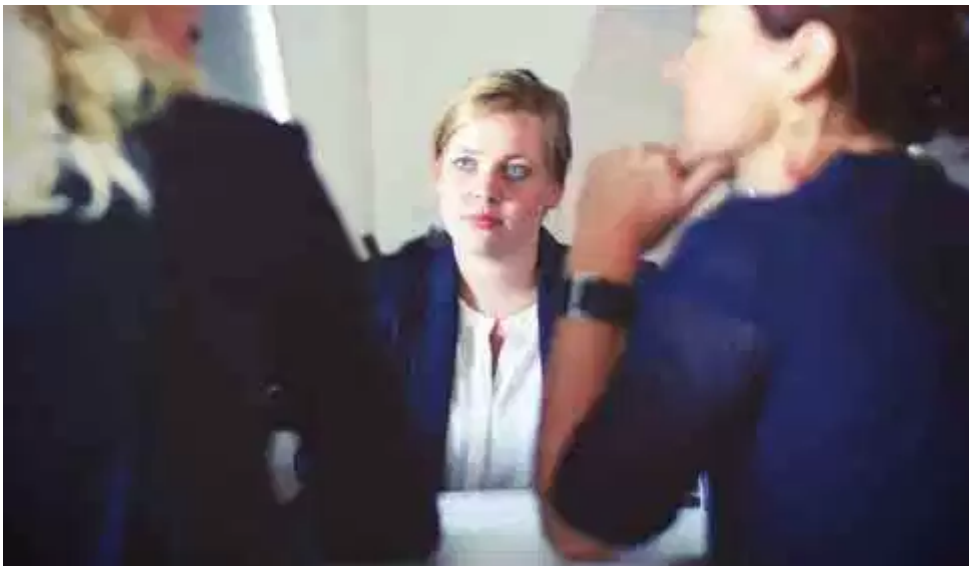


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## How to Hire an App Developer: 4 Tips for Finding the Right Match

by Ashley Alexander // Feb 01, 2018

Tech Tips



We hear way too many horror stories from people who've had issues working with a developer to build their business app. From communication problems and delays, to pricing issues and lack of transparency: we know that these problems are much more likely to be prevented by following a few simple steps. (All before even signing the dotted line!) Here are our four tips to make sure that you find the best developer for your app needs:

### 1. Determine what you need in your developer

Plain and simple: there are different developers for different requisites. If you want to build a mobile app, you're not going to need the same developer than if you were to build a website. When you're looking for a mobile app developer, you'll need to know if you're going to want to build [hybrid or native](#). Do you need a designer on the team? Think about how technical your project is, and how experienced you need your developers to be. Do you want to hire a freelancer, an agency, or an offshore firm? Or can you just use a low-cost tool (like [Hatch!](#)) to build.

There are infinite options when it comes to developers, so it isn't worth wasting your time talking to folks that aren't a good fit. Figure out what you need so you can eliminate the developers that don't meet your criterion and go from there.

### 2. Do your due diligence

It's a good idea to talk to several different firms. We recommend chatting with at least three before deciding. Get quotes. Ask friends for advice. Run their references. Direct tough questions, like these ones, to any and all references:

- "What didn't go as expected when working with them?"
- "How did they respond to a situation when things went wrong?"
- "What were your biggest frustrations?"
- "If I decide to work with them, how should I approach our working relationship?"

Remember, any names the potential development option gives you for reference will most likely be people that are going to say good things about them. Ask for a full client list and call a few people from that — or even better, find people through your personal network. You might get more honest feedback if you find backdoor references. If you have one, get a technical friend to interview your top choices to make sure they have the chops. Figure out who your account manager will be; your account manager will likely be different from the person who is doing the initial sales conversation with you. Learn who will be on your account team, and look them up to see how experienced they are, and if they have experience in your chosen technology. Make sure you check out if the team is diverse in area of expertise (e.g. do you have a designer on the team? If not, who is doing the design work?) You want to be sure you're getting a qualified team to make your product the best it can be.

### 3. Do some serious legwork when determining scope

Figure out all the small details you want your app to have. This includes details like: features, integrations, user permissions, login flow, on-boarding tours, etc. In addition to determining the details of your app's functionality, identify what you'll need in terms of content control, analytics, targeted or event-triggered push notifications, as well as other bigger-picture administrative features. Things like: user-generated content management, or the ability to block a nasty user or delete malicious content often end up being the most expensive to build later on.

You can think of building an app like you would think about hiring a contractor for a construction project: change orders are expensive. We promise, the more work you do upfront, the less time and money you'll spend later on.

### 4. Determine all terms before you start

There are a few things you need to be sure of before you and your developer start the process of creating your app. It's important to know details such as who owns what, specifically the code. Additionally, you will need to determine timeline and payment. Determine if you will be giving your developer a bonus for completing tasks early, and similarly, if you will be docking their pay if they don't meet the predetermined deadlines. Make sure responsibility is established for bugs discovered in the first 6 months (hint: they should be responsible and fix the bug for free.) Of course, you'll need to decide how you'll pay your developer. If hourly and not project-based, figure out how they will be logging the hours and what sort of limitations exist. Don't forget to determine any maintenance fees for after your app is launched. Will you have a retainer in place for the future or will you pay hourly? Maybe you'll agree to pay 20 percent of the build fee for the next two years as a maintenance retainer? Think through every single detail and make sure you have everything in writing. It's important to know what you're getting into so that you aren't blindsided later in the process, a.k.a. when it's too late to change your developer.

Choosing a developer is a big deal — it might even be the biggest in your app-building process — so it's important you choose the right one for your business. We want to make sure you don't end up with one of those developer horror stories, so make sure you've evaluated all of your options before you sign on the dotted line. Check out our post on [choosing the best software development solution](#) for your business to learn more! Or, for a more extensive rundown— download our free e-book on [how to chose the best software development solution for your business!](#)

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