

Owned Marketing Quick Wins

for Airlines



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Introduction

Most airlines today understand the importance of investing in a mobile strategy and commit significant resources (and cost) to high-quality app development. But when it comes to post-launch, many airlines take the ‘sit back, relax, and enjoy the flight’ approach to adoption, expecting automatic passenger uptake of their apps.

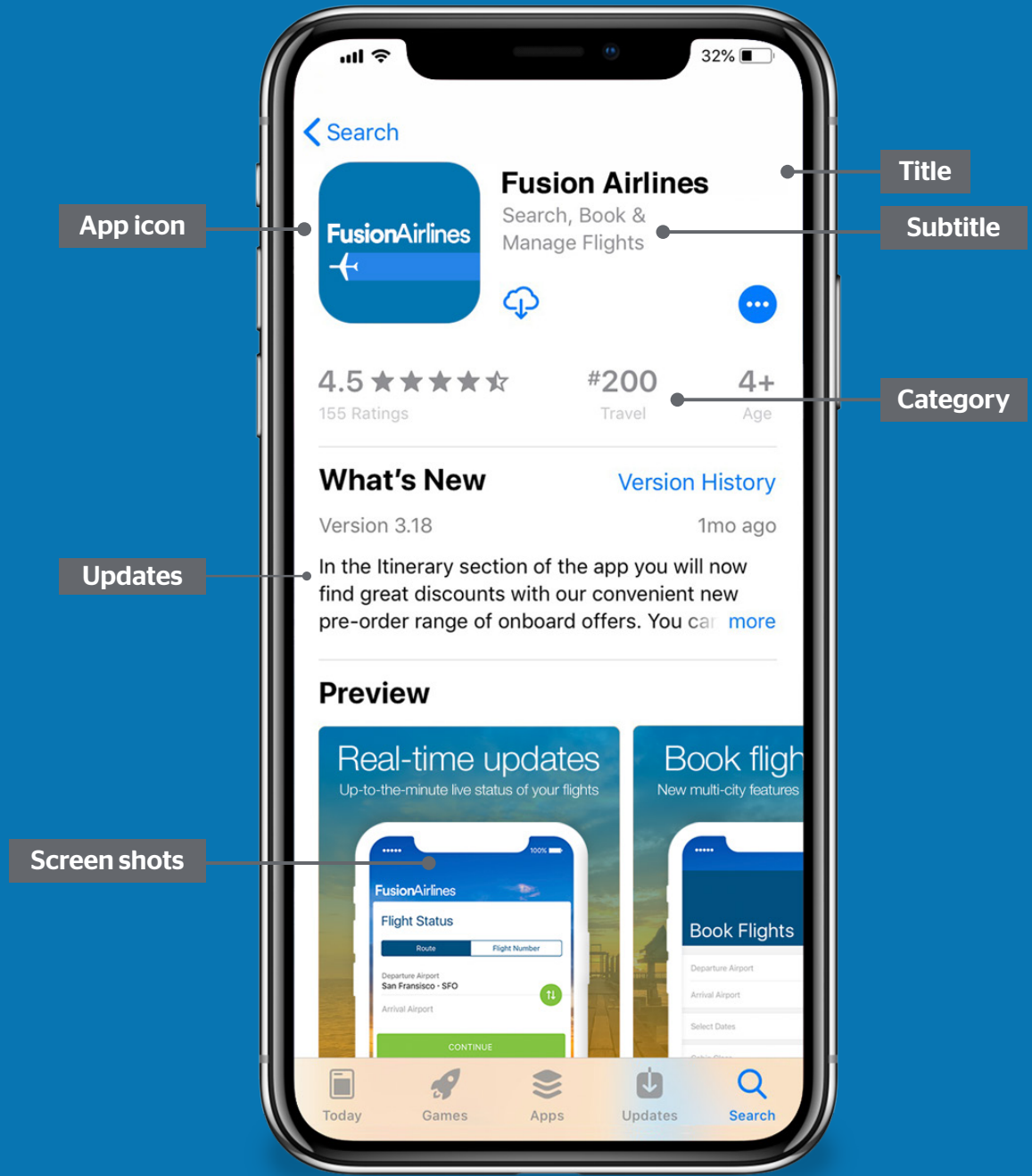
In reality, getting an airline app off the ground and then in turn keeping it flying out of the app stores requires a packed campaign calendar of marketing activities. These need to be designed to build awareness, drive downloads and ultimately increase engagement with your brand on mobile.

Owned marketing is one of the simplest and most cost-effective tools that any airline can use as it not only focuses on channels that the airline controls, but also uses channels that already have high levels of passenger traffic, both online and offline.

This eBook presents seven different ways an airline can use owned marketing from day one to day 365, at little or no cost. Each one includes a simple explanation, a visual example and a brief overview of any technical requirements (if needed) to give you the ultimate head start.

1

Optimize the App Stores



App Store Optimization



WHAT

There are now over five million apps across the five major app stores, with 3.9 million on Google Play and the App Store alone. Add to that fact that 7,000 new apps are released every day¹ and any airline can clearly see that they are about to enter a very crowded market with a new app.

There are now over 5 million apps across the five major app stores with 7,000 new apps released every day.

Therefore, App Store Optimization (ASO) is a crucial part of owned marketing.

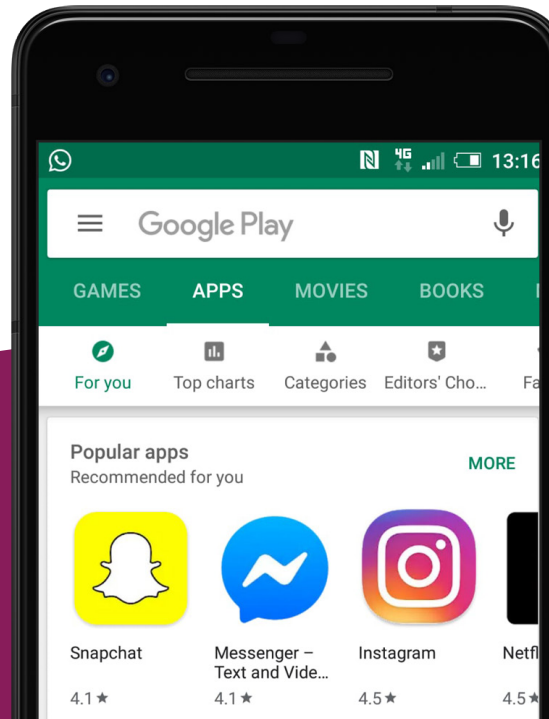
ASO is essentially the mobile cousin of SEO and just like SEO, it is a constant process of optimizing elements not of a webpage, but instead of an app product page. The primary goal is to increase your apps visibility and drive more app downloads. With over 70% of App Store visitors using search to find apps² and 53% of downloads triggered by search on Google Play,³ ASO is vital to making sure your app is as discoverable as possible from launch and beyond.



HOW

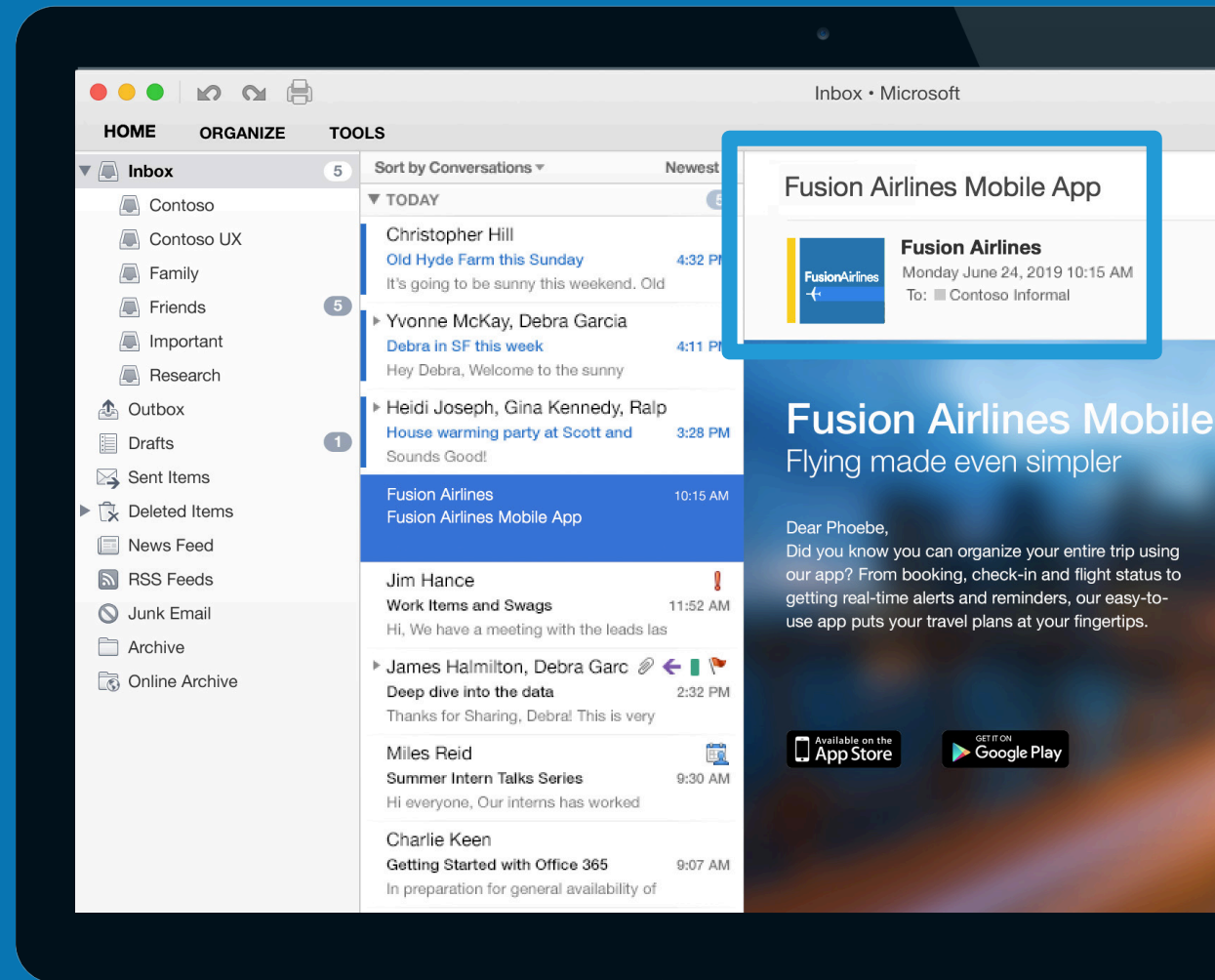
Even though there are a few subtle differences across the App Store and Google Play the basics of ASO involves testing and measuring updates to:

1. App Title
2. Subtitle (iOS only)
3. Category
4. Keywords
5. Description (and 'Short Description' for Android)
6. Screenshots
7. Icon
8. Videos
9. Localization



2

Email, Email, Email!



Email, Email, Email!



Outside of a website, email can be one of the biggest drivers of traffic to your airline brand, therefore this channel offers one of the best opportunities to not only raise awareness of your mobile app, but also drive significant downloads.

Make sure to utilize both operational emails to passengers e.g. check-in reminders, as well as any CRM emails your airline already has in place.

Some great examples of the different types of email marketing that can fall under this quick win are:

- Booking confirmations
- New route announcements or seasonal routes on sale
- And of course, a stand-alone launch email



1. Make sure every email features your new app even if it's just limited to app store badges in the email footer.

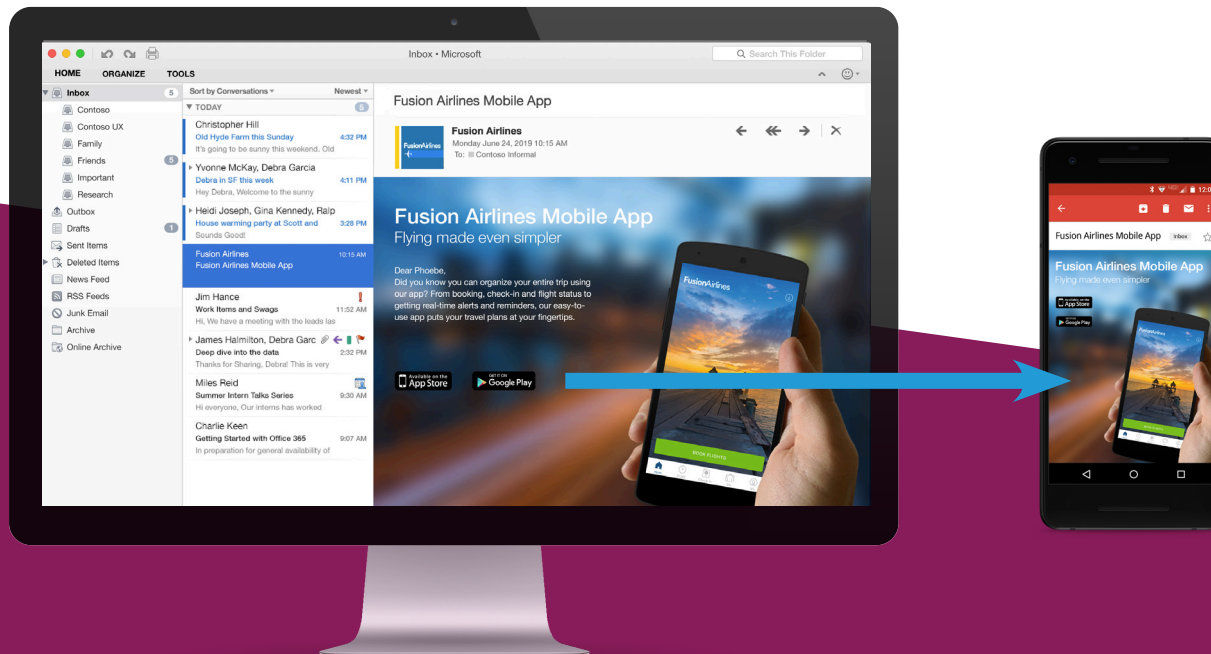
2. For larger scale email promotion make sure to include screenshots, functionality explainers, and benefit driven **messaging about why your passengers need this app.**

3. Use your loyalty database to promote your new app to guests/members first (if your airline has one) using language like 'exclusive' and 'VIP passengers like you.'

4. Communicate new features in standalone emails as you add them over time.

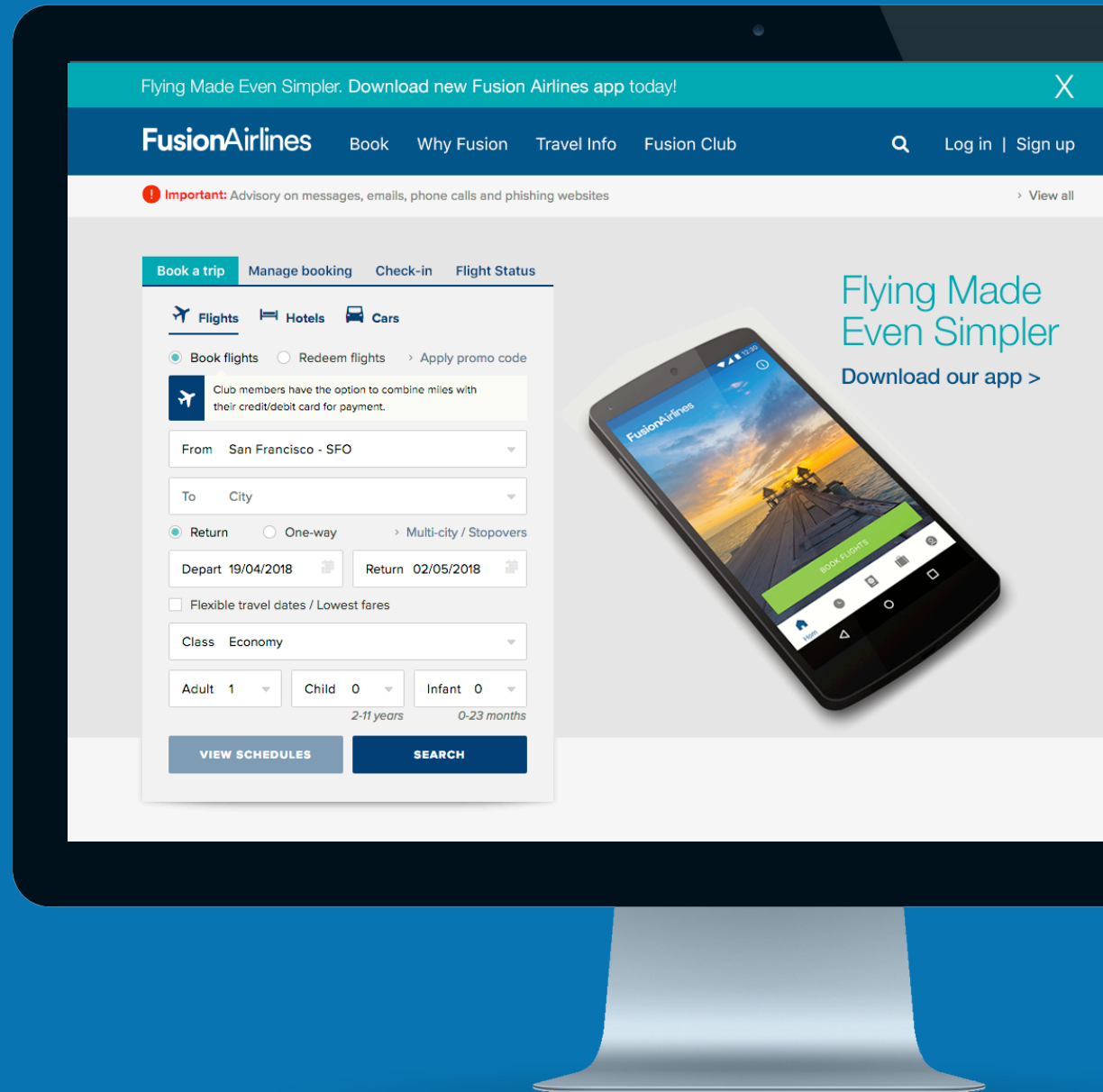
5. Ensure that every email you send includes prominent calls-to-action to download from the app stores.

6. And finally, make sure the emails you send are mobile optimized!



3

Your Website =
Your Greatest Asset



Your Website = Your Greatest Asset



WHAT

Any airline website will be **THE primary source for app acquisition from day one; because there is no other owned channel that has more passenger eyes or has more marketing budget spent on it than your dot.com.**

As this is such an important channel use it wisely and widely, from homepage banners to top level navigation links and literally everywhere in between. Your site should be a springboard for thousands and thousands of downloads every single week.

Homescreen takeovers, countdown banners, footer links, microsities, carousel ads and app store badges on check-in pages are just few ideas of how you could use this prime real estate web space to promote your airline app.



HOW

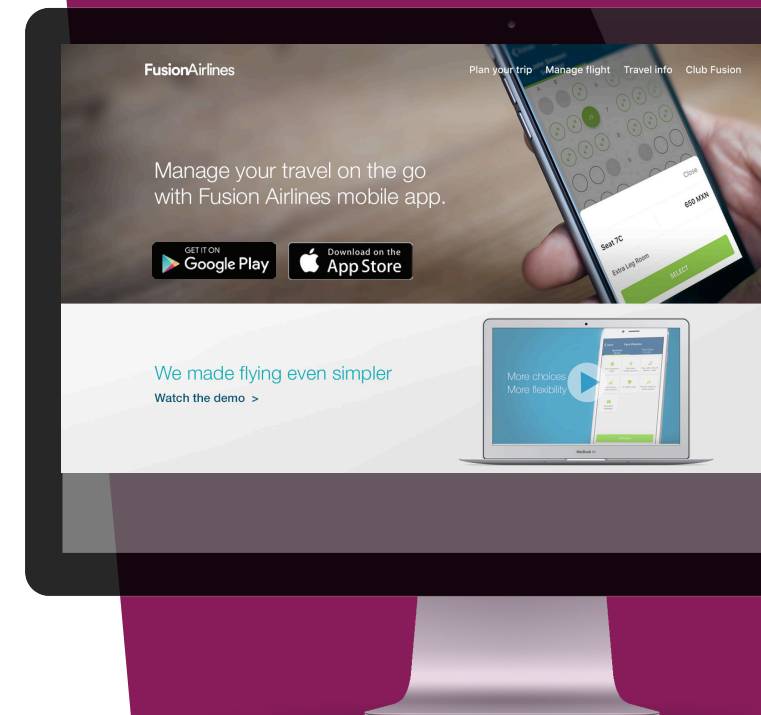
Create separate tabs on your landing page for major functionality (check-in, Apple/Google Pay, Passport Scanning etc) with screenshots & explainers.

Use homescreen banners to list out why your passengers should download the app, drive home the use cases. Utilize this space to announce forthcoming features as well, again using explainers on how this new functionality will benefit them, the passenger, making your app even more compelling for them to use.

Add videos to your pages to showcase the app in action.

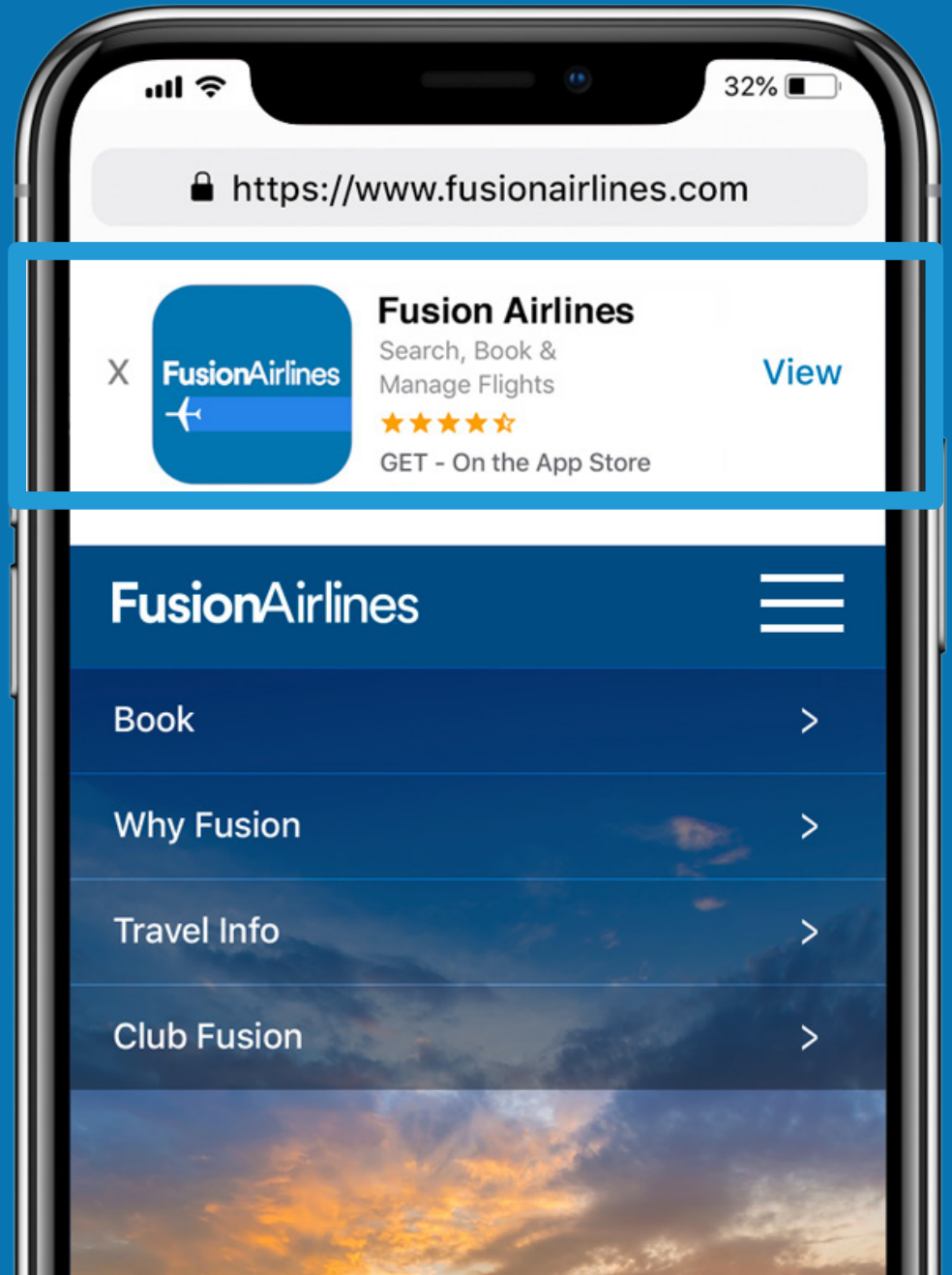
Don't forget to **add app store badges to every webpage** for quick and easy access to download the app.

Create a microsite or landing page where people can go for more information - list the main features and benefits of your app, show screens and video and share links to download it in the app stores.



4

Put Up a
Smart Banner



Put up a Smart Banner



This is probably one of the quickest wins for any airline to implement, and it's also one of the most effective.

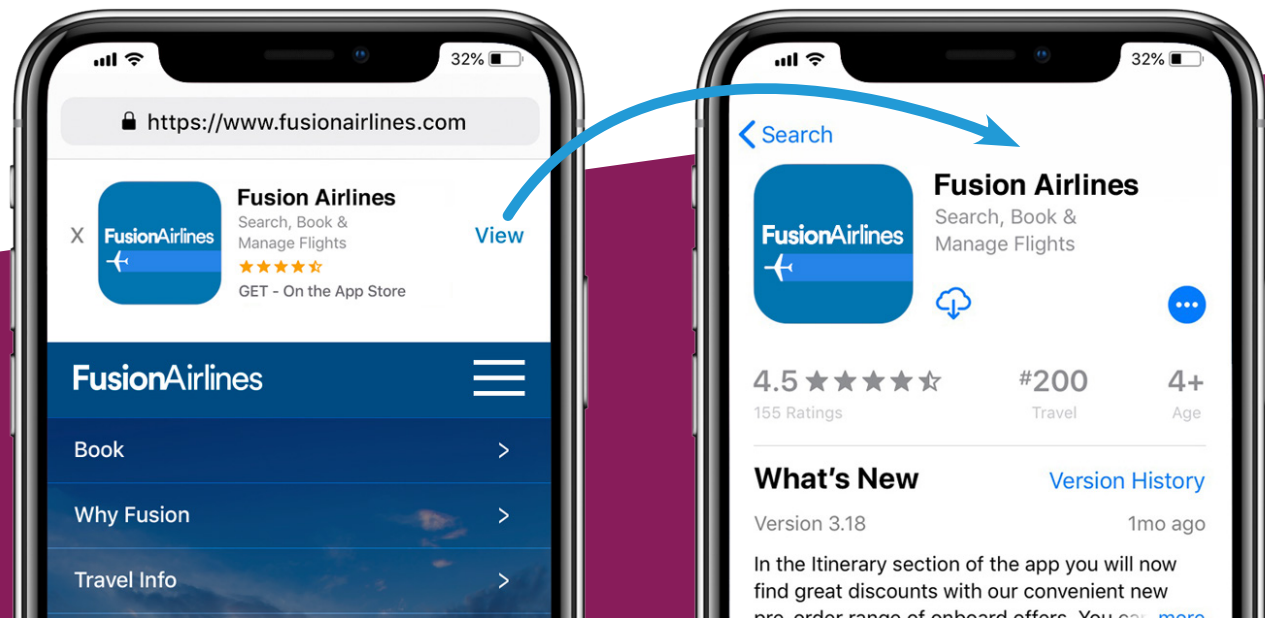
Smart banners or 'Smart App Banners' as Apple name them are a great tool to increase adoption and usage of your airline app, simply by being the first thing your passengers see when they visit your website.

They appear at the top of the screen when a user goes to your website on a mobile device. It works on both iOS and Android phones. This banner includes your app icon, current app ratings and a call to action to 'GET - On the App Store'. The 'View' option links directly your app in the App Store with without any typing or searching required. If a user has already downloaded your application the CTA changes to 'Open', reminding them to use your app once more.

The root URL of your website is the obvious place for these banners to sit, but the code that triggers this display can, and should, be added to any high traffic page of your airline website for maximum effect.

This acquisition driver is not limited to iOS though, the exact same functionality is available for Android too, it's just named differently - 'Native App Install Prompts'. Both operating system banners require just one line of code to be added to your website.

When a mobile user visits your site an App Store banner will be visible, linking directly to your App in the App Store with no typing or searching needed.





iOS Find your app ID

The easiest way to get this number is to search for your iOS app in Google. When found, select the link and you will be directed to a web version of your app product page. Make a note of the number between **id** and **?mt** in that URL.

See highlighted Fiji Airways example here - <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fiji-airways/id1372740237?mt=8>

Add code to the meta tag

Now add the code below to the meta tag in the head of any page of your website that you wish the smart banner to appear - with your app id replacing the *'putyourappidnumberhere'* text.

Code to add to your website

```
<meta name="apple-itunes-app" content="app-id=PUTYOURAPPIDNUMBERHERE" />
```

Further details can be found [here](#).

Please find below an example of a completed code, using Fiji Airways:
<meta name="apple-itunes-app" content="app-id=1372740237" />

Android Find your app ID

Like iOS you will need to make a note of your app id (or Play Store App id) first. The easiest way to get this number is to search for your Android app in Google.

When found, select the link and you will be directed to a web version of your app product page. Make a note of the Play Store ID between **id** and **&hl=** in that URL.

See highlighted Fiji Airways example here - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tvptdigital.fijiairways&hl=en>

Add code to the meta tag

Now add the code below to the meta tag in the head of any page of your website that you wish the smart banner to appear with your Play Store app id replacing the *'putyourplaystoreappidnumberhere'* text.

Further details can be found [here](#).

This is the code to add to your website

```
“prefer_related_applications”: true,  
“related_applications”: [  
  {  
    “platform”: “play”,  
    “id”: “PUTYOURPLAYSTOREAPPIDHERE”  
  }  
]
```

Please find below an example of a completed code, using Fiji Airways:

```
“prefer_related_applications”: true, “related_applications”: [  
  {  
    “platform”: “play”,  
    “id”: “com.tvptdigital.fijiairways”  
  }  
]
```

5

The Day
of Travel



The Day of Travel



WHAT

When it comes to using owned marketing to drive installs, airlines should think outside of the obvious digital channels that many traditional marketers will focus on.



HOW

Try to **align the messaging in the ad to the airport context** to really make an impact. An advert showing your app's mobile boarding pass will likely resonate with users who are queuing at a check-in desk for example.

Target travelers who are not yet using your app by including app upsells on paper boarding passes letting them know that they could be using the app instead to check-in and get a mobile boarding pass.

Use 'Did you know...' pop up banners during the check-in flow or on booking confirmation screens on your website - 'Did you know you can book your next flight on our new app?,' 'Did you know you can get your boarding pass on your phone?'



Consider every single trip touchpoint your airline has control over, and are already engaging with your passengers at, online AND offline!

For example, using in-airport signage in high traffic areas such as at security or check-in can drive significant numbers of downloads simply by capturing thousands of potential app users in situ.

6

Onboard and Inflight



Onboard and Inflight



Whatever type of airline you are (LCC, Legacy/Network, Regional or ULCC) there is one thing that all airlines have in common; millions of passengers are sitting on your planes every year. That equals a lot of idle time on flights!

That's why seatbacks, inflight magazines, bistro leaflets and even onboard meal napkins are the perfect canvas to promote your app to this captive audience. Plus, this onboard owned channel is even more effective now as QR codes are instantly recognized by cameras in both iPhones and Android devices without having to download a separate app.

Add QR codes for quick and easy download and for tracking purposes.



Magazines/Onboard Leaflets
Dedicate full-page features on the app – focus on communicating how it could enhance their journey, especially their return journey.

Call out key value statements, not just a list of features. For example, *'Stay informed of any changes to your inbound flight with our real-time notifications.'*

Add QR codes for quick and easy download as well as for tracking purposes.

Seatbacks

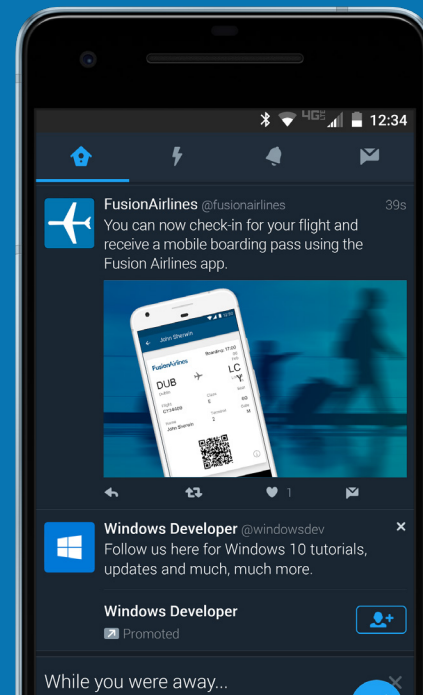
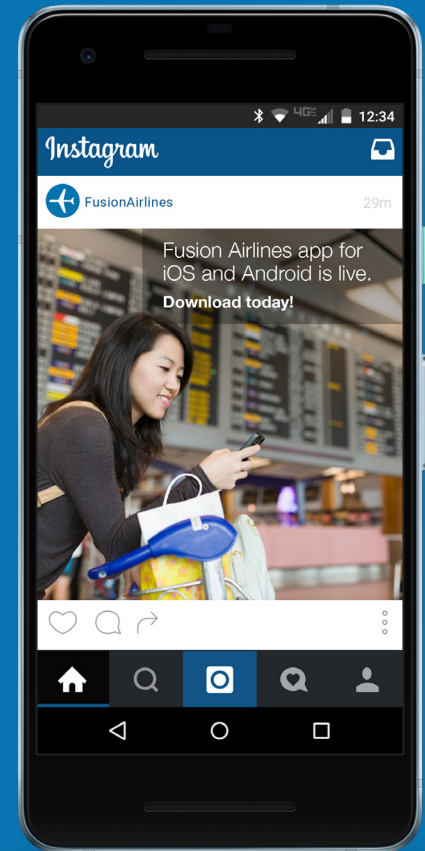
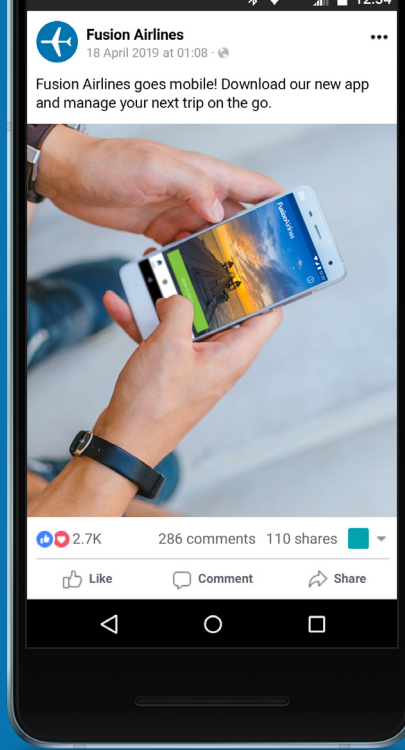
Think about what seatbacks your airline supports, if they are digital then play your app promo videos before the onboard safety announcements. If they are card ads, make sure to use compelling screens for visual impact and again use QR codes for search free, frictionless downloading from the app stores.

Get cabin crews to announce the app before the doors close – *"Scan the code in front of you right now to download our new app", "Want to choose a better seat for the way home, download now"* etc.





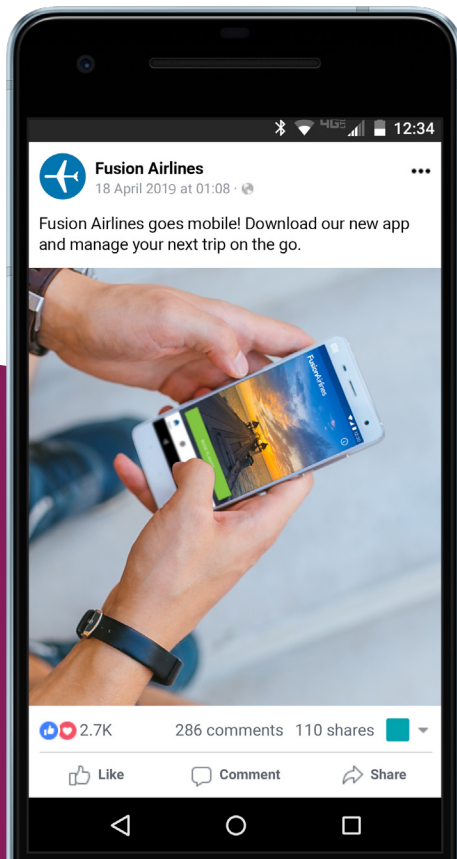
Go
Social



Go Social

WHAT

Many, if not all airlines have spent considerable time and effort building huge followings across social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



With 'Travel' now being the number one search term on Facebook and Instagram⁴, our final quick win is one of the most obvious owned marketing channels to use. As with all the marketing wins mentioned throughout this eBook, using social to promote your app should not be limited to a launch post or one off 'new app' tweet.

Posting on social media is an incredibly effective way to announce your app and all its benefits from day one. However, it's even more effective as a tool to shout about new functionality (who reads the app store updates anymore?!).

Don't limit your use to just organic posts either, each platform has a myriad of paid options to choose from that will allow you to engage with your passengers, whether they've got the app installed on their devices or not.

Posting on social media is an incredibly effective way to announce your app and its benefits. But it's even more effective as a tool to shout about new functionality.

HOW

- 1. Use social as a springboard to launch,** starting before the 'go live' date with a teaser campaign to say the app is coming soon.
- 2. Announce new functionality here first** and link to the new versions in the app stores.
- 3. Post walkthrough videos of your app in action or use your app promo videos.** Videos receive nearly 40% more engagement than image posts on Instagram⁴ and twice the amount of comments.
- 4. Invest in install ads** (where passengers don't have your app already) **as well as 'Engagement Ads'** (for passengers who have your app installed) to allow a deep link directly into your app.
- 5. Keep the conversation going about your app beyond launch!**

Conclusion

Once your app is launched, it's easy to forget about it and move on to the next priority on what seems like a never-ending list. However, in a sea of five million apps, it's not enough to rely on the strength of your airline's brand to drive downloads.

You have made a significant investment in developing your airline's app, and by using the tactics we've outlined in this eBook to promote it, you'll start seeing the pay-off. By exploiting every owned channel at your disposal, you have the potential to reach your customers at multiple touchpoints along their journey - when they're visiting your website, at the airport, or flicking through an in-flight magazine.

The most successful apps are the ones that are backed up by comprehensive marketing strategies that take full advantage of all media channels - paid, earned, and owned. And while there are many options to promote your app, it is owned channel activities that will have the single biggest impact, not only on downloads but more importantly, on engagement.

**If you're looking for assistance in building
a world class mobile app for your airline
or would like help with your mobile strategy
- talk to us today!**

Hello@travelpor.digital.com

Sources

1 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/276623/number-of-apps-available-in-leading-app-stores/> | **2** <https://searchads.apple.com/> | **3** <https://asostack.com/how-do-users-search-for-apps-5aOd3257803f> | **4** Facebook Travel Summit, May 2019

The Travelport logo, featuring the word "Travelport" in a white sans-serif font followed by a stylized white icon of three overlapping shapes representing wings or a globe.

About Travelport Digital

At Travelport Digital we deliver innovative digital travel solutions for airlines, TMCs and travel agencies to meet the expectations of today's ultra-connected travelers. We create superior, end-to-end travel experiences across multiple devices and channels with the latest in mobile technology, great UX and design, a travel focused product set and close collaboration with our clients. Our work enables airlines and travel companies to leverage 'every moment in travel' with mobile and digital services that transform how they interact with their customers.

- * **50+ million** app downloads (as of January 2019)
- * **100 number 1** travel apps in App Store / Google Play
- * **775** App Store promotions in the last two years
- * **4.5** average app star rating
- * **330+** mobile experts dedicated to travel
- * **34** industry awards for our apps (2014 - Present)

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The Travelport Digital logo, featuring the words "Travelport Digital" in a blue sans-serif font followed by a stylized blue and green icon of three overlapping shapes representing wings or a globe. Below the logo is the tagline "Redefining travel commerce" in a smaller blue font.The Travelport Digital logo and tagline are displayed on a white, three-dimensional podium-like structure. The logo consists of the words "Travelport Digital" in blue, followed by the stylized wing icon in blue and green. Below the logo is the tagline "Redefining travel commerce" in a smaller blue font.