

# REDEFINING A SUCCESSFUL APP

FOLLOWING FIRTH  
JULY 2023



Mobile apps are expected to generate over \$935 billion in revenue in 2023. The Apple App Store has 1.96 million apps available for download, while there are 2.87 million apps available for download on the Google Play Store. Over and above this, there are hundreds of thousands of apps being developed and used privately by companies all over the world.

With apps having become this pervasive, you would think that the development process has been refined to the point where each application is as efficient and user-friendly as possible. The reality, however, is that many apps have a lot of room for improvement.



## Keys to success

It may seem like a simple proposition: People need my service, so I will give them an app to make it easier for them to access that service. You could have the best app on the planet, but if nobody is downloading and using it, all of the time and money invested into development is wasted.

In mobile app development, a one-size-fits all approach does not work. Every business has different needs, and the app needs to be built with these in mind. In far too many cases, those business requirements translate into apps that miss the mark for users, either in terms of how easy they are to use, or what kind of resources are needed to run the app.





A successful mobile app should provide an excellent user experience and help the organisation reach its business goals – whether these are to collect and manage customer insights, streamline business processes, improve the customer end-to-end journey, automate administrative tasks, improve marketing content, or just to boost sales and revenue. To help reach these goals, an app should have a well-designed user interface (UI), fast loading time, strong data protection, excellent user support, and built-in integrations.

Many of these factors are consistently important, no matter what the app's function is, or where it is built, but others can easily become the reason that an app lands on the "infrequently used" list. A fast and responsive loading time, for example, is non-negotiable, as is security. The size of the app, on the other hand, is not as big a concern for developers in some countries as it is in others. While app developers in the USA, for example, can rely on ubiquitous post-paid plans providing users with all the data they need at reasonable prices, those in emerging economies should bear in mind that an app may cost the user more than they are prepared to pay.



## Breaking the bank

Surprisingly, app size doesn't seem to get the kind of consideration it needs in South Africa, which has one of the highest costs of data in the world, ranking 135 out of 233 countries. One gigabyte of mobile internet in South Africa cost, on average, 2.04 U.S. dollars in 2022, compared to Israel where users could get a gig of data for 0.04 U.S. dollars, or India, where the average cost of a gig was 0.17 U.S. dollars last year.





In light of this, you would expect local businesses to use local developers to build less data-intensive apps. Unfortunately, not only do many companies rely on international templatised solutions, many local developers do not build their apps with this in mind.

The average size of a mobile app is upwards of 200 megabytes. Looking at the cost of data, the average app costs a person around R10 per 100 megs at today's prices. That is an average of R20 per app – which also needs to be updated every two weeks, or at least once a month, to ensure security and privacy, raising the total cost.

In today's fast-changing and evolving business landscape, being able to iterate, learn, measure and react quickly to user needs is critical to success, but this should not cost users an arm and a leg. When local businesses are thinking the success of their apps, they need to think further than UI, looking for ways to provide a great experience with the smallest data footprint possible.



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