



A STARTER'S GUIDE TO

**APP PROMOTION
& USER ACQUISITION**

FOR MAGAZINE & NEWSPAPER APP PUBLISHERS



INTRODUCTION

WHY DO I NEED TO THINK ABOUT APP PROMOTION?

Your magazine or newspaper app is live on the stores, ready to be downloaded by eager readers who will want to purchase your digital editions. While that might be true, the reality is that **driving traffic to the stores takes work** and getting people to install your app is just the first step towards becoming paying customers.

With millions of apps currently available on the major app marketplaces, simply publishing an app isn't enough. In fact, **millions of apps don't get enough visibility** through rankings to drive downloads - meaning they are basically on the stores, lifeless.

So, what actions can you take to **stand out from the crowd and get installed?** Whether you've just launched your app or are looking for new ways to increase downloads, this guide will go through the most popular and proven ways to raise visibility and acquire more users.

WHAT IS APP PROMOTION?

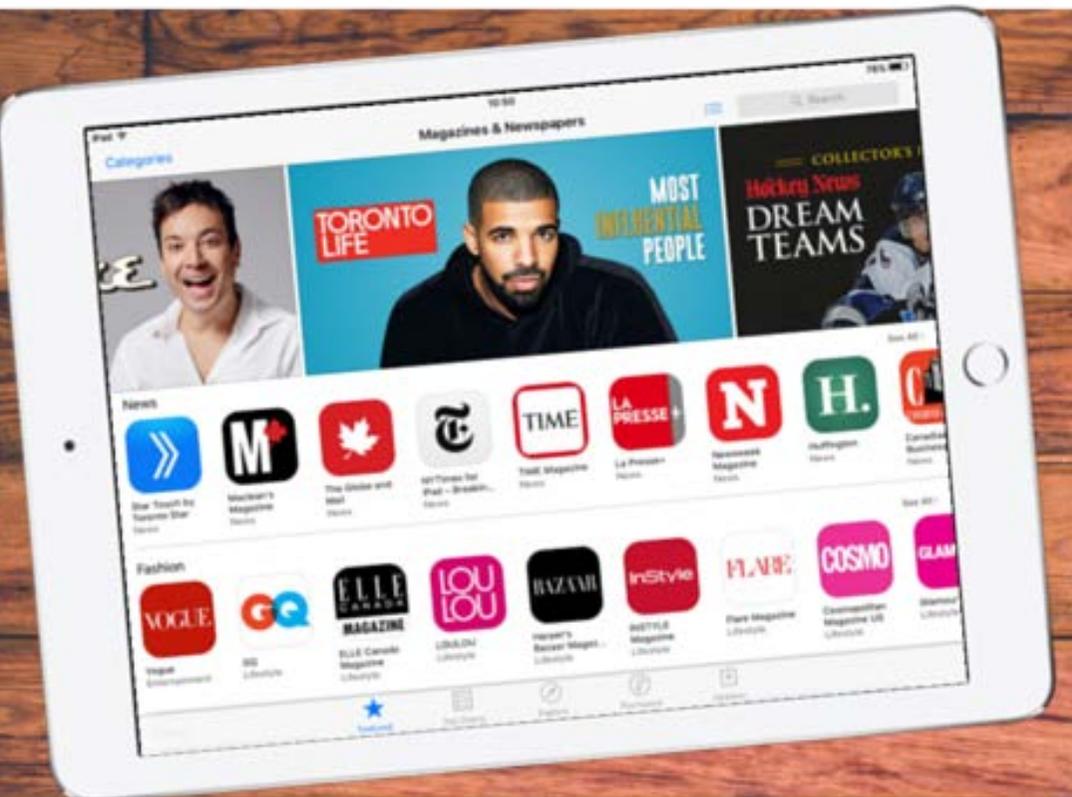
Simply put, app promotion covers any activities you can undertake to drive downloads and acquire new users.

In this ebook, **we'll cover the most widely used strategies**, which we've broken down into three categories:

- App Store Optimization (ASO)
- Paid Acquisition
- Viral Acquisition

By the end of this ebook, you should have a **good foundation to create your own app promotion strategy** and start increasing your app downloads!

APP STORE OPTIMIZATION



Circulation - the cornerstone of publishing success - was once the measure of newsstand sales, but in the digital world the metric includes subscriptions and single issue sales of digital editions. As more magazine and newspaper publishers develop apps to distribute their digital editions, user acquisition – **increasing traffic to the app store and driving downloads** – has become a hot topic.

While much of the debate on scaling app user acquisition focuses on paid acquisition, the starting point is to **develop a strong search presence on the app stores**. In fact, according to data from the [2017 U.S. Mobile App Report](#), 20% of app users find apps through the app store's search engine.

Publishers can improve organic user acquisition – and thus digital circulation revenues – by adopting some basic App Store Optimization (ASO) strategies that boost app store ranking and visitor conversion rates. But what is ASO? **And how exactly can it help publishers get more app installs?**

WHAT IS APP STORE OPTIMIZATION (ASO)?

Much like search engine optimization (SEO) for websites, ASO works to improve an app's visibility by **increasing ranking in search results and in top charts**. Increasing your magazine app's ranking is important as it will drive more downloads.

In this chapter we've separated the tactics publishers can use to optimize their app store listing into two categories:

- Keyword optimization
- Conversion rate optimization



KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION

Keyword optimization involves **finding the right keywords to drive qualified traffic** to your app page, monitoring their impact on your traffic, and benchmarking your ranking against competitors. Keywords can be included in the keyword field, as well as your app name and description to help the search engine rank your app.

Luckily for publishers, there are many free/paid tools to get started on keyword research and monitoring, including [AppTweak](#), [Sensor Tower](#) and [MobileDevHQ](#).

To get started with keyword selection, compile a list of keywords by relevance and competitiveness with tools like Google Keyword Planner tool, Keyword.io, SensorTower, Ubersuggest or WordTracker.

You should also **check the suggested search results** in the app stores to see what people are actually searching for when looking for your brand or magazine category.

Keep in mind that you have 100 characters for keyword selection so be sure to use them all by using the singular form of words and focusing only on the keywords you can truly rank for. Also, even if it's tempting, **avoid using the names of competitors** or trademarks as keywords – Apple frowns on any “black hat” tricks.

And finally, if your app is in different markets, be sure to localize your keywords for each store.

•

CONVERSION OPTIMIZATION

Your keywords have helped you move up the ranks and you're app is showing up in search results, but how can you optimize your listing to get more downloads?

Conversion rate optimization is all about ensuring that **your listing inspires people to download your app**.

So what elements of your app page influence conversion?

APP DESCRIPTION

When people arrive to your app store page, give them your best pitch in the first couple of lines of your app description.

Focus on your unique selling proposition (USP).

For example, explain to your potential readers what content they can expect or what exclusive benefits they can enjoy by buying a digital edition.

Besides capturing people's attention and making them want to download your app you will also want to **include some of the keywords you selected** (as mentioned above). While keywords in the app description don't seem to influence Apple App Store results (app name and keywords count the most), for Google Play the first couple of lines (167 characters) of your description is vital for keyword optimization, both on the store and web search.

Lastly, the updates section of your description is where you can highlight your most recent improvements, but don't be afraid to **add an additional call-to-action** – after all, after reading all the great things your app has to offer, users will be even more receptive to being told to download your app!

APP ICON

Your app icon is the first visual people will see when searching for your app. Your app icon should be **well-designed and reflect your brand**. Overly complex designed should be avoided since they do not render well on small devices, not to mention once the app sits inside a folder (on the device's screen).

SCREENSHOTS

Your screenshots should portray realistic usage of your app while highlighting the most important features or **exclusive content in your digital edition**. Many magazine publishers will update their first screenshot to the cover of the latest issue, which is a great strategy to show users that they can purchase the newest issue.

With Apple, you can upload up to 5 screenshots, with the first screenshot appearing in search results (if no app preview

video is available). Google, on the other hand, allows you to upload up to 8 screenshots. Regardless, if your app is for various markets, you'll also want to **localize your screenshots (if required) to ensure best results**.

APP PREVIEW

App previews are videos that showcase your app in action. Much like screenshots, your app preview should focus on your app's benefits. Your app preview will be used across all stores in various markets, so unfortunately localization is not possible.

For this reason, it's important to **focus on key features, keep it simple**, and avoid using voice-overs (unless truly 100% necessary). For a great tutorial on DIY app previews, check out [this blog post](#) from Tapdaq.

REVIEWS AND RATINGS

Having a highly rated app will help you rise in rankings and stand out from your competitors, but the opinions expressed in ratings and reviews also plays an important role in converting app store visitors.

Positive reviews act as social proof, motivating users to take a chance on your magazine app. However, if you don't have any ratings or reviews – or worse if you only have negative reviews – visitors will be unlikely to download your app.

Asking loyal readers for reviews is key to your success on the app stores. **Target your subscribers via email, push notifications or in-app messaging**, and ask them to provide an honest review.

Also, don't be afraid of a few negative reviews. Honest feedback can be a great learning opportunity and, if you're on Google Play, you can actually reply to feedback, showing that you're proactive about solving user problems!

MORE DOWNLOADS = HIGHER RANKING = MORE DOWNLOADS...

And just like that, your conversion optimization strategies have paid off and you're acquiring more users, which means **your app will rise in the rankings** thanks to increased popularity. But the thing about ASO is that it needs continual upkeep, so be sure to check in on those keywords, monitor your competitors and look at your reviews for insights that will help you improve and drive more downloads.

PRO TIPS: GETTING MORE QUALITY RATINGS & REVIEWS

Improving your app rating is vital to getting more downloads and in turn, increasing your visibility through rankings. While reviews and ratings play a big part in convincing someone to download your app, **your star rating also influences where you'll show up in the search results** and ranking.

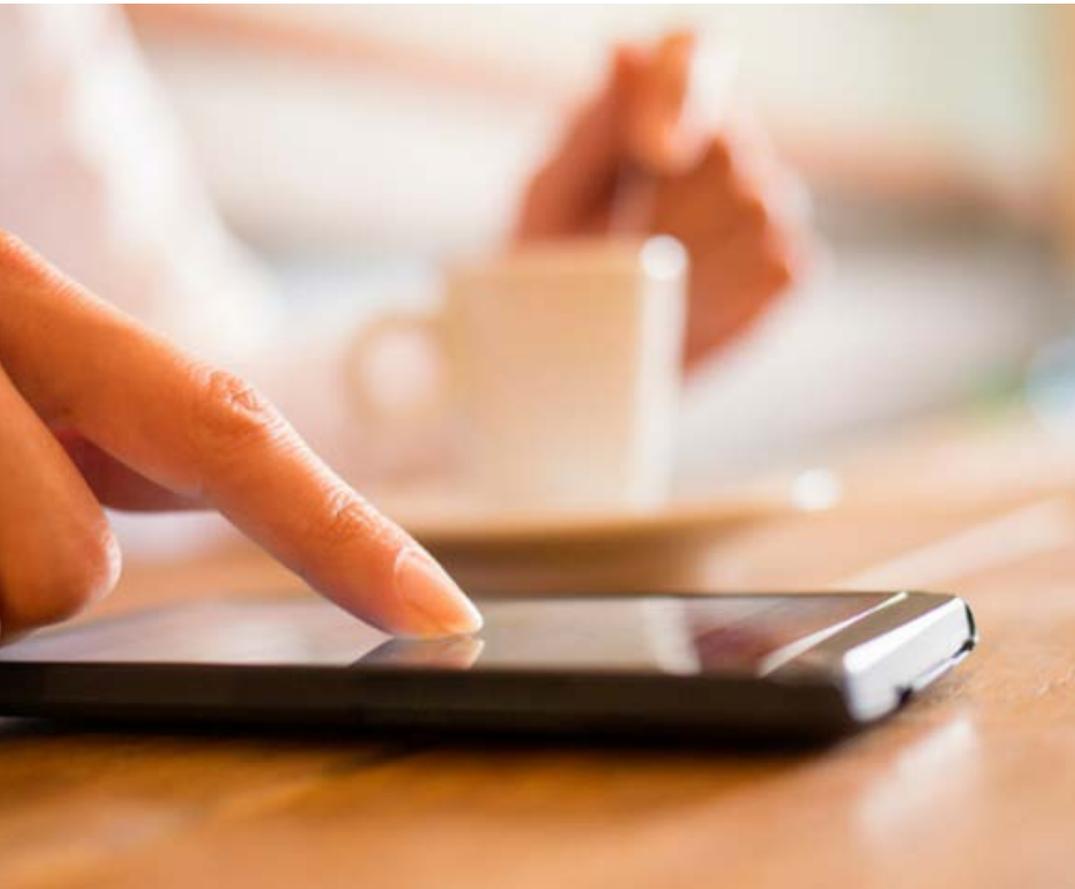
Build a steady flow of positive comments and full star ratings by building user feedback into your app marketing plans.

Here are a few actions you can take:

- **Get a head start as soon as you launch.** Ask bloggers and early adopters to rate and review your app in order to have an average rating for your launch.
- **Use push notifications.** Identify your loyal users and send them a push notification asking them for an app review.

- **Use in-app pop-up messages.** Launch a message inviting users to review your app after they have performed a specific action, like making a purchase. Users are more likely to rate your positively after successfully completing a task.
- **Use App Engagement Ads.** Experiment with app engagement advertising to re-target your superusers with display and social media ads.
- **Use email.** Segment your email list to target app users (by OS) and ask them to review your app (make sure you link to the correct stores). Also, include a CTA to review your app in your support email signature.
- **Counteract negative feedback.** Create an in-app form or support email for users to report bugs or issues.
- **Respond to feedback.** After fixing bugs and re-publishing your app, reply and ask users who gave a bad review to reconsider their rating (Google Play).
- **Leverage your mobile site.** Use a pop-up or banner on your mobile website or landing page to get users who have installed your app to rate it.

PAID ACQUISITION



While ASO will help you convert organic traffic, paid acquisition will help you drive more traffic to your store and scale your growth. App install ads have evolved in the past couple years, with many of the major social and **search channels offering ad products for app publishers**, in addition to the many ad networks who offer in-app ad placement. While the tendency is to think that ads only help with paid acquisition, recent research has shown that investing in app ads can also influence your organic downloads. By boosting downloads, even for a short amount of time, **your app benefits from increased ranking** and visibility on the stores, resulting in more organic installs.

Not a bad investment, right? So what exactly are mobile app install ads?

And **which channel is better for acquiring new readers for your digital editions?** In this chapter, we'll cover:

- What are “Apps Install Ads”
- Summary of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & Google ads
- Ad networks & new solutions on our radar

WHAT ARE APP INSTALL ADS?

According to [ComScore](#), **9% of users discover an app via ads on devices (both browser and app)**.

The main purpose of using install ads is to get qualified traffic from sources outside the stores, such as search, social media and even other apps, to go to the stores to download your app. While pricing models differ across various platforms, app install campaigns are (for the most part) **based on a cost-per-install (CPI) basis**.

Ad products also differ depending on the channel they appear and may also have different iOS & Android specifications.

If you have both an iOS and Android app, you'll need to set up separate campaigns as each will link to the specific store, but you should also account for some other differences in user behavior when thinking about your campaigns.

According to a report from [Kenshoo](#), while it may be more expensive to market an iOS app, it may **deliver better conversions over time**. The study looked at over 10 million app installs across more than 100 countries and found that Android users are more likely to click on a mobile app ad, but once they click, iOS users are more likely to install an app.

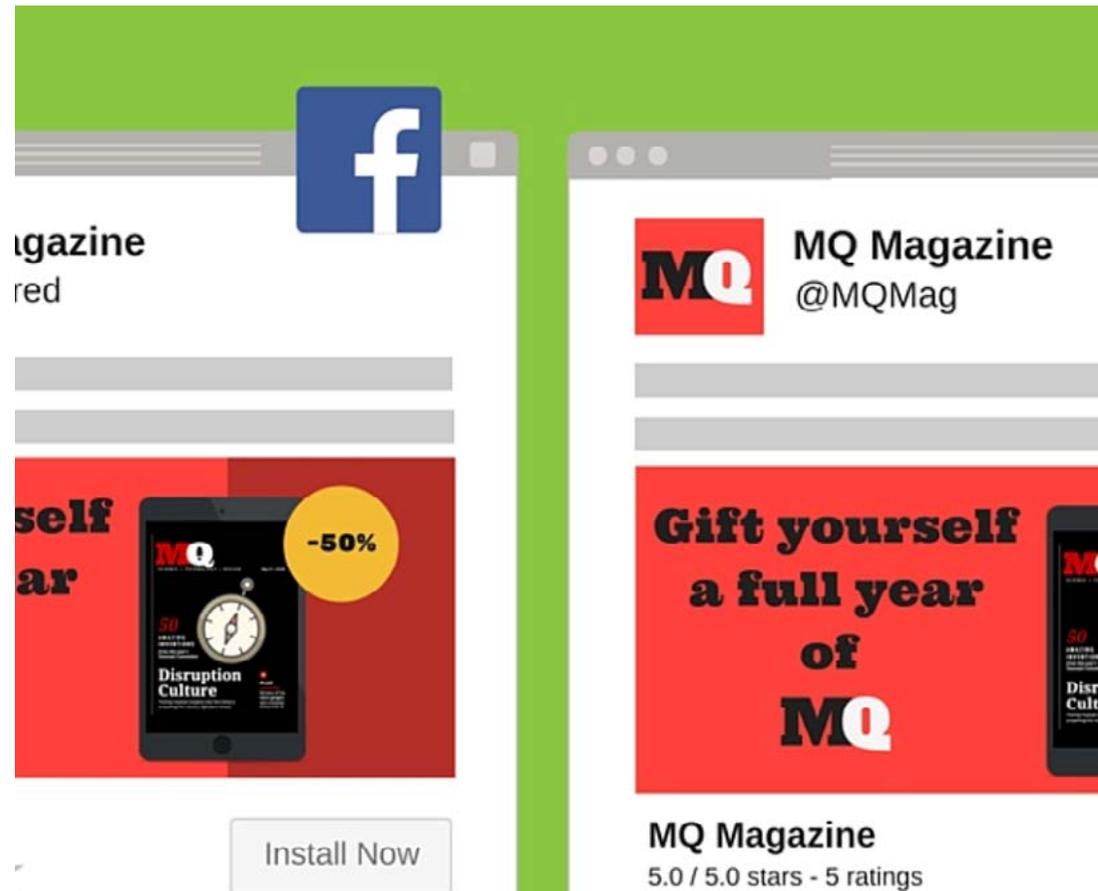
So which are the most popular channels for app install ads? **Here we'll take a look at Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google**, as well give a quick overview of ad networks and some developing ad products to put on your radar.

FACEBOOK

Since Facebook launched the app suggestion ad format it is becoming THE app install driver. After all, it's no surprise that a network with over **2 billion users** can command such incredible returns! So why is Facebook advertising so powerful?

Simple – **targeted reach!** With Custom Audiences, Facebook gives publishers the ability to target users based on specific demographics, profiles or actions they may have taken on your brand's desktop or mobile website. It's also possible to **create Lookalike Audiences** of your highest value users, based on Facebook's wealth of data, allowing you to get your install ad in front of a high quality mobile audience.

For more information on Facebook Mobile App Ads check out [this post](#) and read the [Design Guidelines for Mobile App Ads](#)



The image displays two examples of Facebook mobile app advertisements for MQ Magazine. The left ad is a mobile app suggestion ad, featuring a blue Facebook logo at the top, the text "MQ Magazine" and "red" below it, and a red background with a smartphone displaying the magazine cover. A yellow badge with "-50%" is overlaid on the phone, and an "Install Now" button is at the bottom. The right ad is a standard Facebook ad, featuring the MQ logo and "MQ Magazine @MQMag" at the top, followed by a red background with the text "Gift yourself a full year of MQ" and a smartphone displaying the magazine cover. Below the ad, the text "MQ Magazine 5.0 / 5.0 stars - 5 ratings" is visible.



TWITTER

Twitter also has an ad unit dedicated to mobile app installs, offering another promising channel for publishers to drive downloads. While Twitter's mobile app ad product is one of the largest ad exchanges in the world. Twitter has 330 million users and 80% of them uses the mobile app.

Therefore, using ads is proving to be a **strong opportunity for marketers** to reach Twitter's "real-time" audience.

Much like Facebook, Twitter App Install Cards can be targeted to specific demographics as well as lookalike and tailored audiences for advanced acquisition campaigns. Also, Twitter's mobile app campaigns can be used to **re-engage lapsed users**, helping advertisers increase the lifetime value of app users. A quick look at your feed and you'll see rich, mobile-first ad units designed for compelling an **attention-grabbing user experiences**.

For more information on Twitter App Install Cards check out [this post](#)

INSTAGRAM

With over 800 million monthly active users, Instagram is a mobile-first social network that is hard to ignore. Instagram is expected to generate about \$5 billion in mobile advertising sales in 2018, thanks in part to "**action-oriented**" ad format, including app install ads. App install ads include an install button that opens a mini-browser within the app, so once a user has downloaded the app they will return to Instagram. Instagram advertisers can target ads based on age, gender and country as well as **a wider range of demographic and interest data**, much like Facebook's Custom Audiences (which owns Instagram). More powerful targeting combined with a large adoption by teens and young adults makes Instagram an exciting space for advertisers. After all, millennials are the most active app users: according to ComScore, 64% of them download new apps more often now than they did a year ago.

For more information on Instagram Mobile App Ads check out this post and read the [Ad Design Guidelines](#)



GOOGLE

As the largest search engine in the world, Google has more than 2 billion monthly unique users – proving to be one of the biggest channels to reach potential app users and a few different solutions for app publishers. With **Google AdWords you can create ads for your app** in a variety of formats to show across the Search, Display and YouTube Networks.

Search Network campaigns are a great way to drive downloads from people who are actively searching for a solution your app provides. **“Mobile app installs” campaigns are set up by bidding on keywords** and are optimized for targeting app-specific searches across Google.com, Google Play (for Android apps), and Search Partner sites.

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, app install ads on the search network **cannot be targeted according to user demographics**, so researching keywords is fundamental to the success of your ads.

Instead, advertising via their Display Network can help you reach people while they’re using other apps that are similar to yours. These campaigns often get **large volumes of impressions**, which can increase awareness of your app and attract new app users who may not be actively searching for you.

YouTube, on the other hand, is the largest video sharing website. It has 1.5 billion logged-in users, and more than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices, making it a great channel for app publishers. On YouTube, **you can show video ads** to reach people who are interested in content related to your app. Video campaigns can help boost awareness of your app with engaging content that grabs your customers’ attention at just the right moment.

For more on Google App Install Ads across the various networks see [this post](#).



AD NETWORKS

Ad networks provide many benefits for app publishers – primarily by being a single point of access to a broad range of premium media sources, including other apps. Besides setting up your CPI campaigns, **many ad networks have adopted a “full stack” approach**, including programmatic buying that is optimized for your KPIs & LTV, and also include monetization strategies.

While ad networks offer different pricing, bidding and targeting models, they also vary in ad product types, from banner ads to interstitials as well as push notifications. If this is a route you’re looking to explore, MobyAffiliates has put together a great directory of CPI model providers that you can [access here](#).

EMERGING AD PLATFORMS

With increased attention on mobile apps, many platforms are ramping up their mobile ad offerings.

Here are a few to keep on your radar:

- With 391.9 million active users, **Tumblr** is one of the best platforms to target teenagers and young millennials.
- Mobile-first apps like **Pinterest and Snapchat** also have their own mobile ad products, as well as an always larger audience.

PRO TIPS: CREATING APP INSTALL ADS THAT CONVERT

When it comes to creating successful app install campaigns there are two things to remember, 1) **get your ad targeting right** and 2) make sure your **ad creative actually convinces** people to click on it.

Here are some tips to get started:

- **Know your audience.** Write copy in the tone of voice that is suitable for your audience. Remember that you're reaching out to users on social media, so a conversational tone, with the words your audience would use, work better than sales pitches.
- **Avoid complicated creative.** Let your images speak for themselves - without a bunch of text overlay.
- **Watch your competitors.** Get inspiration from your

competitors. By engaging with them on social channels you'll soon see their install ads, and can get ideas for messaging, colors, creatives, etc.

- **Size matters.** Apple doesn't allow iOS users to download apps that are over 100MB in size over a cellular connection, which means that if your app is over it's best practice to only show ads to people on Wi-Fi.
- **A/B testing.** Set up different tests to see which creative & copy combinations perform better.
- **Segment, segment, segment.** You got it - segment your tests by demographics, behavior, OS, device, etc. for more granular insights.
- **Focus on CPI.** It might be great that a certain ad gets more reach, but if impressions aren't converting your efforts are only increasing your brand awareness.
- **Check the data.** Continue optimizing your ads by looking at post-install conversions and events. Understand which ads impact your LTV and invest in those than bring the best ROI.

VIRAL ACQUISITION



It's a common misconception that publishing your app on the app stores will give you all the visibility you need to drive downloads. Although you can do a lot with ASO and paid advertising - your user acquisition strategy should also **incorporate viral tactics**.

Viral acquisition can help your app grow via word of mouth, social sharing and other tactics that **don't necessarily require a huge budget**. And that's great news if you're not ready to invest in CPI campaigns.

Viral success **is by no means a "one size fits all" formula**. While some tactics for "going viral" may work for one app and not another, there are certain steps every publisher can take to include virality into their acquisition strategy.

In this chapter, we'll discuss:

- Planning for virality during app design
- Leveraging and building up your web presence
- Using offline channels to drive user acquisition

PLANNING FOR VIRALITY

The first step for “going viral” is to build it into the design and functionality of your mobile app. Make it easy (and rewarding!) for app users to **share app content or actions across social networks, email, or chat**. Gaming apps have led the charge on this trend by leveraging social login to invite friends to play, to share accomplishment and by rewarding users with bonus points, etc.

In addition to social sharing, referral campaigns and user generated content campaigns can encourage current app users to **spread the word about your app** to their friends.

The second step to cultivating your viral success is to increase discoverability by infusing it into your promotional strategy.

DRIVING MORE TRAFFIC FROM THE WEB

The first thing you’ll want to do to communicate with mobile users is to set up an app banner on your website. These banners will show up to mobile visitors, directing them to download you app. It’s important to **configure your app banners to direct users to the correct app store**, based on the device they are using.

There are a few ways to implement universal app banners that work on Android and iOS - [this article](#) explains some popular ways.

Promoting your app on your website is an important part of growing awareness and sales of your digital edition. The way you promote your app will depend on if your publication is digital only and distributed exclusively on app store sales, or if you sell print and digital subscriptions on your website. If your publication falls into the later, you’ll want to evaluate the best way to **incorporate your app into your online subscription sales**.

On the other hand, if your publication is digital-only, you can develop a landing page (stand alone or as a part of your website) to promote **your app and lead visitors towards the app stores**. A landing page gives you more visibility in search and, while it's true that your Apple iTunes and Google Play page will show up in search, developing your own web presence allows you to communicate and promote your app in ways the stores simply don't allow.

So how can you build a powerhouse landing page?

We've looked at countless different landing pages, for apps big and small, to boil down the key element they have in common.

- **Introduction.** First and foremost, you want to clearly showcase the name of your app and your app icon, with a brief description of your app to hook your audience.
- **Screenshots and video previews.** Use app screenshots to show off the features or produce a video to take people on an in-depth tour of your app. You can place the images or video in a slideshow, or display them inside your chosen device to give visitors a realistic idea of how the app works.
- **Call to action.** Lead visitors towards the appropriate app store to download your app. If you've developed a cross-platform app, be sure to include the link to download from both the Apple App Store and Google Play, so you don't miss out on anyone.
- **What else?** This is your place to shine so why not add in some user reviews, links to blog posts that feature your app, or Twitter tweets that mention your app! You can also use your landing page to collect feedback or emails, announce coming-soon features or answer FAQs. Plus, remember to add those social share buttons so that your landing page is easily shared across the major social media channels.

PRO TIPS: INCREASING INBOUND LINKS

Once you have your own web presence established, it's time to look at **how you can increase traffic**. It's important to incorporate your new app into your existing content strategy, social media posts, email campaigns as well as PR and outreach.

We've jotted down some of the key tips we've found to help new app publishers generate more traffic to the stores. While you think about which tactics to implement, remember to build up a **solid strategy both pre- and post-launching your app**.

- **Before you launch your app.** Reach out to influencers, bloggers and partners to provide reviews of your app (with a link to download).
- **PR.** Pitch stories about your app to influential media in your industry or market.
- **Blog.** Feature your app in your blog & social media posts and reach out to social influencers who can share your posts across their networks.
- **Email.** Include links to download your app in your email, either in the footer or with specific campaigns (and be sure to A/B test whenever possible!).
- **Focus on CTR.** It might be great that a certain activities get more impressions, but if they don't convert (ie. click through to the app store) it might be best to put your resources elsewhere.
- **Segment & Optimize.** Segment your activities by demographics or behavior for more granular insights. Continue optimizing your efforts by looking at which activities are driving installs and in-app conversions. Understand which activities impact your LTV and invest in those that bring the best ROI.

USING OFFLINE CHANNELS TO DRIVE DOWNLOADS

When launching an app, many publishers tend to focus their promotion online, often **missing out on great offline opportunities**. Mobile needs to be central to all of your marketing campaigns and that includes promoting it in the real world.

Let's go over some of the more popular tactics you can employ to activate discovery of your mobile app:

- **QR codes.** One of the most popular tactics has been the use of the QR code – the scanable 2D matrix which lead a user to a destination link. QR codes can be placed anywhere – from outdoor advertisements and inserts to newsstand decals.
- **Recognition technology.** Less obtrusive than QR codes, image recognition enables users to discover a visual or text match of the scanned logo, creative or object, on the internet, which can then lead them towards your website, landing page or app download.
- **Storytelling.** Storytelling is all about connecting with users on an emotional level at the appropriate moment. Use storytelling in your PR and advertising to show people the benefits of your mobile experience. For example, an ad of someone enjoying your tablet edition during their morning commute could work great on public transportation.

Although offline activities aren't directly attributed to app downloads, letting people know about your app and **positioning yourself as a “mobile-first” brand works wonders for your reputation.**

THE APP PROMOTION CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE LAUNCH

- √ Choose which ASO, Paid and Viral tactics to focus on
- √ Establish your goals, KPIs and budget
- √ Produce your landing page, create a list of influencers, journalists & bloggers you want to reach out to
- √ Start teasing your app on social media
- √ Prepare your app store description and create your app screenshots & video previews
- √ Research keywords for ASO & draft your description

LAUNCH YOUR APP

- √ Publish your app on the stores
- √ Set up app download redirects on your mobile site
- √ Send an email campaign announcing the launch to your database
- √ Integrate app promotion into your marketing & sales funnel
- √ Promote your app on social media
- √ Set up paid app install campaigns
- √ Launch your offline campaigns

ONGOING

- √ Test your campaigns to see which drive more traffic & installs
- √ Optimize for the channels that bring in high quality users (think LTV!)
- √ Maintain your ASO efforts & benchmark your results against competitors
- √ Shift your budget to where you're getting the best return on investment!



WWW.PAPERLIT.COM

