

Navigating mobile app marketing in a privacy conscious mobile space

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Standing out in a competitive mobile app market is even more crucial for marketers and developers to build and market scalable, engaging and user-friendly app experiences. With overall app installs increasing by a significant 41% between Q1 2020 and Q1 2021 in Africa, the mobile app market has seen a surge in growth and innovation across gaming and non-gaming apps with non-organic installs for iOS showing strong positive growth.



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Android's significantly larger market share in Africa has seen developers and advertisers favour its software, but following a greater adoption of iOS operated Apple products, having a strong and effective app for both Android and iOS allows for greater user acquisition across an increasingly diverse user base. Trends show iOS more than doubled its market share of mobile operating systems across Africa jumping from [6.06% in Jan 2018 to 16.23% in May 2021](#).

Apple's recent updates on its iOS operating system brought a major privacy-focused change when it comes to apps on iOS. Now, users will need to proactively opt-in to sharing their IDFA (identifier for advertisers), a unique, random identifier that Apple assigns to every device, and which has traditionally been used by advertisers to measure how users interacted with their ads and along the user journey. Prior to this update, consumers had to proactively opt-out of sharing their IDFA.



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While this may seem like a minor change, it is a big departure, and rightly gives users greater control and visibility over what data apps can access and use. However, it also presents challenges for marketers when it comes to measuring and analysing the performance of mobile marketing campaigns.

Here are my top tips for how to navigate iOS in a post-privacy world:

Rethink the user experience

Marketers should use these changes as an opportunity to reevaluate how they engage with users. Part of this involves placing a greater emphasis on owned media, such as web-to-app campaigns, whereby marketers direct users from the mobile web browser to the mobile app. Other examples include email, SMS or owned social media campaigns to encourage users to download your app.

From a privacy perspective, because the journey includes owned channels, IDFA does not need to be collected for attribution purposes, and first-party data can be leveraged to optimise the experience.

In addition, using owned media can enable marketers to create better onboarding experiences, which are intimately linked to better conversion rates. Another bonus is that acquiring users via owned channels to such as web, is generally more cost-effective than relying exclusively on mobile.

Adapt your strategy for your product UX

Brands should focus on obtaining IDFA consent by delivering value, and building trust and affinity with consumers. In order to do this, it's important to rethink the overall user journey, from when the user first encounters your brand, as they install and onboard, and then as they navigate.

Reframe your user experience process from scratch, and rethink your approach specifically considering the journey users embark on before installing the app, as they onboard and then navigate through the application. By focussing on targeting the obtaining of IDFA consent from highly satisfied users, developers can boost their seed audiences and growth campaigns through collecting data from highly engaged users. For this, timing is absolutely critical, as delaying the ATT prompt, which requests permission from the user, will increase the likelihood that users will opt in allowing you transparent access into their data and activities and decrease the chances they will uninstall the application.

Adapt existing mobile marketing strategies

Since the enforcement of iOS 14.5 and iOS 15, there have been a number of innovations to help marketers overcome some of the challenges surrounding measurement, without compromising user privacy.

For example, while Apple has launched its own privacy-first measurement solution for developers and marketers, SKAdNetwork, measurement is limited to specific activity occurring in the first 24-72 hours. How can advertisers make critical campaign decisions based on such limited data? The answer lies in predictive technologies that will enable marketers to leverage early signals of engagement within the first 24-72 hours, and as such, predict long-term campaign performance. This game-changing development is set to be a powerful tool in any marketer's arsenal.

Increase opt-in rates

While marketers shouldn't expect to see the same level of IDFA opt-ins as before, businesses can definitely focus on driving opt-in rates.

First, marketers should customise the prompt shown to consumers that asks them whether they would like to opt-in or not. This is a great opportunity to explain the value and benefits of opting-in, such as being able to deliver a better, more curated experience, as well as alleviate any privacy concerns they may have.

Marketers also have other opportunities to communicate and convince users to opt-in. A pre-prompt, that's native to your app, is ideal for giving users the extra information they need. While you can't incentivise or manipulate users into opting in, you can contextualise what you're about to ask of them, why you're doing it, and what's in it for them. As well as a pre-prompt, you can also use a post-prompt reminder, to remind customers that they're free to enable IDFA (and disable) at any time - the power is in their hands.

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Build brand affinity

The more a user trusts your brand, the greater their willingness to opt-in and allow use of their data. While this undoubtedly gives an advantage to established, well-known brands, there are still a number of steps newer apps can take to build trust. For example, developing your social presence, cross-promotion in other apps, paid marketing, and email marketing, are all ways to boost brand affinity and build trust.

The African mobile app space is growing and while consumers predominantly favour Android, the iOS user base is steadily increasing. Changes to iOS, while designed to protect the user, mean mobile app marketers need to be more creative and think of more strategic ways to acquire and retain users and measure the user journey. Brands will be operating in a new and fragmented environment, where many KPIs and data points are no longer available. Being able to measure accurately in this ever-changing landscape will be key to any marketer's success.

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