



MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

Mobile Growth Playbook

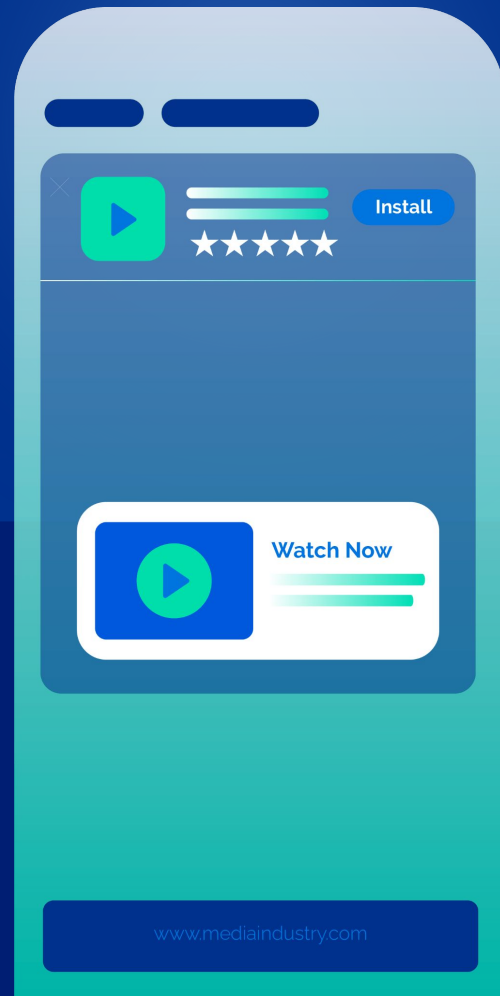


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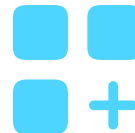
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Media and Entertainment Mobile Growth Playbook



In this playbook, we explore ways that media and entertainment brands can cost-effectively grow their mobile app. With first-hand advice, industry data, and quick tips, we take the guesswork out of mobile growth and empower you to thrive.



Let's start with the state of media and entertainment today.



State of media and entertainment

State of media and entertainment

The media and entertainment (M&E) industry is rapidly evolving, with mobile apps leading its transformation. Apps have revolutionized consumer interactions with M&E brands through personalized content, on-the-go viewing, and interactive features. As of March 2023, nearly **70%** of the digital video audience in the U.S. consumed content on their smartphones.

Despite the dominance of media giants like Spotify, Netflix, Amazon, and Disney, brands big and small across the industry struggle to secure and sustain subscribers.

With customer acquisition costs soaring up to **\$200** per user and **40%** of U.S. consumers canceling at least one subscription in the past six months, getting mobile experiences right is crucial to drive subscriptions, retention, and lifetime value (LTV).

Mobile Entertainment Market

Market Size

CAGR 15%



Study Period	2019 - 2029
Base Year For Estimation	2023
CAGR	15.00 %
Fastest Growing Market	Asia-Pacific
Largest Market	North America
Market Concentration	Medium

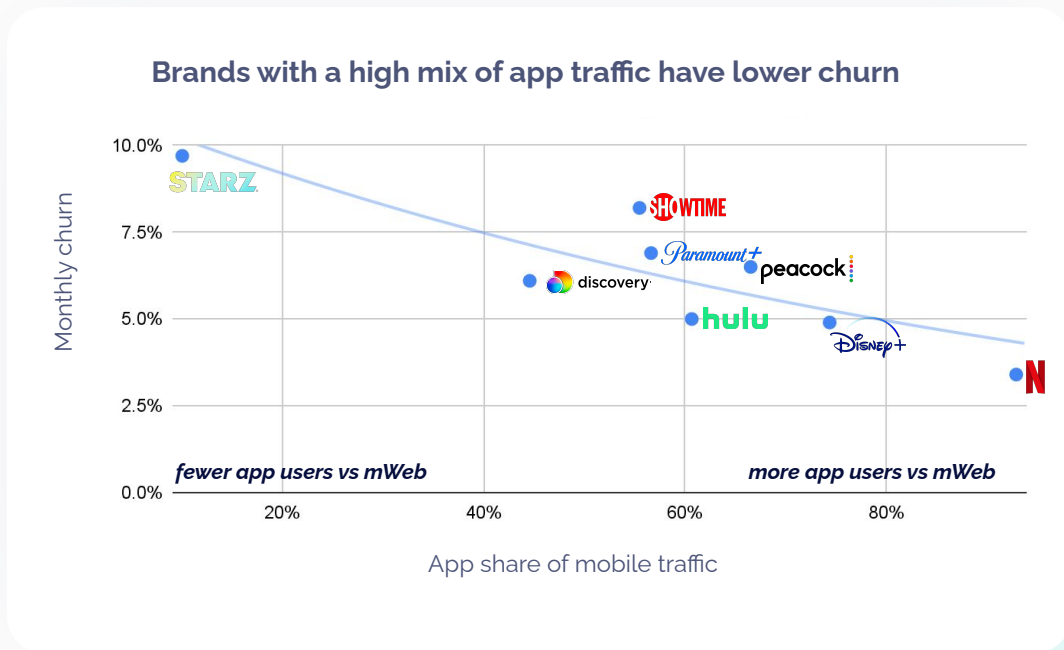
Source: Mordor Intelligence

*Projection includes gaming

State of media and entertainment: App users fuel retention and LTV

Consumers now rely on mobile devices to watch shows, listen to music, and stay up to date on news. For **over a decade**, viewers have preferred their phones and laptops to the big screen. However, despite the convenience and accessibility of mobile platforms, churn remains a significant issue due to factors like subscription fatigue and a wide range of competing options.

Apps are key to retention and LTV: Brands with a higher mix of app traffic versus mobile web traffic exhibit significantly lower monthly churn rates. By providing personalized, feature-rich experiences, apps keep users engaged and satisfied. They offer opportunities to introduce new features and premium content, encouraging users to upgrade their subscriptions and increasing overall LTV.

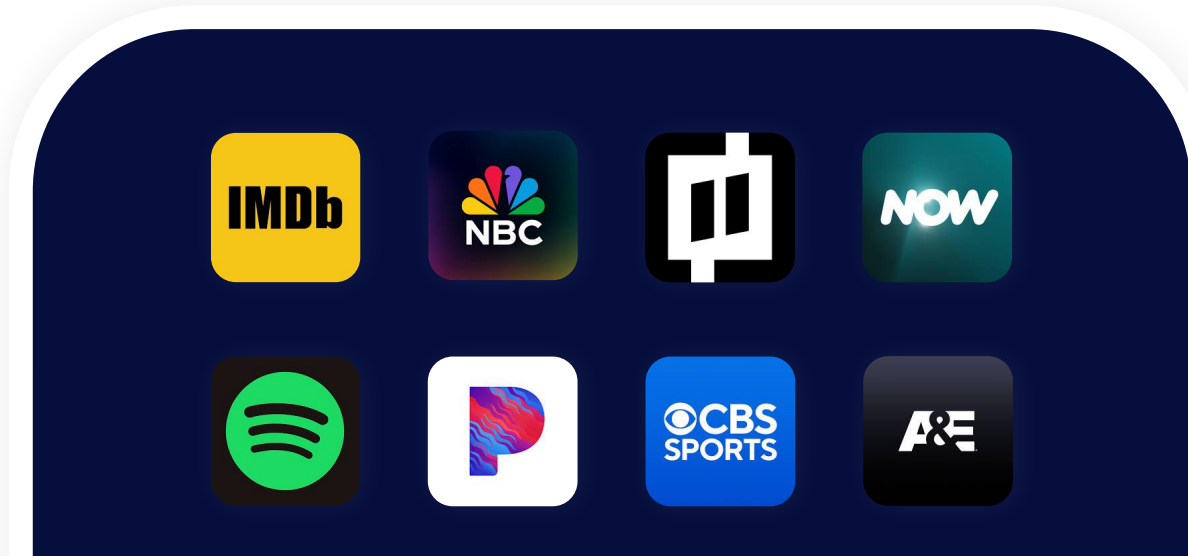


Sources: Antenna Via Variety (Jan-Mar, 2023), Apptopia (May 2023), Similarweb (May 2023)

State of media and entertainment: Mobile is massive

With **70%** of digital time spent on mobile and **88%** of that time dedicated to using apps, media and entertainment brands cannot afford to ignore mobile. And app users are better in every way.

Branch's **Mobile Growth survey** of mobile leaders all over the world conducted between July 2022 and January 2023 found that for every \$1 a non-app user spends, app users spend \$3.30 — **more than 3 times as much.**



Mobile drives value

Mobile drives value for media and entertainment brands

Mobile not only saves money but also drives value for media and entertainment brands — and, perhaps more importantly, for customers.

Mobile engagement is seamless and convenient.

With just a few taps, users can engage with content directly from emails, social media, and shared links. This convenient tap-to-app engagement drives more and higher-quality sessions per month, leading to increased retention and higher customer lifetime value (LTV). Personalized interactions within the app further boost user satisfaction and loyalty.

Mobile creates opportunities for revenue expansion.

By maximizing trial conversions and migrating users to higher LTV tiers, apps increase customer lifetime value and satisfaction. This means higher net promoter scores (NPS) and more upgrades, opt-ins, and viral growth, ensuring sustained revenue expansion and a loyal customer base.

Digital onboarding enhances user adoption.

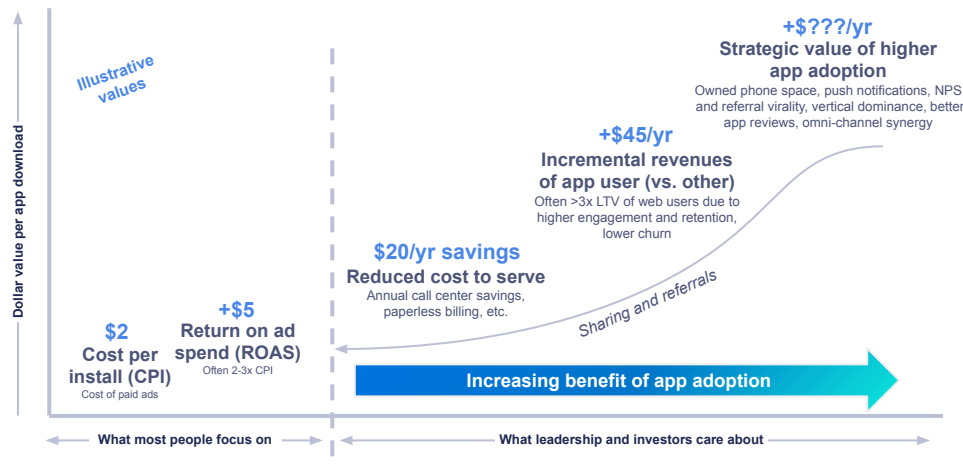
Apps have transformed users onboarding with media and entertainment brands. With multiple streaming options and seamless cross-platform access, users can easily consume content across various devices. Smooth onboarding ensures the highest possible app adoption for both new and existing users, enhancing user satisfaction and engagement from the start.

Mobile reduces costs

Despite the costs of building and maintaining apps, they have proven to actually help reduce business costs over time.

For instance, M&E brands achieve substantial cost savings on staffing and infrastructure when customers utilize self-service features within their mobile apps, reducing the need for call center assistance. Moreover, by leveraging mobile apps as a direct marketing channel, M&E brands can promote content, events, and new releases to users without the expense of traditional advertising methods.

What is an app install worth?

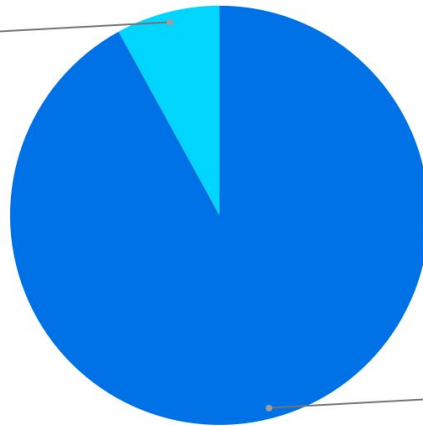


Mobile apps are the primary driver of customer growth and retention

Ninety-two percent of respondents to the [Mobile Growth survey](#) said their mobile app was either a very important or the most important platform when considering customer acquisition and retention.

How important is your mobile app to customer growth and retention?

Somewhat or not at all
8.0%



Most or very
92.0%

Source: Branch Mobile Growth Survey, 2022/23

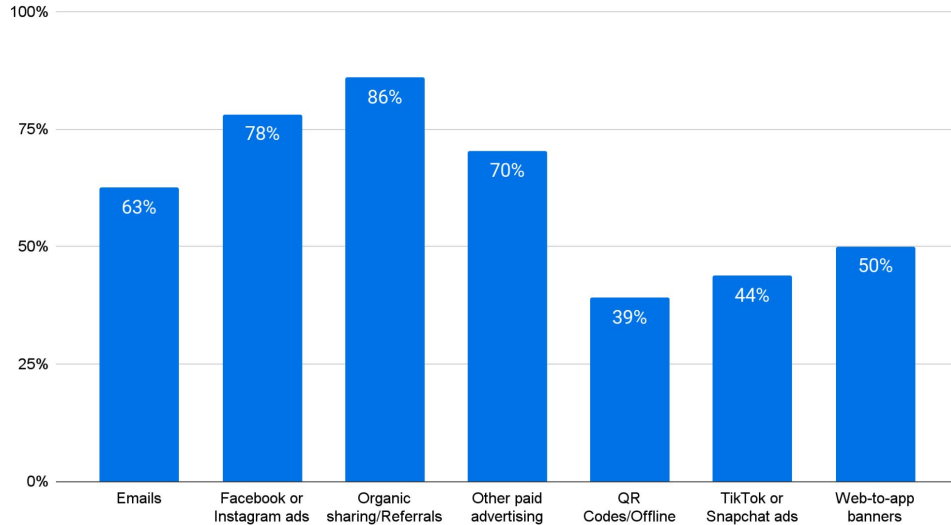
State of mobile

State of mobile: Acquisition

Branch [Mobile Growth survey](#) respondents reported significant investment in organic channels to acquire new app users.

Organic sharing and referrals were ranked the most successful app acquisition channel and were the most used acquisition channel, leveraged by 86% of respondents. Facebook or Instagram ads were still ranked the second most successful app acquisition channel and also the second most used acquisition channel, with 78% of respondents running ads on these platforms.

Acquisition channels used for new app users



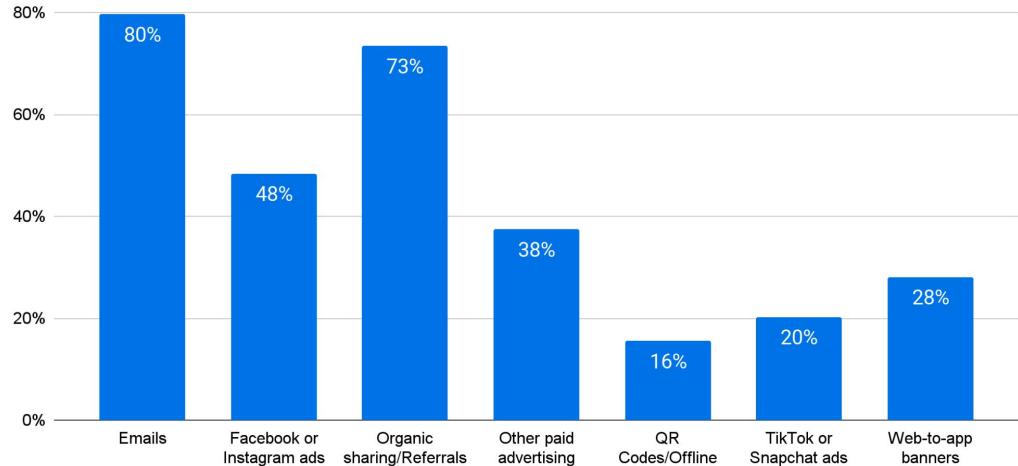
Source: Branch Mobile Growth Survey, 2022/23

State of mobile: Engagement

When it comes to engaging app users, only 36% use four or more channels to engage app users.

Eighty-percent of respondents used email to engage app users, while 78% used organic sharing/referrals. Less than half of those surveyed used other channels like Facebook or Instagram ads (48%), other paid advertising (38%), web-to-app banners (28%), TikTok or Snapchat ads (20%), or QR codes and offline channels (16%) to engage app users.

Retention channels used to engage app users



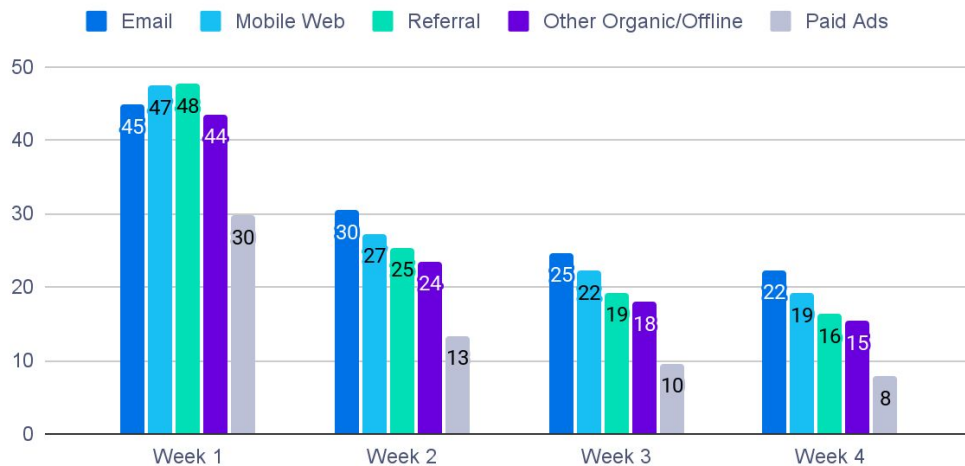
Source: Branch Mobile Growth Survey, 2022/23

State of mobile: Retention is the new bar

In the past, getting users to your app was pretty straightforward: convince them to download the app. Then, they would keep coming back because it's right there on the homescreen. But today, it's more important than ever to make sure you find users who will *do* something in your app.

Truly profitable apps must develop deeper relationships with their customers. Engagement and retention, which hinge on organic channels, are the new bars for success. A Branch Benchmark study found that channels like email, mobile web, and referrals typically have around **2x or higher** retention rate than ads after four weeks.

Retention rate for acquisition channel



Source: Branch Benchmark Study, 2022

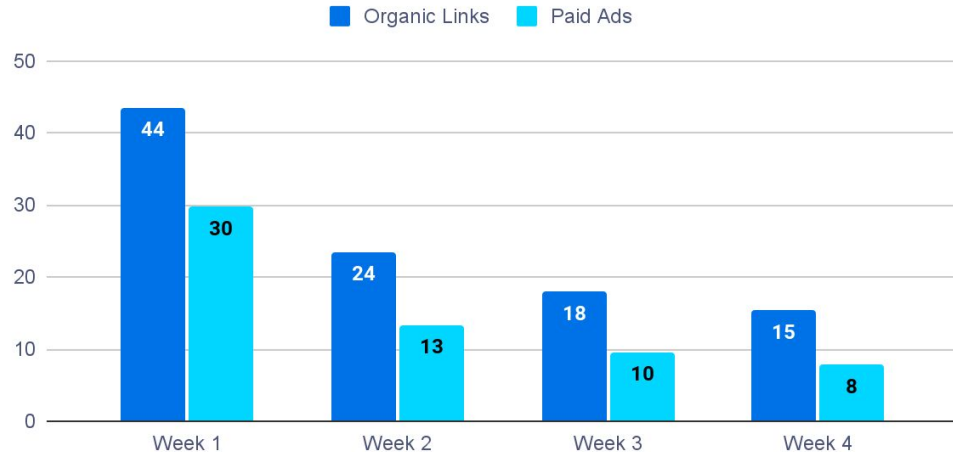
State of mobile: Advertising

Paid ads have historically been a predictable scale driver of user acquisition and conversion — and digital ad spending in the M&E industry has been **on the rise** for years.

However, our data shows that this predictability comes at a cost. Users acquired through paid advertising maintain lower retention rates than users acquired through organic channels.

The good news is, many companies are diversifying their focus across channels. Among survey respondents, **70%** reported using four or more channels to acquire new app users, and just 5% of respondents reported paid ads as their only channel.

Retention rate for organic vs. paid links



Source: Branch Benchmark Study, 2022

State of mobile: What does it mean for M&E brands?

Despite the clear benefits of mobile, the current state of the industry is deeply complex and challenging. Many new and ongoing roadblocks prevent brands from harnessing the true value of their app:

- Mobile measurement is increasingly complicated and fragmented.
- The deprecation of the identifier for advertisers (IDFA) and [SKAdNetwork](#) requires vigilant attention and adjustments.
- [Privacy Sandbox](#) will limit the sharing of user data with third parties and the ability to operate without cross-app identifiers, including advertising IDs.
- Privacy is king, and users expect theirs to be protected.
- Advertising is less reliable in providing turnkey growth than it has been historically.
- Frustrating mobile experiences persist due to platform challenges, and users have no patience for broken experiences.
- Walled gardens continue to make it difficult to acquire new users, engage current users, and accelerate app growth.

But media and entertainment brands that embrace an app-first strategy and select the right partners enjoy a relatively simple solution — mobile linking and measurement — that not only takes the pain out of these challenges but also helps business grow.

Deep linking for growth

Drive users to your app from all channels

Inspire users to take action with powerful deep links that work on any channel and bring users to the in-app content they want. But what are deep links anyway?

Deep links take users directly to relevant content in your app or website, rather than a generic homepage. Once they're created, you can use a single deep link across all your channels: email, ads, QR (quick response) codes, smart banners, in-app notifications, social media, and more.

- **Deferred deep links** pass context and route users to specific content through install. The link will first redirect to the App Store or Play Store, and once the app is downloaded and opened, the user will be taken to the content they expect.
- **Direct deep links** route users to the correct app content when the app is already installed.

Deep linking enables better user experiences by connecting users to their desired content, facilitating personalized experiences and interactions, and breaking down app barriers. Plus, data from deep links allows you to better understand user behavior and continuously optimize user journeys.

All of these benefits lead to business growth.

Accurate attribution for growth

Eliminate attribution blind spots

The only way to continue growing and optimizing your marketing strategies is to have the right data about what's working and what's not. That's where accurate attribution comes into play. Attribution assigns the value of a marketing effort back to the actual source that drove the desired action, such as a channel or campaign. For example, mobile attribution can determine where a user performed a desired behavior, like streaming a movie, subscribing to a music service, or sharing content, and then credit a marketing tactic — like a mobile ad or email campaign — for its success.

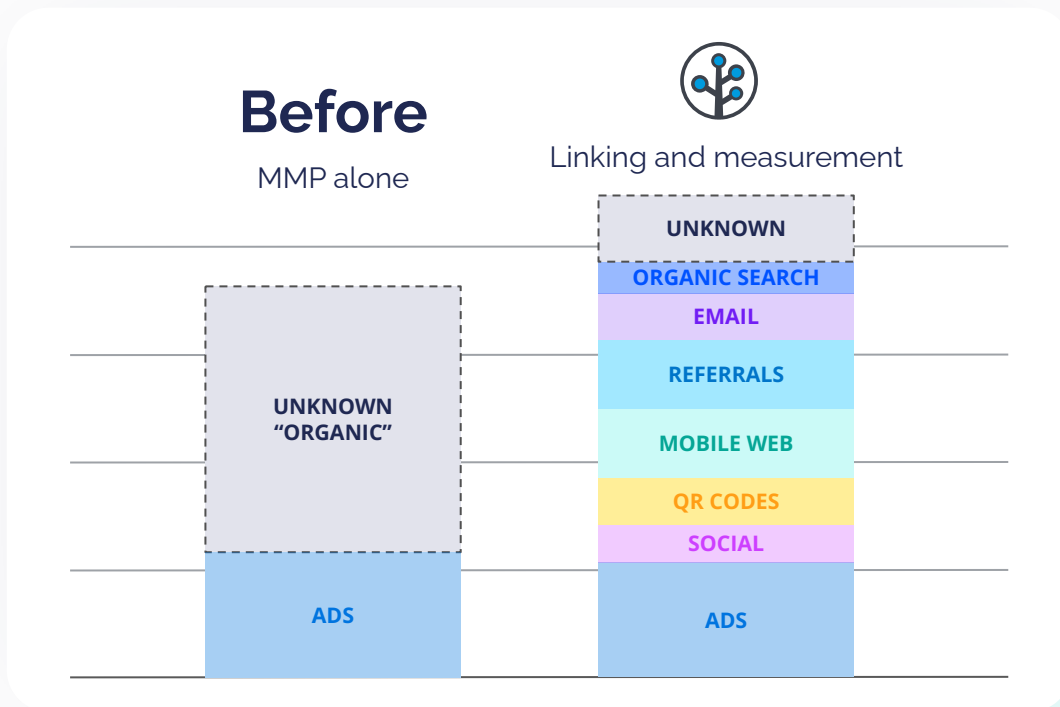
But as the number of marketing channels grows, it becomes even more important to pinpoint which ones drive results. Mobile app attribution providers are able to solve this mystery. They figure out where a user originated and track their future conversions. This data is a gold mine for maximizing the impact of your ad spend.

When brands understand attribution in mobile marketing, they can also leverage these insights to improve user acquisition, user retention, and the user experience for their apps, which can also help build engagement and loyalty — all influencing increased growth.

Better together: Linking and measurement

Some of the best advice for efficient scale and growth is to invest in more than one area, especially if your budget is limited. Diversify channels and tactics to reach more people and keep them engaged.

Measurement is the growth leader's secret weapon. Measure it all with deep linking for your owned and earned channels, coupled with measurement and attribution for all your paid channels. Having true cross-channel, cross-platform measurement and attribution is the only way to understand what works and what doesn't, where to invest more or less, and how to optimize campaigns.



State of mobile: What now?

The current state of mobile might seem overwhelming, but it also presents one of the best opportunities for continued growth. To succeed, you must embrace an app-first approach.

Let's examine some real-world, cost-effective examples of:

ACQUISITION

**How to acquire app users
cost effectively**

ENGAGEMENT

**How to drive in-app
engagement**

CONVERSION

**How to increase
conversions**

ACQUISITION

**How to acquire app users
cost effectively**

Acquisition: Get app users

While getting installs isn't the ultimate target it once was, it's still a necessary part of the mobile journey. And a huge majority — **92%** of respondents to the Mobile Growth survey — said their mobile app was either very important or their most important platform when considering customer acquisition. Everything starts with acquiring new app users. But how do you do this cost effectively?

Let's dive into a few examples of practical app user acquisition:



**User-to-user
referrals**



**Offline-to-app
QR codes**



**Digital-to-app
QR codes**



**Web-to-app
smart banners**



**Email-to-app
deep links**

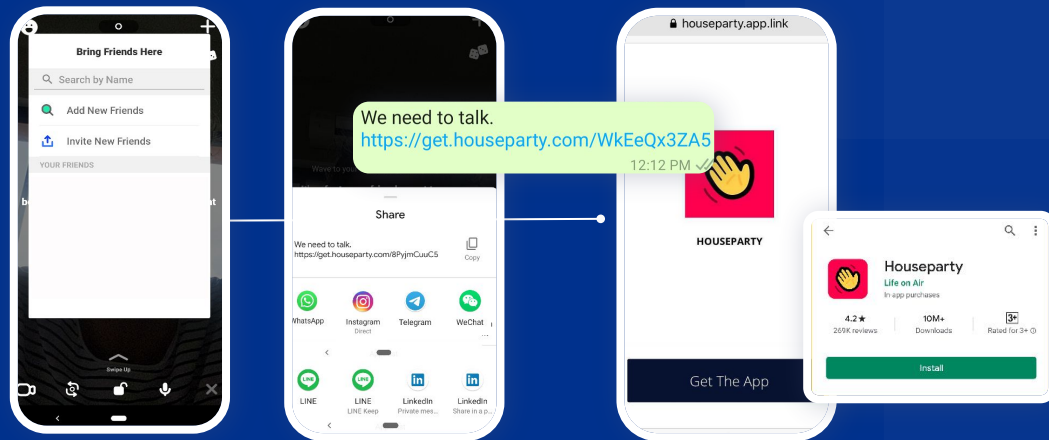


**SEO app
attribution**



**Mobile affiliate
linking and
attribution**

Referrals



Encourage existing users to promote the app to their network

Acquire app users via user-to-user referral programs

Effectively expand your user base by encouraging your existing users to share content with their friends and followers. Many people rely on recommendations from people they trust or admire when choosing what show to watch, song to listen to, or article to read. In fact, **92%** of people trust recommendations from friends and family. And more than **50%** of Gen Z and Millennial consumers prefer content recommendations from social media over streaming services.

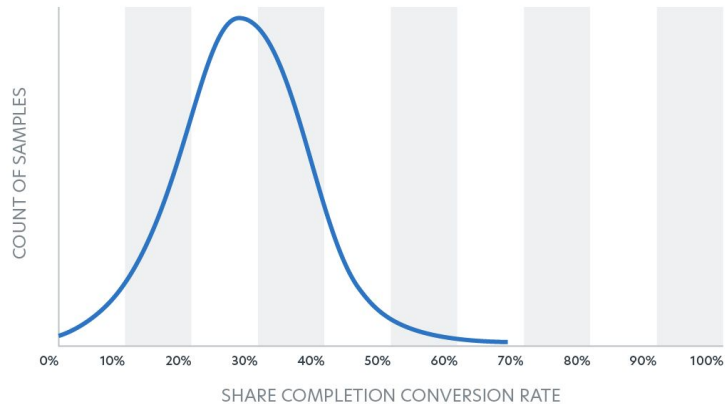
A **successful mobile referral program** hinges on accurate matching and attribution to credit the correct referring users and track who is referring others. Utilizing link analytics enables you to monitor referrals, provide suitable incentives, and close the loop with the referrer.

This not only enhances your brand's reputation for valuing its users but also significantly improves performance. In a **Branch study** comparing incentivized and non-incentivized referrals, incentivized referrals boasted a high conversion rate of 70% in the "high converting bucket," while non-incentivized referrals in the "low converting bucket" only achieved an average conversion rate of 30%.

You can tailor incentives to suit your brand, such as offering exclusive early access to content or subscription discounts. An effective incentive encourages both the original user and the new one to deepen their connection with your brand.

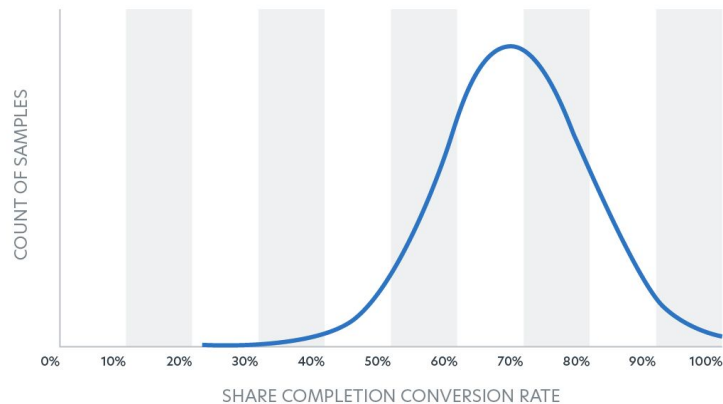
Incentivize links

Conversion from non-incentivized referrals
(low-converting bucket)



Source: [Branch Study](#), 2020

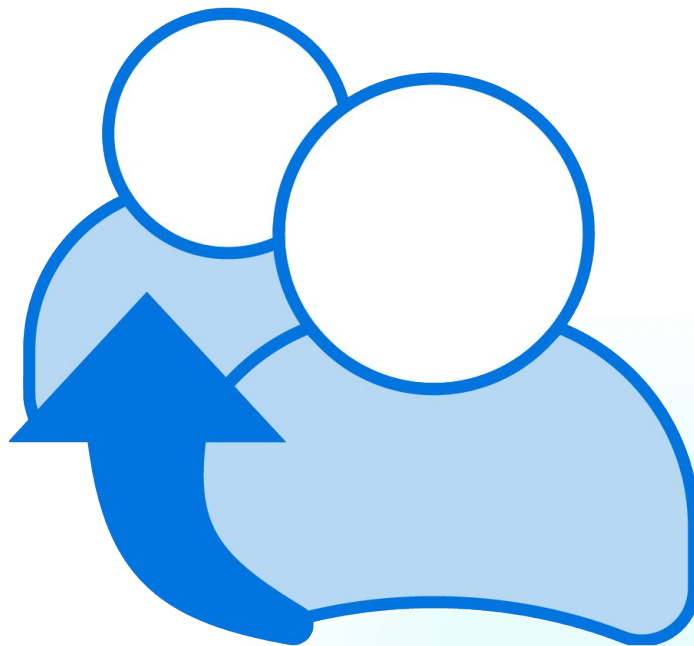
Conversion from incentivized referrals
(high-converting bucket)



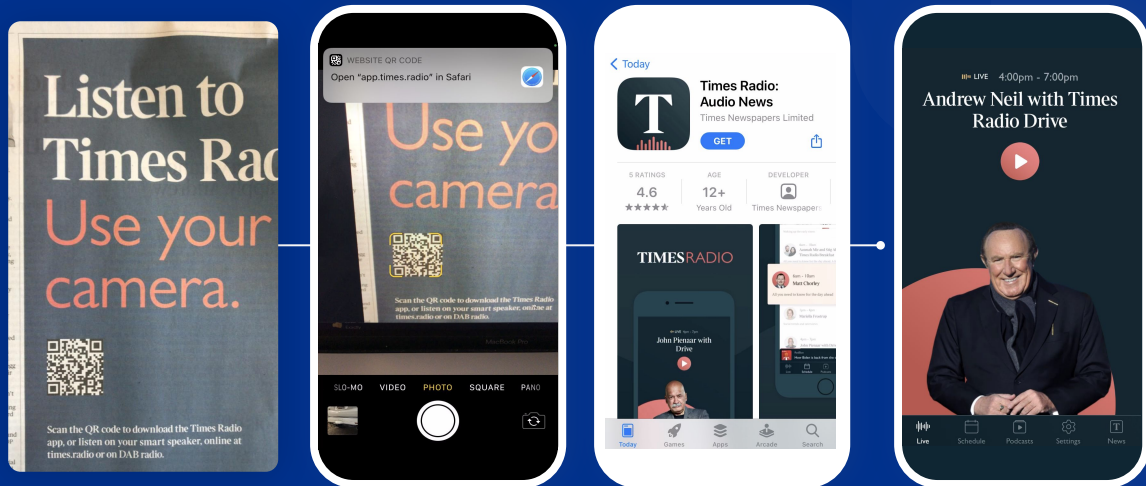
Source: [Branch Study](#), 2020

Quick tips

- ✓ **Make it easy to share**
Allow users to easily share referral deep links via a variety of platforms, including social media, email, and text.
- ✓ **Utilize user-generated links**
Give users a way to create their own QR codes for referrals or user-generated content (UGC) to expand your reach.
- ✓ **Try custom share sheets**
Use custom share sheets so users can share links to content with friends via multiple social media platforms and text messages. Bonus: With deep links, recipients of the link are taken directly from the link to the specific content that was shared.
- ✓ **Show the referrer's name**
Foster trust and belonging by showing the name of the referrer and taking users straight to the content they wanted.



Offline-to-app QR codes



Drive users into your app from the offline world

Acquire app users via QR codes on billboards, ads, mailers, signs, etc.

The explosion of QR codes shows no signs of slowing down. They are integrated into billboards advertisements, displayed on venue signage, and printed in newspapers. Their simplicity for users, ability to measure offline-to-online journeys, and capacity to convert offline audiences into app users make QR codes indispensable in any mobile growth strategy. Now is the perfect time to start or [expand your usage of QR codes](#) to scale user acquisition and educate your audience on how your app fits into their daily life.

Offline channels offer a significant opportunity for app acquisition, but many QR codes are not optimized for apps. The key to optimizing your QR codes for native apps lies in the link embedded within them. Just like with any link you scale across your digital channels, you should equip a QR code link with deep-link routing. When the user has your app already installed and scans a QR code, they expect to end up on the content inside your app. For users without the app, QR code campaigns offer an acquisition opportunity. Once you've enabled your QR codes with reliable deep linking, the links can detect if a user has your app and then route them appropriately. Deep links can also discern whether users are on iOS or Android and direct them to the appropriate app store if the app is not installed.

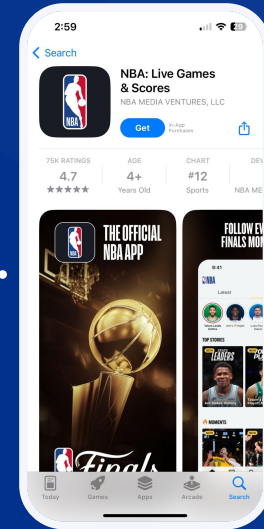
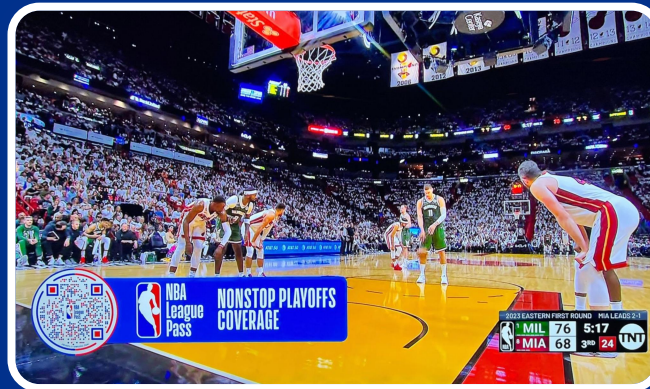
Equally important, with deep links behind QR codes, you gain accurate attribution and measurement data to enhance QR code campaign performance and deliver more personalized experiences.

Quick tips

- ✓ **Use QR codes on signage**
Include QR codes on signage at key interaction points like live event venues and newsstands.
- ✓ **Try physical ads**
Incorporate QR codes into print ads or other physical advertising like billboards.
- ✓ **Always deep link**
Prevent broken experiences and create cohesive user journeys through direct and deferred deep linking.
- ✓ **Include the option to update**
Ensure your link and/or QR code generator can update the link destination after deployment to keep up with evolving campaigns.



Digital-to-app QR codes



Move desktop users into your mobile app

Leverage QR codes on "Get the App" and install landing pages

In our increasingly digital world, you need to seize opportunities for brand affinity and connect with potential users across all touchpoints. With users already visiting your website, capitalize on this traffic by incorporating easy-to-create, cost-effective QR codes directly on web pages.

In the past, bridging the gap between desktop engagement and app downloads was challenging and often required multiple steps. But now, you can add a QR code to your desktop experience that eliminates unnecessary steps from the path to download and allows you to add nuance to your onboarding experience. For instance, if you know a user came from a QR code via desktop, you can customize their onboarding in a way that adds value and makes sense given the install source, like encouraging them to use a magic link to sign in.

Quick tips



Make it easy to update

Make sure you can easily update the link data behind your QR code as campaigns evolve over time.



Use deferred deep linking

Be sure to use deferred deep linking. This enables you to route a user to the in-app content they expect, even after install. It provides a great personalization opportunity that drives conversions and retention.



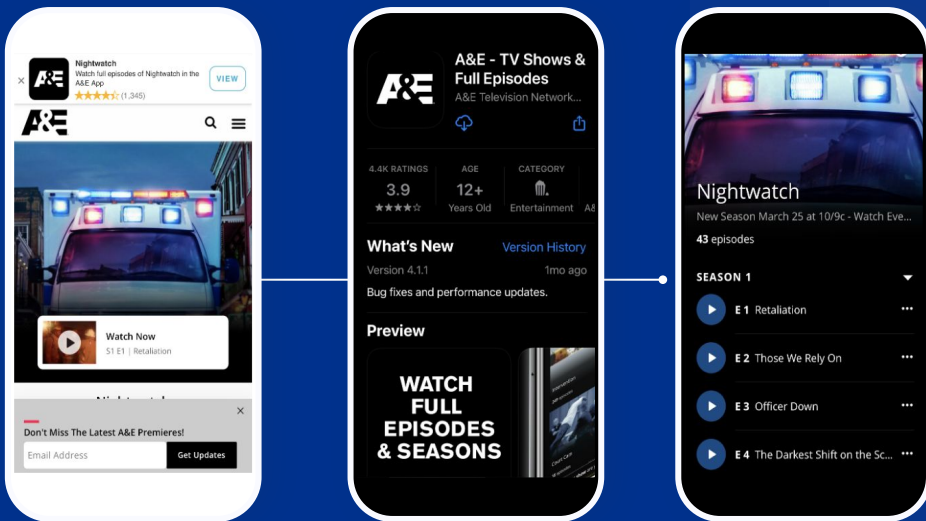
Optimize campaigns

With attribution data for QR codes, you can understand and optimize the performance of your QR code campaigns by viewing opens, installs, and downstream app events.

[Listen to the case study](#): NBCUniversal Local used QR codes to drive high-intent user acquisition



Web-to-app smart banners



Convert web browsers into engaged app users

Deploy smart banners for web-to-app user acquisition

Because **70% of digital time takes place on mobile**, you know you have users interacting with your brand on the mobile web, and they're primed for you to target as potential app users. You can display a smart banner for those users and encourage them to download the app with any number of incentives, including loyalty rewards, a discount if they purchase via the app, or any other benefits specific to your app.

As with any user interaction, personalization matters. You can personalize your smart banners at scale in a variety of ways, based on any number of attributes that signal specific user intent. App installs increase significantly when calls to action match intent. For instance, a music streaming app might prompt users with "Listen now in the app" rather than a generic "Use the app," while a news app could use "Read latest articles in the app" instead of "Continue." This tailored approach significantly boosts conversion rates.

Smart banners drive high-value users to your app when they visit your mobile website. This not only reduces the cost per install but also ensures a seamless experience through deferred deep linking. This process essentially matches the user who clicked a link in a paid or organic channel to the user who opens the app for the first time after installing it. As a result, the user automatically lands on the intended content after completing the installation process.

Smart banners fit seamlessly into every acquisition campaign because they are so customizable, highly targetable, and cost effective.

Quick tips



Customize based on intent

Customize banners to consider the context of where your user is coming from and previous user behavior. Users who find your website through search engine optimization (SEO) content are in a different mind frame than those who came because a friend sent them a link.



Create smart CTAs

Craft calls to action (CTAs) that hint at how the app is the next natural progression, such as "Add to your playlist in the app" or "Unlock exclusive content with the app." This ensures continuity and yields significant results in helping users grasp the value of downloading in the moment.



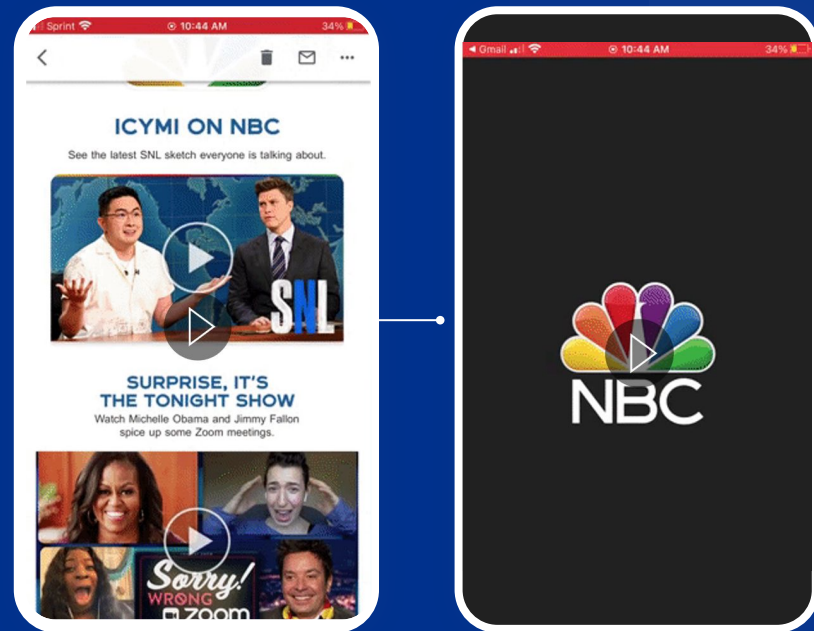
Be mindful of the customer journey

Reserve larger banners for users acquired from email or social media. For organic searches on your mobile website, banners should be small or just a button.

[Read the case study](#): IMDb streamlines A/B testing and boosts app downloads by 443%



Email-to-app deep links



Provide a pathway to download your app from email

Increase email-to-app user acquisition with email service provider integration

Did you know that over **70% of people open emails on mobile**? That's a huge opportunity to turn already highly qualified email subscribers into app users and gain a deeper understanding of post-click user behavior. But there is a **disconnect between email and mobile apps** that impacts the user experience and the ability to track clicks, especially on iOS.

When you send an email to your contacts, they read it and click on the CTA, expecting to be directed to the app store or your app. However, many email links are broken, leaving users in a vacuum. While it may seem like you're acquiring users from email marketing, you may actually be losing out on a significant number of users and driving higher abandonment rates. To address this issue, successful email campaigns with high conversion rates incorporate deep links throughout their emails — in the copy, images, and CTAs. This is particularly beneficial because you want to swiftly direct users to your app without losing their interest, curiosity in your offer, or intent to purchase.

Quick tips



Use deferred deep links

Prompt users to download your app via email using banners, footers, dedicated welcome emails, etc. Then, route them to related content in the app via a deferred deep link.



Personalize the experience

Personalize email CTAs based on whether the user already has your app. For acquisition campaigns, display a CTA like "Get the app" to users who don't have it yet, then deep link them directly to an in-app onboarding experience that explains the value of your app.

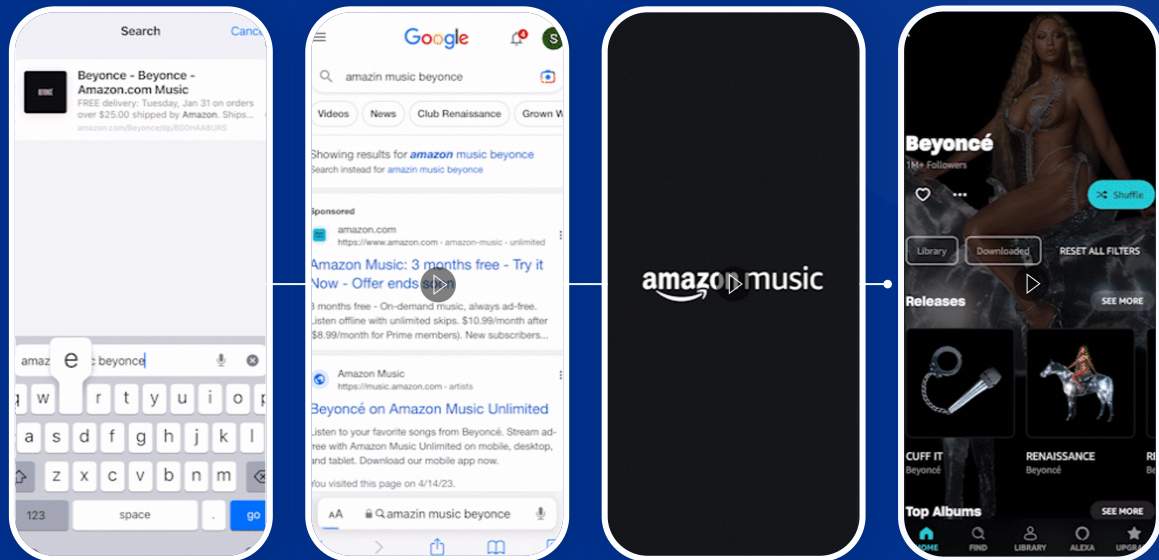


Brand your links

Use branded links to improve click-through rates, build trust, and increase confidence in your brand.



SEO app attribution for acquisition



Trigger a smart banner to users coming from SEO

Acquire app users from web search results with website passthrough

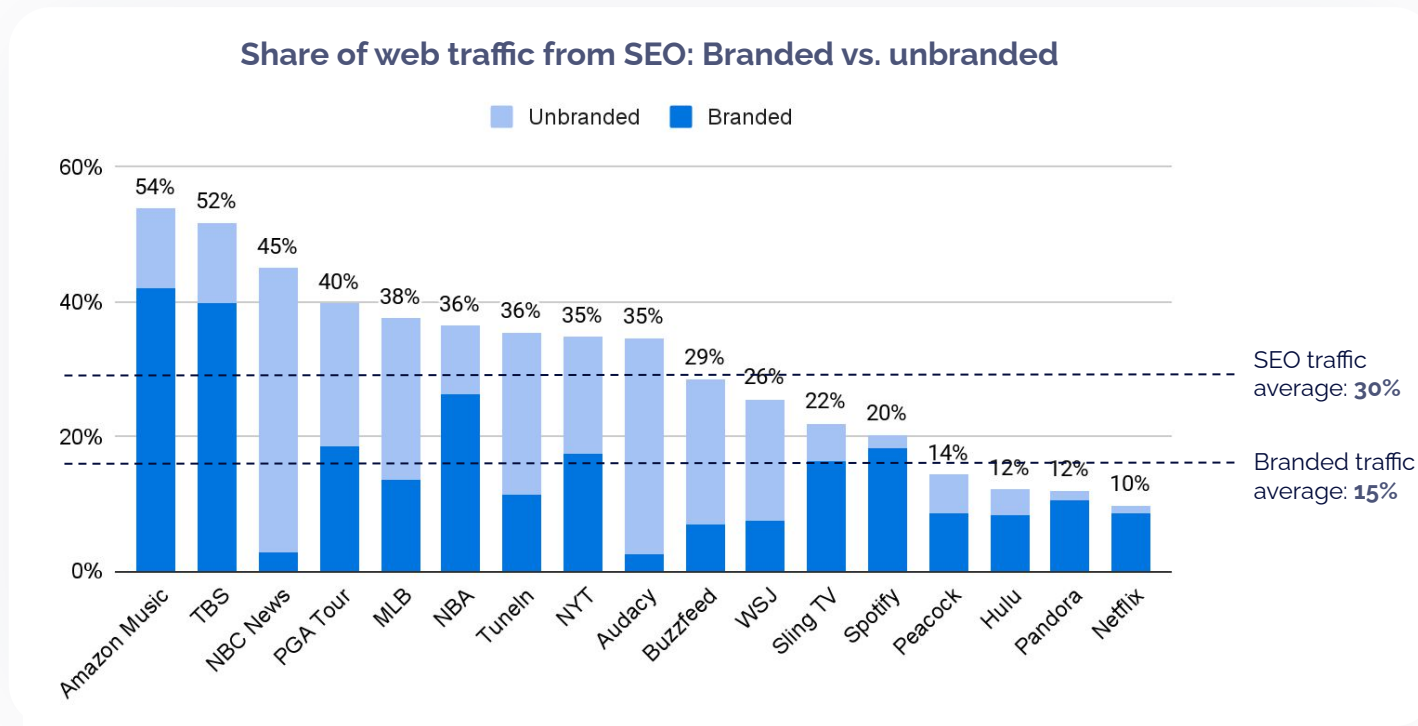
As a marketer, you're likely already leveraging some type of SEO strategy, but are you really able to understand how it affects app user acquisition? Attribution is notoriously hard to measure on mobile considering users interact with many channels before entering the app, plus most organic search occurs on mobile — that's a significant portion of your credit and insight that you're unable to report. With deep linking and attribution for owned and earned channels, you can unlock a key aspect of the user journey.

Proper SEO app attribution empowers marketers to attribute downstream funnel events back to the search engine that sourced the app session. You can deduplicate app events and attribute them to the corresponding search engine, which opens a window to SEO performance for a better understanding of its value and a more complete cross-channel view.

Light-touch smart banners offer a straightforward pathway for users higher up in the funnel to download your app from organic searches. These banners allow you to attribute app actions back to their source without compromising SEO credit. It's important to note that Google penalizes websites displaying large, splashy banners to users from organic searches. Therefore, for organic searches, it's best to utilize small banners or simply a button.

Nearly one-third of web traffic to top M&E sites originates from search engine results pages

With an average of 30% of web traffic to popular media and entertainment sites originating from search engine results pages, and approximately 15% of that originating from branded searches, deep linking is a no-brainer. It ensures that valuable traffic is funneled to your app, maximizing conversions and enhancing user engagement.



Source: SimilarWeb, 2023

Quick tips



Target smart banners

Target smart banners to users that clicked on an organic search link and attribute that action back to the domain and URL that drove the install.



Limit large banners from search

Limit large banners for top-of-funnel campaigns like acquisition. Reserve those for users acquired from email or social media. For organic searches, banners should be small or just a button.



Be patient

SEO success can take a long time, but content return on investment (ROI) will stay with you for even longer.

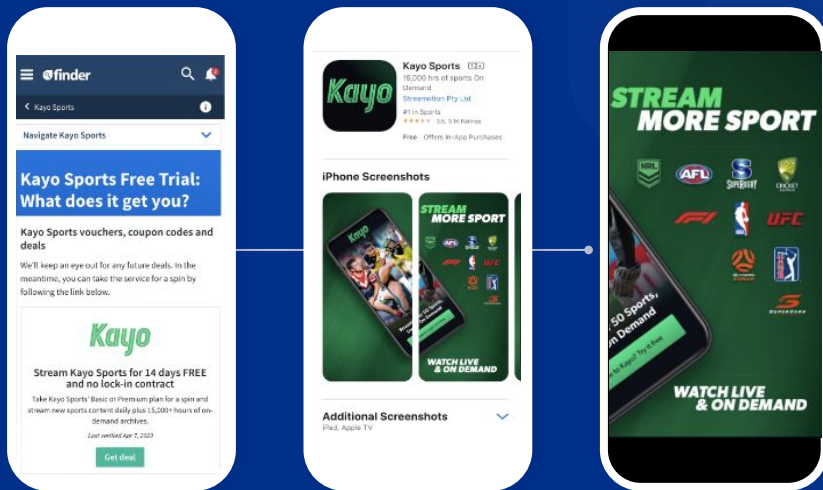


Attribute app traffic to search

Blind spots lead to inaccurate investments. On average, Branch customers have been able to attribute 16% of app traffic to organic search with [SEO App Attribution](#).



Mobile affiliate linking and attribution



“Appify” affiliate marketing to drive conversions and campaign optimization in real time

Acquire app users with affiliate links that go into mobile apps

Affiliate campaigns have not historically been optimized for mobile, but “appifying” your affiliate campaigns can help you drive the best experience, get the highest ROI, make accurate payouts, and leverage real-time campaign data to boost campaign performance and improve reach.

Deep linking users from a campaign to the advertised product within the app, and subsequently attributing in-app conversions back to the affiliate source, optimizes both sides of this unique funnel. The end advertiser sees increased campaign impact by reducing friction to conversion. The affiliates/publishers/partners get credit for their true impact, including cross-platform user conversion paths, unencumbered by false positives or negatives. For well-aligned publisher/brand relationships, this typically results in higher payouts for the influencer by eliminating holes in attributing click-to-conversion rates and minimizing mid-funnel drop-off. It also gives stronger signals about whether the brand and influencer pairing is a good ongoing fit. Finally, the end user gets a seamless transition into the app with fewer steps between them and the desired action, which reinforces trust with the influencer and mirrors some of that affinity onto the brand itself. Because the destination app preserves context of the user's click and delivers them directly to the content they expected, with any promised offers and coupons automatically applied, there is a continuity of experience and trust. This also reduces likelihood of churn and increases the opportunity for ongoing conversions.

Quick tips



Create a consistent experience

Ensure a better user experience with deep links. Affiliate campaigns can be run on everything from email and social media to search and SMS, so it's important to have a consistent, convenient experience across all channels.



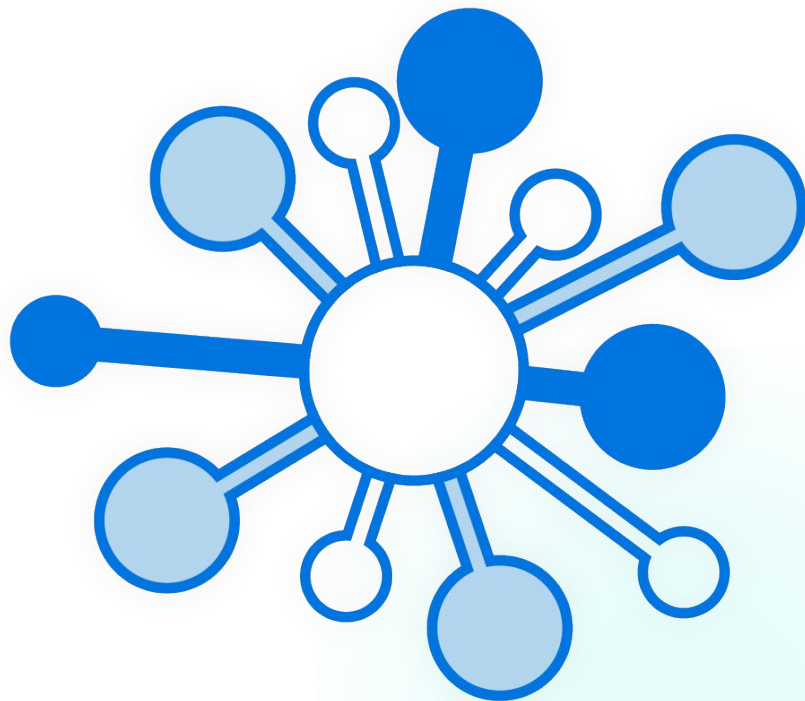
Deduplicate data with deep links

Utilize deep links in affiliate campaigns to send clean, deduplicated conversion and revenue data in real time and in the right format.



Appify your strategy

Integrate your app into your affiliate strategy and leverage your affiliates to drive more app adoption.



ENGAGEMENT

**How to drive in-app
engagement**

Engagement: Bring app users back

Because of increasing app usage and competition, to build and maintain truly profitable apps, media and entertainment brands must develop deeper relationships with their customers that keep them coming back. Engagement is increasingly important to be successful in any type of mobile growth.

Here are a few examples of how to bring users back to your app and keep them engaged:



Personalization



**Targeted web-to-app
smart banners**



**Break out of
walled gardens**



**Offline-to-app
QR codes**



**Email-to-app
deep links**

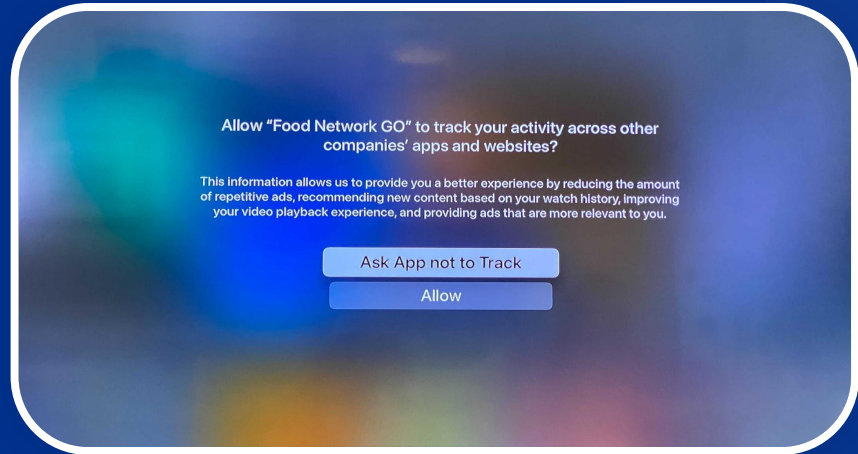


**Deep linking in mobile
ad campaigns**



**In-app-only
experiences**

Personalization



Leveraging personalization to bolster retention

Strengthen your customer relationships with tailored brand experiences

Every customer is an individual, but is your brand treating them that way? Modern marketing has evolved beyond campaigns blasted to the largest possible audience. And as today's consumers move more of their activity online, brands are finding that personalization is essential if they want to hold onto customers for the long haul.

According to McKinsey, **71% of consumers** expect personalization from the brands they patronize. When your brand fails to deliver that, you're not just serving up a disappointing experience — you're signaling that you don't understand what they need. That can undermine an otherwise good relationship and hurt retention. On the flip side, embracing personalization can make your marketing more effective. Research conducted by Braze found that personalized messages were **15% more effective** at driving lapsing users back to a company's app or website, compared to standard messages.

Personalization is powerful, but to nurture sustainable customer relationships, you need to embrace it at every stage of the process. Take a step back and think about how to embrace personalization on a strategic level. One smart way is to build out responsive, multi-step messaging flows that feature not just personalized copy but also personalized journey pathing that auto-adjusts each individual's experience based on real-time insights into how they are engaging and how their preferences have shifted.

Quick tips



Take advantage of dynamic personalization

Consider leveraging a dynamic personalization tool to pull in additional real-time information from your company's own internal servers (e.g., loyalty program info), as well as from third-party APIs (e.g., local weather data). Use it to further tailor the messages and images contained in your outreach and drive more impact.

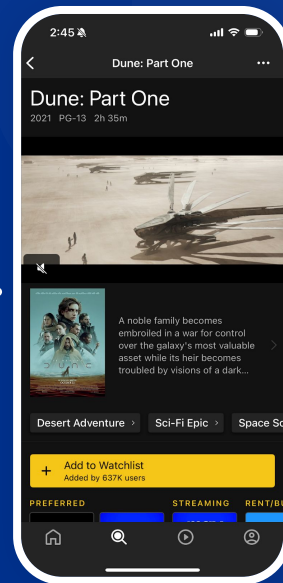
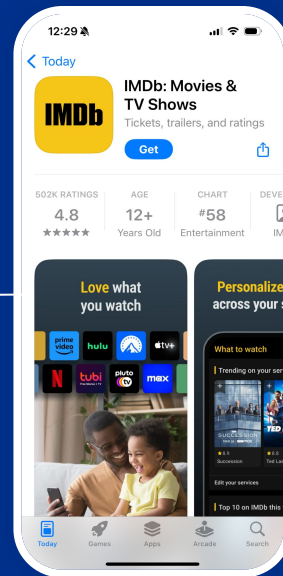
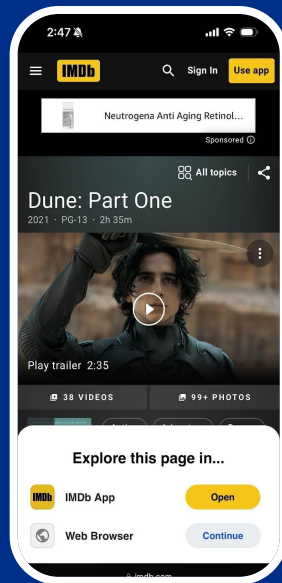


Leverage real-time segmentation

Personalization goes beyond just adding recipients' first names to a message; it should provide an experience that truly aligns with their wants and needs. Segmentation makes this possible, but it's only effective if the curation happens in real time. After all, customers are always changing, and sending messages based on each individual's behavior only pays off if those messages are timely enough to resonate with the recipient.



Targeted web-to-app smart banners



Drive existing app users to specific app content from mobile web

Show smart banners on your mobile website

Because customers tend to convert more and have a higher lifetime value (LTV) when they use your app, you should focus on driving users back to the app. A simple and cost-effective way to do this is by using targeted smart banners to encourage app users to continue their journey in the app.

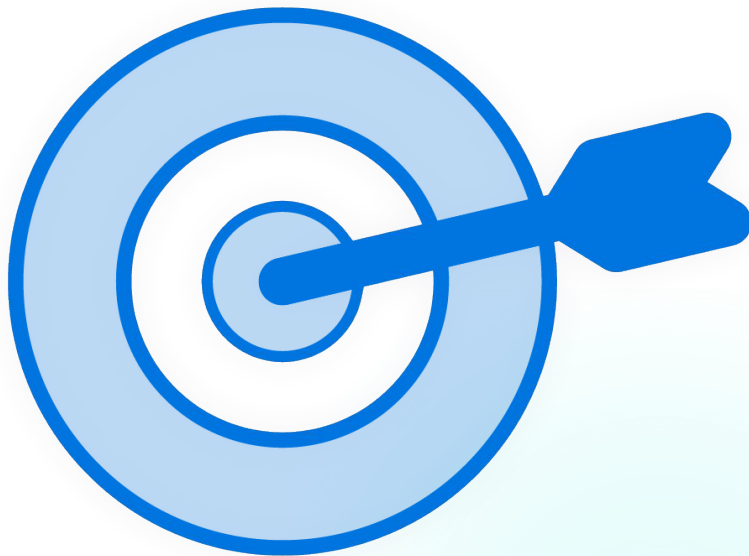
Typically, you should use a lighter touch with low-intent users at the top of the funnel. But for users you want to reengage who have already downloaded your app, **more pronounced and consistent engagement is welcome** — and can tip the scales toward conversion. Because these users are interested in interacting with your business, you can show larger banners or even full-page interstitials — most likely, visitors at this stage won't be scared away.

Smart banners can be customizable, highly personalized, and reflect a user's intent, making them the perfect addition to your engagement strategy.

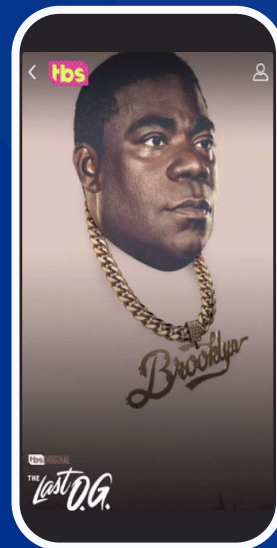
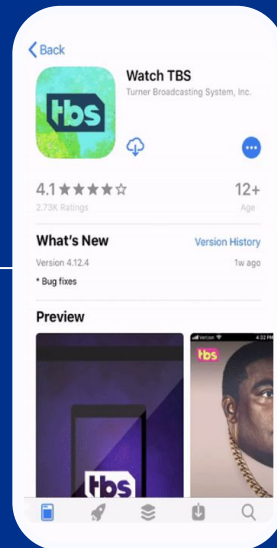
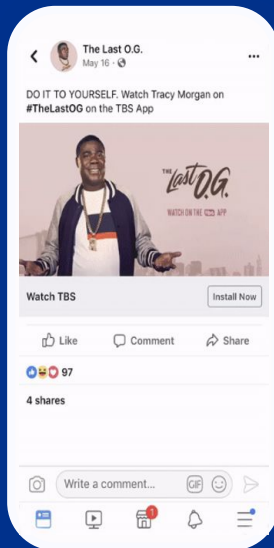
Quick tips

- ✓ **Use smart targeting rules**
Implement smart targeting rules to personalize web-to-app banners and interstitials.
- ✓ **Use larger banners**
Reengage users with larger banners instead of the smaller messaging used in acquisition campaigns.
- ✓ **A/B test**
Be sure to A/B test different banner variations and messaging to see which perform best for specific audiences.

Read the case study: Leading news media company in the U.K. increased content consumption by 25%



Break out of walled gardens



Bring users into your app from organic social

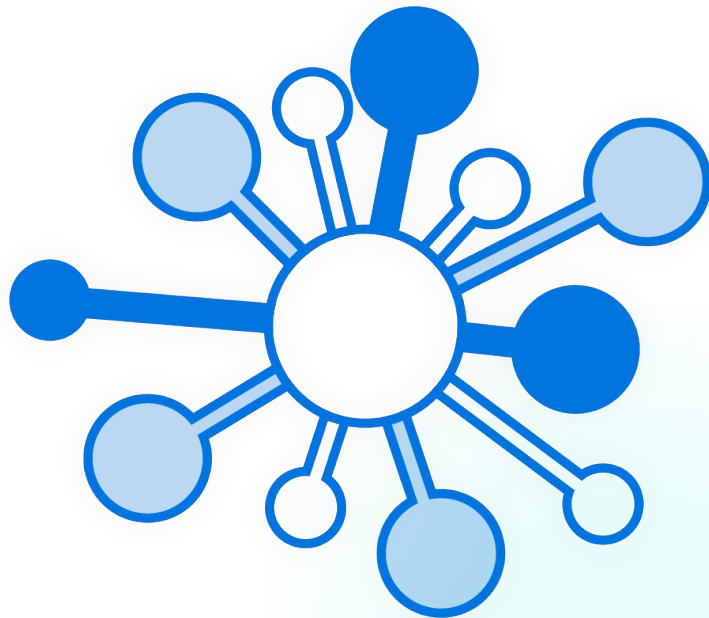
Use deep links to break users out of walled gardens

Social users have already shown an affinity for your brand, but many of them get stuck in walled gardens like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. Each platform has **in-app internet browsers** that are designed to keep users in the social media apps for a longer period of time. By leaving users within social walled gardens, you're missing an opportunity to acquire and engage high-value users in your app. But with deep links, you can bypass the walled gardens and get users directly to your app.

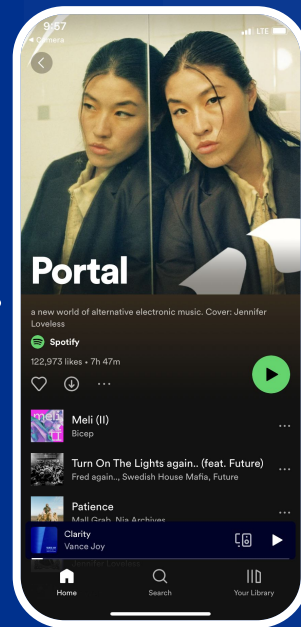
Deep linking increases **social media engagement** and — without any friction — gets users to the content they want to see. Deep links are vehicles that both ensure seamless user experiences and provide you with full attribution and analytics across every channel — email, referrals, paid advertising, social, organic search, and desktop-to-mobile. So with deep links, you can measure how each social media campaign performed and break free from walled gardens that keep users from engaging with your app.

Quick tips

- ✓ **Free users with deep links**
Create and deploy deep links in organic social campaigns.
- ✓ **Increase revenue with better experiences**
Bring users from a walled garden to the exact content they desire in your app with deep links. A superior experience like this can increase revenue, loyalty, and LTV.
- ✓ **Plan the user journey**
Wireframe your user journey ahead of time to ensure no visual snags appear while users are engaging with your links.



Offline-to-app QR codes



Bridge the offline-to-app gap

Use QR codes to deep link and drive in-app conversions

QR codes are a low-lift, high-reward strategy. Consumers expect to use your app at every stage of their journey, even when they aren't online. By employing QR codes in offline places like out-of-home advertisements, venues, direct mailers, and print ads, you can drive app engagement from the real world, meet rising consumer expectations, and understand how offline actions lead to app activities.

Attributing app installs back to the specific locations where QR codes are placed can also give your team insight into the categories that influence app usage the most and help you decide where to invest more in cross-promotion.

Quick tips



Brand your QR codes

Customize and brand your QR codes so when people engage with them in the physical world, out of context, they will know the QR codes originate from your brand.



Get additional ROI

QR codes can be great for paid campaigns — and adding them to real estate you already pay for increases return on that investment.

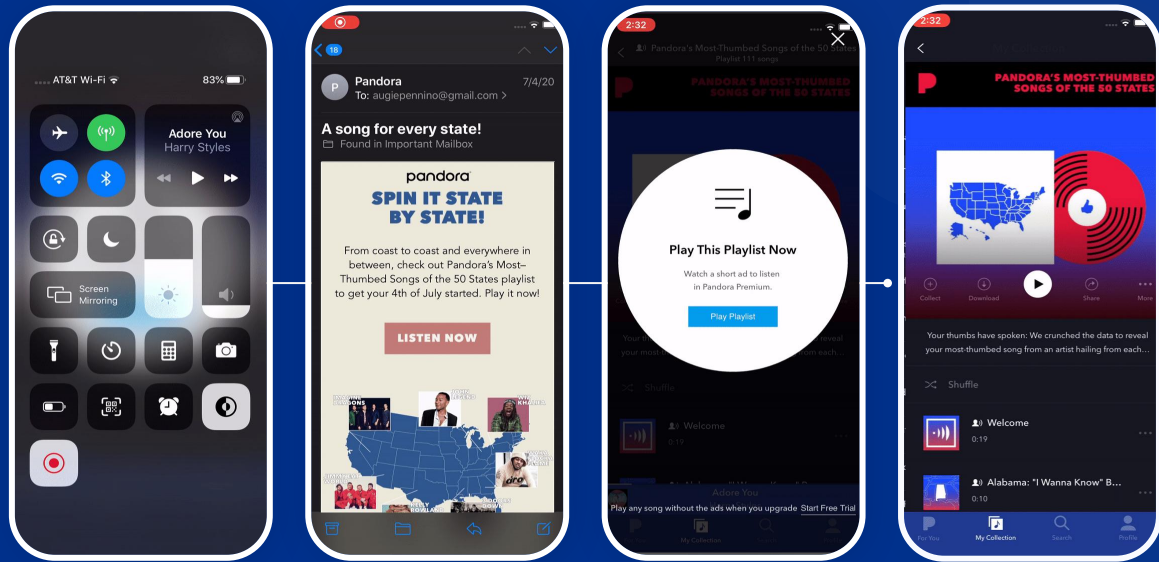


QR codes aren't going away

Fifty-nine percent of smartphone users plan to keep using QR codes in the future, so they are still a good investment for app engagement.



Email-to-app deep links



Route users from email to the corresponding content in your app

Use email-to-app deep links via email service provider (ESP) integration to recapture existing app users

The highest-value users are those who have already shown a strong interest in your brand. Therefore, they are the most likely to be influenced by your engagement campaigns. Email is a great way to reach lapsed or slightly engaged users and bring them back to an app because they already signed up for that type of connection with your brand.

Covering everything from newsletters and new releases to exclusive content drops and personalized playlist recommendations — email can highlight unique, new value propositions that remind users of, and entice users back to, your app. Make sure your winback and reengagement emails deep link users into the app for a seamless experience; you don't want users to churn again because of a broken link and fragmented experience that was entirely preventable.

Quick tips



Personalize CTAs

Personalize email calls to action for users who already have your app but haven't used it in a while. Show them a CTA like "View in the app" or ask them to try a new feature to reengage them.



Segment users

Segment users and tailor CTAs to each specific audience to help increase engagement and conversion rates.



Try in-app-only offers

Promote in-app-only offers, content, or special promotions in emails to entice users back into the app.



Deep linking in mobile ad campaigns



Route existing users to app content from paid campaigns

Run reengagement ads to drive conversions in an already-installed app

Just because a user downloaded your app doesn't necessarily mean they will keep coming back. Many brands rely on paid ads to reengage their audiences because paid media reliably broadens a brand's reach at every stage in the funnel, from awareness to conversion to winback. Place a dynamic bid and you can reach a uniquely tailored audience at exactly the right time. This becomes particularly crucial in channels where a brand's organic efforts might be overshadowed by the noise, or where the audience size may not be large enough to consistently meet the brand's growth objectives.

Retargeting is another way to engage users who have already downloaded your app. Many networks support showing retargeting ads to custom user segments based on time since last engagement. These ads can be particularly effective on a cost per acquisition (CPA) basis because they do not have the drop-off rates of install ads, where a user must first download the app to transact. To optimize your CPA, make sure that ad placements take users with the app directly to the advertised offering and content with minimal friction. Deep linking users directly to the intended content will improve reengagement spend and keep your existing users coming back.

Quick tips



Better understand user behavior

Deep link app users to specific content from paid campaigns and capture attribution, which will help you understand the user's path to conversion, even when it's long and complex.



Retarget lapsed users

Test retargeting ads specifically with lapsed user segments.



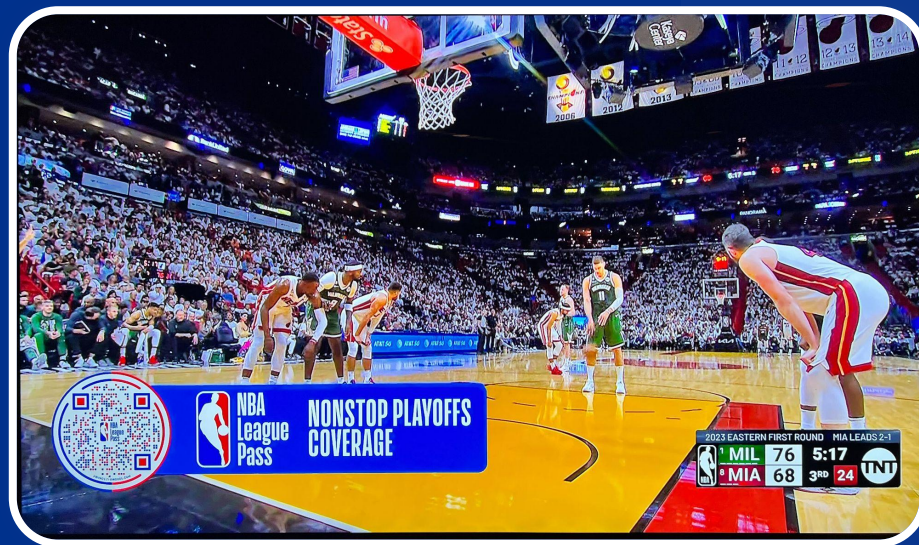
Deep link to compelling content

Reengage users with ads that link directly to compelling content in the app instead of sending users who already have the app to an app store.

Read the case study: A+E Networks decreases cost per performance by 78%



In-app-only experiences



Drive users to the app for enhanced functionality

Engage app users with experiences only available in the app

Another interesting way to engage your users is to offer in-app-only experiences that will entice them to explore new features, enhanced functionalities, or exclusive content.

For instance, entice music enthusiasts to revisit your app for exclusive access to new album releases, personalized playlists, or immersive music experiences such as virtual concerts or behind-the-scenes footage of their favorite artists. These in-app offerings not only enhance user engagement but also create a sense of exclusivity, motivating users to return to the app for more.

However, it's crucial to ensure users are informed about these enhancements and can easily access them within the app. Utilizing deep links guarantees that any promotions are properly attributed and direct users to the intended experience within the app. Deep links are instrumental in driving cross-platform engagement and create a better overall experience for all your app users.

Quick tips



Deep link directly to new experiences

Use deep links to enhance functionality within the app and promote to existing users through social media, email, smart banners, etc.



Promote features with smart banners

Try a mobile website banner to highlight app-only capabilities, such as ad-free viewing or extended episodes.



Diversify content

You don't necessarily have to build new features. You can also promote free trials, bonus content, or early releases.



CONVERSION

**How to increase
conversions**

Conversion: Get app users to do something

Even when you have highly engaged new users, you still need them to convert — to do something you want them to, whether it's subscribing to premium content, sharing with a friend, or simply logging into the app. Many successful conversions actually start with exceptional user experiences from the very first open.

Here are a few ways to ensure you're providing the best possible user experience:



**Cross-channel
experiences**

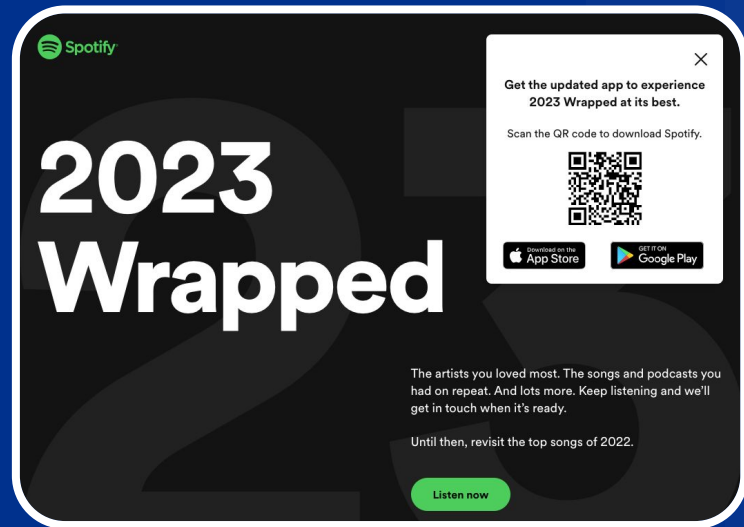


**Personalized
onboarding**



**Deferred
deep linking**

Cross-channel experiences



Creating cross-channel experiences that drive conversions

Enhance the impact of your marketing programs by creating cohesive experiences across channels

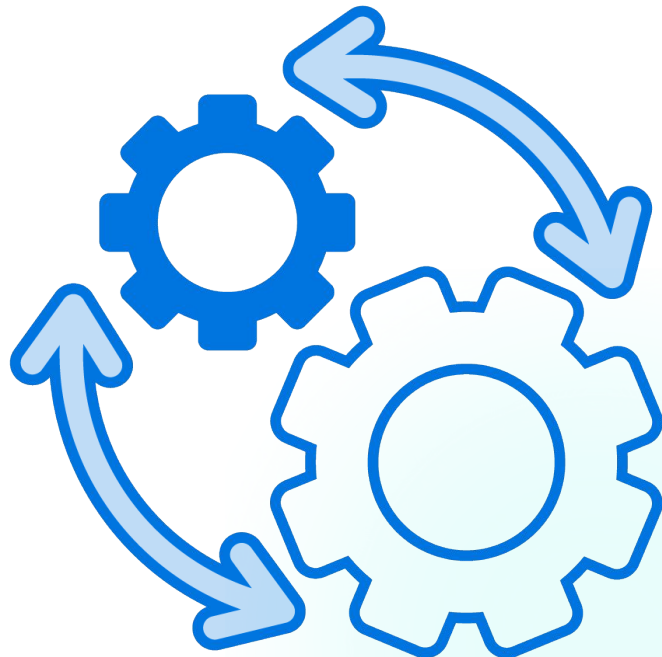
With the proliferation of mobile and connected devices, brands can't rely on one channel to engage customers. Especially in media and entertainment, customers have so many platforms at their disposal and frequently bounce between apps, mobile web, desktop, and over-the-top (OTT). This makes it essential for brands to ensure they have the ideal channel mix to reach customers in a complementary, cohesive way while maximizing each channel's strengths.

Embracing a cross-channel approach can be one of the most impactful ways for today's marketers to drive real results. Research conducted by Braze found that top-performing brands are **66% more likely** to use three or more channels to engage their customers, and every additional messaging channel used led to a **3.2x average increase** in purchases per user. That said, it's important to be thoughtful about which channels you use and why. In a successful cross-channel strategy, each interaction you have with your customers should align with your brand story, ensuring that your users feel understood, valued, and nurtured by your brand throughout their customer journey.

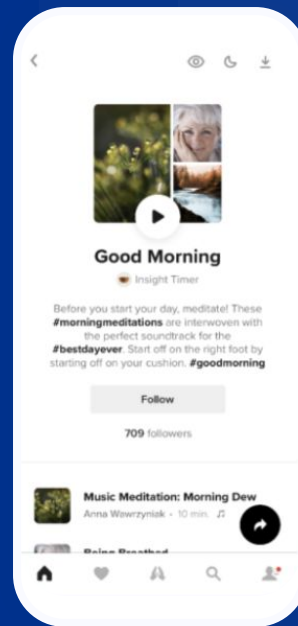
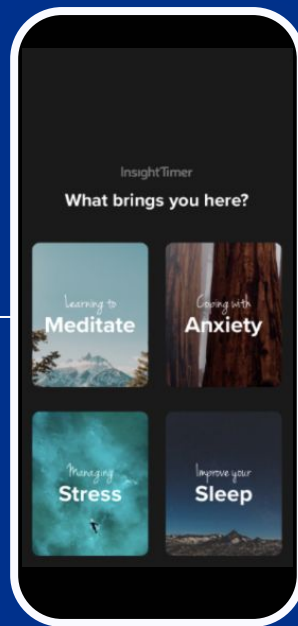
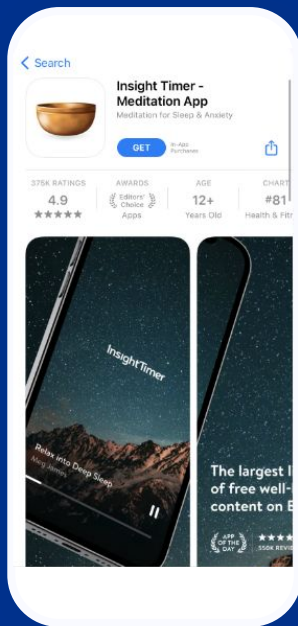
Quick tips

- ✓ **Personalize which channels you use**
Just because you have multiple channels at your disposal doesn't mean you should use each one every time. Adjust your channel mix to make the most of each one's strengths and consider using a [channel optimization tool](#) to send outreach in each recipient's preferred channels.
- ✓ **Combine in-product and out-of-product channels**
By combining both in-product channels (e.g., in-app messages) and out-of-product channels (e.g., email), brands can both capture the attention of users who aren't currently on their app or website and also nudge active users to take key actions.
- ✓ **Test and optimize your cross-channel flows**
Consider testing different channel combinations to find the strongest-possible performance, and establish a check-in cadence to review results and update elements like channel mix, timing, and copy/creative.

[Read the case study](#): RTLZWEI optimizes cross-channel experiences in the Love Island app



Personalized onboarding



Provide a custom onboarding experience to increase app retention

Use deferred deep linking for customized onboarding

How do you take users to that golden moment of conversion? A lot of it rests on your onboarding process, which can determine whether a user stays or leaves. Just like a first date, making a good first impression on your user is critical. It takes just **50 milliseconds** for a user to form an opinion about a website — and an app isn't much different. Woo your users with frictionless onboarding that entices them to stay the course and convert.

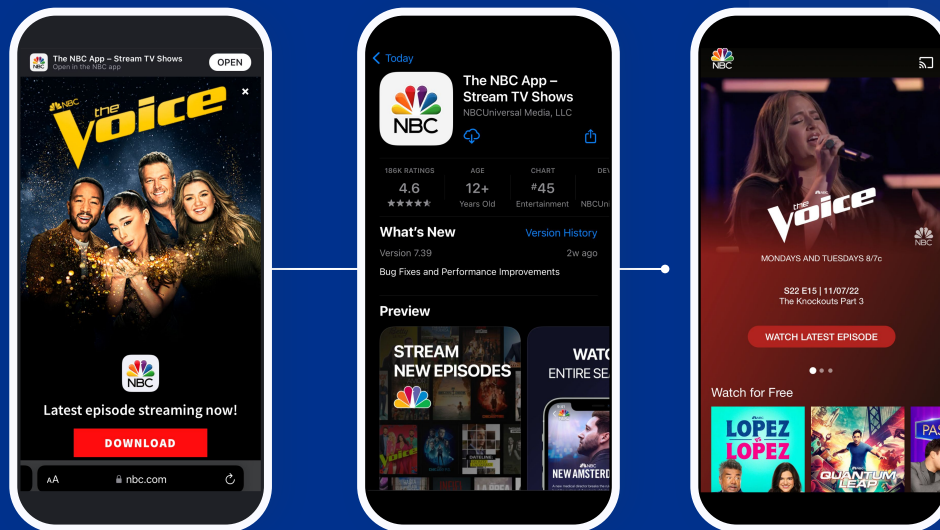
By seamlessly carrying over the context from a user's web activity into your app, you're crafting a deeply personalized first experience. For instance, if a person receives an app invitation via text and enters the app greeted with a message like "Amanda created a playlist for you," it sets the stage for an exceptional user experience. Tailored messages not only reduce the likelihood of user drop-off but also increase the chances of them taking the next step and converting within the app.

Quick tips

- ✓ **Keep users informed**
Balance minimizing required steps while maximizing up-front value by asking users more tailored preference questions and telling users why and how the information you collect during onboarding will enhance their experience.
- ✓ **Curate the journey**
Only show the features that are most important for users to get started. Show more features as the user moves deeper into your app, and uncover what they need when they reach appropriate stages of their journey.
- ✓ **Show value up front**
Remind users why they signed up — include your value proposition during onboarding to reinforce why your app deserves their attention.



Deferred deep linking



Take new users to the right content after they download

Leverage deferred deep linking for new app users

Tailoring content and designing user experiences to match user intents and desires significantly increases the likelihood of desired actions. Trust is key; fulfill user needs without bombarding them with aggressive messaging or content, such as immediate sign-in prompts, unless it aligns with their intent and adds value.

Once you've curated the right content, ensuring users are seamlessly directed to expected content upon app download is crucial for retention. [Deferred deep links](#) play a pivotal role in this process by guiding users to intended content through the installation process. Essentially, deferred deep links bridge the gap between a user's initial click on a link and their first interaction with the app post-installation, providing a seamless user experience.

Deferred deep links can facilitate various actions, such as exploring a personalized news feed or accessing exclusive content, ensuring users receive a tailored experience from the moment they engage with the app. By providing users with a direct pathway to interact with the brand through their mobile app, brands can cultivate a base of loyal and engaged users who are more likely to engage with premium features or subscribe to content.

Quick tips

- ✓ **Serve exceptional experiences — no matter what**
Set up deferred deep linking to relevant content for users who already have the app installed as well as users without the app to immediately route them after the first install. No matter who the user is, they will get an exceptional experience.
- ✓ **Store custom data parameters**
Use customized or branded URLs and store custom data parameters in link data with deferred deep links.
- ✓ **Track LTV with deep links**
Deferred deep links also help track customer lifetime value and can provide insights into what channels drive better performance.

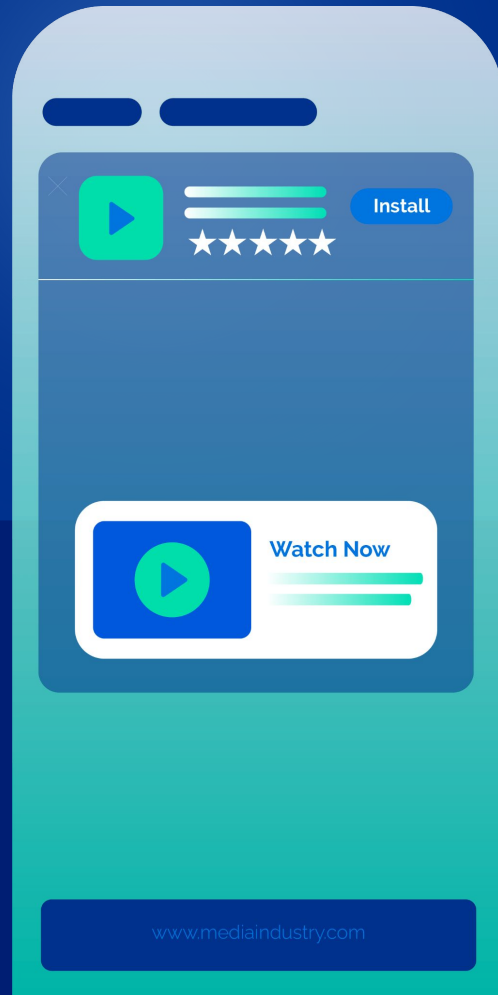


Conclusion

As with many things in the marketing world, mobile growth is sometimes more of an art than a science, but there are tried-and-true ways you can grow your app — now and into the future. Hopefully, you learned a few in this playbook.

With smart experimentation, the right measurement, and a few tweaks to your marketing strategies, growth is still very much on the horizon.

The world of mobile is a world of possibility. [Let's get started!](#)





About Branch

Branch is the linking and measurement partner for growth-focused teams, trusted to maximize the value of their evolving digital strategies. World-class brands like Instacart, Western Union, NBCUniversal, ZocDoc, and Sephora rely on Branch to acquire users, retain customers, and drive more conversions.

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