more-likely-to-make-a-purchase-when-brands-offer-personalized-experiences>





Salah Mustafa

DIRECTOR, DIGITAL MARKETING

“We dramatically improved LTV by building a complete segmentation map, and personalizing our marketing message per segment.”

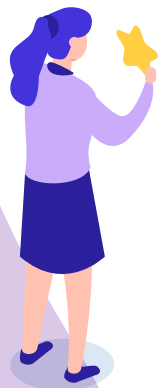




Claus Enevoldsen

VP GLOBAL GROWTH & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

“Do you want a narrow or wide funnel when onboarding? Having more action during onboarding increases engagement and retention, but it also creates a different path to conversion. Try A/B testing onboarding paths to see whether one path boosts engagement enough to make up for the smaller funnel. Making the onboarding path quicker and simpler creates a wider funnel — and increases engagement because there are happy users.”

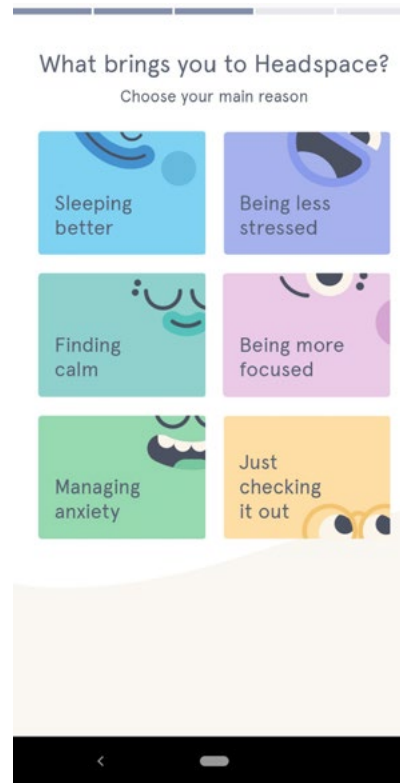


A/B Test Your Way to Onboarding Success

Onboarding should be a testing and iterating playground. Bucket users by persona, then roll out tests to determine what works best for each audience to increase frictionless onboarding and continued engagement.

A few options worth A/B testing in the onboarding process:

- Segment user onboarding based on known information to respond to their needs.
- Allow users to self-select their app experience — and put them in charge of their own onboarding path.
- Pre-populate lengthy registration forms with known user info to make onboarding more seamless.



Example: Headspace, a health and fitness app, created a landing page with tiles that allow users to find their way to the right place.



PRO
TIP

>> Onboarding should be a testing and iterating playground.

wish



Kevin Ma

PRODUCT MANAGER GROWTH

“Don’t follow your intuition. You have to test. Here’s an example: You need to give consumers filters as an ecommerce app, so they can shop. We built a detailed filtering system that we thought was great, and engagement went way down. We learned that sometimes you can’t give the consumer so many options, and we should declutter the path to conversion. You want the cleanest way to get users to purchase.”



Discover the Aha! Moment

Samuel Hulick's Elements of User Onboarding makes a strong case for giving users "a small win that provides them with a positive outcome to their first excursion, and one that can be used as a springboard for future efforts."¹ Onboarding pros often call this the "Aha! moment."

Figuring out the right Aha! moment for an app takes some serious digging into data. It requires finding patterns among users that indicate a likelihood they'll be retained. (Appcues has a great in-depth look at how to

uncover the Aha! moment).² But this research is critical for driving engagement and retention, especially for new users.

Example: Facebook realized users who added seven friends in the first ten days had a higher likelihood of returning to the app.³ Prioritizing finding friends for new users helped ensure they would keep coming back.

PRO
TIP

>> A small win that provides users with a positive outcome can make a big difference in onboarding.

¹ <https://www.useronboard.com/user-onboarding-ux-design/training/>

² <https://www.appcues.com/blog/aha-moment-guide>

³ <https://mode.com/blog/facebook-aha-moment-simpler-than-you-think>



realtor.com®



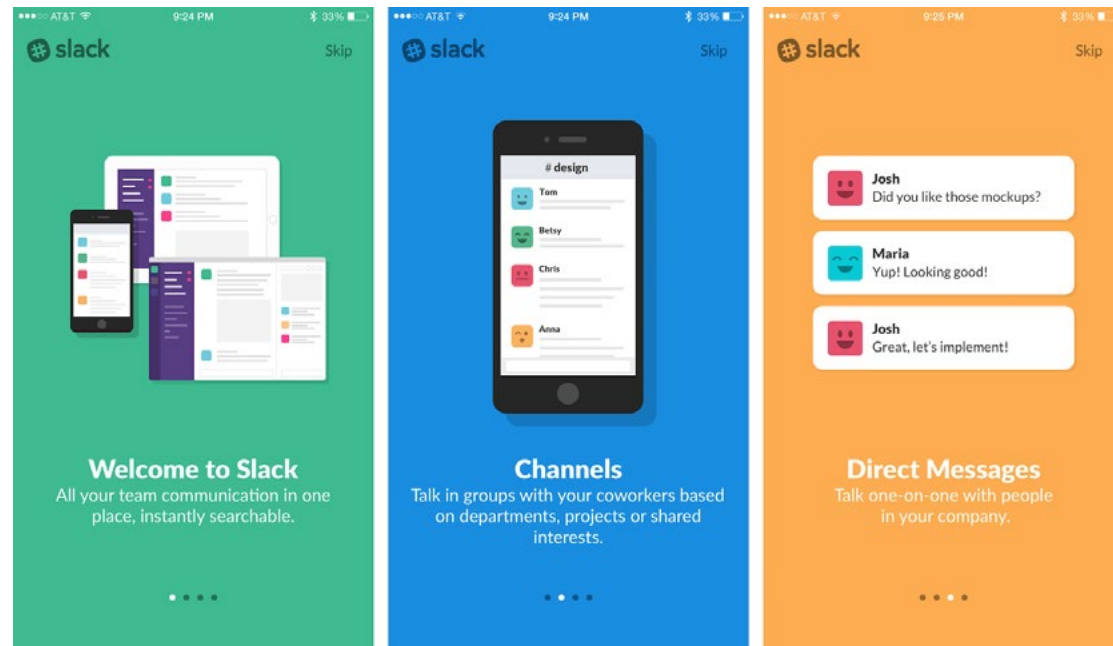
Nate Johnson
CMO

“You never want to give a user a stopping point. Instead you have to ask: How do you give them a next step and next experience? You find these stopping spots by becoming an expert user of your product and knowing how your user thinks and behaves.”



Let Users Opt Out of Onboarding

Users come and go — and certain users might have reinstalled the app, or used a different email address to register a second time. Giving users the ability to opt out of onboarding at any step of the journey will make sure only users who need an introduction to the app get one.



Example: These screens from Slack are simple and helpful, but users always have the option to Skip if the onboarding isn't relevant for them.



PRO
TIP



Ali McCourt

SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER

“One of the things we are thinking about is getting people beyond the seven day cliff. Originally, our onboarding experience was benefit forward and we were telling users all the things our app could do for them, but we weren’t showing them how to use it. Fixing this helped increase our conversion to registrations and getting people past the seven day cliff.”





Mike Antognoli

DIRECTOR, MOBILE PRODUCT

“We recently revamped our new customer onboarding experience to make it shorter and more personalized while still capturing enrollment preferences and digital engagement up front in the relationship. Our ability to track new customer app downloads greatly improved as a result.”



Hop Skip Drive



Mae Tuck
VP GROWTH

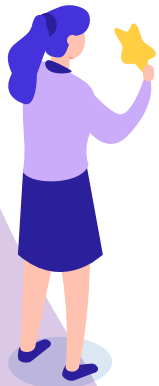
“We implemented a first-time user promotion to welcome new users in. But we realized we were sending it out too early — so we shifted that promo further out and saw huge lifts in conversions.”





Brett Hutton
MARKETING ASSOCIATE

“Humanizing the onboarding process is important. Offering personalized, customized onboarding has boosted our engagement levels.”

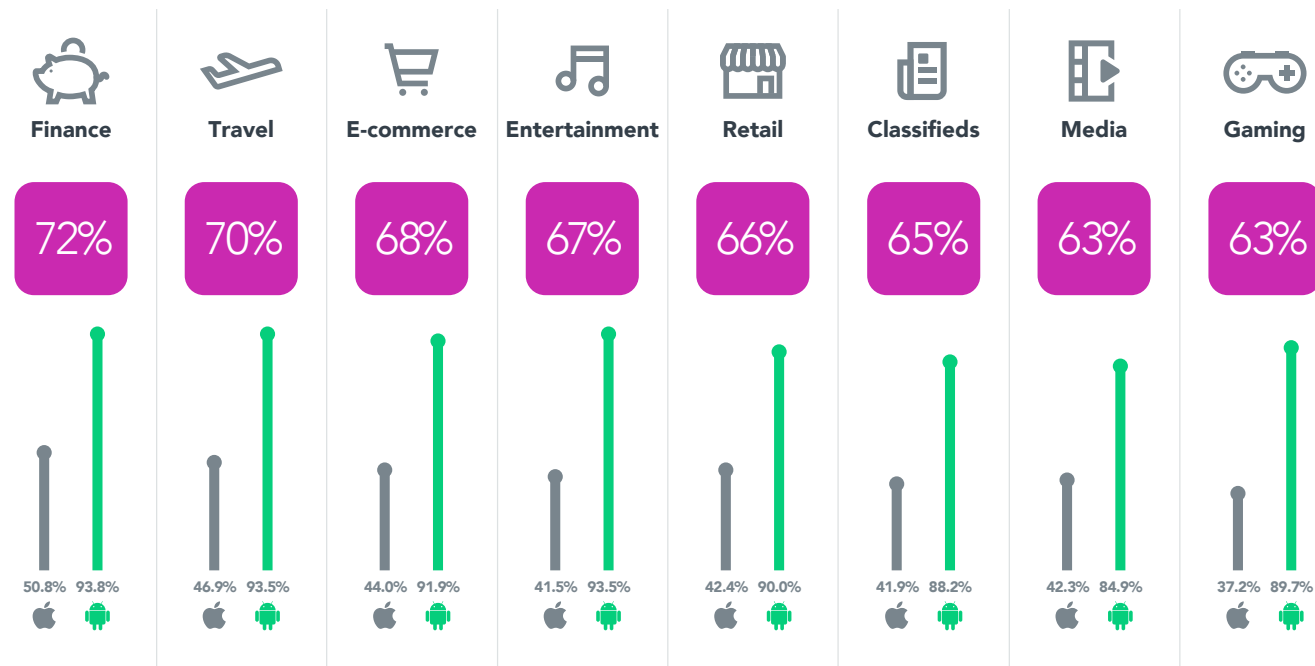


Mastering Push Notifications

The average U.S. smartphone user receives 46 app push notifications per day.¹ So while push notifications can be effective, it takes a lot more than hitting “Send” to stand out from the crowd and drive users back into the app.

User devices also have an impact on how effective push notifications are. CleverTap found that Android users are more likely to click through, with a CTR of 4.06%, compared to 1.7% on iOS.¹

Opt-in rates for push notifications also vary widely by industry, as uncovered by Accengage.² Factoring in user devices and industry can help determine exactly how many push notifications are right for an app — and when they should be sent.



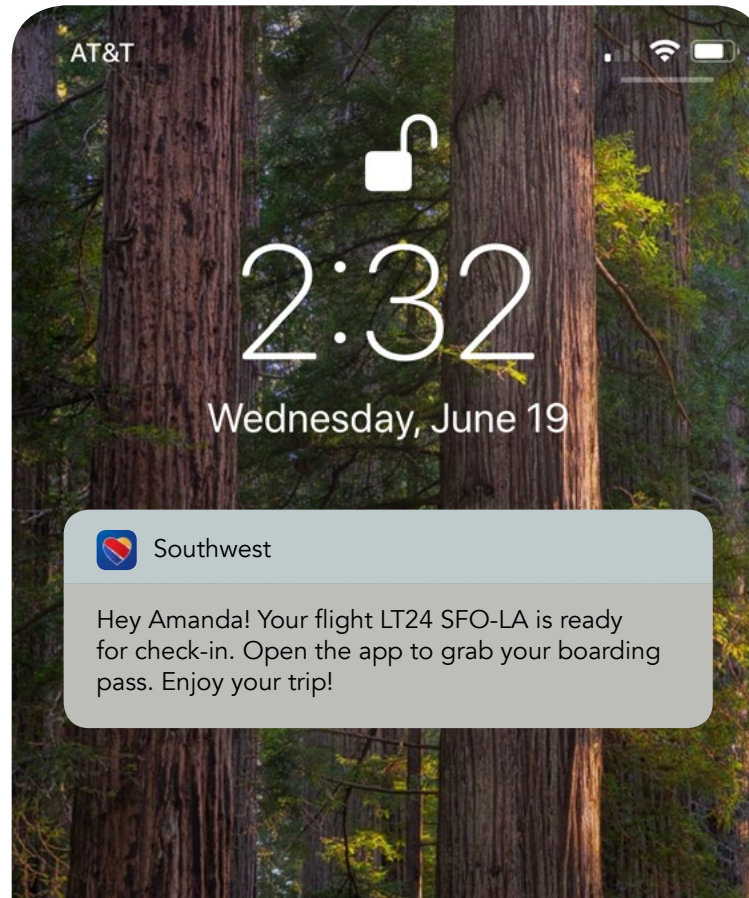
Source: accengage
AN AVEVA COMPANY

¹ <http://www.businessofapps.com/marketplace/push-notifications/research/push-notifications-statistics/>

² <https://www.accengage.com/benchmark-opt-in-and-reaction-rates-of-push-notifications-and-in-app-messages-for-mobile-apps-2018-edition/>

Leverage Impactful Copy

Push notifications offer at most 120 characters to convey a message. With limited screen space and user attention span, it's crucial to pick the most important value proposition and write the copy as precisely as possible. Add value — and a reason to click through.



PRO

TIP

Leanplum Masters Push Notifications

Our friends at Leanplum show us how to craft an effective push notification: Timely, helpful, and a value-add since the boarding pass is prioritized.



Keep it Creative

Playful, fun push notifications make users more likely to engage — and spread the word on social. From emojis to thoughtful puns and offers, a push notification that pops can delight users, drive engagement, and help an app go viral.



RING

There is motion at your Front Door



AMAZON

The Galaxy is coming home to you! Star Wars: The Force Awakens will be available this Monday on Amazon Prime.

Here's an example from Amazon, which leverages the user's interest in Star Wars and a creative opening to drive interest.¹

¹ <https://www.leanplum.com/blog/7-most-creative-push-notifications/>

PRO
TIP



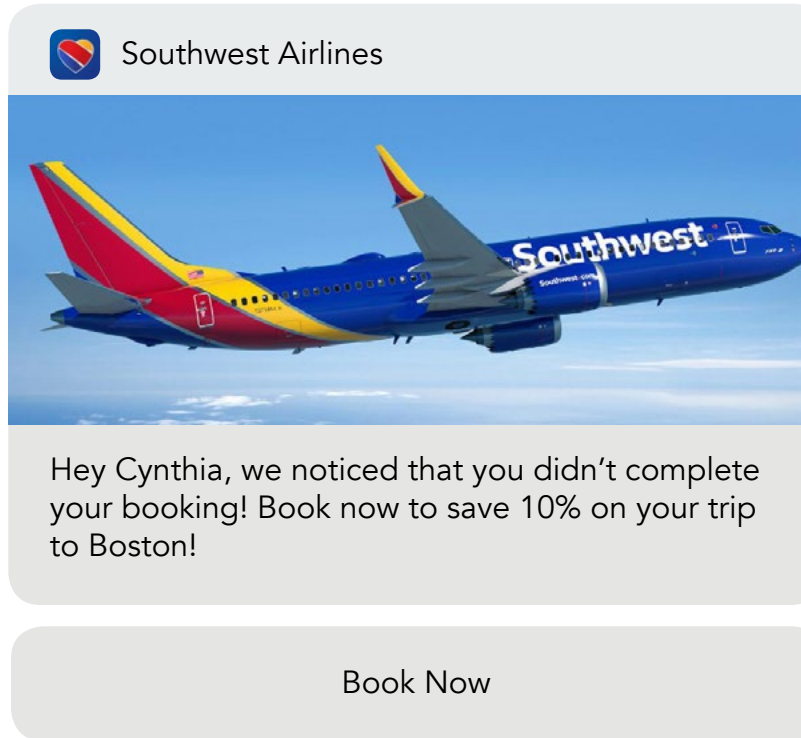
Re-Engage With an Offer via Push Notification

10% off, a free gift, free shipping. For users who have not engaged with an app for some time, an offer can be exactly what's needed to drive users back into the app — especially if it's timed right when they are most likely to drop.

Even better? Try “vanishing offers.” These limited-time offers and single-use promotion codes for high-value app users can boost engagement, LTV, and ROI.

A few worth trying: Flash sales, one-hour discounts, and weekend deals.


PRO
TIP




Leverage Data Triggers to Send 1:1 Notifications

Personalized push notifications that respond to users' actions or attributes can increase engagement. Test push notifications triggered by data, event, behavior, location, or user profile.




 BURBERRY

Hey Liz, your Burberry scarf is still in the cart.
Check out now!

 H&M

Loving your new jacket? Pair it with these new boots for a complete look! View the look.

 BLEACHER REPORT

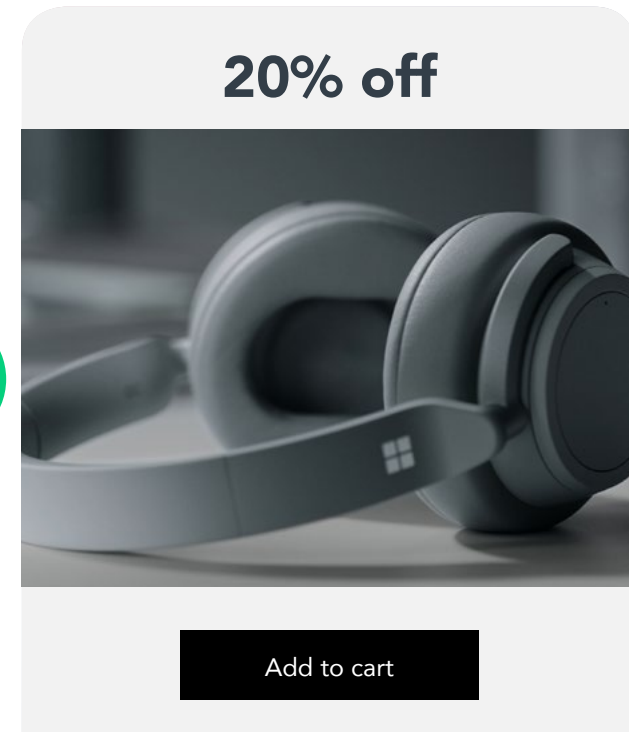
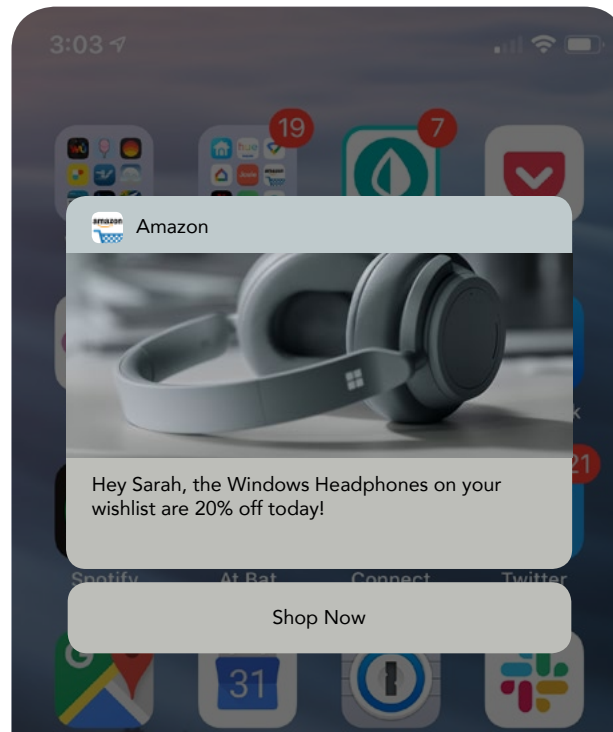
What a GAME! The Cubs outlasted the Indians in extra innings to win their first World Series since 1908!!



Deep Link Push Notifications into the App

Incorporating deep links into push notifications enables mobile marketers to link from push notifications directly to specific products, in-app promotion landing pages, in-app landing pages, abandoned carts, and more.

While Branch doesn't send push notifications, using Branch's deep linking capabilities can drive more ROI from your push notifications — and a better user experience.



Our friends at CleverTap show how to deep link effectively from a push notification with this great ecommerce example.



PRO
TIP

Effective App Gamification: Four Keys

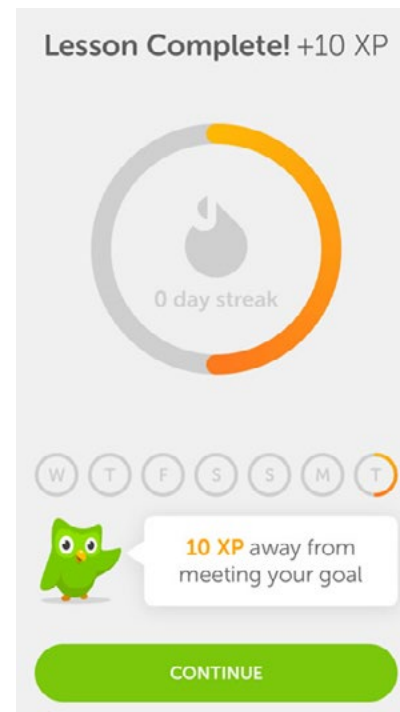
Apps like Duolingo have proven that gamification is crucial for driving app engagement. In fact, Gigya found in-app gamification features — such as badges, awards, and unlocked features — can help increase user engagement by one-third.¹

Looking for inspiration? Try playing a few rounds of Clash of the Clans or Zelda, and take note of these key gamification strategies:

- **Progress bars:** Show users where they are in the journey to keep them moving forward.
- **Tool Tips:** Relieve friction by offering hints and tips during parts of the experience where users are likely to have questions.
- **CTAs:** Most games feature prominent CTAs that drive users into a store to buy new gear, tools, or booster packs. Similarly, in-app gamification should

include a highly prioritized CTA that drives revenue.

- **Loyalty Rewards:** Driving stickiness for the app gets easier with a loyalty program in place. Incentivize users with points they can redeem along the way.



¹ <https://clevertap.com/blog/best-examples-of-app-gamification/>



Reyana Fayyaz
HEAD OF SELF-SERVE

“When applying gamification at Box, we learned a few things from Zelda. In the game, when players are wondering what path to choose to move forward, they are guided to the right place by a fairy navigator. We tried to use this concept in a B2B setting, because choosing a subscription plan is complicated. So we offer suggestions during the sign-up flow when users are confronted by choice. Messaging like: ‘44% of users in your demographic chose this package.’ helps alleviate pressure — and ensure users choose the right plan for them.”



The logo for the company 'Wish', featuring the word 'wish' in a lowercase, blue, rounded font.

Anurag Agrawal

HEAD OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

“Unpredictable and variable experiences can make an app more fun and engaging. At Wish, we found that converting incentives on the Wish app from a fixed reward — like a static percentage off coupon — to a reward that changes randomly per user, increased usage, sales and revenue, even when net average cost of the incentive was the same.”



Driving Gold-Star Engagement with Email

Roughly 70% of emails are opened on mobile devices — and that means email is a critical part of any app re-engagement strategy.¹ But simply blasting emails to an app list isn't enough.

Those emails must be:

- Personalized
- Incentivized
- Well-designed
- Well-timed

Let's look at a few other keys to driving app engagement via email.

>> Roughly 70% of emails are opened on mobile devices.



¹ <https://branch.io/universal-email/>

Use Email to Encourage Users on Their Journey

It's best to leverage data on in-app behavior to respond to user needs and interests by surfacing app features they haven't tried yet — or updates to the app.

Highlight the Next Step. If a user hasn't added a credit card yet, but it will improve their experience in future app sessions, send a prompt explaining the benefits of adding that info now.

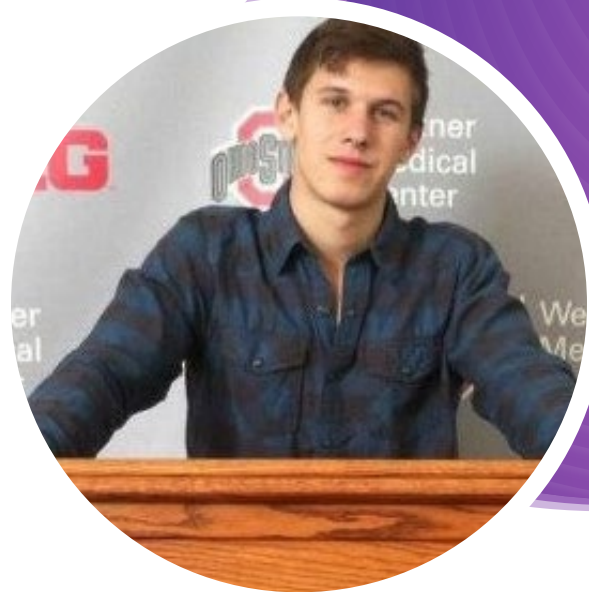
Brag Up New Features. Launching a new feature that app users asked for? Announce it via email to show how responsive the app is to user needs — and re-engage users who might have dropped off.

Send a Freebie. This one is great for users who are likely to churn or have already dropped off. Send a 10% discount or a free referral code to drive engagement.

>> Send a 10% discount or a free referral code to drive engagement.

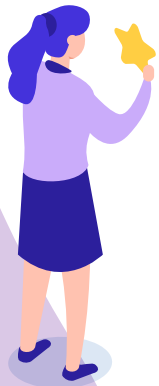
PRO
TIP





Brett Hutton
MARKETING ASSOCIATE

“When we were creating a loyalty program at TopHatter, it was very testing based. We only rolled the program out to our most loyal users. We used Braze to send out codes which boosted top-level revenue 16%! Creating reasons to re-engage with the brand helped drive customers back into the app.”



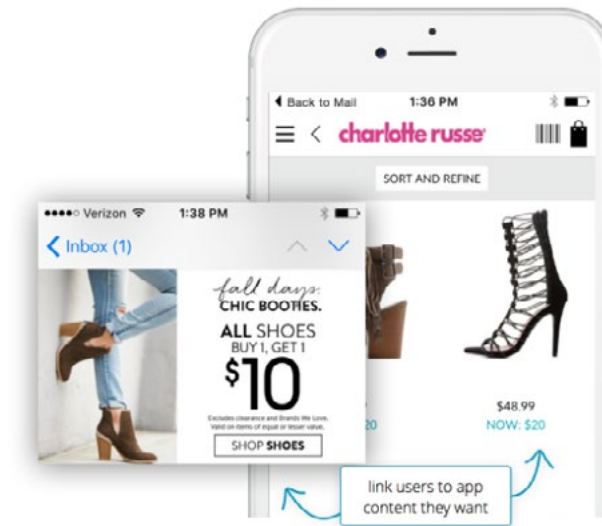
Deep Link Emails to Drive App Revenue

No matter how many emails are sent to encourage app engagement, the end result will be worthless if users don't land in the app on click.

So many companies lose users at this critical point in the cross-platform journey. Often, users are routed to the mobile website or dropped off in an app store — rather than delivered into the app where they can receive an engaging, personalized, seamless experience.

Deep linking emails in order to effectively drive users into the app from email — no matter which device or OS they're using — is one of the key drivers of email performance and app revenue and engagement.

Bottom line: If emails don't effectively link users from mobile emails into the app instead of the mobile web, engagement will drop — and so will your KPIs.



Charlotte Russe deep links emails directly into the app, where users can check out seamlessly.



Test Your CTAs: Six Tips for Success

A great call-to-action is worth a thousand clicks. Keys to mastering the CTA, courtesy of Campaign Monitor:¹

Keep it simple. Too many CTAs can confuse users, so try to ensure emails only drive users to complete one action.

Test positioning. Marketing teams are still debating whether above the fold or below the fold is better for CTA buttons, so test and iterate to determine what works best for each persona using the app.

Test unique colors. Brands like Birchbox and De Beers use light blue and peach for their CTAs to draw the eye — and drive clicks.

Leverage white space. Some of the most clicked emails are often the most plain — extra white space can make a CTA pop.

Use action words. This list of 80+ actionable CTAs can help provide a starting point for testing and iterating on the right language to get users to click.²

Measure email performance across platforms. Email campaigns don't live in one channel — so the ability to see how email performs when driving users into the app, for example, is critical. Without effective deep linking, many marketing teams lose the ability to truly track email performance as it relates to app activity and conversions.

PRO
TIP

¹ <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/email-marketing/2019/03/75-call-to-actions-to-use-in-email-marketing-campaigns/>

² <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/email-marketing/2016/02/marketing-words-to-improve-email-campaigns/>



venmo



Karine Terzibachi

DIRECTOR, COMMERCE BUSINESS LEAD

“How do you bring the mobile experience that people love to the offline world?
Take the mobile experience to other channels to drive more engagement.”



Driving Engagement Offline with QR Codes

Users don't live in one channel — and so neither can efforts to drive app engagement.

While social apps like Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp use QR Codes for adding friends and opening profiles, big brands like Coca-Cola and Walmart use QR Codes to market and engage with shoppers.

Direct mail and in-store QR codes both offer great opportunities to drive app installs and repeat engagement from physical channels — rather than through digital.

Here's why: Deep linked QR codes will automatically open the app for users on both iOS and Android upon phone scan.

The same premise can be applied to direct mail. Including a QR code on a direct mail promotion that drives users into the app — where they are more likely to engage and convert — can be a huge help.



wish



Stella Wu

(FORMER) GROWTH PM

“You have to be careful with direct mail. It’s expensive, and not everyone is worth that postcard money. To measure that, you have to make sure there is a control group so you can see if the postcards are actually having an impact.”



>> Section Three

Retain

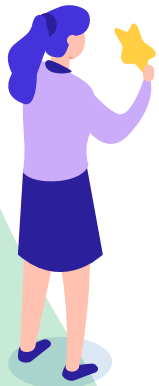




Robbie Allen

(FORMER) MOBILE PRODUCT MANAGER

“Retention is just engagement over time. If users aren’t opening and engaging with your app frequently, then nothing matters.”



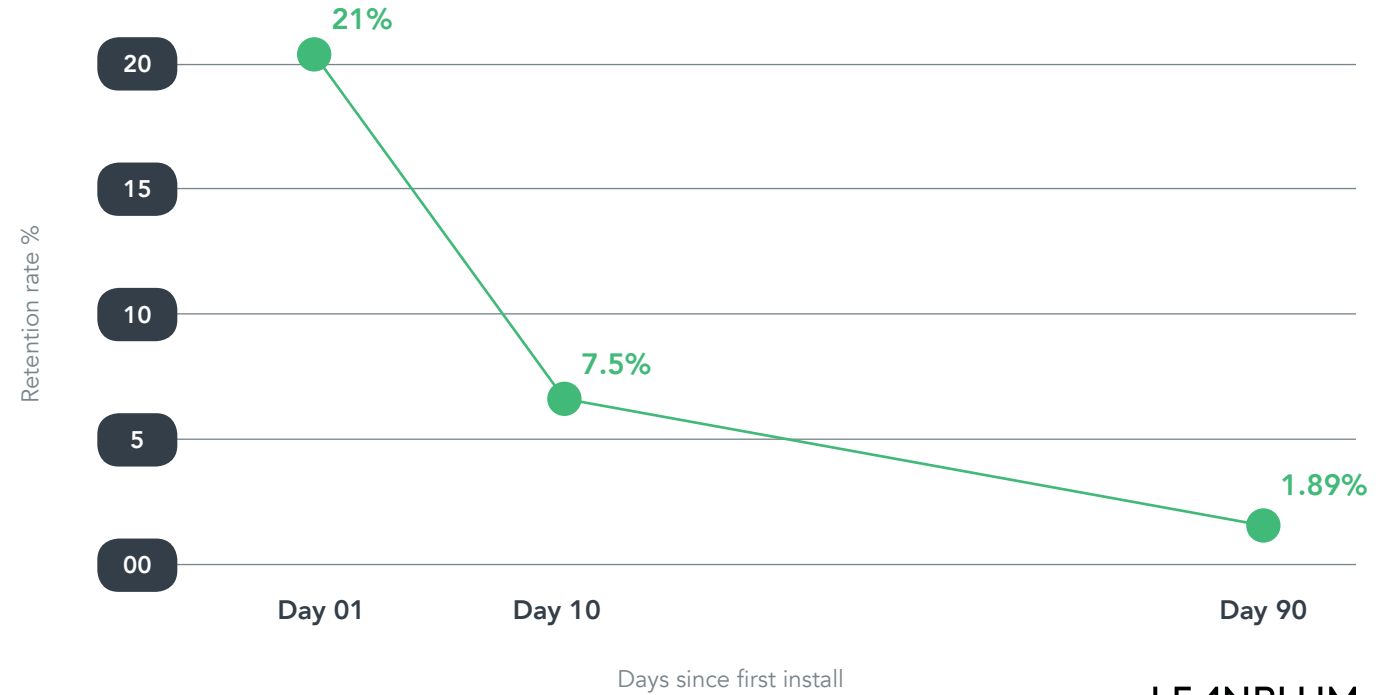
Retaining App Users in a Cross-Platform World

Churn is a word no marketer wants to hear, but it's one of the biggest reasons apps ultimately fail. Retaining app users is just as much of a challenge as acquiring them — if not more so. With so many apps available — and attention spans shorter than ever — users are more likely than ever to drop off. Let's look at the definition of both:

Retention: A retention rate gives a number to the percentage of users who are still using an app after a certain number of days after install. Example: The user returns to an app at least 1X within the first 30 days.

Churn: Also known as the rate of attrition, churn is the percentage of users who stop using an app within a given period. For an app to remain healthy and grow, the number of new users must be higher than the number of users who leave.

Average Retention Rate for Mobile Apps



Source: LEANPLUM

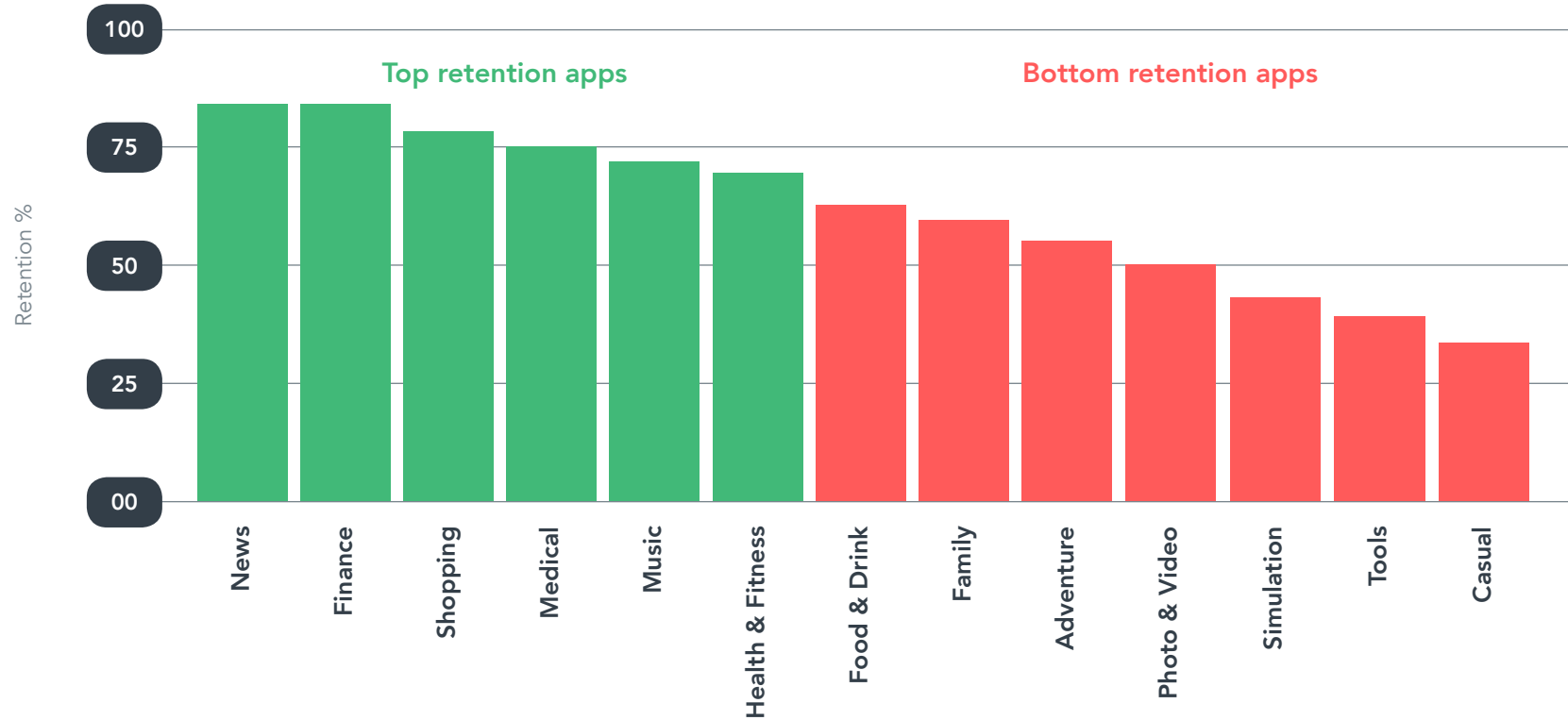
Note

Here, we see that most apps lose a majority of their users after being opened for the first time.



Your App's Category Can Impact Retention Rates

In addition, retention rates vary by app category.



Source:  Apptentive



Retention as a Focus: It's Worth the Investment

The good news: Many companies are shifting focus to retention as a key marker of app success. And research shows it's worth the investment:

- Bain & Co. found that just a 5% increase in customer retention can increase a company's profitability by 75%.¹
- Hubspot found brands that adopt retention marketing see an average 40% increase in lifetime value and a 20% increase in repeat purchases.²

The challenge: 2019 marks an era in which users expect incredible cross-platform experiences throughout their lifecycle. Companies that fail to provide that will see KPIs like LTV, CAC, and ARPU take a hit. Now, let's take a look at how to retain in 2019 and beyond.

>> A 5% increase in customer retention can increase a company's profitability by 75%.

¹ <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/the-economics-of-e-loyalty>

² <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-retention-marketing-why-you-need-to-startsf=1469073102>



Create Cross-Platform Experiences that Delight & Convert

Retaining users means more than sending offers via email. If acquired users don't receive personalized, seamless cross-platform journeys throughout their customer lifecycle, they are more likely to churn.

There's no way around it: If users aren't recognized and responded to across channels in their journey to the app, they will churn.



PRO
TIP



Determine Your Best Acquisition Channels for Retention

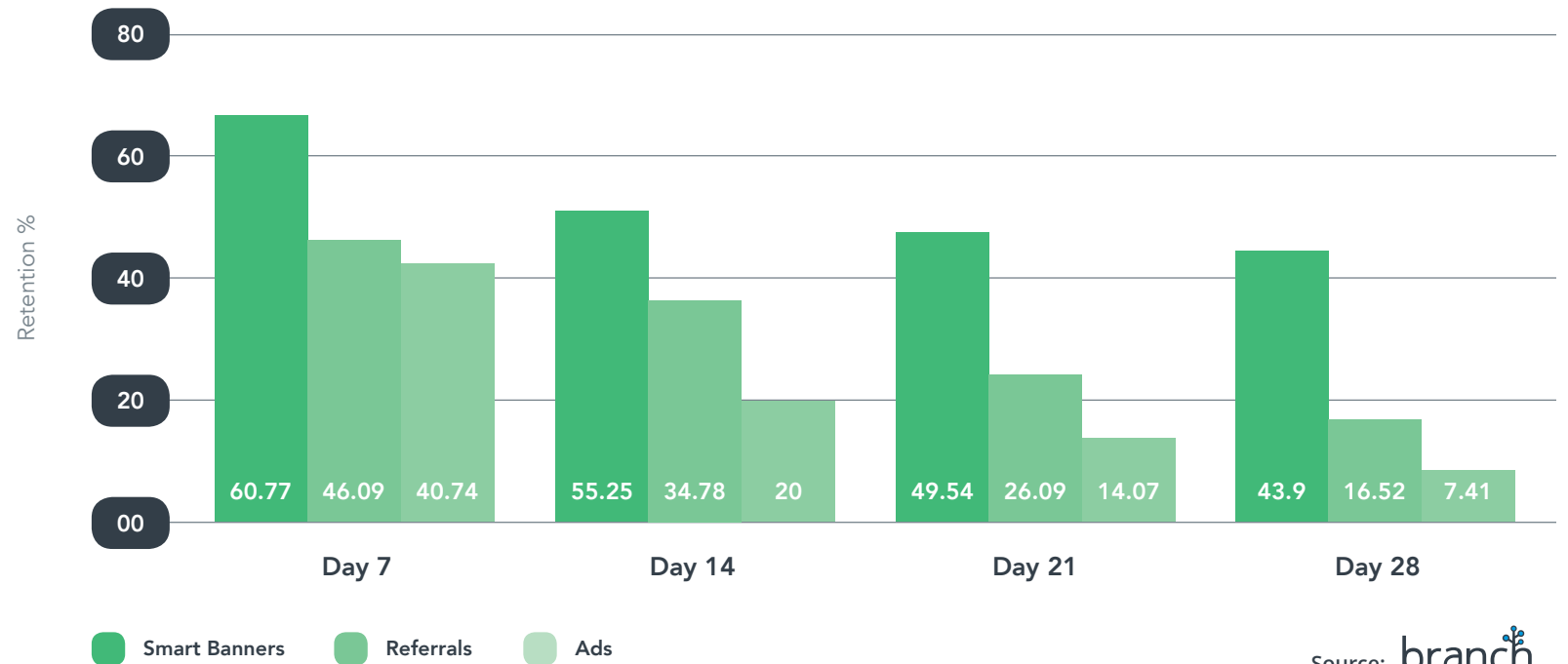
The way in which a user was acquired can have an impact on churn later on in the lifecycle.

Case in point: Branch data found that users acquired by organic channels are more likely to be retained than users who were acquired by paid efforts.

It's worth digging into the data to find out which days users are most likely to drop from the app — and developing cross-platform strategies to drive them to re-engage.



Four-Week In-App Retention Rate by Acquisition Channel



Source: branch

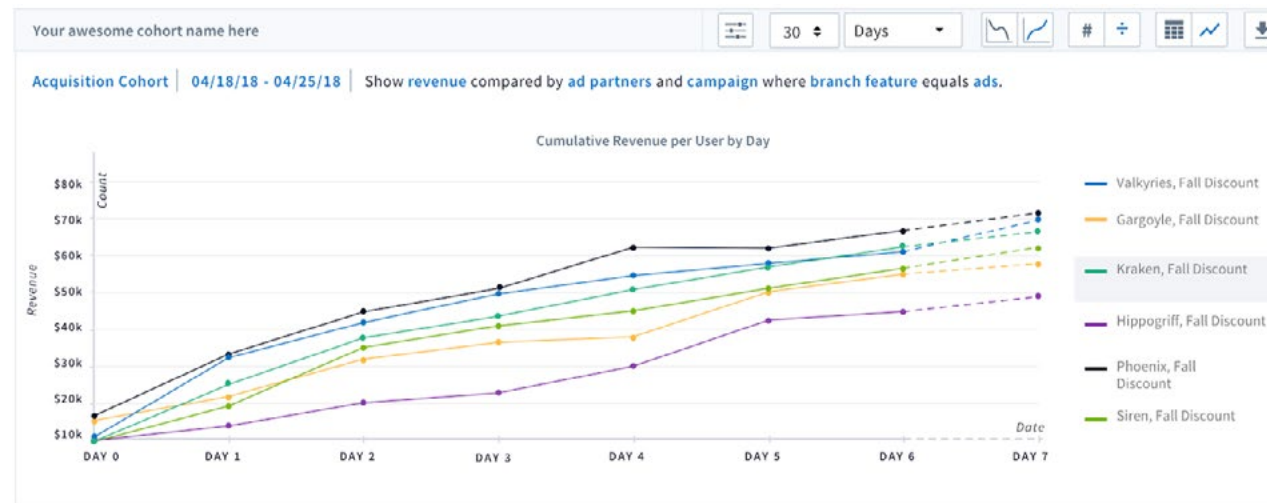


Leverage Cohort Analysis to Understand Churn and Retention

Sophisticated marketers know an install doesn't tell the full story. As we move into 2020, marketing teams that leverage tools like cohort analysis will see greater success in their mobile growth strategies.

In the context of marketing analytics, a cohort is a subset of users segmented by specific interactions with channels (e.g. app/website) and campaigns (e.g. email/text), as well as select behaviors (i.e. the first time a user downloads the app, the first conversion, the second conversion, etc.).

Example: Let's say a brand runs a user acquisition campaign through a paid ad campaign and a social media campaign. Cohorting determines whether users exposed to the paid ad campaign vs. the social campaign engage at a higher rate over time post-install.



Branch's Cohort Analysis solution helps uncover trends in retention by campaign, channel, and platform, offering a more comprehensive understanding of LTV, CAC, and ARPU.



Test New Offers and Content to Drive LTV

Driving retention can be as simple as offering the right incentive at a time during the lifecycle when a user is more likely to churn.

A Few Ways to Counteract This Churn:

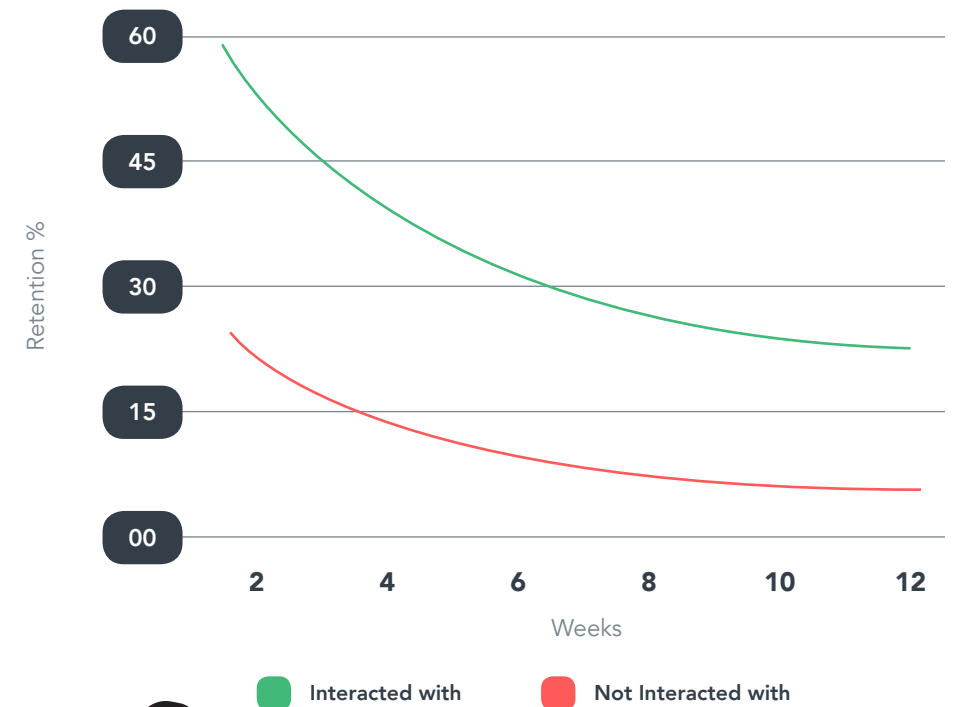
1. Fresh content. Seems obvious, but it's true: Stale app content leads to less engagement and a higher chance of drop off. Fresh content can look different depending on the app category, but there are always ways to surprise and delight users with new content and ideas.

2. Trial periods. Offer premium trial periods when users are more likely to abandon the app. One popular app offered three-month trial periods of their premium subscription to users who were identified as likely to churn — and found it helped increase retention.

3. Communicate in-app at the right time. Users who are communicated to within the app during key mobile moments (such as completing a task) are more likely to be retained.



App Retention Stats Based on Proactive Interaction



Source:  Apptentive

Retarget Cross-Platform to Drive Retention

Leveraging push notifications can help with retention, but many users opt out of those notifications. Accengage found the average worldwide opt-in rate for push notifications was 67.5% — meaning almost half the world's app users might never see a push notification.¹

To keep the app top of mind for users who are at risk for churning, it's critical to turn on all channels — and retargeting campaigns can have a huge impact on user retention and ROI.

The only catch: Retargeting ads served to users who already have an app installed

must deep link back into the app to provide the seamless cross-platform experiences users expect.

Example: Checkout 51 leveraged paid retargeting ads for users with the app installed to get them to re-engage. By deep linking those paid ads to drive app users back into the app, Checkout 51 saw an 86% increase in click-to-open rates.²

Retargeting campaigns that respond to a user with an app and drive them to the right place with the right offer at the right time simply work.

PRO
TIP

>> By deep linking paid ads to drive app users back into the app, Checkout 51 saw an 86% increase in click-to-open rates.

¹ <https://www.emarketer.com/content/push-notifications-2018>

² <https://branch.io/resources/case-study/?res=Checkout+51+Drives+a+93%25+Click-to-Open+Rate+with+Deep+Linking+in+Ads>



Let Users Explain Their Churn — and Then Win Them Back

Requesting user feedback is one of the easiest ways to identify friction points during the app lifecycle. One catch: When and how that feedback is requested has a huge impact on whether users will respond.

Ask for feedback throughout the journey.

Zomato asks for feedback throughout emails and product releases, and features a feedback button within the app so users can decide when and how to leave feedback and suggestions.¹

Make opting out a feedback session.

When users do decide to churn, make it easy — and build feedback into the process.

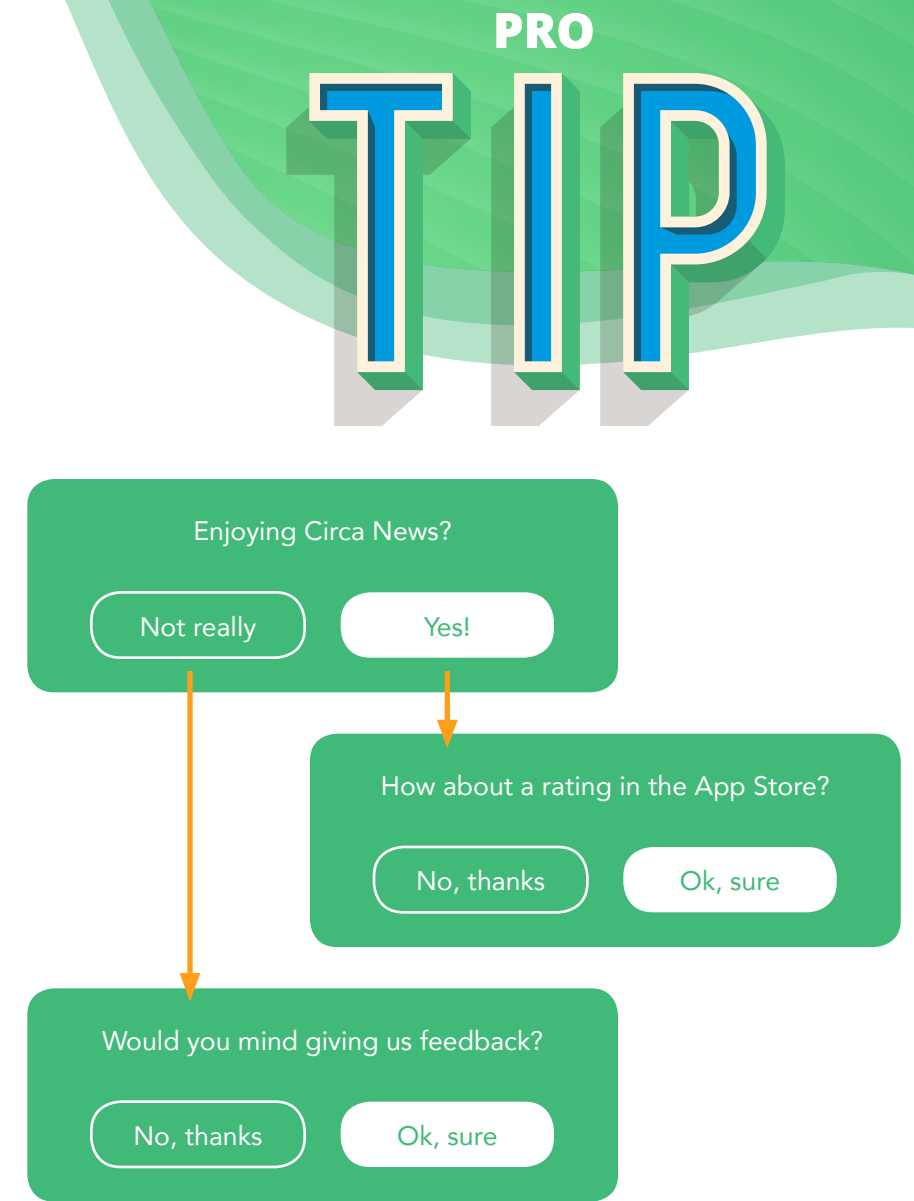
Box asks users to self-select a reason for churning, then responds to that reason in an effort to re-engage the user.

Example: Users who express the service is too expensive will receive a discount encouraging them to come back to Box.

Be considerate of the user's context when asking for feedback. In the example on the right, Circa does a great job of incorporating feedback into the reading journey with simple questions and prompts that don't disrupt the user.²

¹ <https://clevertap.com/blog/retention-marketing/>

² <https://medium.com/circa/the-right-way-to-ask-users-to-review-your-app-9a32fd604fca>

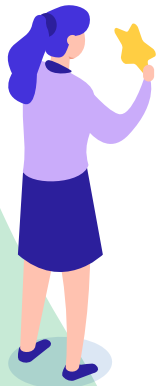




Georgie Mathews

SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER

“Usually 75% of users drop off the app and are never going to come back to you. You spend so much effort acquiring a customer. So before you even acquire them, you have to think about how you are building the app so that they can come back.”



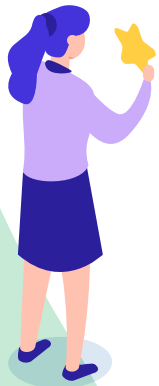
glassdoor®



Jordan Girman

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF USER EXPERIENCE

“The biggest thing in retaining our users is relevance, so the more we know about a consumer, the better experience we can provide. The ability to follow and understand their journey to the brand is so important.”



>> Section Four

Advocate



Turning App Users into Advocates in a Cross-Platform World

In the best case, mobile users aren't just retained — they become loyal advocates and referrers of the app.

Let's take a look at some statistics from Nielsen:¹

- 92% of consumers trust referrals from people they know
- People are four times more likely to buy when referred by a friend
- 43% of consumers are more likely to buy a new product when learning about it from friends on social media

Another bonus: Since referral programs create their own conversion mechanism over the long-term, the cost per acquisition of each new user is considerably

lower. These new users are signing up willingly, are less likely to churn, and might also turn into referrers.

Simply put: Referrals and advocates are critical to the long-term success of any app.

But with great revenue opportunity comes a great need for strategy. Turning app users into advocates takes planning, and it requires a cross-platform strategy that ensures incentives, referrals, and shares can all be attributed to the right user.

Beyond app users, there is also the emerging category of influencers. Let's take a look at both.



¹ <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2013/under-the-influence-consumer-trust-in-advertising.html>

Driving Cross-Platform Referrals & Advocacy

There are plenty of ways to drive referrals for an app — but some core standards are necessary for an effective program.

Four keys:

1. Easy-to-understand rules
2. Simple signup methods
3. Clear eligibility criteria
4. Fast reward payout

Beyond these basics, there are a few other steps worth taking to ensure referrals work across channels, platforms, and devices — and can be accurately attributed.

>> Single-channel referrals don't work in a cross-platform world.



Pick the Right Audience

Before kicking off any referral program, it's important to know that every user is not a great candidate to be a referrer. Determine which key metrics reveal a user is highly engaged or has a high prospective LTV, then offer referral program inclusion to those users.

Data Points Worth Considering:

Behavioral: Does the user return to the app more frequently than others? Highly engaged users could refer the app to like-minded friends.

Psychographic: Does the user live in an area where the app is very popular or alternatively not popular enough? In both cases, referrals can play a role in helping the app expand territory.

Demographic: Age, gender, place of residence, and socioeconomic factors such as occupation can help determine if an app user is worth including in referral programs. Modeling ideal user types and personas, then offering referrals to those personas can help make sure more of the same types of users find the app.

>> Highly engaged users will refer your app to like-minded friends.

PRO
TIP



Leverage Deep Links to Power Cross-Platform Referrals

Let's say a loyal brand fanatic wants to refer a friend to the app.

To send the referral, that user could:

- Use an in-app system that triggers an email
- Text a referral code or link
- Email a referral code or link
- Share an incentive referral coupon on social media

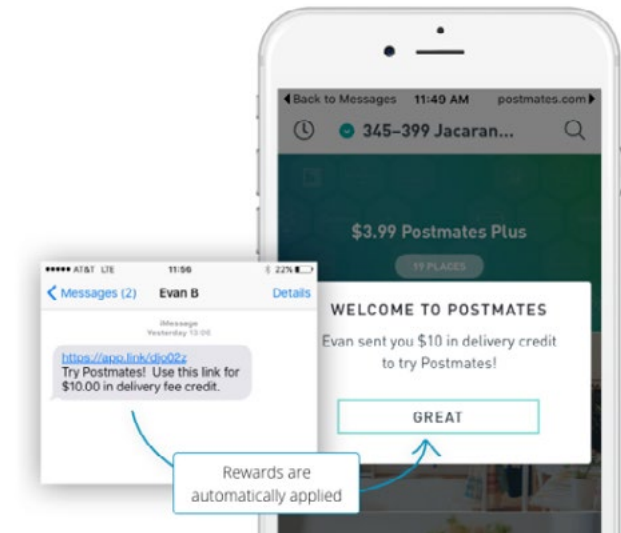
No matter which path the user chooses, the referral becomes cross-platform, cross-device, and cross-OS! That's where deep linking comes in.

¹<https://branch.io/referral/>

Deep links enable link generation, referral tracking, reward attribution, credit balance, and more. (And apps that use Branch for this can create referral reward rules directly on our dashboard — which means referral coupons and discount codes can be applied in-link.)

Deep linked referrals, like the example from Postmates at the right, have been shown to increase conversions by 31% for Branch customers.¹

Even better? Effective deep linking ensures referrals are accurately attributed so marketing teams can determine exactly how much ROI those campaigns are generating.



PRO
TIP

Offer Referral Rewards Based on Current App Status

Referral rewards are a great way to drive interest — especially in the early growth stages of an app. That said, every company can't offer a \$50 credit for every referral. So let's look at some incentives and referrals that can work for apps at any stage.

Early Stage App Incentives

In some scenarios, referrals can drive such a high-level of new users that it's worth leveraging freebies in the beginning of an app's launch.

Example: Dropbox offered an extra 500 MB of free storage space to the customer who made a referral — and to the newly referred user. Membership skyrocketed by about 60% in 2010, driving four million users in 15 months.

Mid-Stage App Incentives

Driving referrals when an app already has a solid base of users can help push it from “pretty cool” to viral. But it isn't necessary to offer coupons and money.

Example: Evernote, the ever-popular note-taking app, launched a referral program that awarded points to users who referred the app. The points could be redeemed for access to premium Evernote features and upgrades. Result: Evernote has more than 100 million users.

Later-Stage App Incentives

For apps that already have a large pool of acquired users who are receiving regular discounts, coupons, and promotions, referral rewards might look a little different.

Example: Offering VIP badges, unlocked features, and leaderboards can help inspire referrals. Duolingo does a great job of this by encouraging users to share results and progress with friends.

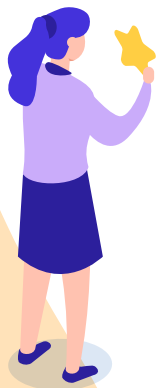
PRO
TIP





Aditya Vaidyanathan
PRODUCT MANAGER

“We offered a ‘Give Five Get Five’ promotion when we started delivery. Awareness about delivery among users was very low. They didn’t know what delivery meant from us. Over time, as we built user awareness, this became a pretty powerful tool for user awareness and acquisition. We tracked performance by making sure links were properly tagged with UTMs. We measured incremental traffic and were constantly evaluating the effectiveness of the program.”



Cross-Platform Influencer Marketing & Attribution

Influencer marketing is yet another way to drive installs and conversions through referrals — and it largely occurs on social media.

There's good reason to pay attention to this approach. Influencer Marketing Hub projects the influencer industry will reach \$6.5 billion this year.¹

This technique can drive KPIs (across acquisition and referrals) through the roof, but there's a catch: It's a very hard strategy to attribute.

Often, mobile app marketers must rely on the influencers themselves or their agents to self-report on KPIs like engagement and clicks — or piece together revenue data to make sense of exactly how many installs or conversions were a result of an influencer campaign.

¹<https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-2019-benchmark-report/>

>> Influencer marketing can drive ROI — but it's very hard to attribute without the right technology.



Solution: Deep Linked Influencer Campaigns

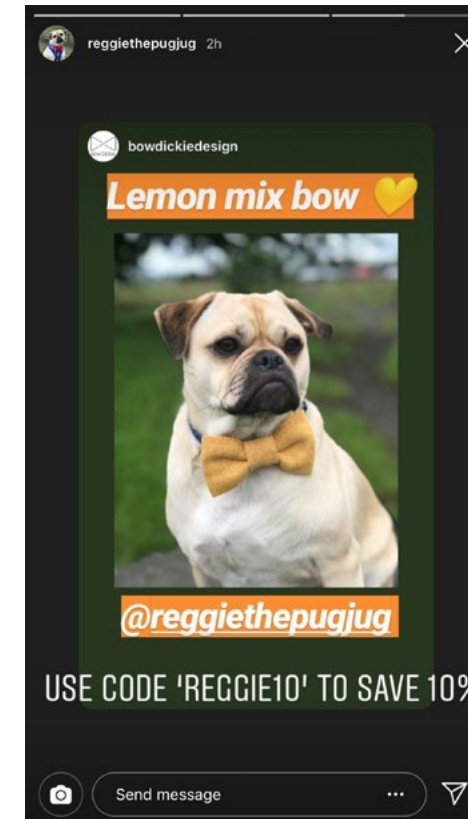
That's where deep linking comes in again.

By creating deep links with referral codes built into the URL, marketing teams can ensure any installs, conversions, or coupon redemptions driven from influencers on social media are accurately attributed.

Deep linking also gives companies the ability to segment influencer performance by channel to determine if an influencer is more effective on Twitter than Instagram, for instance.

In addition, using Branch's deep links, it's possible to segment performance by influencer name, channel, and campaign for even more in-depth attribution.

Definitely necessary before putting marketing budget against this type of referral plan.



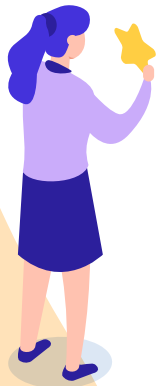
Driving Sales with Dapper Influencers

By using a custom promo code, Bow Dickie Design knows exactly how many sales were driven by this very good boy. To further streamline the user journey, make sure deep links have promo codes built in — saving users time and energy, and increasing conversions.



Tina Kuan
CMO

“It’s extremely difficult to measure influencer marketing. With our new Castbox Originals campaign, we incentivize YouTubers with 1M+ followers to convert their viewers to listeners. Castbox uses spike analysis to track increases in users after a YouTube influencer plugs them.”



GRAILED

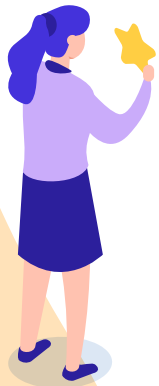


Bilal Shaikh

DIRECTOR OF ANALYTICS

“We recently ran a content marketing play in which we had top celebrities sell items from their wardrobes on our platform. Essentially, we used their audiences to expand our audience. It’s typically really difficult to measure ROI on campaigns like this, but it was clear this performed really well and the CPI was quite low.

This campaign basically worked as well as an organic activation.”



>> Section Five

Attribute & Optimize



Attributing and Optimizing Cross-Platform Experiences

40% of Mobile Growth Survey respondents said their biggest cross-platform challenge right now is accurately attributing user journeys across multiple touchpoints.

In addition, 47% of survey respondents indicated that less than 25% of marketing campaigns are cross-platform.

That's a problem.

As users become more cross-platform than ever before, attributing and measuring the impact of marketing efforts has become one of the biggest challenges facing modern marketing teams.

At the most basic level, every marketing attribution system in the world performs three tasks:

1. Capture interactions between the user and the brand
2. Count conversions by the user
3. Link those conversions back to any interactions that — in theory — drove them

When done correctly, this process allows you to figure out if those campaigns are worth the cost.



The Fourth Piece of Cross-Platform Attribution

But now there's a fourth task:

4. Protect against broken user journeys.

Attribution simply won't work if part of the journey breaks and conversions are lost in the first place.

In order to master attribution — and achieve the data accuracy necessary to make smart marketing decisions for mobile growth — it's necessary to:

- Create seamless experiences
- Understand the full user journey across channels, platforms, devices, and campaigns

But most marketing teams struggle to achieve accurate attribution.

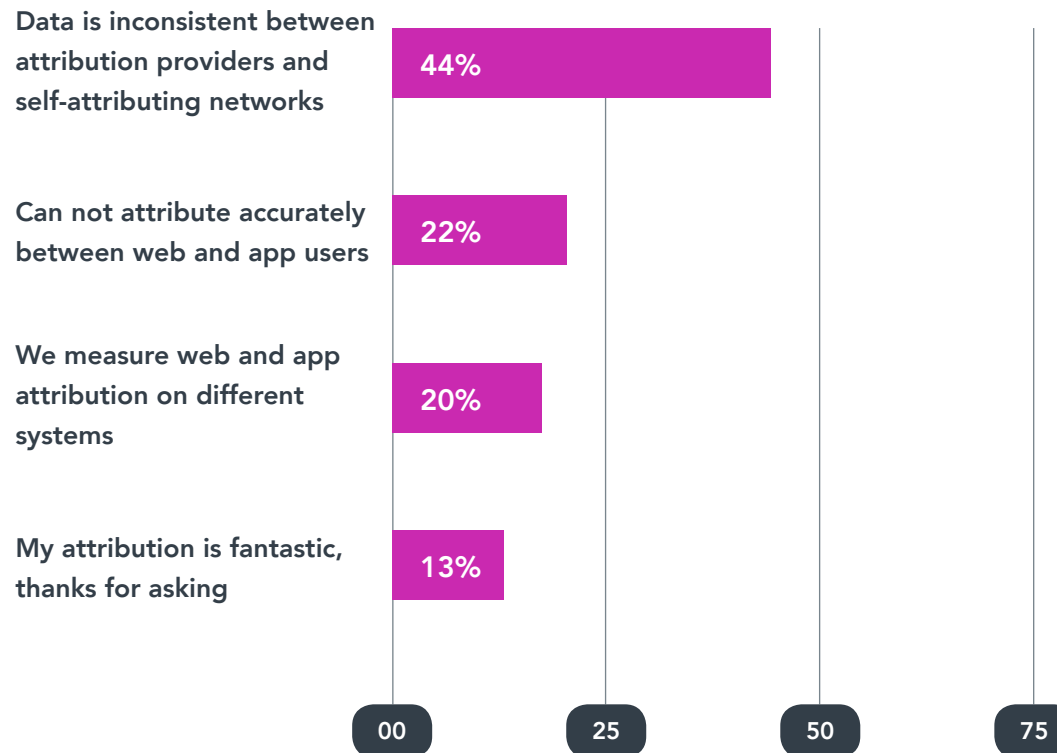
>> Most marketing teams struggle to achieve accurate cross-platform attribution.



Attribution by the Numbers

This year's Mobile Growth Survey respondents reported their key challenges — and attribution across networks was one of the biggest hurdles when it came to data.

What is Your Biggest Attribution Challenge?

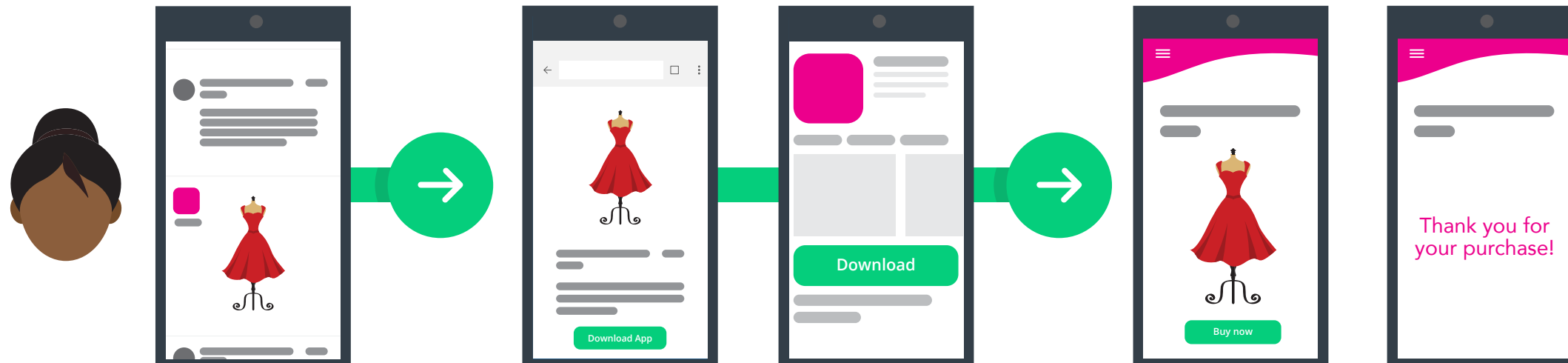


Source: **branch**



Attribution: How it Should Work

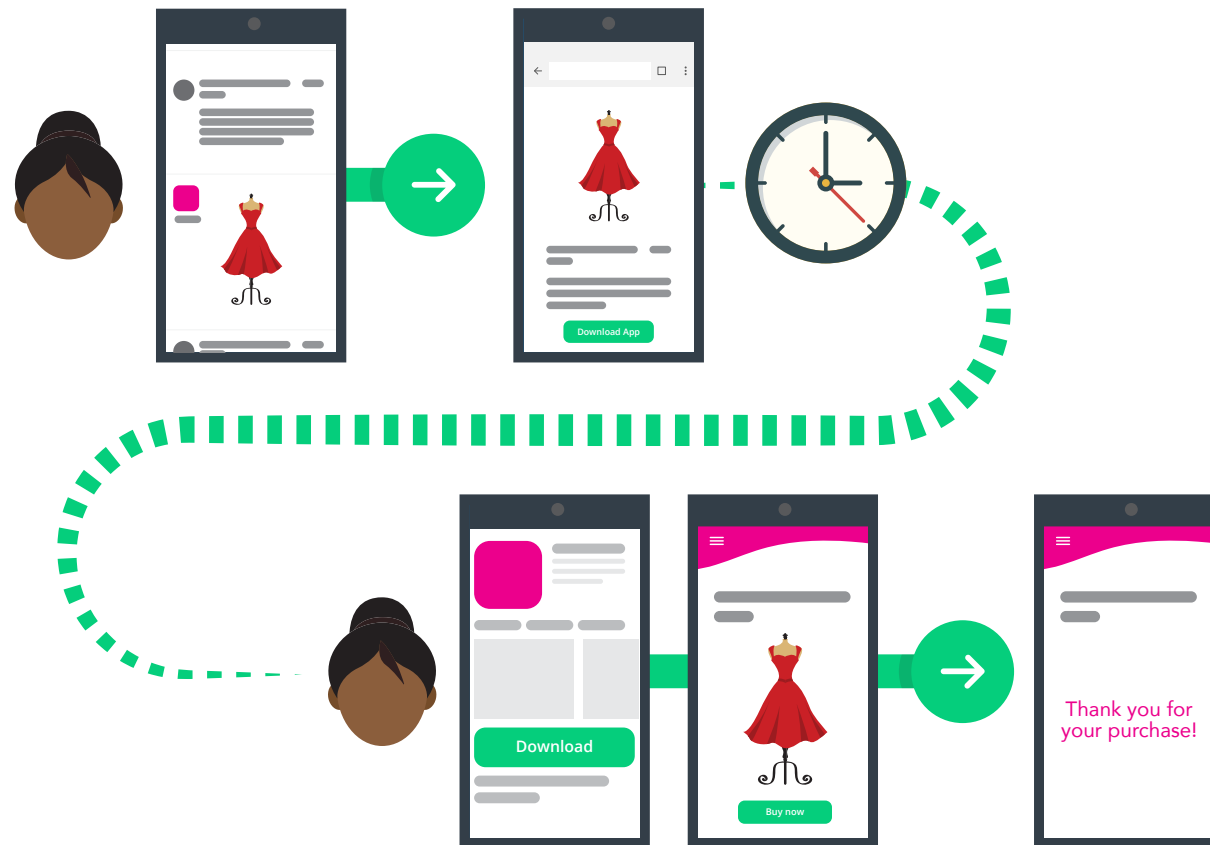
Here's how attribution should work — and what today's attribution providers can track reasonably well: While scrolling through Facebook, a user sees an app install ad for a dress on sale, downloads the app, and then proceeds to purchase the dress. Everything is attributed accurately, because the basic app install ad is working the way it was designed to.



Attribution: How Things Happen in Real Life

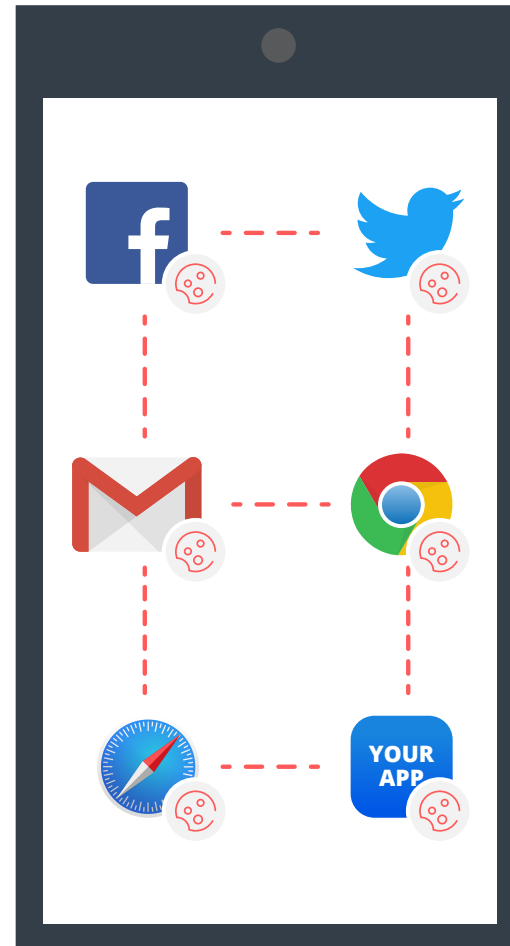
Now let's look at a more realistic scenario: While waiting in line at a coffee shop, the user searches the web for a dress. She sees an app install ad, and clicks it. Before the app finishes downloading, her order is called, and she walks out of the store without opening the app.

Three days later, she remembers the dress, searches the app store for the app, then downloads and purchases the dress. Legacy attribution providers will see these interactions as two separate users — and won't attribute this conversion correctly.



Here's Why: Cookies Break on Mobile

Attribution is challenging because cookies don't work on mobile. That means when users alternate between desktop, mobile web, and the app, it becomes much more difficult to attribute their behavior to the initial touchpoint.



Branch Persona Graph Solves This Challenge

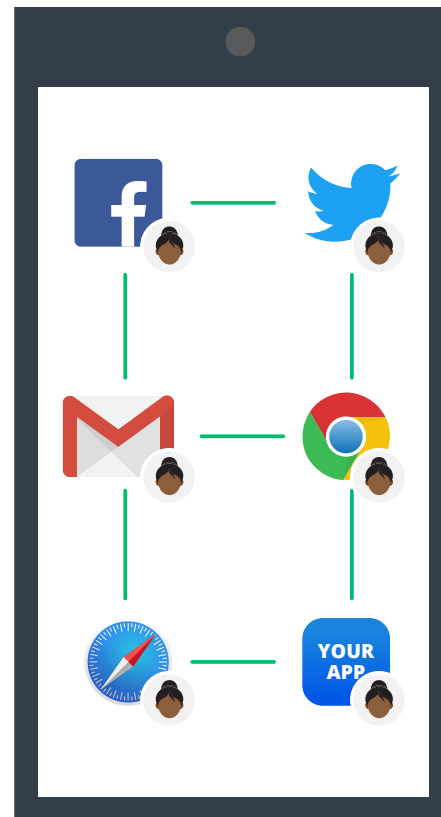
Solving the fragmentation challenge isn't easy, but by powering world-class cross-platform user experiences for over 50,000 apps — including many of the best-known brands in the world — Branch has built a solution that is both more accurate and more reliable than anything else available.

Branch's Persona Graph

With links that work everywhere, Branch creates personas at scale by connecting groups of deterministic identifiers across all channels and platforms that belong to the same user.

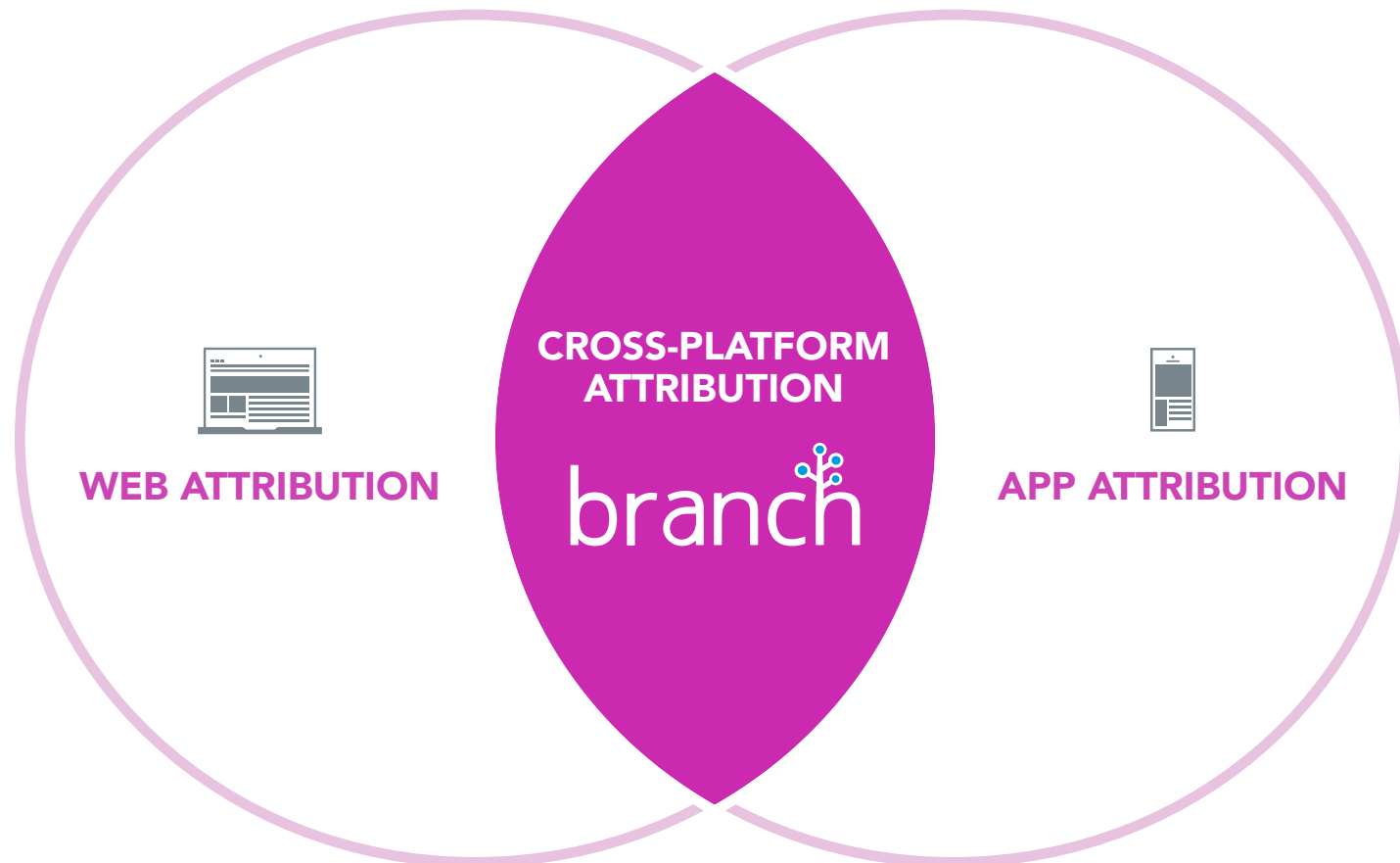
These reliable, deduplicated personas are available to reference across every channel and platform for accurate measurement and personalized user experiences.

The result: Crumbling cookies on mobile will no longer make it impossible to understand complicated user journeys or drive seamless cross-platform experiences for the same user.



Mastering Cross-Platform Measurement

Legacy attribution providers can only track web or app activity. But the world's leading providers enable cross-platform, cross-channel attribution to unlock the true performance of marketing activities.



>> Unify once siloed tools, dashboards, and metrics.

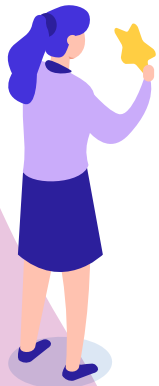
GRAILED



Bilal Shaikh

DIRECTOR OF ANALYTICS

“It’s really important for me as the architect to have an absolutely seamless view of how all our customers use our product across all channels and platforms, and to have parity between data that’s passed everywhere, so we can understand how different users interact with us and then use that data to our advantage (e.g. knowing when to push someone to the app vs. web etc.). And of course, we want to ensure that as we push people between all these channels and platforms, the experience itself is perfectly seamless.”



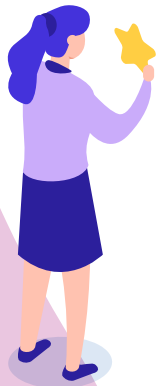
intuit.



David (Buck) Antestenis

GROUP MARKETING MANAGER, QBSE ACQUISITION

“I tell people all the time: If you’re measuring last-click and it doesn’t work, it’s because it doesn’t work.”

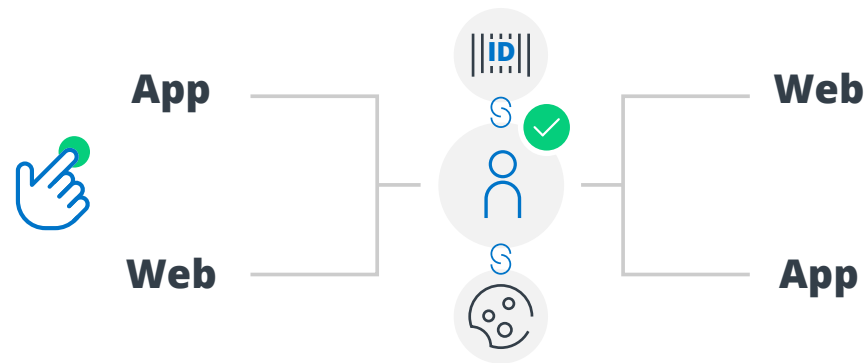


Deep Linking is the Foundation of Accurate Attribution

Deep linking users from any channel — social, paid ads, email, the mobile web — into the app ensures that those users receive a seamless experience and that those experiences can be attributed.

Accurate user identification is critical for deep linking. Deep links serve as the connective tissue between disparate data points across channels, platforms, and

devices. Without the connective tissue, there is no way to understand the full user journey at every stage or truly achieve accurate attribution in a cross-platform world.



PRO
TIP

>> Ready to start creating deep links for your channels and campaigns? Branch can help.

[Get started today.](#)

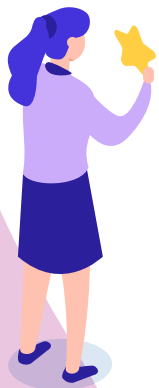




Andreas Homer

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

“You really need to invest in a great data scientist. How do you witness and track enhanced engagement or advanced revenue? It’s one thing to gather data and another to have intel and the ability to produce actionable insights from it.”

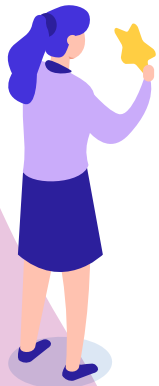


REMERGE



Tommy Yannopoulos
DIRECTOR OF SALES, EAST

“At Remerge, we believe incrementality measurement isn’t achieved in a test. Rather, it should be an advertiser’s core KPI. Incrementality allows app advertisers to fully understand the efficacy of their channels in an empirical, data-driven manner. The ghost bids method provides the greatest level of upside as it enables always-on, cost-free, noise-free, and fully verifiable lift measurement.”



Go Beyond Fingerprinting

One of the biggest flaws with legacy attribution providers: They often rely on fingerprinting to identify users across devices.

In web-to-web attribution, providers can use identifiers stored in the cookies of the browser to identify users across multiple sites. But those cookies don't work on mobile,

so fingerprinting becomes the main way of matching these users to their devices.

Additionally, restrictions implemented by major web browsers and increased privacy-focused legislation around the work (such as GDPR) indicate the tide is turning against cookie-based attribution.



Revolutionizing Attribution with Branch

At Branch, we built a completely new way of doing attribution that nearly eliminates the need for fingerprinting all together: Persona Graph. It uses the wisdom of the crowds to build a large identity graph mapped to device IDs, generated from the tremendous amount of traffic Branch sees. **Even better?** Branch's Persona Graph keeps user privacy front and center.

Ready to find out how Branch's Persona Graph can help you? [Contact our sales team today.](#)



Finding the Right Provider: Five Keys

Finding the right attribution provider in a sea of options isn't easy. But there are some key things that will help find the right partner.

Implementation: Ease of implementation will help speed up the process and ensure accurate attribution starts quickly.

SDK: The ideal attribution provider will have lightweight, open source SDKs, offering transparency so you know what you're installing into your app.

Support: The support team of any provider has to be top-notch to support attribution across channels and platforms.

Unified Dashboard: The ability to see both paid and organic marketing analytics in one place is critical for achieving a unified view of performance.

Breakdown of Cost Data: Without the ability to understand costs across campaigns holistically, attribution won't give a clear view of spend and ROI.

Finding the right provider can take time — and requires research. But for the most advanced deep linking and cross-platform attribution, Branch is here to help.

PRO
TIP

>> The right attribution provider will give you cross-platform insights for your users' journey and your campaign performance.





Patrick Moran

GLOBAL HEAD OF GROWTH MARKETING

“Today at Spotify, we take on the mindset that we are not going to learn everything immediately. When we look at our next two to three tests, we also want to think about the situation a year from now. In doing so, it relieves the pressure to drive significant performance at the expense of shortcuts.”



>> Mobile Growth 2019

Conclusion



Conclusion: Driving Cross-Platform Mobile Growth in 2019

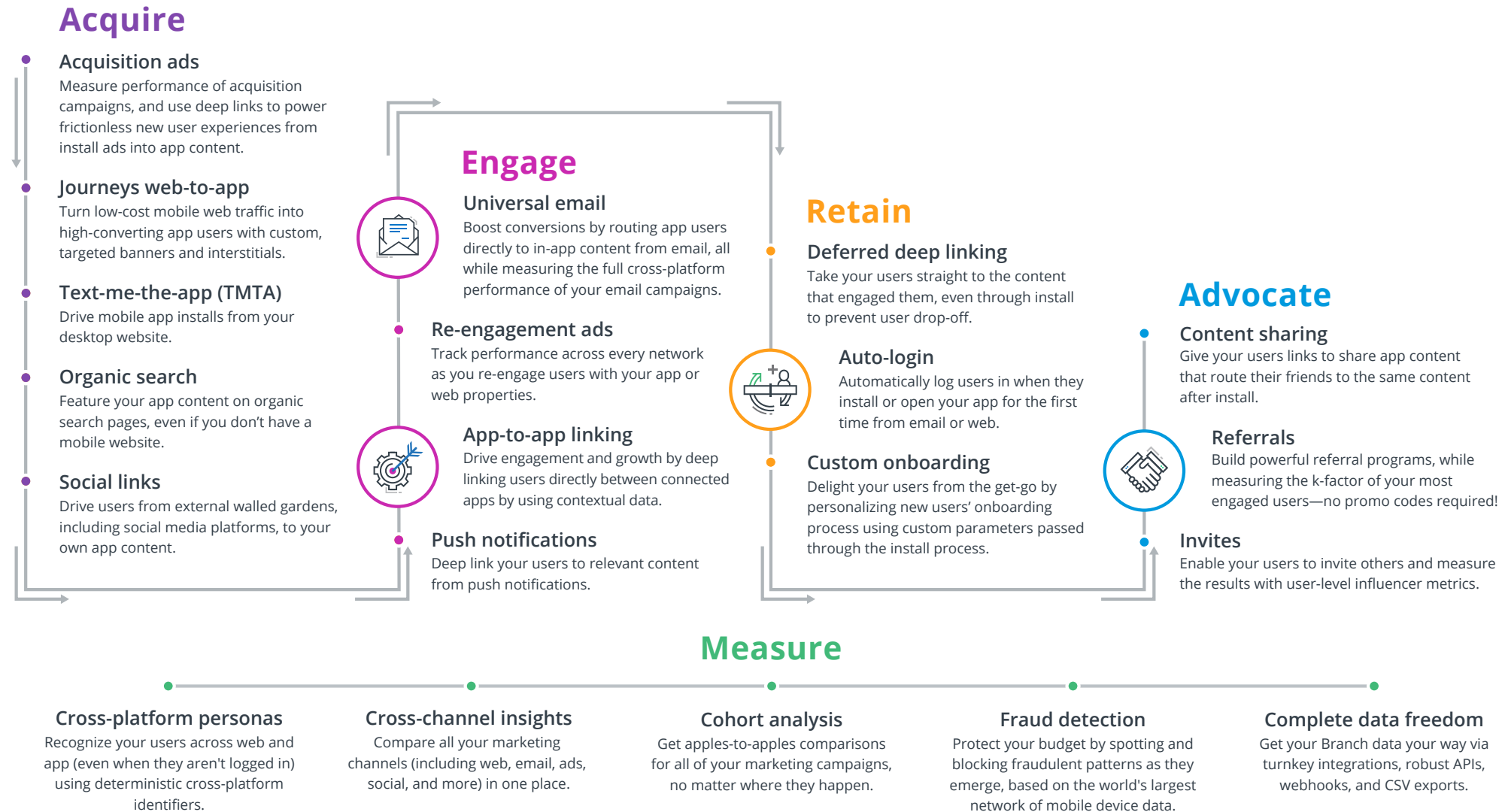
With rising mobile usage, more devices than ever, and fragmentation impacting data and marketing efforts, growing app users, engagement, and ROI requires a cross-platform mindset that encompasses — and attributes — every touchpoint along the user journey.

As more marketing teams focus on a holistic approach to all touchpoints, channels, and devices, cross-platform campaigns and efforts that drive users into the app — and are easily and accurately attributable — will determine mobile success in 2019 and beyond.

>> A cross-platform approach to mobile growth — that can be accurately attributed across all touchpoints — will determine mobile success in 2019 and beyond.



A Look at the New Cross-Platform World



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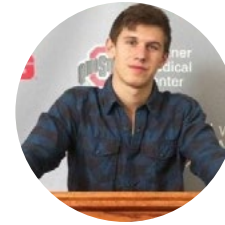
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Product Manager, Mobile Growth



Anurag Agrawal

Head of Product Management



Robbie Allen

(Former) Mobile Product Manager



Tina Kuan

CMO



Bilal Shaikh

Director of Analytics



About **branch**

Branch provides the leading cross-platform linking and attribution platform, offering solutions that unify user experience and measurement across devices and channels. We power mobile links and cross-platform measurement to more than 3 billion monthly users across the globe, and is a trusted cross-platform marketing, engagement and measurement solution for over 50,000 apps — including Foursquare, BuzzFeed, Yelp, OfferUp, and many more.

Ready to take your mobile growth to the next level with cross-platform linking and accurate attribution? Our Sales team would be happy to set up time to talk.

[Contact Us](#)

>> Find out more about attribution and how Branch is revolutionizing the space.

- [Mobile Attribution 101: The Death of App Attribution](#)
- [Mobile Attribution 102: Building Attribution 2.0](#)
- [Mobile Attribution 103: The Rise of Persona Graph](#)

