

## WHY YOUR BUSINESS APP SHOULD BE MOBILE

If you think your business is too small to go mobile, think again! Countless small and medium size businesses are jumping on the mobile app train because ultimately, this is where everyone is heading!

It is now vital to the success of your business that you understand that an effective mobile strategy is far more than just a mobile-friendly website (and if you didn't know that then you need to modernise your approach to online marketing). Mobile apps are the way forward and all small companies who have their own mobile app are already ahead of the game.



If you are wondering whether to follow their lead, here are some reasons why yes, you definitely should!

### ● Customer value

There are a number of ways to increase customer satisfaction through your app. One of the most popular is to offer rewards. Let your customers collect their rewards via the mobile app. This will undoubtedly result in more sales and more return customers. Another way to add value is have an easy to find contact us section with clear instructions of how to speak to a human – not an answering machine. It doesn't matter if you are only available during working hours, but people get put off by talking to robots all the time.

### ● You will be visible at all times

People spend a vast majority of their downtime on their phones and while they may be spending this time on the same app, they all still have unlock and scroll through their device for the apps they're looking for. If your app is in their

phone, they will unconsciously be visible every time they are on their phone.

### ● Stand out from the crowds

Despite the ever growing trend of mobile apps for businesses of all sizes, it is still fairly rare for small businesses to have one. Use this time to make your claim on the big bad world and offer your services online and via an app. You will leave your competitors high and dry with a leap to mobile.

### ● 24 hour availability

A mobile app puts you into the palm of people's hands at all hours of the day or night – regardless of whether you are present or not. Adding a messaging feature to your app will make you even more reachable and set you out from the rest. There has been a trend in recent times to avoid contact of any sort. Mobile apps are putting a stop to this. Customers want to know there are real people involved in your business, so put yourself out there and become available.

### ● Your own digital marketing channel

An app can be used for a number of different functions such as providing useful information, prices, search features, booking forms, user accounts, instant messaging, news feeds, entertainment and much more. You get to choose what information you would like your customers to have at their fingertips. With push notifications, you're even close to direct contact and can remind customers about sales and promotions without them having to log in.

### ● Build your brand

Use your app to your advantage and build your brand with it. You should at least have a logo; a mobile app will add to your brand awareness. You can do what you want with your brand and if you build an app that your customers will love, your brand will get the publicity it deserves. Ultimately, the more recognition you get, the more products/services you will sell. People love recognizable and well-known brands. It's a fact. A mobile app lets you compete with the big boys and create a brand you and your customers can really be sure of.

**For more information on creating your own app for your business, call us at 972-895-3100 now.**

# WHY APP INTEGRATION IS VITAL FOR SUCCESS

The day we need to rely on apps for our business has arrived and it's shocking how many businesses simply aren't prepared. Apps are incredible tools for business – enabling jobs, processes, sales and marketing to take place from a computer, tablet or phone. However what makes apps even more important is their ability to integrate with each other.

Ultimately, apps that talk to one another are like a really productive brainstorming session. By working together, so much more is achieved!



If this doesn't convince you about the importance of app integration, try these reasons:

**Saves time on admin:** Imagine only having to upload files once. That's it – they're saved to a cloud and available to everyone who has permission. Resaving files across multiple platforms is time consuming and boring – not to mention really inefficient.

**Lowering training time:** Your new members of staff can learn from one single app, adding more apps if/when they need them. If you have integrated all of your systems into one app, new staff members need only learn about that one.

**A streamlined service:** If your business model requires clients to access your system, it is far easier to manage if they are only on one system - especially if that system is branded for your company. Your business will come across as extremely professional and tech-savvy. Using multiple apps nowadays is clumsy, disorganised and a waste of time. The last thing you want to do is upset your clients by having them log into multiple accounts.

**Makes you look professional:** To be a successful business, you need to move with the times and apps are the way forward for every successful business. To be behind the times is unprofessional and certainly won't help in the quest to find new clients, who so often complete business/retail transactions on a mobile device.

## How does app integration work?

Depending on your company's needs, there are a number of different ways it works. Extensions within apps allow you to share, save and capture information in an instant. They work together without compromising your security and

usually through the same operating device. For example, you may have noticed recently that icons come up when you are reading articles online, visiting websites and looking at pictures. These icons are usually to do with sharing on social media – allowing you to pin a subject, tweet about it or post it to Facebook in the click of a button.

Add-on software is becoming increasingly popular. These allow all businesses that use that particular app to run their entire company on that same system, moving data to different applications when appropriate.

For most businesses, and especially ones relying on software to generate business, integration between apps is what has been missing for so long. The mobile, cloud-based systems allow employees to work from anywhere at any time and save their work to one central place.

**If you would like to learn more about app integration and why it is so important to succeed, call us at 972-895-3100 today!**

## Pioneering Newsbytes

### Santa's shopping list



Can't think of what to buy the guy who has everything? Why is it that men can be so difficult to buy gifts for? Luckily we're about to come to the rescue! Look no further. This month, we're dedicating one whole blog to this year's best Christmas buys and find a sneak peak right now with three of our favourite ideas:

For the budding photographer, they can't do without the Instagram Photo-Book Series by Chatbooks. It's as simple as 1,2,3... Chatbooks will turn your friend's perfectly designed Instagram feed into a PROPER book. If they're more into their selfies, this LED camera light makes everyone look good, anytime, anywhere! It is a must for all selfie obsessions!

Finally, this Spigen Thin-Fit iPhone Case is perfect for everyone who proclaims they don't need a phone case. Everyone needs a phone case – everyone!

# STOP BEING TIED TO YOUR DESK

As a business owner, it is more important than ever for you to have access to your files wherever you are and whenever you need them. Business has become mobile and if you are still tied to your desk, you need to cut those ties and free yourself and your business opportunities.

You need to find your files at the push of a button and let's not forget productivity tools such as to-do lists and notes. What's the use of only having access to these on your desktop? If you make an appointment while you are out, you need to be able to add it to your diary, or if work comes through while you are travelling, you need to add it to your task list wherever you are. You might need to bring work home or work while on the go. All of these require you to



have mobile access to your working life.

Choosing online tools for your productivity is a great way to start – especially if you are cautious or sceptical of clouds and online working. To-do lists can all be stored in 'the cloud' and you can access them through your computer or mobile device with the specific apps. It's a convenient way to organise your time and many of these lists can also be linked to your online diaries and email accounts. Apps communicate with each other, saving you the arduous task of documenting appointments, schedules and workflow to a number of different programmes. The cloud will also back up your lists and update them as you tick off your completed tasks.

Cost is another reason for choosing to go online. Many apps are free or come at a minimum price. You do not pay for upgrades (which are done behind the scenes) and time costs are an absolute minimum.

There are a number of online to-do lists to choose from. You need to choose one that will work best for you. Consider whether it links with your email program, your diary, your smartphone and your desktop and also whether the design is easy to use and the notifications are to your requirements.



When it comes to note-taking, there are also a number of online options that can be shared with all of your devices. If your desk is cluttered with post-it notes or scraps of paper, it may be time to de-clutter and become more streamlined.

Once again, there are a number of excellent online versions available. You can make notes on your desktop and then save them to cloud where they will be available to you whenever and wherever you want.

It's vital to stay on top of developments within the industry. You need to know what outside influences are affecting your business and why. However, searching through Google on a daily basis is somewhat of a thankless task. Luckily there are a number of news sites that will do the arduous work for you and send you relevant news stories. They will store all of the information, allowing you to pull out the stories as and when you need them.

These are just a few ideas of how to move your productivity away from just your desktop. Business has become fluid and people are expected to be available wherever they are. If you are not yet mobile, there is no excuse not to change; it could be losing you clients.

Once you are confident with the above, you may find it's time to move onto file sharing applications. Again, the cloud offers storage options and the ability to download any files you have saved anywhere at any time. Once you turn to the cloud, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it!

**Call us at 972-895-3100 today to start you on the right path for becoming mobile.**



# RELYING ON EXCEL IS A RISK

Are you heavily reliant on Excel for the day to day running of your business? If so, you need to know just how problematic this could become for you. A common theme we come across when designing custom apps for our clients is the number of people who run their business using spreadsheets. This dependency on Excel however could be very detrimental to your company's future growth.

In our experience, one of the main reasons for using Excel is because this is the only program their current systems can handle. Many outdated systems don't enable the user to view and understand data as well as providing relevant data required to make day to day decisions. Therefore, the information is logged into an Excel workbook which is updated and exported as required.

However, who's checking these spreadsheets? Studies have shown that up to 80-90% of spreadsheets contain serious errors. There are always horror stories being passed around about a how a simple typo has cost a company millions of Dollars!



Spreadsheets are, and always will be, easy to use and can be created by anyone in the company, but this could also be your downfall. Serious errors are very easy to make, but near on impossible to catch! Who is checking the checker? How about checking the updates? Who knows who's changing what? It is all too easy to get lost among the numbers and forget to double check a figure you typed in that you were unsure of.

It is also really difficult to manage the different versions when you have multiple inputters. They have to be emailed back and forth, or stored in the cloud where versions aren't necessarily always safe and before you know it, every version is different and no one is quite sure which the original – or the true – version is!

When working with spreadsheets, it's also really difficult to manage data from every department. Each department usually has to have their own spreadsheet which contains different information about the same customer. Anyone who is tasked with the job of analyzing that data will find it very tricky and won't necessarily be aware if a mistake or has been made somewhere along the line. One department will hold all of the sales information while another might be working on the billing and none of it will be brought together.

Anyone who has worked over a long period of time with Excel will know just how easy it is for a spreadsheet to become corrupted. As the information contained on each spreadsheet increases, the more unstable they become and therefore the greater the risk for data loss becomes. There is rarely any controls in place for duplication, which is not only a source of wasted effort, but also a risk as figures may be changed on one version, but not the other and suddenly neither version is correct.

## It's time for one single system!

Here at Pioneering Programmers, we are big fans of integration and the use of customised apps to eliminate the need for external spreadsheets, to simplify the process of recording information and to ensure that all information is securely stored in one place. You only have one true version which is visible to everyone in the company – without them having the ability to change anything without permission.

If you would like advice on streamlining your operating system, get in touch today by calling: **972-895-3100**.

## Pioneering Newsbytes

### Facebook wants to help those in need

Developers at Facebook have designed AI software which can scan posts and videos for suicidal thoughts. Once the program has come across a problem, through what is known as 'proactive detection' it alerts a team of moderators (human) who are trained in dealing with suicide prevention. These specialists will send resources to that person at risk or friends/relatives and alert the authorities if necessary. The program has been designed to flag potential problems, alerting professionals who will send help in real time.



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