Attract the Best Users

Your campaign is officially live! Now that it is off and running, don’t just set it and forget it. This is the time to start looking at the data to see what’s working, what can be improved, and what could be optimized to help you to meet your overall goals.

In this section we’ll go into more detail about which metrics to track, how to optimize based on that data, and the value of competitive data sets — all of which are key to attracting and keeping the best users for your app.

Measure & Optimize

Throughout your campaign, you’ll want to evaluate the following areas to review performance, draw key insights and identify new items to test:

- Acquisition Channels
- User Segments
- Creative Assets and Formats
Acquisition Channels

If you’ve spread your campaign budget across several networks and tactics, you will need to determine which ones perform the best. You should conduct ongoing evaluations of various UA channels to understand their return against spend overall, including how well they deliver with respect to targeting and with particular creative.

User Segments

To better understand whether your UA efforts are bringing in high-quality users, you’ll want to conduct a cohort analysis. (A cohort is a group of users who share a particular characteristic over a set period of time.)

There are two cohort groups to consider: acquisition cohorts and behavioral cohorts. Acquisition cohorts are typically segmented based on the channel that brought them to your app (e.g., organic, Facebook ad, etc.) or by when they installed the app. Behavioral cohorts are based on a certain desired behavior (such as making an in-app purchase within X number of days).

By examining these segments, you’ll better understand the channels that drive desired outcomes — e.g., users who come in through Facebook are more likely to return within the first week. With this kind of insight, you can adjust your ad spend and media mix accordingly.

Creative Assets & Formats

Designing creative assets that entice new users to download your app is part art and part science. In general, you need to create assets that are simple, engaging and clear. On the science side, you should iterate constantly to identify which visuals and messages improve installs and convert the most high-quality users. Small changes can have significant impact on your campaign.
Refine with Competitive Data

Understanding what worked for other apps in your category is a great way to shorten the learning curve and find UA tactics that deliver results. Competitive app data is especially important before you have enough of your own data to set benchmarks.

While you’ll always have somewhat limited visibility into what your competitors are doing, the quantitative and qualitative data you can get is invaluable for research purposes. After all, on mobile you can always adjust your campaign spend and creative quickly based on what you learn.

Retention Data

Competitive app retention data, for instance, is particularly useful after a competitor launches a large UA campaign. With this data, you can start to answer these questions:

- Are our competitors’ UA campaigns attracting high-quality users?
- How does our user retention stack up against the competition?
- What is the lifetime value (LTV) of our target customer?

This retention data can help you plot your app’s growth trajectory and validate crucial product and marketing decisions. Setting realistic benchmarks against competitors and top apps will also help you discover new ways to build a loyal and engaged user base.
APP ANNIE INTELLIGENCE: Retention

Using App Annie, you can track retention and compare against the top 200 apps within a category. For example, take a look at Instagram: it is trending much higher than the Social category average. Data like this helps you to set your own benchmarks and goals.
Creative Monitoring

Tracking the types of ad formats and creatives your competitors are running is a quick way to see which messages and visuals could attract your target audience. With this information you can develop a strategic UA campaign rooted in competitive analysis.

APP ANNIE INTELLIGENCE: Creative Gallery

Using App Annie you can track in-app ads across a number of networks including AdColony, AdMob, Facebook, InMobi, YouTube, Twitter and more. With access to this competitive information you can discover the ads that are working best, the networks they are partnering with, and more to inform your UA strategy.

Detecting Changes in Strategy

If your competition suddenly ramps up their spend, or the number of ads they have in market, you’ll want to know why. Keep tabs on top apps to understand the networks they’re working with, the apps they’re appearing in and their share of impressions across the network.
APP ANNIE INTELLIGENCE: Creative Insights

Using App Annie, you can track your competitors’ UA efforts including creative details, drill down to the networks the campaign is running on and the apps the ads are appearing in to identify best practices to incorporate into your own strategy.

For example, General Motors’ app Maven, a car sharing app, claimed the #1 spot within the travel category in May, consuming about 2% of Admob’s impression share. Out of the nine creatives General Motors was running, video made up 55% of the advertiser’s share, highlighting the creative format type prioritized in their advertising efforts.

Noticing spikes in activity and correlating them to particular strategies can help you optimize your own UA spend by investing in a concurrent campaign, either on a competitor’s primary ad network to gain the mindshare of that audience, or on a competitor’s lower volume ad network where they have less presence and you can dominate.
User acquisition shouldn’t focus solely on quantity — you want to make sure you’re bringing in loyal users you can monetize. Depending on your industry and app, monetization can mean many things.

Lifetime value (LTV) is one of the most important metrics to evaluate. Let’s look at Lloyd Melnick’s — formerly of Zynga and now at PokerStars — definition of LTV.

LTV helps you identify how much a customer is worth to your company. Melnick uses three variables to calculate LTV:

**Monetization**
How much revenue a user generates over their lifetime of using your app. For games, this can be a measure like average revenue per user (ARPU). For apps like Tinder, it might be a user’s monthly subscription fee, and for retail apps like Target, it could be average monthly basket size.

**Retention**
This is how often users come back to your app, how frequently they open the app within a certain span of time, and their average session length.

**Virality**
This tracks how many organic users install the app as a result of this user over a specific period of time. You might also hear this referred to as “K-factor” — where a K-factor of one means that every user acquired will, in turn, invite one additional user who installs the app.

The exact formula will vary by company, but the specific metrics should reflect these categories.
The Search for New Users Continues

After launching your user acquisition campaign and persuading your ideal user to download and use your app, it’s time to repeat the process. Different media types, various cadences of outreach and regular monitoring of competitive data are all essential elements of UA toolkit. And whether you want to test a new product feature or reach an untapped market, a UA strategy that flexes and grows as the app economy evolves is crucial to success.

As the industry standard for app market intelligence, App Annie is designed to help you deliver on your ASO and UA goals. App Annie Intelligence can help you see the impact of changes to marketing tactics, and uncover new avenues to success.

ABOUT APP ANNIE

App Annie delivers the most trusted app data and insights for your business to succeed in the global app economy. Over 1 million registered members rely on App Annie to better understand the app market, their businesses and the opportunities around them. The company is headquartered in San Francisco with 15 global offices. App Annie has received $157 million in financing from investors such as e.ventures, Greenspring Associates, Greycroft Partners, IDG Capital Partners, Institutional Venture Partners and Sequoia Capital.

GET STARTED FOR FREE TODAY