



## The scale of the market

If you are dealing with major business challenges, such as:

- Increasing efficiency
- Reducing costs
- Personalising communications
- Increasing profitability

...then developing a bespoke app is one of the best solutions. Until this year, the massive expansion in apps had been dominated by entertainment and consumer products, creating a market of more than 1 million apps.

Now is the time to take advantage of this new technology and get ahead of your competitors.

## Challenges that B2B apps address

So, what are the main problems and challenges that you're likely to face, which can be solved by implementing B2B apps?

- Lack of information channels through your business
- Slowness of response in the internal processes
- Difficulties in logistics flow
- Problems communicating with customers or getting feedback
- Lack of communication and direction for your employees, for example when making presentations away from the office

You probably have processes already established in each of these areas, but may be struggling to improve them. Where improvements are proposed, you may have found it difficult to measure the ROI

(return on investment), which has stopped you from taking decisions.

At the same time, many of your employees, suppliers and customers are now routinely using mobile apps in their daily lives, whether to find directions, measure their exercise activities or play games.

## Initial approach to app development

The most important questions that a good b2b app developer should answer for you are:

- How will it improve your business?
- How will it save you time – to reduce the average speed of an operation from one minute to 30 seconds, for example?
- What percentage of cost decrease will it achieve?
- What percentage of profit increase?

If your app supplier is not able to discuss these questions, maybe they are not suited to develop B2B apps for your company. There should always be an overriding commercial case for development, along with clear goals and metrics to determine success.

## Hiring experts

To achieve these goals, you'll need an [expert app developer](#).

In this highly specialised and technical field, when you hire expert developers and designers, you need to recognise this: there has to be an explicit trust between your business and the developer, with each side happy to delegate responsibility to the other, based on their expertise.

In other words, the developer must be allowed to take control of a project.

There are plenty of low-cost, quick-fix app developers in the market. But hiring a low calibre of professional involves significant risks. The product that emerges may be inadequate or faulty. It is important to ensure that the app developer you choose maintains high quality standards and has a strong track record.

The best app developers are highly experienced and senior in their field. Of course it is tempting to hire young, cheap developers, but there is a heightened danger of mistakes and bugs getting into the system. Dealing with these issues can make the process more expensive in the long run.

The supply of high level app developers is limited, so be sure to research the market thoroughly and identify the best talent.

When developing B2B apps, issues such as usability, speed and reliability take priority over their physical appearance. Hire experts who adopt this approach, rather than those stressing an attractive design

## Create an MVP

Once you've decided on an app developer, it's time to create an MVP – minimum viable product. This is a skeleton application, developed using the outline of the proposed product, with sufficient functionality to demonstrate its potential. It will minimise your initial expenditure and give you greater flexibility.

In the course of the MVP development process, you will have an opportunity to assess how the app will be used, what difference it is likely to make, and how it relates to your existing processes. At the same time, you can monitor the state of your key markets, the overall direction of the enterprise and any related systems upon which you may rely and to set priorities for the next most valuable features to be realised in your application.

Creating an MVP allows you to adapt the app to changing circumstances, to improve it and to eradicate mistakes, with minimal disruption and expense.

## Launch and implement your app

Having built upon the foundations of the MVP, you will then be ready to launch your app. I personally suggest doing this by stages, beginning with a limited number of users who can then provide feedback and suggest improvements.

One big decision to take ahead of the launch is whether you use existing software or order the development of your own. Bespoke software has the advantage that it is free of dependencies, it has a clear function and relevance to your business and it may be more easily scalable than off-the-peg software. On the other hand it may have a higher cost.

Determining the ongoing cost of maintaining and updating your app will depend on its size. A simple, linear app will be cheaper to run than larger, more complex alternatives. It should be relatively straightforward to add new features and functionality to the app.

Do not build a higher specification product than you need. It's best to keep things simple – this is not a vanity project, where you are competing against your rivals to develop the best looking, most powerful app on the market.

## Return on Investment (ROI)

With the app launched, you will need to calculate the ROI. This is a major subject, which we will deal with in detail in the future. For now, here are some key issues:

- Look for the clear-cut, obvious ROI measures, such as employee numbers to achieve a set goal
- Be sure to take into account any variable factors such as seasonality, changes in the competition or market conditions

- Make careful comparisons of results prior to the app launch and afterwards
- Estimate the financial value of the changes you can identify

## Conclusion

Millions of businesses are discovering that B2B apps have transformed their operations, increased efficiency and profitability. Applying the principles identified here will help you to join them.