

5 Questions to Ask Your App Developer

Your guide to choosing the right app developer
to build the app you need.

Introduction

You need an app. You've got a solid concept. You know the features you want. Now you just need someone to build it. But not so fast, because of the myriad agencies and app developers in the market, how do you sort the rip-offs from the rock stars?

With apps costing anywhere from \$50,000 to several hundred thousand dollars, how can you be sure you're getting a quality product?

Your app developer should understand your business, be able to translate business needs into digital solutions, identify opportunities to add value to your concept, and deliver not just the tech but an exceptional user experience that amplifies your brand. The process should be clear, with development milestones and payment structure outlined upfront.

So how to uncover the best partner for your project, before you commit your precious budget? Check out our top 5 questions to ask your app developer - and keep your wallet in your pocket.

Five Questions to Ask Your App Developer Before You Spend a Cent

1 Can you show me some other apps you've built?

Look for apps in the same field as your business, or at least with transferable technology.

If your users are predominantly Apple-freaks, you'll want a developer with experience building iOS apps. If your users are desk-bound and will be using your app for utility or operational efficiency, you might need a web app.

Look for a developer or digital marketing agency with experience in your market, your audience and / or your operating platform so you can compare apples with apples. (And ask them exactly HOW MUCH of their portfolio is their own work - some design houses skin apps built by third-party coders; some developers don't offer design; some are rescue projects - you want to assess the technical proficiency of your chosen developer, so dig deep.)

2 What is your development process?

Find out exactly how they will be developing your app with the following questions:

- What development framework do they follow?
- What are their protocols for data security, confidentiality and cross-border data management?
- What reporting frequency and transparency do they offer?
- What are their testing phases, and how do they QA their work?
- Can they build for Android, iOS, hybrid or web?
- What's their bandwidth - will your app go to the backburner if competing deadlines with other clients arise?
- What if we want to make changes or new releases after the app is complete?

Get a feel for not just the initial build, but future releases, updates and management, so you can ballpark your total budget.

3

Can you explain all of your services? Can I cherry-pick which services I want?

Some developers just do code. Some do custom skins on cookie-cutter solutions. Some do poor design on shoddy code. And some offer **blue-chip quality** across both dev and design, plus digital strategy (ahem!). You want to understand the whole kit and kaboodle, regardless of whether you need the full suite of services or just a few.

Additional questions to ask include how do you project manage my app? Who is my primary contact person? What support do you offer during and post development? Do you deploy to the App Store? What is your handover process (training, documentation)?

Whether you need a corporate brand design, or a go-to-market strategy, or initial concept validation plus user testing, explore the full capabilities of your development team up front so you can identify gaps and ensure the best partner for your needs.

4

What is your payment structure?

Payment structures vary widely, from 50% upfront, 50% on completion to payment on development milestones to monthly retainers. Ask how frequently you will be invoiced. Will you own the code once you've paid your final bill? (Don't assume - some developers stitch up your code in service agreements so they retain ownership.) What happens if you abort the project half-way through?

How will scope creep be costed? What about additional testing, or multiple rounds of changes? Think of the worst case scenario, then find out what that will cost you. And use this worst-case figure as your budget, so you'll have a buffer if you need it.

5

What is your approach to app design?

UX and UI will make or break your app. A well designed app is a joy to use - intuitive, simple and fun. A poorly designed app - even with the best technology in the world - will feel laborious to use. Design influences user behaviour - and good design can even influence your brand's profit margin (don't believe us? Check out our blog on [Good Design is Good Business](#)).

A great mobile app translates your brand to a perfect user experience they can carry in their pocket. If you value your brand, it pays to ask about design - after all, the app will become a critical part of your digital brand artillery.

Conclusion

Now you've explored the technical proficiency, development approach, design capabilities, financial structure and project management processes of your chosen app developer, all before you've spent a cent. If it sounds like a match made in digital heaven, it's time to start building your app.

Additional Resources:

Ready to get started? Check out our [Guide to Building a Killer App in 7 Steps](#).

Already got it? Don't miss our free [MVP Planner](#) to work out your critical features for launch.

Just want to get started? [Talk to us](#) about your idea and we'll turn it into a killer app.