

# iPhone® & iPad® Apps **MARKETING**

SECOND EDITION

Secrets to Selling  
Your iPhone and iPad Apps



JEFFREY HUGHES

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Your iPhone and iPad Apps

**Jeffrey Hughes**

**que®**

800 East 96th Street,  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240 USA

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

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## About the Author

**Jeffrey Hughes** is the creator and lead instructor for Xcelme's ([www.xcelme.com](http://www.xcelme.com)) iPhone and iPad App Marketing course, which has helped hundreds of independent developers market their iPhone and iPad apps effectively in a very competitive market. He has two decades of experience as a marketer, publisher, and speaker, working with high tech companies including McAfee, Blue Coat, and Novell.

Jeffrey consults and gives seminars around the world to developers, corporations, and universities on how to position their apps, improve their marketing approach, and win new customers. Hughes is the author of 13 books including *Android Apps Marketing: Secrets to Selling Your Android App*. Hughes has a B.S. degree in marketing and a minor in computer science from Brigham Young University. He resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.

## Dedication

*This book is dedicated to my daughters Laurin and McKenna who inspire and encourage me each day. May your dreams come true.*

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# Introduction

*Over the past three years, I have witnessed something remarkable as iPhone and iPad developers have created and posted apps to Apple's App Store at a breathtaking pace. The App Store has swelled to more than 400,000 apps and still shows no signs of abating. The gold rush to sell iPhone and iPad apps is still on, and you've created (or want to create) the next blockbuster iPhone/iPad app. Each time another Tiny Wings reaches the pinnacle of success, you see dollar signs and want to be a part of this explosive business opportunity. So do 135,000 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. The accelerated pace of technology is compounding the problem of getting noticed. 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/iPad app developer aspires to make it on Apple's Top 100 or Top 10 or on the New and Noteworthy or Staff Picks lists. They know that making it on those lists will catapult them into realizing dramatic sales, for a time at least.

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, everyone loves 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. Customers are faced with the challenge of reviewing scores of similar apps and trying to figure out the best ones 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 of people so they will download your app. 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 think 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.

Not doing any 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. Successful apps have managed to attract the attention of reviewers and capture the imaginations of thousands through positive word of mouth.

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 and launched. You need to build your app with a clear objective and have a clearly identified audience who will be 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 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 illustrates the broad steps in the marketing process.

## 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 Part I, you review steps to help you create a unique message that will help 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. Part II 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, Twitter, Blogs, and YouTube. You can use these newer social media 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 App”**—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 their 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 of 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. Learn about pay per install and app recommender campaigns.
- **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 charge 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.

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

*As an iPhone or iPad app developer you may be hoping 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 writing apps and leave their other full-time jobs behind. Although these goals are possible, it is very difficult to make it onto to the top 25 best selling or most downloaded apps categories.*

There are several reasons why it's hard to make it big. 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 if you are selling a game, vying for the buyer's attention.

Secondly, the intense pricing pressure causes many developers to start off at a low price or quickly drop their prices to \$0.99, a figure that makes it extremely difficult to break even much less make any profit. According to the website 148 Apps ([www.148apps.biz](http://www.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.

Application Price Distribution				
This page shows a table showing the number of apps and games in each price category.				
Count By Price - Active Apps				
App Price	# Apps	# Games	Total	% of Total
Free	114,878	20,089	134,967	(36.35%)
0.99	86,431	23,225	109,656	(29.54%)
1.99	40,243	6,824	47,067	(12.68%)
2.99	20,383	2,549	22,932	(6.18%)
3.99	11,797	663	12,460	(3.36%)
4.99	12,392	1,014	13,406	(3.61%)
5.99	4,344	103	4,447	(1.20%)
6.99	2,656	163	2,819	(0.76%)
7.99	4,712	61	4,773	(1.29%)
8.99	1,271	17	1,288	(0.35%)
9.99	7,326	126	7,452	(2.01%)

Source: [www.148apps.biz](http://www.148apps.biz)

**Figure 1.1**    iPhone app prices tend to be bunched around the \$.99 and \$1.99 level and lower.

The large 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 iTunes 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 52,000 items! Every vendor is fighting for shelf space so more people will buy their products. Amazon.com is no different; booksellers 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 had hoped to get their big break by being mentioned on Oprah or some other television show. The App Store has exploded from its introduction of fewer than 1,000 apps to well over 435,000 apps at the time of this writing. Just like the supermarket vendors, every app developer is vying for that eye-level virtual shelf space. They are either hoping to make it into the top 100 sales for their categories in the App Store 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 highest selling categories of apps available on the App Store. Approximately 500–600 apps are posted to the store each day! According to Apple, almost 7,500 apps per week are still being submitted for the approval process. Although it may take another year or so, the App Store could see over a half million apps!

**Table 1.1** App Store Percentages for the Most Popular Categories on the App Store

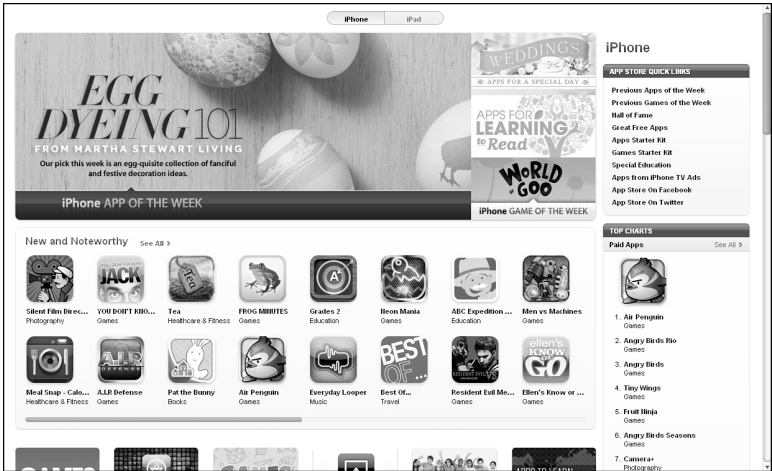
Type of iPhone/iPad App	Percentage of Total Apps
Games	29%
Books	24%
Entertainment	22%
Travel	13%
Education	12%

Source: [www.148apps.biz](http://www.148apps.biz)

As the 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 continues to improve the search capabilities of the store, adding more home page app categories such as “Made for IOS 4” and “What We’re Playing” in the Games section. All of these groupings help your app to get more visibility if it’s rotated in for one of those groupings. As shown in Figure 1.2, the top paid, free, and grossing apps are shown in the right column on the App Store’s home page and 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 10 paid apps and the top 10 free apps along with a newer category for top 10 grossing apps as shown on the right side in Figure 1.3. Notice that this particular category has 70 pages of paid apps (12569) at 150 apps displayed per page! If you add in free apps in the Lifestyle category, there are over 23,000 total apps at the time of this writing! If your app manages to sell enough copies to make

it into the top 100, you will see your sales climb dramatically (as long as you stay on this coveted 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 a listing for paid and free apps.

You can also sort the apps within each category by Name (A–Z breakouts) and by Release Date and Bestsellers 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 some of the other categories such as "What



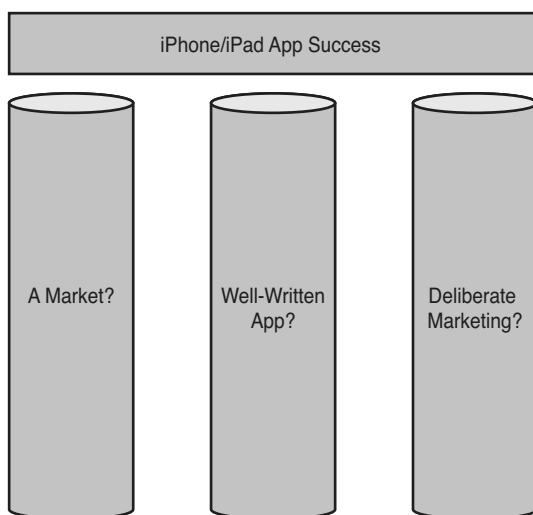
**Figure 1.4** The App Store allows you to sort by Name, Release Date, and Most Popular within each category.

Hot” allows you to search by name alphabetically or by when the app was featured. Newly featured apps are first on the list.

The App Store will continue to make improvements to help strengthen and refine the search process and showcase apps in the best way possible. 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.

There are three pillars of your app's success as shown in Figure 1.5. Failure to address all three of these areas 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. This is true. There are always examples of people achieving success in books or movies that, for some odd reason, defy all understanding and lack of marketing. I wish that success for all of you.

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 apps, regardless of how stupid or pointless the apps might be. They may claim to have done no marketing, but word of mouth (a form of marketing) has propelled them to success.



**Figure 1.5** Three pillars of iPhone/iPad app success: a market, well-written app, and deliberate marketing



#### 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 unless it takes off virally, and we all hope that will happen for you!

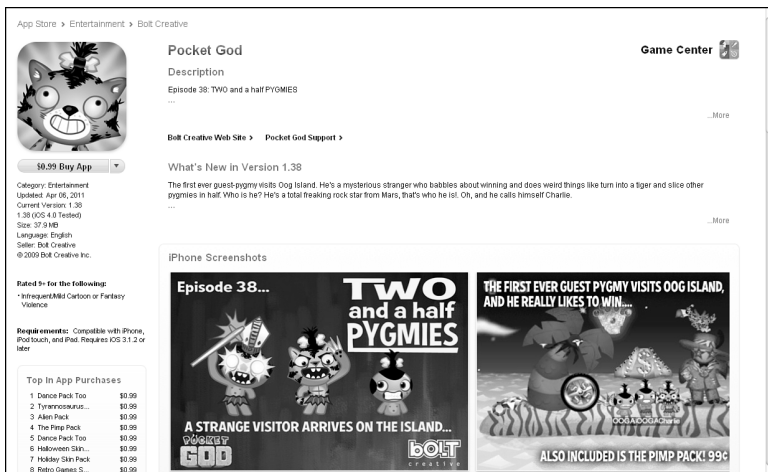
Most developers are trying to knock their apps out of the park. They want the grand slam and think anything less is failure. A number of developers give up, thinking there's only two possible outcomes to selling their apps: the Big Win or No Win. But there are actually three possible outcomes: the Big 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 down 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 launches. Games, by far, make up the majority of the Big Win apps. Why? Because games take advantage of the impulse buy that occurs directly from an iPhone. Games are the most likely app to be bought on impulse. The impulse buyer cares about what's hot right now and what looks like the most fun to play.

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 apps successful by porting an already successful PC or Mac game over to the iPhone platform. But I am also seeing small up and comers making big names for themselves. Who can forget Tiny Wings (Andreas Illiger) overthrowing Angry Birds for at least a month!

Big Win apps have also 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 her time. The longevity of this type of app may be short, lasting only several 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 1.6. 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.

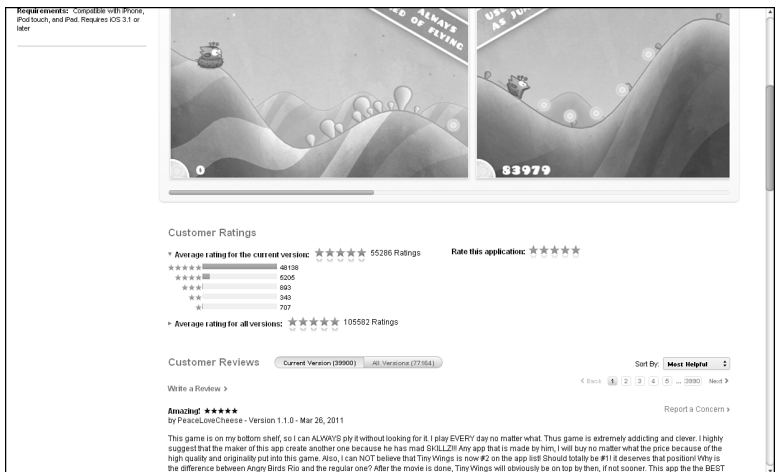


**Figure 1.6** Pocket God has done a very good job keeping customers engaged with its frequent new “Episodes,” or product updates.

Another common element for Big Win games is that they are usually very simplistic in their premises. 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. Think of Tiny Wings. It is easy to learn but challenging and incredibly addictive. 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 and start playing right away.

Just when we think only big development houses can win in the iPhone/iPad game business another Tiny Wings comes along and steals the show. But the stakes are high. Think about how great the music, graphics, and game play are in Tiny Wings. It's no easy feat to do all of those things well. And it's costly to hire outside expertise to help you create the pieces of the app where you may lack experience. 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. However, when a following is created and the app is updated frequently, you will continue to attract customers and positive reviews as shown with Tiny Wings in Figure 1.7.

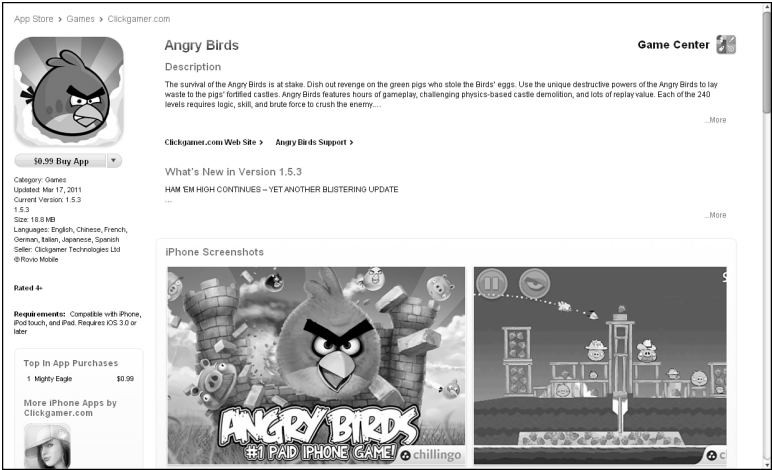


**Figure 1.7** Positive reviews continue to roll in for the infamous Tiny Wings App.

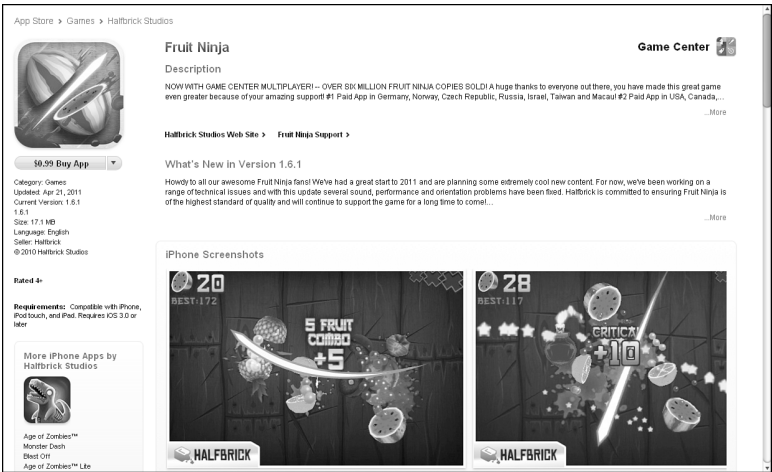
The last characteristic of the Grand Slam apps is that they often get a big break from the press or large review sites as being an app to look at. Think of Touch Arcade, a very large game review site, which is a must-have review if you are to succeed with your app in a big way. You not only need to post your app on this site, but also get them to review yours. Tom Clancy achieved remarkable success with his book *The 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 review site, it can serve as the catalyst to get sales moving in a big way. Word of mouth takes it from there. This is the holy grail of app marketing.

Some other apps that fall into this category are shown in Figures 1.8 and 1.9. These apps have achieved phenomenal success. Angry Birds continues to stay on the best

seller list due to its amazing graphics, simple play premise, and huge following. Fruit Ninja also hit the mark with its amazing graphics and addictive game play. And who can forget Doodle Jump and its New York developers, who are brothers, that hit it big as shown in Figure 1.10.



**Figure 1.8** Angry Birds 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 1.9** Fruit Ninja achieved early success with its incredible use of graphics and simple premise of design.



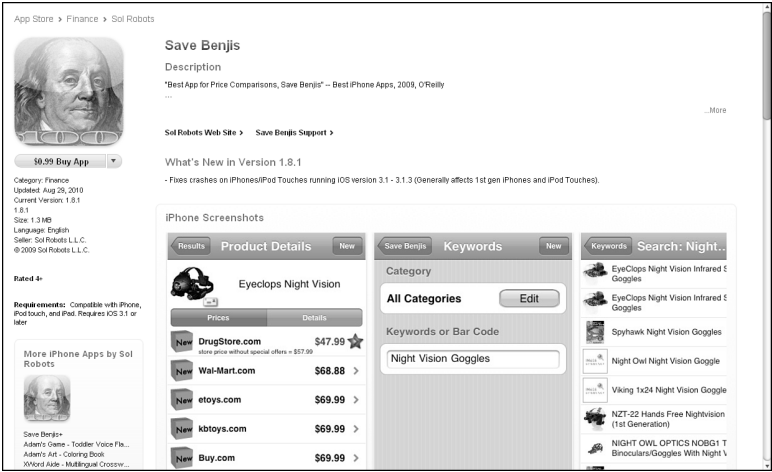
**Figure 1.10** Doodle Jump is the runaway best selling game from Lima Sky, Inc. It is on Apple's Highest Grossing App list.

## The Steady Win—Base Hits

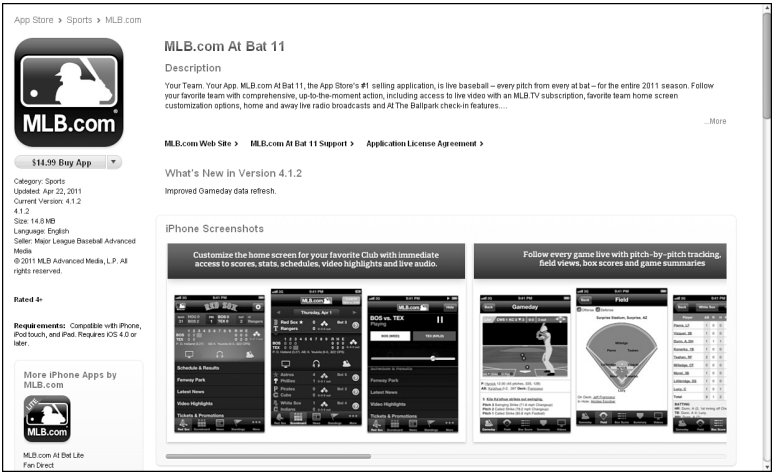
The next category of iPhone/iPad apps is the Steady Win, also known as base hit apps. This category may be overlooked by some app developers who focus solely on the Big Win. The majority of new iPhone/iPad apps land in this category even if the developer has intentions of his app making it into the Big Win group. These apps rely on app reviews, positive blog posts, advertising, and making it onto the App Store's "wall of fame" where the app is placed in the "New and Noteworthy" or "Staff Picks" or "What's Hot" sections for a short period of 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 well written app, the right marketing mix, and product updates, this type of 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 1.11 and Figure 1.12. 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 finance, saving money, getting healthy, travel, and other topics that interest almost everyone.



**Figure 1.11** Save Benjis is an app that allows you to do price comparisons. They also offer an upsell to their product, a newer app with the popular barcode scanner feature.



**Figure 1.12** MLB.Com is a long-time selling app that provides immediate access to scores, stats, video highlights, and live audio.

Given that 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. Although with this revision we have learned considerably more about the Big Win apps and will share these tips with you throughout the book. Utility type apps (almost anything that isn't a game) 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 hours 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 each day. A few sales here, a few sales there.... What has happened? Where are all the buyers? What happened to the 10,000 daily downloads? You thought people would be breaking down the doors to get 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 over 78,000 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 app categories? 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 too well. 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 yet? As I 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 app 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 1.13 shows some sample icons that do a good job of communicating their value.



**Figure 1.13** These icons communicate very nicely what the apps do such as a sports app a professional team may have built. This is an important part of your overall marketing.

There is always an explanation as to why an app is not successful. The answer is always there with a little digging.

If you should decide that your old app should rest in peace, at least you can 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 with it, 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.

Table 1.2    Big Win Advantages/Disadvantages	
Advantages	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 market strategy.	Extremely competitive, 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	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Make money slowly but more predictably.	Developers who get discouraged easily don't see their efforts through to success.
Apps build a customer following 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.

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.

## 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, you should also 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 and takes some very positive reviews from very powerful review sites. 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 good 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.

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