

# The APP-solute fantastic brand experience

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Seemingly coming out of nowhere, a major hit amongst South African consumers has been the suite of mobile apps across varied platforms developed by brands such as Ster-Kinekor and FNB. With these apps not being Angry Birds types of apps it seems that 'usefulness' has become KING!

In spite of the hundreds and thousands of rands poured into app development, only a handful of apps by major brands achieve "app-solute" success with the people that matter: the mobile app user loyal to the brand.

But at its core the steps needed to achieve 'app-solute' success in mobile are pretty simple.

When it comes to developing mobile apps the key consideration has to be the consumers' current, not future, needs.

Despite facing a global decline in market share, in SA Nokia and BlackBerry are thriving.

Data shows that of a total of  $\pm 10$  million smartphones sold in SA, 4.8million are BlackBerry devices. Coming a close second, Nokia, with most of its devices on the Symbian operating system, boasts 4 million, with Android mobiles being only 800,000 and iPhones barely making a blip with fewer than 400,000 units being in people's hands.

## What matters

In the future, South Africans may emulate international usage patterns with iPhone and Android becoming the favoured devices but that is not where we are today, or anytime soon and that is what matters.

For example in Prezence Digital's partnership with Ster-Kinekor we knew that  $\pm 70\%$  of users frequenting Ster-Kinekor's mobile site originated from BlackBerry devices. Knowing this, excluding the rollout of an app for BlackBerry in Ster-Kinekor's mobile app strategy would have made no sense.

This basic fact is the same for the majority of brands in SA, yet BlackBerry is usually left off the list when developing, and if included it seems acceptable to do a poor quality, watered down deployment.

Not only is this a disservice to the customers looking to engage with the app but ultimately it's a disservice to the brand's overall look, feel, and messaging. This is mainly driven by the lack of BlackBerry expertise in the developer market, however, as proven by brands such as Ster-Kinekor and FNB, the BlackBerry experience can be great.

## There is a demand

Even so, with the continued primacy of the feature phone in our market some question the very necessity of building an app if the brand already has a cool mobisite. While mobisites are key, there is a demand from the consumer for apps.

These users demand an enriched and engaging user experience that integrates seamlessly with the native functionality of their devices; a user experience which cannot be attained on mobisites.

While not problem solvers, for big brands mobisites do address key issues:

- They allow for access to the brand experience on all mobile devices
- Are the must have platform "for the masses"
- Are a stepping stone into enhancing an app strategy

Facts and figures don't lie and at the end of the day there is a demand from brands to see real ROI if they invest in building apps. For this to happen app development must be seen as part of the overall marketing vision of the brand, and not merely be an afterthought or something thrown together in response to a competitor.

Having an amazing app which gains popularity for the brand is great, but to be truly fantastic, it must add value, usefulness and the ability for scale, constantly bringing its users more features to keep them engaged, and thus provide a ROI to the brand.

## ABOUT LYNETTE HUNDERMARK

With over 15 years of experience in the tech, digital marketing and mobile solutions space, Hundermark co-founded specialist mobile solutions consultancy Useful & Beautiful. With a passion for developing mobile products that are aligned to business goals, Hundermark's appetite for keeping abreast of the latest industry trends is fast establishing her as an expert tech commentator and opinion leader in South Africa. Follow @lynetteanthony on Twitter.

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