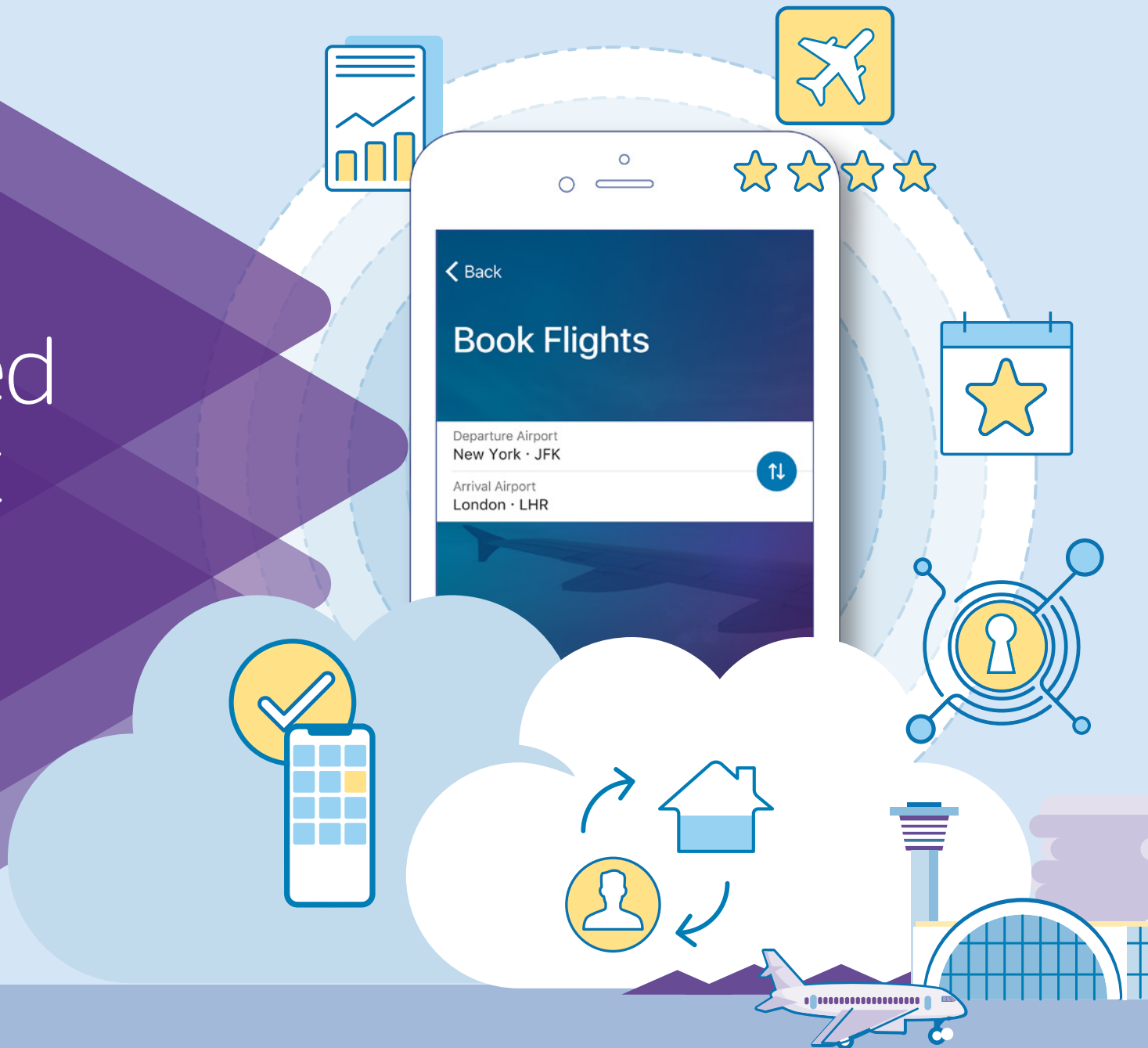


Travelport Digital 

Getting started with your first airline app



Introduction

If you or your airline has never built or launched an app, there are undoubtedly going to be many questions floating around your head. How much will it cost, how long will it take, who will build it, will it be a success? This guide is designed to help you answer those questions and examine the various options that are available today.

Your starting point is to uncover the truth, to better understand the strategic importance of mobile and how airlines use it to increase bookings, drive ancillary sales and reduce operational costs. With this insight you'll be armed with all the data you need to convince your board to invest in a new mobile app and get started with selecting the right vendor or building a team in-house.

It's easy to build an app but it's very difficult to get it right. As such, we'll examine when to go in-house or outsource the development and how to choose the right people or partners for success. Next, we'll help you to chart the course in building all the fundamental features you'll need to have in place, with an eye on the overall mobile ecosystem, so you can add new developments or integrations in future.

With your new app almost there, you'll need to stay focused on your launch plan. We'll help you determine the metrics, KPI's and what a fully integrated marketing campaign should look like. By following this proven path to success you'll have downloads booming, social media buzzing and a surge of bookings through your mobile channel. Plus, beyond the hype surrounding the launch, we aim to help you plan for continued growth and success beyond the first few months.

We understand that no two businesses are the same, but, having worked with dozens of carriers to make their apps a success we feel this flexible guide and the practical insights within can be adopted by any airline, particularly those who have never had an app or whose mobile strategy is struggling.

So let's get started, to help you get started with your first airline app..

Content

Why mobile?

- 5 The shifting mobile landscape
- 7 Comparing mobile apps and web
- 8 The key benefits of going mobile

01

Key functionality

- 25 Getting the basics right
- 27 Technology integrations

04

In-house or outsource?

- 14 Outsource v in-house
- 15 Pros and cons
- 18 Choosing the right vendor

02

Launch planning

- 29 The launch plan
- 30 App launch timeline

05

App success

- 21 Building a team for success

03

Metrics

- 40 Metrics for success

06



Why mobile?



Why mobile



In-house or outsource



App success



Key functionality



Launch planning



Metrics

01

The shifting mobile landscape

To give your first app project some context, it's important we take a look at how we got to where we are today. Just over a decade ago, the airline commerce landscape was increasingly growing via the desktop channel. Bookings were shifting from traditional and agency channels towards a steady growth in online.

However, the smartphone market was still in its infancy, with less than 3% of the market using one, and brands such as Nokia and Blackberry still at the top. Then something monumental happened. The iPhone was launched in 2007 and twelve months later Apple introduced the App Store. This changed everything.

The 11 years since the launch of the iPhone has seen incredible change in the travel industry. Air travel has effectively doubled since 2007, and there are now over 4 billion air travelers each year. Airlines have responded with a huge investment in their mobile channels to drive additional revenues and decrease operational costs. For example, three-quarters of global airlines now offer mobile check-in today

- this has coincided with a growth of mobile check-ins from 1% in 2010, to 20+% of all online check-ins in 2018. And airline consumer behaviour has simultaneously responded to this technological investment. Today 40% of bookings are made via mobile in the U.S.

So, what's on the horizon for mobile in the travel ecosystem? Well, most data-points point to accelerated and continued growth. The rise of the millennial traveler, who is highly adept at embracing and using apps and mobile, increased customer expectation and a sharper consumer savviness has provided a potent environment for mobile and the digital landscape to flourish, resulting in a transformation of the travel industry.

It's all very good listing the macro impact of mobile apps, but how does this affect airlines beyond booking and check-in? For airlines, mobile plays a pivotal role because it is the only device your consumers have by their side when searching and booking travel, as they go through the airport, when they're at destination and when they complete their return leg.

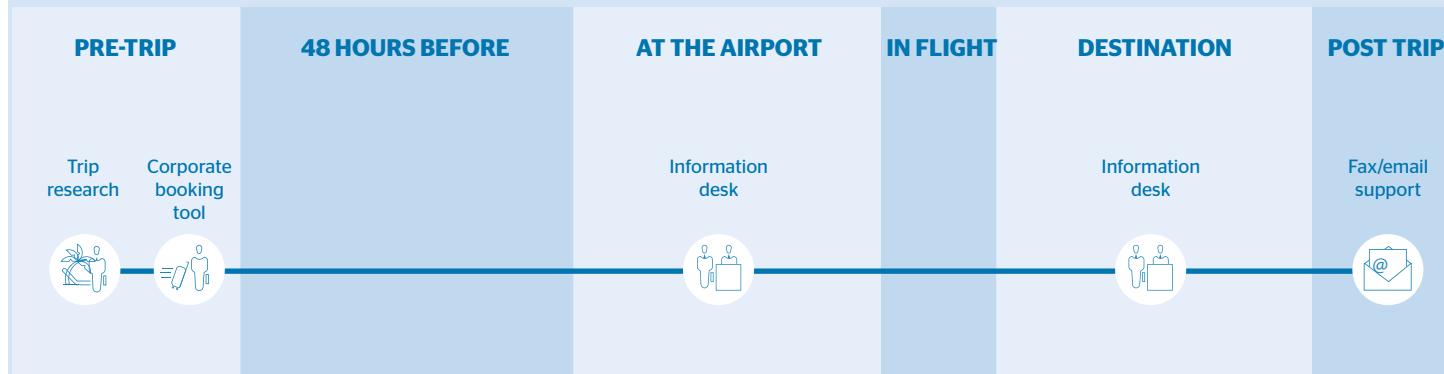
Without a mobile app your airline has a limited presence in the end-to-end journey. Your passenger goes to your website and books a flight, receives an email, prints a boarding pass or checks-in at the airport. In a world dominated by

digital, personalized experiences, this older model of travel commerce can appear commoditized and crude; focused on the destination and one off transactions. Without an app, your airline has very little opportunity to engage with your travelers throughout the travel experience. The evolution of mobile technology has changed that however.

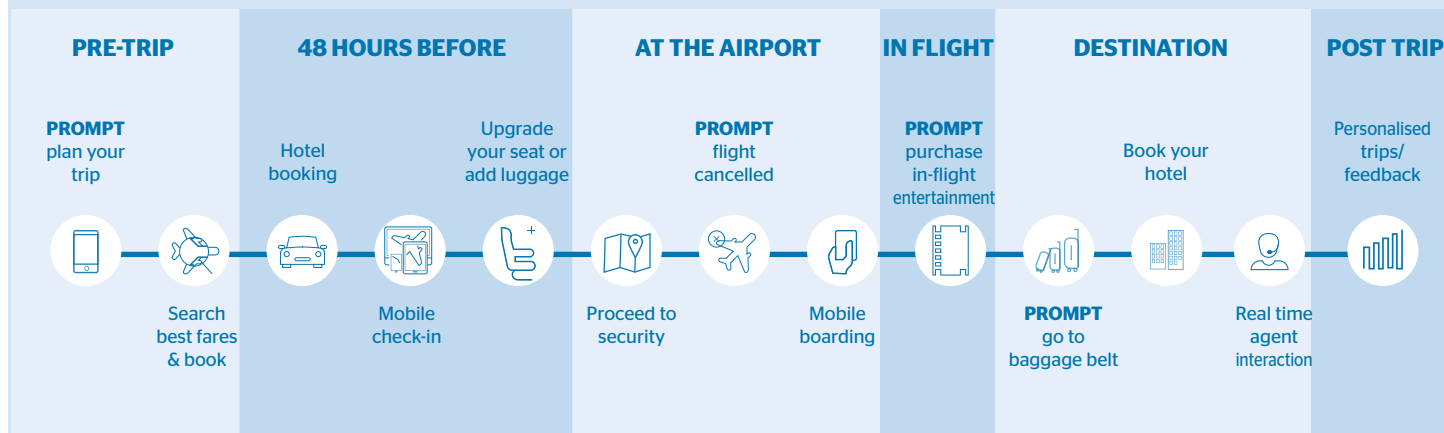
Picture your airline now, post the launch of its new (and successful!) app. You can send a contextual push notification to your user about a sale on a route they love. With an optimised booking flow, they can book in seconds via their saved payment details on Apple Wallet. As they get closer to the departure you can offer a variety of ancillary options including airport travel, baggage, and seat upgrades. You can prompt them to check-in via the mobile app, saving the cost for your staff doing it at the airport. If there's a delay or cancellation you can let them know about the changes and improve their experience. How about offering airport lounge-access, free wifi, food menus, or in-flight entertainment? How about at-destination guides? How about changes at destination? Easy. Seamless. Contextual. Personal. All via a mobile app.

At this point you might say, 'I can do all via desktop, email or my responsive website'. And yes, you can do some of this (more on that later). However what you lack is the UX, the contextual, personalized nature and timing of mobile and its effectiveness. For example, email click-through rates in travel are just 2%! Push notifications via mobile apps deliver at least seven times the CTR.

Bringing you from **limited** engagement...



...to **multiple touchpoints** for engagement



Comparing mobile apps and web

Up until recently 'mobile' really meant either mobile apps, found in places like the App Store, or mobile web, accessible via URLs. What we see now is that travelers are increasingly turning to the app experience, rather than mobile web, to search and book flights and accommodation.

A recent global study we carried out showed that 58% of people prefer apps to search for flights and 53% preferred apps to find accommodation. We found that consumers want a lightning-fast mobile experience, which they feel this is best delivered through apps. Travelers also value the additional functionality and features that native platforms bring.

“66% of travelers currently have a travel app installed on their smartphone and of those 69% use them on a regular basis”

Travel brands that can match their app experience to consumer expectations will drive more bookings, add more ancillaries and create longer-term value. And those travel brands that don't deliver will suffer through online cart-abandonment, as well a pummeling on social media and app store ratings.

Rather than showing signs of 'app fatigue' now seen in other industries, travel apps are continuing their growth in downloads and monthly active users. 82% of travelers we questioned said they will be downloading the same number or more travel apps than they did the previous year.

Let's take a look in more detail at the benefits having a mobile app can bring to an airline, and indeed the challenges airlines face that mobile can help solve.

88%

of activity on smartphones and tablets originates from apps

27%

Order values on apps are on average worth 27% more than desktop

\$94bn

of travel bookings are expected to come from mobile by 2019

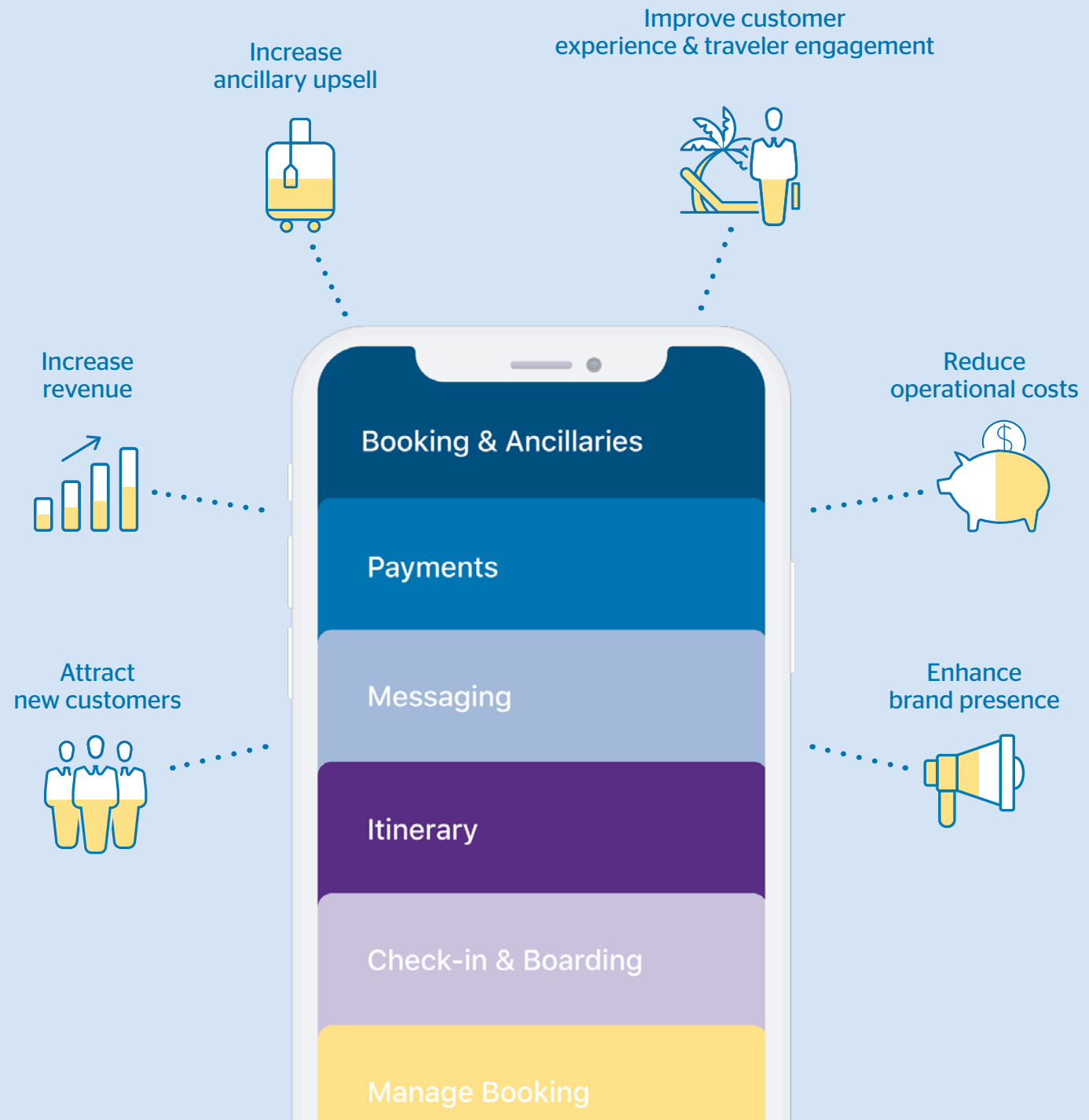
The key benefits of going mobile

Travel brands that can match their app experience to consumer expectations can realise significant benefits, so let's take a look at why an airline should invest in mobile.

A mobile app can improve customer experience and traveler engagement

Apps can help improve your customers experience by giving them a frictionless mobile experience through which they can make purchases, access promotions and get specialised customer support. Mobile also enables travelers to stay in control and manage their own travel experience, such as purchasing seats, extra leg room or wifi, without having to reach out to a customer service agent. Chat options also allow quick and easy access to any questions they may have.

It's important to note that it's essential that your app is as intuitive and usable as possible, usability cannot be underestimated in terms of app stickiness and associated revenue. The better your app is the higher



your app store ratings will be, another element that needs careful consideration. These ratings are not simply a vanity metric - they are a key driver for mobile revenue. Boosting an average star rating from a 2 or 3-star rating to a 4-star has been shown to more than double downloads.

Increase ancillary upsell through mobile

There are many moments and opportunities for engagement along the travel journey. Choosing the moments of engagement wisely are a precursor to a successful airline ancillary strategy. Timing and context is everything as you can personalize the experience. This is where mobile really comes into its own.

Push notifications can be used for ancillary upsell through all stages of the end-to-end customer journey. They can be automated based on your passengers location or how they interact with your app - something that cannot be done on desktop.

The more relevant and personalized the deals, the more likely customers are to buy them. Pre-trip ancillary purchases such as seats, wifi and meals can be sold, at the airport there is opportunity to upsell security passes

and lounges whilst 'in destination' ground transport, events, tours and activities can be bolted on.

A mobile app helps retain loyal customers

Mobile, being location-aware gives airlines the ability to engage customers throughout their entire trip. With this information you can truly personalize the customer experience by providing immediate, personal, reliable information to keep them coming back. You can also make booking a trip easy with saved searches, bringing customers right back to where they left off. By combining these with mobile payment technologies booking on mobile has never been easier.

There are long term revenue gains from acknowledging customer loyalty; people are more inclined to return to the same app when they know their loyalty is recognized with benefits for sticking around. So if your travel brand has a loyalty program in place, you will want to ensure that it's fully integrated into the native app as users overwhelmingly prefer to use in-app loyalty functionality. By having this one integrated feature you will increase repeat usage of the app and help drive more bookings.

\$82.2bn

Airline ancillary revenue projected to be \$82.2 billion worldwide in 2017

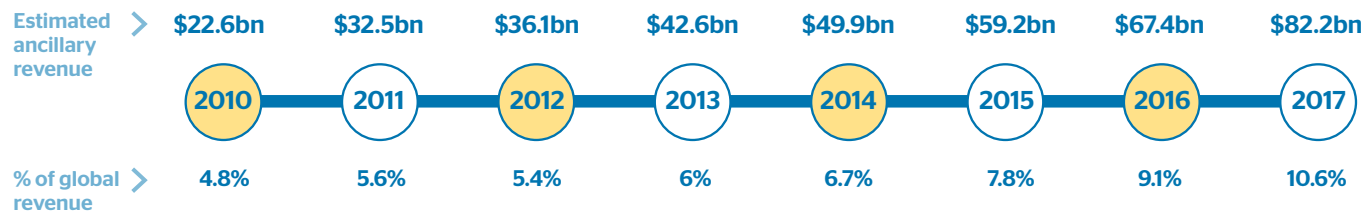
46%

The top 10 airlines in the world earn up to 46% of total revenues from ancillaries

60%

of airline customers prefer to access loyalty programs via an app

Worldwide estimate of ancillary revenue



Source: Ancillary revenue statistics applied by IdeaWorksCompany to annual airline revenue results

A mobile app can reduce operational costs

Self-serve features such as mobile search, booking, check-in, boarding, passport scanning, day of travel assistance and real-time flight alerts enable airlines to reduce customer support costs, manage IROPs more effectively and reduce late passenger arrivals.

Engaging directly with the traveler from within an app can help airlines to reduce the volume of customer service calls, increase the average saving per check-in and reduce the costs for managing IROPs. By enabling customers to increasingly self serve, customer service can be scaled at a much lower overhead.

A mobile app can increase revenue

Mobile offers the potential to drive revenue in ways that aren't possible via other channels, with apps leading the way. An average of €111 (\$127) is spent in-app, versus €87 (\$100) on desktop and €79 (\$91) on mobile web.

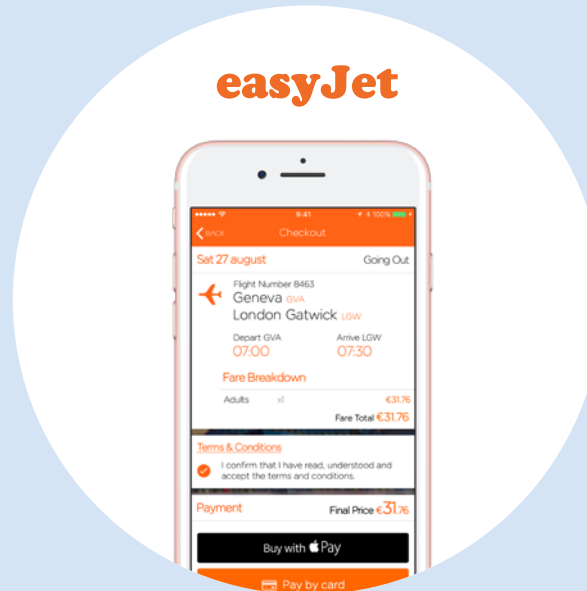
Mobile provides the easiest option for booking flights and optimizing precious upsells, cross sells, airport retailing and in destination opportunities. With mobile there are more meaningful touchpoints to increase passenger yield, encourage repeat business and increase customer lifetime value. With the right mobile app revenue strategy in place the ROI can be extremely profitable.

“Etihad Airways drove \$30M in revenue through their iOS app within first 6 months of launch”

easyJet case study

easyJet has created new revenue streams through mobile, with their app experience driving bookings through push notifications, timely ancillary upsell and brilliant UX.

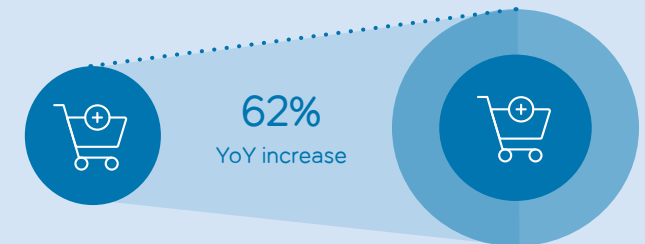
It's an app that people love.



£600m

revenue driven
by easyjet's mobile app*

Post booking ancillary revenue
through mobile**



“We launched the app with a sense of excitement and trepidation. Five years on, the app has been central to how customers interact with us and we're delighted to have pioneered a number of value adding industry firsts that our customers really appreciate”



James Millett
Director of Marketing,
Digital & Brand, easyJet

Source: *corporate.easyjet.com **corporate.easyjet.com (June-Aug YoY comparison)

A mobile app helps enhance your airline's brand presence

A mobile presence enables airlines to extend their reach beyond just desktop, ensuring a consistent brand experience across all digital touchpoints. Developing your own branded app gives you the opportunity to accurately reflect your airlines brand identity and own the digital brand experience.

It also opens up new opportunities to establish strong brand connections directly with the traveler leading to greater engagement, improved customer satisfaction and stronger brand recognition.

Some airlines have gone even further than just 'having an app' - KLM allow their passengers to receive their booking confirmation, check-in notification, boarding pass and flight status updates via Facebook Messenger. Another great example is Singapore Airlines, who were the first airline in the world to integrate Panasonic Avionics in-flight entertainment system in their travel app; enabling their customers to personalize their IFE service.

To unlock all the possibilities of mobile travel, brands need to do more than just 'have an app', they need to actively work to drive engagement and improve conversion rates. Those who want to leverage mobile to its full potential must develop an understanding of a new set of strategies, tactics, analytics and data points that underpin it. But more on that later.

A mobile app helps attract new customers

As we know millennials are a demographic that cannot be ignored. In the US alone they make up circa 85 million people, making their potential purchasing power huge. They are nearing their peak for spending and traveling, and perhaps more importantly, they have a key influence on travel decisions for older generations. *"This is the first time we've seen one generation affect another's purchasing decisions,"* says Jeff Fromm, author of Marketing to Millennials.

For many millennials if your brand does not have a mobile presence, they simply won't engage. They have grown up with mobile only companies such as Uber, Lyft and Airbnb, and communications platforms like WhatsApp and Snapchat, all of whom have helped to fundamentally change how we socialize, communicate and do business. Brands that embrace mobile benefit from increased demand in addition to the opportunities that mobile brings, that simply aren't available on any other channel.

"By 2018, millennials will have the most spending power of any generation"

\$3.50

Average saving per each self service check-in

\$43.4bn

Estimated worth of mobile location-based services in 2019.

\$200bn

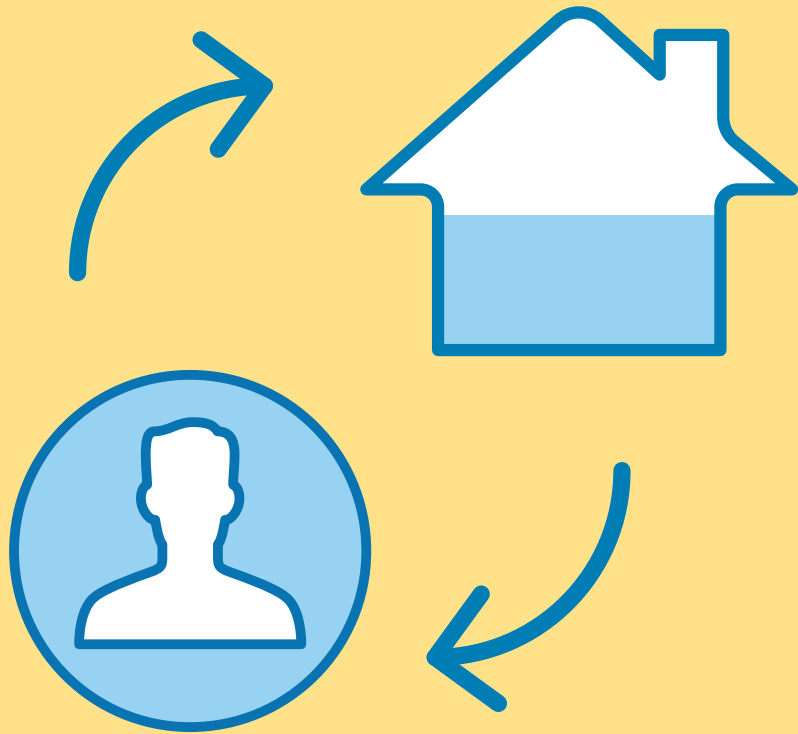
This year it is estimated that millennials in the U.S. alone will be spending \$200 billion.

“I think we could have done more on mobile, and we tried to move faster on mobile. The trend that we see there is incredible. If I had my time again, I would have doubled our efforts in this area”

Kenny Jacobs
CMO, Ryanair

 **RYANAIR**





In-house or outsource?



Why mobile



In-house or outsource



App success



Key functionality



Launch planning



Metrics

02

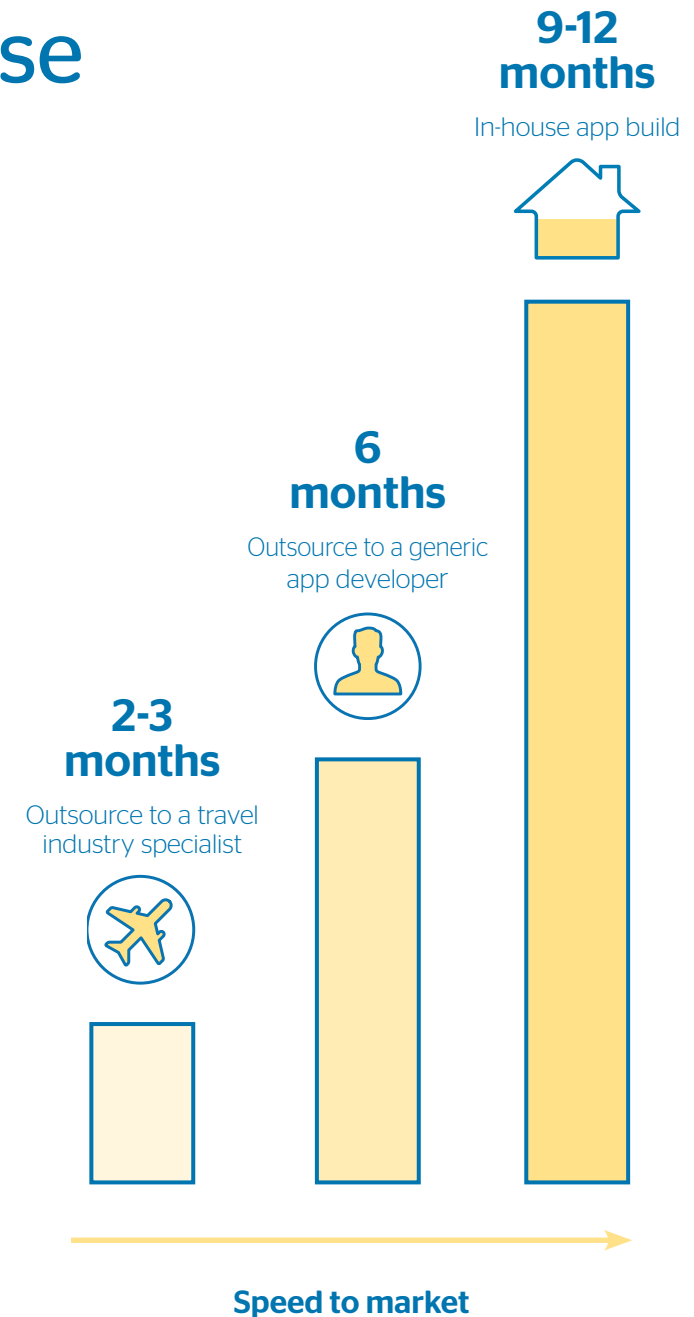
The big question – outsource v in-house

When getting started with a mobile app one of the first questions that comes to mind is – who will design and develop our app? Do you outsource the app development or keep it all in-house?

It's a big decision for any airline to make and as the saying goes 'there are two sides to every story'. There are many things to take into consideration such as cost, expertise and speed to market.

On the next page we evaluate the pros and cons of each approach to provide you with a summary to help you make that decision a bit easier.

“Building a mobile app with an in-house team can be 3 times more expensive than outsourcing to a dedicated mobile travel partner”



In-house



Pros

- ✓ **Aligning to your business requirements**
No one understands your business objectives better than your own team
- ✓ **Industry knowledge**
In-depth understanding of your industry, bypassing any learning curve
- ✓ **Project management**
Greater control and simplified sign-off process
- ✓ **Flexibility and differentiation**
Flexibility to make changes to scope
- ✓ **Confidentiality**
De-risk the leakage of any sensitive or confidential company information
- ✓ **Technology**
You have control of the technology strategy to align with wider business goals

Cons

- ✗ **Expertise**
Gaps in knowledge on mobile specific expertise can lead to slow development
- ✗ **Adaptability**
Keeping up to speed with new technology and innovations which can cause a strain on development time
- ✗ **Resource**
Expense of resource investment with the threat of attrition
- ✗ **Speed and cost**
It can take up to 3 times longer to develop an app in-house with the added cost of building an internal mobile team
- ✗ **Software delivery**
Risk of partial or complete failure as well as maintenance of increasingly large code base

Outsource



Pros

- ✓ **Resource efficiency**
Flexibility and cost efficiency of resources while outsourcing the risk of employee turnover
- ✓ **Maintenance & support**
Keep up to speed with new innovations whilst benefiting from 24/7 support
- ✓ **Quality & control**
Control what is being produced whilst being guided by experts
- ✓ **Domain expertise**
Access the extensive experience and successful track record of an industry specialist resulting in a more cost effective, superior app
- ✓ **Speed to market**
Hit the ground running with a team who is laser focused on your app

Cons

- ✗ **Confidentiality**
Endanger data privacy with risk of leakage of confidential information
- ✗ **Flexibility**
Difficulty changing the scope of project, resulting in extra expense or delay
- ✗ **Expectations**
Risk of what is being delivered being different to expectations
- ✗ **Control**
Lack of control over development process

In-house



Pros

Aligning to your business requirements

- No one understands your brand, business goals, app vision, customer needs and competitor landscape better than your own team.

Industry knowledge

- Living and breathing your business every day gives you an in-depth understanding of your industry, leapfrogging any learning curve a third party supplier may need to go through.

Project management

- Project is entirely managed in-house so you have greater control.
- Sign off process can also be quicker if everyone is in the same location.

Flexibility and differentiation

- Build what you want.
- If you decide to change the course of the app project, there is greater flexibility (and potentially less cost implications) when developing in-house.

Confidentiality

- As the project will be handled internally no confidential or sensitive information is handed over to a third party supplier.

Technology

- You have control of the technology strategy, ensuring it's aligned with wider business goals.



Cons

Speed to market

- It can take up to 3 times longer to develop an app in-house rather than outsourcing
- According to research by Outsystems 40% of IT professionals said that it took between 6 months to over a year to deliver a finished app
- With an industry expert you can go live with a robust mobile app within 3 months.

Expertise

- Mobile and mobile app development is different so very specific expertise is required such as developers and designers that are versed on mobile development, usability, user experience and UI.
- Gaps in knowledge can lead to slow development.

Resources

- People investment can take time and money with the project lasting three times longer when developing a mobile app in-house.
- Threat of attrition once skills have been honed in-house.
- The opportunity cost of deploying a team on a mobile project vs working on other priorities internally.

Adaptability

- Mobile is constantly evolving and changing, the team needs to keep up to speed with new technology and innovations which could cause a strain on development time.

Software delivery

- Risk of partial or complete failure.
- Expanding maintenance of increasingly large code base and legacy code.

Cost

- Building an in-house team can be expensive. You need to ensure you hire the right people with mobile specific skills. Additional costs of new hires also need to be taken into consideration; on-boarding, hardware, software and time off (vacation, illness etc).
- Overall the cost of the project can be up to \$2 million, with further cost implications to maintain and upgrade the app as well as maintaining the in-house team.
- Systems can be expensive to implement and must work with all systems already in place

Integrations and partnerships

- It can be difficult to dedicate the resource in-house to handle integrations or partnerships. A partner can already have relationships in place or integrations done with other customers.

Outsource



Pros

Experience

- Benefit from the experience a mobile partner can bring in terms of design, development and usability.

Domain expertise

- Gain from the track record, experience and expertise a partner brings from working with other industry brands, truly understanding the nuances.
- Marketing is imperative when launching an app and driving continuous downloads and usage. Working with a partner that can bring best practice mobile marketing techniques can really help your app succeed.
- Broader industry knowledge (if you select a travel mobile specialist) that can keep an eye on market and user trends.

Accelerated speed to market

- An accomplished partner has the teams, experience and expertise in place to hit the ground running; rapidly shortening the time it takes in getting your app to market.
- Your app could be live within 12 weeks rather than 12 months with a dedicated industry specialist mobile partner.

Value add

- Benefit from other areas of support your partner may be able to give you such as help submitting to the app stores, how to market your app and other consulting specific to your industry.

Resource efficiency

- There is greater flexibility of resources with a partner; ramping up and ramping down on demand without hiring and organisational impact, as well as no outlay in terms of on-boarding, vacation time etc.

Laser focus

- While in-house teams can get caught up in every day demands, your app will be the key focus for your mobile partner.

Lower risk

- A partner understands how to manage and deliver mobile software, with a tried and tested deployment and QA process specifically for mobile applications.
- Outsource the risk of employee turnover.

Quality

- Your testimonial is extremely important to a partner, therefore they want to produce the highest quality work as word of mouth is a powerful tool.
- You buy into the scalability of an app with a partner and benefit from the quality of work that has been done for other brands similar to yours.

Maintenance

- Once an app is launched it needs to be maintained and updated with new features and functionality, it's an ongoing project keeping it up-to-date. A good partner will keep on top of all new innovations on your behalf.

Support

- Most partners will offer 24/7 support should there be any issues with your app. Dedicating this time can be tricky when supporting in-house.

Control

- While your app development might be outsourced, you still have control over what is being produced, with the added benefit of being guided by experts.



Cons

Confidentiality

- When outsourcing there is always an element of risk when it comes to confidential information. Third parties often need access to your back systems. This risk can be easily mitigated by the signing of an NDA.

Expectations

- When outsourcing there can be a difference in expectations from what is briefed to what is executed on. Regular communications between both parties as well as clear documentation and detailed product description can alleviate this.

Flexibility

- Should requirements change there can be difficulty in making changes to the project, especially if a supplier is operating a waterfall rather than agile approach to development (a fixed scope rather than shorter 'sprints' of development), which can be expensive and result in delays.

Control

- When outsourcing you always have to relinquish some form of control but regular, robust communication and clear project description and plans can ensure that the control still remains in the hands of the client.

Choosing the right vendor

If you have decided to outsource your app development it's important to choose the right vendor. One who not only can 'build an app' but has the domain expertise to build one specific to your industry. It's imperative that they have a proven track record within the travel industry, know how to build iOS and Android and will guide you through the best practice development.

How do you go about selecting a mobile partner who not only responds to your business needs but truly understands them? Here are some key questions you should ask to help you gauge the best potential supplier:

Do they have expertise in the travel industry?

Travel industry mobile solutions are not static or self-contained; they have to talk to and integrate with third-

parties and complex systems, such as GDS. You should be confident in your mobile partner's knowledge and understanding of your business from previous experience and in their ability to incorporate industry-specific tools - APIs, and integrations such as flight status, passenger tracking, payment and scanning solutions - into your mobile platform. The ultimate goal should be a mobile offering that manages technical integration while delivering a user experience that is exceptional (rather than merely functional).

Do they have a reputation for delivering successful travel apps

Factors like travel industry specific experience, industry reputation, and app store ratings of previous work are important when selecting a mobile partner. It is also useful to look at how your mobile partner is perceived by its industry peers. Have they won any awards of note for mobile innovation or a brilliant smartphone app?

Can they deliver, not just on app development, but also on strategy, design and UX?

Some technology businesses can't offer the full spectrum of services required to create a highly successful mobile offering that includes user experience design/user interface design, coding, testing, launch, mobile marketing support, app store optimization guidance and marketing strategy.

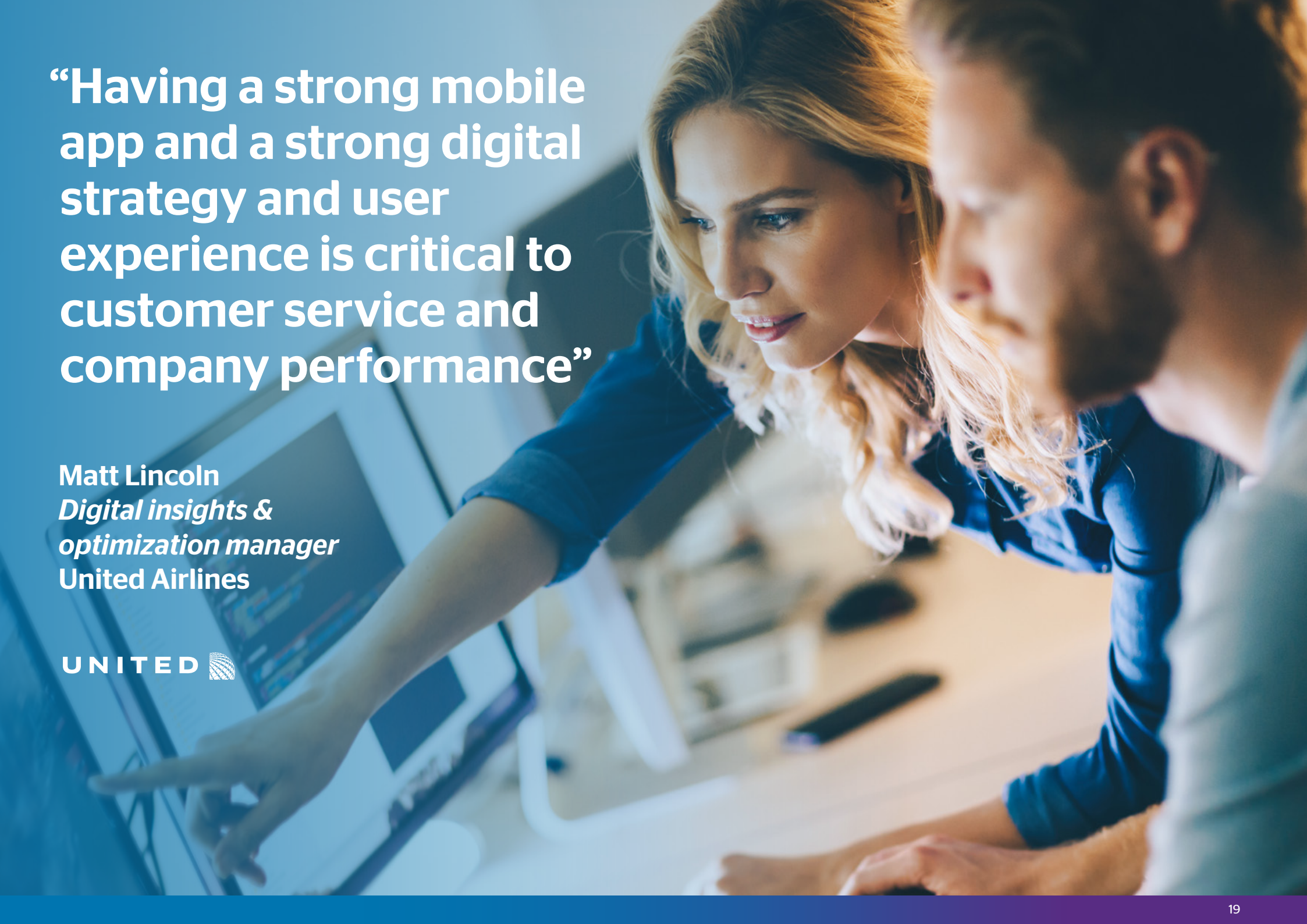
What level of support can you demand from your mobile partner?

Lack of support when things go wrong is a major pain

point for digital consumers who have come to rely heavily on their personal devices for travel support and information. Does your mobile partner offer a 24-hour support resource to fix problems as and when they arise? Can they deliver a great app within a strict time frame? Speed to market is vital in order to keep on top of a rapidly changing mobile travel landscape. If you have a stringent deadline that you need to adhere to, you need a company that will deliver on your expectations within the required timeframe.

Can your mobile partner support app launch to drive downloads and usage?

Marketing is very often a neglected and underestimated component of app development and delivery timeline. Your mobile partner should have a proven marketing strategy that will help launch your app, ensuring optimization techniques are in place for visibility in the app store.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue shirt, is pointing at a laptop screen. A man with a beard, wearing a light blue shirt, is looking at the screen. They are in a meeting setting with other laptops and papers on the desk.

“Having a strong mobile app and a strong digital strategy and user experience is critical to customer service and company performance”

Matt Lincoln
Digital insights & optimization manager
United Airlines

UNITED 



App success



Why mobile



In-house or outsource



App success



Key functionality



Launch planning



Metrics

03

Building a team for success

When getting started with your first airline app getting the right team in place is critical to ensuring its success. Regardless of whether you decide to build the app in house or outsource the development an airline needs to build a team to get behind the project, however size of the team will vary.

Before the project is even signed-off there needs to be support across the business, from the board level down, so that the entire company knows the importance of mobile to the future success of the business. Investing in mobile is not a one off “build it and it will be done” approach. It’s a project that needs continuous investment in both time and effort to get it right.

“90% of travel brands said that having a mobile strategy is ‘critical’ or ‘very important’ to the future success of their organization”

To kick-start a mobile project there are a number of key stakeholders who are involved in getting the project signed off:

- **Senior leadership team**
- **CTO/IT lead**
- **eCommerce/Digital**
- **Procurement**

Once the project has internal sign-off there are a number of people across the business who are integral to the success of an app. Resource requirements change in phases over the lifecycle of a project but can be broken down into phases:

- **Initiation & product demonstration:**
 - eCommerce/Digital
 - Mobile Technology Specialist
- **Contract negotiations & commercial approval**
 - CEO/CTO
 - eCommerce/Digital
- **Integration & app build**
 - Mobile Technology Specialist
 - eCommerce/Digital

- App launch

- Marketing - pre launch and launch plan

- Ongoing - live app

- eCommerce/Digital input for any future feature roadmap requests
- Marketing input for any sales or push notification campaigns

The full extent of the mobile team is dependent on whether you decide to go in-house or outsource to a mobile partner. In-house your team will consist of 20+ people, with that resource drastically reduced to 4 key people when you outsource. Let's take a look at how each of these teams break down.

In-house

When setting up an internal mobile team there are a number of key skill sets that need to be employed, requiring a substantial investment from an airline beyond the typical team. It can take a while to get the team ramped up so time needs to be taken into consideration when building out the internal team.

“Outsourcing to a travel industry mobile partner requires a resource of 3-4 people, a significant resource reduction compared to a 20+ in-house team”

The team structure would require:

- 1 Team lead
- 2-3 iOS developers
- 2-3 Android developers
- 2-3 Backend server engineers
- 2 QA testers
- 1 Automation engineer
- 2 Architects to build an adapter to the PSS systems
- 1 UI designer
- 1 UX designer
- 1 Product owner
- 1 Project manager
- 1 Marketing manager
- 1 Customer experience/ loyalty manager

The average salary* for a mobile team is as follows:

- Tech team lead: \$110,263
- Mobile developer: \$106,772
- Android developer: \$118,176
- iOS developer: \$115,285
- Backend server engineer: \$103,984
- QA tester: \$69,862
- Automation engineer: \$93,111
- Architects: \$123,257
- UI designer: \$88,389
- UX designer: \$96,384
- Product owner: \$101,376
- Project manager: \$100,743

**indeed.com U.S. salary review 2017*

Depending on the required speed-to-market the team can be increased or decreased accordingly. It's important to bear in mind however that the launch is just the start of your app build, team requirements need to also factor in future features as well as additional resource needed from other key teams across the business such as customer experience/loyalty and marketing for the strategic launch.

The cost of building out an internal mobile team could be in the range of \$1.5 - 2 million.

Outsource

While there are different outsourcing options for airlines there is real value in outsourcing to a dedicated travel industry partner. One of the biggest benefits is the significant reduction in resource required as the solution is ready made for the airline industry.

Furthermore a specialist partner will understand the complexities of the business logic in the PSS, are able to roll out industry specific tools, APIs and integrations such as flight status and can help with launch strategy, especially when it comes to mobile marketing and optimization techniques for app store visibility.

Once the decision has been made from the C-Level/board down the core headcount to run a mobile project with a dedicated industry partner is typically only 3-4 people, a significant reduction in resource compared to the 20+ people in-house team.

The resource requirement needed from an airline perspective when outsourcing mobile app development includes:

- Mobile technology specialist

- Ensure smooth integration with back-end systems and understand the technicalities when it comes to implementing a mobile app.

- Marketing

- Marketing is integral to the success of your app, if people don't know about it they won't be able to download and use it. Marketing support doesn't start with the launch of an app and end there, it needs to be an ongoing strategy pre, during and post launch. To mitigate against attrition there needs to be an ongoing plan to acquire and engage customers.
- An industry specialist can assist in your marketing efforts, giving you a mobile app marketing blueprint to ensure success

- eCommerce/Digital

- The eCommerce or Digital function often leads the requirements and manages the project management of the app build. They ensure the app is delivered on time and with all the required product features and functionality.



Key functionality



Why mobile



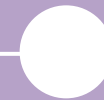
In-house or outsource



App success



Key functionality



Launch planning



Metrics

04

Getting the basics right

When launching your first mobile app it's important to get the basics right and ensure that it ties back to your mobile strategy. These core features and functionality will help drive revenue, reduce operating costs, improve customer experience and justify the ROI in investing in mobile.

At a minimum your airline app should incorporate the following features and functionality:

- **Flight search and booking**

- Improve conversions and reduce cart abandonment with a seamless search and booking experience

- **Flight check-in**

- Mobile check-in allows travelers to avoid any queues at the airport by simply checking in when it suits them on their phone

- **Mobile boarding pass**

- Allow travelers to download their boarding pass to their phone. Ensure it is supported for both iOS and

Android and that Apple Wallet is also supported to allow easy access at any time

- **Flight status and IROPs notifications**

- Keep travelers informed by delivering real-time flight alerts including departures, delays, cancellations and gate changes. It's important to ensure people are in the right place at the right time

- **Ancillary upsell**

- Generate ancillary revenue by using ancillary capabilities such as seat selection and paid bags during the check-in flow

- **Real time marketing messages**

- Deliver broadcast marketing communications pre, during and post flight via push notifications

- **Payment options**

- Reduce any friction in the booking flow by providing seamless payment options

- **Loyalty features**

- Ensure your travelers are able to log-in to their loyalty profile to review their miles/points

- Analytics and reporting

- Generate key insights on app usage, acquisition, audience type and behaviors
- Generate commercially orientated reporting to determine how your data can be leveraged to improve your business and deliver actionable user intelligence

In addition to getting the key functionality right, it's important to delight your customers with user-centric design leveraging OS technology for speedy, seamless usage.

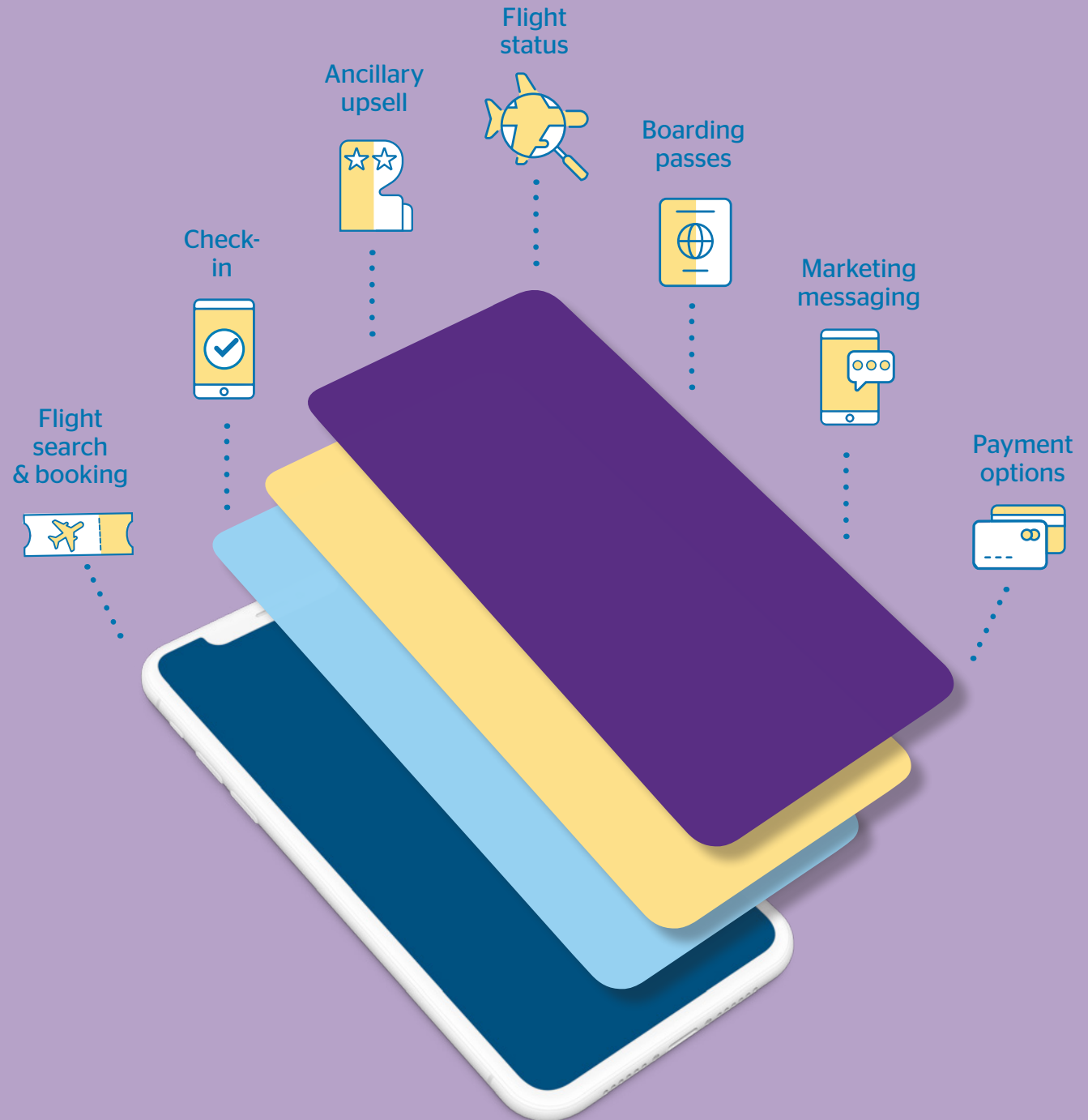
The importance of good UX and UI cannot be underestimated, every tap and click needs to deliver a slick experience to avoid any user frustration.

- Technology integrations

- Working with a good third party supplier can help your travel brand to get seamless integration with some of the biggest partners in the world.

On the following page we've listed sample areas of integration that mobile travel vendors typically integrate with within their overall platform ecosystem.

It is worth noting that if you wish to expand your apps capabilities in future you may wish to consider a specialist mobile travel vendor with existing partnership agreements, or a platform that works with third party systems.



Technology integrations



Friction removers

Leverage integrations that make your app as usable and useful as possible throughout the passenger journey. e.g. Google Maps, Jumio, Flightradar24



Optimize Performance

Test, measure and optimise your apps performance on an ongoing basis. e.g. Apptimize, Google Analytics, Firebase



PSS

Work with a provider that can easily integrate with any PSS



Payment service providers

Provide flexible payment options for maximum convenience and higher conversion e.g. Apple Pay, Android Pay, Google Pay



Fare shopping engines

Enable digital retail across mobile channels
- Google ITA, Vayant, Travelport



Ground Transport

Transport integrations provide additional revenue streams while enhancing the passenger experience.
- Mobacar, Mozio, Uber



In-destination

Maximise revenue potential by providing targeted tours and activity suggestions to your passengers.
- Viator, GetYourGuide, Raleigh & Drake



On-board

On-board provides an opportunity to enrich the IFE experience while maximising retail opportunities
- Panasonic, Guestlogix, RetailInMotion



In-airport

Add value to the airport experience while maximising retail revenue potential - Collinson, Flio



Launch planning



05

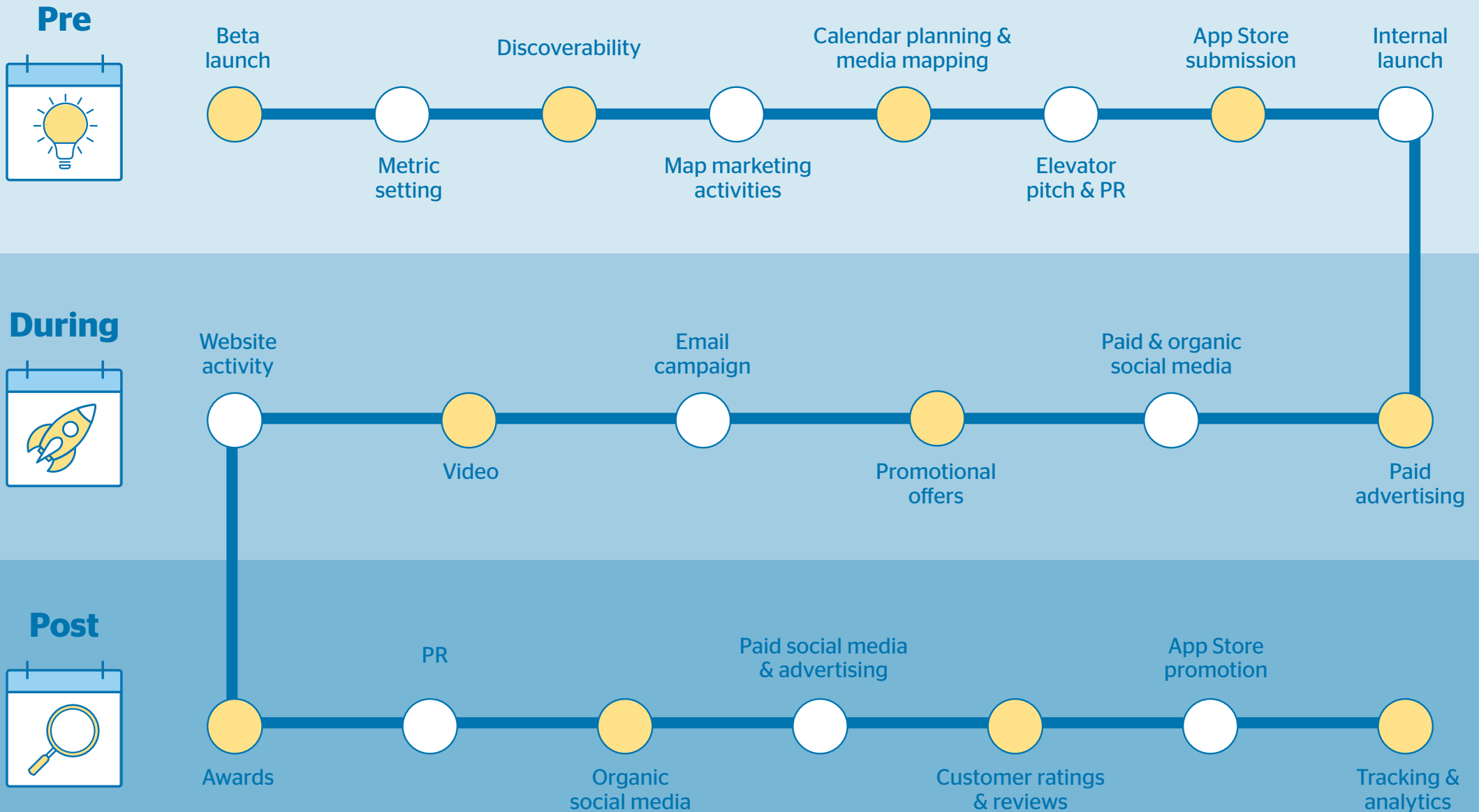
The launch plan

So, your stakeholders are convinced, you've decided on in-house or outsourcing, you've even mapped out the functionality for version 1.0 to 1.5. Now it's just a case of "build it and they will come". Not quite...

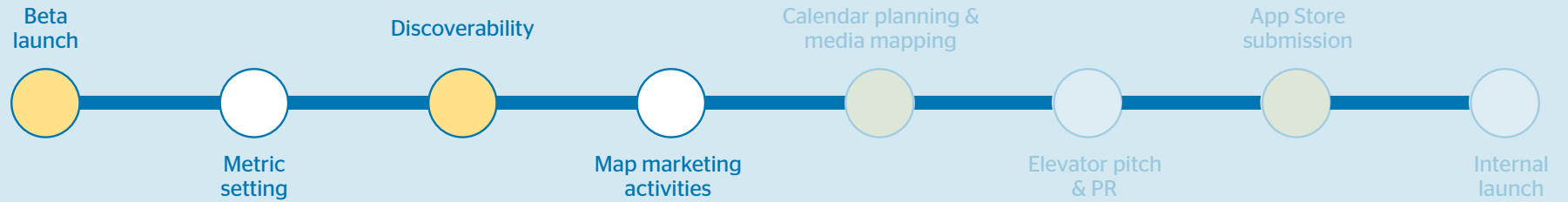
With an app market of over 6.5 million apps and 1,000 new apps being released every single day it's vital that your app doesn't fall at the first and possibly the biggest hurdle, the launch itself.

However, before you create an explosive 'big bang' day one campaign don't forget that while an app launch may be big hurdle, it's not the only one when it comes to making your app a success. Too many travel brands create a single peaked mountain of downloads that then tails off into a set of minor speed bumps for the rest of its mobile shelf life. If you want a successful app, then think pre, during and post launch when planning your strategy or that beautifully developed and functionality rich app will just become a faceless number 6,567,897 on the app stores.

App launch timeline



Pre



As with every launch planning is key, but remember the planning process doesn't start at day one of your app launch, or even a week before. It needs to be a coordinated effort that starts at least three months prior to launch so that you can gain real traction in terms of download and usage.

Here is a run down of what you need to do before your app is actually launched.

Test

It's vital that you get your app into the hands of your users (both internally and ideally externally) as soon as possible before launch so they can test it for you and keep you up-to-date on any glitches or bugs in your app. Test Flight, Fabric, Google Groups; the choices for testing your app with real actual users are rich and varied.

Research

(Only required for in-house app development as a good mobile partner will complete this for you)

Conduct user testing sessions. This will ensure that you haven't made assumptions in the design phase about what your customers want. This will help keep your solutions relevant, useful and delightful for your users and fix any issues that may arise.

Beta launch

Once you have released your app use the first few weeks of your app release to monitor usage. Track your social channels for any issues and keep an eye on those all important reviews in the app stores. These first weeks are the perfect opportunity to make sure your app is as good as it can be so that when you do push the button on promotion your app is loved by the masses.

Define metrics

What does success look like? Define the success metrics of your app - are you looking to reach a certain number of downloads or an increase in revenue per user? Whatever your KPIs are make sure to measure them from day one and beyond.

Make it discoverable

More than 60% of apps on the App Store are discovered by search so it's vital that you invest in ASO. Use this time pre launch to write chart topping elements of app store optimization like descriptions, keywords subtitles, and value driven messages for your screenshots.

A good mobile partner will help you with this or complete it for you as a value-add.

Map out your marketing activities

There are numerous marketing activities that need to be planned and activated before you even launch your app.

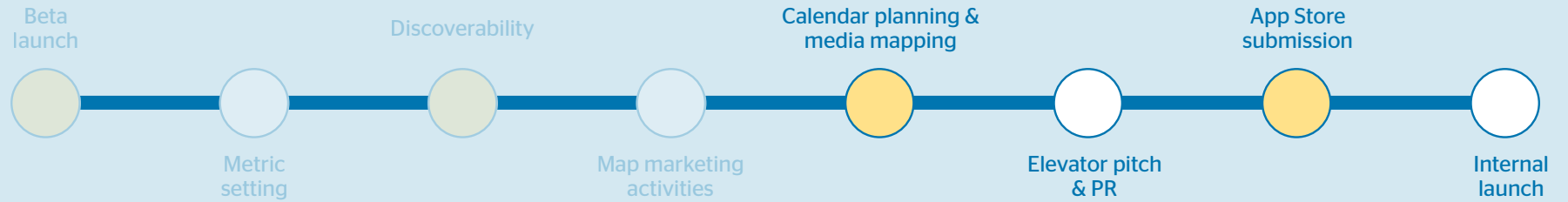
- Microsite

- Create a microsite or landing page where people can go for more information and register their interest. Make sure this is easily accessible from the main website and has a simple URL structure for search engine crawlers to find.

- Banner advertising

- Create banner advertising for homepage placement on your website or paid advertising campaigns at launch

Pre



- Video

- Create a promotional video for your app launch to showcase the benefits of your app.

- Social media

- Most airlines will have spent time and effort building a loyal following across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc, so make sure to use these channels to create a teaser campaign to create hype around your new app.

Calendar planning & media mapping

Create a campaign calendar with all the various marketing activities you have planned for pre-launch, launch and post-launch. Ensure it isn't brushed aside once the app is launched - that is the critical time for you to really accelerate marketing efforts.

Book all media activity such as your offline marketing campaigns. These can take a few months to get scheduled to ensure they are available for launch.

Create your elevator pitch

Create an app press kit to generate interest around the app and circulate it to relevant press and bloggers. It should include:

- **App icons in different sizes**
- **Screenshots to tell a story**
- **Video to attract attention**

Lay the foundations for what's coming next, leave them wanting to know more!

Compose a media list including traditional media as well as blogger outreach; their influence among your target audience can be extremely valuable.

Internal launch

Your employees are one of the best ways of getting word of mouth out about your app - think of how far a net you could cast if all your employees put something on their

social media channels about your great new app?

Send an internal email out with all the information and schedule training sessions, especially with key customer facing team members.

App Store submission

A week before launch the time has come to submit your app to the app stores. Make sure you have everything ready in advance, including any localization if your app is in different languages, so there are no delay. Read up on all the submission guidelines to ensure you don't run into any problems getting your app approved.

- Your iOS submission should include

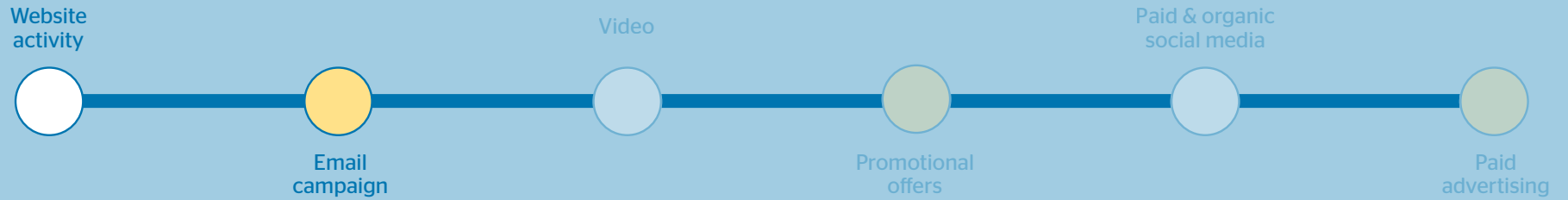
- Title, subtitle, category, description, promo text, keywords, screenshots, app preview videos, app icon

- Your Google Play submission should include

- Title, category, short description, full description, screenshots, app promotion video and app icon

A good third party supplier will help submit your app for you.

During



When you are about to launch your app there are a number of activities that travel brands can do to create that ‘big bang’ and really build the momentum that has already started in the run up to launching an app.

Website activity

Your website is one of your greatest assets when promoting your app. Promote it via the homepage using a banner ad, a scrolling banner along the top or in prominent section elsewhere on the homepage depending on your website design.

Microsite

Update your microsite to include the main features and benefits of your app features, using screens and videos. Add share links so that visitors can easily download your app in the app stores.

Offline marketing

Think outside of the obvious channels and consider all the various touchpoints that you have control over.

- Inflight magazine advertising

- This is prime real estate for a captive audience where you can call out key value statements about how the app can enhance the journey. Include a clear CTA and QR code for quick and easy download as well as tracking purposes.

- Airport signage

- Using in-airport signage in high traffic areas such as at security or check-in can drive significant numbers of downloads, capturing potential app users in-situ.

- Seat back advertising

- Similar to the in-flight magazine, seatback adverts are ideal for grabbing attention during idle flight time. This approach will work whether you have paper or digital seatbacks.

- Paper boarding passes

- Target travelers who are not yet using your app. Include simple messaging letting them know that they could be using the app instead to check-in and get their boarding pass.

Email campaigns

There are huge opportunities to let your existing customers know about your app through email campaigns, such as;

- **Promote the app** in booking confirmations
- **Communicate new features and functionality** as you add to it over time
- **Run targeted campaigns** around airfare sales and new routes to promote downloads
- **Send follow up emails** to those who download, thanking them and providing instructions on how to make the most of it
- For those who didn't install, **follow up with emails** encouraging them to do so.

“A Travelport Digital customer generated huge exposure using seat back advertising, capturing over 120,000 scans of the QR code in the first month alone”

During



Website activity



Email campaign



Video



Promotional offers



Paid & organic social media



Paid advertising



Video

Create videos to showcase and guide users through new features and functionality. Use these across the app stores, website, microsite and social media.

Promotional offers

An app specific promotional offer is a great way to incentivize customers to download your app. Offers could include a 10% discount on all flights booked on your app during a certain time period (summer sale for example) and could be run across multiple channels including social media, email and website.

Organic social media

Posting on social media is an effective way to let your existing follower base know about the app and all the benefits it has to offer. Create a buzz on social media now your app is launching.

Paid social

The last decade has seen social media become the biggest, most important and predominantly mobile platform for brands to connect with their customers. But with so much on offer from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to WeChat it can be confusing as to what channel to focus on.

Here's a brief run down:

- Facebook

- There are a few ad formats you can use including mobile app install ads, mobile app engagement ads and canvas ads

- Instagram

- There are 4 different types of Instagram ads that can be used- photo ads, video ads, carousel ads and story ads

- Twitter

- App installs or re-engagements are the most suitable Twitter ads for marketing an app. You can target your audience by language, device, behaviours and others

- Snapchat

- Snap Ads are most relevant for marketing an app; they consist of a 3-10 second vertical video followed by either an article, app install, long-form video or web view

- WeChat

- (China's largest social network) offers three different types of ads - moment ads which are similar to Facebook ads, banner ads which feature at the bottom of a message, and key opinion leader ads where advertisers pay a popular WeChat blogger to promote their brand.

Paid advertising

- Apple search ads

- For the first time, airlines and travel companies can now target potential app users on the platform where they are most likely to download, allowing you to target users already browsing the App Store. There are 2 different types of ads:
 - **Basic ads content** is generated automatically by Apple using your App Store assets. There are two different variations of the ads, one with screens and one without (currently only available in US)
 - **Advanced ads** are based on keywords, search match feature and audience

- Digital ad platforms

- Google is one of best ways to drive installs via paid channels. All their campaign types have been consolidated into Universal App Campaigns (UAC), which appear across Google Search and Display, Google Play and YouTube. Mobile-specific ad platforms, such as Admob, Airpush, InMobi and Tapjoy can also be used to target your audience profiles.

540%

Increasing your app's rating from 2-star to 4-star can result in a 540% increase in app store conversion rates

70,000

A Travelport Digital customer had 70,000 app installs by adding a QR code and download call to action on their paper boarding pass.

2,172%

An 'App of the Day' feature can drive downloads of your iOS app by up to 2,172%

Singapore Airlines case study

Singapore Airlines place a significant focus on marketing their apps, communicating the features and benefits via multiple channels including video, a dedicated microsite and email marketing.

This has resulted in 4.2M+ app downloads to date and 'money can't buy' promotion on Apple's homepage when they launched their Apple Watch.



4.2M+

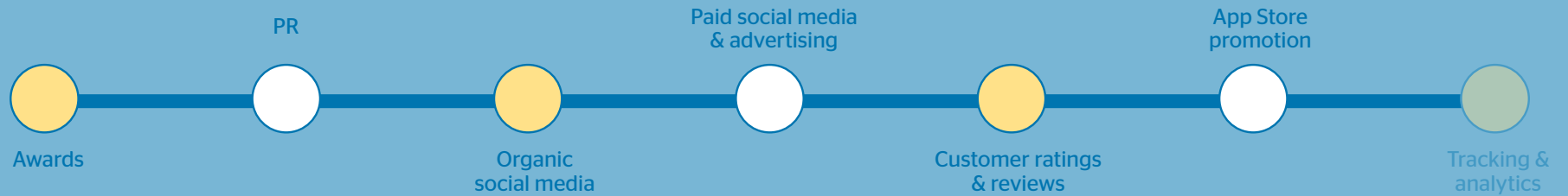
app downloads to date

"We are pleased that our app has been well received and will continue to invest heavily in technology to provide a more personalised on board experience for customers"



Campbell Wilson
SVP Sales & Marketing
Singapore Airlines

Post



Once your app is launched the marketing activity should not just stop there. Acquiring customers is one thing, but airlines need to continue to engage their customers to build relationships and increase brand loyalty. Marketing is crucial to ensure user acquisition, retention and ultimately app monetization.

Paid social and advertising

Once your app is launched don't stop there with paid advertising. Use mobile PPC and continue to utilise install and engagement ads to drive acquisition and engagement.

PR

With thousands of apps launched every day a well executed PR plan can be the difference between an ok app and a great app. Following on from prepping your media list and your app assets, such as videos, screenshots, app icons reach out to all the relevant media.

Make sure to include blogger outreach. While some blogs may not have as big a following as media outlets, their influence can be priceless.

Organic social media

Continually share new updates and features over time; use videos and infographic style imagery to bring features to life.

Awards

Award wins are a low cost (and often free) way of gaining third-party credibility for your app. Create an annual awards calendar that incorporates global and/or regional awards. Once you've nailed down one application creating additional ones won't be too time consuming, they usually just need to be tweaked according to each specific application. Be sure to create a buzz around any award wins or shortlists by sharing the news through your social channels, PR, blog etc.

Customer ratings and reviews

Customers are your biggest advocates and their ratings and reviews are a critical tool for your brand. In-app prompts allow users to give an app rating without being

redirected to the App Store. They were introduced by Apple in 2017 and are a powerful way of increasing ratings (especially positive ones) with only small code change required to implement. You are restricted to a maximum of 3 pop ups a year so use them wisely! Request reviews at 'peak happiness points' such as post booking or check-in and ensure you wait until after a specific number of logins or certain time period.

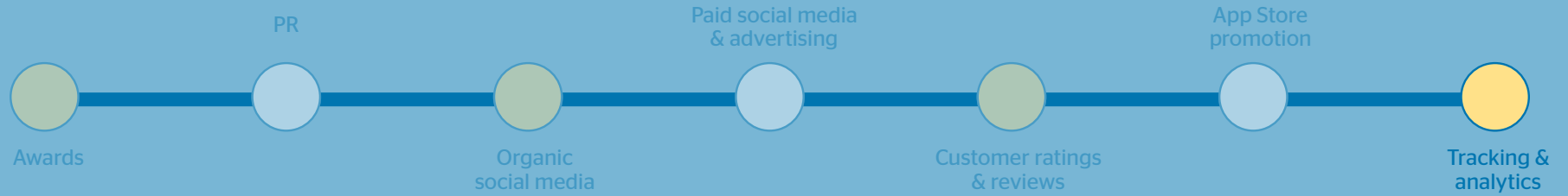
App Store promotion

Getting featured on the app stores can have a huge impact in terms of downloads. In addition to 'App of the Day' where Apple chooses one app each day to feature, iOS apps are also featured on apple.com and within iTunes. For Android, in addition to paying for Google Play app install ads, you can also submit your app to the Early Access Beta Programme for promotion.

The following tips will increase the likelihood of your app being featured;

- **Use the latest OS feature updates**
- **Localise your app**
 - o The local Apple teams ultimately decide on which apps to feature

Post




- Make sure your **iOS and Android apps** are **designed specifically for each channel**
- **Update it frequently**
- **Invest in App Store Optimization (ASO)**
- **Build a relationship with Apple**
 - You can contact them directly to request a promotion

Tracking and analytics

In addition to analytics from iTunes Connect and Google Play Statistics, within Google Analytics you can gain access to iOS and Google Play campaign tracking URL builders, at no cost. These will allow you to track installs of your app against the source, so that you can understand the best performing channels and make effective, data-driven marketing decisions in the future.

Create a custom dashboard using one of the many free online tools available to visually represent your app's performance and easily share with others.

Getting your app marketing strategy right takes time and involves an ongoing process of continuous research and refinement. There is no 'one size fits all' approach, it's up to you to figure out what works best for your airline.

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is seated in an airplane cabin. He is looking down at a smartphone held in his right hand. The background shows the interior of an airplane with windows and seats. The lighting is soft and focused on the man.

**“The easyJet app
has been an amazing
draw for business
travelers. They can
do anything they
want with easyJet
on the mobile app.
Anything.”**

Carolyn McCall
Former CEO
easyJet

easyJet



Metrics



Why mobile



In-house or outsource



App success



Key functionality



Launch planning



Metrics

06

Metrics for success

When launching your app it's important to set KPIs from the outset so you can measure how effective your app is. Data analytics for mobile is quite different to that of traditional web. It's no longer about website traffic, page views or time on page; with mobile it's now about app performance, monthly active users, cost per download etc.

Having a clear set of objectives related to your mobile strategy is key, otherwise you won't know if you are succeeding or how to make decisions in the future.

As an airline, you will have different measures of success that are aligned to your business goals. You may be interested in improving service and reducing costs by promoting mobile check-in, or increasing revenue by offering a new channel for your customers to purchase tickets and ancillaries. Regardless of the business goal, it is important to be clear about what it is that the app will do and how that can be measured.

Once you have defined those business goals, the next step is to ensure that the key features in your mobile app are tracked so you can measure their relative importance. Tracking can be as simple as recording each time a app user sees a screen, or each time a particular button is pushed. A robust data analytics platform can then aggregate these values over a wide number of users to indicate which features are being used most.

For features that require several steps (such as booking/purchasing), ensure that all the steps are tracked. This will highlight how many users start to make a purchase and will then track them through the steps. Analyzing these steps as a funnel will highlight if customers are being lost or if there are problems getting them to the checkout. This analysis will allow you to ensure that you are maximizing the conversion rate and hence driving revenue.

People will only use your app if they see value in it. Measuring all the key features in your app can determine their relative importance and highlight where customers are dropping out. Travelers have different needs at each point in the trip, the week before, day before, day of travel; mining tracking data and uncovering patterns of usage can keep you better informed about which traveler problems are worth solving, what features are important and what functionality needs to be added.

In order to detect such patterns, it is vital to first configure the tracking to include information about the users' trips. Simple data could include the flight number, route, and departure and arrival times. Using a robust analytics system, it will be possible to identify different behaviours on different routes and in different markets. This will let you tailor the services that you offer to be the most appropriate for those travelers.

In the early days of your mobile application you will be running lots of marketing campaigns to increase awareness among your customers. Analytics will help you determine the effectiveness of these campaigns activity; how a channel is performing and the cost per download on each channel. For example an AdWords campaign may be getting lots of views, but not drive downloads, whereas an outbound email campaign could be a primary driver. Correctly tagging each and every link to the app stores will let your analytics service show you the answers to these questions, helping you refine your campaigns and understand the return on your investment.

Working with a partner who can offer you a robust analytics and reporting platform can help you determine how your data can be leveraged to improve your business and deliver actionable user intelligence.

Cost per download



App install/uninstall



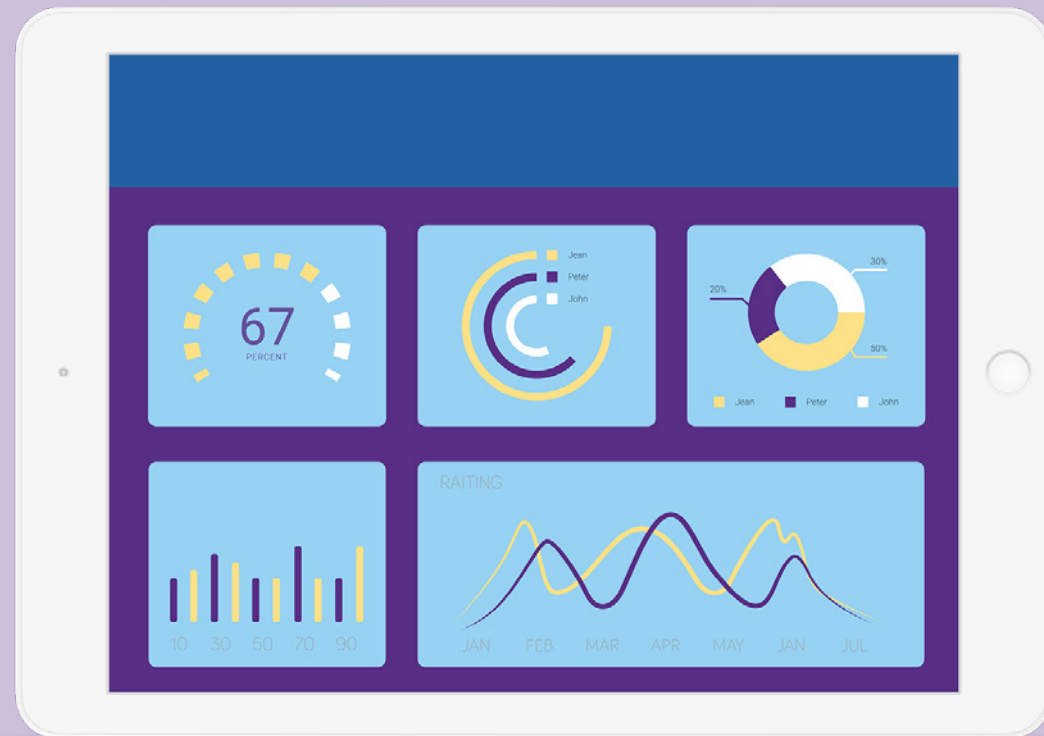
Monthly active users



Campaign tracking



Push messaging engagement



Conclusion

We're living in a modern mobile world that has opened up a world of new possibilities for airlines to capture changing consumer behaviours and deliver an experience that fits with this 'on demand' culture.

Delivering a mobile capability is no longer a 'nice to have', it is now a necessity, as having a mobile app can have a transformative effect on an airline. All successful airlines need to differentiate themselves; they offer different products, delivered via differing brands and they all have a different way of doing business. However what's the one thing that the majority of them have in common? They have an app. In fact, 96% of the top 50 airlines have a mobile app today.

This is due to the multitude of opportunities available to increase revenue, improve ancillary upsell, reduce operational costs, improve customer experience and loyalty, and offer an enhanced brand presence. On the flip side, apps can help your airline become more cost-efficient, which will ultimately save time and money in the long run.

It's not necessarily a decision taken lightly by any airline executive board and often it's the return on investment numbers that will do the convincing. So, it's important to point out that airlines that have a mobile app deliver 7 to 10 times ROI over a 3 year period. As the mobile user base grows so too does the percentage growth in contextual ancillary sales, while at the same time the operational cost savings also increase resulting in a significant return.

Mobile apps are not just a subset of an airline's digital ecosystem. They're very much at the centre of propelling airlines forward towards strong growth and transforming their businesses. Driving engagement and shifting perceptions and opportunities.

It's not an easy path to follow. There's a lot to get wrong and more than a few potential mis-steps along the way (real transformation is never smooth). But if you follow the principles and best practices summarized in this guide, we're convinced you will succeed, just as the pioneers of mobile travel have succeeded before you.

Best of all: this journey is also hugely rewarding on a personal level. You'll deliver great results for your board, open up new potential with your colleagues in eCommerce, Marketing, IT and beyond. And working in an airline with a focus on a great mobile experience is far more gratifying

than the old-school, transactional-driven, commoditized grind that are prevalent in many travel businesses today. It's customer-driven, it drives successful business results and you'll experience a major shift from day one of your app launch.

The time has come for your mobile journey to begin, are you ready?

“What do 96% of the top 50 airlines in the world have in common? They all have a mobile app”

Sources

IATA, 2017; Business Insider UK, 'One in every 5 people in the world own a smartphone, one in every 17 own a tablet', Dec 2013; SITA, Mobile evolution; Skift, 'Survey: Passengers want simpler tech solutions from airports and airlines, May 2015; Skift 'Mobile travel bookings to reach 40 percent of online sales in 2017', June 2017; Jeff Fromm & Christine Garton 'Marketing to Millennials; MarketRealist 'Smartphone penetration may reach 66% globally in 2018', Oct 2017; Comscore 'The 2017 U.S mobile app report', Aug 2017; Criteo, 'Global Commerce Review 2017; eMarketer 'Mobile drives growth online travel bookings', June 2017; Travelport Digital 'End traveller mobile research 2017; Smartling Report 'Mobile apps rule in eCommerce conversion comparison, Sept 2017; Points, 'The state of mobile wallet loyalty and engagement in 2016'; Cartrawler/IdeaWorks '2016 Top 10 airline ancillary revenue rankings'; CarTrawler 'The 2017 CarTrawler yearbook of ancillary revenue, Nov 2017; Criteo, Mobile commerce at its tipping point: Criteo research reveals mobile surpassing desktop on path to purchase, Sept 2016; The National, UAE 'Etihad showcases plans to transform air travel experience, Nov 2016; Corporate.easyjet.com; Forrester 2016; Forbes 'The millennial customer has \$200 billion to spend', Jan 2015; Ascend '41 revealing statistics about millennials every marketer should know', June 2017; Think with Google 'Millennial travelers: mobile shopping and booking behaviour; Outsystems, State of application development : 2017 research report; Travelport Digital Mobile Trends Survey, 2017; Indeed.com 2017; Statistica 2017; Google/Ipsos, May 2015, Mobile App Marketing Insights: How Consumers Really Find and Use Your Apps (U.S.); Apptentive, 2015 Consumer survey: The mobile marketer's guide to App Store ratings & reviews

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.

- 40+ million app downloads (as of February 2018)
- 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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Travelport Digital 
Redefining travel commerce

Travelport Digital 
Redefining travel commerce