HATCH   Platform   Industries   Customers   Pricing   Sign In   Book Consultation   Try For Free

< Blog Home

What Does It Cost to Build a Mobile App?

by Ashley Alexander // Dec 20, 2017

Tech Tips

So, you might be asking yourself:

"How much is it going to cost to build my app?"

Well… it depends. I could give you an estimate based on the median price of all apps ever created. But, this might not be very accurate or applicable to the app you want to build. So, what we'll do instead is break down what factors affect the cost of an app.

When evaluating options for mobile app development, price is a common concern — as it should be. At Hatch, we encourage anyone who is just starting the process of creating an app for their business to explore their options, and learn about how apps are priced out. (For more insight into other things to consider, read up on where to start when building an app for your business.)

Here's the thing: there are a lot of factors that go into how much it will actually cost to build your business' app. Given the multitude of options when it comes to features, interactions, design elements and functions, it only makes sense that the price may vary, and will be unique to the direction you plan to take your app.

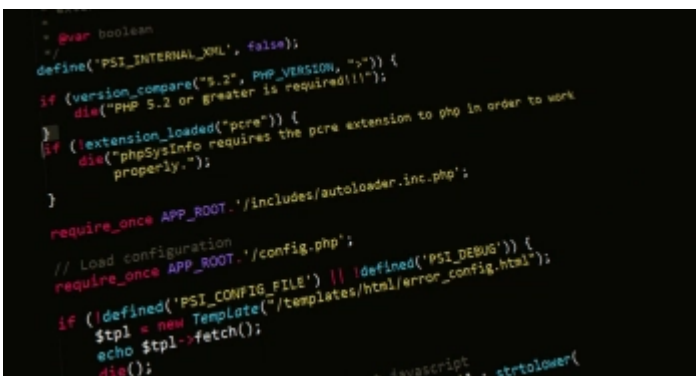Here are a few factors that play into how much your app will cost to build:

Preparing and prototyping your mobile app
First, you might want to think about which features of your product or service you will want to translate into a mobile app. You might even want to conduct some research with your audience to figure out what kind of features would be most compelling to them on-the-go. Or, you might know exactly what you want for your app and how it's going to work. You may even have a prototype available, which will speed up the process. Overall, the more thought and preparation you've put into your app, the clearer you'll be able to communicate what you want it to do. In turn, this will help your software developer of choice scope the necessary work and price it all out efficiently, without as much back and forth.

Speed to market when building an app
Speaking of the speed and efficiency, your timeline could also affect the cost of building your app, if you are working with a software development agency (shameless plug: it won't impact the cost if you go with an automated software development platform like Hatch!) If you need your app on the market within weeks, this will create a shorter timeline for your app to be built by developers…and therefore a higher bill. Additionally, a traditional software agency would also add in extra costs if you are going to need the help of a designer to figure out colors, icons and other visual features.

Understanding costs for different app platforms

When we say "platform" we're talking about the device where you want people to be able to access your app from (i.e. iOS — or an Apple phone, an Android phone, or from the web.) Generally speaking, if you are working with a software development agency or freelancer and only want to deploy your app onto one of the three platforms, it'll be cheaper than two or more. Some of the platforms are less expensive to deploy onto (hint: web is overall a bit cheaper than iOS or Android.) Android is actually the most expensive of the three for a few reasons. Short answer: it takes the longest to develop. Why? It requires a lot more coding than iOS and web. That means generating, maintaining and debugging more code. Long answer: this article. Either way, it's good to look into where you'll need your app to be accessible from platform-wise, as that will impact the cost to build with a software development agency or freelance developer. With Hatch, we automatically deploy apps to all three platforms…so it's a pretty incredible bang for your buck.

Ongoing content management for your app
Once your app is developed, what will you want to be able to access on your end? You might need to be able to moderate user-generated content, or adjust or add to your own in-app content. If you want to know how your users are interacting with the app, it might be beneficial to have access to mobile app user analytics. Will you need your users to be able to leave feedback about your app? Additionally, being able to send push notifications could be something your app is going to rely on, so you need to make sure these things are going to be built out in a way that you can manage yourself. Generally speaking, the more changes you want to make, and the more control you want to have, the more it will cost, if you build with a development agency or freelancer. This is one of the most overlooked aspects of app pricing. People look at the price tag of building their app and think: that's it! But if your app is going to be a powerful tool for your users, and one you want to evolve with your business, you need to consider the costs of ongoing analytics, management and upkeep.

Features and functionality of your app
Another pretty important factor is what your users will be able to do on your app. Do you want your users to be able to post images, text or video? Do you want them to be able to search for, comment on and favorite other users' posts? Think about if you need each user to create a profile. For example, if you want to create an e-learning app, you might need quiz functionality as well as data collection and gamification capability. So, the pattern goes on. If you want your users to have an extremely extensive ability to do all sorts of things on your app, it's going to cost a bit more than a simple single-function app.

Unforeseen costs when building an app

Oh, so that's all? Not exactly. Those are the main factors that go into how much it will cost to build an app at the start of the process. But, it's often forgotten that apps aren't just created and then exist in perfect condition forever. Once the app is built, it's going to need to be tested… and tested again…and honestly probably tested a few more times after that to ensure it's ready for market. From there, the app will need to be serviced and maintained. There's also the servers and app hosting that need to be considered. Apps also need to be updated — could you imagine if some of the apps you have on your phone were never updated? Not to mention they might not be compatible each time a new phone software is released. Yes, that's a lot of thinking about the future, but it comes with the territory of ensuring how awesome your app is going to be, and continue to be!

Choosing the best software development option
We've broken down what to consider in deciding which development option is best for you, but we didn't delve too deep into the pricing of each option. What we're talking about is the price for an app development agency versus a freelance coder versus a no-code software, like Hatch. The first option, an app development agency, will be the priciest. Building with an agency can cost anywhere from $100,000 to $500,000 depending on the above factors. A freelancer is a little cheaper, (but often less efficient) and can cost anywhere from $10,000 to $100,000, depending on the functionality of your app. The cheapest and most efficient solution is a no-code software like Hatch. If you want to know for sure, sign up to try out our automated app development platform in Washington, D.C. We'll help determine if Hatch is a good solution for you, or if a software development agency might be a better route, or check out our pricing calculator for more insight.

Remember, you shouldn't sacrifice what you want your app to do just because of the price, it's important your app turns out the way you want it to. But, it might be worth it to look into what functions you really need to launch your app, so you can budget accordingly.
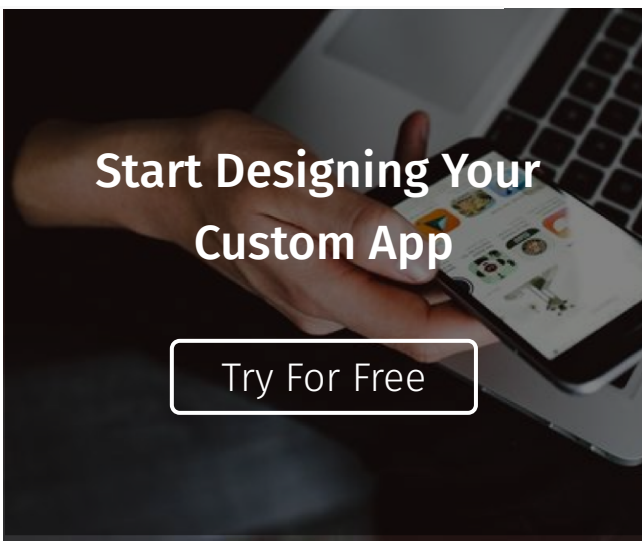
Share this blog post:

Start Designing Your Custom App   Try for Free

Ashley Alexander
Digital Marketing Fellow

HATCH

919 18th St NW, Suite 950
Washington, DC 20006
202-851-7676
support@hatchapps.com

COMPANY
About
Careers
Blog
Press Kit

PLATFORM
Features
Pricing
Technology
Terms
Privacy

RESOURCES
Newsletter
FAQ
Pricing Calculator