

Mobile App Promotion Tips for Healthcare Providers

How to Ensure your Branded Apps Are Adopted and Used by Patients and Employees

MobileSmith
Your Quickest Path from Idea to App

- Promoting your hospital app to current and potential patients: whom to target, and how?
- 5 essentials of a successful app marketing campaign for internal and patient-facing apps
- Examples of efficient marketing strategies for 3 great hospital apps



1. Why Invest in App Marketing?

Healthcare marketers are finally buying in to what analysts call the **mobile mind shift** – an expectation held by **4 out of 10** U.S. customers that your organization will offer them a user-friendly mobile app. As consumers research health information on mobile, they seek **trusted resources** for that information, according to a 2013 Makovsky-Kelton survey. Their physician and healthcare provider are still viewed as **the most trusted source** of health advice.

Aware of this demand and trust, more healthcare providers are either already offering or actively considering offering **branded mobile apps** to their patients and employees. However, building and publishing your hospital app is only the first step in your mobile journey. To ensure your app is discovered, adopted and used, you have to:

✓ Build Your App for Success ✓ Actively Promote your App ✓ Engage Users and Foster Loyalty



Consider the competition your hospital app will be facing:

- More than **43,000** health and wellness apps are available in iTunes alone; nearly half of those apps have been downloaded **fewer than 500 times** ([IMS Health](#), 2013).
- Nearly **80 percent** of all apps available today are **zombie apps** with hardly any downloads at all ([Adjust](#), 2014).
- The **cost-per-launch** grew **75 percent** for iOS apps and **169 percent** for Android apps year-over-year ([Fiksu](#), April 2015).

*As the competition heats up, marketers tend to spend more on mobile app promotion. But they are also learning how to **spend smarter**.*

2. Building your App for Success



Analysts agree: mobile cost center is shifting from app development to app discovery. Facing these rising costs, marketers are looking for effective strategies of app promotion.

Wouldn't it be great if your branded hospital app could **promote itself**, attracting and retaining loyal users without a significant marketing investment? It is difficult, but doable. The key to acquiring users without spending a fortune is to make your app **highly relevant** to your target audience at the very moment when they most need it.

To achieve this, you will have to put on your marketing thinking hat way before your mobile app development project begins.

Before you start building your app:

- Define the **business goals** you are trying to solve. Are you trying to reduce readmissions? Lower ER traffic? Facilitate physician referral? Attract customers for your new cancer or birth center?
- Identify your app's **target audience** and its main characteristics.
- Pinpoint their **mobile moments** - the points in time and space when someone pulls out a smartphone or a tablet to get what they need in their immediate context.
- Design the **use case** targeting your audience's mobile moments; with your business goals in mind.
- Define the **metrics** and **benchmarks** for your mobile app.
- Build your **app marketing strategy** based on all of the above.

3. The 5 Essentials of a Successful App Marketing Strategy

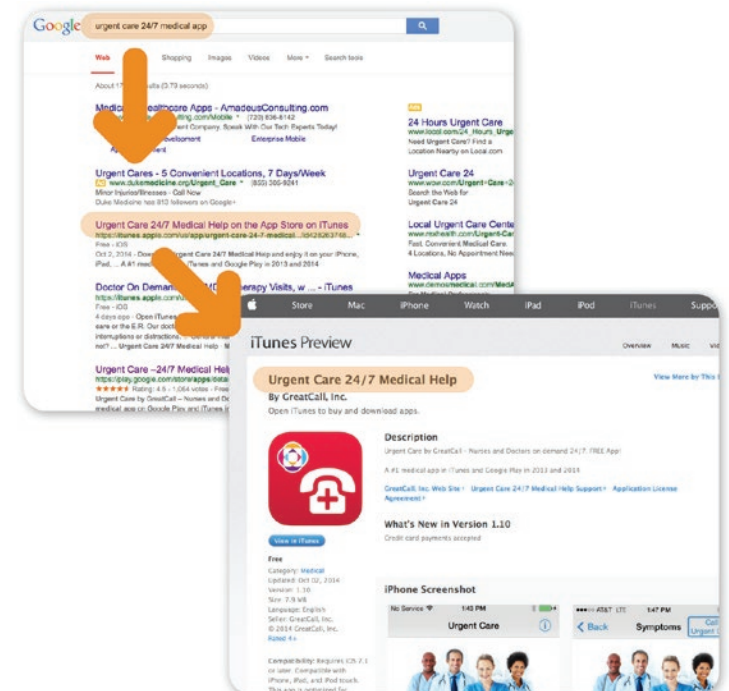
Mobile users are on the move and looking for **quick, relevant, and credible** information on their mobile devices. Your branded app can become a source of such information. To make your target audience aware of your app, employ these five essential strategies:



1. Search Engine Marketing

How will customers find your app? The same way they find everything else – **on Google**. Optimize your app for search. Your app should **show up #1** when it's highly relevant to your audience – when they are searching for a similar product or service (not necessarily mobile). Perhaps they weren't thinking of apps when this necessity arose? **Let them now think of yours!**

- Ensure your app is relevant to their current need, in their current context.
- Make your app available for both **iOS** and **Android phones**.
- Optimize your app description in Apple and Android app stores to clearly reflect its value proposition.
- Design a stunning icon; post your best looking screenshots.
- If you are targeting local patients, invest in an optimized AdWords campaign.





2. Email marketing

Email is still one of the most potent tools of promoting products and services. If you have an opt-in database, or an email newsletter, utilize these resources to promote your app to current and potential patients. Email is also great for promoting internal apps to your employees. Segment your lists to better target your subscriber base. Make your app pitch short and sweet – **53 percent** of emails are now opened on mobile!



3. Social Media

Social has become people's top activity on mobile. It is estimated that people engage with brands on social **10 percent** more often from their smartphones or tablets than from their PCs. Senior citizens are also increasingly active on social media. Use your **social channels** to promote your mobile app! To engage a specific patient demographic, consider running a sponsored post or ad targeting local users with specific interests or likes (e.g. "female followers of @BabyCenter and @FitPregnancy in Raleigh-Durham, NC").



4. Print and Signage

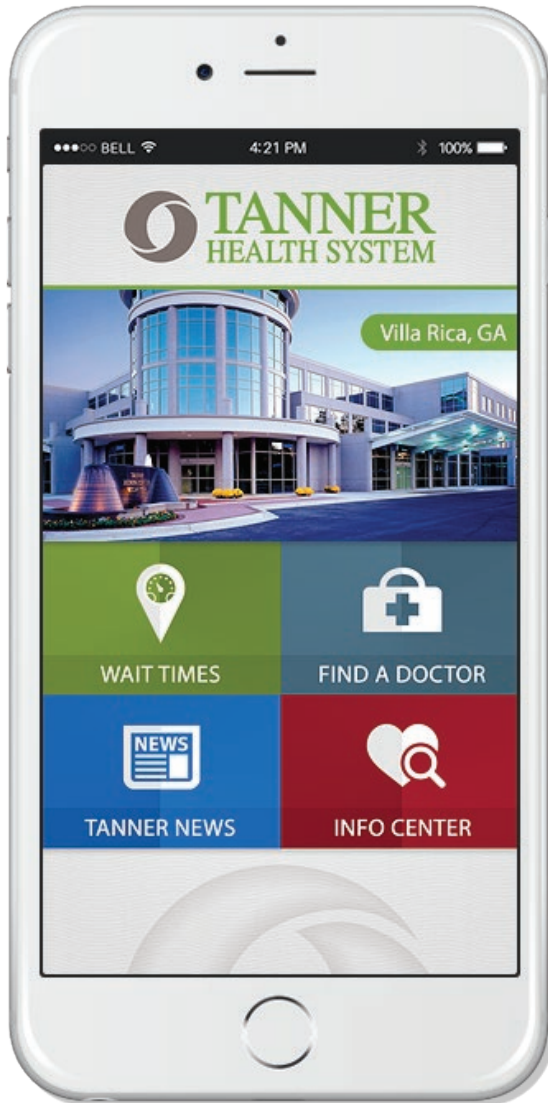
Traditional **postcards, flyers** and signage are great for targeting less Internet-savvy populations, or patients who frequent certain areas. Use print and signage **onsite** to market your app to patients and their families, or to your employees. Include a licensed **QR** code and a mobile optimized **landing page** to simplify downloading your app.



5. In-App Download

Popular **mobile apps** like Facebook will allow you to offer your app directly from them! Your target audience will see your app as available for download in their regular news feed.

4. Example: Urgent Care App



Let's explore a few successful branded hospital apps and their promotion strategies.

Urgent care apps are becoming very popular with healthcare systems who open branded urgent care centers in an attempt to reduce costly ER traffic. An efficient urgent care app would include the following functions (working online or offline; wherever the user most needs medical care):

- See **dynamic wait times** for each center.
- Find the **closest UC center**; get GPS directions.
- Submit a form saying you are on your way, **get put into a queue**.
- Check if your insurance is accepted.

Target Audience:

Prospective or existing patients, many of whom may be on the go. Potential ER clients: people in stress; in pain; with an immediate need to get non-critical care.

Promotion Strategy:

1. **Search Marketing:** Optimize your app for the cloud of keywords related to primary or urgent care in your locality. Also optimize for searches on possible non-critical conditions that would warrant a visit to an urgent care, but not to the ER. Launch an AdWords campaign using these targeting parameters.
2. **Signage:** Put up billboards in the area covered by your urgent care network.

5. Example: Physician Referral App



Physician Referral apps can be both internal or patient facing. An integrated, dynamically updated, searchable physician directory can be a tremendously useful tool for doctors and patients alike, and can be included as a function in any branded hospital app.

- Look up physicians in your internal system by **name, location, or specialty**.
- See their credentials, publications, contact information.
- Get a list of **physicians-on-call** for any specialty.
- Refer physicians or request appointments directly from the app.

Target Audience:

Physicians within your system. You know these people, and you know how to reach them. Define how your app will be changing their behavior, and get in front of them at the right time!

Promotion Strategy:

- 1. Signage:** Design a promotional flyer and a postcard. Insert them into your employees' daily dose of medical research or specialty news.
- 2. Email:** Your staff will eagerly adopt an app via email if your pitch is relevant and your call-to-action is optimized for easy download. We recommend including above-the-fold links directly to App Store and Google Play from the email body.
- 3. Social:** Your employees may already follow one or several social accounts of your health system, or have LinkedIn profiles. It's easy to reach them on social!

6. Example: Hospital Wayfinding App

Wayfinding apps are gaining popularity, as healthcare providers realize how important patient experience is to their organization's brand image and bottom line. Today, providers can **quickly and cost-effectively** include custom wayfinding and proximity messaging functionality in any of their branded apps, offering a variety of functions:

- Receive **proximity-based text messages** when entering the area, or inside the facility - directions, info, maps, announcements, and more.
- **Auto-check-in** when entering the geofence; get placed in queue.
- Get general info, contacts, GPS directions, insurance, etc.

Target Audience:

Patients and their family members. These people are likely to be on-the-go; possibly driving. Make your app easy to download and open quickly, using one hand.



Promotion Strategy:

1. **Outdoor and Indoor Signage:** Your app can be a life-saver for someone circling around the parking area or hospital corridors, trying to make their appointment on time. Large signs in relevant locations, with prominent QR codes, are a must!
2. **Email:** For existing patients, email works great to promote new facilities and services. Advertise your wayfinding app for easy orientation and early check in.
3. **Social:** Thought not efficient in addressing an immediate need, social can be a great tool to promote the cool new function your brand is offering in its apps.

7. A Few More Useful Tips



1. App Engagement

It takes a user **10 seconds** to decide whether to download your app, and **30 seconds** – whether to keep it. To minimize your user reacquisition costs, make sure your app marketing strategy creates loyal, engaged users. App **“stickiness”** requires continuous engagement. Include push notifications, interactive and social features to keep your patients coming back. Most importantly, monitor user reviews and continuously **version your app** to fix reported bugs and improve the user experience!



2. Deep Linking

App deep linking is a brand new **search optimization technique** that helps you minimize app promotion costs and keep your users engaged with your app. Essentially, Google is now indexing the content within mobile apps and can return that content as a search result. Users can be sent directly to a **page within your app** – not just to the app download page. At present, Google only offers deep linking for Android apps for Android 4.1+ , but deep link usage in apps is growing rapidly, and soon can be applied to any healthcare brand or service.



3. Free (No-Brainer) Promotion Options

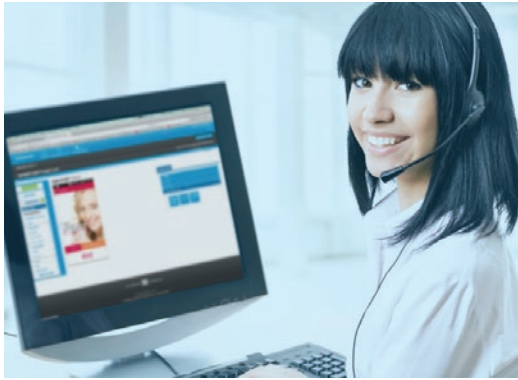
Along with paid app promotion, you can explore a variety of easy, free app marketing techniques:

- Create a search-optimized **landing page** for your app, clearly explaining its benefits.
- Spread the word through **guest blogs** and partner sites; feature it on your own **website homepage**.
- Include an app download link in your **email signature**; place a QR code on your business card.
- Offer your users iTunes or Google Play perks for referring their friends to your app, and more!

Need Help?



We Know How to Make Your Apps Successful!



Mobile Strategy Session

- We can help you outline your app's goals; target audience; benchmarks, approximate development time and cost; and the place of your app in the context of your overall branded app portfolio.
- We can help you find that **Special Sauce:** what can make your app "sticky"?



Turnkey App Design & Development

We can take your app from idea to launch in a matter of weeks:



Ideation



Custom Design



Integration



Testing & Building



App Management

Turnkey Mobile App Marketing:

We ensure that your app is properly submitted; app store and Google search optimized; easily found by your target audience; used frequently, and continuously driving brand awareness for your organization:



App Store Optimization



Promo e-Blasts



Print Collateral



Social Media Promotion

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