FAMESTERS

MOBILE APP INDUSTRY & INFLUENCER MARKETING:

THE 2025 REPORT

KEY DATA
STATISTICS
TRENDS
EXPERT INSIGHTS

With the support of Business of Apps

FAMESTERS.COM

2025 MOBILE APPS & INFLUENCER MARKETING REPORT

Famesters pulled together fresh data, campaign results, and expert insights to reveal what truly drives installs, revenue, and user loyalty. In the pages that follow, you'll see how mobile habits and influencer partnerships shape success across the app industry.

READ ON FOR:

- Mobile app market size and growth.
- Usage and engagement patterns by country.
- Revenue and spending trends — who pays, how much, and where.
- App category benchmarks for retention and monetization.
- Marketing challenges, trends, and emerging channels.
- Influencer marketing playbook for apps.
- Influence at scale: why 84% of brands rate creator campaigns effective.
- Budget shifts: one in four companies now puts 40%+ of spend behind influencers.
- UGC & IGC: buying the clip, owning the rights, slashing CPI across channels.
- Organic lift: influencer buzz that spikes brand searches and boosts ASO.
- Expert insights and predictions on where app-plus-influencer strategies go next.

Got questions or need help turning these insights into results?
Email hey@famesters.com or visit famesters.com.
First, we make it work. Then, we make it scale.

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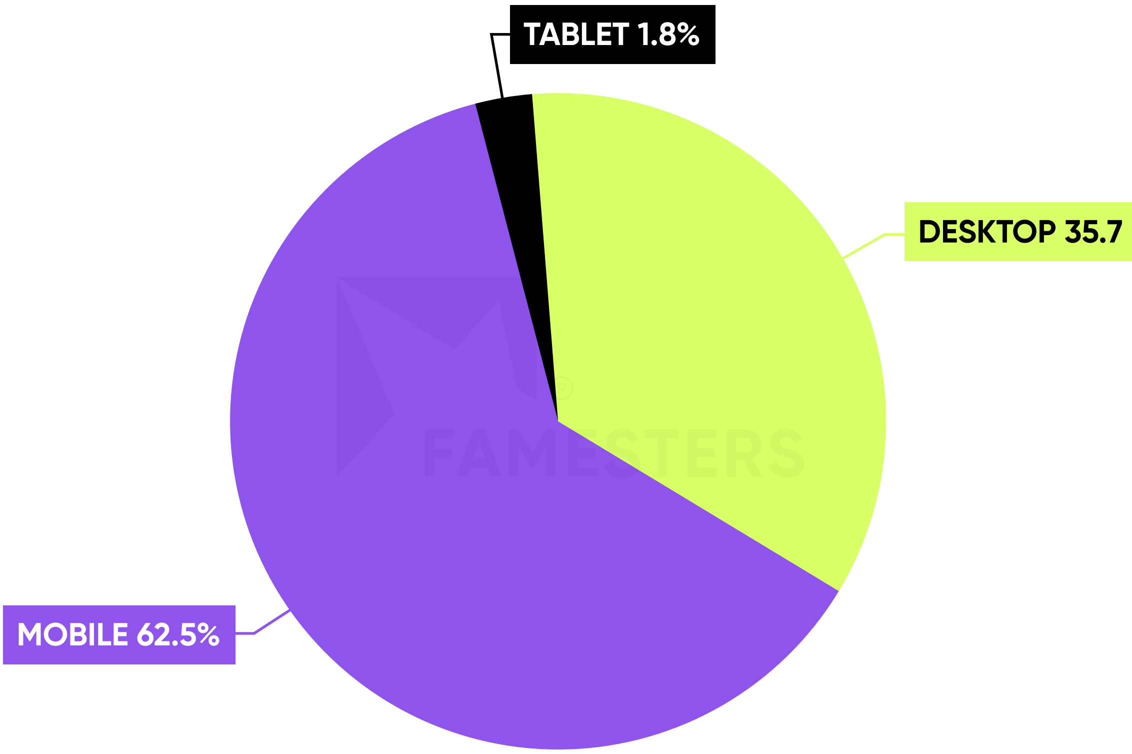
MOBILE APP MARKET SIZE & GROWTH

SMARTPHONE & MOBILE APP USAGE

First of all, if you needed one chart to confirm we now live in a mobile-dominant world, here it is.

GLOBAL INTERNET TRAFFIC MARKET SHARE



Today, 62.5% of global internet traffic comes from mobile devices. That's nearly two-thirds of all online activity happening through smartphones — not desktops, not tablets, but through the screens people carry in their pockets.

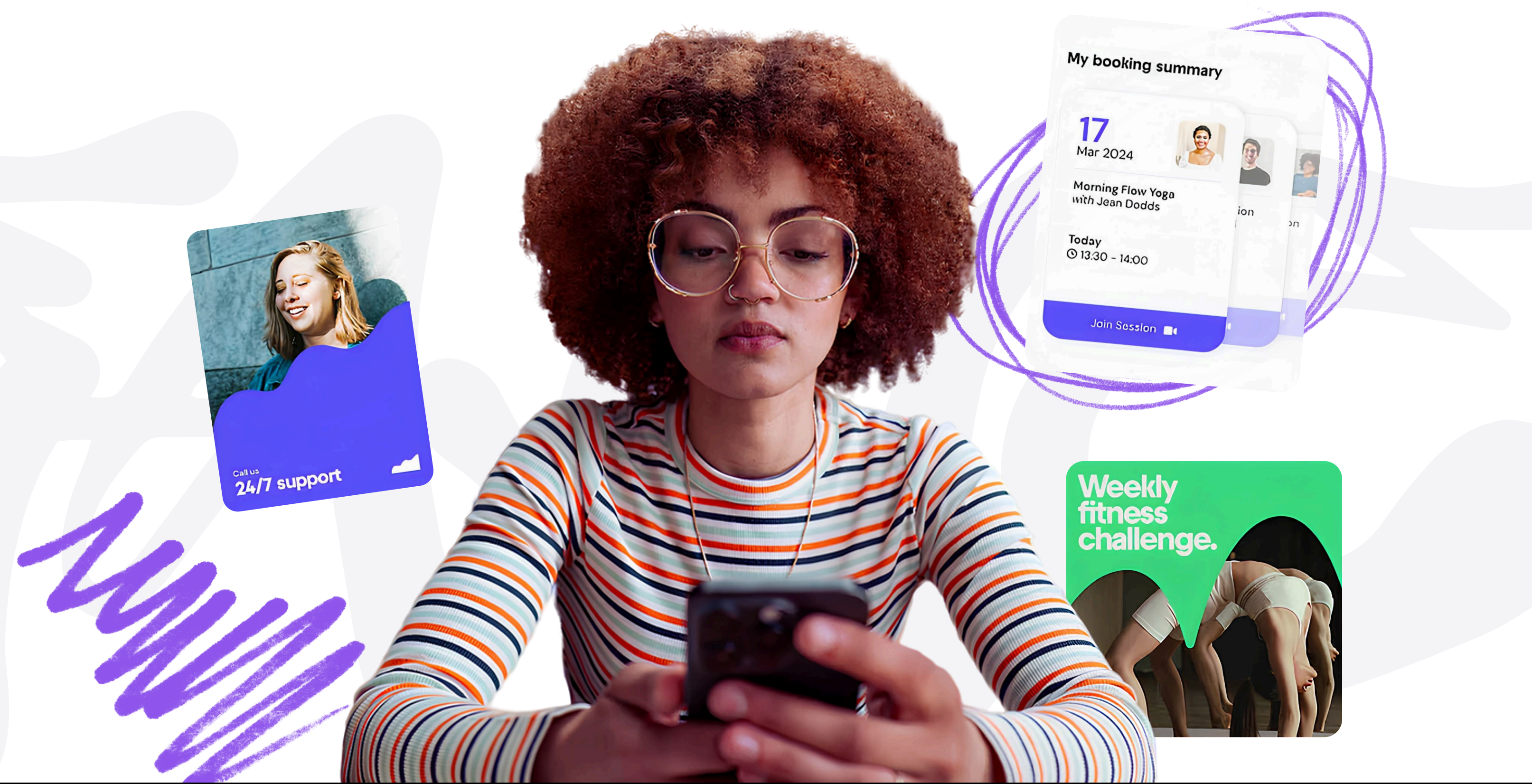
Meanwhile, desktop traffic has shrunk to 35.7%, showing that traditional web browsing is no longer the default. It's still important — particularly for work, finance, and high-attention tasks — but it's no longer where most people discover, shop, scroll, or consume content. That space belongs to mobile.

And as for tablets? They barely register, holding just 1.8% of global internet traffic. Once considered the future of media consumption, tablets are now a distant third — overshadowed by the portability of phones and the productivity power of laptops.

SMARTPHONE & MOBILE APP USAGE

GLOBAL INTERNET TRAFFIC SHARE BY DEVICE (2015-2025)

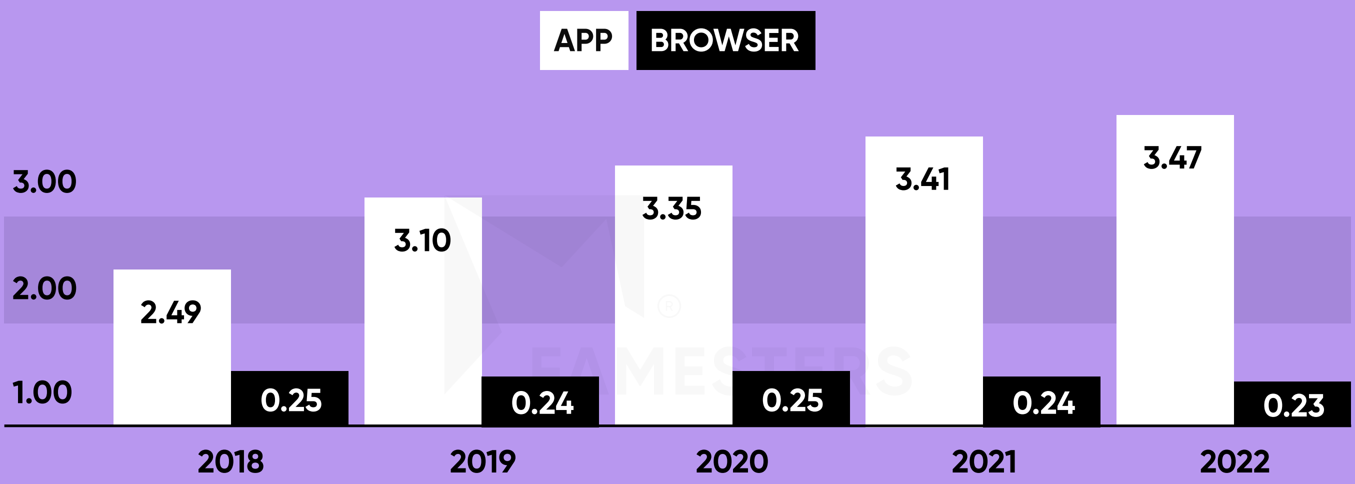
Year	DESKTOP	MOBILE	TABLET
2015	59.17%	35.1%	5.73%
2016	51.37%	43.59%	5.04%
2017	43.75%	51.56%	4.69%
2018	45.11%	50.88%	4.02%
2019	46.04%	50.39%	3.57%
2020	45.64%	51.61%	2.75%
2021	42.31%	55.01%	2.69%
2022	39.43%	58.32%	2.25%
2023	42.88%	55.19%	1.94%
2024	39.41%	58.54%	2.05%
2025	35.71%	62.45%	1.84%



SMARTPHONE & MOBILE APP USAGE

Now, if you ever had any doubt about where mobile users actually spend their time, let's take this example of the U.S. This chart clears it up: apps completely dominate mobile engagement — and they've done so consistently for years.

APPS VS MOBILE WEB USAGE IN THE US (HOURS/MINUTES SPENT PER DAY)



APPS WIN — BY A LANDSLIDE

Americans spend an average of 3 hours and 28 minutes per day in mobile apps, compared to just 14 minutes in mobile web browsers. That's a 15× difference — and the gap hasn't narrowed at all. In fact, since 2018, app usage has steadily climbed year over year, while mobile browser time has hovered below 25 minutes throughout.

This isn't just user preference — it's behavior at scale.

BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022:

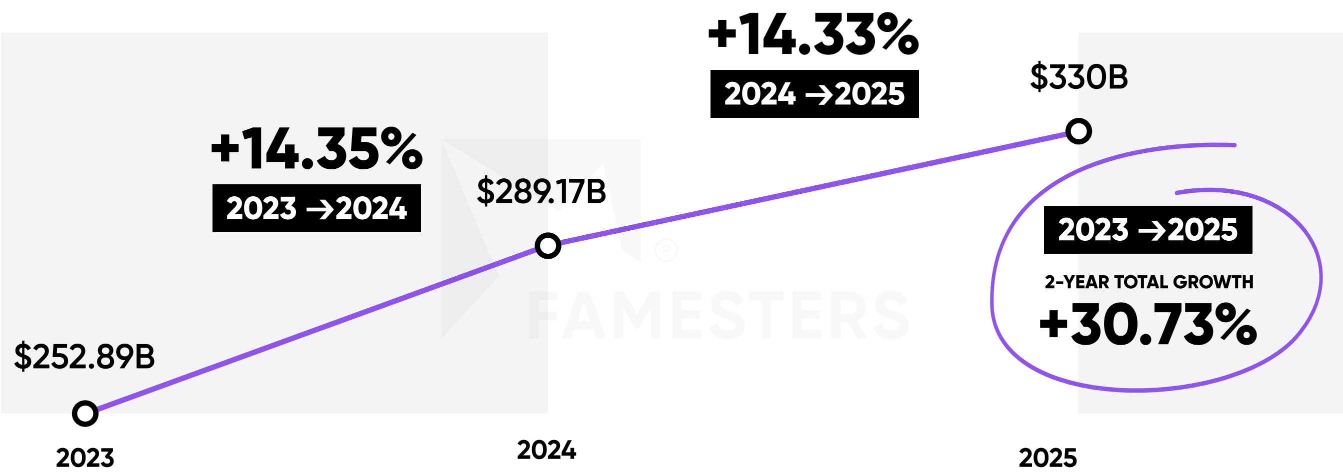
- App time jumped from 2.49 to 3.47 hours per day
- Mobile web time barely moved — and even slightly declined

What that tells us is simple: for the average user, apps are where mobile life happens — from communication and entertainment to banking, shopping, and health. Browsers are still around, but they've been relegated to quick lookups, links, and edge cases.

The most important trend here is that app usage keeps going up: people are spending more time than ever inside apps. That suggests stronger retention, deeper engagement, and a growing reliance on mobile tools — not just for consumption, but for daily routines and decision-making.

MOBILE APP MARKET OVERVIEW

The global mobile app market is gearing up for massive growth — and the numbers say it all. In 2023, the market was already worth $252.89 billion, by 2024, it jumped to $289.17 billion, and in 2025, is expected to exceed $330 billion. That's double-digit growth year after year — and the momentum is only building.



From there, the growth curve keeps climbing — steadily at first, then accelerating year over year until the market crosses the $1 trillion mark in 2034. In other words, the mobile app economy is set to quadruple in size within a decade. That kind of trajectory reflects more than just more people downloading apps; it's a sign of how deeply mobile has embedded itself into how we live, work, shop, play, and connect.

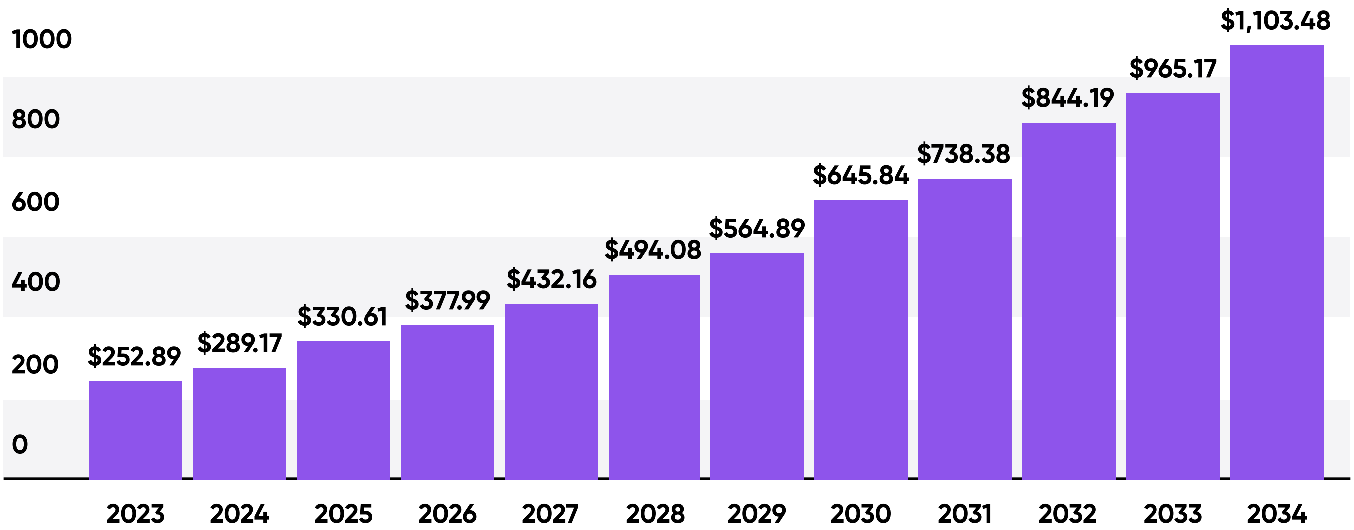
What's driving this surge? A mix of powerful trends: expanding smartphone access in emerging markets, a global shift toward mobile-first experiences, and game-changing tech like AI, 5G, AR/VR, and super-app ecosystems. These are reshaping what apps can do — and how users engage with them.

The numbers speak for themselves: from a $41 billion increase between 2024 and 2025 to a jump of $138 billion between 2033 and 2034, the pace is picking up fast. The window for early movers is now.

For app developers, marketers, and investors, this forecast is encouraging and also a clear signal: the mobile future is wide open, and the next decade is going to be defined by those who scale smart, stay agile, and tap into the cultural and technological shifts fueling this explosive growth.

MOBILE APP MARKET OVERVIEW

MOBILE APP MARKET SIZE 2024 TO 2034 (US$, BILLION)



According to Business of Apps, between 2015 and 2024, global app downloads grew from 40 billion to 91.3 billion, more than doubling in less than a decade. The most dramatic surge happened in the earlier years, particularly from 2015 to 2020, when mobile adoption and app usage expanded rapidly across both developed and emerging markets. Downloads jumped by over 46 billion in that five-year span alone, driven by rising smartphone penetration, the expansion of mobile internet access, and a growing culture of mobile-led consumption.

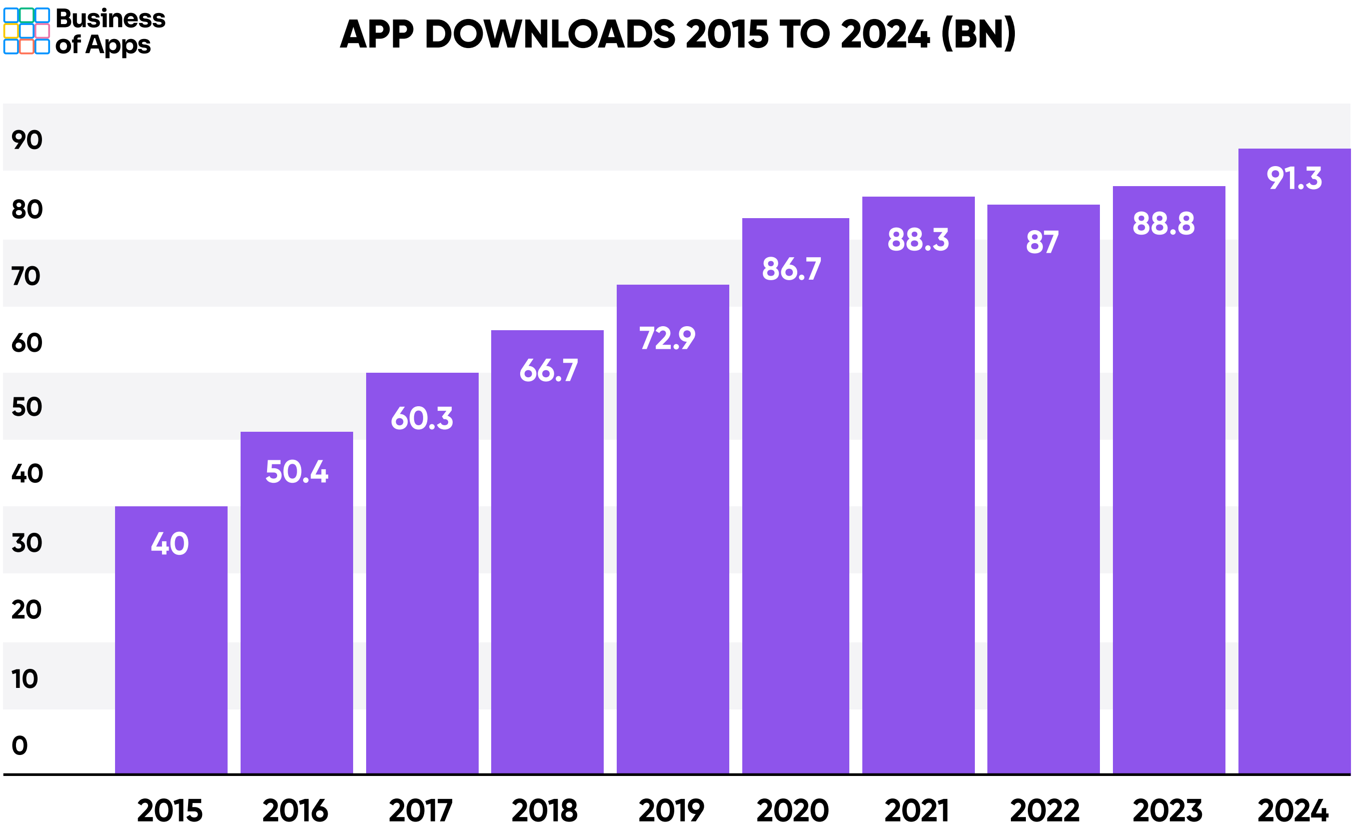
The peak growth period appears to have concluded around 2020, with 86.7 billion downloads, after which the pace of growth slowed significantly. From 2021 onward, the market enters what looks like a maturity phase. Year-over-year increases drop to low single digits, with a slight dip in 2022 (–1.5%) — likely a correction after the pandemic-fueled spike in mobile activity. However, downloads recovered modestly in 2023 and 2024, reaching 91.3 billion — a new high, but only 2.8% above the previous year.

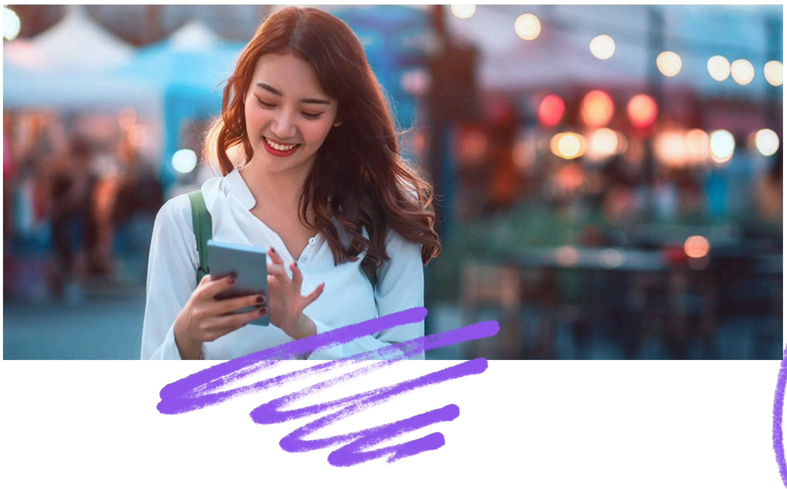
What's clear is that volume growth has plateaued. The global app market is no longer about exponential increases in downloads — it's about quality over quantity. As user acquisition slows, the spotlight shifts to retention, engagement, and monetization. Developers and marketers now face a new challenge: not just getting apps onto phones, but keeping them there — and turning installs into sustained revenue.

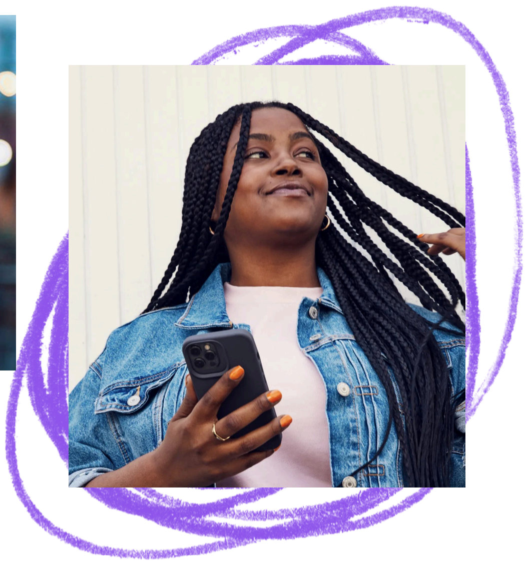
MOBILE APP MARKET OVERVIEW

At the same time, this plateau signals opportunity: further growth will likely come from untapped or underserved regions like sub-Saharan Africa, rural Asia, and parts of Latin America. And within mature markets, the next wave will be driven less by new users and more by new categories, such as AI-powered tools, vertical-specific services, and high-utility niche apps.

In short, the app download curve may be flattening, but the mobile economy is far from done growing — it's simply evolving.







MOBILE APP MARKET OVERVIEW

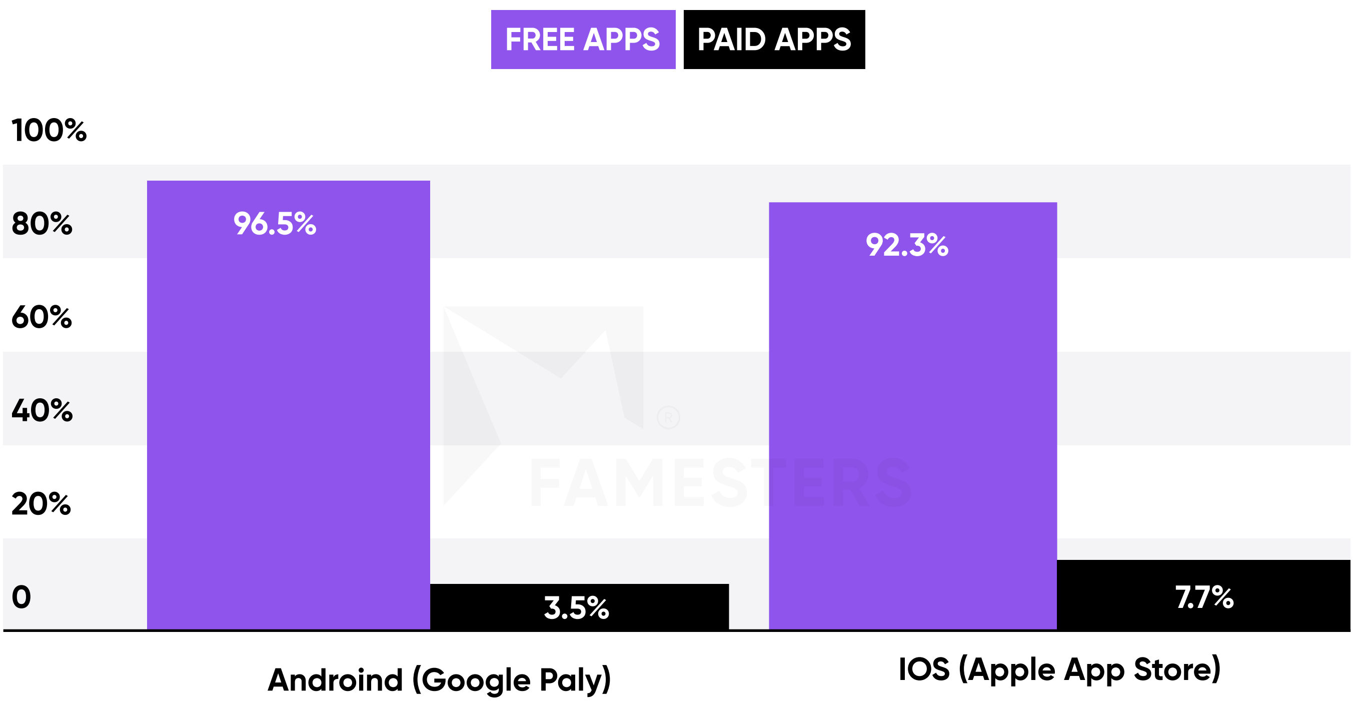
If there's one thing this chart makes obvious, it's that the free-to-download model absolutely dominates the mobile app ecosystem — on both Android and iOS. On Google Play, a massive 96.5% of all apps are free. The Apple App Store isn't far behind, with 92.3% of its apps offered at no upfront cost.

That means across the board, only a tiny fraction of apps — 3.5% on Android and 7.7% on iOS — require users to pay before downloading.

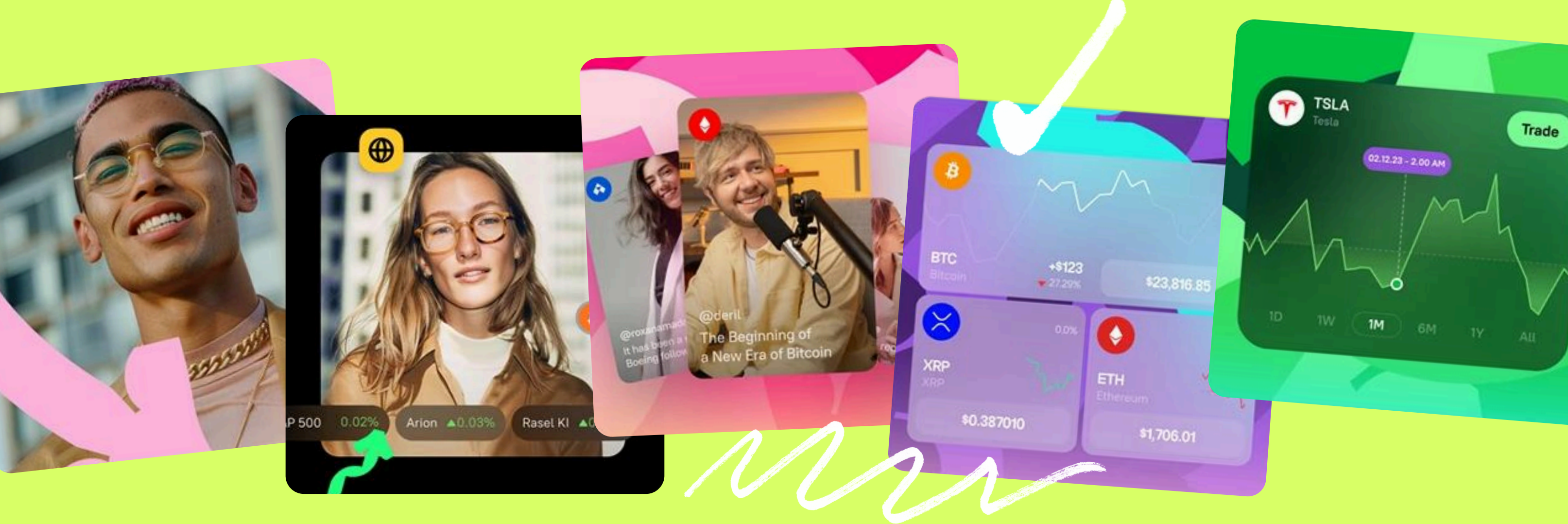
Why? Because the economics of mobile have shifted dramatically over the past decade. Consumers expect to try before they buy (or never buy at all), and most developers have adapted accordingly. The focus is on monetizing after the install — through in-app purchases, subscriptions, ads, and upgrades — rather than through the download itself.

The slight difference between platforms is also telling. iOS still has a larger share of paid apps compared to Android because iOS users have historically shown higher willingness to pay upfront and because developers targeting iOS are often building for a higher-income audience. Still, even on Apple Store, the paid app model is quickly becoming the exception, not the rule.

DISTRIBUTION OF FREE AND PAID APPS



APP USAGE STATS BY COUNTRY



According to Business of Apps, in 2024 (and proceeding in 2025) **India led the world in app downloads by a wide margin, clocking in at 24.3 billion downloads — nearly double that of the United States, which ranks second with 12.2 billion.** This gap in numbers reflects a fundamental shift in the center of gravity for mobile growth. India's dominance is powered by its enormous population, widespread Android adoption, and affordable mobile data, making it the largest and most dynamic download market globally.

Following the U.S., several other high-growth, mobile-centric economies stand out. **Brazil (9.4B), Indonesia (7.7B), and China (7.1B) round out the top five**, together representing a mix of large populations, increasing digital penetration, and mobile dependence. Brazil and Indonesia, in particular, continue to show the strength of emerging markets in Latin America and Southeast Asia, where mobile phones often serve as the primary access point to the internet.

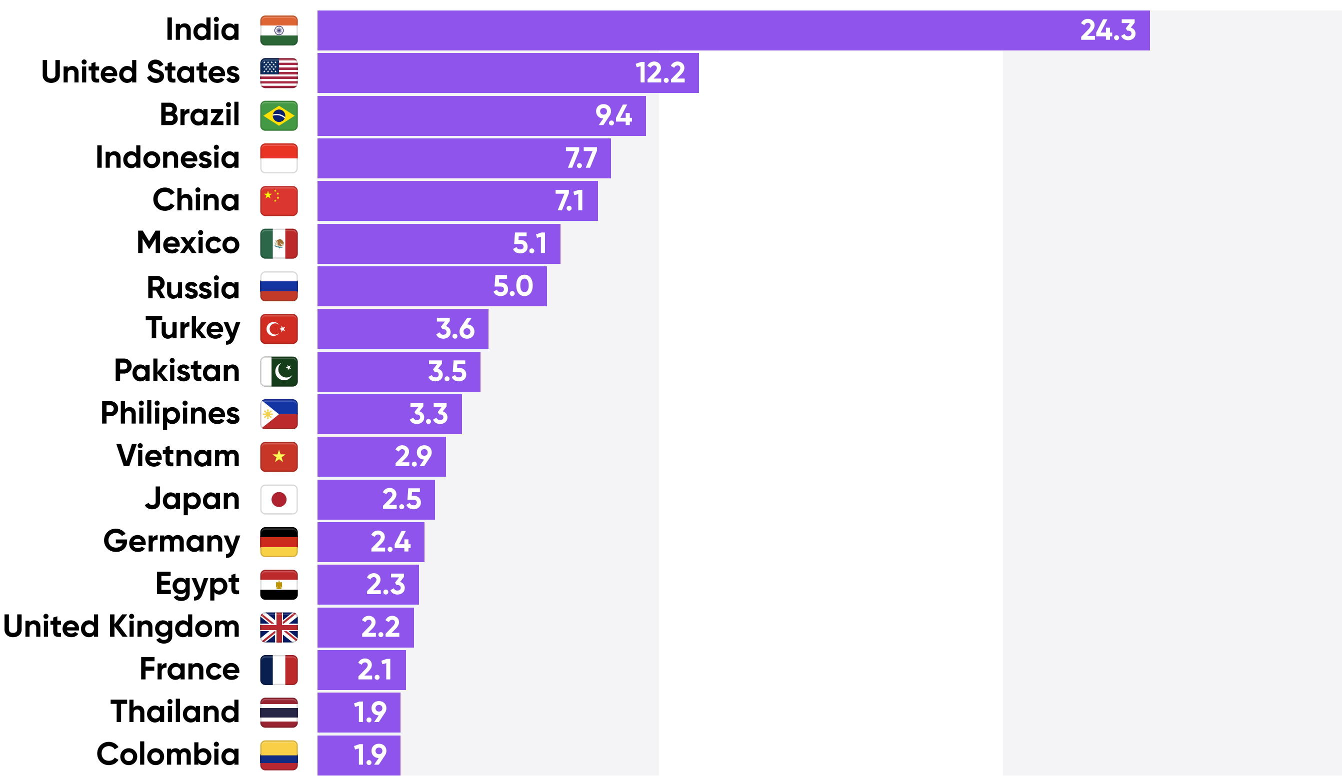
Beyond the top five, Mexico (5.1B), Russia (5.0B), Turkey (3.6B), Pakistan (3.5B), and the Philippines (3.3B) highlight the next tier of strong performers — countries where mobile use is booming, often driven by younger populations and a surge in social and commerce app engagement. Many of these markets are cost-sensitive, making them ideal for freemium models and aggressive user acquisition strategies.

Meanwhile, mature economies like Japan (2.5B), Germany (2.4B), the UK (2.2B), and France (2.1B) are much further down the list, not because of lack of tech infrastructure but due to market maturity and saturation. These users tend to download fewer apps but engage more consistently and spend more per user — making them valuable despite smaller download volumes.

APP USAGE STATS BY COUNTRY

Thailand and Colombia, tied at 1.9 billion downloads, round out the top 20. Both represent emerging but fast-growing mobile ecosystems, with increasing internet access and rising demand for entertainment, social, and e-commerce apps.

DOWNLOADS BY COUNTRY 2024 (BN)



APP USAGE STATS BY COUNTRY

Business of Apps reports: in 2024, India is in a category of its own when it comes to mobile app engagement. Users in India spent a staggering 1,126 billion hours in apps — more than three times that of any other country. This is a reflection of how deeply mobile apps are embedded into everyday life across India, from entertainment and payments to education, commerce, and communication.

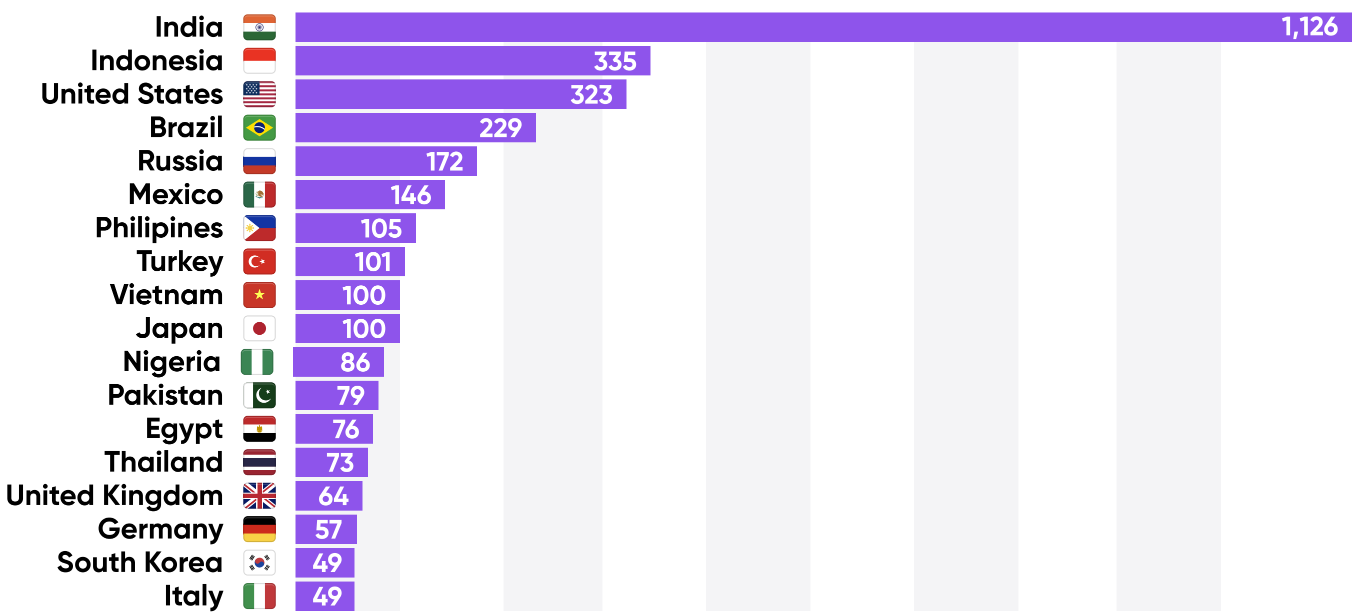
Indonesia (335B hours) and the United States (323B hours) take the next spots, almost neck and neck. What's interesting is how different these two markets are: Indonesia's mobile engagement is driven by necessity — in many cases, smartphones are the primary access point to the internet. The U.S., on the other hand, reflects mature app ecosystems, strong subscription usage, and media consumption habits. Both countries, though, are clear power users of mobile.

Then come Brazil, Russia, and Mexico, each racking up over 100 billion hours. These are fast-moving, app-hungry markets where social media, gaming, and digital commerce dominate daily mobile time.

But the real story sits further down the list. Countries like the Philippines (105B), Turkey (101B), and Vietnam (100B) are spending more time in apps than the UK or Germany — and by a long shot. It's a clear sign that emerging markets aren't just catching up — they're defining what high engagement looks like in a mobile-dominant world.

Meanwhile, mature markets such as the UK (64B), and Germany (57B) show significantly lower total hours. It's not that users aren't active — but their time is spread across more devices and platforms. These are high-value markets with high expectations, but less total time logged on mobile.

HOURS SPENT ON APPS BY COUNTRY 2024 (BN)



MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

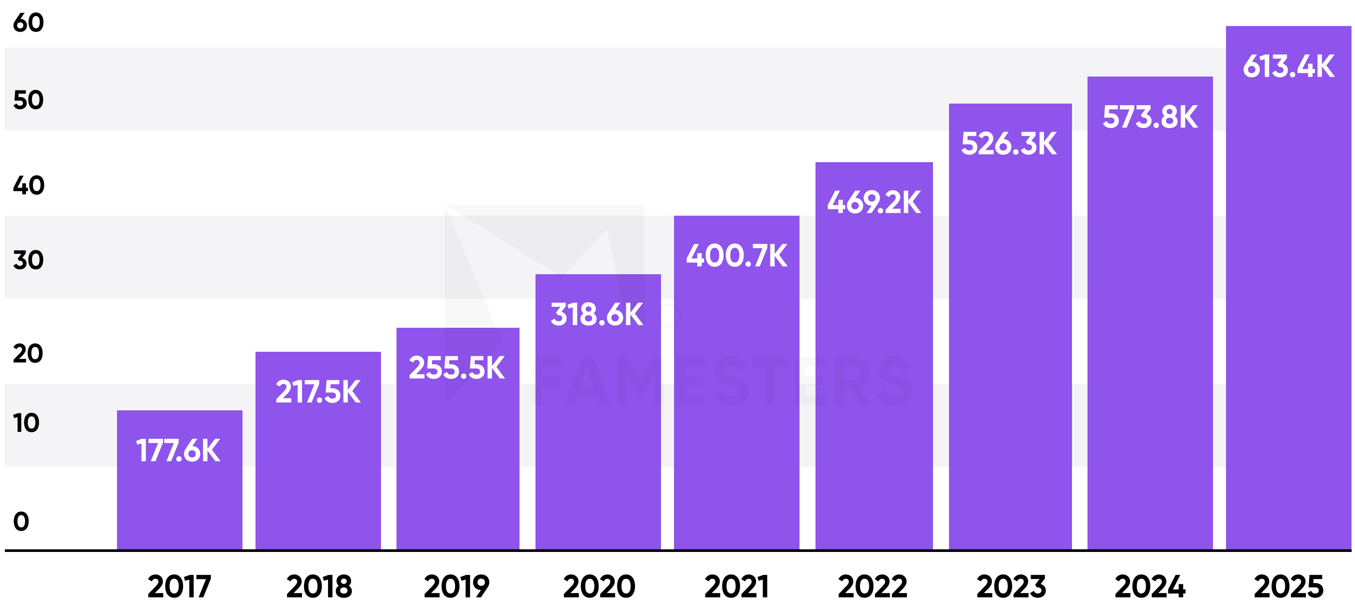
The global revenue generated by mobile apps has seen explosive, consistent growth, rising from $177.6 billion in 2017 to a projected $613.4 billion by 2025. That's a 3.5× increase over eight years, with a CAGR of 16.76% — a remarkable pace for any digital sector.

From 2017 to 2020, the market gained momentum as mobile-native behavior went mainstream. Then in 2021, revenue crossed the $400 billion mark, boosted by pandemic-driven mobile dependence. From there, growth only accelerated to 574.8 billion in 2024 and projected 613.4 billion in 2025.

This steady climb underscores a shift in the app economy: while download volume has leveled off, revenue per user is rising fast. Consumers are spending more — through subscriptions, in-app purchases, and digital services — signaling a maturing, high-value market.

The mobile app industry is scaling efficiently, turning attention away from just user acquisition toward retention, monetization, and long-term value.

REVENUE OF MOBILE APPS WORLDWIDE 2017-2025



MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

When it comes to in-app purchases, these ten countries are leading the charge — and the numbers aren't just big, they're strategic. Together, they account for the lion's share of global mobile revenue, and offer the clearest picture of where people aren't just downloading apps — they're paying to stay.

THE U.S. IS IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

With a staggering $52.39 billion in IAP revenue, the U.S. tops the list — it more than doubles the next-biggest market. This is the result of a mature digital economy, widespread subscription adoption, and a user base that's not just comfortable spending on mobile — it expects premium experiences. Whether it's streaming, health apps, productivity tools, or gaming, the U.S. market continues to deliver unmatched revenue-per-user performance.

CHINA HOLDS SECOND — WITH JUST IOS

At $25.22 billion, Mainland China takes the second spot — and it's worth noting: this is iOS-only. That's huge. With Android's app ecosystem largely isolated behind China's regulatory firewall, this figure represents only a fraction of the full picture. Even so, it shows the sheer depth and spending power of China's Apple user base, particularly in mobile gaming, education, and entertainment.

JAPAN: SMALLER MARKET, MASSIVE SPENDING

Japan continues to outperform expectations, generating $16.5 billion in IAP revenue. Japanese users are some of the most valuable in the world — known for loyalty, engagement, and willingness to pay for both entertainment and functionality. While the market isn't as large as the U.S. or China, its high concentration of paying users makes it a top destination for app publishers in gaming, manga, productivity, and wellness.

MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

SOUTH KOREA: MOBILE-FIRST AND MONETIZATION-READY

At $6.35 billion, South Korea reflects a highly digital, mobile-centric culture. From education to health, from language apps to lifestyle planners, South Koreans are highly engaged with mobile services — especially those offering personalization, automation, and real-world utility.

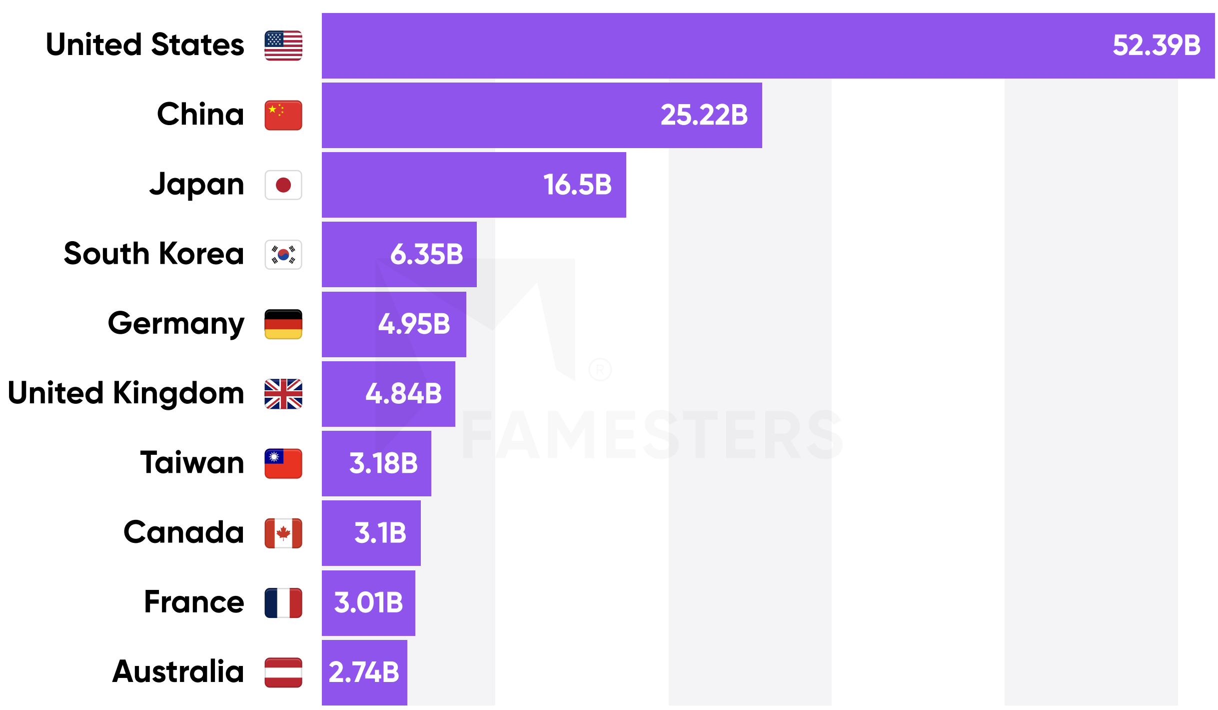
GERMANY AND THE UK: EUROPE'S IAP POWER DUO

Germany ($4.95B) and the United Kingdom ($4.84B) represent Europe's most lucrative mobile markets. Both countries support thriving app ecosystems across categories, from finance to fitness, and both have a strong appetite for subscriptions and utility-based models. What sets them apart is their consistency — these markets don't spike, they sustain.

TAIWAN, CANADA, FRANCE, AND AUSTRALIA: THE EFFICIENT MIDDLE TIER

Each bringing in $2.7–3.2 billion in IAP revenue, Taiwan, Canada, France, and Australia are markets that punch well above their weight. These countries may have smaller populations, but they're digitally mature, economically stable, and full of users willing to pay for quality and convenience. They're ideal for developers looking to scale revenue without necessarily scaling user volume.

TOP 10 MOBILE MARKETS BY IAP REVENUE



MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

Want to understand where mobile app revenue is really coming from? Here's the data gathered by Business of Apps that makes it clear: not everyone pays — but the few who do, pay big.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T PAY — BUT THE ONES WHO DO, ESPECIALLY ON IOS, PAY FOR REAL

Just **5.2% of all mobile app users ever open their wallets,** yet this slim cohort spends an **average of $9.60 per month per app — about 20× the global per-user average.** Within that paying slice, **iOS** users shine, shelling out nearly **2.5× more per app than Android** users (**$1.08 vs. $0.43** monthly) and showing a 50% higher likelihood to purchase at all (7.1 % vs. 4.6 %). In short, revenue comes from a tiny, high-value core that skews iOS, which is exactly why developers tend to prioritize Apple first and lean hard on targeting, retention, and personalization to keep those premium spenders engaged.

ASIAN USERS SPEND MORE OVERALL — BUT NORTH AMERICANS SPEND MORE WHERE IT COUNTS

Asian users spend 40% more on in-app purchases than users elsewhere, with an **average of $0.70 per month** per user per app. But in shopping apps, North Americans take the lead — spending 2.5× more than Europeans and 3× more than Asian users. This is a region where mobile commerce is mature, seamless, and high-converting.

At the other end, Latin American users spend just $0.16 on average — which doesn't mean they're not active, just that ad-driven and freemium models are likely a better fit.

APP CATEGORY MATTERS — AND SHOPPING OUTPACES GAMING BY A LONG SHOT

Gaming has long dominated mobile monetization headlines, but here's the real story:

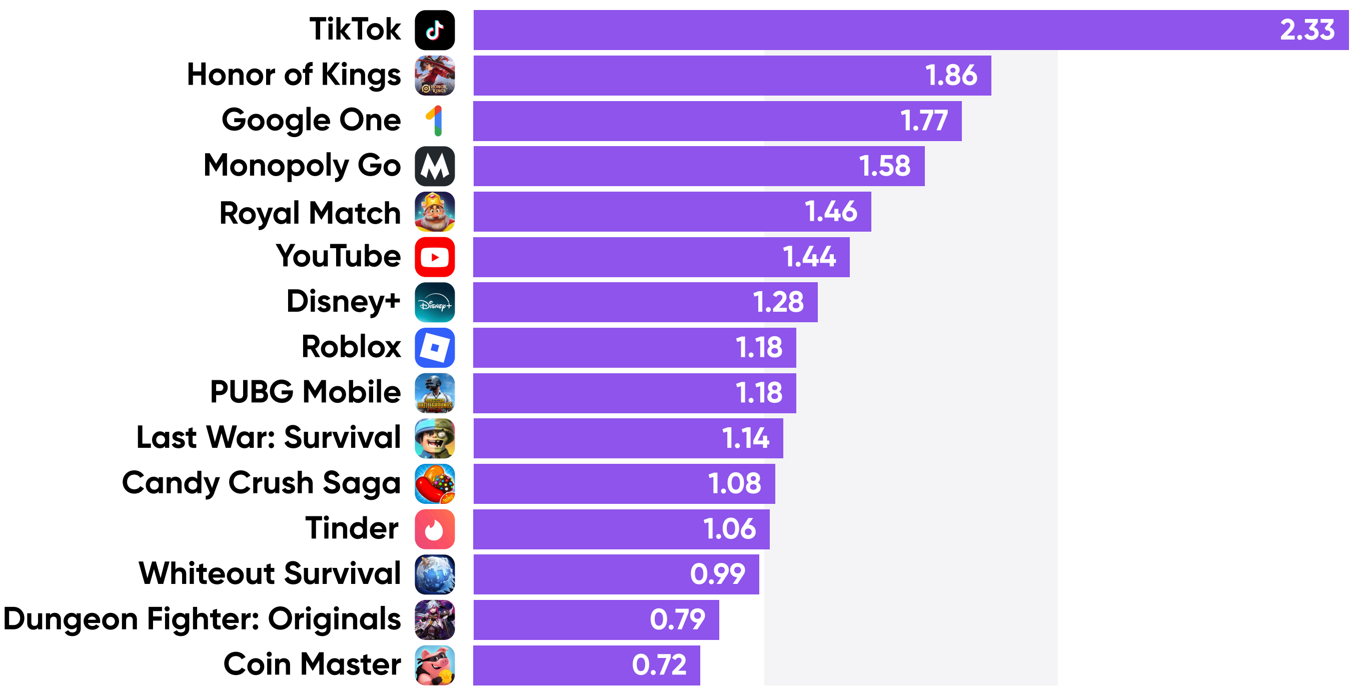
- Shopping apps: $2.68 monthly per user
- Gaming apps: $0.32

That's a signal that consumer behavior is evolving. Mobile commerce is both convenient and increasingly habitual — and users are clearly comfortable spending through apps.

MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

Business of Apps

TOP GROSSING APPS AND GAMES IN 2024



TIKTOK HOLDS THE CROWN — AGAIN

With $2.33 billion in in-app purchases in 2024, TikTok remains the top-grossing app in the world. TikTok continues to turn attention into revenue through a mix of virtual gifting, premium boosts, and creator economy incentives. It's proof that if you get the engagement engine right, the revenue follows.

A TIGHT RACE ACROSS CATEGORIES: VIDEO, STORAGE, GAMING, AND DATING

Just behind TikTok, we see a diverse mix of apps spanning entertainment, utilities, and gaming:

Honor of Kings ($1.86B) and Monopoly Go ($1.58B) remind us that games still drive massive mobile spending — especially those that combine competition with community and reward loops.

YouTube ($1.44B) and Disney+ ($1.28B) show that video still monetizes — but it's no longer just about ads. Premium subscriptions, bundled content, and hybrid monetization are what keep these platforms growing.

Google One ($1.77B) is the standout utility on the list — a quiet giant proving that subscriptions tied to cloud services, security, and convenience scale incredibly well.

Tinder ($1.06B) is still the top-grossing dating app, showing consistent strength in a category where monetization is built around visibility, exclusivity, and urgency.

MOBILE APP REVENUE & USER SPENDING

IOS-HEAVY, BRAND-HEAVY, AND EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN

This list is dominated by brands that deliver ongoing value, not one-time utility. Whether it's media (YouTube, Disney+), social connection (TikTok, Tinder), or digital lifestyle (Google One), the apps that succeed are those that become daily habits — apps you don't just use, but rely on.

The high IAP totals also speak to iOS dominance. Many of these titles thrive on Apple devices, where users are more likely to spend — and spend more.

GAMES STILL DOMINATE VOLUME

Of the top 15 apps, more than half are games — and they hold a firm grip on the mid-tier. Royal Match, Roblox, PUBG Mobile, Candy Crush Saga, Last War: Survival, and others each bring in over $1 billion. That's a strong reminder that gaming is still the largest revenue engine on mobile, but the top performers are increasingly those with ongoing events, personalization, and social elements.

WHAT THIS TELLS US:

Subscription-based value wins across verticals. Whether it's cloud storage, streaming, or dating — recurring models tied to daily usage scale big.

Gaming is still a juggernaut, but only a few titles break the billion-dollar ceiling — and they tend to have either brand legacy or breakout virality.

Utility apps can absolutely compete on revenue — as long as they deliver consistent, non-optional value (think Google One or cloud services).

The biggest earners are apps that feel less like apps — and more like platforms, routines, or ecosystems.

STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

Retention is one of the most important — and most difficult — metrics in mobile app performance. This data shows how well different types of mobile apps keep users engaged over time, with a focus on 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day retention rates.

TYPE OF MOBILE APP	30-DAY RETENTION RATE	60-DAY RETENTION RATE	90-DAY RETENTION RATE
Media & Entertaiment	37%	27%	22%
E-commerce & Retail	39%	27%	22%
Travel & Lifestyle	38%	28%	23%
Business & Technology	34%	23%	17%
Social Networking	30%	20%	16%

E-commerce & Retail apps top the chart with a 39% 30-day retention rate, and hold steady at 27% after 60 days and 22% at 90 days. This strong performance reflects the habitual nature of online shopping and re-engagement through deals, notifications, and personalization.

Travel & Lifestyle apps are a close second in overall retention quality, especially notable for maintaining the highest 90-day retention (23%). These apps likely benefit from planning cycles and utility-based features that bring users back over time — e.g., travel booking, loyalty programs, or wellness tracking.

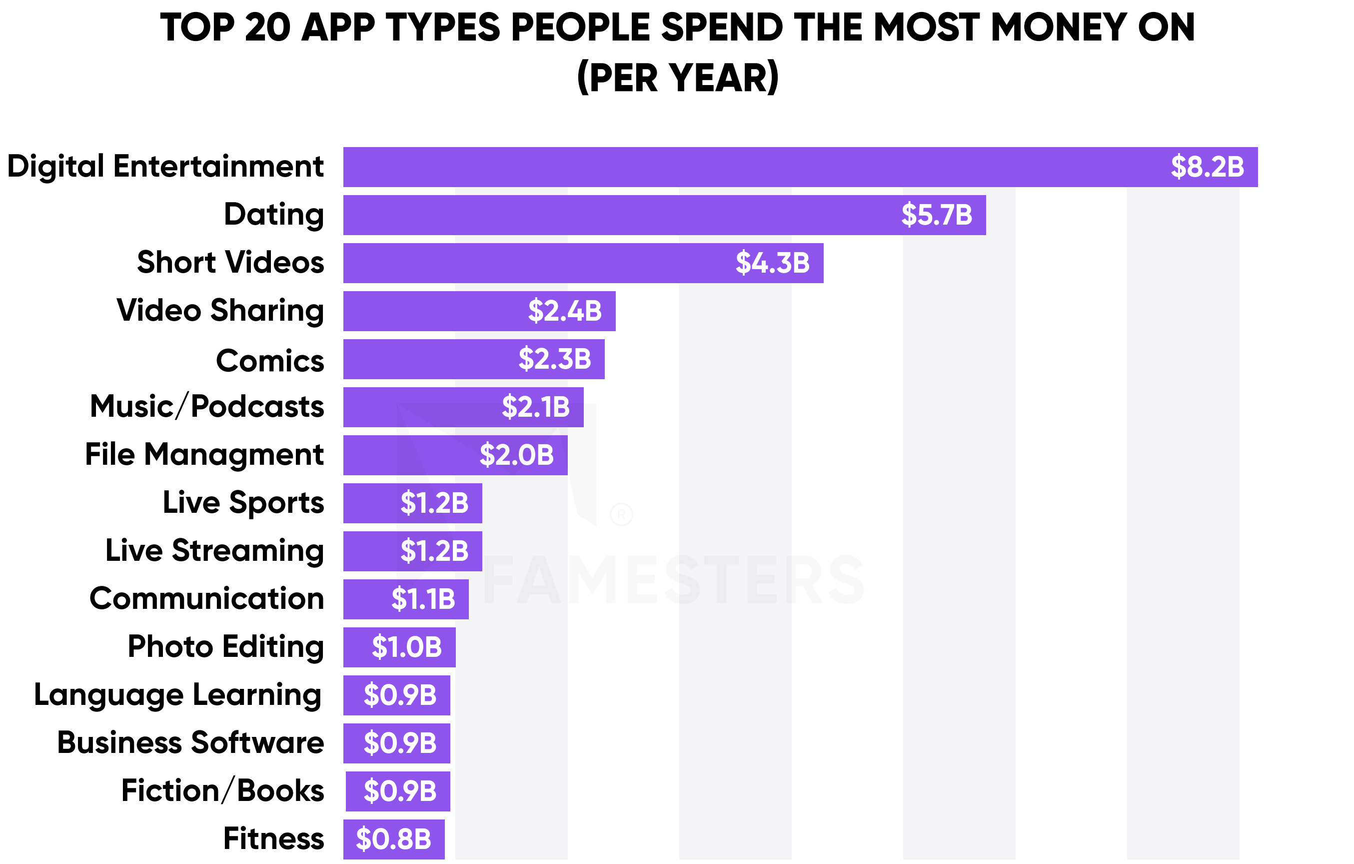
Media & Entertainment apps (streaming, video, podcasts) also perform well in early retention, with 37% of users still active after 30 days, and a solid 22% remaining at 90 days. These apps are often content-rich and rely on strong recommendation algorithms to pull users back in.

Business & Technology apps (e.g., productivity, cloud tools) show a moderate drop-off: starting at 34% (30-day) and falling to 17% by 90 days. Their usage may be more goal-oriented or tied to work cycles, leading to episodic rather than sustained engagement.

Social Networking apps surprisingly show the lowest retention across all stages — with only 30% of users retained after 30 days, and just 16% at 90 days. While this may seem counterintuitive given the daily use of platforms like Instagram or TikTok, it reflects high churn among newer, less sticky social apps that struggle to compete with entrenched giants.

STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

Wondering where users are actually spending their money in the app economy — not just time or clicks, but actual dollars? This chart breaks it down. And the results are as telling as they are strategic.

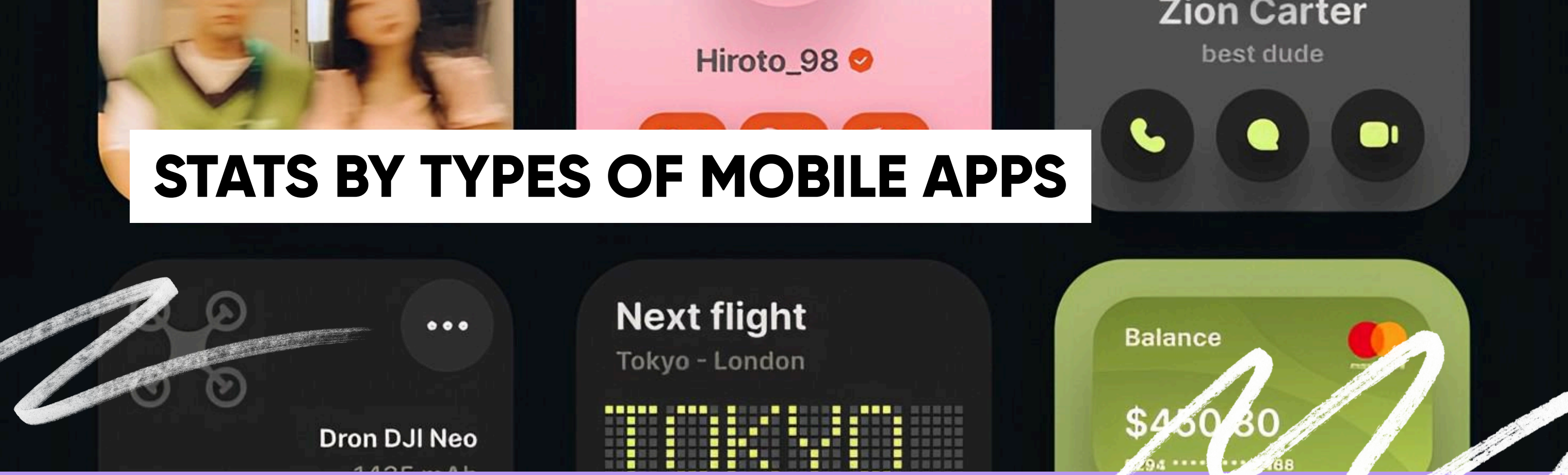


DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT LEADS — BY A LANDSLIDE

At $8.2 billion, digital entertainment apps top the list by a wide margin. This includes video platforms, subscription services, and media hubs — the kind of apps that have become part of people's daily habits. They're not just consumed; they're paid for, often monthly. This speaks to the stickiness of content, and how users are willing to pay for access, convenience, and personalization.

DATING APPS: HIGH CONVERSION, HIGH VALUE

In second place, dating apps brought in $5.7 billion, showing just how strong the monetization potential is when you're solving for emotional connection and social behavior. These platforms typically rely on freemium models — free access, but highly compelling upgrades, like visibility boosts, messaging privileges, and advanced filtering. Users pay because the value is immediate and personal.



STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

SHORT VIDEO = FAST-GROWING, MONETIZED ATTENTION

Coming in third with $4.3 billion, short video apps (think TikTok and similar formats) have managed to convert explosive attention into actual revenue. This includes both user subscriptions and in-app purchases like digital gifts. It's proof that attention spans may be short, but the revenue impact is real — especially when entertainment feels both personal and interactive.

THE MID-TIER: VIDEO SHARING, COMICS, MUSIC, FILE TOOLS

Apps for video sharing ($2.4B), comics ($2.3B), and music/podcasts ($2.1B) round out the mid-tier of spenders. They show how niche entertainment categories and passive engagement can still drive meaningful revenue — often through subscriptions, memberships, or premium content access.

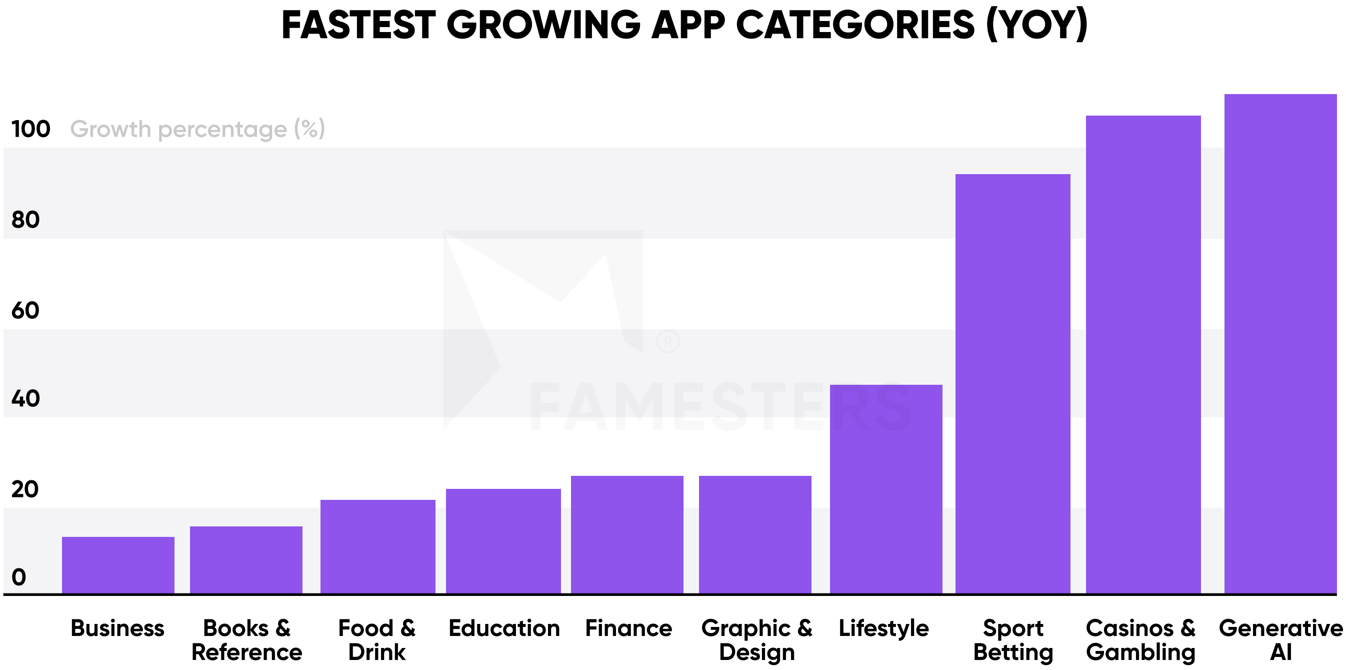
Meanwhile, file management apps ($2.0B) prove that utility pays — especially in productivity, security, and cloud storage use cases. These tools aren't flashy, but they're necessary — and that makes them monetizable.

THE LONG TAIL: HIGHLY MONETIZABLE NICHES

Further down the list, we see steady spend across:

- Live sports and live streaming (each at $1.2B) — both powered by real-time engagement and exclusive access
- Communication apps ($1.1B) — especially those offering privacy, business features, or enhanced tools
- Photo editing, language learning, and fitness — apps that deliver clear, goal-oriented value
- Also worth noting: fiction/books ($0.9B) and business software ($0.9B) aren't far behind, underscoring the demand for tools that help people focus, learn, or get ahead.

STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS



Here are the categories of apps that are seeing the most growth:

GENERATIVE AI: THE BREAKOUT STAR

Generative AI is leading the charge with an explosive 109% growth — this category is the big winner of 2024. From creative tools to content generation apps, AI is finally hitting its stride. Users are increasingly looking for ways to make their lives easier, whether that's by automating tasks, creating personalized experiences, or even generating art. This category is clearly tapping into something big, and it's only going to keep growing.

CASINOS & GAMBLING & SPORTS BETTING: MAKING BIG GAINS

Both Casinos & Gambling (107%) and Sports Betting (93%) are showing strong upward trends. As more regions open up to online betting and gambling, the growth in these apps is no surprise. People are spending more time — and money — on these apps, making them an attractive space for app developers.

LIFESTYLE, GRAPHIC & DESIGN, FINANCE & EDUCATION: SOLID GROWTH

Lifestyle apps are booming with a 43% growth. These apps cover everything from fitness to personal productivity, and as people look for ways to better manage their daily lives, these apps are becoming a go-to. Graphic & Design apps are also on the rise, growing by 26%, as more people are using their phones for creative projects. Whether for work or hobbies, the demand for creative tools continues to rise.

STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

FINANCE APPS

growing by 26%, show how mobile users are increasingly using their phones for managing money. From budgeting tools to stock trading apps, people are looking for ways to control their financial lives in the palm of their hand. Education apps are also doing well, growing by 25%. With more people learning online, apps that provide courses, tutorials, or educational resources are becoming indispensable.

FOOD & DRINK & BOOKS & REFERENCE: SLOWER BUT STEADY

While the Food & Drink (23%) and Books & Reference (18%) categories aren't growing as fast as others, they're still on the rise. Apps in these categories are becoming more essential to everyday life, whether that's ordering dinner or learning something new. Their steady growth shows the continuing importance of these apps in users' routines.

BUSINESS APPS: A SLOW BUT STEADY INCREASE

Business apps are up by 17%, showing that tools for productivity and professional use continue to hold their ground. While they aren't seeing the massive growth of categories like AI or gambling, they remain a crucial part of the app landscape, especially as remote work continues to drive demand.

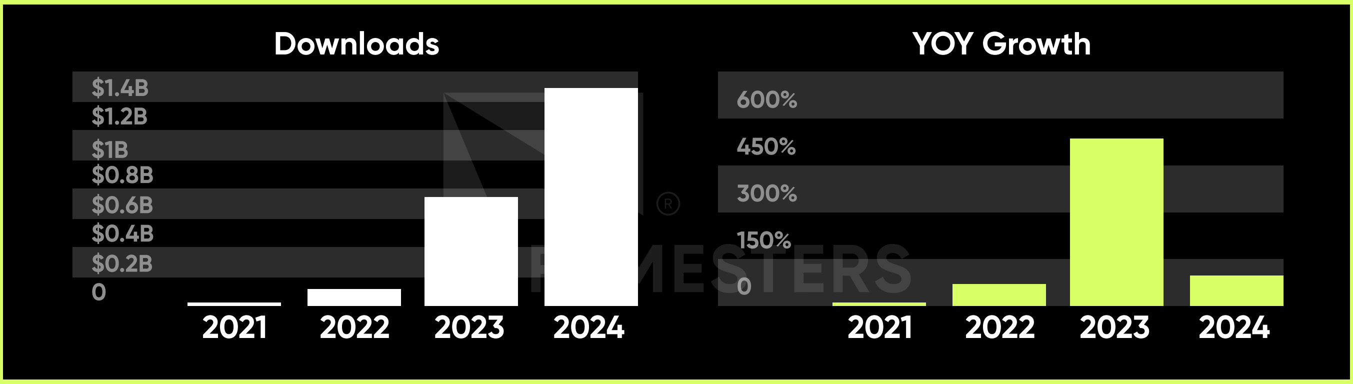
STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

If there's one category that's rewriting the rules of mobile growth right now, it's **generative AI apps.** The charts paint a clear picture: this market exploded.

DOWNLOADS: FROM NICHE TO MAINSTREAM IN TWO YEARS

Back in 2021, generative AI apps were still a curiosity — clocking in at under 100 million downloads globally. By 2023, they hit 700 million. And **in 2024,** they were on track to double that again, soaring past **1.4 billion downloads. That's 14× growth in just three years,** turning what was once an early adopter niche into a full-blown mainstream category.

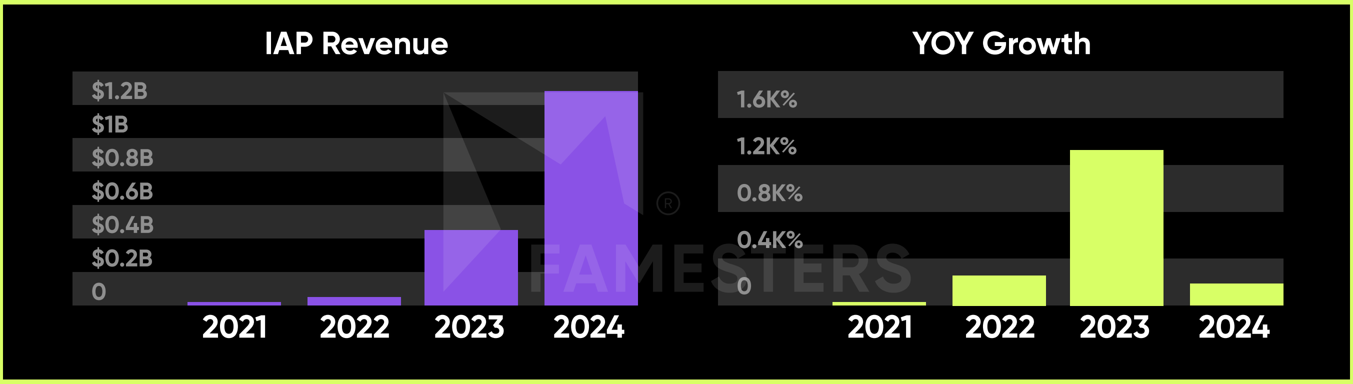
The growth curve is vertical. This signals a massive shift in consumer awareness and demand for AI-powered tools on mobile: image generators, AI chat apps, personal assistants, productivity boosters, and more.



IAP REVENUE: MONETIZATION IS CATCHING UP FAST

The revenue side tells an equally dramatic story. **In-app purchases for generative AI apps** jumped from nearly nothing in 2021 to **$1.2 billion in 2024.** That's a 3× increase year over year, and a signal that users aren't just curious — they're willing to pay.

This kind of monetization lift is rare. It suggests that the category has moved past novelty and is starting to deliver real, perceived value — whether through pro features, credits, faster generation speeds, or enhanced outputs. And it's happening at scale.



STATS BY TYPES OF MOBILE APPS

YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH: OFF THE CHARTS (LITERALLY)

2023 was the breakout year, with nearly 500% YoY growth in downloads and over 1,200% growth in IAP revenue.

While 2024 shows lower YoY percentages, that's only because the base is now much larger — and the total numbers are still doubling.

This tells us the spike wasn't just hype. The market is sustaining momentum, not crashing back down.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Generative AI apps are a new category of everyday tools.

The shift from downloads to real revenue signals that these apps are finding product-market fit, especially in productivity, content creation, and personal use cases.

Developers entering this space now face a very different environment than a year ago: more competition, but also a larger, more willing audience.

For monetization: freemium models, pay-per-credit systems, and premium subscriptions are proving effective — especially when paired with AI features that feel like magic.

This is what a market breakout looks like. If your product is powered by generative AI — or could be — the next 12 months are a window of massive opportunity. Not just to grow fast, but to build loyalty, brand recognition, and long-term monetization in a category that's defining the next era of mobile.

Here is our free report on AI + influencer marketing if you need more information, data, and expert insights on the topic.

MOST POPULAR APPS BY CATEGORY

MOST POPULAR APPS BY CATEGORY IN 2024 (TOP 3 PER CATEGORY)

MOST POPULAR APPS BY CATEGORY

According to Business of Apps, in 2024, the most downloaded apps across categories show a clear trend: social apps dominate, with TikTok leading the way, followed closely by Instagram. But it's not just the social giants that are standing out – apps in business, entertainment, music & audio, shopping, food & drink, and even health & fitness are making waves with massive download numbers. Let's break it down:

SOCIAL APPS: TIKTOK AND INSTAGRAM LEAD THE PACK

TikTok continues its dominance as the most popular social app of 2024 with 773 million downloads, outpacing Instagram by a significant margin (759 million downloads). These apps are no longer just about social interaction; they've become full-fledged media platforms, offering everything from entertainment to shopping. With their powerful algorithmic feeds and high engagement, TikTok and Instagram are reshaping how people connect, shop, and consume content globally.

Other apps in the social category, like Facebook and WhatsApp, continue to perform well, but their download numbers are a bit behind, showing a slight shift toward newer platforms with more engaging and interactive formats.

BUSINESS APPS: WHATSAPP BUSINESS LEADS THE CHARGE

In the business category, WhatsApp Business takes the top spot with 271 million downloads, significantly ahead of Zoom (137 million) and Microsoft Teams (103 million). This shows that business communication and customer service apps are critical for professionals worldwide. WhatsApp Business is especially crucial for businesses in regions where WhatsApp is the dominant messaging platform, while Zoom and Teams are key players in remote work and collaboration.

ENTERTAINMENT APPS: NETFLIX RETAINS ITS LEAD

In entertainment, Netflix stays ahead with 161 million downloads, just edging out YouTube (145 million). Interestingly, YouTube Kids also shines, showing a dedicated segment for younger audiences. Other big players in this space, such as JioCinema (117 million) and Amazon Prime Video (113 million), indicate that the battle for video content consumption continues to grow, with both Western and regional players pushing their offerings.

MOST POPULAR APPS BY CATEGORY

MUSIC & AUDIO: SPOTIFY LEADS, BUT LOCAL APPS SHINE

Spotify remains the top music streaming app with a 239 million downloads, a clear leader in the space. DDMusic and StarMaker also see significant traction, showing that localized music and audio platforms are carving out their own space. With such variety, the market is split between global giants and regional favorites.

SHOPPING APPS: TEMU OVERTAKES SHEIN

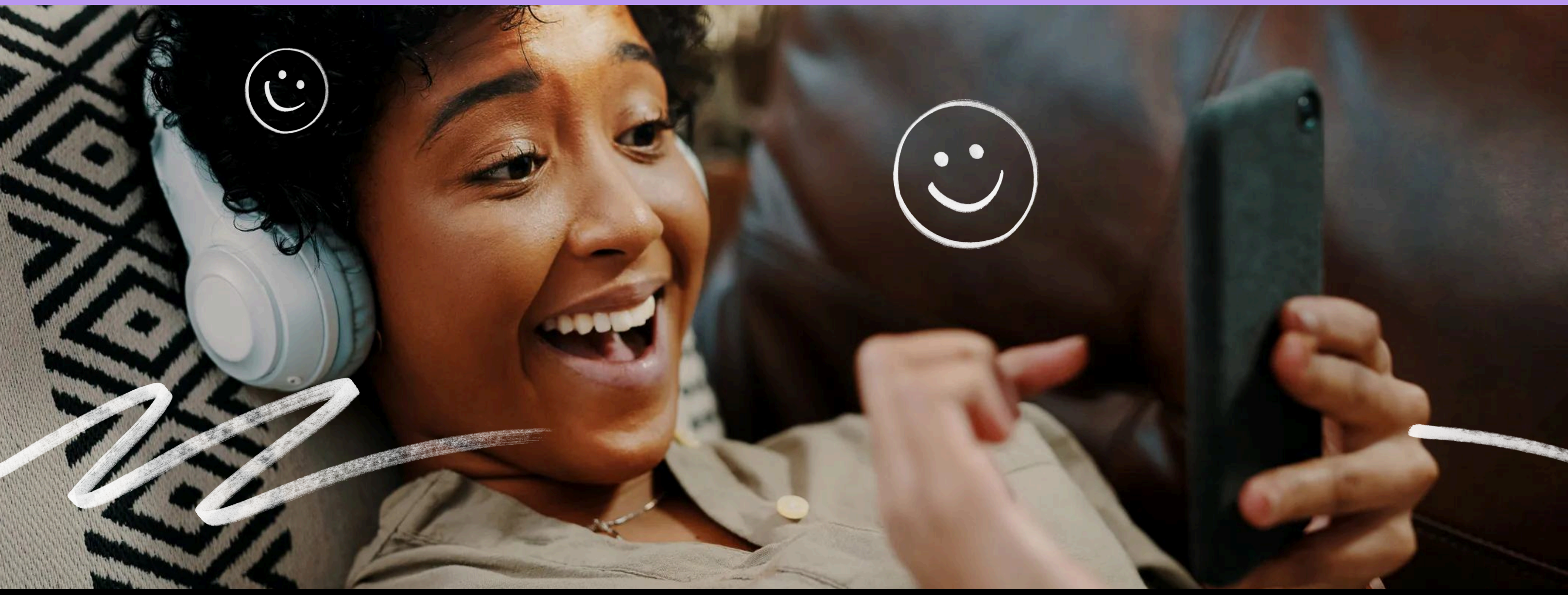
In the shopping category, Temu has taken the lead with an impressive 438 million downloads, more than double that of Shein (211 million). This is a notable shift in the shopping landscape, especially given Temu's rapid rise in the global marketplace. Apps like Meesho (188 million) continue to show the strength of social commerce models, where users shop directly through their social media feeds.

FOOD & DRINK: MCDONALD’S STILL DOMINATES, BUT LOCAL APPS ARE CATCHING UP

McDonald’s remains the leader with 76 million downloads, but Indian food delivery apps like Zepto (56 million) and Swiggy (36 million) are making waves, proving that regional food delivery services are outpacing global platforms in terms of local market penetration. The rise of super-fast delivery apps is a trend that’s reshaping the food delivery landscape.

HEALTH & FITNESS: FLO TOPS THE CHARTS

In the health and fitness category, Flo, a female health app, leads with 53 million downloads, showing the growing demand for health and wellness apps. The rise of apps like Sweatcoin (38 million) and Health Tracker - Appsky (35 million) highlights the shift toward personalized health and wellness tracking.



MOST POPULAR APPS BY CATEGORY

TRAVEL: GOOGLE MAPS AND UBER STAY STRONG

When it comes to travel, Google Maps remains the most downloaded app with 120 million downloads, while Uber follows closely at 115 million. These apps have become essential for everyday travel, whether for navigation or ride-sharing. The steady presence of Where is my train (72 million) shows that transportation apps are also critical in specific regions.

MONEY TRANSFER: PHONEPE TAKES THE LEAD

In the money transfer category, PhonePe continues to lead with 150 million downloads, further solidifying its position as the top app in this space for the third year running. With the increasing importance of digital payment solutions, Google Wallet (89 million) and PayPal (68 million) continue to perform strongly, but PhonePe's local dominance in regions like India has allowed it to maintain a clear edge.

And what's important here: you can't ignore social media apps and influencers running them. This leader board tells a blunt story: the two most-installed apps on the planet – TikTok (773 M) and Instagram (759 M) – are also the two places where influencer content is native, nonstop, and algorithmically amplified.

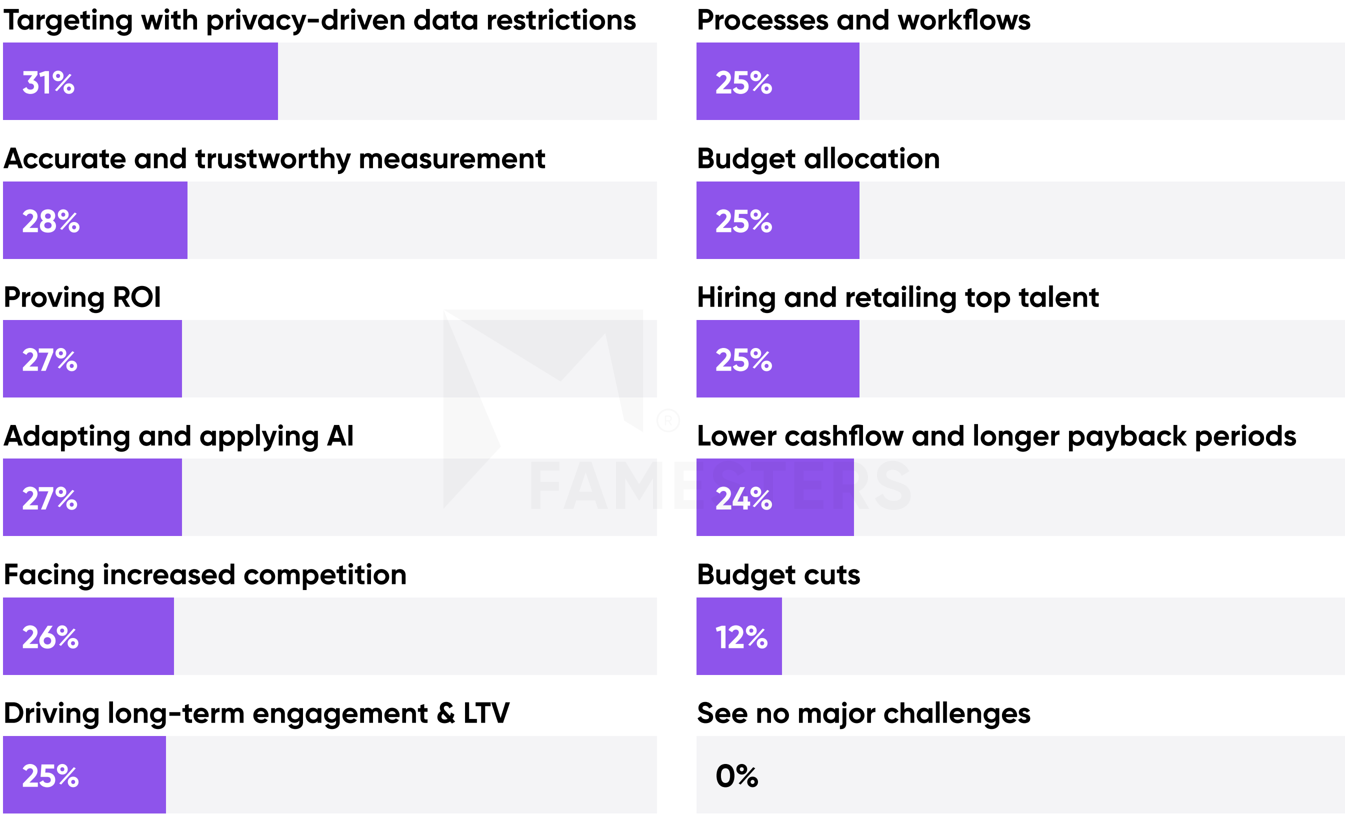
When billions of users' first and last taps of the day land inside a feed curated by influencers, the quickest route to app discovery is to ride that feed rather than fight it. In other words, the distribution network your next user already trusts is owned by influencers; paid placements that borrow their voice reach prospects in the very moment they're primed to download something new.

User attention has consolidated inside social apps, and social apps have consolidated around influencer programming. If your mobile-growth plan doesn't harness creators – both for top-funnel reach and one-click install paths – you're leaving acquisition volume (and lower CPIs) on the table. Influencer marketing isn't a niche tactic; it's the shortest, most context-rich bridge between the apps people already love and the next one they'll download.

MOBILE APP MARKETING TRENDS

First of all, look at the top mobile-app marketing challenges — ranked, unpacked, and (where it truly fits) bolstered by influencers. In many ways, the challenges shape mobile app marketing trends and dictate how the industry will develop.

TOP MOBILE APP MARKETING CHALLENGES



1 TARGETING UNDER PRIVACY-DRIVEN DATA RESTRICTIONS — 31%

App Tracking Transparency, third-party-cookie deprecation, and region-specific laws now wall off swaths of high-intent users. Granular look-alike and retargeting pools have shrunk, driving up CPMs and forcing teams to rethink segmentation logic.

2 ACHIEVING ACCURATE, TRUSTWORTHY MEASUREMENT — 28%

Signal loss across iOS and Android has crippled the old, pixel-heavy attribution stacks, so top teams are rebuilding truth with server-side post-backs, cohort-level incrementality tests, and MMM-plus models.

MOBILE APP MARKETING TRENDS

3 PROVING ROI TO FINANCE AND THE BOARD — 27%

Rising CPIs and elongated payback windows put every channel under the microscope. Marketers must surface hard numbers — time-to-profit, not vanity metrics — before budgets are renewed.

4 ADOPTING AND APPLYING AI AT SCALE — 27%

Large-language models, predictive bidding, and creative-generation tools promise huge lifts, but production rollouts demand clean data, new workflows, and change management. Early adopters are embedding AI co-pilots into media buying, copywriting, and churn prediction, while laggards struggle with tooling overlap and talent shortages.

5 FACING INCREASED COMPETITION IN CROWDED STORES & FEEDS — 26%

More than two million apps jostle for top-of-scroll visibility, inflating bids and fragmenting user attention. Brands are doubling down on differentiated value props, on-store video previews, and community-building tactics to stand out. Partnerships — whether with creators or complementary apps — are now table stakes for breaking through the noise.

6 DRIVING LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT & LTV — 25%

A download without stickiness is just an expensive bounce. Teams are layering in progressive onboarding flows, adaptive paywalls, and reward loops to keep users active past day 30. Creator boost: serialized "build-with-me" or challenge-based content hosted by trusted influencers brings users back for fresh chapters, lifting session frequency and upsell potential.

7 STREAMLINING PROCESSES & WORKFLOWS — 25%

Growth stacks have ballooned to dozens of point solutions, creating reporting silos and approval bottlenecks. The 2025 imperative: consolidate redundant tools, automate recurring tasks, and install shared OKRs so product, UA, and lifecycle teams move in lockstep.

MOBILE APP MARKETING TRENDS

8 ALLOCATING BUDGET ACROSS CHANNELS — 25%

With performance swings happening weekly, static annual media plans age out fast. High-velocity reallocation — shifting budget from under-performing display to, say, high-ROAS creator whitelisting or retention CRM — is now a core competency, not a nice-to-have.

9 HIRING AND RETAINING TOP TALENT — 25%

AI hype hasn't killed demand for human experts; if anything, it's amplified the need for T-shaped marketers who can marry creative insight with data fluency. Competitive comp packages, flexible work models, and clear up-skilling paths are the new retention levers.

10 LOWER CASH-FLOW AND LONGER PAYBACK PERIODS — 24%

Rising interest rates and investor caution mean marketing must fund itself faster. Channels that combine low acquisition cost with strong cohort economics — search, referrals, and well-optimized creator partnerships — win disproportionate share of wallet.

11 BUDGET CUTS — 12%

Only one in eight teams has faced outright slashes, but the specter of trims keeps everyone defensive. Demonstrable efficiency gains (think −50 % CPI case studies) are the best insurance against the red pen. Here's where influencer marketing can become a savior: go to the next section of the report to learn more about it.

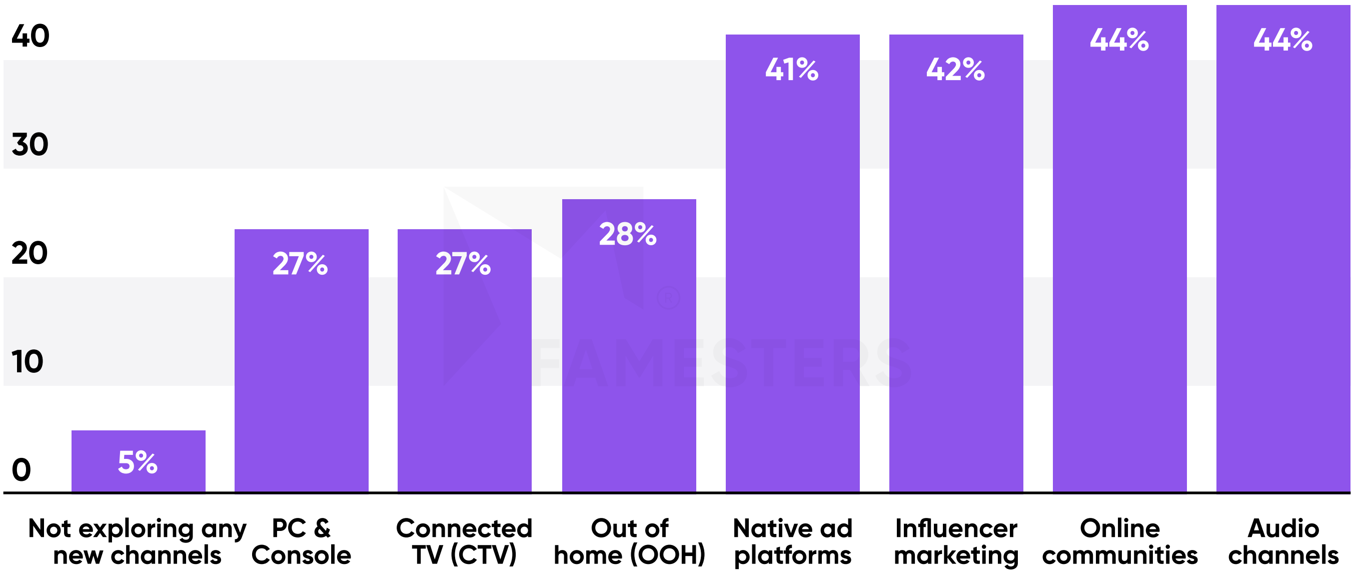
KEY TAKEAWAY:

Privacy, proof, and payback top the worry list. While influencer marketing isn't a universal solvent, it directly eases the biggest pressures around compliant reach, measurable ROI, and post-install engagement — making creator strategy one of the few levers that addresses multiple 2025 pain points in a single stroke.

Influencer audiences are built on declared interests and first-party opt-in links, so campaigns reach qualified users without device IDs — restoring compliant scale while sidestepping regulator heat.

MOBILE APP MARKETING TRENDS

TOP NEW ACQUISITION CHANNELS EXPLORED BY APP MARKETS



95% OF APP MARKETERS ARE HUNTING FOR FRESH USER ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

Nobody's waiting for installs to fall from the sky. Almost all app marketing teams are actively scouting new channels, proving that growth today is a test-and-learn sport, not a set-and-forget routine.

TOP CHANNELS: ONLINE COMMUNITIES & AUDIO (BOTH 44%)

Communities and audio share the crown. Discord servers, Reddit threads, and niche forums let marketers embed themselves in conversations users already care about. Meanwhile, podcasts and streaming audio catch listeners in commutes and workouts — prime moments for brand affinity to bloom without screen-time friction.

INFLUENCER MARKETING: CREATORS MOVE FROM "NICE-TO-TRY" TO "MUST-HAVE" (42%)

Influencer marketing has charged into the top tier — just a whisker behind the co-leaders and ahead of every other newcomer. Why the surge? Creators lend built-in trust, native storytelling, and algorithmic reach that paid units can't match. For brands craving both scale and authenticity, partnering with influencers is quickly becoming the shortest path to installs and retained users.

MOBILE APP MARKETING TRENDS

NATIVE ADS ARE ANYTHING BUT PASSÉ (41%)

Ads that mirror the surrounding content remain a go-to. Their "looks like content, feels like content" vibe minimizes banner blindness and keeps CAC in check, which is why four in ten teams still rank them near the top of their test lists.

RISING BETS: OOH, CTV, AND PC/CONSOLE (27–28%)

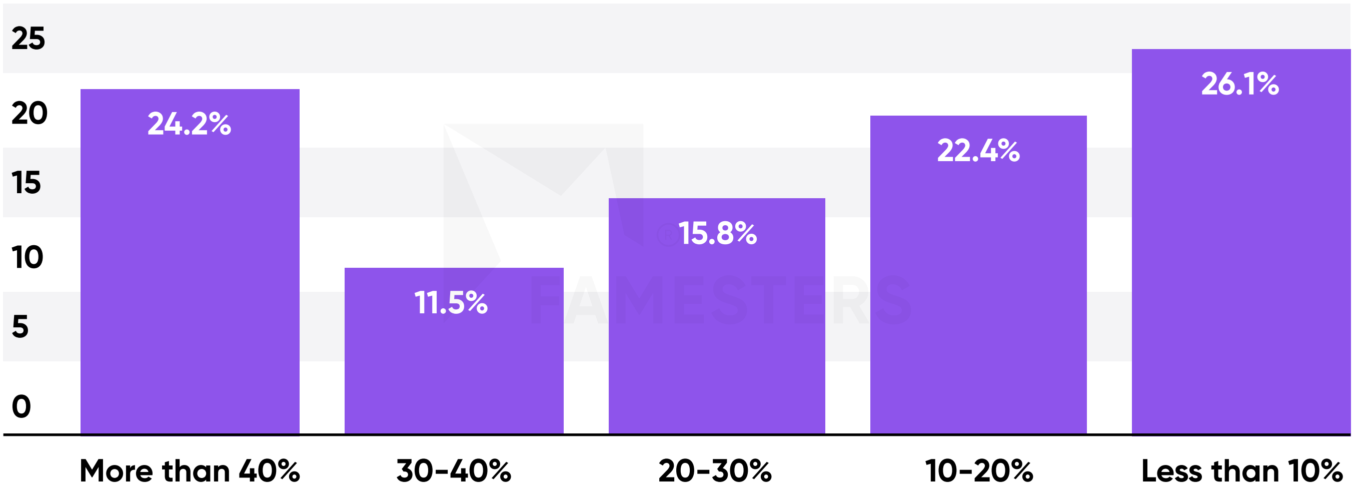
Billboards, transit wraps, and digital out-of-home (28%) are back in vogue as foot traffic rebounds. Connected-TV placements (27%) exploit streaming's household reach, while PC & console inventory (also 27%) taps into a gaming audience that's famously hard to hit on mobile alone. Each sits in the "experimental now, mainstream tomorrow" bucket.

THE STATUS-QUO SQUAD (5%)

A slim 5 % aren't exploring anything new — either budgets are locked to proven channels or risk tolerance is zero. That's fine for steady-state brands, but in a market where creators, communities, and audio are rewriting the playbook, standing still could mean slipping behind.

Bottom line: creator-led influencer marketing is one of the top channels most marketers are piling into right now, and the one most likely to siphon spend from every other line on next quarter's media plan. Now, 24.2% of brands already allocate over 40% of their overall marketing budget specifically to influencer marketing:

MARKETING BUDGET ALLOCATION TO INFLUENCER MARKETING IN 2024



Here's a quick rundown of the top 10 mobile app marketing trends in 2025, showing where things are heading and what's making waves:

1 INFLUENCER MARKETING TAKES CENTER STAGE

Influencer partnerships have become the engine of efficient growth. Agencies and sophisticated matchmaking tools now pair brands with talent whose audience demographics mirror high-value user segments, while first-party conversion pixels prove that influencer **clicks carry lower CPIs (50-70% lower)** and higher day-30 retention than comparable paid-social ads: **influencers deliver a 23-37% higher customer-retention rate.**

Long-form "build with me" series on YouTube establish deep product authority, and short-form TikTok challenges ignite viral loops that drive organic lift well past the paid flight. In 2025, influencer spend is migrating from experimental budgets into always-on programs with quarterly OKRs and dedicated CRM workflows — cementing its status as the top strategic lever for acquisition and loyalty.

2 SHORT-FORM VIDEO REIGNS SUPREME

TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts continue to dominate attention spans under 30 seconds: **66% of consumers say they are the most engaging.** Creative teams iterate dozens of hooks per week, testing face-to-camera demos, kinetic typography, and meme-led narratives. Platform ad suites now offer instant "swipe-to-download" cards, trimming the path from intrigue to install to a single gesture and driving **CPIs that can beat static display by ~60%.**

3 AI-POWERED PERSONALIZATION & PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

Machine-learning models ingest behavioral, transactional, and contextual signals to craft micro-segments that shift in real time. Dynamic paywalls now adjust pricing tiers per cohort, and push notifications are timed to individual propensity-to-act scores — cutting churn by double digits. Predictive LTV scoring also guides media bids, letting marketers throttle spend when models forecast negative payback and double down when high-value users are in market.

10 KEY TRENDS

4 SOCIAL COMMERCE TAKES OVER

Instagram Checkout, TikTok Shop, and live-stream storefronts collapse discovery, consideration, and purchase into one screen. With zero redirects, cart-to-conversion rates climb, and affiliate dashboards surface SKU-level data to fine-tune merchandising. As impulse buys shift in-feed, traditional mobile web funnels lose traffic, pushing brands to invest in richer in-app product pages and loyalty integrations.

5 AUGMENTED REALITY GETS REAL

AR toolkits now render photorealistic models with centimeter-level tracking, letting users “place” furniture in their living room or preview cosmetics on live facial meshes. These immersive trials triple add-to-cart rates versus 2-D galleries and fuel social sharing that functions as earned media. SDKs from Apple and Google reduce dev time, making AR a viable feature even for midsize teams.

6 PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE

Post-IDFA, marketers lean on server-side tagging, consent management platforms, and edge encryption to honor GDPR, CCPA, and the upcoming ePrivacy Regulation. Clear value exchanges — such as personalized rewards for opt-ins — lift consent rates without resorting to dark patterns. Compliance is no longer a cost center; it’s a trust signal that directly impacts retention and brand equity.

7 SMARTER ANALYTICS & MULTI-TOUCH ATTRIBUTION

Incrementality testing frameworks (ghost bids, geo holdouts) and MMM-plus methodologies map true channel contribution in a signal-starved world. Unified data layers merge in-app events with CRM and ad-platform impressions, presenting a single source of truth for cohort payback, ROAS, and creative fatigue — turning reporting cycles from reactive dashboards into proactive growth sprints.

10 KEY TRENDS

8 GAMIFICATION BOOSTS ENGAGEMENT

Progress bars, streak mechanics, and tiered reward paths shift user psychology from casual use to habit formation. In sectors like fintech and health, compliance-driven “quests” translate mundane tasks into achievements, elevating weekly active users and extending session times. Leaderboards seeded with soft-currency incentives foster community competition that bolsters virality.

9 ASO REMAINS ESSENTIAL

Keyword density, localized metadata, and A/B-tested screenshots still move the needle on organic installs. With iOS in-app events and Google Play promotional content, marketers can now spotlight limited-time offers directly on store listings, delivering a 360-degree funnel that welcomes cold prospects and re-engages lapsed users alike.

10 CHATBOTS & VOICE ASSISTANTS ELEVATE SUPPORT

Natural-language engines hit near-human comprehension, resolving tier-one queries in seconds and deflecting up to 70% of support tickets. Voice intents embedded in wearables and smart speakers extend app utility beyond the touchscreen, while sentiment analysis flags at-risk users for white-glove human follow-up — turning support from a cost center into a retention asset.

Bottom line: AI, AR, and data rigor are reshaping the tactical toolkit, yet influencer marketing stands above the fray — now the default starting point for any brand intent on winning both installs and lifetime value in 2025 (and upcoming years, too).

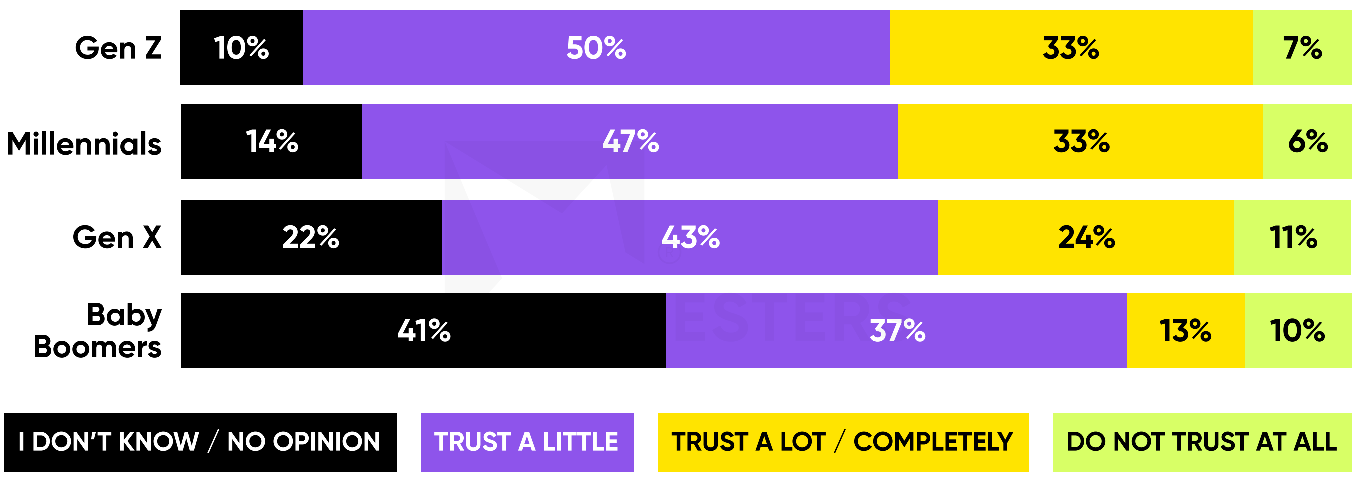
INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE MOBILE APP INDUSTRY

First of all, 84.8% of brands find influencer marketing effective.

Second, 83.8% of brands believe that the customers they acquire through influencer marketing are of higher quality compared to those from other marketing methods.

And this is not surprising at all as consumers clearly show their preferences: 83% of Gen Z, 80% of Millennials, 67% of Gen X, and 50% of Baby Boomers trust influencers recommendations.

TRUST LEVEL IN PRODUCTS AND BRAND RECOMMENDATIONS BY INFLUENCERS



Mobile app developers and marketers also recognize both the trend and its real value.

Here's how influencer marketing is being used for apps →

PREVALENCE AND RATIONALE

The popularity of influencer campaigns for apps comes from their effectiveness. Consumers tend to trust peers and personalities more than traditional ads — 61% of consumers prefer endorsements from relatable influencers over ads. For example, a fitness app might work with fitness Instagrammers who share their workout routines using the app. These authentic demonstrations build credibility.

It’s noted that for every $1 spent on influencer marketing, brands earn up to $5.78 in value on average, underlining a strong ROI. Given such returns, it’s no surprise that app marketers are on board. Mobile apps from a range of categories — gaming, finance (think of fintech YouTubers promoting stock trading apps), photo editing, etc. — have all utilized influencer marketing to great effect.

TYPES OF INFLUENCERS (MEGA, MACRO, MICRO, NANO) USED FOR APP MARKETING

FOR REFERENCE

Nano-influencers have 1,000-10,000 followers on at least one social network

Micro-influencers - 10,000-100,000 followers

Macro-influencers - 100,000-1,000,000 followers

Mega-influencers - over 1,000,000 followers

MEGA-INFLUENCERS (1M+ FOLLOWERS)

offer massive reach. Many top mobile apps have used mega-influencers (or celebrity endorsements) for big campaigns. However, they are costly, and their connection with the audience is broad rather than deep. As noted, mega-influencers give broad exposure but at a high price.

MACRO-INFLUENCERS (100K–1M FOLLOWERS)

are often subject-matter leaders (like well-known tech reviewers, popular gamers, etc.). They still have wide reach but may be more affordable than the mega tier. Apps with a sizable marketing budget use macro-influencers to hit key demographics (for instance, a language learning app partnering with a polyglot YouTuber who has 500k subscribers).

MICRO-INFLUENCERS (10K–100K FOLLOWERS)

have become particularly important for app marketing. Micro-influencers tend to have high engagement in niche communities. Their audiences trust them on specific topics (e.g., a micro-influencer who focuses on budgeting might be ideal for a personal finance app). They also have a more personal connection with followers. Many apps run campaigns with a large number of micro-influencers simultaneously, each catering to a local market or niche interest, which can collectively drive a lot of downloads.

TYPES OF INFLUENCERS (MEGA, MACRO, MICRO, NANO) USED FOR APP MARKETING

NANO-INFLUENCERS (1K–10K FOLLOWERS)
are very small scale, but often with extremely tight-knit audiences (like a local community or a very specific interest group). They are the cheapest to work with (they often accept just free access or a small fee) and have the lowest cost per engagement. Apps in early stages or with limited budgets might engage dozens of nano-influencers to generate grassroots buzz.

App marketers choose the mix of influencer tiers based on goals. A big launch might feature a mega-influencer for awareness plus many micro-influencers for targeted reach. A niche app might skip mega entirely and focus on micro/nano where the audience quality is higher.

PREFERRED PLATFORMS FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Different social platforms cater to different content styles, and the choice often depends on the app being promoted:

Instagram remains one of the most popular platforms for influencer marketing. Its visual focus is great for lifestyle apps, fashion retail apps, travel booking apps, etc., where influencers can post stories or reels using the app. Many app install campaigns run through Instagram sponsored posts or influencer stories with swipe-up links.

TikTok sees a huge surge in influencer marketing usage. 68.8% of marketers choose TikTok for their influencer campaigns. Short, viral videos on TikTok are extremely powerful for promoting apps that appeal to Gen Z and Millennials. Many lifestyle or fun consumer apps have gone viral through TikTok influencer challenges or trends. TikTok influencers charge roughly $460 per collaboration on average, making it cost-effective for the reach it provides.

YouTube is key for longer-form content. Tech apps, for instance, use YouTube for detailed YouTube reviews. Note that YouTube influencers tend to charge higher rates on average (around $791 per sponsored video on average in one analysis), but those videos have long shelf-life and depth.

Twitch (for live streaming) is important specifically for iGaming apps. Many online casinos sponsor Twitch streamers to play live, reaching dedicated audiences in real time.

Others: Platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook are used as well, but to a lesser extent for influencer content (they're more for ads or community management). Meanwhile, emerging platforms or regional social media (e.g. VK in Russia, Weibo in China) can be considered to target those markets with local influencers.

INFLUENCER CONTENT STRATEGIES

Apps use influencers in creative ways. Some common approaches:

APP REVIEWS/DEMOS:

Influencer creates a tutorial or review of the app (e.g. a tech blogger reviewing a finance app's features, or a fitness vlogger doing a workout with a fitness app).

SPONSORED CHALLENGES:

Particularly on TikTok, an app might sponsor a challenge or trend. For example, a music app might get influencers to start a dance challenge using a song from the app.

GIVEAWAYS AND PROMO CODES:

Influencers often share exclusive promo codes for an app's subscription or in-app rewards, incentivizing their followers to download and try the app.

LIFESTYLE INTEGRATION:

The influencer shows the app naturally in their daily life – e.g., a travel blogger using an airline's booking app while planning a trip, subtly demonstrating its utility.

LIVESTREAM "APP TAKEOVERS":

An influencer runs a timed livestream inside Instagram or TikTok showing real-time use cases, with a pinned download link and live Q&A. Engagement spikes because viewers can ask questions before committing to install.

POST-INSTALL NURTURE SERIES:

Creators don't have to exit after the download. They can record a short onboarding tip, milestone celebration, or seasonal challenge featuring the same influencer and serve it by push or in-app inbox. Consistency between acquisition and retention messaging bumps day-7 and day-30 stickiness.

INFLUENCER CONTENT STRATEGIES

MORE "TECHNICAL" STRATEGIES RECOMMENDED BY FAMESTERS INFLUENCER MARKETING EXPERTS:

Influencer-powered referral loops. Turn influencers into affiliate nodes: give them trackable links that drop a referral code for the user at install. Each new user then sees a built-in "share and earn" button, propagating the code to friends. This turns one paid creator into a seed for user-generated virality, multiplying ROAS without additional spend.

Whitelisted boosting + paid social retargeting. After the organic post goes live, the brand can "whitelist" the creator handle (Spark Ad on TikTok, Branded Content Ad on Meta) and drive extra reach to look-alike audiences while keeping the influencer's face and comments thread intact. Pair that with a 24-hour retargeting window to catch fence-sitters who watched but didn't click — cuts blended CPI by ~20–30 % in most tests.

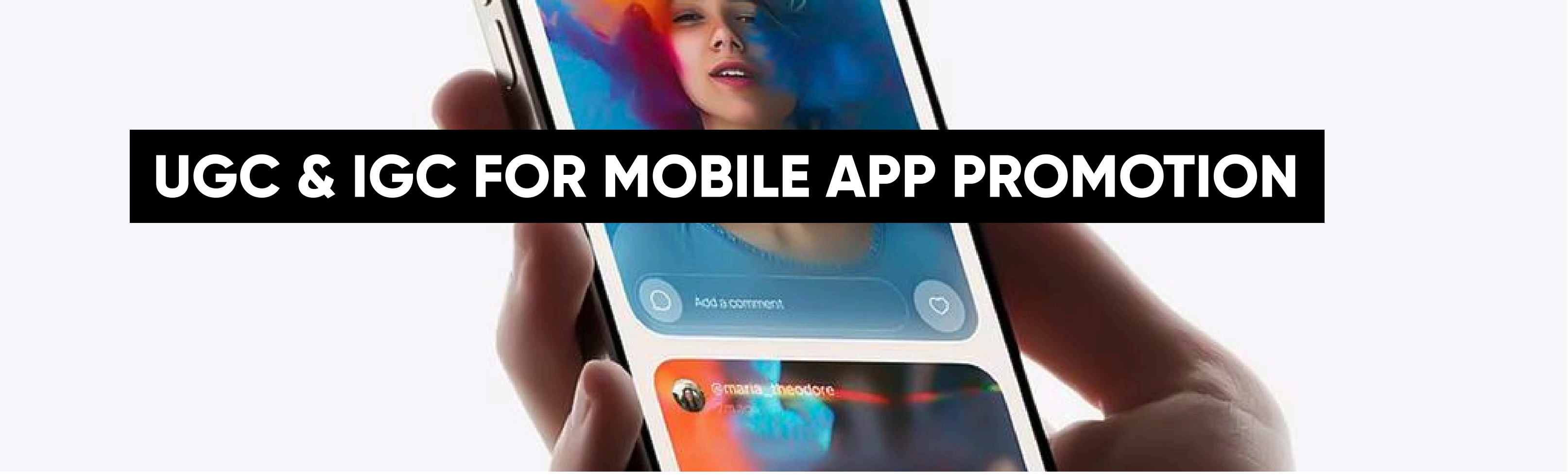
Feature co-creation & early access. Grant top creators "lab access" to beta features, then let them break the news in their channels. Audiences love seeing something exclusive, creators feel invested, and you get real-world usability feedback before a full roll-out.

Crisis & sentiment monitoring. Track comments and reaction videos for the first 72 hours. If sentiment bends negative, a rapid follow-up from the creator (not just the brand handle) can re-align the narrative before it snowballs — especially critical for finance, health, or kids' apps.

The key is authenticity. Influencers perform best when the app aligns with their personal brand and audience interests. This authenticity is why relatable micro-influencers can have a big impact — their followers know they won't promote something they don't actually like, so an app mention comes across as a genuine recommendation.

One more point: **influencer marketing dovetails with user-generated content.** Often, a few influencers can start a trend that many regular users then participate in (creating a viral effect). If an app can achieve that momentum, it gains many organic installs beyond the initial paid influencer posts.

UGC & IGC FOR MOBILE APP PROMOTION



Mobile UA lives and dies on creative fatigue and CPI math. The UGC & IGC model attacks both problems at once. To use it, you basically have to buy not a post on an influencer's account (or at least not just a post), but a video creative and also the rights to it. This way you can post it elsewhere, re-upload as you please, and re-use to attract users via multiple channels. Here's how it works:

Authentic footage that converts. Influencer-shot clips feel like real recommendations, and 69% of consumers say they trust that kind of word-of-mouth over classic ads — so swipe-to-install rates climb without cranking bids.

CPI-slashing economics. Because you're buying the asset, not the post, there's no need to pay for a slot on the influencer's feed. The content drops straight into your own paid-social or UAC stack and routinely drives lower CPA/CPI than brand-handled creative tests.

Rights cleared, ready to scale. Make sure that your legal team bakes full usage rights into every contract, so the same 15-second demo can run on TikTok Spark Ads, Meta Advantage+, store-listing videos, or even CTV — no redraws, no takedown risk.

Speed and flexibility for fast-moving funnels. Mobile campaigns can't wait for an influencer's content calendar. UGC is produced on your schedule, meaning fresh creative every sprint and no gaps in the testing queue.

Predictable ROI, transparent pricing. You approve each clip before you pay, and you only pay for the footage — not impressions — so media efficiency stays crystal-clear. This model turns creative cost into a fixed line item, letting UA managers focus on in-platform metrics rather than negotiating every post. When that asset drops CPI or lifts CPPU, the win is easy to isolate, report, and scale.

For mobile apps fighting rising CPMs and creative burnout, IGC & UGC offer a faster, cheaper, and fully rights-cleared pipeline of high-trust ad creative — exactly what you need to keep installs flowing and LTV climbing.

MORE EFFICIENCY: THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON APPS' ORGANIC TRAFFIC

Apps using influencer marketing see the effect going well beyond trackable clicks. After launching influencer marketing campaigns, they also register spikes in organic searches. In measurement terms, that spikes matters for three reasons:

Brand-equity lift. Organic brand queries are the purest proxy for unaided awareness; they mean people remember the name and seek it out without paid prompts.

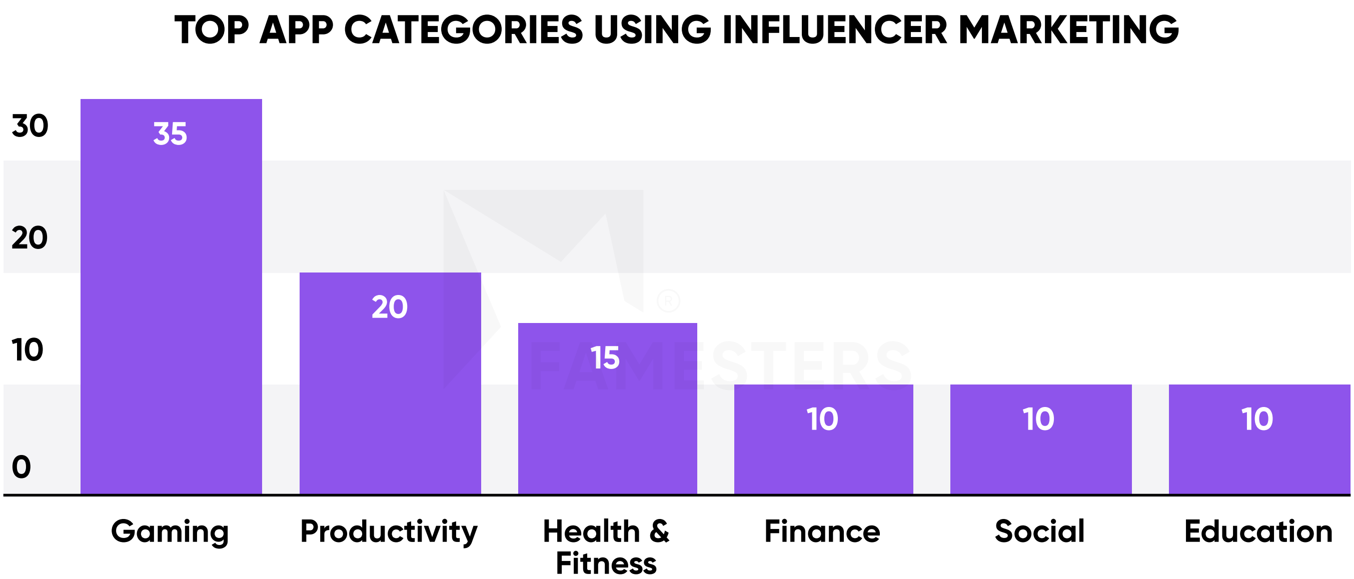
ASO tailwind. Every branded search that converts boosts keyword-to-install rates, signalling to the store algorithms that the app satisfies intent, which in turn raises its rank for non-branded keywords.

Budget arbitrage. Once users are searching organically, you're acquiring them at zero media cost; each incremental download effectively lowers blended CPI and extends runway for paid tests.

How does influencer content trigger that lift? Viewers who weren't ready to download on the spot still filed the brand name away. Later, when they have an actual need or a problem to solve, they search for your specific app instead of generic terms. That delayed-action recall is why organic-search spikes often trail 7–10 days behind the first viral posts.

In short, a creator campaign's impact isn't confined to the UTMs you place in a bio link. Done right, it plants a brand keyword in the audience's vocabulary — and that lift in organic search is both a free acquisition channel and a compounding signal to every store algorithm you care about.

TOP APP CATEGORIES USING INFLUENCER MARKETING



Here's a snapshot of the app categories using influencer marketing in 2025, and it's clear that gaming apps are leading the charge. At 35%, gaming takes the lion's share of influencer marketing efforts, by far outpacing other sectors. This makes sense given the highly engaged and passionate communities around gaming, where influencers play a huge role in promoting new releases, updates, and in-game purchases.

Following gaming, productivity apps come in second with around 20%, showing that tools for work, organization, and personal efficiency are increasingly relying on influencers to reach their target audiences. This is a smart strategy, as productivity apps benefit from influencers who can demonstrate their use in real-life scenarios.

Health & Fitness apps round out the top three at 15%, highlighting how wellness influencers have a strong pull in promoting fitness trackers, health guides, and diet apps. These types of apps benefit greatly from visual demonstrations, which is where influencer marketing truly shines.

The remaining categories — finance, social, and education — all see a fairly equal share, hovering around 10%. While these sectors are not using influencers as heavily, their presence in influencer marketing still shows the growing appeal of these apps to targeted audiences via trusted voices in each niche.

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

Mobile users have grown picky, stores are crowded with look-alike apps, and ads alone no longer move the needle. Expert voices here point to a new playbook – one built on real people, real stories, and products that feel helpful from the first tap.

WHAT MATTERS MOST RIGHT NOW:

Influencers need room to breathe. Campaigns work when an influencer folds the app into daily life – no scripts that read like ads.

First-tap clarity is non-negotiable. Confusing flows, hidden fees, or fuzzy data policies send people packing in seconds.

Tiny communities decide big wins. Quiet Discord channels, niche sub-reddits, and LinkedIn threads steer downloads more than app-store charts or glossy banners.

Discovery splits in two directions. Quick-hit games still thrive on viral moments, while health, finance, and other "serious" tools win by showing depth and care.

Honesty beats polish. Raw walkthroughs, open road-maps, even critics who poke holes can earn more trust than flawless promos.

Feedback loops never stop. The apps that stick test new ideas in small bursts, listen hard, tweak fast, and repeat.

The pages ahead dive into these and other lessons, showing how teams that keep the story human, the communities close, and the experience crystal-clear still cut through today's noise.

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

NADIA BUBENNIKOVA

CBO & Co-founder of Famesters

WEBSITE ↗

"In short: custom-built influencer integrations will decide the winners in the mobile app industry.

After almost a decade in influencer marketing, I've watched performance curves flatten the moment a campaign treats an influencer as mere ad space. Today's users scroll for personality, not polish, and they'll swipe past anything that feels bolted-on. The fix – and the future – is custom integration: weave the creator's quirks, catchphrases, and visual language directly into the product demo.

When a productivity app weaves itself into Matt D'Avella's YouTube walkthrough like "My Productivity System" or a fintech wallet riffs on Humphrey Yang's tongue-in-cheek budget-breakdown memes, three things happen. First, authenticity scores jump: followers read the placement as a logical extension of content they already trust. Second, algorithmic lift kicks in: engagement signals (watch time, comments) stay high because the post feels like native storytelling, so TikTok (or YouTube, or Instagram) keeps pushing it. Third, post-install retention rises: users remember the creator's signature context – "this is the exact budget sheet Humphrey uses" – and open the app again.

The data backs it up. We see CPIs 50-70% lower and day-30 retention 25-30% higher when creators co-design the script or product skin versus a generic brief. By 2026, I expect brand-safe templates to lose budget share to what some call "creator-coded assets" – ad units so stamped with the influencer's DNA that the product feels incomplete without them.

So, if your mobile app still hands influencers rigid talking points, you're paying premium CPMs for banner-level performance. Invite them into the creative room, adapt the UI or promo hook to their style, and let the story belong to both of you. Anything less will look – and convert – like yesterday's ad."

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

EKATERINA CHEMEROVSKAYA

Team Lead at Famesters

WEBSITE ↗

“Over the next year the bar for mobile apps is set to rise sharply. Users have learned to spot dark-pattern “close” buttons on paywalls in an instant, and they will abandon an app that hides them. At the same time, AI-powered tooling has lowered the cost of development, flooding stores with polished competitors. That means the margin for error is shrinking: thorough QA and, ideally, live customer interviews are no longer optional luxuries but survival tactics.

Acquiring those choosy users still starts with performance UA, yet the quality layer increasingly comes from influencer marketing. The winning channel, however, is never one-size-fits-all; it starts with asking where your audience actually hangs out. If you’re chasing Gen Z, map the Discords, sub-reddits, and micro-communities they treat as second homes. For B2B or prosumer products, LinkedIn is turning into a surprisingly fertile ground — executives and operators are acting like micro-influencers, and their follower graphs convert with intent.

The collaborations that cut through the noise combine rigorous targeting with an element of creative whiplash. Hooks matter, but a hook is more than another “Top 5 productivity hacks” list; it can be a one-second visual that makes no sense but makes viewers blink, laugh, or even flinch before you slip the real message in. TikTok, Reels, and Shorts — they all love those quick, unexpected moments that shake things up. No matter the format, the stuff that really scales follows a pretty simple loop: try things out, see what clicks, tweak, repeat — then double down on what works.

Looking a bit further out, expect a widening barbell. On one end: hyper-casual, delightfully pointless time-killers engineered for dopamine hits. On the other: mission-critical, AI-infused utilities — health, finance, personal knowledge — where depth and trust matter. Apps in either camp will grow fastest when AI isn’t just a buzzword layer but a deeply integrated capability.

And finally, every industry event is underscoring the same warning: the old playbook is losing steam. Paid channels cost more, fresh creative burns out in days, and even influencer rates are creeping up as demand surges. None of that means the channel is broken — it just means you can’t throw money at noise and expect magic. Step back, test with intent, and treat every new platform like a hypothesis to prove or kill quickly. Teams that stay level-headed, measure ruthlessly, and swap in new ideas the moment returns fade will still earn users’ trust — and keep acquisition costs from spiraling.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

ALI YILMAZ

Co-founder & CEO of Aitherapy

WEBSITE ↗

"Users no longer tolerate friction or fluff. In the mental health app space, we're seeing a strong shift toward emotional UX – people expect apps to feel safe, intuitive, and personalized from the first tap. They want immediate value, not just onboarding checklists. There's also growing demand for transparency: users want to know how their data is used and whether the AI behind the app is actually trained for their needs.

In promoting, short-form video remains king – but what's working best isn't polished content, it's relatable storytelling. At Aitherapy, we've seen more conversions from creators sharing raw personal moments with our product than from traditional explainer-style content. TikTok and Instagram Reels are still dominant, but we're starting to see niche Discord servers and even Reddit communities becoming powerful for app discovery, especially when your product solves a specific pain point.

We've had surprising traction from mental health subreddits and YouTube comment sections. Anywhere people gather around vulnerability is an opportunity – not to sell, but to genuinely show up with something helpful. That's where influence builds."

JASON HENNESSEY

CEO of Hennessey Digital

WEBSITE ↗

"Influencers using 'Before and After' stories convert incredibly well. They show the pain point, then the transformed result. Apps that support that journey fit naturally in flow. It's simple, repeatable, and connects emotionally right away. Whether it's finances, weight, or focus, people relate fast. This structure remains reliable in multiple verticals consistently.

We're also excited by the traction on LinkedIn lately. B2B creators share tools that boost efficiency or sales. Posts that frame apps as work-life hacks gain traction. When respected voices share these tips, others follow quickly. LinkedIn has become a power channel for productivity apps. Authentic content there feels more thoughtful and actionable."

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

KURT UHLIR

CMO of ez Home Search

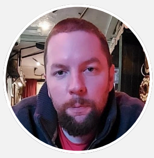
WEBSITE ↗

“The platforms don’t matter as much as what you say and who says it. Everyone’s looking for some magic channel — ‘is it TikTok? is it YouTube Shorts?’ It’s all of them. But the message has to hit. The creator needs to be credible and the content needs to match how people actually use the app. If your creator wouldn’t use the app in real life, don’t fake it. Users can smell it.

Right now, what’s performing? Honest explainer videos from users with 2K–20K followers who’ve built trust in a specific niche, and on the B2B side, it's the decision makers using your product. That’s the sweet spot. The high-trust mid-pack. That’s where installs and retention come from.

And underrated? Threads on X. Not “X” as a whole — just well-placed threads in tight communities. People will read a 10-tweet story about how someone saved $300/month using an app. If it’s honest and actionable, it spreads.

Bottom line: Stop shouting. Start solving. Your app is just a tool — it’s the story around it that sells.”



PAUL ALLEN

Owner of DublinRush

WEBSITE ↗

“We’re about to see the rise of anti-influencers — creators who trash popular apps and gain massive followings by calling out bloatware, surveillance tactics, or exploitative monetization models. Ironically, these brutally honest reviewers will become the most trusted voices in the ecosystem. Developers who embrace critique and build in public will attract loyalty, while polished PR will backfire. The smartest apps will start courting their haters.

The App Store and Google Play are dying as discovery platforms. Real trust now happens in long-form: Reddit deep dives, 3AM YouTube rabbit holes, and brutally honest Twitter/X threads. Users no longer want “5-star” reviews — they want war stories. Apps that lean into transparency (e.g., showing growth plateaus, failed experiments, user mistakes) will win over jaded users. Think GitHub meets Netflix docuseries.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

MJ GOTTLIEB

Co-founder and CEO of Loosid

WEBSITE ↗

"The biggest shift we're seeing is that people care just as much about the brand and meaning behind the app as they do about the features. There are so many apps out there now, and it's easier than ever to build one, so users are choosing the ones that make them feel something.

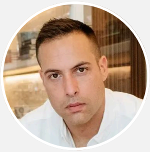
For sensitive communities like the sobriety space, that means choosing apps created by brands they trust — brands that make them feel a sense of belonging and connection. People want to feel like they're part of something bigger, not just downloading another tool.

Conversational content is winning right now, especially in niche industries.

It's not about a single person promoting an app; it's about the right people having a real conversation. That makes the message — and your app — more memorable. Platforms matter less than the brand partnerships you create. We've seen the most impact by getting creative with who we collaborate with.

Now, to the channels that are driving the most valuable user actions for apps, and for the app users — become key for app discovery. Loosid is a sober app, but sobriety isn't just about not drinking or using — it's about building a fulfilling life. That's why we partner with adjacent brands like mental health companies, non-alcoholic beverage brands, and others that align with that lifestyle. That's where real discovery is happening — in like-minded communities, not just app stores."

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS



ARI S. GOLDBERG

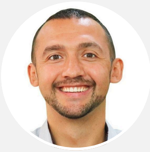
Founder & Managing Partner of RNMKR

WEBSITE ↗

“The supply and demand economics of the influencer market are fundamentally shifting. With the explosive growth in creator numbers outpacing brand budget allocation, we're witnessing a market correction that's transforming how influence is monetized. This isn't just about pricing pressure — it's driving creators to seek equity and revenue-sharing arrangements rather than flat-fee sponsorships. The most successful apps will be those building infrastructure for creators to participate in value creation through novel partnership structures rather than traditional promotional models.

The rise of vertical social networks will dramatically reshape app discovery and trust mechanisms. Web 2.0 was dominated by horizontal platforms designed for everyone and everything, but we're now seeing the emergence of community-focused platforms built around specific passions and interests — think Strava for running or Twitch for gaming. These vertical networks incorporate familiar social features but center on passionate communities with shared expertise. This shift means users will increasingly discover and evaluate apps through these trusted vertical communities rather than through broad-based platforms or traditional app stores.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS



ANATOLII ULITOVSKYI

Founder of UNmiss.com

WEBSITE ↗

“I think people are craving less friction — they want apps that are not just functional but emotionally intelligent and proactive. I notice that users now expect personalized onboarding, seamless AI integration, and zero-learning-curve interfaces — basically, apps that understand their needs before they ask. I’ve worked with many apps that failed to scale not because of poor features, but because users just didn’t feel guided or cared for in their early experience. What I often recommend is building predictive UX journeys powered by data from first touch to retention — because users now expect their time to be respected like never before.

As for influencer marketing, I think the shift is moving toward micro-content and story-based recommendations. I see TikTok and YouTube Shorts still winning in volume, but I’m getting surprising results on Reddit, Discord, and Telegram — especially for fintech and productivity apps. These platforms don’t look like typical influencer hubs, but they drive high-intent users who convert well because they’re actively seeking solutions, not just browsing.

I also love using podcasts and LinkedIn influencers for B2B and SaaS — it’s slower-paced but builds trust like nothing else.

I think what’s underrated right now is community-led app discovery, especially in niche Slack and Discord groups, where one good mention can lead to hundreds of quality users without spending a cent on ads.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

VAIBHAV KAKKAR

CEO of Digital Web Solutions

WEBSITE ↗

“The best partnerships that we are finding in the app landscape are multi-touch campaigns – the type where influencers do not merely promote the app one time for a post but take their followers on the journey through onboarding, usage, and ongoing value of the app over time. In fact, the ‘download now’ promotions do not perform that well anymore. People want context and guidance to follow through.

Apps that are innovating are giving influencers creative freedom to design user experiences like setting up personalized onboarding flows with creator-specific content or themes. One influencer-led growth hack I would love to see more is giving creators access to live usage stats of their referrals and let them compete or share real time growth. It turns promotion into a shared success story.

Also, gamified challenges tied to mobile apps are thriving now. For example, influencers build 5-day goals with progress tracking screenshots. Apps become part of that accountability journey easily. It is participatory, not just a passive viewing experience. Audiences join in, compete and share their outcomes too. The app becomes a badge of commitment and identity.

And Facebook Groups are making a comeback again. Especially for health, parenting, and local services apps. Members trust advice from familiar faces inside closed spaces. Group admins play a powerful role in app recommendations. These groups create contextual discovery with built-in social proof.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

HONE JOHN TITO

Co-founder of Game Host Bros

WEBSITE ↗

“It’s clear that niche TikTok creators can create a stir, more so those with between 20,000 and 100,000 followers who discuss their actual workday. A one-minute video we placed in an online community about our task-scheduling app was viewed over 3,000 times and resulted in those installs over a three-day period. It isn’t influencers giving tutorials – it’s just users showing you how they use the app. It’s the casual style and the exact moment that makes the difference. If people watch the video on a Wednesday at work, the install rate goes up almost 100%. I expect that, in the next step, we’ll see people embedding short videos in their replies on community boards or niche discussion groups.

Reddit has especially benefitted from a surge in activity outside the main topics. One real post in r/Productivity directing people to our roadmap saw 12,400 users visit over five months and is still getting visitors. We keep an eye on where traffic comes from and genuine comments plus pictures work better than fine-tuned content. Loop making has started to happen for us on Discord. A new win or mod in our channels can quickly increase our DAU. I think it’s the loop, not the blast, that leads to real growth.”

EXPERT INSIGHTS & PREDICTIONS

KATIE BREAKER

Director of Sales and Marketing at BirdieBall Golf

WEBSITE ↗

"The content that works right now is short, specific, and tied to a task. The best-performing clips show someone doing something useful, with the app as part of that moment. No long setup. No sales voice. Just straight into the action. That format holds attention and pushes action faster.

YouTube Shorts has been stronger for us than TikTok. The viewer drop-off is lower, and the installs come faster when the content is posted in a sequence. A single video works, but a short series that shows different use cases drives more consistent results.

Smaller spaces are making a bigger impact. We saw a spike in installs from one Discord link placed inside a live session recap. No callout. No promotion. It worked because the audience already trusted the creator and the tool fit the moment.

Reddit brings in longer-session users. Most of the installs come from comments, not posts. Someone shares what they used, someone else clicks. It's slow but consistent. These users convert better because they are acting on real answers, not ads.

Discovery is shifting into smaller, purpose-driven spaces. If the content shows value in context, people act. If it sounds like a pitch, they move on."

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