

Need for 'made for Africa' apps



By [Nicholas Rixon](#)

24 Jul 2013

There is a need for local application developers to develop apps specifically for the African market that solve local problems and provide utility to the local market. The rise of mobile technology has bought about a gold rush of mobile companies looking to create the next best app for consumers and businesses.

The market is overrun with international applications, many of which do not add value in the African context. The South Africa market, while producing some great apps for enterprises sectors, is yet to produce a world dominating app concept. Local consumers are looking for apps that help them in their daily activities to solve local problems and increase their effectiveness.

The rise of mobile incubators and accelerator programs in Africa is leading to some great innovation in the mobile and application space, and could lead to the development of more 'made for Africa' apps. These localised projects help entrepreneurs create successful mobile businesses that will look to tackle African problems using mobile devices.

Within the next two to three years we can expect to see some of these mobile businesses create real socio, political and economic impact across the continent.

Apps that provide instant gratification

Mobile users are looking for apps that provide instant gratification while on the move. When opening an app or looking at a website, consumers want to be able to find the information they need quickly and easily.

Consumers are using technology to short cut the thinking process. Mobile apps need to provide them with a powerful medium to discover and access information on the go, and display it in a way that maximises their actions tenfold.

Two fundamentals

When developing a mobile application, there are two fundamentals that stand true in each project. The first is to know your target audience.

Understanding your target audience and finding out their pain points is the first vital step to making a successful mobile application. This information will dictate which platform the app is developed for, how you design the app, and what brand messages you send out when marketing the app.

Secondly, the app needs to create an exceptional user experience. New mobile applications are being developed almost hourly. The way to differentiate your app from the rest of the market is to develop a well thought out and designed mobile app that provides maximum utility with very little effort.

Challenges

There are many challenges that developers and mobile designers face during the development of an application. The costs involved; deciding which platform to use; deciding to make a native, hybrid or web-based app; how to distribute the app and what to charge for it are all decisions that developers must make early on in the project.

However, the biggest problem faced by developers remains how to market the app once it has been built. A solid offline and online marketing plan is required to get the best marketing results. Simply submitting an app to the app store is not enough.

In order to be successful, developers need to get their apps into the hands of tech writers and review sites that their target audience frequents. An effective marketing plan is critical to the success of a mobile app and is often overlooked in the planning process.

ABOUT NICHOLAS RIXON

Nicholas Rixon is the COO and Co-founder of OnePixel, a leader in the field of mobile application development. Rixon has been in the mobile industry for almost three years. During this time he has been involved in mobile application development and mobile strategy for some of the biggest brands in South Africa, including Checkers, Practice Perfect, Hero Group, and Zing360. Contact details: email nick@onepixel.co.za | LinkedIn | Twitter @RxSA
» Need for 'made for Africa' apps - 24 Jul 2013

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>