

Don't Create An App For Apps' Sake

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Three-quarters of mobile app users expect major brands to have an app

The trendiness of mobile apps has made them a popular tactic among some marketers who want the latest, coolest thing—even if it doesn't always make sense for their brand. In some sense, they may be right.

Consumers do consider apps a must, according to an October 2010 survey from interface design agency EffectiveUI conducted by Harris Interactive.

More than three-quarters of mobile app users said they expected all brand name companies to have a mobile application, and nearly as many said they expected the app to be easier to use than the company's website.

But the survey also highlighted the danger of developing an app for its own sake. Almost seven in 10 app users said their perception of a brand would be negatively affected if it had an app that wasn't useful or helpful.

And many apps appear to fall into this category; 38% of respondents said they were not satisfied with most apps from their favorite brands.

An earlier survey from Adobe found most mobile device users preferred using browsers to apps for a variety of functions, despite the assumption among marketers and industry experts that apps provide a better user experience. These users may also have been unimpressed with many of the apps they had tried.

Marketers must keep ease of use and also utility in mind when designing apps.

The application must be a natural fit for the brand and offer a genuine value to users, or they could be actively turned off from the brand.

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