

How does my app look in this?

By [Anton Cabral](#)

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Just as youngsters have a fear of missing out and being left behind by their friends, businesses are similarly not immune. Corporate FOMO is alive and well in the tech arena, where the latest business question seems to be, “So, how does my app look?”



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When it comes to the digital transformation of a business, the three hottest technology trends at the moment include mobile, personalised apps and technologies, and IoT (internet of things). And as the top engagement channels continue to be social media, web, and mobile apps, it's become remarkably easy for businesses to fall for gimmicks and develop apps simply for the sake of ticking a box. It's a sin many businesses are guilty of: they operate without a plan.

Enhancing the EX

So, how does one go about developing apps that enhance the EX (a self-coined term for employee experience), and not end up in the expensive tech scrapheap a few months down the line?

Ultimately, the purpose of every app should be to deliver something that not only fulfils a useful purpose, but also appeals to the senses and creates a desire for users to engage with it. That, in effect, is what makes a beautiful app.

A great app is never finished - it's an on-going iteration.

Where there's a pressing business issue to address, it often serves a company to forego the quest for perfection which can hamstring actual progress. The ability to introduce new digital innovations in an agile way is key: rather deploy an MVP (minimum viable product) quickly, and then experiment and improve as you go.

A business that understands the value of effective employee engagement, and approaches app development to deliver an outstanding EX, is already on the right path. The first step lies not necessarily in thinking about what app can be built, but rather in asking: do our employees want or need an app?

In this regard, Clayton Christensen (*Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation*) believes that understanding the job

that needs to be done is central to deciding the tech solution required for an employee to progress a task effectively and efficiently.



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The challenge

The challenge is to deliver the employee's desired experience

For an app to be effective and widely adopted, it needs to answer the requirements of its users on a functional, emotional and social level. It needs to deliver the desired experience. On-going consultation with employees should, therefore, be considered a non-negotiable activity. This intense level of listening and communication can be further iterated with machine learning data that highlights employee preferences and behaviours. In this way, processes that cause frustrations and anxieties for users can be removed.

An effective app does not survive in isolation: it should integrate with the job, and be delivered to employees in a process specific to their job spec. Design metrics that measure performance (around the desired progress that employees want to make) allow for any complexities to be continuously improved or removed. Communicating development milestones back to employees is also a must-do.

Five tips to create apps that deliver

- From the outset, do whatever you can to involve your employees in the development process, and pay attention to what their app needs are – they'll be an invaluable guide in deciding your development direction;
- Use machine learning data as well as big-data sources to augment what your employees have already communicated;
- Prepare to deliver an MVP that gets your team moving quickly, and then iron out issues and make refinements based on employee feedback as you go;
- Pay attention to the functional, emotional and social environments of your employees. Consider your employees as important as the customers you serve, and cater to them accordingly;
- Incorporate performance metric measurements into the app design – it's an objective and immediate way to determine when an app is not delivering the way it should and helps prioritise elements that require development focus.

Creating beautiful apps that support a beautiful business is well within every organisation's reach...provided it's done as part of a clear plan, geared to deliver an EX second to none.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anton Cabral is partner and managing executive at LRMV Digital Agency. He began his career in computer-related positions after completing a BSc in Mathematical Sciences (Computer Science and Informatics). He then joined LRMV in October 2004 as part of the eLearning team. He is currently busy with a Bsc Honours degree in digital technology, design and development. He is the managing executive of the Digital Agency business unit of LRMV Performance Agency, where he is involved in business development, business analysis, scoping and delivery of projects. He is passionate about giving access to knowledge and information and about increasing people's capabilities through the delivery of effective, innovative and measurable digital solutions crafted around the audience's specific needs. He believes in the power of the human heart and mind; in the power of digital to reach the unreachable with information, to help bring hidden talents to life.

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