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A Marketer's Guide to Mobile Growth Maturity

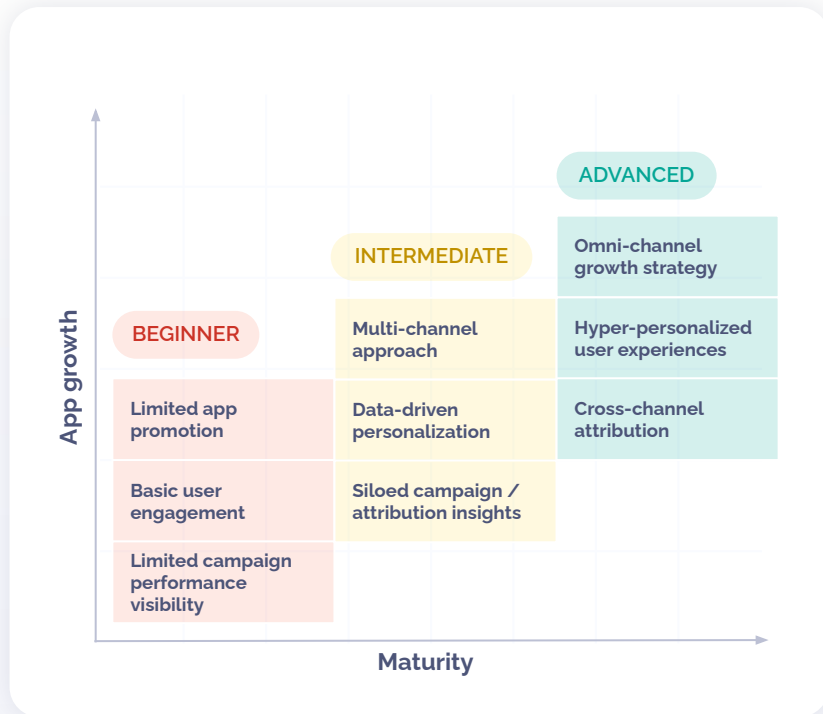


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A Marketer's Guide to Mobile Growth Maturity

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, mobile app growth is critical for businesses striving to meet consumer expectations, outpace competitors, and grow revenue. Marketers play an important role, driving the strategies that determine an app's success. A Marketer's Guide to Mobile Growth Maturity delves into three key pillars of mobile app growth maturity: acquisition and engagement channels, in-app experiences and personalization, and measurement and attribution. By reading this guide and completing the accompanying assessment, marketers can gain valuable insights into the current state of their mobile growth strategy and chart their course toward profitable growth.



Making it in today's mobile app ecosystem

The world of mobile apps is always changing. Global users increased their time spent using mobile apps by approximately [46%](#) between 2019 and 2022 — and now spend over five and a half hours using apps every day. And it's not just time being spent; last year, users spent [\\$83B](#) on mobile apps in the Apple App Store alone.

Consumers' eagerness to use apps has led brands across industries to prioritize mobile apps as a cornerstone of their digital strategies. Marketers recognize that engaging users within a native app environment can lead to [greater customer loyalty, better conversion rates, and increased revenue](#).

Yet despite the growth of apps and apparent consensus within the industry that mobile apps are critical for many consumer-facing brands, the mobile app ecosystem is not an easy one to navigate. Several factors contribute to the complexity, including:



The proliferation of channels and complex user journeys

Today's consumers interact with brands across numerous digital touchpoints. From social media and email to paid ads and influencer marketing, the average customer journey has become almost impossible for marketers to follow. Navigating the complexity requires a new set of tools and a holistic, multi-channel mindset.



App competition

With more than [5.7](#) million apps available to consumers across app stores, standing out from the competition has become increasingly difficult. Once a user downloads your app, the battle still isn't over. Getting users to remember and reengage with your app now requires that marketers go above and beyond to deliver exceptional experiences that make users feel valued.



Changing privacy regulations

Data privacy is a top concern in today's digital world. Apple's [SKAdNetwork](#) and [Google's Privacy Sandbox](#) are just two examples of how regulations are reshaping the way app marketers work. Marketers are now expected to adapt and ensure compliance — or risk legal consequences and damage to their brand's reputation.

Assess mobile app growth maturity

The concept of mobile app growth maturity refers to how effectively marketers can promote their app to new audiences, convert visitors on other channels to app users, and use data to refine their strategies over time. We've identified three key dimensions as a framework for marketers to assess their current state and chart a roadmap to app growth:

Acquisition and engagement channels

This dimension encompasses the multi-channel strategies used by marketers to acquire new app users and engage existing ones. It focuses on the various online and offline touchpoints used to route users to the app, like mobile web links, social media, email campaigns, and more. Maturity in this area means marketers employ a diverse range of paid and organic channels to acquire and engage app users and can seamlessly transition users to their app.

In-app experiences and attribution

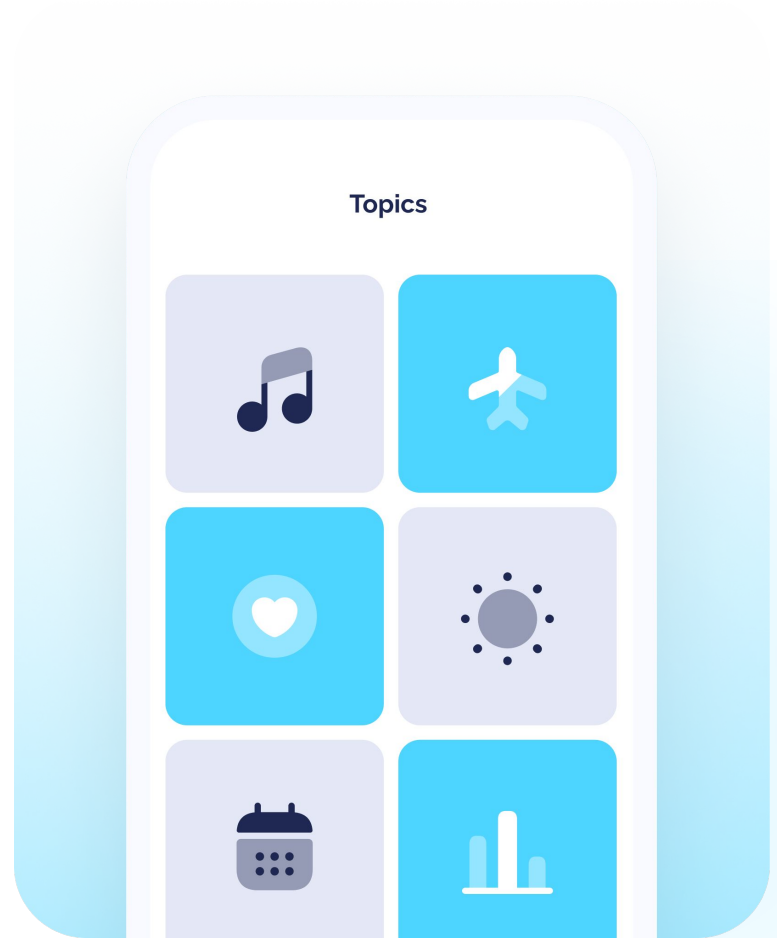
This dimension evaluates the quality of the user experience within the app itself. It involves strategies like personalized app onboarding, in-app messaging and notifications, and A/B testing to deliver tailored experiences to app users. Here, maturity means marketers can provide personalized, contextually relevant experiences that encourage long-term app usage and reduce churn.

Measurement and attribution

This dimension encompasses the tools and strategies used to track and analyze app installs, engagement, conversions, and the overall effectiveness of app-related campaigns. A mature approach means marketers can accurately attribute activities to specific marketing campaigns across any device, platform, or channel — and continuously apply those attribution insights to optimize their marketing strategies.

DIMENSION 1:

Acquisition and engagement channels



DIMENSION 1:

Acquisition and engagement channels

Today's consumers jump across a wide variety of channels and devices while interacting with your brand. They might read your marketing emails on their iPads, research your product on their laptops, make purchases in store, and process returns in your mobile app. Sophisticated brands know that every one of these touchpoints is an opportunity to direct users to their most valuable channel: the mobile app.

However, transitioning users from marketing channels to the app is not always easy. Traditional links are not optimized for apps, often leading to cumbersome extra steps for users or simply directing them to a mobile website, even if they have the app downloaded. On social media, in-app browsers are designed to keep users within the "walled gardens" of their platform, rather than directing them to an external app. Even email marketing campaigns — which are a prime channel for app reengagement — struggle to link users to specific in-app content at scale.

To provide seamless pathways to the app, brands use [deep links](#). Deep links take users directly to relevant content inside the app, rather than a generic homepage. If users don't yet have the app installed, [deferred deep links](#) can route them through the app store, then to the content they were previously viewing on the mobile web so they can pick up right where they left off. By incorporating deep links into every marketing touchpoint, brands can unlock new acquisition and engagement channels and fuel app growth.

Perhaps the most obvious starting point for brands to redirect users to the app is the mobile website. When visitors are browsing or transacting online, a simple on-page footer, pop-up, or [smart banner](#) can prompt them to continue in the app for a more convenient, feature-rich experience. But there are many more options for savvy brands: an influencer campaign can deep link users directly to curated app content. [Offline QR codes](#) can scan users to the app (or app store) and automatically apply rewards or loyalty points. And affiliate marketing campaigns can take users directly to cart or checkout pages in the app.

DIMENSION 1:

Acquisition and engagement channels

BEGINNER

When it comes to app user acquisition and engagement, beginners are just starting to recognize the importance of guiding users from marketing touchpoints to their mobile app. They may have implemented basic prompts on a mobile website to encourage app usage, such as a link to download the app or an iOS Safari or Google Chrome banner. Actual mobile adoption for this group is typically far below its potential due to the limitations of simple, one-size-fits-all tools and tactics. Most companies in the beginner stage still view their mobile app as a discrete part of their digital strategy but have aspirations of incorporating it into a more holistic, omni-channel strategy.

Tips for getting to the next level

Ensure your mobile website has a prominent link to download or view content in app

Explore basic social media promotion of the app

Begin exploration of a deep linking solution to unlock new app growth channels

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate-level brands have a more structured app growth strategy in place. They understand the function and value of deep links and have incorporated them across multiple marketing touchpoints, including owned, earned, and paid channels. Marketers might leverage offline QR codes, affiliate marketing campaigns, or social media to direct users to specific in-app content. At this stage, marketers may still be using a homegrown deep linking solution but should consider a [mobile linking platform \(MLP\)](#) to scale deep linking and ensure reliability across all channels.

Tips for getting to the next level

Explore untapped marketing touchpoints that can be used to grow your mobile app, including influencer marketing, ad partners, or [OTT/CTV](#)

Ensure your deep linking solution is equipped to handle complex user journeys and edge cases

Incorporate deferred deep links to provide seamless journeys to the app through install

ADVANCED

Advanced brands have a robust, omni-channel approach to app user acquisition and engagement. They seamlessly integrate deep links and deferred deep links across online and offline touchpoints, ensuring smooth transitions to their mobile app. Their strategies extend beyond basic "Download" or "View in app" prompts, and they've started to experiment with more creative ways to guide users to specific app content, including A/B testing ad copy, [personalized smart banners](#), and [dynamic QR code](#) campaigns. At this stage, marketers have unlocked the full potential of an app-first mentality and see significant growth in their app's userbase and engagement rates.

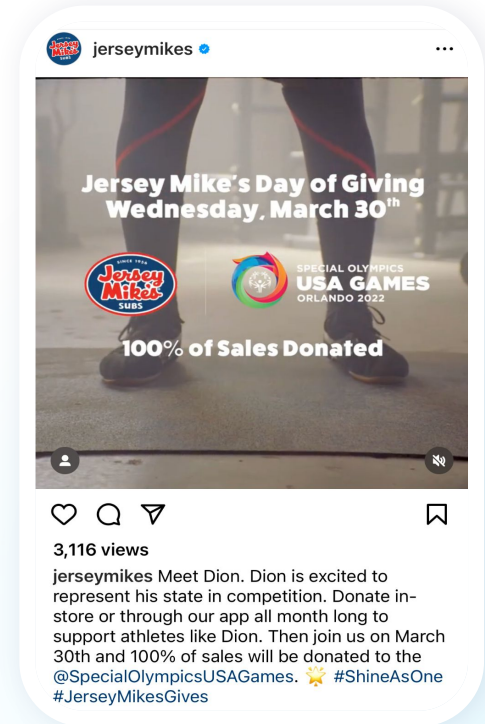
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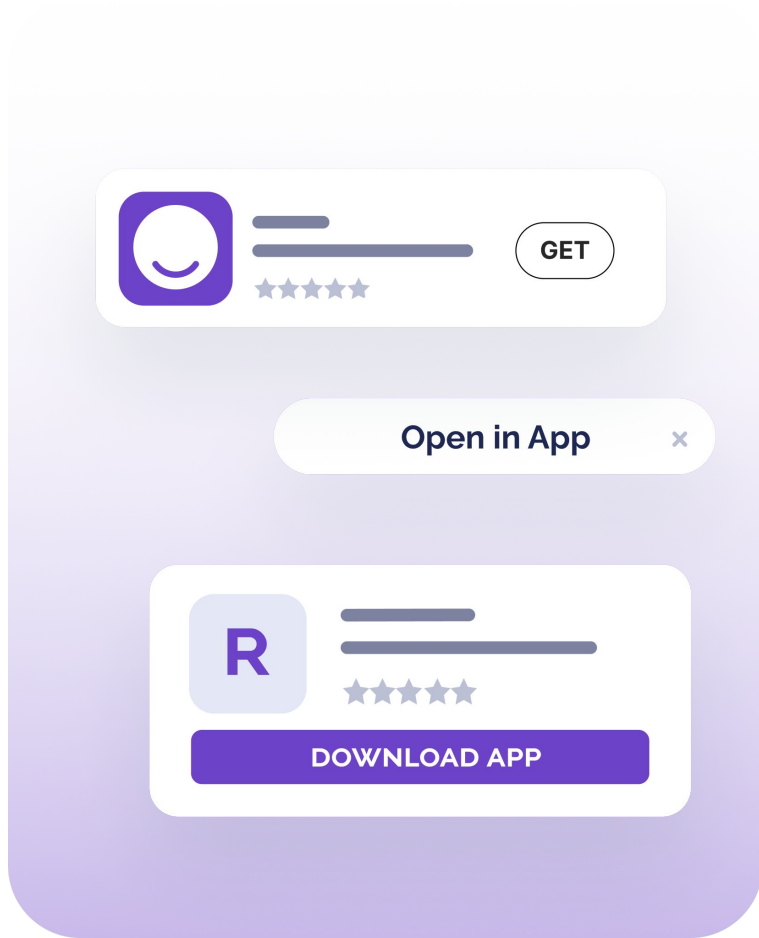
Acquisition and engagement channels

What excellence looks like

Jersey Mike's launched the Day of Giving to drive scalable growth, increase brand awareness, and generate donations throughout the month of March. On the special day, more than 2,000 Jersey Mike's restaurants donate 100% of their daily sales to a charitable cause. To promote its 12th annual event in March 2022, the Jersey Mike's team implemented a comprehensive marketing campaign that utilized multiple channels, including paid, organic social, SMS, and push notifications. The goal was to achieve record-breaking in-app order numbers for the Day of Giving.

To seamlessly direct users to its mobile app, Jersey Mike's used Branch Quick Links in all of its campaign assets. On the backend, the team was able to track app opens, downloads, and conversions attributed to the multi-channel campaign. The Day of Giving resulted in a 365% increase in app installs, 601% increase in app opens, and 293% increase in app purchases compared to the previous 30-day average.





DIMENSION 2:

**In-app experiences and
personalization**

DIMENSION 2:

In-app experiences and personalization

Getting users to download an app is only half the battle. Unfortunately for marketers, 25% of users abandon apps after one use, and the average churn rate after one month is 55%. To encourage users to stick around, brands now need to tailor app interactions and deliver exceptional, personalized in-app experiences.

The obstacle, and opportunity, starts as soon as a user downloads your app. First, it's important to realize that not every app user is the same. Some might come to your app looking for a specific piece of content. Others might be totally unfamiliar with your app but were referred by a friend. And some might be coming from a direct competitor, familiar with your app's purpose but looking for a better experience. Regardless of their source, every user should receive a personalized first interaction based on where they came from and what you already know about them. In today's world of walled gardens, this is easier said than done.

Thankfully, deferred deep links allow user context (where they came from, what they clicked on, what they were doing before they installed the app, etc.) to pass through the app install process so brands can personalize the initial app interaction. This could be a [personalized onboarding flow](#) that boosts the likelihood of adoption and long-term usage. In the case of user-to-user referrals, passing referral data through install means users can skip the step of copying and pasting referral codes and instead see their referral bonuses automatically applied upon opening the app. By eliminating extra steps and providing the most convenient experience possible, brands can significantly reduce dropoff rates.

Once users are acquainted with an app, the challenge becomes continuous engagement. Brands must provide contextually relevant messages and offers to keep users active and retained. This means using app data — both at the [cohort](#) level and individual user level — to understand user preferences, behavior, and needs within the app. By targeting users with the right content at the right time, marketers can reduce churn and increase [lifetime value \(LTV\)](#).

DIMENSION 2:

In-app experiences and personalization

BEGINNER

Beginner-level brands have started to recognize the importance of tailoring their app interactions but may not have the technical capabilities or usable data to implement personalization strategies. Marketers may be more focused on app user acquisition and not yet have a formalized strategy around leveraging app user data for engagement and retention. At this stage, marketers might be experimenting with basic in-app messaging and push notifications.

Tips for getting to the next level

Conduct simple A/B tests to optimize app content and messages

Explore basic in-app personalization by segmenting users based on their activity

Incorporate deep links into engagement campaigns

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate brands have made significant progress in delivering personalized in-app experiences. They use deep linking to understand new users' context through install and provide personalized onboarding. They likely include deep links in their social media or email marketing strategies to route users to personalized in-app content. Marketers at this level actively leverage user data to deploy relevant offers, messages, and notifications, and have demonstrated improved engagement rates.

Tips for getting to the next level

Explore cohort analysis to understand user preferences and behavior for more targeted personalization

Implement deep links across all marketing channels to enable personalized onboarding experiences

Experiment with personalized smart banners tailored to specific audience segments

ADVANCED

Brands at this stage have perfected the art of delivering highly personalized and contextual experiences to app users. These brands use advanced methods like data analytics, segmentation, and cohort analysis to understand user preferences and behavior. This data serves as the foundation for their tailored approaches. For instance, advanced brands may use multiple email calls to action (CTAs) to deep link users to the most relevant in-app offers. Or they may implement personalized, dynamic smart banners to target mobile web audiences based on their activity. Marketers at these companies have strategies in place to continuously optimize onboarding and engagement. They regularly use A/B testing to refine their content and messaging.

DIMENSION 2:

In-app experiences and personalization

What excellence looks like

Domino's Indonesia aims to drive more mobile app installs and increase repeat purchases across its store locations. To do so, it uses a multi-pronged marketing strategy that incorporates online and offline ads, email, SMS, influencer, corporate partnerships, and even meme marketing.

To boost personalization and deliver more relevant promotions to customers, Domino's partnered with Branch to strategically segment its existing customers and target them with distinct offers and ad sets. It also targeted look-a-likes of its segmented customers with similar offers, resulting in higher ad conversions.

Because each Domino's Indonesia store has a defined territory and can take orders only from within that area, it's also important for the brand to target highly specific regions with ads to ensure timely delivery. It also needs to personalize its messages based on the users' location.

With Branch, Domino's Indonesia is able to precisely target customers in geo-specific regions to further improve the user experience and keep up its delivery time guarantee — a 30-minute delivery or one free pizza voucher. As a result, more customers now use the Domino's Indonesia app to place their orders online. The brand has seen 29% new user growth on average each quarter since 2021. It has also reduced its cost per revenue (CPR) by half after implementing the geofencing setup changes for targeting.



DIMENSION 3:

Attribution and measurement



DIMENSION 3:

Attribution and measurement

Ensuring app growth isn't just about acquiring users and delivering great experiences; it's also about effectively measuring your efforts. In the world of mobile apps, marketers are tasked with navigating complex data landscapes, an endless number of digital channels, and ever-changing privacy regulations to gain insights into campaign performance. Attributing app activities like installs and purchases to specific campaigns requires meticulous tracking and advanced attribution models — something most in-house teams aren't equipped to build on their own. Meanwhile, marketers also need proof of ROI-positive campaigns to justify their budgets to leadership.

The reality is that consumer journeys are rarely confined to a single platform or channel. Users jump from online to offline, switch devices, and bounce between digital touchpoints. To truly understand their path to conversion, marketers need cross-channel insights that unify all marketing channels — web, email, social, QR codes, and more — in one place.

Traditionally, marketers had separate tools to measure performance on paid and non-paid channels, leading to duplicated data and apples-to-oranges comparisons. Now, leading brands use attribution solutions to bring owned, earned, and paid campaign insights into one central location. With a “single pane of glass,” marketers can identify which campaigns drove customers to convert and know where to invest their resources.

DIMENSION 3:

Attribution and measurement

BEGINNER

At this stage, brands are only beginning to establish their measurement frameworks. They might be tracking basic KPIs like app installs and engagement metrics, but the attribution of these activities to specific marketing channels is often vague or inaccurate. Many beginner-level brands rely on manual data collection and analytics to assess campaign performance.

Tips for getting to the next level

Incorporate deep links into your app marketing channels to collect valuable user context and data

Define clear objectives for your app marketing campaigns

Begin exploration of a mobile linking and measurement partner that can provide accurate tracking and attribution data

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate-level brands have made solid strides in attribution and measurement. They often have dedicated tools to track app activities and regularly assess and apply insights into which marketing efforts drive installs and conversions. Many brands at this stage have a [mobile measurement partner \(MMP\)](#) in place to track paid channels but aren't yet able to unify attribution insights for owned, earned, and paid channels.

Tips for getting to the next level

Ensure your measurement partner can unify attribution insights across owned, earned, and paid channels

Move beyond a single-channel mindset by embracing multi-channel attribution modeling

Explore partner integrations to provide richer data and insights for better decision-making

ADVANCED

Advanced brands use sophisticated attribution solutions to accurately attribute app activities to specific campaigns and touchpoints. They are able to track every single digital touchpoint and regularly extract insights from attribution data to refine their app growth strategies over time. Many of these mature brands take advantage of partner integrations, importing and exporting data from various tools like mobile linking and measurement platforms ([MLPs](#) and [MMPs](#)) and customer data platforms (CDPs) to get a more holistic view of campaign performance and user behavior. This level of tracking enables them to accurately measure performance and optimize ROI and [return on ad spend \(ROAS\)](#). They also utilize predictive analytics and statistical models to forecast future campaign performance and proactively adjust strategies and budget allocation.

DIMENSION 3:

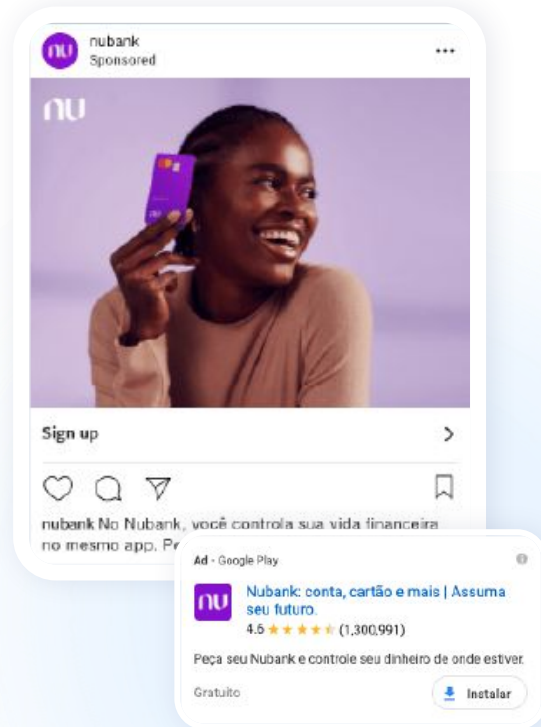
Attribution and measurement

What excellence looks like

[Nubank](#), one of the world's largest digital banking platforms, invests a significant portion of its marketing budget in driving users to its mobile app via paid media. As its mobile web signup experience is fairly extensive, it aims to send users directly to its app — where engagement and conversion rates are significantly higher.

Nubank's marketing team wanted to optimize its campaign ROI but had little insight into what was actually working to convert new customers into app users. To do so, they implemented [Branch's mobile measurement partner \(MMP\)](#) solution to understand which sources resulted in the highest return on ad spend (ROAS).

With richer insights into attribution, Nubank was able to test multiple ad networks and measure campaign results in a single dashboard. It also created a process for testing different partners to understand their true impact and make real-time campaign optimizations. This allowed them to discover and double down on their highest performing network: Google. Now, the Nubank team has the confidence to make ROI-positive investments in paid campaigns and has increased both the efficiency of its paid mobile acquisition campaigns and overall new user conversion rate.



What's next

Mobile app growth requires that marketers continuously adapt to changing consumer behaviors, competitive threats, and an increasingly complex ecosystem. By tackling the three dimensions of app growth maturity, you can better identify gaps in your strategy — and see where you might be leaving revenue on the table.

Take the Mobile Growth Maturity Assessment to gain insights into your current strategy and discover new tactics to grow user acquisition, engagement, and return on your marketing investments.

[Take the assessment](#)

What's Your Mobile Growth Maturity Score?





A Marketer's Guide to Mobile Growth Maturity

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