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Finance Mobile Growth Playbook
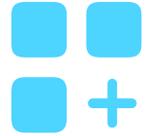
In this playbook, we explore ways that finance and banking companies can grow their mobile apps. With first-hand advice, industry data, and quick tips, we take the guesswork out of mobile growth and empower you to thrive.

Let's start with the state of finance today.
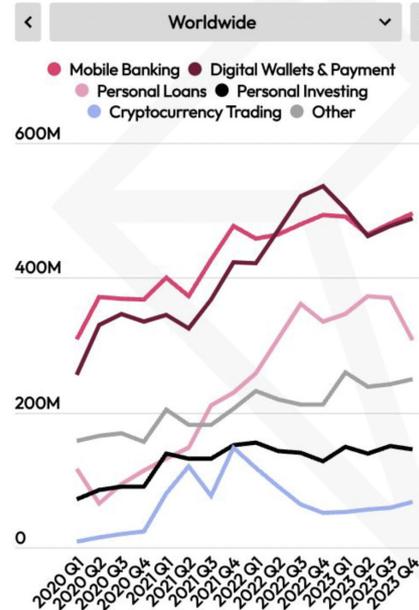
State of financial services

Mobile is on the rise

In 2023, mobile banking emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors in finance app downloads, highlighting a fundamental change in consumer behavior. Mobile has created new customer habits, with consumers opting to check their banking apps daily rather than visit physical bank branches.

Mobile apps present a massive opportunity for banks to interact with their customers in entirely new — and increasingly valuable — ways. However, according to BAI research, there's a disconnect between consumer expectations and bank priorities. Consumers ranked "improving the omni-channel experience" as their top CX priority, but that concern wasn't even in the top three for banks. So while consumers are hungry for digital transformation, many banks are lagging.

As the industry evolves, financial services brands must embrace digital solutions to meet the needs, preferences, and expectations of their customers.

Finance Subgenre App Downloads by Country
Powered by data.ai's App IQ Taxonomy

Worldwide

- Mobile Banking
- Digital Wallets & Payment
- Personal Loans
- Personal Investing
- Cryptocurrency Trading
- Other

Top Apps by Downloads in 2023

|	App	Subgenre
1	PhonePe	Digital Wallets & Payment
2	Paytm	Digital Wallets & Payment
3	PayPal	Digital Wallets & Payment
4	Google Pay	Digital Wallets & Payment
5	Alipay	Digital Wallets & Payment
6	Nubank	Mobile Banking
7	Binance	Cryptocurrency Trading
8	Bajaj Finserv	Personal Loans
9	DANA	Digital Wallets & Payment
10	Google Wallet	Digital Wallets & Payment

Source: data.ai Intelligence | Note: Downloads across iOS, Google Play; China is iOS only. Finance apps are classified using data.ai's App IQ taxonomy.

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Mobile adoption is key to satisfy consumers.

But some brands will **stand out** while others fall behind.

Projected app installs using Branch tools
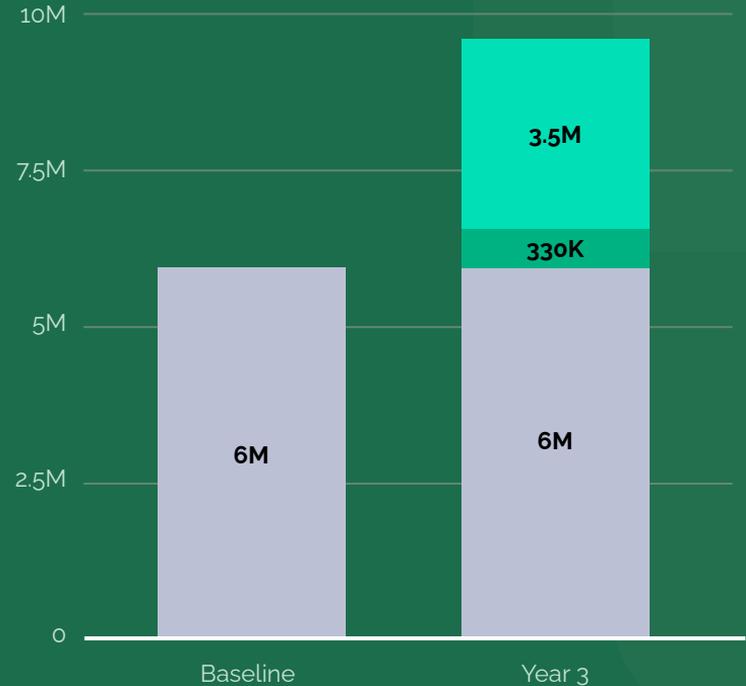
Projections based on Branch data of customer app installs after three years of using Branch tools.

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Mobile can't be ignored

A recent survey from Chase found that **62%** of consumers said they can't live without their mobile banking app, and **78%** are using it weekly. Banks simply cannot afford to ignore mobile apps. Not only do consumers demand the convenience and ease of mobile banking apps, but app users are better in every way.

Branch's **Mobile Growth survey** of mobile growth leaders from around the world, conducted between July 2022 and January 2023, found that for every one dollar a non-app user spends, app users spend $3.30 on average — **more than three times as much.**
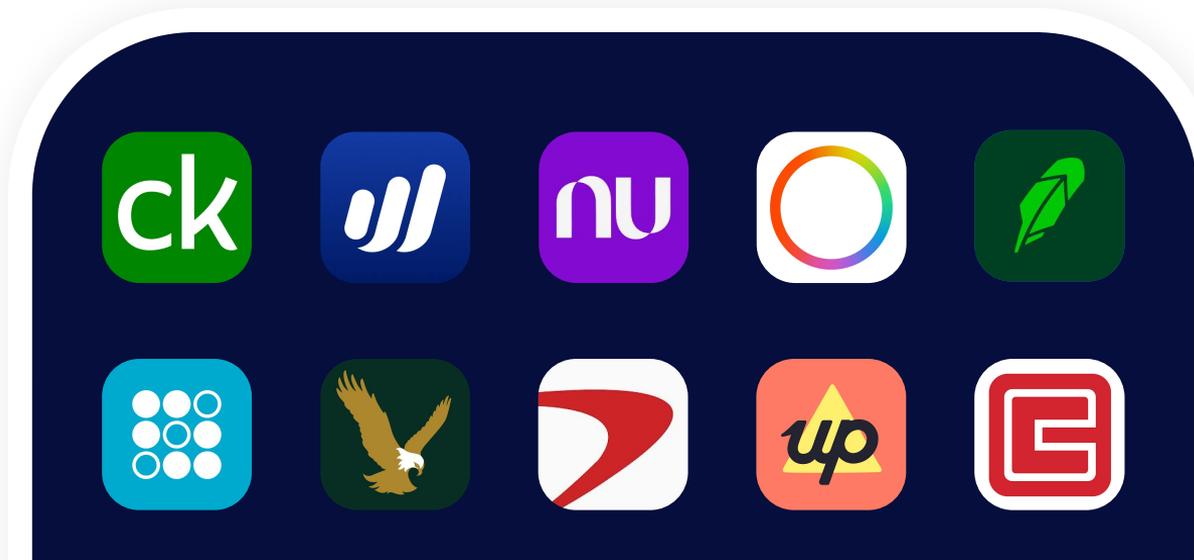
Mobile drives value

Mobile drives value for banks

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

Mobile experiences are seamless and more convenient.

Mobile apps have revolutionized how consumers engage with financial institutions. With just a few taps, consumers can adopt features in real time, save their credentials to automatically log in, and bank on the go. This level of convenience enhances customer satisfaction and fosters long-term loyalty.

Mobile creates opportunities for ancillary revenue.

Apps put banks in the pockets of consumers, allowing personalized interactions that ensure consumers receive relevant offers, upsells, and alerts tailored to their individual preferences. This type of ongoing communication means revenue optimization, higher add-on sales, and reduced cost to sell for banks.
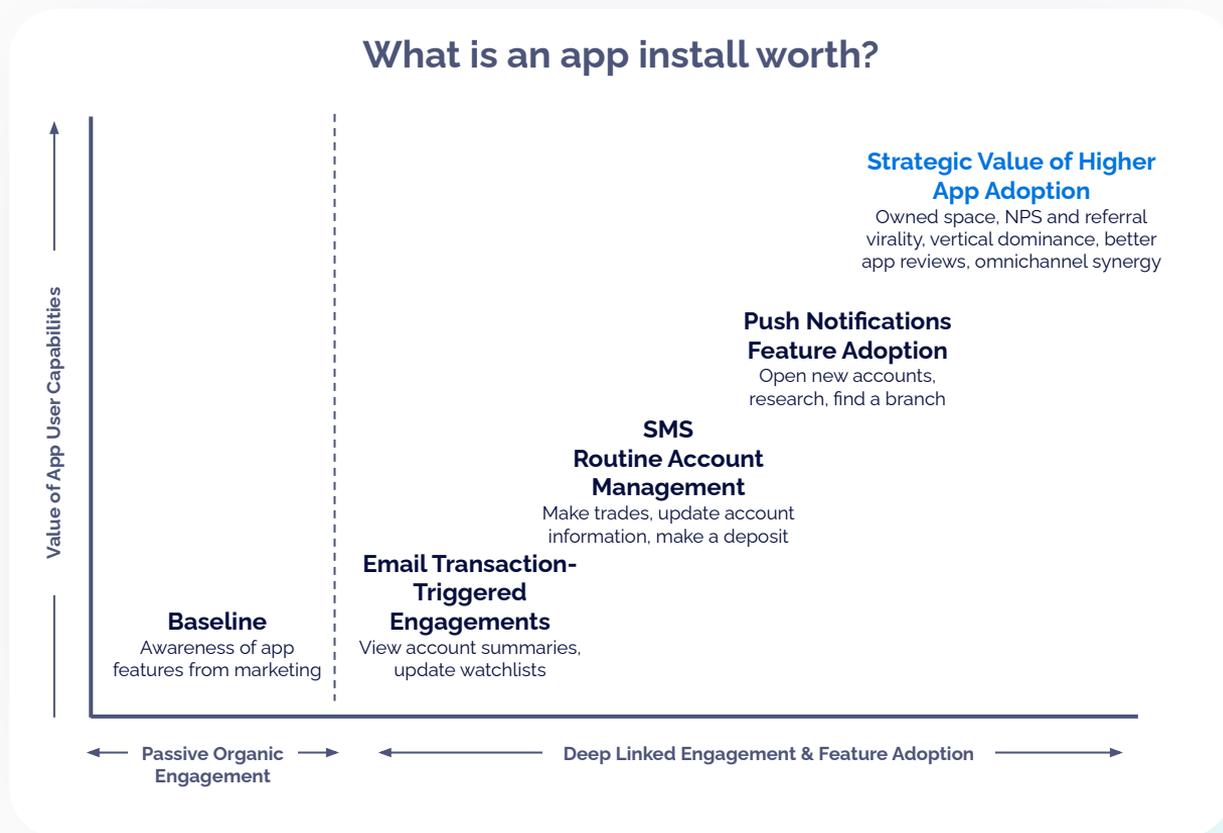
Customer service is better on mobile.

Mobile apps empower consumers to independently manage their finances and access support as needed. With self-service options at their fingertips, customers are more likely to manage tasks on their own or turn to digital support options like chatbots, alleviating pressure on call centers and reducing cost to serve.

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Mobile reduces costs

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

For instance, banks generate significant cost savings on staffing and infrastructure when customers make deposits through an app or opt for digital service instead of dialing into a call center. But the savings don't stop there: Transitioning to digital communications and notifications reduces reliance on printed and physical materials. Plus, apps provide a direct channel for marketing and communication with customers, reducing the need for costly traditional advertising methods.

What is an app install worth?

Value of App User Capabilities

Strategic Value of Higher App Adoption
Owned space, NPS and referral virality, vertical dominance, better app reviews, omnichannel synergy

Push Notifications Feature Adoption
Open new accounts, research, find a branch

SMS Routine Account Management
Make trades, update account information, make a deposit

Email Transaction-Triggered Engagements
View account summaries, update watchlists

Baseline
Awareness of app features from marketing

◄ **Passive Organic Engagement** ►

◄ **Deep Linked Engagement & Feature Adoption** ►

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Mobile apps are the primary driver of customer growth and retention

92% 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?
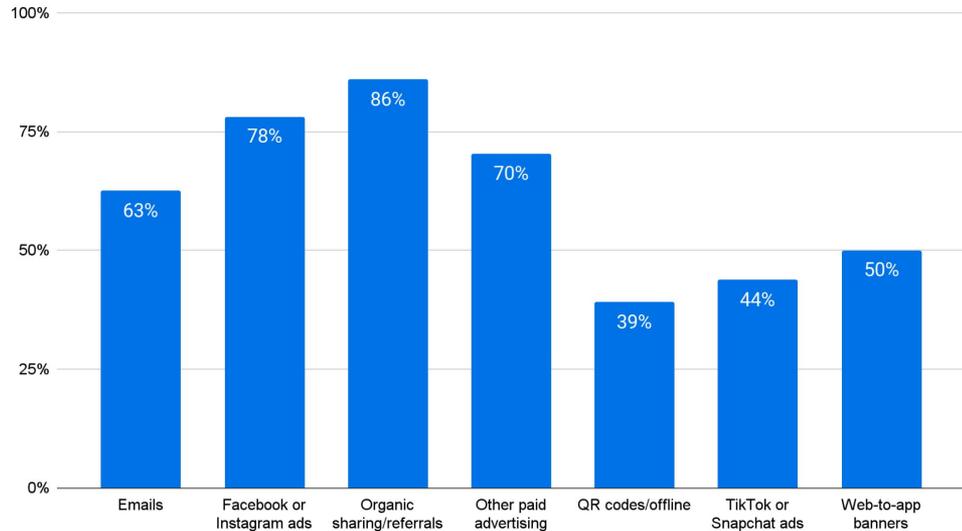
Somewhat or not at all
8.0%
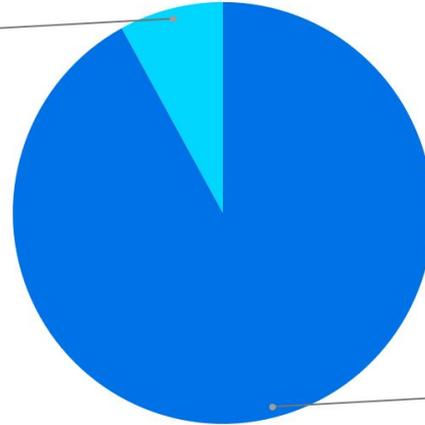
Most or very
92.0%

Source: Branch Mobile Growth Survey, 2022/23

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Acquisition breakdown

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.
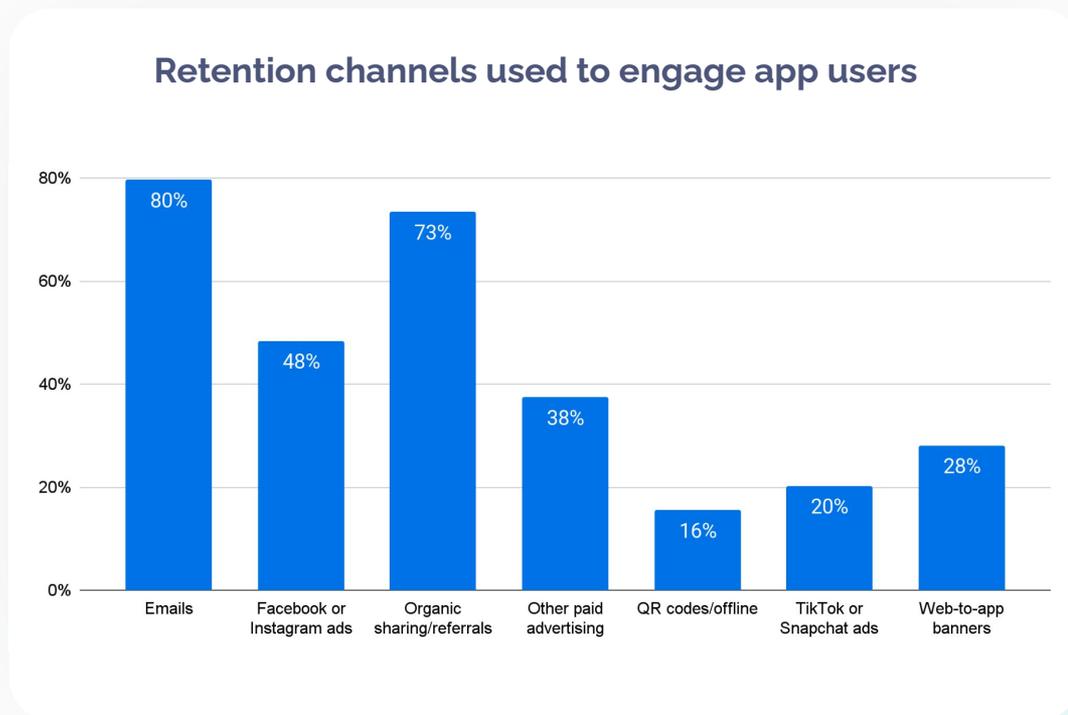
Acquisition channels used for new app users

Channel	Percentage
Emails	63%
Facebook or Instagram ads	78%
Organic sharing/referrals	86%
Other paid advertising	70%
QR codes/offline	39%
TikTok or Snapchat ads	44%
Web-to-app banners	50%

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Engagement breakdown

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

80% 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.
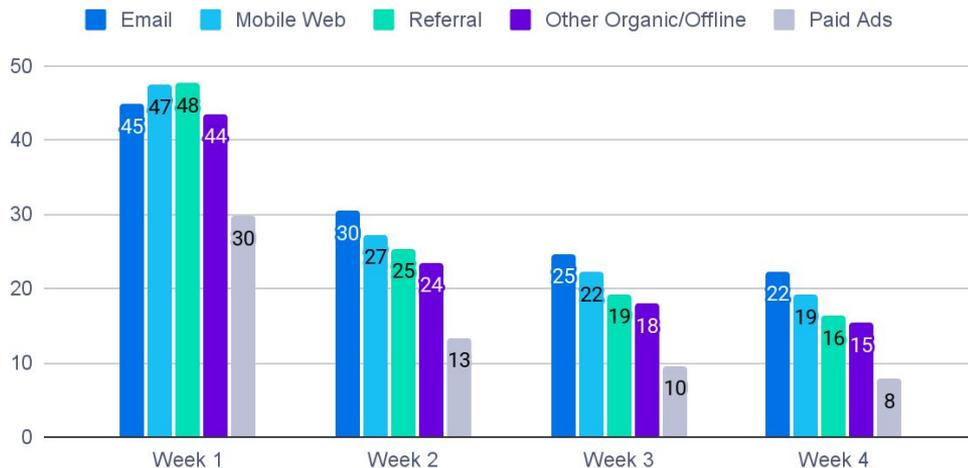
Retention channels used to engage app users

Channel	Percentage
Emails	80%
Facebook or Instagram ads	48%
Organic sharing/referrals	73%
Other paid advertising	38%
QR codes/offline	16%
TikTok or Snapchat ads	20%
Web-to-app banners	28%

Source: Branch Mobile Growth Survey, 2022/23

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Retention breakdown

In the past, getting users to your app was pretty straightforward: Convince them to download the app, and they would keep coming back because it was 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

Legend: ■ Email ■ Mobile Web ■ Referral ■ Other Organic/Offline ■ Paid Ads

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Email	45	30	25	22
Mobile Web	47	27	22	19
Referral	48	25	19	16
Other Organic/Offline	44	24	18	15
Paid Ads	30	13	10	8

Source: Branch Benchmark Study, 2022

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What does mobile growth mean for financial brands?

Consumers are keen to embrace mobile for their financial needs, from banking to payment and even education. Despite the clear benefits of mobile, the current state of the industry is deeply complex and challenging. There are many new and ongoing roadblocks preventing banks from harnessing the true value of their app:

- **Frustrating mobile experiences** persist due to platform challenges and privacy regulations, and users who desperately want better omni-channel experiences have no patience for broken experiences.

- As consumers favor apps over in-person banking, customers want **premium security features** to ensure that none of their in-app information is in danger.

- Digital transformation is double-edged for banks. Not only do banks need to **convince older existing customers to embrace digital**, they also need to adapt and cater to new younger, digital-native customers.

- Users want the convenience of mobile banking without sacrificing any of the **freedom** that comes with banking in person. If a bank can complete a task, it should be achievable through its app.

- Having parity between in-person and app features isn't enough. Banks must offer all kinds of **new features** to stay competitive not only against other banks but also with tech companies like Apple, Meta, and Amazon that are vying for new customers. Features like chat support, search options, budget planning, alternative financing, contactless payment, and personal finance education can all help differentiate banks from competitors, but they take time and resources to develop and maintain.

For banks that embrace an app-first strategy and select the right partners, there's a relatively simple solution that can render these complex challenges painless and also help your business grow — **mobile linking and measurement.**

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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 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 financial services brands to better understand user behavior so they can continuously optimize user journeys.

All of these benefits lead to business growth.

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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 to understand 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 installing a mobile app, making a deposit, or completing a survey — and then credit a marketing tactic — like a mobile ad or email — 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 banks that need to make their ad spent count.

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

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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 really the only way to understand what works and what doesn't, where to invest more or less, and how to optimize campaigns.

Before

MMP alone

Linking and measurement

UNKNOWN
"ORGANIC"

ADS

UNKNOWN

ORGANIC SEARCH

EMAIL

REFERRALS

MOBILE WEB

QR CODES

SOCIAL

ADS

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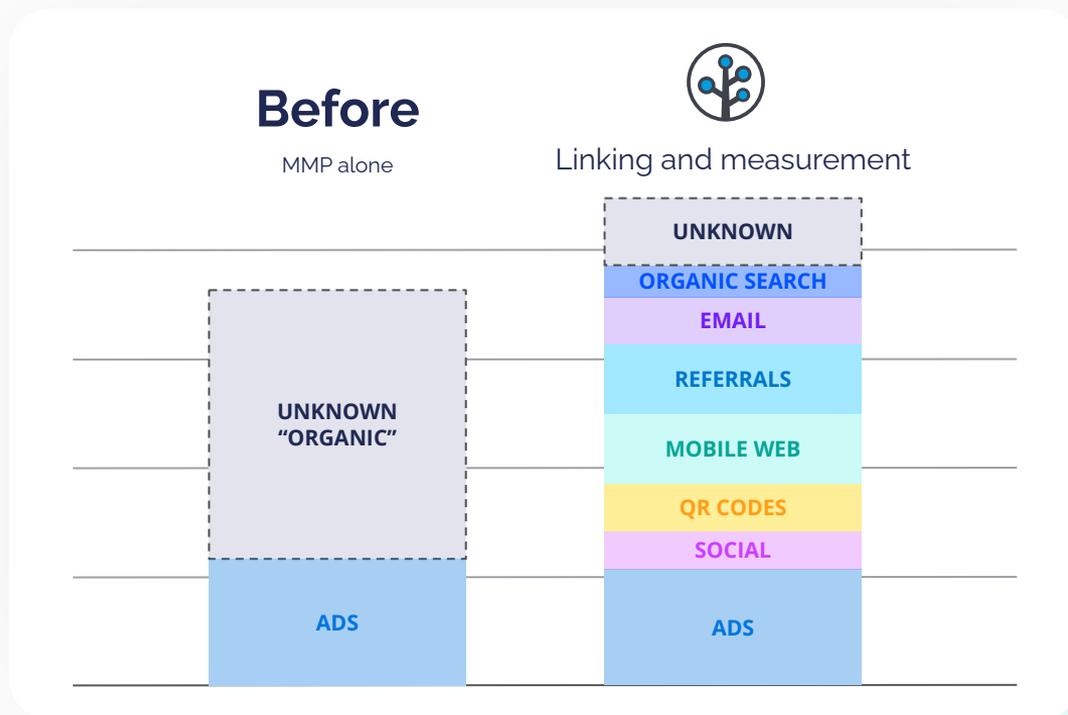
Nubank increased in-app conversion rates and ROAS with linking and attribution
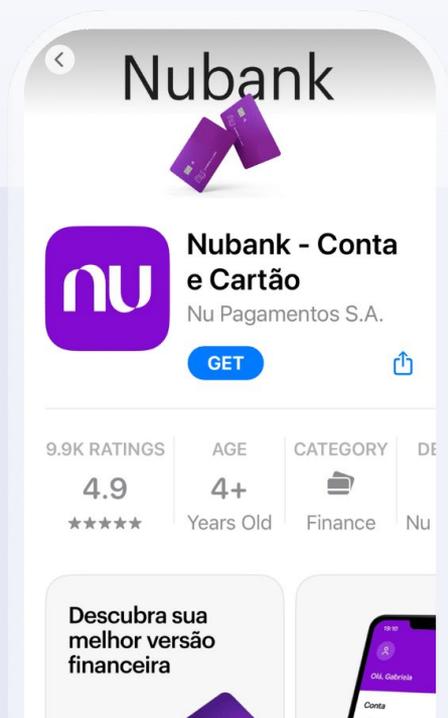
As a fast-growing company investing in paid media, Nubank's marketing team sought to optimize its campaign ROI. The team needed a mobile measurement partner (MMP) to understand which sources yielded the highest return on ad spend (ROAS).

Recognizing the extensive nature of its mobile web sign-up process, the Nubank team acknowledged that directing users straight to the app would improve campaign performance, given that engagement and conversion rates were significantly higher in the app. Sending new users straight to the app would also decrease the number of steps to conversion — which is better for both user experience and conversion rates.

To realize its full ROI potential, Nubank needed to unlock attribution and deep linking for its paid campaigns.

Learn more about Nubank's success.

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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, financial services brands must embrace an app-first approach.

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

ACQUISITION	ENGAGEMENT	CONVERSION
How to acquire app users cost effectively	**How to drive in-app engagement**	**How to increase conversions**

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Acquisition

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:

Referrals

Offline-to-app QR codes

Digital-to-app QR codes

Web-to-app smart banners

Email-to-app deep links

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Referrals

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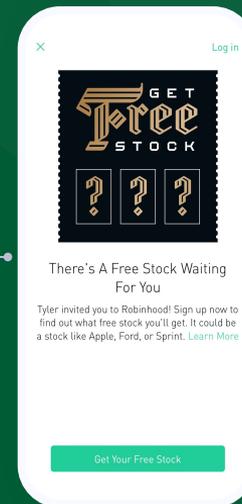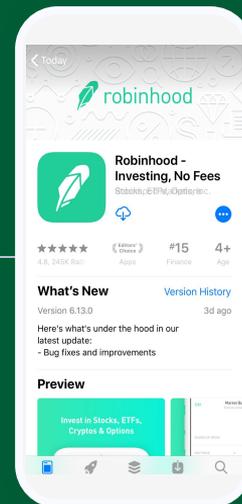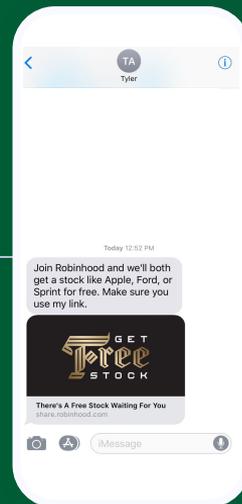
Encourage existing users to promote the app to their network

Acquire app users via user-to-user referral programs

A very efficient way to grow your userbase is to encourage your existing users to share with their friends and followers. Many people use apps because people they like or admire tell them to. In fact, **92%** of people trust recommendations from friends and family.

A **successful mobile referral program** requires accurate matching and attribution to credit the correct referring users and see which users are referring others. From there, link analytics will allow you to keep track of referrals, offer appropriate incentives, and close the loop with the person that made the referral.

Not only does this give your brand the reputation investing in its users, unsurprisingly, incentive-based referrals perform better than non-incentivized ones. In a **Branch study** on incentivized vs. non-incentivized referrals, the "high converting bucket" made up of incentivized referrals had an average conversion rate of 70%. In comparison, the "low converting bucket" consisting of non-incentivized referrals had an average conversion rate of 30%.

An incentive can be wholly tailored to your brand, such as in-app currency, a discount your users can't ignore, or more points toward a loyalty program. Bonus points if it encourages both your original user and the new one to increase their connection to your brand.

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Incentivize links

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

COUNT OF SAMPLES

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

SHARE COMPLETION CONVERSION RATE
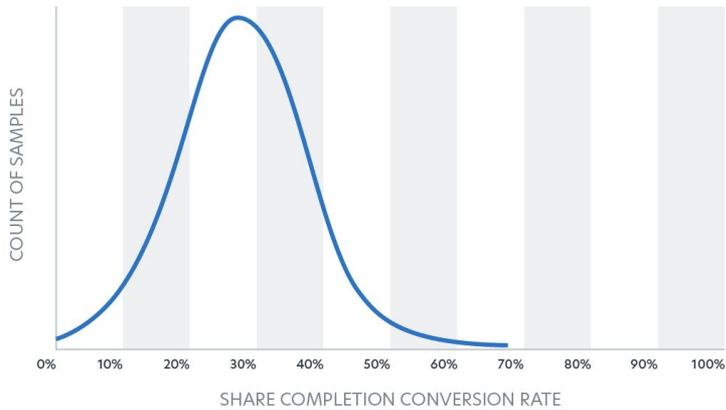
Source: Branch Study, 2020

Conversion from incentivized referrals
(high-converting bucket)

COUNT OF SAMPLES

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

SHARE COMPLETION CONVERSION RATE
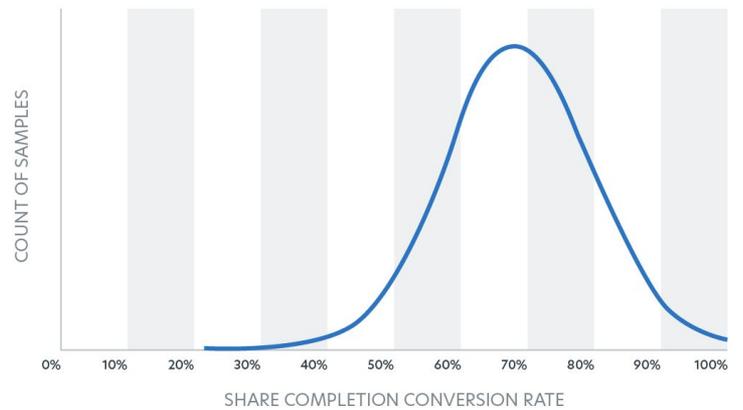
Source: Branch Study, 2020

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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.

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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. Their ease of use from the end-user perspective, ability to measure offline-to-online journeys, and ability to convert existing offline users into your app — whether they're incorporated into account statements sent through the mail, displayed at customer service desks, or added to print ads — make QR codes a must in any marketer's growth strategy. Now is the perfect time to start or **expand your usage of QR codes** to scale user acquisition and educate your customers 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 is the link behind your QR code. Just like any link you scale across your digital channels, a QR code link should be equipped with deep-link routing. When the user has your app installed already and scans a QR code, they expect to end up on the content inside your app, which is why a deep link is so critical. For users who don't already have your app installed, you can use your QR code campaign as an acquisition opportunity. Once you enable your QR codes with reliable deep linking, the links behind your QR codes can detect if a user has your app and then route them appropriately. Deep links can also detect whether users are on iOS or Android and then send them to the appropriate app store if they don't already have the app.

Perhaps most importantly, with deep links behind your QR codes, you can get proper attribution and measurement based on that data to drive better QR code campaign performance and more personalized experiences.

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Quick tips

✓ **Turn local branch infrastructure into an app engagement funnel**
Include QR codes encouraging app downloads on signage throughout branches, specifically at key customer interaction points like customer service desks.

✓ **Try physical ads**
Incorporate QR codes into print ads or other physical advertising like billboards or signage.

✓ **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.

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Digital-to-app
QR Codes

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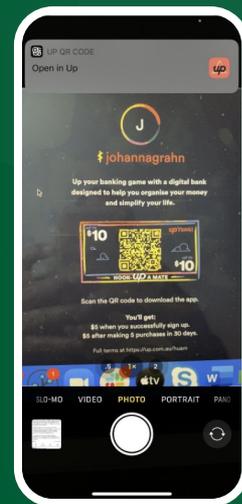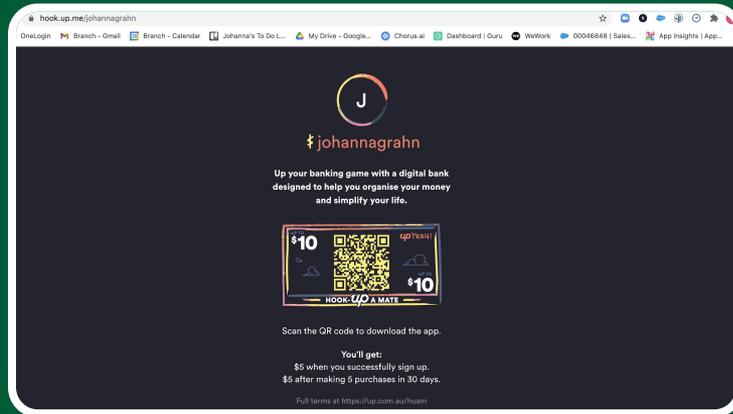
Move desktop users into your mobile app

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 in a more omni-channel way than ever. You know users are landing on your website, so why not leverage easy-to-create, cost-effective QR codes on web pages to entice desktop users to download the app?

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 minimizes friction, 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 could 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.

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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.

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Web-to-app smart banners
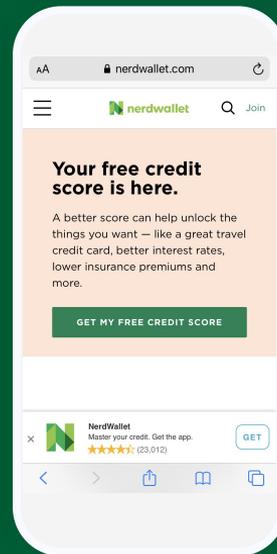
Convert web browsers into engaged app users

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 example, Instagram says "View Photos in App" versus "Use the App," and DoorDash uses "Order Delivery in App" instead of "Continue." This approach substantially increases conversion.

By driving high-value users into your app when they land on your mobile web, smart banners also help you reduce cost per install and ensure a seamless experience through deferred deep linking. This essentially matches the user who clicked a link in a paid or organic channel to the user who opened the app for the first time after installing it, so that user is taken to intended content after the entire install process.

Smart banners can be part of every acquisition campaign because they are so customizable, highly targetable, and cost effective.

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Harness the power of smart banners

When it comes to converting web visitors to app users, smart banners are significantly more effective on average than static iOS banners — particularly in the finance industry.

Among top app types, finance apps have much higher view-to-click and click-to-install rates than other app genres, including entertainment, travel, social networking, and news.

Banner Performance by Genre for Top 100 US Apps
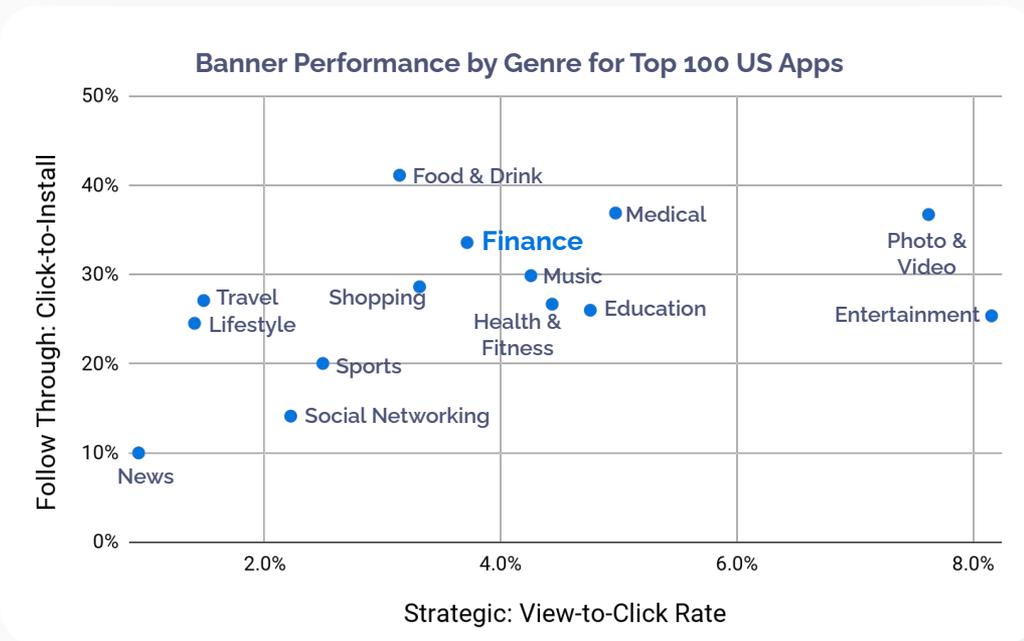
Source: Early 2020 Branch data, U.S. traffic, iOS only

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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 SEO are in a different mind frame than those who came because a friend sent them a link.

✓ **Create smart CTAs**
Create calls to action that tease how the app is the next logical step, like "sign up for fraud alerts in the app" or "download the app to manage your account 24/7." This provides continuity and outsized results in getting users to understand the value in downloading in the moment.

✓ **Be mindful of the customer journey**
Larger banners should be reserved for users acquired from email or social media. For organic searches on your mobile website, banners should be small or just a button.

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Email-to-app deep links
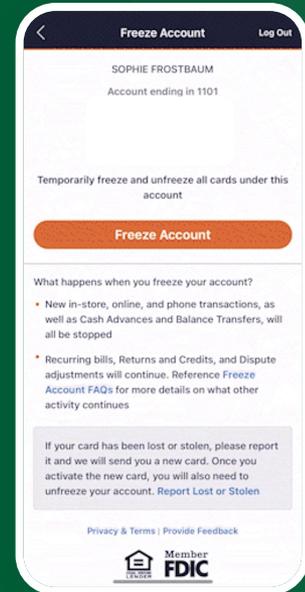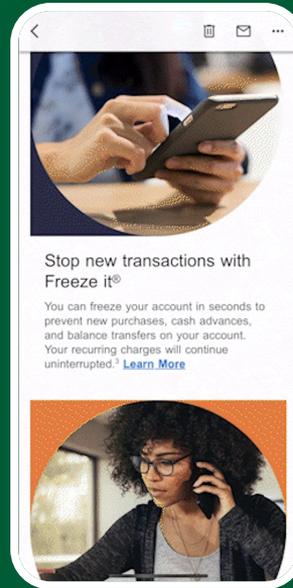
Provide a pathway to download your app from email

Email-to-app for app user acquisition with email service provider integration

Did you know that about 70% of emails are opened on mobile? That's a huge opportunity to turn already highly-qualified email subscribers into app users, gain a deeper understanding of post-click user behavior, and ease cross-selling and new product adoption for your highest-value account holders. 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, click on the CTA, and should be directed to the app store or your app. However, many email links are broken, and users end up in a vacuum. While it may look like you're acquiring users from email marketing, you may be losing out on a significant number of users and driving higher abandonment rates. To counter this, most successful email campaigns with high conversion rates use deep links throughout their emails — in the copy, images, and CTAs. This is particularly helpful because you want to direct your users to your app quickly without losing their interest, curiosity in your offer, or intent to purchase.

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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, show users who don't have the app a CTA like "Get the app," or deep link existing users directly to an in-app onboarding experience that explains the value of the app.

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

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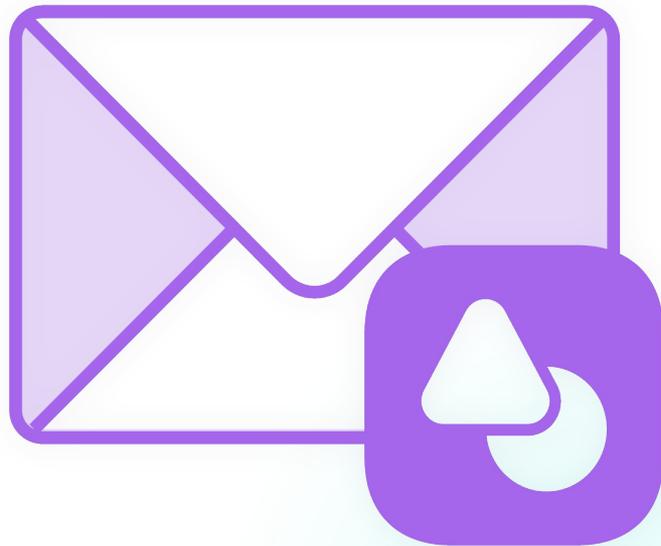
Engagement

Engagement: Bring app users back

Because of increasing app usage and competition, banks must develop deeper relationships with their customers to keep them coming back and to build and maintain truly profitable apps. Consider the cost of getting new app users versus keeping the ones you already won. Acquiring new customers can cost five times more than retaining existing ones — and the success rate of selling to an existing customer is 60%–70%, versus 5%–20% for new customers. Engagement is increasingly important to be successful in any type of business growth.

Here are some ways to bring users back to your app and keep them engaged:

Targeted web-to-app smart banners

Social media-to-app

Offline-to-app QR codes

Email-to-app deep links

In-app-only experiences

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Targeted web-to-app smart banners

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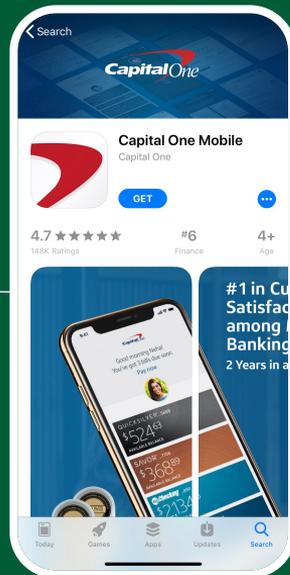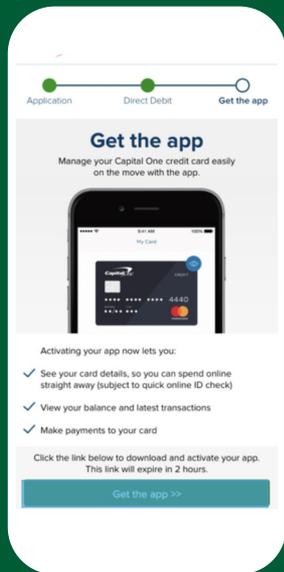
Drive existing app users to specific app content from mobile web

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, driving users back to the app should be a major focus of any marketer. A simple and cost-effective way to do this is to use 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.

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# Payoneer increased app users by 13% and boosted installs from smart banners
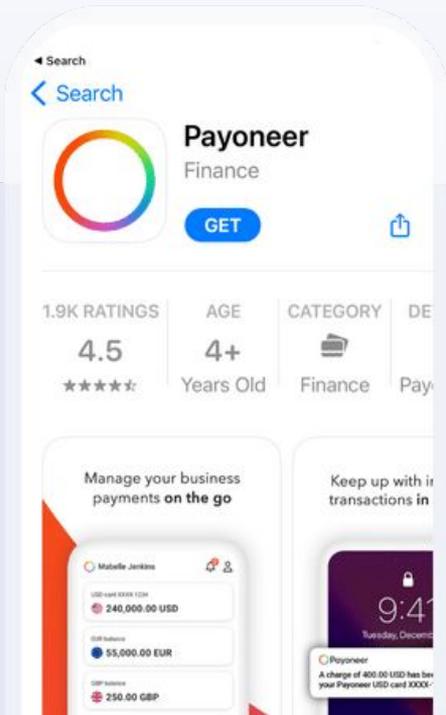
After a long search for a robust mobile linking solution, Payoneer partnered with Branch. By integrating Journeys smart banners, a Branch solution that helps brands convert their mobile web traffic into app users, Payoneer built a seamless web-to-app pathway for its customers.

With a reliable and scalable mobile growth partner, Payoneer has rapidly grown its mobile app userbase over the past few years. In 2020, 33% of Payoneer's users used the mobile app; in 2023, that percentage was close to 46%.

Learn more about Payoneer's success.

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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.

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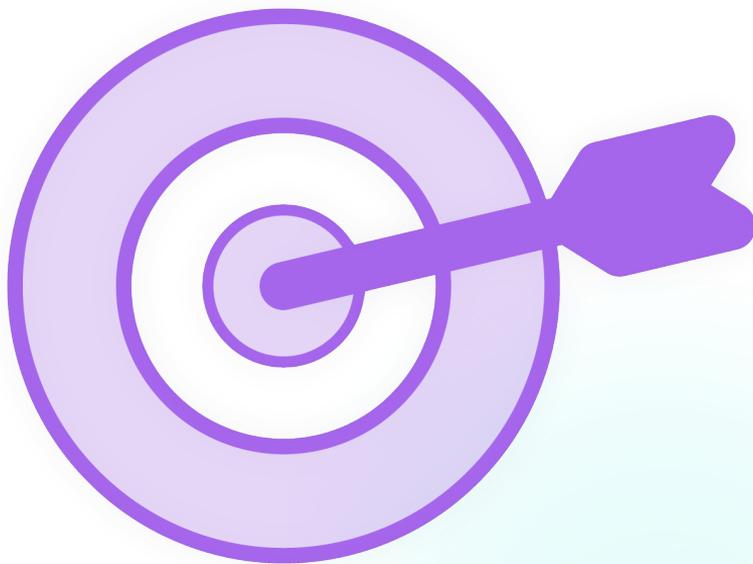
Social media-to-app

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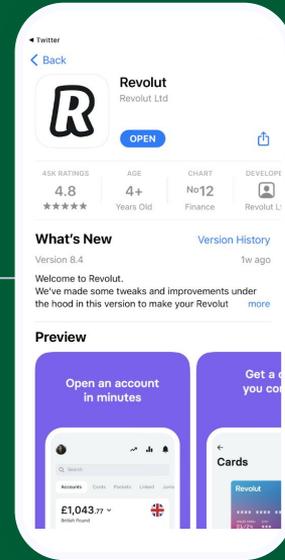
Bring users into your app from organic social

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 effectively keep users from engaging with your app.

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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.

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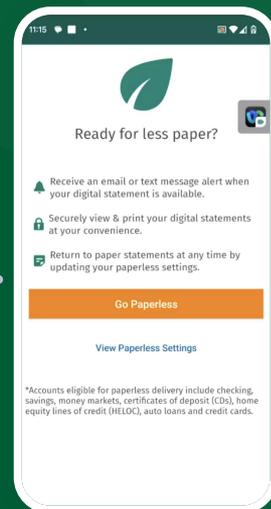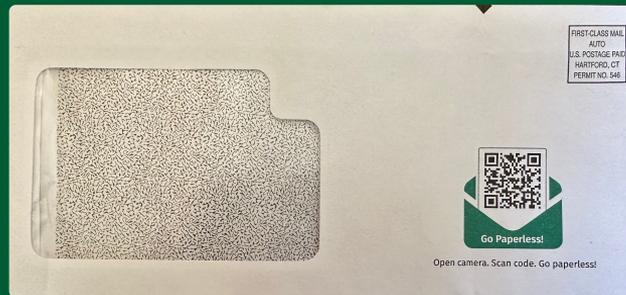
Bridge the offline-to-app gap

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 even online. By employing QR codes in offline places like out-of-home advertisements, local branches, direct mailers, and print ads, you can drive app engagement from the real world, meet rising consumer expectations, and understand how real-world 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.

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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 a QR code to real estate you're already paying for increases return on that investment.

✓ **QR codes aren't going away**
59% of smartphone users plan to keep using QR codes in the future, so they are still a good investment for app engagement.

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Email-to-app deep links

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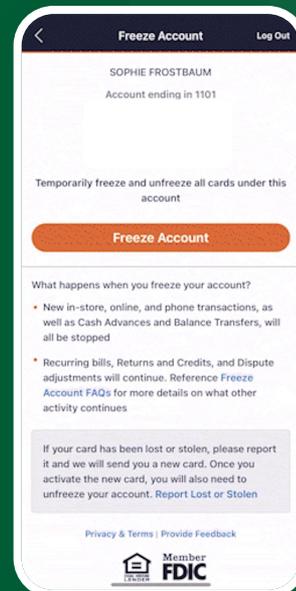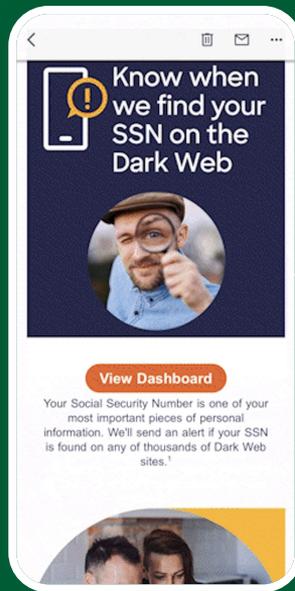
# Route users from email to the corresponding content in your app

Email-to-app via 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 bank.

Covering everything from personalized offers and account updates to exclusive lending deals and investment 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.

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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 "Explore 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, discounts, or loyalty rewards in emails to entice users back into the app.

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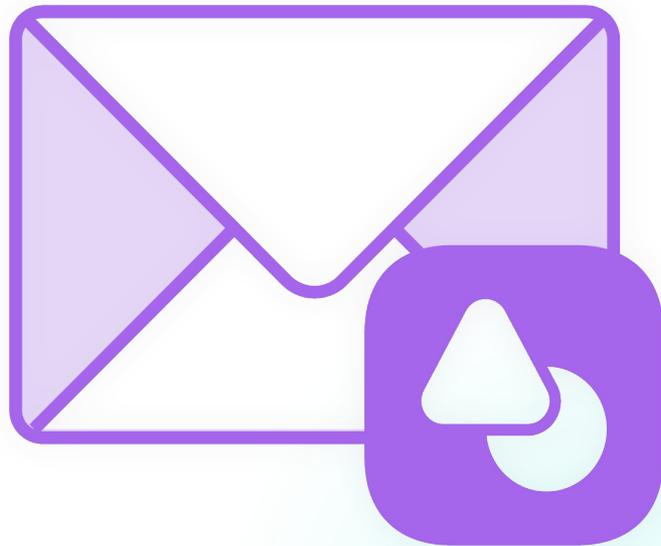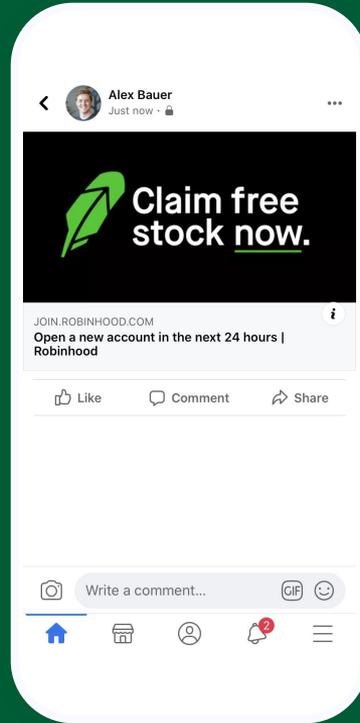
Drive users to the app for enhanced functionality

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 users to try out new features, enhanced actions, or even just app-only offers or account upgrades.

For example, entice customers to revisit your mobile app for exclusive loan offers, credit card upgrades, or special budget-tracking features. These advanced features not only spark interest but also enrich the overall app journey, motivating users to return for more.

However, it's important to be thoughtful of how users will learn about enhancements and get to the app to experience them. With deep links, you can be sure that any promotions will have the correct attribution and lead users directly to the right experience within the app. Deep links can be instrumental in driving cross-platform user engagement and create a better overall user experience for all your app users.

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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 mobile website banners to highlight app-only capabilities, such interactive financial planning tools or real-time investment tracking features.

✓ **Diversify content**
It doesn't have to be only experiences; you can also promote in-app discounts, offers, loyalty rewards, etc. as an incentive to reengage with an app.

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Conversion

Conversion: Get app users to do something

Even when you have highly engaged new users, you still need them to convert — to do something that you want them to, whether that's open a new account, apply for a new credit card, or simply log 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:
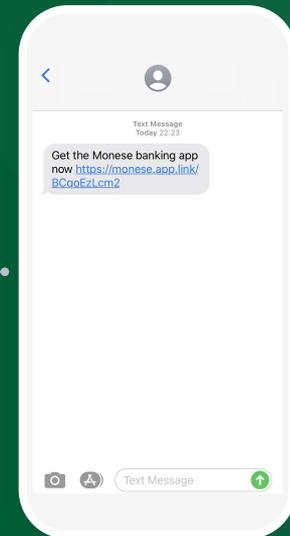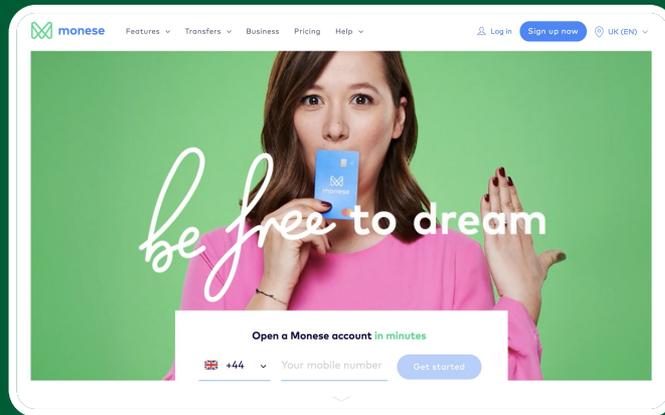
Cross-channel experiences

Personalized onboarding

Deferred deep linking

branch

Cross-channel experiences

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# Creating cross-channel experiences that drive conversions

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

With the rise of mobile and connected devices, brands can no longer leverage any single channel to engage and convert their entire customer base. Today's customers have so many devices and platforms at their disposal that it has become possible for them to curate their experience of each company they choose to engage with. That makes it essential for every brand to ensure it's using the ideal mix of channels 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 marketers today to drive real results. Research conducted by Braze found that top-performing brands are **66% more likely** to use 3+ channels to engage their customers, and every additional messaging challenge used led to a **3.2X average increase** in purchases per user. That said, it's important to be thoughtful about what 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.

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Quick tips

✓ **Personalize which channels you use**
Just because you have multiple channels at your disposal doesn't mean you should use every 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 see the strongest possible performance, and establish a check-in cadence to review results and update elements like channel mix, timing, and copy/creative to stay up to speed on what's resonating with your audience.

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Personalized onboarding

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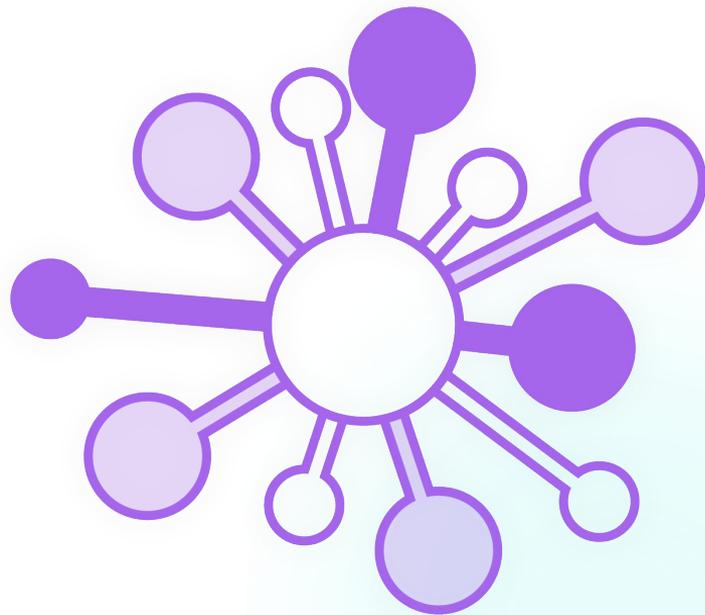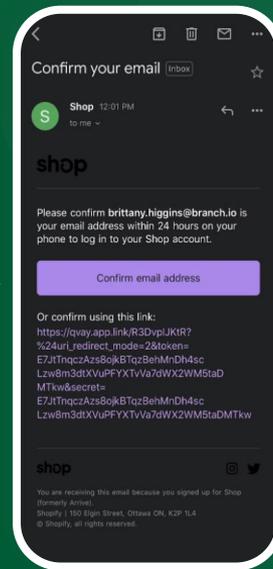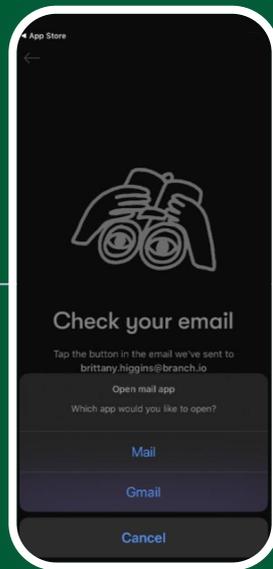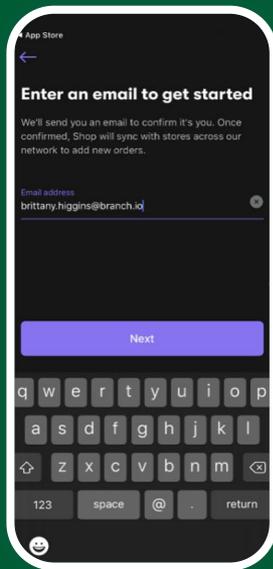
Provide a custom onboarding experience to increase app retention

Use deferred deep linking for customized onboarding

So, 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.

If you carry the context from wherever a person came from on the web into your app, you're creating a profound, personalized first experience. For example, if someone shared an app with a friend via text, and the friend entered the app with a message, "Amanda recommended this app for all your mobile banking needs," that's an exceptional first experience. This message makes it less likely that the new user will drop off and more likely that they'll take the next action and convert in the app.

A highly personalized onboarding process will likely minimize drop off.

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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.

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Deferred deep linking

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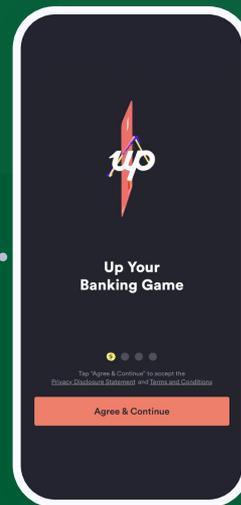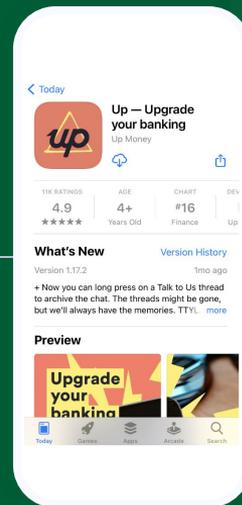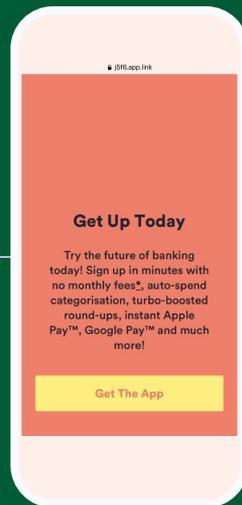
Take new users to the right content after they download

Deferred deep linking for new app users

If you create content and design the user experience specifically around the intents and desires of the user, they're more likely to take the action you want them to — whether it's to explore new app features or sign up for autosave. Trust is important. Make sure that you fulfill their needs and don't preemptively bombard them with aggressive messaging or content, such as an immediate sign-in box, if it doesn't build value by fitting their intent.

Once you have the right content, users who download your app are more likely to stick around if they are taken to the content they expect. That's why it's imperative to build experiences that users expect, and the best way to do that is with deferred deep links. **Deferred deep links** take the user to the intended content through the install process. This type of links basically match the user who clicked a link in a paid or organic channel to the user who opened the app for the first time after installing it. Deferred deep links automatically show the content the user clicked before the app install, thereby creating a seamless, convenient user experience.

A deferred deep link might help a new referral get credit for their very first investment, or a long-time user who gets a fraud alert text message navigate to the right place in the app to freeze their account. Deferred deep links ensure that customers now have a direct pathway to engage with a brand and can do so in the easiest way — from the app on their phones. Brands then have more loyal and engaged users who are more likely to convert.

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Quick tips

✓ **Serve exceptional experiences — no matter what**
Set up deferred deep linking to relevant content for users who have the app installed already 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**
You can even 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.
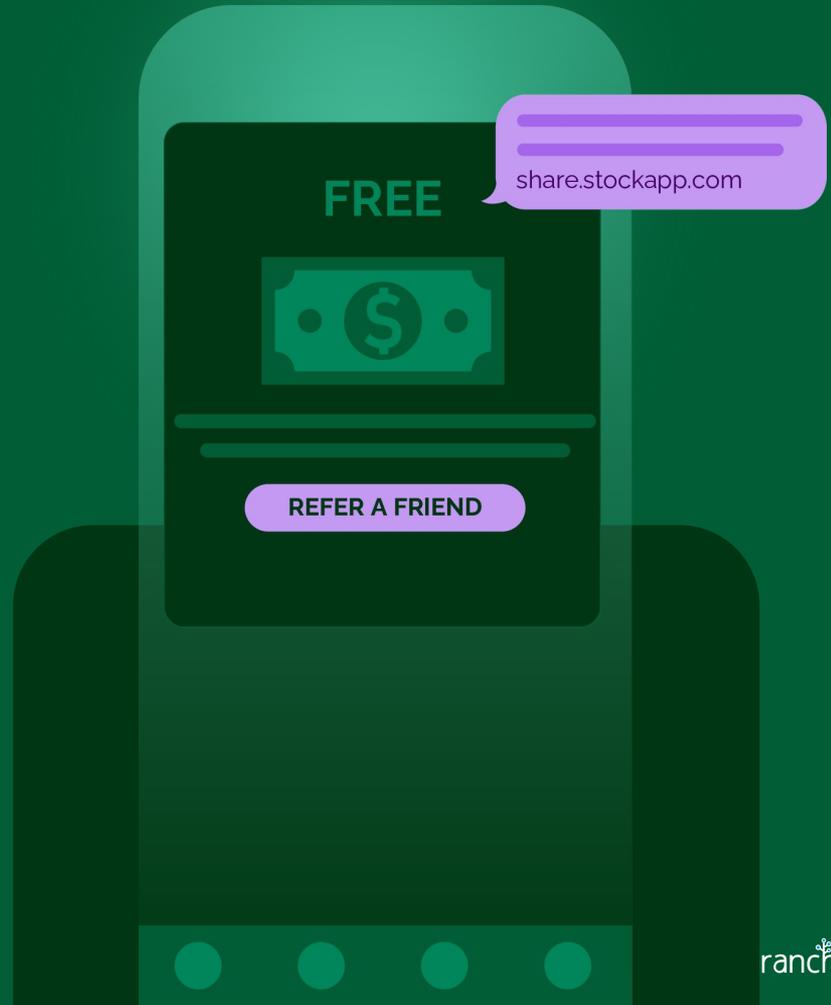
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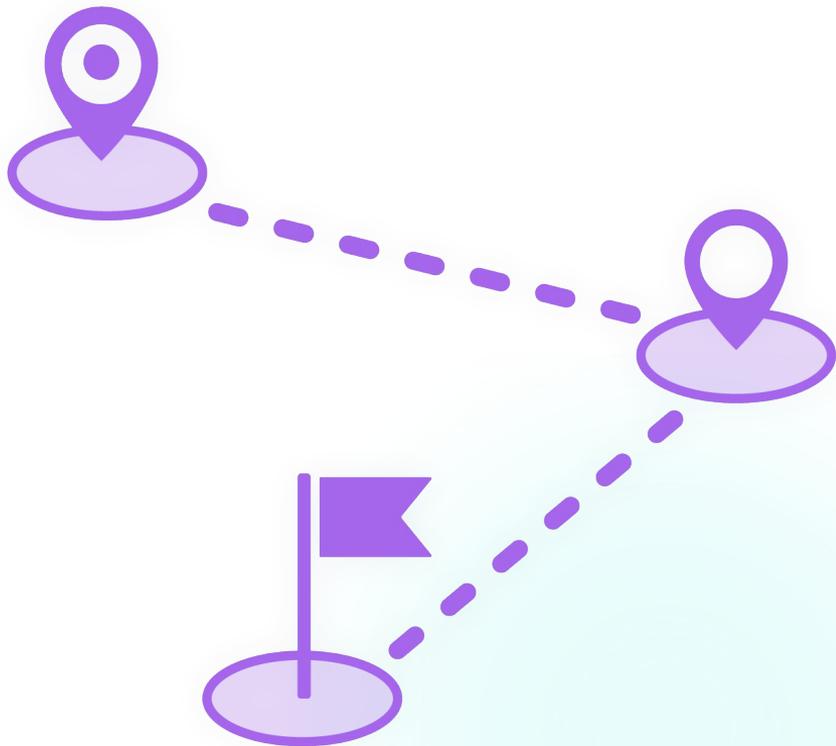
Conclusion

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 customer experience strategies, growth is still very much on the horizon.

The world of mobile is a world of possibility. Let's get started!

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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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