A New App for your Company

From the first meeting to the market release – things you should be aware of during app development

# Content

Do you know this?

Do you feel like you and your agency don't speak the same language? Do the outcomes always differ from what you've agreed on and you have no idea what happened to your original project? If you keep getting vague or even no information at all and the issues accumulate instead of being dealt with, the successful finalization of your project is probably out of sight.

If you feel like this about your project, you've probably chanced upon a less experienced team. The agency most likely has not stabilized its processes and workflow yet and that's why your project is paralyzed now.

To prevent you from such an experience, let's look at a few tips on what to look at when you're about to start a project and how to choose the right agency. If you choose well, you may expect to get a well-functioning and successful app.
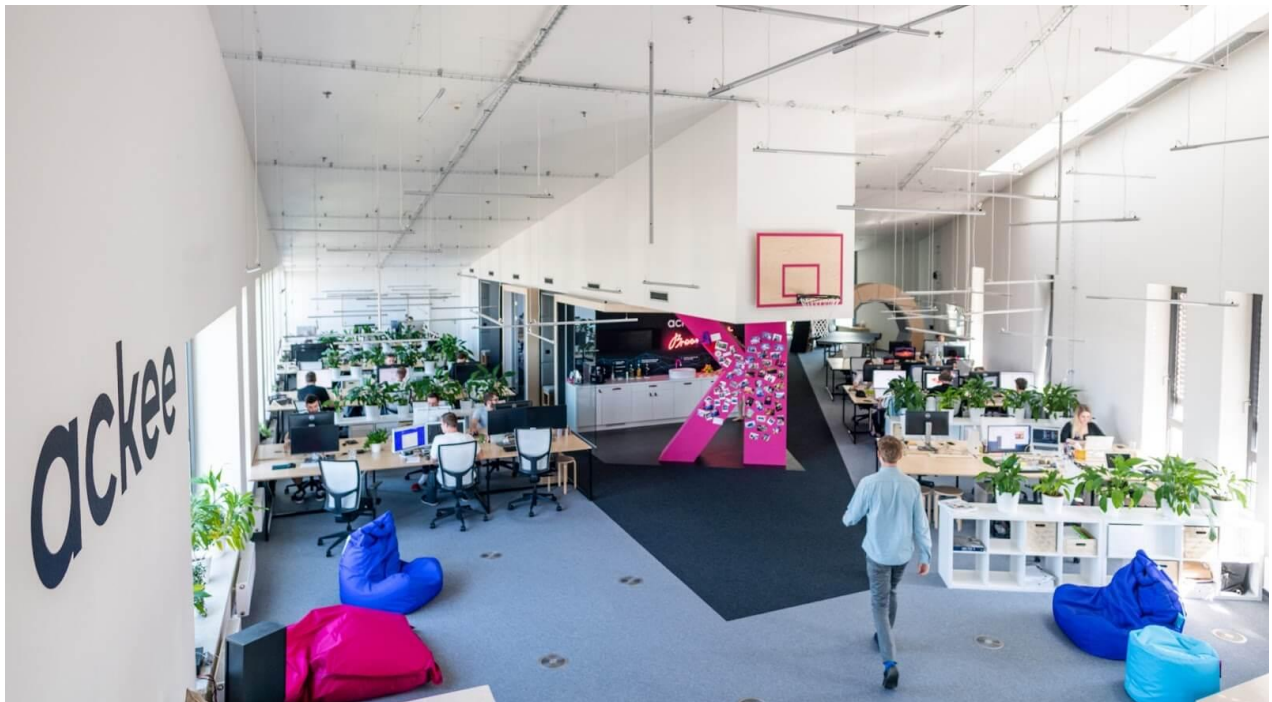
Best of luck with your project!
Ackee team

Kick-off – Together from the first moment

Mobile app is a clever combination of design, usability and technology. This doesn't necessarily mean it's a work of art, but these two do share some qualities. You probably wouldn't word a request for a painting like this: "We expect at least 5-year experience in the field of painting. Oil painting 30 x 70 cm, a landscape, body of water acceptable. Please prepare a budget and we will pick the agency with the nicest price."

Such requests are, unfortunately, pretty common. A good agency wouldn't even think about a request like this. If there are no technical specifications, no UX nor other user interface proposals and also no market research available, there is no way that a reliable agency can tell the exact price for such an order – there are no data to do so.

Ideally, an agency should offer to prepare all these pre-production steps for the client and also to provide the technical specifications of the project. Naturally, while creating such specifications, the agency invites the client to co-develop the product from the beginning. The agency can gain some extra details on what the client expects from the product. This saves not only the client's nerves, but also money and it prevents misunderstandings and disappointments. Of course, even this process must be paid, but undoubtedly it's worth the money, right?

Use case is the boss

At first sight, an app might not appear to have so many different technologies under the hood. The most versatile app as regards technology are the **native apps**. They can meet the highest quality and performance expectations. Native apps are sold exclusively in App Store and they have to be developed for iOS and Android separately.

This doesn't apply to **hybrid apps**. These are not programmed in a platform specific language but rather "translated", sent to the Stores packed in a native package. The advantage of hybrid apps is, therefore, that they need to be developed only once. You must, however, be prepared to get lower quality and performance.

The third option are **web apps**. Web apps can be accessed directly in browsers just like websites. A web app offers the user an experience similar to that of a native app.

Progressive web apps are relatively new to the market. They can also be downloaded directly from your browser but they work offline and they look and feel like native apps.

You should always choose the solution according to your use case!

Copyright or who owns the code?

If a freelancer or an agency are involved in the app development, they also hold the right to the code by default. When the app needs to be changed, you rely on the freelancer or the agency. If the collaboration has not gone well, the only thing that remains is to get the rights to the code.

When drafting the contract, make sure to set the rights to the code properly.

The Idea – It can do everything!

Generally, successful apps deal with only one specific problem, they are easy to use and they have a clear function. The most used apps for Android are WhatsApp, Facebook, Spotify, or anything Google has to offer: Google Maps, Google search engine or Gmail.

An application should not be a mobile version of your website. If you're looking for an application for your product, think thoroughly about the basic needs of the user. And, in particular, think about how to meet their needs in an easy and efficient way. This is the key idea behind each new application.

Or simply do it like Google. Create a separate app for each function.
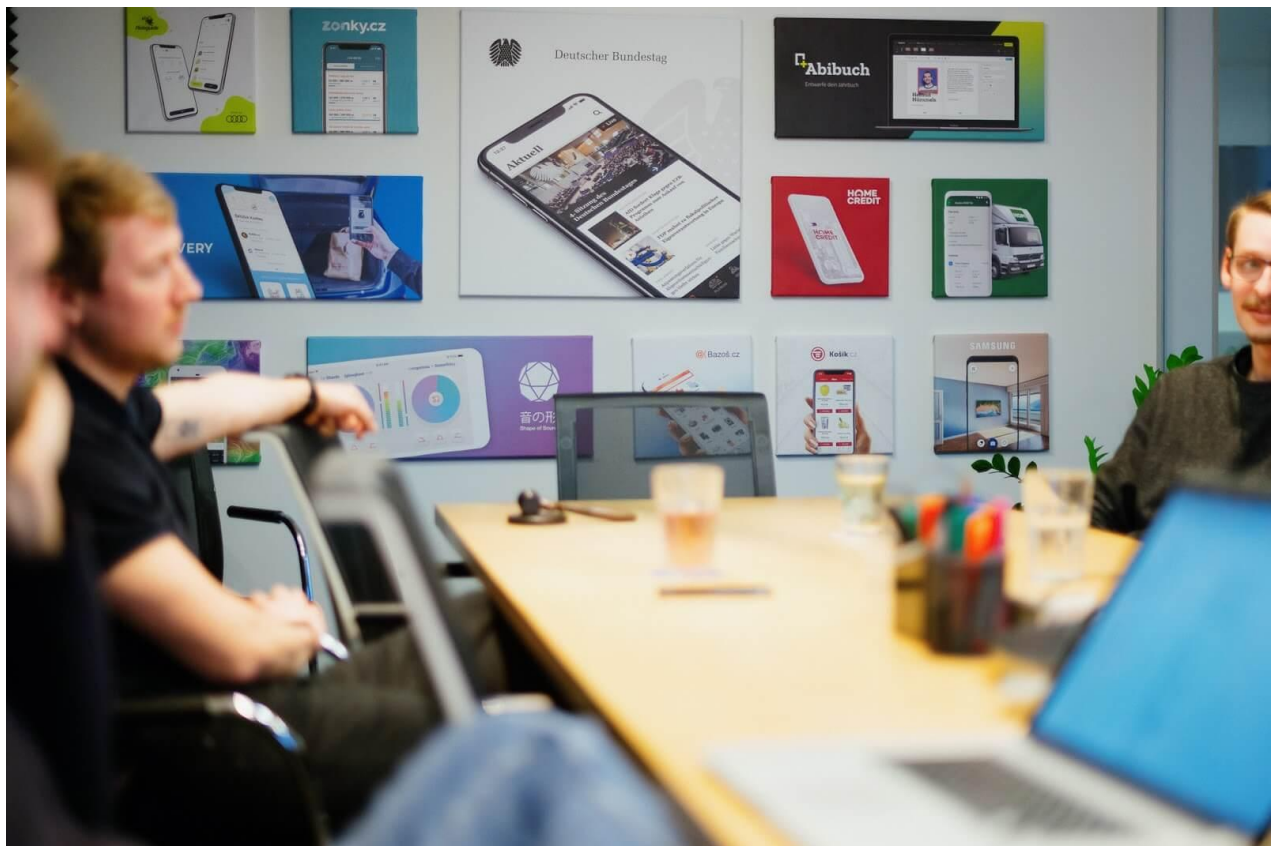
The most important success factor: Choosing the agency

[Choosing the right agency](#) is a key to the success of the whole project. Make sure that you've considered the following.

The Team

All specialists should work in the agency permanently or at least cooperate with it on a long-term basis. The best ideas are born around a coffee machine! Efficient cooperation works only in a close distance. This includes not only UX and UI designers but also all developers and project managers. In the ideal situation, there should be two responsible developers. Firstly, it is always good to have four eyes to see the code because even the best developer might overlook some mistakes. Secondly, if the main developer leaves the project, there is the second developer who knows the project just as well and can take the lead immediately.

Agile development

[Agile project management](#) provides quick development cycles and user-oriented results. If you find out that users rarely use the main button during testing, your app can be easily repaired and the improved version released. The first publicly available version is usually MVP (a product with minimum functions). After some successful testing there is a process of adding more complicated functions. These functions are developed within time restricted iterations called sprints. The goal isn't to fill the first version with all functions – on the contrary!

Technologies

It's recommended to choose an agency that knows and uses the newest IT technologies. This extends the service life of your app without having to adapt it to new trends too soon. Otherwise you'll create a technological debt that will cost you more resources later. If you need to cut costs, there are better ways to [save on app development](#).

Control

The developers must control each and every part of the code very closely using these so-called Pull Requests. Malfunctioning apps annoy the user and bring negative reviews and unnecessary risk, which can cause your project to fail.

Experience

Project managers coordinate the project and also work as a communication clutch between the developer team and the client. They should have the necessary experience with such projects, especially in a technical field.

References

The bigger your project, the more important the agency's experience. Don't get fooled by logo walls full of internationally known companies on the agency's reference website. Don't be afraid to ask if the agency worked on the project from A to Z or if they only participated in some fractional part. If the agency is honest, they won't mind sharing the contact details of their customers which you can contact and ask for opinion yourself.

App development – how it's done

Analysis

In the beginning, project managers elicit from the customer what they expect from the app. They help define the target group of users, goals of the project and deadlines. Analysts gauge technical requirements and then prepare use cases and technical specifications. Finally, they put a time frame on the milestones, goals of the project and expected results. In case of agile development, the whole process repeats.

User eXperience design

UX designers' task is to analyse the user's needs and behavior, and design the architecture of the app as user-friendly as possible. UX designers often have to leave their desk in order to go to the field to experience the daily routine of the users and learn about their actual needs. After this, they create a prototype of the app that is later tested by the prospective users. The result of UX designers' work are **wireframes** that show the layout and navigation flow of the app.

User Interface design

UI designers are responsible for the user's visual experience. They design the style of the app in accordance with the corporate identity of the customer, giving it a unique look and feel. UI designers must choose a matching color palette, fonts, but also design tiny details like shapes, shadows or contrasts. Sometimes they draw more complex illustrations or even create a mascot to make the app even more attractive. Their choices must facilitate smooth and seamless movement through the app and make the app visually appealing and unique. The result of their work is the **graphic design** of all the screens in the app.

Programming

Programmers, or software developers, write the **code** of the app. Their task is to bring the design to life and connect the app to the servers, where all the data is stored. We split our developers into 4 teams according to their software platform: back end, web front end, iOS, and Android. There should be at least two developers in each team because it reduces the error rate and, in case one of the developers has to leave, the project doesn't come to a standstill.

Testing

Finally, the testers join in to look for software errors (bugs). They check the validity and feasibility of user scenarios and try to discover unexpected behavior. Testers report bugs to developers and ensure that the bugs are fixed. No app should leave the development process without the testers' check because what comes next is the release.

Deadline – Party for your new app

Don't plan the app launch party including PR and marketing campaign right after you sign the contract. Bigger projects are generally developed using the Agile method and there is no specific deadline at the beginning.

Another thing that may delay your project is the Apple Review. This iOS controlling process usually takes five to ten days. Sometimes the app doesn't get the license because of some minor issue and it must be revised and sent to the Apple Review again. If the Apple evaluator rejects to approve your app immediately, you can postpone your launch by a few weeks.

About Ackee

Ackee was founded in 2012 by a group of graduates of the Czech Technical University in Prague. In 2016, they opened a branch office in Berlin. A year later, it was granted a contract to create an app for the German federal parliament (Bundestag). In 2018, Ackee was awarded in the category Recognition of Excellence in the international competition Deloitte Technology Fast 50 Central Europe. In 2020, it was also ranked among the 500 fastest growing technology companies in the EMEA region and the winners of an international competition organized by the prestigious German Design Council.

Since Ackee founders are eager festival goers, the first product they developed was the App4Fest, which is now used by dozens of festivals worldwide. Recently, Ackee has won the trust of many well-known companies and organisations, e. g. Volkswagen, CME, Equa bank, ŠKODA AUTO DigiLab, Livesport, Audi AG, WWF, T-Mobile, Samsung or Ethereum Foundation.

Aside from designing and developing mobile and web applications, Ackee is a go-to partner for sustainable digitalization and focuses on new technologies such as blockchain and augmented reality. In 2021, the company founded Ackee Blockchain, a joint venture with Rockaway Blockchain Fund, dedicated to the security of smart contracts. For more information, go to www.ackee.agency.

Contact

Ing. Martin Půlpitel

Co-Founder, CEO
martin.pulpitel@ackee.cz
+420 604 762 266

Ing. Dominik Veselý

Co-Founder, CTO
dominik.vesely@ackee.cz
Tel: +420 723 115 000

Ackee s. r. o.

Evropská 11
160 00 Praha
Česká republika
info@ackee.cz

Ackee GmbH

c/o The Drivery
Mariendorfer Damm 1
12099 Berlin
Germany
info@ackee.de

App Roadmap

Step 1

Initial call, requirements gathering

- Idea
- Desired features and user stories
- Platforms and architecture (iOS, Android, web, back end, etc.)
- Project timeline

Step 2

Offer

- Rough cost estimate (including time estimate)
- Suggestions for the technical solution
- Suggested improvements
- Time for questions

Step 3

Project planning

- Kick-off workshop
- Analysis – definition of technical requirements and user stories
- Timeplan / Milestones Sprints
- Wireframes and design concept
- List of features and estimate of time and costs needed for the implementation

Step 4

Project development

- UX/UI design & wireframes
- User testing
- Client feedback

- Development
- Testing & bug fixing
- Client testing

- Payment
- Another sprint's start

Step 5

Release and App Stores deployment

Step 6

Support and updates (SLA)

- Software maintenance
- Product updates
- Continuous product improvement

14