

Title A: Apps Are Dead - Long Live Apps

Subtitle A: It's time to redefine how we view the app.

Title B: Everything You Think You Know About Apps is Wrong

Subtitle B: Micromoments are the keys to unlocking user engagement.

Title C: The App Market Is Flooded - Here's How to Stand Out

Subtitle C: Apps are still useful, but not in the ways you think.



[Image Source](#)

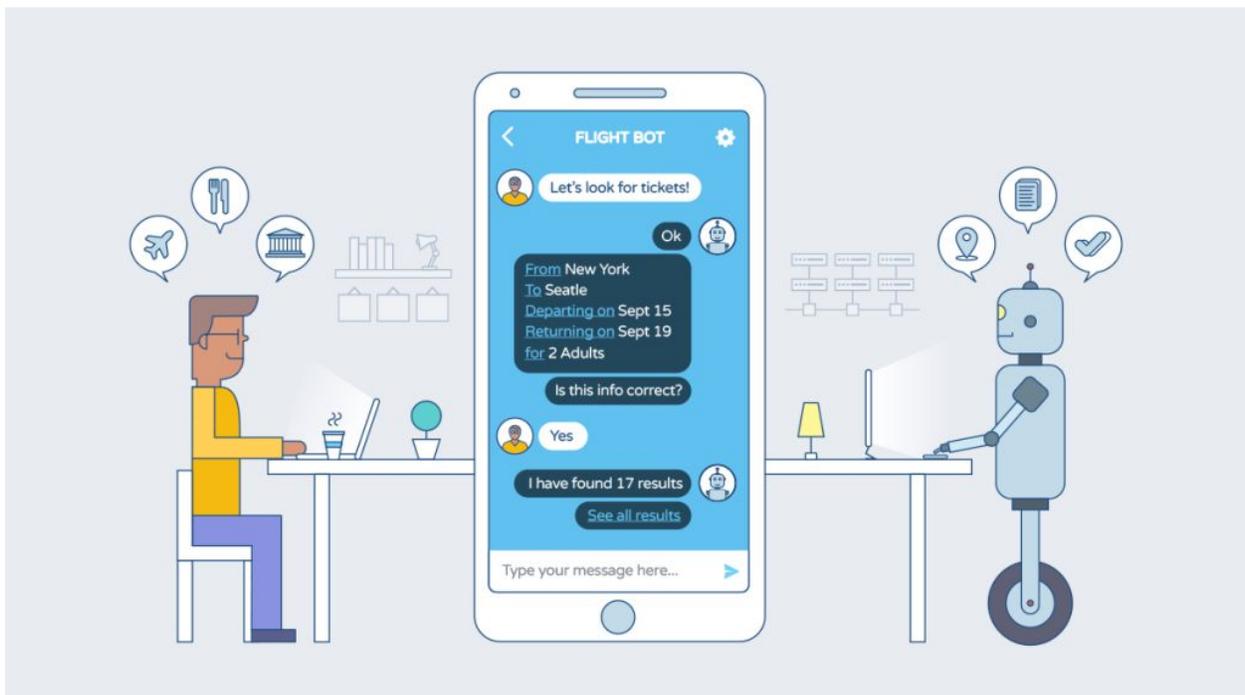
Mobile apps are an important part of the modern world. According to the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#), 91 percent of households use a mobile phone or smartphone to access the Internet, equal to the amount using laptops and desktops.

Studies around the globe, including the [comScore global mobile report](#), show that apps account for 80 percent of our time spent on mobile devices. This led to brands everywhere rushing to release apps - it seemed like a good bet, but we all know “build it, and they will come” is a fallacy.

There are over [2.8 million apps](#) in the Google Play store and 2.2 million in the Apple App store. Standing out in this crowd is nearly impossible, especially for a new app. And even if your app is downloaded, it's unlikely to be used unless it addresses a specific user need in the moment.

Although [197 billion mobile apps](#) were downloaded in 2017, only [nine are being used each day](#) on average. [Four of those nine](#) are native pre-installed apps, and over 25 percent of app usage is exclusively Google and Facebook. If you can't beat them - join them.

When building an app, your focus should be on servicing micro-moments - this is where apps succeed. Otherwise, look to build specific functionality into an existing app or utilize mobile web to accomplish your goals.



[Image Source](#)

Gaming the Growing App Ecosystem

Social apps like YouTube, Snapchat, FB Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp [dominate user engagement](#) with millions of users every month and deep market penetration.

And vanity metrics like Twitter followers, app downloads, etc., don't always translate to sales. True app KPIs shouldn't be defined by redundant metrics like views and time spent in-app. What's more necessary is to track the full user journey and pivot as necessary. As Miller Lite's marketing manager Greg Butler said, "[I have to sell beer, not sell a meme.](#)"

On top of this, these apps are reaching into other spaces to become mobile portals for users. You can send money or find local businesses using Facebook Messenger. Even if the app doesn't have the functionality built-in, you can always use them to ask a friend.

Instead of focusing on building an app from the ground up, consider integrating into these existing apps to tap into their established ecosystems.

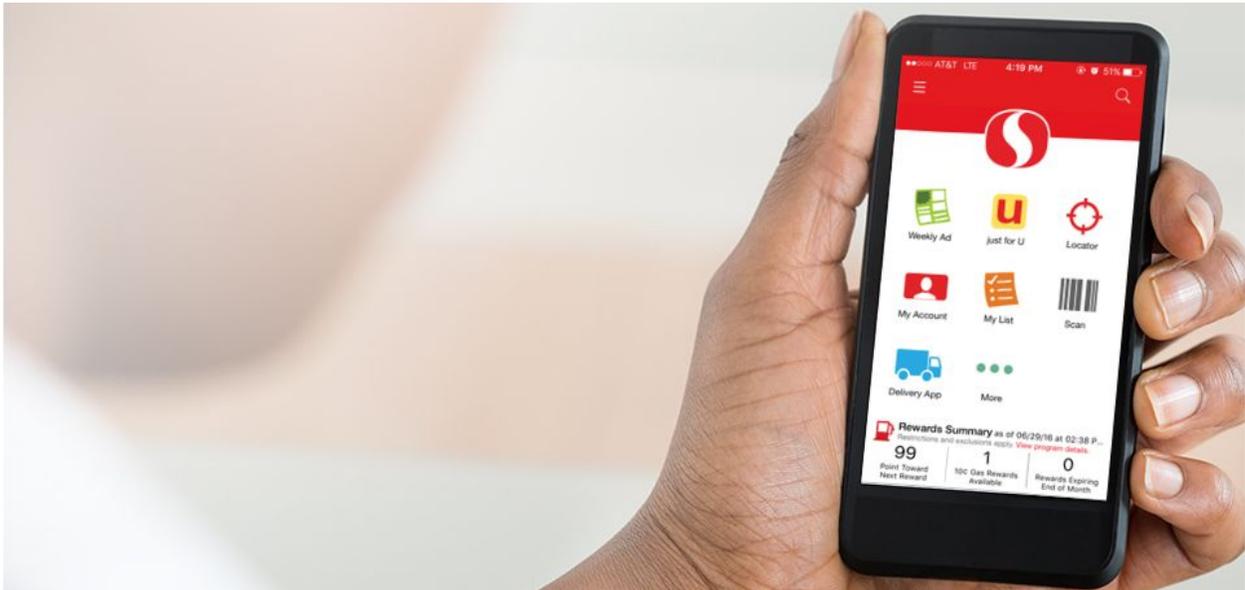
Chatbots are quickly becoming a successful go-to for brands looking to reach customers on mobile devices. These bots are available on every major messaging and social media app, and there are [dozens of development platforms](#) to create them.

A chatbot is a simple AI program that can be trained to respond to customer inquiries in a human manner. Brands like [Unilever, NBC, and Casper](#) employ these bots to entertain, engage, and educate users within the apps they're already using. They don't need to be complicated - the key to a successful chatbot is resolving a customer's issue during micro-moments.

Domino's, for example, is the most popular pizza delivery chain in Australia. While the company has [a mobile app](#) with over a million downloads, it's focused on reaching customers through chatbots.

If you send a message to Domino's Australia on Facebook, for example, its [FB chatbot](#) will automatically present you with offers and images that link directly to online ordering. In fact, you can order Domino's via Twitter, your smart TV, smartwatch, Amazon Echo, Google Home, Ford Applink, and more with [Domino's AnyWare bot](#).

This is a lead you'd be wise to follow, and these micro-moments should apply to your apps too.



[Image Source](#)

The Customer Is Number One

If you build an app, it needs to resolve specific issues throughout the customer journey. Safeway, a US-based grocery chain, does this very well. It has [several apps](#) that each perform specific functions for its customers.

The [2017 Retail Dive Consumer Survey](#) found nearly 60 percent of consumers use their mobile phones to research product information and compare pricing. Safeway has an app for that, and it even encourages its usage by placing special discounts on price tags throughout the store using its “Just for U” program. Customers are encouraged to scan price tags to automatically add in-store discounts to their club cards.

In addition, Safeway has an online shopping and delivery app. The chain offers grocery delivery in most major cities, and this is a completely separate app catered to those customers. There’s another app for Safeway’s pharmacy and a seasonal app for its annual Monopoly Shop, Play, Win game.

Instead of offering a one-size-fits-all app, Safeway's multiple apps ensure it resolves the exact issue experienced by its customers. Since every customer is different, these apps each handle a completely different use-case. It's exactly what Gartner described in its [Post-App Era report](#).

Conclusion

While mobile apps are certainly popular, it doesn't mean every brand needs to create one. Actual usage is limited to only a small handful of apps, and marketing your own app can waste a lot of time and money. Instead of pouring resources into developing an individual app, learn to piggyback on the ones already in use.

If you do create an app, it needs to be really good at one thing. Consumers don't have the type of loyalty they once did, and nearly [25 percent of apps are deleted](#) after only one use. That one use needs to convert a customer, or the resources spent developing it are wasted.

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