

Jeffrey Hughes



iPhone® & iPad™ Apps

Secrets to Selling Your iPhone and iPad Apps

Marketing

iPhone® and iPad™ Apps Marketing: Secrets to Selling Your iPhone and iPad Apps

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Introduction

Over the past two years, we have witnessed something remarkable as iPhone developers have created and posted apps to Apple's App Store at a breathtaking pace. The App Store has swelled to more than 180,000 apps and shows no signs of abating. The gold rush to sell iPhone apps is on, and you've created (or want to create) the next blockbuster iPhone app. You see dollar signs and want to be a part of this explosive new business opportunity. So do 125,000 of your friends—all toiling late nights and weekends to strike it rich. Large development companies also want a piece of the action and have teams of programmers cranking out apps as quickly as they can bring them to market. Compounding the problem is the accelerated pace of technology. We have moved beyond “Internet time”—referring to the incredible speed at which technology advances—to “mobile time,” where technology is deployed almost instantly to anyone with a mobile device. This means that consumers have an avalanche of choices when it comes to the technology and content they consume.

What we are seeing on the App Store, however, is not a new phenomenon. Amazon boasts hundreds of thousands of book titles, most selling perhaps a few copies a month. Only the most publicized and best books make Amazon's Top 100 list on its home page. The fact that the top 100 selling books are on the list helps them sell even more copies. It's self-perpetuating. So, every author aspires to be on that list. In a similar fashion, every iPhone app developer aspires to make it on Apple's Top 100 or Top 10, or the New and Noteworthy or Staff Picks lists. They know that making it on those lists will catapult them into realizing dramatic sales. How do you increase your chances of getting noticed? Well, not doing marketing is a surefire way *not* to get noticed. Marketing in some form or another is going to raise your chances of success. All apps that have achieved dramatic success have done so through marketing, either intentionally or unintentionally. The apps have managed to attract the attention of reviewers and capture the imaginations of thousands through positive word of mouth.

Beyond posting your app on Apple's App Store, you may be wondering what else is needed to successfully market your iPhone/iPad app. In short, lots! The days of simply posting your app on the App Store and achieving instant success are long gone. Sure, some developers have hit pay dirt, and, just like the next Vegas jackpot winner, we all love to read those stories. It's not impossible, but the odds of hitting the jackpot have gone up dramatically. So many apps have been introduced so quickly that it's impossible for any casual observer to keep track of the 600+ apps delivered to the App Store each day. Once on the store, customers are faced with the challenge of reviewing scores of similar apps, trying to figure out the best one to download. It's a tall order for any app buyer.

How does an independent developer stand out in a sea of apps? How can someone beat the odds in this high stakes game? The answer is (sort of) simple. Build a great (and I mean great) iPhone/iPad app and devise a stellar marketing plan to capture the hearts and minds of thousands. The execution of these two strategies, however, is not so simple. Many developers rush their apps to market and think the momentum of the App Store will carry them forward. They hope a little luck will be on their side and that they'll get a positive review or get noticed by Apple's staff with a mention. But often they end up with a mediocre app, no reviews, and maybe 3–4 downloads a day. Then, they consider marketing...as an afterthought.

But if you have aspirations to make more than a little spending money from your app, then you must follow tried-and-true marketing (and some offbeat) principles to get your app noticed. As a developer you need to think about the key areas of marketing before, during, and after your app is created. You need to build your app with a clear objective and have a clearly identified audience who is interested in your solution. You also need to think about pricing and promotions, sales and support, and creating buzz for your app. This is not easy work but absolutely necessary to achieve the results you want to see with your app.

The good news is that the marketing process for iPhone/iPad apps is really no different than marketing any other product; it's just highly compressed in terms of the buying process. The principles are the same, even though some of the marketing tools have expanded dramatically in recent years, especially in the area of mass communication and social media. The steps are also still the same: You develop an app that customers need and want, create a solid marketing message, deliver the message to the right audience, build a following, and develop new apps and upgrades to retain existing customers. Remember that marketing is a *process*, not a one-time event. Marketing also takes hard work and effort. It is not a spectator sport.

When you understand that marketing is a continuum that incorporates these fundamental steps, you will be able to plan and implement them to increase sales success for your iPhone app. This book will assist you in understanding the necessary marketing steps to increase exposure for your iPhone/iPad app(s), whether you are just starting out as a first-time developer or have created and posted a number of apps for sale. This book assumes you want to move beyond being a casual developer and seller of iPhone apps to a successful marketer of your own best-selling apps and brand. The following sidebar illustrates the broad steps in the marketing process.

STEP 1: BUILD YOUR IPHONE/IPAD APP MARKETING PLAN

Marketing doesn't have to be mysterious or complicated. You can quickly gain a greater understanding of marketing processes and make them work for you. You can learn how to generate a solid, reusable marketing plan through the following:

- The identification and definition of your iPhone/iPad apps' unique value and purpose
- The creation of a powerful, easy-to-remember message for your app
- The use of the right marketing tools to deliver your message to the right audience at the right time

STEP 2: DELIVER YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

The timely delivery of the right message to the right audience using the right technology helps set you apart from the competition.

STEP 3: CONVERT YOUR PROSPECTS TO CUSTOMERS

By following the instructions in this book, you can develop an effective marketing plan. A marketing plan is your guide to converting prospective buyers to becoming customers of your iPhone/iPad apps.

STEP 4: REUSE YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Marketing is a process, and when followed it brings predictable results. This book provides a valuable overview of basic marketing principles but also includes the secrets of moving prospective customers from casual app observers to enthusiastic buyers.

Part I: Your Marketing Message

Everything from naming your app to the text you place on the App Store (and many other components) contributes to your marketing message. What sets your iPhone/iPad app apart from all your competitors? How can you convey that unique message to your buyers? Let's face it: There are lots of competitors with similar apps. In this part, you review steps to help you create a unique message that will distinguish your app from the competition. You'll do this by examining positioning, target audience, competition, and other market conditions. The following chapters are included in this part:

- **Chapter 1, “Your iPhone and iPad App Marketing Strategy: Grand Slam or Base Hits?”**—Learn how messaging works and understand how iPhone messaging is similar and, in some cases, very different from marketing for other products.
- **Chapter 2, “What Makes a Winning iPhone/iPad App?”**—What are the key selling points of your app? Can you identify key strengths and competitive advantages to highlight your app? Learn how to distill this essential information.
- **Chapter 3, “Identifying Your App's Unique Value”**—Let's zero in on what matters and create a crisp message that meets some basic criteria and is easy to remember.
- **Chapter 4, “Identifying Your Target Audience”**—The best results from your marketing message come when you have targeted a specific audience with a clear message. Learn how to find your target audience.
- **Chapter 5, “Building Your App's Total Message”**—An effective app name, a crisp App Store message, and a clear website all contribute to your overall marketing message. Choosing not to do some of these things may not impact your sales. Not doing any of them will.

Part II: Delivering Your Message

With a carefully crafted message, you are now ready to deliver your message to the right audience and through the right means for maximum exposure and effectiveness. This part provides an overview of the various methods available to reach different audiences and create demand for your iPhone/iPad apps. Demand is created when you help prospective customers see that you have a solution to their problem or you pique their curiosity with a challenging game or puzzle. The demand for most products is already there; it's just a matter of creating a message that resonates with that audience and gets them to notice your app. The following chapters are included in this part:

- **Chapter 6, “Electronic Word of Mouth”**—Word of mouth is one of the most powerful means of increasing sales of your iPhone/iPad app. Learn how to go about getting people to talk about your app.
- **Chapter 7, “Using Social Media in Your App Marketing”**—Create a following for your brand and your apps using Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Blogs, and YouTube. You can use these newer tools to achieve greater exposure for your app.
- **Chapter 8, “Timing Your Marketing Activities”**—When do you want to communicate your message? Often, timing plays a role in how well your marketing message is received. Learn how to coordinate the delivery of your marketing message for maximum impact and results.
- **Chapter 9, “Getting the Word Out About Your Apps”**—A press release can be a very powerful tool to spread the word about your app, but it has to be written professionally and adhere to very specific guidelines to attract the attention of your audience. Learn the tricks of the trade.

Part III: Pricing Your iPhone/iPad App

A key aspect of marketing your iPhone/iPad app is to carefully set your price. Setting your price is not a trivial matter. This part walks you through pricing considerations and helps you understand the buyer’s mentality and decision-making process. You learn how to create promotions and cross-sell your app where possible, another important aspect of pricing. The following chapters are included in this part:

- **Chapter 10, “Pricing Your App”**—Perhaps one of the biggest challenges of developing an iPhone/iPad app is pricing. In this chapter, you learn how and where to begin to price your app for maximum success.
- **Chapter 11, “Conducting an App Pricing Analysis”**—A pricing analysis will help you calculate your breakeven: how many apps you need to sell to cover your costs and start to make a profit.
- **Chapter 12, “Selling Value over Price”**—Some apps will be priced higher than the usual \$0.99 or \$1.99. Learn how to convey the value of your apps and get the price that you’re entitled to for your hard work.
- **Chapter 13, “Breaking into the App Store Top 100”**—You can do a number of things in an effort to get your app into the Top 100. Learn the best tips to reach maximum success in the App Store.
- **Chapter 14, “Level the Playing Field with a Free App”**—Learn the pros and cons to creating a free version of your app or how to use the

in-app purchase capability to expand your sales. In-app purchases are the trend of the future for iPhone/iPad applications.

- **Chapter 15, “The App Pricing Roller Coaster”**—Raising and lowering your price can have an impact on sales, but there is a cost, and you’ll learn all about it here.
- **Chapter 16, “App Promotions and Cross-Selling”**—Promotions aren’t just for your local car dealership. Some promotions can work to sell your iPhone/iPad app. Cross-selling can also work in certain circumstances.
- **Chapter 17, “Using iPhone/iPad Analytics”**—Now’s the time to let math be your friend. These kinds of app analytics help you sell more of your apps. Learn the tools available for iPhone/iPad developers and how to interpret the results to your benefit.

Part IV: Implement a Marketing Plan/Launch Your App

With the right message and the right audience, combined with the right marketing tools and methods, you can create extremely effective marketing campaigns. This part walks you through the steps of implementing a marketing campaign and provides a fully developed sample campaign ready for you to implement. The following chapters are included in this part:

- **Chapter 18, “Why Have a Marketing Plan?”**—When developers hear about a marketing plan, they usually run the other way. This marketing plan is short, to the point, and effective. You need to have a plan to guide your app to sales success.
- **Chapter 19, “Components of an App Marketing Plan”**—Learn the basic components of an iPhone app marketing plan and how they can be used to help you stay on track during development and launch.
- **Chapter 20, “Marketing Essentials”**—Not all marketing plans are designed the same. Learn which types of apps need a certain plan. Learn what to do if you’ve already posted your app and you’re not seeing great sales.
- **Chapter 21, “25 Essential iPhone/iPad Marketing Activities”**—Learn the top 25 marketing activities that will help your app achieve maximum exposure and success.

- **Chapter 22, “Implementing Your Plan”**—If you have planned for it, your app launch should be an exciting and exhilarating experience. Learn how to get ready for the launch of your iPhone app.
- **Chapter 23, “iPhone/iPad Apps for Corporate Marketing”**—If you are working for a large corporation, you want to read this chapter on how to develop apps that help your company with branding. Lots of companies have built apps for name recognition and brand value alone, whereas others are charging for them.

So there you have it. Who thought so much could be said about marketing an iPhone/iPad app? Apple has created an incredible opportunity for developers around the world to achieve success on the App Store. Although not without its flaws and complaints, the App Store has created a tremendous opportunity for individual developers and companies to build and sell mobile technology for the masses. Here's to your success.



Your iPhone and iPad App Marketing Strategy: Grand Slam or Base Hits?

As an iPhone or iPad app developer you want to strike it rich selling your app to millions of customers, or at least tens of thousands of customers, to make your hard work pay off. Other equally ambitious developers hope to achieve a steady income and perhaps write apps full time and leave their other full-time jobs behind. While these goals are possible, it has become much more difficult over the past year to achieve such success.

There are several reasons. First, the sheer number of apps for sale on the App Store has made it much more difficult to stand out from the crowd. Instead of just a few similar apps in your category, there are likely hundreds, even thousands, vying for the buyer's attention.

You are competing against free and paid apps, some brilliantly written and some not even worth giving away.

Secondly, the intense pricing pressure causes many developers to start off at a low price or quickly drop their price to \$0.99, a figure that makes it extremely difficult to break even much less make any profit. According to the website 148apps.biz, almost 42% of all apps (games included) are priced at \$0.99. Figure 1.1 shows a range of apps, from free to \$9.99, and their percentage totals on the App Store. You'll notice that 77% of all apps sold are at \$1.99 or lower.

Count By Price - Active Apps				
App Price	# Apps	# Games	Total	% of Total
Free	20,176	5,396	25,572	(24.78%)
0.99	34,896	7,962	42,858	(41.52%)
1.99	10,783	2,492	13,275	(12.86%)
2.99	5,659	913	6,572	(6.37%)
3.99	1,867	192	2,059	(1.99%)
4.99	3,508	413	3,921	(3.80%)
5.99	1,011	38	1,049	(1.02%)
6.99	584	23	607	(0.59%)
7.99	1,085	30	1,115	(1.08%)
8.99	222	3	225	(0.22%)
9.99	2,042	85	2,127	(2.06%)

Figure 1.1 iPhone app prices tend to be bunched down at the \$1.99 level and lower.

Source: *www.148apps.biz*

The sheer number of competing apps may seem daunting; however, these statistics are not presented to be discouraging. Rather, this chapter is designed to point out that the App Store has matured very quickly, and you have to develop a solid marketing strategy to realize success. The App Store is not running on Internet time, it's on mobile time! Your marketing strategy also has to be tuned to work with your buyer.

We've Seen This Movie Before

The App Store is much like your local supermarket. In the 1980s, the average supermarket carried about 7,500 items. Today, that same supermarket carries upward of 50,000 items! Every vendor is fighting for shelf space so more people will buy their products. Manufacturers want their products positioned at eye level or placed on their own display at the end of an aisle. They are willing to pay extra for this privilege. The supermarket makes its money through high volume turnover of its products. Those items that don't sell well are pushed to the bottom of the shelves or moved to another part of the store.

Amazon.com is no different; vendors are trying to stand out in a very crowded market. Not counting other items, its bookstore alone boasts well over 250,000 titles. Many authors hope to achieve fame and fortune by landing on the top 100 list on Amazon's book home page. Other authors hope to get their big break by being mentioned on Oprah.

The App Store has exploded from its introduction of fewer than 1,000 apps to well over 185,000 apps at the time of this writing. Just like the supermarket vendors, every app developer is vying for that eye-level virtual shelf space, hoping to get top billing so buyers will take a look. They are either hoping to make it into the top 100 sales for their category or get a mention in the "Staff Favorites," "New and Noteworthy," or "What's Hot" sections of the App Store. Table 1.1 shows the breakout of the different categories of apps available on the App Store. Approximately 450–600 apps are posted to the store each day! According to Apple, almost 10,000 apps per week are submitted for the approval process. At this pace we could easily see well over 225,000 posted to the App Store by the end of 2010.

Table 1.1 App Store Percentages for the Most Popular Categories on the App Store	
Type of iPhone/iPad App	Percentage of Total Apps
Games	29%
Books	24%
Entertainment	22%
Travel	13%
Education	12%
Source: www.148apps.biz	

As the App Store has grown, it has necessitated reconfiguration numerous times to further segment the apps into logical groups where buyers can more easily connect with sellers. Apple has improved the search capabilities of the store, added sub categories and added Top Paid Apps and Top Free Apps columns to each of the individual categories. As shown in Figure 1.2, the top paid, free, and grossing apps are displayed on the home page of the App Store.

If you drill down into a category such as Lifestyles, you see that there is also a breakout of the top 20 paid apps and the top 20 free apps. An example of this breakout is shown in Figure 1.3. Notice that this particular category has 275 pages of free and paid apps at 20 apps per page! I'll do the math. That's 5,500 apps in the Lifestyle category (at the time of this writing). If your app manages to sell enough copies to make it into the top 20, you will see your sales climb dramatically (as long as you stay on this list.)

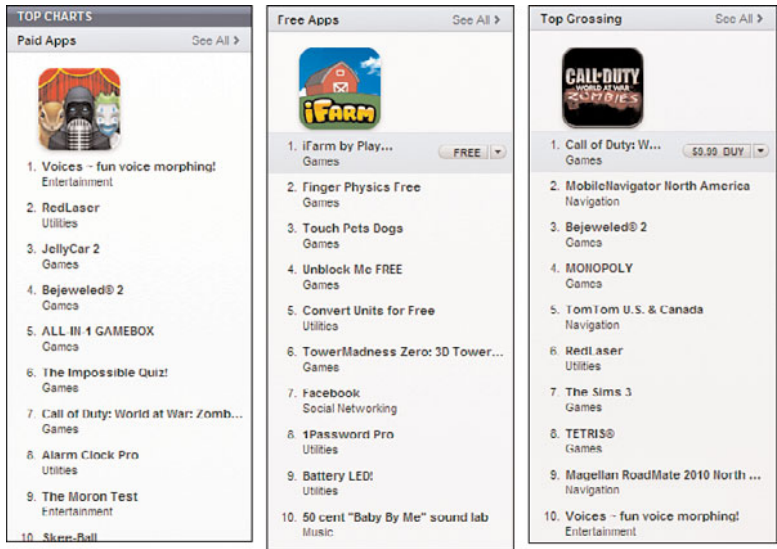


Figure 1.2 Top Paid Apps, Top Free Apps, and Top Grossing Apps are shown to the right of the App Store's home page.



Figure 1.3 Each category on the App Store has columns for paid and free apps.

You can also sort the apps within each category by Name (A–Z breakouts), by Release Date, and by Most Popular as shown in Figure 1.4. Searching by Name is helpful if you're searching on a particular name of an app or your best guess as to its name. Release date is the default. Searching on Most Popular almost always brings up a huge list of free apps. No surprise there.

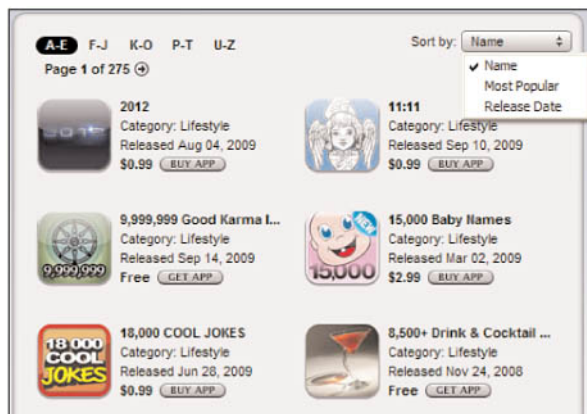


Figure 1.4 The App Store allows you to search by Name, Release Date, and Most Popular within each category.

The App Store will continue to make improvements to help strengthen and refine the search process and showcase apps in the best way possible. After all, Apple has a vested interest in your success. The more apps you sell, the more they make. Perhaps more importantly, the more apps that are sold, the stronger the iPhone brand. Apple doesn't publish App Store sales in its earnings results, but it has commented on earnings calls that it is slightly above breakeven on the App Store. However, no matter what it does to improve the store, the challenge will always be the same for you: how to get your app noticed.



Note

Someone once said (possibly Rudi Giuliani) that hope is not a strategy. Hope is also not a marketing strategy! Posting your app on the App Store and hoping for the best is not a plan and will more than likely result in mediocre sales from the very start.

In order to create a winning sales and marketing strategy for your app, it's important to understand the dynamics of the App Store and understand that there are several strategies that you can employ. Most developers are trying to knock their app out of the park. They want the grand slam and think anything less is failure. A number of developers give up, thinking there's only two possible outcomes: the big win or no win. But, there are actually three possible outcomes: the Big Win App, the Steady Win App, and the No Win App. All apps fall into one of these three categories. Over time, and without marketing or product updates, all apps will eventually slide from one category to the next one below.

The Big Win—Grand Slam

The Big Win apps or Grand Slams are generally characterized by explosive sales from their launch. Games, by far, make up the majority of the Big Win apps. Why? Because games take advantage of the impulse buy which occurs directly from an iPhone. Games are the most likely app to be bought on impulse. The impulse buyer doesn't care about reviews. Sometimes, a community of people is familiar with a particular development company and is hungry to purchase its new app. Some companies have made their app successful by porting an already successful PC or Mac game over to the iPhone platform.

Big Win apps have been positioned by large development companies with huge followings. Their aim is to achieve quick sales on apps that are priced in the games sweet spot from \$0.99 to \$1.99. At this price point, the impulse buyer is looking for something to occupy his time. The longevity of this type of app may be short, lasting only months. Then the same company releases another app and focuses its attention on that. Some winning apps are designed in such a way to bring the customer back over and over again with paid add-ons or frequent updates. One of the most popular game apps to provide frequent releases is Pocket God shown in Figure 1.5. Pocket God refers to its updates as “Episodes” and has built a very strong community of users that keep the game in the spotlight. User suggestions for new features keep the game fresh and exciting.

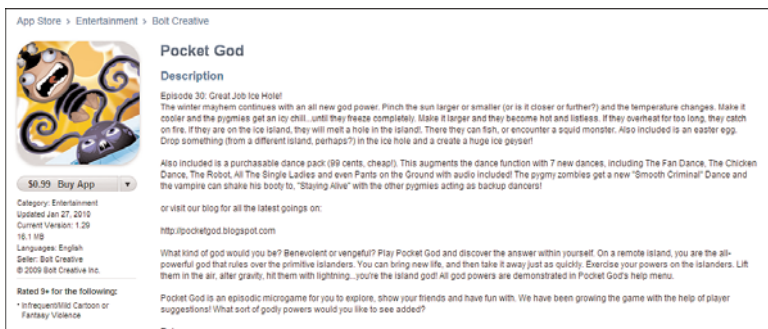


Figure 1.5 Pocket God has done a very good job keeping customers engaged with its frequent new “Episodes,” or product updates.

Another common element for Big Win games is that they are usually simplistic in their premise. The masses of iPhone users purchase games that are easy to learn. Low on learning, high on enjoyment is the rule of thumb for the quick win Big Win games. The typical game buyer doesn't want to learn tons of rules to a new game. They want to understand the point of the app immediately.

The Big Win apps can also come from independent developers (Ethan Nicholas of iShoot Fame) whose military tank battle game is a classic example of independent

developer success. However, the big wins for independent developers are happening less and less due to the number of games on the App Store and because game quality is going up while the time to market is going down. Larger companies have the development staff that can bring apps to market more quickly without sacrificing quality. It simply takes an independent developer longer to create a high powered, high quality game app. iShoot continues to do well, although its sales are not as strong as they used to be. However, once a following is created and the app is updated frequently, you will continue to attract customers and positive reviews as shown in Figure 1.6.

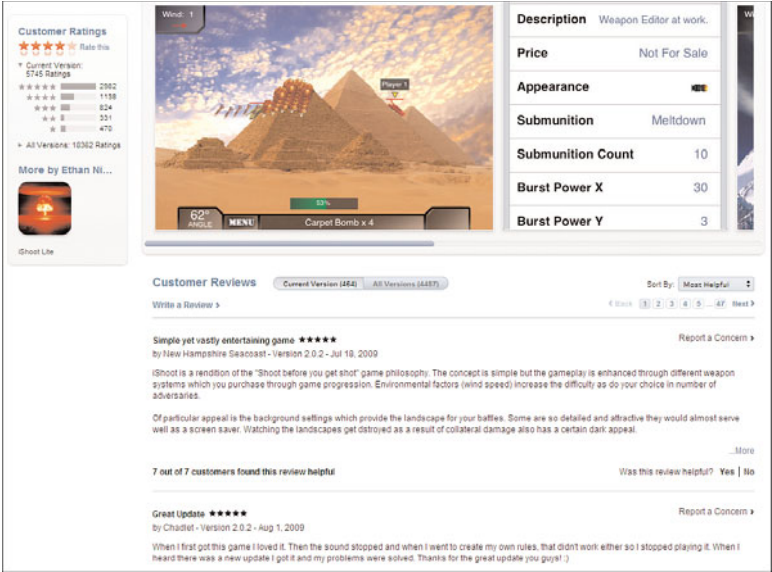


Figure 1.6 Positive reviews continue to roll in for the infamous iShoot App.

The last characteristic of these apps is that they often get a big break from the press as being an app to look at. Tom Clancy achieved remarkable success with his book *Hunt for Red October* when Ronald Reagan praised the book after he read it while on vacation. After Reagan’s comments, sales of that book skyrocketed. If an iPhone/iPad app gets a lucky break from a major news agency, it can serve as the catalyst to get sales moving in a big way. Word of mouth takes it from there.

Some other apps that fall into this category are shown in Figures 1.7 and 1.8. These apps have achieved phenomenal success. *Flick Fishing* continues to stay on the best seller list due to its amazing graphics, simple play premise, and huge following. *Koi Pond* also hit the mark with its relaxing and amazing graphics, and, according to its developers, being in the right place at the right time when the App Store was launched. And who can forget *Bejeweled* and *Bejeweled 2* shown in Figure 1.9.

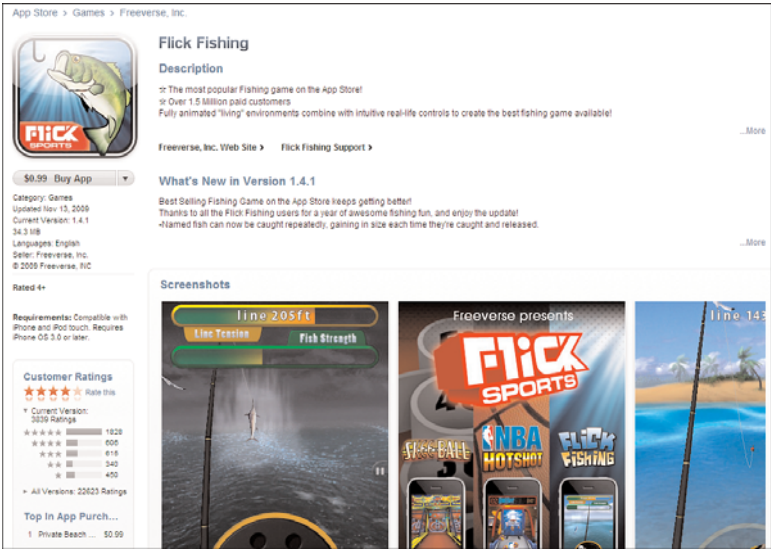


Figure 1.7 Flick Fishing has achieved Big Win success with well over 1.3 million downloads. They also offer an add-on pack for additional play, adding to their revenues.

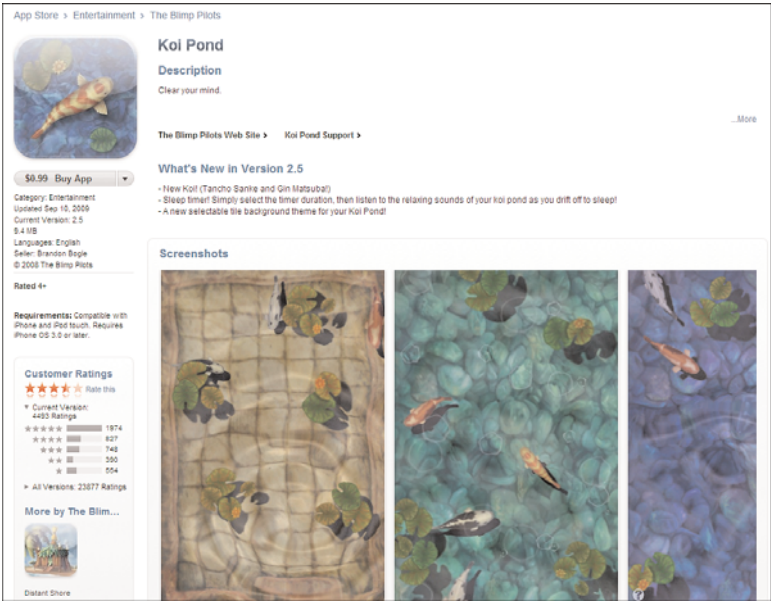


Figure 1.8 Koi Pond achieved early success with its incredible use of graphics and simple premise of design.



Figure 1.9 Bejeweled is the runaway best selling game from PopCap Games, Inc. It is on Apple's Highest Grossing App list.

The Steady Win—Base Hits

The next category of iPhone/iPad apps is the Steady Win, also known as base hit apps. This category may be overlooked by some app developers who focus solely on the Big Win. The majority of new iPhone/iPad apps land in this category even if the developer has intentions of his app making it into the Big Win group. These apps rely on app reviews, positive blog posts, and making it onto the App Store's "wall of fame" where the app is placed in the "New and Noteworthy" or "Staff Picks" sections for a time. These placements are definitely helpful and will boost sales noticeably while you remain on that list.

These apps also rely on good, old-fashioned, consistent marketing. The revenue with this type of app can be more predictable when the seller understands what marketing activities work for him. With a good app, the right marketing mix, and product updates, your app can achieve success on the App Store. It may not be multimillion dollar success, but it can be decent. It may be enough to compel you to write multiple apps, build a brand, and truly make a business out of your efforts.

Some apps that have achieved solid success that are not necessarily iPhone games are shown in Figure 1.10 and Figure 1.11. These apps have been achieving a steady revenue stream for their developers albeit not millionaire levels. They have strong value propositions and their products resonate with their intended audience. These apps are focused on saving money and getting healthy, topics that interest almost everyone.

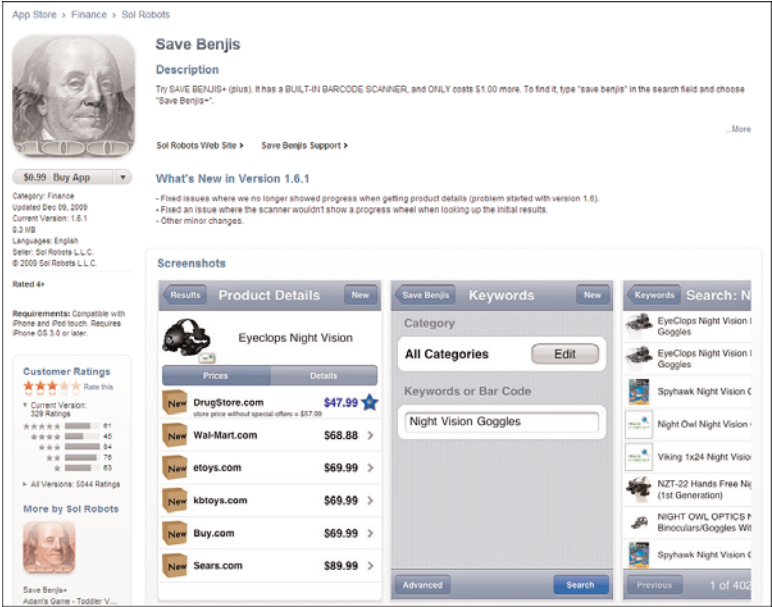


Figure 1.10 Save Benjis is an app that allows you to do price comparisons. They also offer an up-sell to their product, a newer app with the popular bar-code scanner feature.

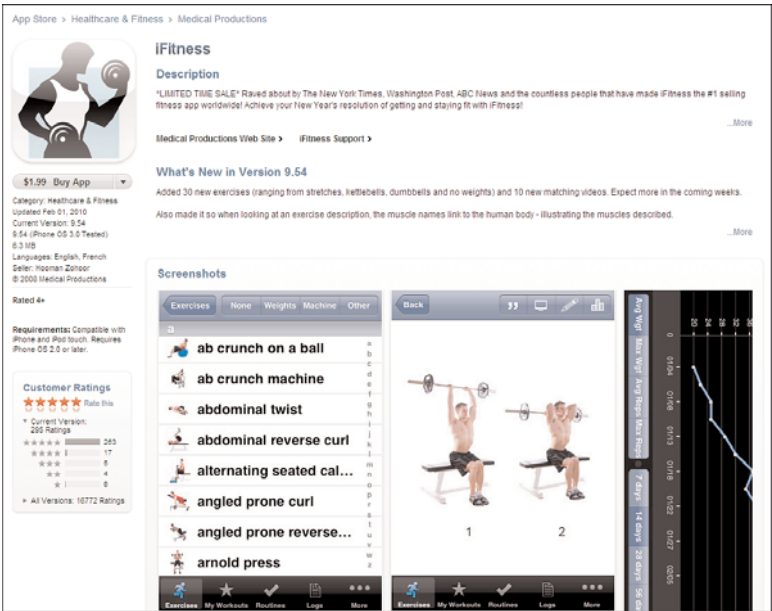


Figure 1.11 iFitness is a long time selling app that helps you track and learn how to do more than 200 exercises.

Since most apps fall into the category of Steady Win, the bulk of this book is focused on helping you achieve ongoing success through a complete marketing approach. These apps generally command a higher selling price and can have more predictable revenue streams. Independent developers will most likely be playing in this category whether they realize it or not.

The No Win—Strikeout

Sadly, a large number of apps on the App Store are DOA. After working months and months or paying someone else to write your app, you post the app to the App Store and anxiously await its review and approval. After a few weeks you get the word back that your app has been approved. The app is posted within a few days of approval and your expectations soar! You can see the checks rolling in from Apple. You've already bought the swimming pool (remember *Christmas Vacation*). Then, you wait. You check your sales stats. A few sales here, a few sales there.... What has happened? Where are all my buyers? What happened to the 10,000 downloads overnight? You thought people would be breaking down the doors to get at this new app. You are discouraged and think you've wasted your time. You've probably thought about dropping your price. Surely there must be something wrong with the App Store to cause this.

Sometimes, even very well written apps end up unnoticed and ignored. An app that sees 0 or 1–2 sales a day is not going to cut it to reach your break even. At the time of this writing, there are almost 12,000 apps that are inactive and no longer for sale on the app store. So, what does a person do who finds himself in this predicament where his app is not doing well? It's time for a total app makeover. Ask yourself the following questions, and be brutally honest:

1. Is there really a market for my app? Did you come up with your app idea while sitting around with a bunch of friends and thought you had stumbled onto something that was incredible? Or did you do some solid competitive research to see if there were similar apps already posted, especially in the Free category? Nothing wrong with creating a competing app if you can make it better, but it's got to be better! Often, whenever we think we have a great idea we need to really analyze whether it's viable or not. Ask some family, friends, or coworkers if they would be willing to pay for such an app. Find out if you have a market (and its potential size) for your app before you start coding or launch into an expensive project with a developer.
2. Is your app extremely well written? A number of apps on the App Store are poorly written. They have bugs or some of the features don't work. This is a surefire way to get a one-star rating on the App Store by a disgruntled buyer. Even at \$0.99 people will take the time to point out that

your app is crap and not worth the money on the customer reviews. One of the outcomes of competition is that prices fall and quality goes up. Customers expect an app to work just as well at \$0.99 as they do at \$29.99.

3. Have you done any marketing? As we will mention time and time again in this book, marketing is not posting your app to the App Store. You've had your app approved by Apple, and that's a great accomplishment. Now the second half of your work starts. Selling iPhone/iPad apps is not a passive activity if you intend to make money at it. A few other questions to consider: Does your app's icon convey what the app does? Icons that don't convey what the apps does or at least what category the app is in are missing a marketing opportunity. Does the name of your app communicate the value of your app or help tell the story of what it does? Does your web copy match your product website in terms of crisp well-written content? All of these things combined help you to tell the story of your app and communicate its value. Figure 1.12 shows some sample icons that do a good job of communicating their value.



Figure 1.12 These icons communicate very nicely what the apps do. This is an important part of your overall marketing.

Taken together, these three components are the pillars of your app's success as shown in Figure 1.13. Failure to address all three of these areas well means the likelihood of your app succeeding in the market is slim. I know there are stories of some apps seemingly not addressing these areas and yet achieving wild success. There are always examples of people achieving success in books or movies that, for some odd reason, defy all understanding.

The same goes for iPhone/iPad apps. But, even the successful apps that achieve (perhaps) undeserving success have done at least two of these three things right. They definitely have a market for their app, regardless of how stupid or pointless their app may be. They may claim to have done no marketing, but word of mouth (a form of marketing) has propelled them to success. There is never an explanation why an app is not successful. The answer is always there with a little digging.

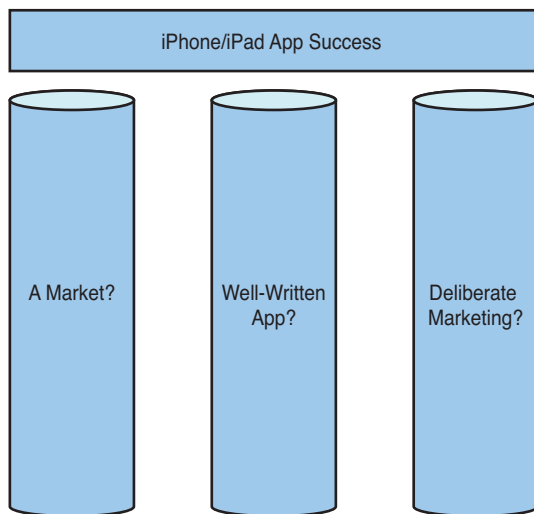


Figure 1.13 Three pillars of iPhone/iPad app success: a market, well-written app, and deliberate marketing.

If you should decide that your old app should rest in peace, at least you have a better understanding of what you can do the next time around to help you achieve success. Don't kid yourself when you answer any of these questions. If you truly believe you have a great idea for an app and you've done your homework, then go for it. If you have written a great app and know it without a doubt, then apply some marketing and get those sales moving.

Benefits/Drawbacks of the Big Win and Steady Win Strategies

The App Store is not a perfect democratic society and never will be. No matter how many changes Apple makes to the App Store, there will always be unhappy participants. So, you can whine about what's wrong or you can figure out how to work the system to your best advantage. Table 1.2 illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of the Big Win strategy. The App Store is not for the faint of heart. Table 1.3 shows the advantages and disadvantages of the Steady Win strategy. Again, it's more likely you'll end up in this category than the Big Win.

If you haven't started developing your iPhone/iPad app, you are at an important decision-making point. Making a strategy decision now will help you make important marketing decisions as you get closer to launch. Having clear (and realistic) expectations of where your app will be positioned on the App Store gives your app purpose and will help you avoid the No Win bucket.

Table 1.2 Big Win Advantages/Disadvantages

Big Win Advantages	Big Win Disadvantages
Make lots of money quickly	Customers expect high quality at a crazy low price, like \$0.99.
Deliver apps quickly to market	Usually requires development team to get app created quickly. Time is of the essence.
Games are extremely popular with this strategy	Extremely competitive, market very fickle
Charge a low price to attract customers	Highly price-sensitive customers, promotions have limited impact, no pricing flexibility

Table 1.3 Steady Win Advantages/Disadvantages

Steady Win Advantages	Steady Win Disadvantages
Make money slowly but more predictably	Developers get discouraged easily, don't see their efforts through to success.
Apps build a customer following with repeat business for add-ons	Must build updates on a frequent basis and respond quickly to customer feedback.
Almost any app can participate in the Steady Win category	Games are a challenge here because of their short lifespan. Developers must build in add-ons to keep the audience coming back.
Apps can achieve access into the Top 100 (or other categories) with consistent marketing	Income drops off dramatically if steps are not taken to keep the consumer in front of the app. Marketing is a full-time job.

Summary

iPhone and iPad apps fall into one of three categories: Big Wins, Steady Wins, and No Wins. The Big Win is what every independent developer tends to go after. However, they would be wise to look closely at the Steady Wins category of selling as this affords the best opportunity for most developers. Good marketing can make the difference between no revenue (No Win) and steady revenue (Steady Win).

Decide now what your iPhone selling strategy is going to be and you'll have an easier time defining a marketing plan and sticking with it. It will save you a lot of heartburn too if you look realistically at your app and its market and set realistic expectations on your success. Don't get me wrong, I want you to be wildly successful in selling your app. I hope you hit a grand slam into the parking lot, but I also want you to realize that it's hard work to get there. Even getting base hits is hard work but more likely, especially when you apply some marketing to it.

For those of you who think you've got an app lost in the No Win bin, it's never too late! You can resurrect your app from the No Win status to the Steady Wins status as long as your app is well written, has a strong premise, and gets some marketing. Are you prepared to rewrite a poorly written app? Does your app really have sales appeal? If so, then roll up your sleeves, put your marketing hat on, and keep reading.

Index

A

- AAMCO, 280
- accountability system, setting up, 273
- ad exchanges, 199, 267
- add-ons, cross-selling, 217
- Admob, 102-103, 199-200, 267
- advertising, 98, 101-102, 262
 - with Admob, 102-103
 - click-based advertising on Facebook, 114
 - free apps with, 198-201, 263, 267
 - with Mobclix, 103
 - online advertising, 105
 - paid search, 103-104
 - with Quattro Wireless, 103
 - in traditional media, 98-101
 - newspapers*, 98-100
 - radio and TV*, 100-101
- Adwhirl, 201
- after app launch marketing activities, 256
- allocating marketing funds, 235-236
- analytics, 223-224, 262
 - event tracking, 225-226
 - interface usage tracking, 226
 - location tracking, 224
 - mobile analytics, 266
 - privacy issues, 229-230
 - product usage tracking, 225
 - sales tracking, 224
 - vendors
 - Flurry/Pinch Media*, 226-228
 - Mobclix*, 228-229
- app buying cycles, 124-125
 - seasonal apps, 125-126
- app content, updating at App Store, 254
- app development
 - costs, quantifying, 163-166
 - feature updates, 28-29
 - PC/Mac app redevelopment, 33-34
 - seasonal apps, 32-33
 - social-networking apps, 32, 34
 - trends, following, 30-31
 - unique ideas, 26-28
- app development costs, quantifying, 163-166
- app development strategies, pricing for, 192-193
 - converting paid apps to free apps, 200-201
 - dual paid/free app strategy, 195, 197-198, 266
 - free apps, 194-195
 - free apps with ads, 198-201, 263, 267
 - in-app purchases, 197-198
 - standalone paid apps, 193
- app launch
 - date, selecting, 128-130
 - marketing activities
 - after*, 256
 - during*, 255
 - prior to*, 254-255
- App Popular, 184-185
- app pricing, 147-149
 - breakeven analysis, 155, 158-159
 - competing against free apps, 149-152
 - elasticity of, 159-160
 - misconceptions about, 152-154

offering free versions, 154
strategies for, 155-156

app review blogs, 117

App Store

app content, updating, 254
category percentages, 11
cross-selling on, 219
searching within, 10-13
text, writing, 76-78

App Store top 100 apps. *See*
top 100 apps

Apple retail stores, 47

Apple reviewers

contacting, 189-190
submitting apps to, 129

apps

best sellers, characteristics
of, 89

marketing strategies

big wins, 14-15, 21-22,
126-128

lack of, 19-21

steady wins, 17-19,
21-22

naming, 70-76, 260

number in App Store,
10-13

pricing range of, 10
submitting for Apple
review, 129

Apptism, 239

audience. *See* target market

average prices of apps, 203-204

B

balancing marketing activities,
253-254, 256

Barnes and Noble Bookstore,
280

Bejeweled, 15

belief and value systems

(market segmentation), 58

benefits

comparison of costs and,
167-168

linking to features lists, 49
quantifying, 166-167

Benjamin Moore, 277

best sellers, characteristics
of, 89

beta testing apps, 183-184

Bic Concert Lighter, 194

Bic lighter app, 275

big wins marketing strategy,
14-15, 126-128
advantages/disadvantages
of, 21-22

blogs, 117-119, 265

timing needed for, 124

body copy (press releases),
writing, 140-141

brand building, 64, 267, 270

with corporate marketing
apps, 275-280

with cross-selling, 220

development pricing
strategies, 192-193

*converting paid apps to
free apps*, 200-201

dual paid/free app

strategy, 195-198, 266

free apps, 194-195

free apps with ads,
198-201, 263, 267

in-app purchases,
197-198

*standalone paid
apps*, 193

mixed results of, 277

selecting app name, 73-74

top 100 apps, tips for
achieving, 188-189

breakeven analysis, 155,
158-159, 168-170

budgeting, 215-216, 235-236

bugs, resolving, 29

business environment (in
marketing plan), 245-246

business models, Apple retail
stores example, 47

buyers

decision process of, 70
types of, 68

buying cycles for apps,
124-125

seasonal apps, 125-126

buying email lists, 93

buying process, 38

C

calendar (in marketing plan),
249-251

call to action in press
releases, 141

case studies for pricing
apps, 177

categories, selecting for apps,
58-59

Chipotle, 281, 283-284

Clancy, Tom, 15

click-based advertising on
Facebook, 114

collaboration, 267

ColorSnap, 277, 280

comments, posting in
forums, 266

community relations, 105-107

comparison of costs and
benefits, 167-168

competition

evaluating, 239

in marketing plan, 245

researching, 27-28, 40-42
identifying competitors,

42-44

learning from

competitors, 45, 47

size of, 9-10

competitive pricing, 178

competitive worksheet, 52

consumer analysis (in
marketing plan), 246

contact information for
contests, 216

contests, 213, 216

contribution margin, 169

coordinating

marketing activities, 92-93
product launches, 237

corporate marketing apps
benefits of, 276

for brand building, 275-280
pricing, 276

as web product extensions,
276, 279, 281-284

whether to develop,
276-277

cost of hiring press release writer, 135

cost of marketing, balancing, 253-254, 256

cost/benefit analysis, 161-162

- app development costs, quantifying, 163-166
- benefits, quantifying, 166-167
- breakeven analysis, 168-170
- cost/benefit comparison, 167-168

cost/benefit comparison, 167-168

CPC (pay-per-click) advertising, 102-103

cross-promotion, 185-186

cross-selling, 211-212, 216-220

- add-ons, 217
- brand building with, 220
- on product website and App Store, 219
- purchase links, 218

customer relations, 105-107

customer retention, 270

customer reviews, generating, 83-85, 264, 267

customer support, 151-152

D

delivery methods, reaching target audience, 94-95

demand generation, 93-94

demographics, 58, 245

developers, hiring, 163, 166

development. *See* app development

differentiation in app pricing, 178

Digg, 265

digital signature in press releases, 143-144

direct competitors, 42

direct mail marketing, 95-96

direct marketing, 95

- direct mail, 95-96
- email, 96-98, 261

distributing press releases, 144-145

documentation, 151

downloads, increasing with graphics and description improvements, 88

downward pricing pressure, 153

dual paid/free app strategy, 195, 197-198, 266

during app launch marketing activities, 255

E-F

email lists, buying, 93

email marketing, 96-98, 261

embedded links in press releases, 141-142

evaluating competitors, 239

event tracking, 225-226

exclusive sponsorship deals, 127

expert quotes in press releases, 141

extending web products with corporate marketing apps, 276, 279, 281-284

Facebook, 113, 265

- marketing objectives, 113-114

fan pages (Facebook), creating, 113-114

fashion trends apps, 30

feature updates, 266

- in app development, 28-29

features lists, 48

- linking benefits to, 49

Fidelity Investments, 282-283

financial information (in marketing plan), 249

fixed development costs, 163

Flick Fishing, 15, 217

Flurry, 226-228, 230

focusing target market, 235

foreign developers, hiring, 166

forums, discussions in, 266

free apps

- with ads, 198-201, 263, 267
- building following with, 194-195
- competing against, 149-152
- converting paid apps to, 200-201
- dual paid/free app strategy, 195, 197-198, 266
- offering, advantages of, 154

free samples, 215

functionality

- in marketing plan, 248
- paid versus free apps, 150

funding, obtaining, 237

G-H

game apps

- naming, 71-73
- price range, 162, 203-204

Gas Cubby, sponsorship example, 127

giveaways, 213

goals

- of marketing campaigns, 270-271
- in marketing plan, 243-244
- sales goals, setting, 238

Google, ideas for app names, 75

Grand Opulence Sundae, 171-172

grand slams. *See* big wins marketing strategy

graphic design, paid versus free apps, 151

graphics, 78-79

green trends apps, 30

groups (social media), joining, 112

growth roadmap, marketing plan as, 236-237

half-off sales, 214

headline (press releases), writing, 138-139

healthy eating apps, 30

hiring
 developers, 163, 166
 press release writers,
 133, 135
 holidays (in marketing plan),
 249-251. *See also* seasonal apps
 home décor trends apps, 31

I

I Am T-Pain (music app), 182
 ice cream sundae pricing,
 171-172
 icons
 role in marketing, 20
 selecting, 79-80, 268
 iFitness, 18
 iGUAAGE, 280
 iHandy, 189
 images in press releases,
 142-143
 implementation of marketing
 plans
 goals of, 270-271
 managing marketing
 activities, 273-274
 measurement criteria, 271
 target market, gathering
 prospects, 271
 tracking marketing
 ROI, 272

in-app advertising, 263
 in-app purchases, 65, 197-198
 increasing
 downloads with graphics
 and description
 improvements, 88
 sales, 270

indirect competitors, 42
 interface usage tracking, 226
 intuitive design, 151
 iPhone sales statistics, 124
 iShoot, 15, 193

J-K

joining social media
 groups, 112

keywords
 in press releases, 141
 top 100 apps, tips for
 achieving, 187-188
 knitting-related apps, 27
 Koi Pond, 15
 Kraft iFood Assistant 2.0, 280

L

launch date, selecting, 128-130
 launch sponsorships, 266
 launching app
 marketing activities
 after, 256
 marketing activities
 during, 255
 marketing activities prior
 to, 254-255
 launching press releases,
 timing of, 145-146
 learning from competition,
 45, 47
 legal issues, location
 tracking, 224
 life stage (market
 segmentation), 58
 lifestyle (market
 segmentation), 58
 LinkedIn, 119-120, 264-265
 links, embedding in press
 releases, 141-142
 location tracking, 224
 lowering prices, 205-208

M

Mac/PC apps, redevelopment
 for iPhone, 33-34
 managing marketing activities,
 273-274
 market analysis (in marketing
 plan), 244-245
 market research, 60-61
 importance of, 19
 market segmentation, 57-63
 marketing, defined, 37

marketing activities
 advertising, 98,
 101-102, 262
 with Admob, 102-103
 with Mobclix, 103
 online advertising, 105
 paid search, 103-104
 with Quattro Wireless,
 103
 in traditional media,
 98-101
 after app launch, 256
 balancing, 253-254, 256
 community relations,
 105-107
 coordinating, 92-93
 demand generation, 93-94
 direct marketing, 95
 direct mail, 95-96
 email, 96-98, 261
 during app launch, 255
 in forums, 266
 managing, 273-274
 prior to app launch,
 254-255
 reaching target audience,
 deliver methods for,
 94-95
 timing of, 123-124
 app buying cycles,
 124-126
 app launch date,
 128-130
 when to write press
 releases, 132-133
 “total message” marketing,
 67-70
 generating reviews,
 83-85, 264, 267
 graphics and photos,
 78-79
 product website,
 81-84, 263
 selecting app name,
 70-76, 260
 selecting icons,
 79-80, 268
 writing App Store text,
 76-78
 updating App Store app
 content, 254

- word-of-mouth marketing, 88, 90, 261
 - positive reviews, obtaining, 90-92, 260*
- marketing calendar (in marketing plan), 249-251
- marketing focus (in marketing plan), 247, 249
- marketing funds, allocating, 235-236
- marketing objectives
 - on blogs, 117-119, 265
 - on Facebook, 113-114
 - on LinkedIn, 119-120, 264-265
 - on Twitter, 115-117
 - on YouTube, 120-122, 264
- marketing plans
 - components of, 242
 - business environment, 245-246*
 - financial information, 249*
 - goals and objectives, 243-244*
 - market analysis, 244-245*
 - marketing calendar, 249-251*
 - marketing focus, 247, 249*
 - mission statement, 243*
 - SWOT analysis, 246-247*
- implementation
 - goals of, 270-271*
 - managing marketing activities, 273-274*
 - measurement criteria, 271*
 - target market, gathering prospects, 271*
 - tracking marketing ROI, 272*
- importance of, 233
- marketing strategies
 - versus, 234
- reasons for having, 234-235
 - allocating marketing funds, 235-236*
 - coordinating product launches, 237*
 - defining value proposition, 240*
 - evaluating competitors, 239*
 - focusing target market, 235*
 - measuring progress, 236*
 - obtaining funding, 237*
 - pricing and promotions, 240*
 - roadmap for growth, 236-237*
 - setting sales goals, 238*
- sample plan, 243
- marketing strategies
 - big wins, 14-15, 126-128
 - advantages/disadvantages of, 21-22*
 - lack of, 19-21
 - marketing plans versus, 234
 - steady wins, 17-19
 - advantages/disadvantages of, 21-22*
- measurement criteria
 - establishing, 271
 - tracking marketing ROI, 272
- measuring progress of marketing plan, 236
- mission statement (in marketing plan), 243
- Mobclix, 103, 199-200, 228-229
- mobile analytics, 266
- mobile navigation apps, pricing, 174-175
- multimedia in press releases, 142-143
- multiple apps, selling, 64

N-O

- objectives. *See also* goals of marketing campaigns, 270-271
 - in marketing plan, 243-244
 - online advertising, 105
 - online presence, importance of, 104
 - opportunities (in marketing plan), 247
 - original ideas in app development, 26-28
-
- ## P
-
- paid apps
 - converting to free apps, 200-201
 - dual paid/free app strategy, 195, 197-198, 266
 - standalone paid apps, 193
 - paid search, 103-104
 - pay-per-click (CPC) advertising, 102-103
 - PC/Mac apps, redevelopment for iPhone, 33-34
 - PDF files in press releases, 142-143
 - photos, 78-79
 - Pinch Media, 226-228
 - Pizza Hut, 280
 - Pocket God, 14
 - positive reviews, obtaining, 90-92, 260
 - postcards, 95-96
 - press releases, 131-132
 - hiring writer for, 133, 135
 - publishing and distributing, 144-145
 - when to launch, 145-146
 - when to write, 132-133
 - writing, 261
 - body copy, 140-141*
 - components of, 136-138*
 - digital signature, 143-144*
 - embedded links, 141-142*
 - headline, 138-139*
 - multimedia, 142-143*
 - naming apps, 70-76, 260
 - Nationwide Mobile, 280
 - negative reviews, 90
 - NetSuite, 282
 - newspapers, advertising in, 98-100
 - Nicholas, Ethan, 14, 193

- objectives for, 135-136
summary copy, 139-140
- pricing, 147-149
app development strategies, 192-193
converting paid apps to free apps, 200-201
dual paid/free app strategy, 195-198, 266
free apps, 194-195
free apps with ads, 198-201, 263, 267
in-app purchases, 197-198
standalone paid apps, 193
average prices, 203-204
breakeven analysis, 155, 158-159
competing against free apps, 149-152
for corporate marketing apps, 276
elasticity of, 159-160
for game apps, 162
ice cream sundae example, 171-172
lowering prices, 205-208
in marketing plan, 240, 248
misconceptions about, 152-154
most expensive app example, 172, 175
offering free versions, 154
raising prices, 205
range of, 10
reasons for sensitivity to, 173
selling value of app, 173
on quality, 174-175
on return on investment, 175, 177
tips for, 177-179
on usefulness, 175
strategies for, 155-156
for top 100 apps, 186
value-add sales, 209
- pricing analysis. *See* cost/benefit analysis
- pricing objectives (in marketing plan), 244
- pricing strategies, 262
- prior to app launch marketing activities, 254-255
- privacy
analytics and, 229-230
location tracking, 224
- PRMac, 144
- product launches, coordinating, 237. *See also* app launch
- product objectives (in marketing plan), 243
- product usage data, tracking, 225
- product website
cross-selling on, 219
developing, 81-84, 263
directing traffic to, 270
- productivity apps, pricing, 175
- profit objectives (in marketing plan), 244
- promo codes, requesting, 118
- promotions, 211-212, 262. *See also* advertising
budgets for, 215-216
contests, 213, 216
cross-promotion, 185-186
free samples, 215
giveaways, 213
half-off sales, 214
in marketing plan, 240, 248-251
questions to ask, 212
temporary price drops, 208
- PRWeb, 145
- publishing press releases, 144-145
- purchase links, 218
- ## Q-R
- quality
achieving top 100 apps, 182-183
pricing based on, 174-175
- Quattro Wireless, 103
- quotes in press releases, 141
- radio, advertising in, 100-101
- raising prices, 205
- Reagan, Ronald, 15
- Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, 119
- recommendation apps, 127
- relationships, importance in social media, 110-112
- release date, 128-130
- reputation. *See* word-of-mouth marketing
- requesting
promo codes, 118
reviews, 127, 184-185
- researching
competition, 27-28, 40-42
identifying competitors, 42-44
learning from competitors, 45, 47
target market, 60-61
- resolving bugs, 29
- return on investment. *See* ROI
- reviews
Apple review, submitting apps for, 129
on blogs, 117
contacting Apple reviewers, 189-190
generating, 83-85, 264, 267
negative reviews, 90
positive reviews, obtaining, 90-92, 260
requesting, 127, 184-185
researching target market, 61-62
- roadmap for growth, marketing plan as, 236-237
- ROI (return on investment)
pricing base on, 175, 177
tracking, 272
- RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feeds, 119
- ## S
- sales
increasing, 270
as promotions, 214

top 100 apps, tips for achieving, 181-182
brand building, 188-189
contacting Apple reviewers, 189-190
cross-promotion, 185-186
keyword usage, 187-188
pricing apps, 186
quality of app, 182-183
requesting reviews, 184-185
social networking integration, 186-187
testing app, 183-184
 tracking with analytics, 224
 sales goals, setting, 238
 sales objectives (in marketing plan), 243-244
 sales statistics for iPhones, 124
 sample marketing plan, 243
 Save Benjis, 18
 search engine optimization (SEO), 150
 search engines, paid search, 103-104
 searching within App Store, 10-13
 seasonal apps
 in app development, 32-33
 buying cycles for, 125-126
 segmenting the market, 57-63
 selecting
 app names, 70-76, 260
 categories for apps, 58-59
 icons, 79-80, 268
 launch date, 128-130
 market segments, 62-63
 social media tools, 112
 social media userid, 110
 selling proposition, developing, 38-39
 benefits, linking to features, 49
 features lists, 48
 questions to answer, 39
 researching the competition, 40-42
 identifying competitors, 42-44

learning from competitors, 45, 47
 unique qualities of app, 49-52, 268
 sensitivity to pricing, reasons for, 173
 SEO (search engine optimization), 150
 serial app, 236
 Sherwin William Paint Co., 277, 280
 signature in press releases, 143-144
 Smule, 189
 social media, 109-110
 blogs, 117-119, 265
 timing needed for, 124
 Digg, 265
 Facebook, 113, 265
 marketing objectives, 113-114
 integration with, 186-187
 LinkedIn, 119-120, 264-265
 relationships, importance of, 110-112
 selecting tools for, 112
 time requirements, 110
 Twitter, 115-117
 userid, selecting, 110
 YouTube, 120-122, 264
 social-networking apps in app development, 32, 34
 sponsors for app launches, 266
 sponsorships, 127
 standalone paid apps, 193
 Starbucks Mobile Card, 280
 steady wins marketing strategy, 17-19
 advantages/disadvantages of, 21-22
 strengths (in marketing plan), 246
 submitting apps for Apple review, 129
 summary copy (press releases), writing, 139-140
 sweepstakes, 213

SWOT analysis (in marketing plan), 246-247
 synonyms for app names, 75

T

Tap Metrics, 238
 Tap Tap Revenge, 209
 TapMini, 238
 target market
 focusing, 235
 gathering prospects for, 271
 identifying, 81
 market segmentation, 57-63
 reasons for identifying, 56-57
 targeted marketing to, 63-65
 reaching, delivery methods for, 94-95
 targeted marketing, 63-65
 technical support, 151-152
 television, advertising in, 100-101
 temporary price drops, 208
 testing
 app names, 76
 apps, 183-184
 text in App Store, writing, 76-78
 threats (in marketing plan), 247
 time requirements of social media, 110
 timing of marketing activities, 123-124
 app buying cycles, 124-125
 seasonal apps, 125-126
 app launch date, 128-130
 when to write press releases, 132-133
 timing of press releases, 145-146
 top 100 apps, tips for achieving, 181-182
 brand building, 188-189
 contacting Apple reviewers, 189-190

cross-promotion, 185-186
 keyword usage, 187-188
 pricing apps, 186
 quality of app, 182-183
 requesting reviews, 184-185
 social networking
 integration, 186-187
 testing app, 183-184
 “total message” marketing,
 67-70
 generating reviews, 83-85,
 264, 267
 graphics and photos, 78-79
 selecting icons,
 79-80, 268
 product website, 81-84, 263
 selecting app name,
 70-76, 260
 writing App Store text,
 76-78
 traditional media, advertising
 in, 98-101
 newspapers, 98-100
 radio and TV, 100-101
 training, costs of, 164
 trends, following in app
 development, 30-31
 tutorials, 151
 TV, advertising in, 100-101
 Twitter, 115-117

U

unique ideas in app
 development, 26-28
 unique qualities of app,
 determining, 49-52, 268
 unique selling proposition.
 See selling proposition,
 developing
 up-selling, 216, 220-221

updates
 in app development, 28-29
 to App Store app
 content, 254
 to apps, selling, 65
 usability of product website, 83
 usage data, tracking, 225
 usefulness of app, pricing
 based on, 175
 userid for social media,
 selecting, 110

V

value of app, selling, 173
 on quality, 174-175
 on return on investment,
 175, 177
 tips for, 177-179
 on usefulness, 175
 value propositions,
 defining, 240
 value systems (market
 segmentation), 58
 value-add sales, 209
 variable development
 costs, 163
 videos, YouTube, 120-122, 264
 viral marketing, 152

W

Walgreens, 279
 weaknesses (in marketing
 plan), 247
 web copy, writing, 82-83
 web products, extending with
 corporate marketing apps,
 276, 279, 281-284

websites, developing product
 website, 81-84, 263
 Whole Foods, 278
 Will it Blend? videos, 121
 Woodforest Mobile Banking,
 283-284
 word-of-mouth marketing, 88,
 90, 261
 positive reviews, obtaining,
 90-92, 260
 writing
 App Store text, 76-78
 press releases, 261
 body copy, 140-141
 components of, 136-138
 digital signature,
 143-144
 embedded links, 141-142
 headline, 138-139
 hiring writer for,
 133, 135
 multimedia, 142-143
 objectives for, 135-136
 summary copy, 139-140
 when to write, 132-133
 web copy, 82-83

X-Z

YouTube, 120-122, 264
 Zipcar, 280
 Zippo, 279-280
 Zippo lighter app, 275