

## Mobile Strategy for Casinos

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When it comes to having a mobile strategy for your casino, you (a casino marketer, IT manager, or other corporate employee with influence on marketing to patrons) probably know that it's no longer acceptable to churn out a mobile app that simply reiterates information that's already on your website. You need integration and functionality that is entertaining, informative, and most importantly – time saving and useful for your patrons. Today's mobile users – 77% of all adults in the U.S., up from 35% in 2011 - demand an app experience that's convenient, functional, entertaining [<sup>1</sup>Statista, 2018], and easy to use.

In the world of mobile, you only get one chance to make a good first impression. If a patron takes the time to download your app and devote a precious piece of real estate to you on their device, they expect a top-notch experience the first time. If they don't receive that, your app will probably be deleted or left dormant on their device. Therefore, your app should be able to offer capabilities beyond displaying the patron's account information and giving them information on dining, events, gaming and amenities. It should let them book restaurant tables and event tickets, it should integrate with your kiosk system to allow drawing entries and notifications supported by geofence technology, and it should provide a virtual players club card. It may also even incorporate features like a social casino, location-based marketing, cashless transactions, and even augmented reality. It needs a backend platform that allows you to execute highly targeted push notifications, geofence your patrons, and even see your percentage share of a patron's gaming trips.

Your app also needs engagement features that keep your patron interested and returning on a regular basis, and it should drive trips back to your property as well. For example – moving your traditional scratch-off game piece onto your mobile app will a) encourage repeat app usage, b) drive trips to your property for redemption, and c) save an enormous amount on direct mail costs.

Any successful mobile platform and marketing program needs a team behind it that supports you 100% with regard to training your staff, encouraging patron adoption, and keeping your app content fresh and interesting. *And lastly and perhaps most importantly*, it should increase revenue and save time, effort, and expense.

When evaluating your organization's mobile strategy, keep in mind that building a fully functional app in-house - from the ground up with a team of several people - usually takes from 1.5 to 2 years and ends up costing upwards of \$2 million. If you contract an outside developer to build the app, you may be able to get it done for less money, but the launch time frame will be the same. When that developer eventually moves on, you may be stuck with an app that quickly becomes broken or obsolete.

Tomorrow's casino mobile apps are focused on ease of use, integrations with back of house and third-party systems, engagement features, and utility. These are all important items to consider when choosing a partner to build and service your mobile application; your choice could mean the difference between a wildly successful mobile program that increases your share of wallet, or being caught behind the curve. Which will you be?