Today’s Shortage in Code Development Presents Entrepreneurs With a Massive Opportunity

Mobile apps are essentially a digital gateway drug: While one app is not addictive on its own, each one can be habit-forming and lead to the use of other addictive apps. What starts as a tween love for Candy Crush quickly turns to an obsession, with Instagram “likes” five years later. Even former Facebook vice president of user growth Chamath Palihapitiya has expressed a sense of guilt about what mobile apps like social media have done to society.

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“The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops we’ve created are destroying how society works,” Palihapitiya recently said in a speech at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

While Palihapitiya’s remarks may signal the start of a trend toward social media and app-use criticism, mobile shows no signs of slowing. Cisco’s annual report on mobile traffic growth reported that by 2020, more people will have a cell phone than electricity. Not to mention that mobile apps will be a $188 billion global market.

From an enterprise perspective, Gartner predicts that by the end of this year, the demand for mobile-app development expertise will grow up to five times greater than most organizations’ internal IT departments can currently serve. So, if you’ve got a business, now, more than ever, it’s important for you to also have in place a solid mobile app strategy.

So, how, exactly, do you implement that app strategy?

Entrepreneurs often struggle to develop apps because they lack the in-house teams necessary to do so. Even if a company has a development team on hand, those teams rarely have the resources and tool kits needed to develop apps that meet their end goal. And without the proper tools, the stages from conception to development can take a long time.

Of course, time means increased costs, and potentially a competitor making it to market sooner. Even when developers finally have a minimum viable product (MVP), that product has to go through countless layers of administrative approvals and feedback, which can delay the process even further.

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App development doesn’t have to be so complicated, however. With the right approach, companies can develop apps at a faster rate, and resolve issues before they become serious problems.

Here are a few steps every entrepreneur can take to upgrade his or her strategy for facilitating app development:

1. Reduce the amount of code.

Most entrepreneurs these days are familiar with coding at its most basic level, but cursory knowledge does little when it comes to building and launching a mobile app. Not to mention, the code that these apps are built on is often more complicated than it needs to be. This is because companies try to develop their own proprietary code, rather than rely on tried and true methods that can help simplify the process.

I recently spoke with Anders Lassen, CEO of Fuse, who

explained, “People work incredibly inefficiently today, and we simply can’t afford that when demand for enterprise apps outstrips supply by six-to-one.

“Simplifying the code that makes an app run is one of the best ways to ensure its continued performance and speedy development,” Lassen continued. He recommended using development tool kits based on simplified code, rather than wasting time trying to develop proprietary solutions.

2. Use visual interfaces.

For people looking for a more user-friendly app-development experience, here’s a tip: Visual-development interfaces make for a much simpler design process. With this method, developers, instead of burying their noses in code all day, select options from a visual interface that looks a lot like the apps they’re used to using on a day-to-day basis.

“Having a consistent look, behavior and brand-identity across their different platforms and apps is important, and that’s only achievable through focused collaboration between designers, developers and stakeholders,” Lassen said. “My experience is that being able to do this on a single, unified platform is key, as it eliminates friction and frustration for everyone involved.

“Overall, it makes zero sense to invest in an expensive prototype that you then ask someone to look at, interpret and then re-implement in a native language.”

3. Employ full app-lifecycle support.

Make no mistake: Low-code development platforms don’t focus solely on the initial building phase. Instead, these options support the entire app-delivery lifecycle, from design, to

build, to deployment and iteration.

Iteration is probably the most important factor in app development, because of the feverish speed at which consumer demands change. Being able to integrate user feedback into your application without the help of outside developers or an IT team means your app updates get to market faster and can be seamlessly updated throughout the app lifecycle.

Entrepreneurs cannot afford to be held back by apps that don’t serve their business’s and customers’ needs.That’s why they need better support throughout the entire lifecycle of their app. Jason Bloomberg, an analyst at Intellyx, recently reported that business leaders “can be even more successful with their digital transformations if they do away with hand-coding altogether, adopting Low-Code/No-Code across their organizations instead.”

Integrate analytics

Once your app is deployed, and users start installing it, you’ve only just begun the process of maintaining a successful app. Efficient iteration is impossible without being able to analyze behavior, predict trends and quickly integrate user feedback. Analytics provides insight on how people navigate through the app once they leave it, where they upgrade and how they behave in terms of dozens of other behavioral patterns.

With these details, entrepreneurs can analyze and compare campaigns, adjusting their resource allocation in response. Popular tools for integrating analytics and tracking into app development include Google, Firebase and Flurry.

No matter what industry you’re in, the landscape is likely changing rapidly, as people move from obsession-riddled social media apps to zero-friction utility apps. In order to stay competitive, entrepreneurs need to explore all app platform options before prematurely investing in expensive developers,

designers, and IT teams.

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So, what path will your app journey take?

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