

# Mobile App User Acquisition: 5 Keys to Success



  
**ADACTION**



Real, Actionable  
Strategies to  
Outperform Competitors

# Your App Design Is Complete—It's Time to Acquire Users



You've completed your app's design, but that's just the first step in your journey to success. Users don't know about it yet. You've put in the hard work, researching your target audience and their demographics, needs, and behaviors. Most importantly, you identified the problem your app solves for them better than any other one currently on the market.

Your pre-launch prep didn't stop there. You've also engaged in [App Store Optimization \(ASO\)](#) best practices. Your marketing team has a strategy ready to go, balancing organic and paid channels while also outlining monetization plans. It's time for the world to receive a warm intro to your app.

## Competition Is Fierce No Matter the Quality of Your Planning or Strategies

As of the first quarter of 2020, the [App Store has over 1.8 million apps](#), while [Google Play includes over 2.5 million](#). Your app will be competing with over four million others and facing long odds in a fickle market.

However, there's some good news. We talked to the experts, gathered the insights, and compiled this eBook that discusses five key components of successful user acquisition (UA):

- Measure What Matters
- Soft Launch Benefits
- Feature App and Pre-Order Signups
- Diversifying Your Media Mix
- Team Collaboration and Communication

Acquiring and monetizing users for a new app is challenging, and you need to work every angle. Leveraging these fab five could give your app a decisive edge in this ultra-competitive game.







# Measure What Matters

Measurement is critical to compete in the mobile app market. Adaptation and improvement are mandatory, and measurement drives both. Analytics pave the road to success, including downloads, engagement, conversions, and retention. You must continuously track data to drive better decisions, optimize efficiency, and outpace the competition.

*Aaron Burcell, CEO at methinks.io, and a 12-year industry veteran, said, “Measurement is paramount, and in mobile, it’s everything. You can’t do anything until you know where customers are coming from and what they are doing in their initial customer experience.”*

## Let Goals Be Your Guide

With a variety of metrics, you can get overwhelmed with what to measure. Start by defining what success will look like for your app, based on preset goals.

Are downloads most important? | Do daily or monthly active users matter? | How about registrations or total revenue? | Is user retention the main goal?

With goals in hand, select your key performance indicators (KPI). Many acquisition managers track basic KPI’s such as downloads, installs, uninstalls, and retention “stickiness” by comparing daily (DAU) and monthly (MAU) active users. Others prioritize the bottom line by tracking in-app purchase (IAP) conversions, Lifetime Value (LTV) of a customer, average revenue per user (ARPU), and cost per install (CPI).



# Engagement and Experience Are Critical Metrics

User engagement and customer experience are also significant metrics to track. App opens, app session intervals, session time, and quit rate help understand user behavior. Touch heatmaps detail screen locations most popular with users. Experience metrics like load time, crashes, and unresponsive gestures are important to watch as high numbers could mean disaster for your app.

## Attribution: How Are Users Finding You?

Attribution may be your most important metric. Not knowing where your users originate can leave your marketing team flying blind. Remember to track your advertising success with valuable KPIs like click-through rates, paid conversion rates, and customer acquisition costs (CAC).

## Mobile Measurement Platform Selection

Finally, take the time to select reliable, unbiased mobile measurement platform (MMP) partners. Smaller budget-conscious apps can benefit from maximizing free tools like:

- Apple Analytics
- Google Analytics
- Firebase
- Flurry

Larger players with more experience, inventory, and deeper pockets can increase value and scale with paid MMPs:

- Appsflyer
- Adjust
- Branch
- Kochava

Analytics provide a critical window into the relationship between apps and users. A reliable measurement system with robust data flow allows for the agility and growth to remain competitive.





## Soft Launches Deliver Valuable Insights

*Is there any way to know if your app will succeed?*

Guarantees don't exist with app campaigns, but the next best thing does, soft launches. These trials provide a less-costly opportunity to test drive your app in a non-primary geo closely resembling your target market.

Typically lasting up to three months, soft launches are low-risk, learning opportunities to gather valuable data and feedback. Teams can test for bugs and defects, collect input from beta users, and experiment with marketing, monetization, and advertising strategies.

Before your soft launch, build a deep understanding of your target audience, market, and competitors. Many companies find creating "best user" personas helpful at this stage. You also want to identify the problem your app solves better than the competition and highlight its key features in a unique value proposition. Once you have this information, it's time to move forward.







# Soft Launch Steps

## Do Soft Launches Deliver?

Andy Jennings explains, “We generally have a pretty good feel for how a game will perform in a global market by the time we conclude a soft launch. Soft launches are a limited risk method to ensure realistic expectations and position for success. You gain the confidence in knowing your product will perform before you take your main shot on goal.”



## Identify Your Geo

Find a non-primary geo that mirrors your target market with a similar culture, behaviors, needs, media channels, and acquisition costs.

Andy Jennings, UA Manager at Perblue, discusses his team’s geo selection strategy. “We look for markets that behave like us. For the games market in the U.S., Canada, and Australia are the go-to choices. With similar acquisition costs and behavior, they provide a strong barometer for how a game will perform on the U.S. user level.”

## Select Your Media Mix, Partners, and MMPs

For your soft launch to provide actionable data, construct your media mix precisely as you would for your real audience. Select appropriate media partners and analytics tools to promote and track your app’s test campaign. Choose suitable channels and creatives, but don’t stress if your early attempts fail miserably. Remember, you’re learning in this scenario.

## Prioritize What to Test and Select the KPIs

Soft launches provide a no-lose opportunity to test and optimize every angle of your campaign. Be prepared to A/B test all components of your marketing strategy—channels, creatives, formatting, designs, and platforms.

How will you monetize your app? You could start with a paid option and track purchases or a free app using promo offers to entice users toward in-app conversions and track these. How about advertising? Now is the time to determine which ads drive the highest click-through and conversion rates and where your “best users” originate.





# Featured App and Pre-Order Signups Can Boost App Visibility

Apps looking to accelerate their UA strategy shouldn't overlook two powerful organic methods, listing as a Featured App or Pre-Order signups. Appearing as a feature in either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store can increase your app's visibility. The downside is this exposure isn't a secret, and your app will have stiff competition for this coveted placement. Here are some tips to increase your odds of being selected.

## Best Practices for Attracting Feature Consideration

- Design your app for error-free functionality and a seamless user experience
- Build your app for exposure across all devices.
- Create an eye-catching name, description, and icon for your app.
- Localize the customer experience with multi-lingual options to drive global appeal and acquisition.
- Optimize landing and store pages with keywords, screenshots, videos, high ratings, and reviews
- Generate buzz with social media, content campaigns, email blasts, and media platforms like Product Hunt.
- Reach out to bloggers, journalists, and influencers for public relations boost.



## Google Play Store Notes

- Google favors apps that focus on and run with a business orientation. They'll want to see crash and uninstall rates low.
- In your description, highlight Google features.
- Consult Google's [Launch List](#) and [Material Design](#) guidelines for the user interface.
- Finally, submit a detailed application for a feature spot.



## App Store Notes

- Emphasize Apple features.
- Offer a unique concept and design while demonstrating attention to detail.
- Be customer-centric by responding to user reviews and updating the app often.
- Apple appreciates apps with simple, intuitive UX.
- For consideration, complete a feature application sharing the app's story, value proposition, and marketing strategy





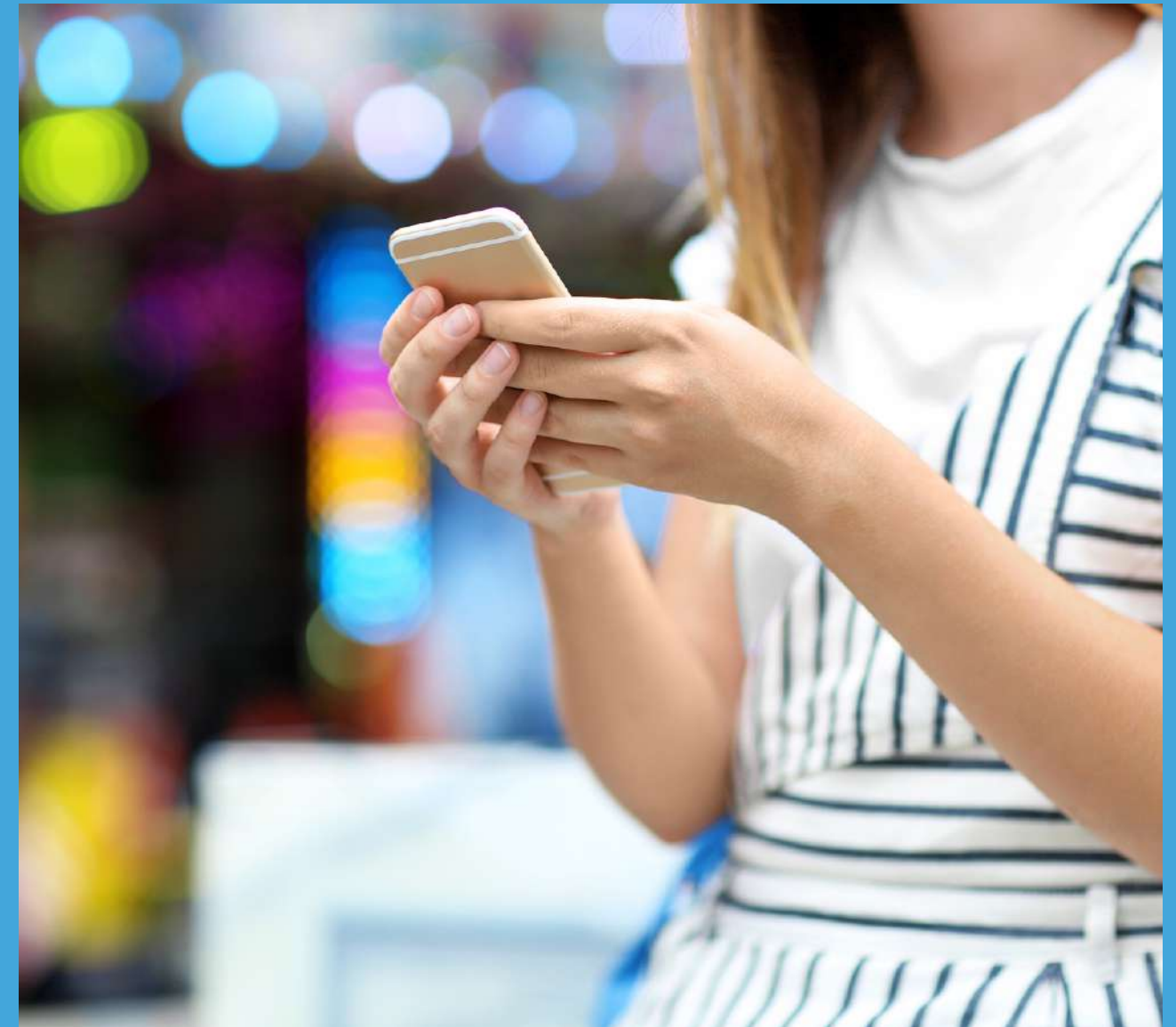
# Best Practices for Successful Pre-Order Signups

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# 4 Diversifying Your Media Mix

Savvy marketers know that both paid and organic methods belong in an effective UA strategy. It's wise to maximize every organic opportunity while carefully selecting your paid advertising.

Facebook and Google, with their highly sophisticated targeting methods, consume most UA budgets. However, it's become increasingly important for apps to consider various channels and diversify their media mix.

## Why Diversify



- Customer journeys are more fragmented than ever. You can no longer find all your customers in one place or channel.
- Market leaders Facebook and Google are expensive. Up and coming players like Snapchat and TikTok offer improving options and services at lower prices.
- At some point, advertising hits a level of scale and saturation, resulting in customer fatigue and diminishing returns. To avoid this, you should have six or seven channel options.
- The advertising landscape is always changing, with ad networks growing and absorbing others. What didn't work yesterday may work well tomorrow. It's critical to regularly test mixes and be on the lookout for new trends.
- Diversification helps reduce cost per user and keeps your bottom line stable as you grow to scale.
- Diversification hedges against over-dependence and ensures running on different inventory and achieving different results while maintaining a balanced approach to reach your audience.



# What Are the Risks of Not Diversifying?



*What are the dangers of over-reliance on one media platform or channel?*

Kate Palmer, Director of Growth at STASH, addresses the risks, “If you put all your advertising eggs in one basket, you open yourself to bigger swings in performance. If Facebook has a bad day, your ads have a bad day. It can also be challenging to scale as more money spent doesn’t always equal more users. Sadly, when this happens, the only thing increasing is your cost per user.”

As Kate learned, when building the STASH advertising platform, patience, and willingness to take an active role are key. She shares advice for those looking to diversify their media mix successfully, “You can’t just hand your account manager thirty thousand and some creatives, and, after a month say, well, it didn’t work for us. You must allow time and remember that one of the most critical aspects of diversifying is involvement. The more you tack on, the more campaigns you run, the more involved you need to be.”



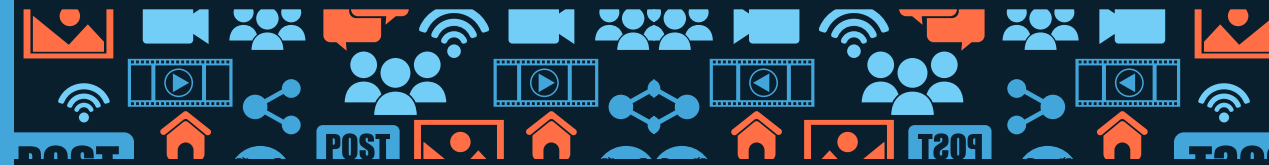


## Social Media

Social networks influence 74% of all buying decisions. Facebook monopolizes 83.8% of social ad spending, followed by Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and TikTok. Social ads work: 51% of Facebook users clicked on ads, while 48% bought something after viewing an ad.

Influencer endorsements can boost brand awareness, provide credibility, and drive sales. They can also be expensive, depending on the clout of the influencer. Instead, try performance-based social media influencer marketing. With this approach, you only pay when influencer posts lead to app downloads.

# Channels to Consider When Diversifying



Social Media  
Search  
Display Ads  
Rewarded Ads  
Traditional Advertising

## Search

Apple and Google dominate this channel with paid banner options appearing on top of the app stores search results. Apple recently announced a search campaign software update that allows ad placement beyond the store and into more of its apps like Maps and News.

Burst campaigns help with search ranking. You can execute a burst campaign by keywords or category in a short-term, high investment approach. Burst campaigns can deliver a high volume of new users.

## Display Ads

Google is the leading player in the display sector, reaching 90% of internet users worldwide. The average click-through-rate (CTR) across all display ad formats and placements is only 0.05%.

This data shows how challenging it is for marketers to get a direct response from display ads. Many advertisers piggyback display ads with other apps or products popular with the target audience to increase traction.

## Rewarded Ads

Reward advertising provides an incentive for users to take an action via an offerwall. The action could be watching a video, downloading an app, or making an in-app purchase.

Seek out exclusive reward inventory to drive store, category and keyword rank, and scale post-install CPE (cost per engagement) events. Their high-performance reward-based video ad units increase brand awareness and boost ROAS (return on ad spend).

## Traditional Advertising

If your target audience still responds well to traditional advertising, you could consider TV, radio, print ads, or billboards to supplement digital efforts.





# Collaboration and Communications

## UA Collaboration and Why It's Important

Successful UA teams recognize how vital a cooperative relationship is with other departments, specifically Product and Monetization. They know communication and teamwork play critical roles in acquiring more quality users while keeping acquisition costs low.

What is UA's connection with both product and monetization? How does keeping these relationships strong benefit UA managers?



### UA and Product

Both groups must operate in tight alignment with transparency and share a common language to accomplish goals.

UA needs knowledge of the product, and product teams must understand UA strategies. Both departments must trust in the competence of the other and maintain open lines of communication to prevent toxic doubt and finger-pointing.



### UA and Monetization

Communication and cooperation between UA and monetization boost revenue and fuel positive growth. UA efforts bring users; the product delivers a great experience, and the revenue is reinvested into UA campaigns.

These departments can also collaborate in granular ways for mutual benefit. For example, user response to monetization paywalls may influence a UA manager's conversion points to run CPE campaigns. Teams can also work on segmenting channels based on user monetization behavior, then adjust KPIs, as necessary.



### UA Manager Benefits

UA managers gain significant value from the input and data contribution of each department. These shared insights allow for better understanding of user behavior and help formulate more effective UA strategies. Unified departments create organizations with shared goals and a focused purpose. Everyone's on the same page, making jobs easier while acquiring more quality users and keeping costs low.





# Ready to Implement these UA Strategies?

There you have it—the five essential components every mobile app launch should include. Make sure you leverage soft launches, special features, and Pre-Order Signups. Diversify your media mix, and don't forget to communicate and collaborate internally. Set performance goals and measure everything. Each is equally important, yet only part of the larger blueprint for a successful launch campaign.

There's no doubt launching and marketing an app today isn't easy. Acquiring and retaining quality users while monetizing your app will require a maximum, collaborated team effort. Climbing to relevance atop a mountain of five million takes persistence, guile, and the knowledge necessary for that winning edge.

You have the knowledge, and your app's time is now. Use these fab five to fuel your successful launch, getting your app in front of those who need it most. To find out more about how AdAction can help you reach more quality users, drop us a line!



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