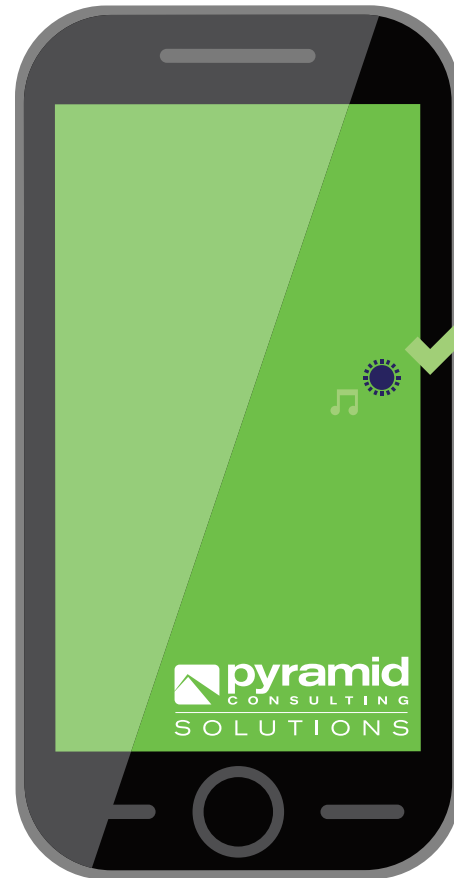




# 5 Ways to Design Apps

with User Experience and Business Needs in Mind



# Apps rule.

People are ruled by their apps, a trend that has spilled over from consumer apps to the business world.



But business apps have additional, often-complex requirements that can make a good user experience difficult to achieve. Those requirements can include cross-platform architecture and delivery, security, mobile device management and integration of data securely into the enterprise.



It's no surprise that business app design can become a **bottleneck** for many businesses as they struggle to marry utility and usability.

Regardless of whether an app is going into the consumer marketplace or will be used in business-to-business endeavors, the underlying work that needs to be accomplished has some of the same characteristics. This e-book will explain how app development should:

**01 BE DRIVEN BY PRODUCT MANAGERS, NOT ENGINEERS**

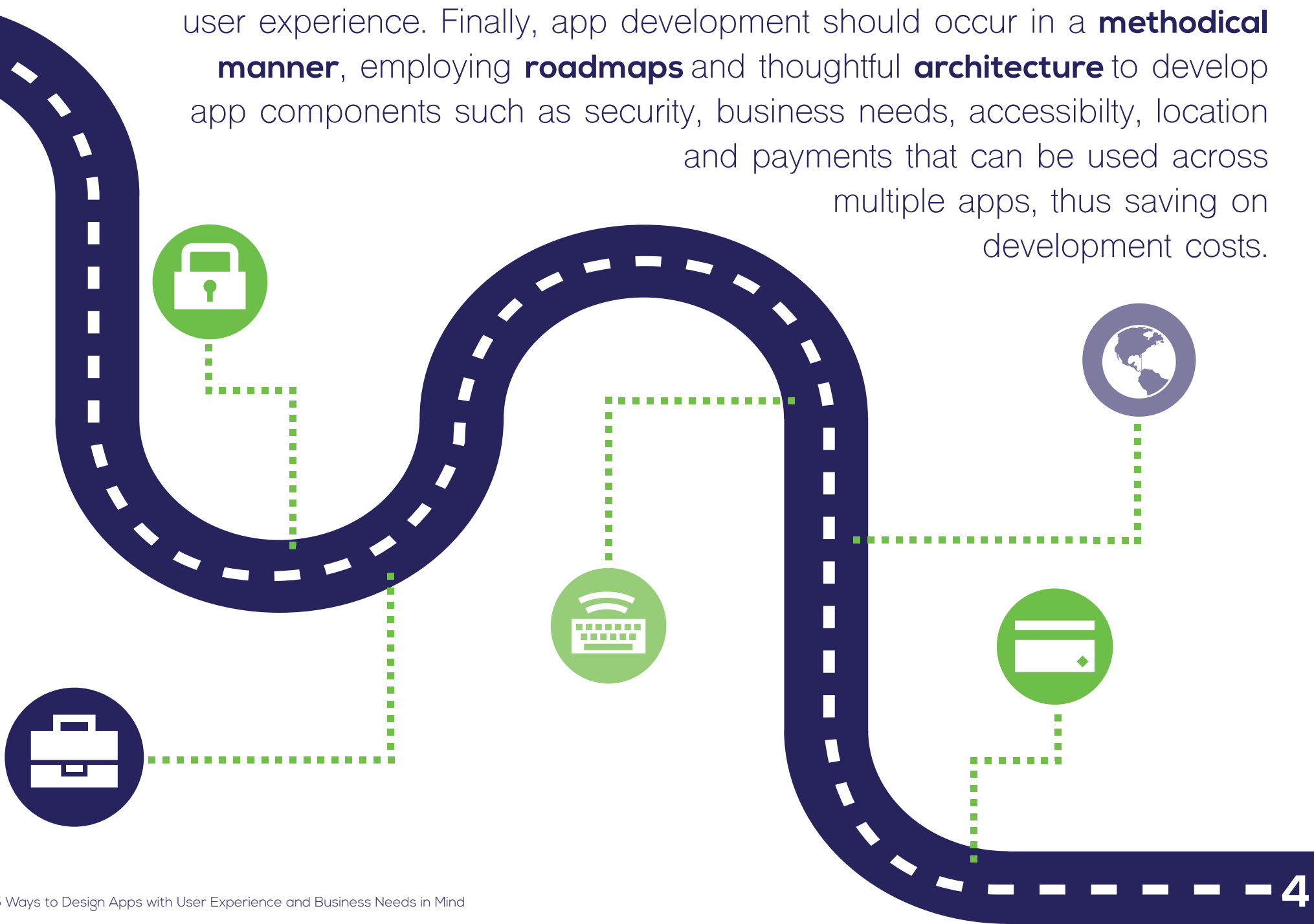
**02 MEET USERS WHERE THEY ARE**

**03 RESPECT THE USER**

**04 BE SUPPORTED WITH BACK-END SYSTEMS**

**05 PRESENT A UNIFORM EXPERIENCE TO THE USER**

User experience, or UX, is a critical consideration for any project. Even apps that will be used by employees in B2B situations must address the user experience. Finally, app development should occur in a **methodical manner**, employing **roadmaps** and thoughtful **architecture** to develop app components such as security, business needs, accessibility, location and payments that can be used across multiple apps, thus saving on development costs.



# 01

Be driven by  
product managers,  
not engineers



01

Be driven by  
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not engineers



02

Meet users where  
they are



03

Respect the user



04

Be supported by  
back-end systems



05

Present a uniform  
experience to the user

# Especially with B2B apps,

the tendency is to design from the top down, developing apps that might work for the C-suite but not for the salesforce. What you often get are apps that have gee-whiz functionality but don't help the actual users.

To develop a truly useful app, design first from a user perspective, then develop the features and functions needed to accomplish your objective.

# UX should be geared toward solving business problems, not just looking pretty.

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IT should be intimately involved in the project and point out any potential pitfalls, but the technologists should not be the primary drivers. Rather, the business should be the primary focus, and the product managers or those responsible for the app's success should be at the forefront.



# If your company has several apps in the pipeline, consider setting up a mobile center of excellence that can take a more holistic approach to app development.

To gain economies of scale, for example, center-of-excellence members would look for commonalities among the features of the apps in development. Relevant portions of apps used in one area can easily be repurposed into additional apps with similar functionality. This saves time and money on future development. The center can help develop product roadmaps and architecture that will guide and inform app development in a more methodical manner.

# 02

## Meet users where they are

- 01 Be driven by product managers, not engineers
- 02 Meet users where they are
- 03 Respect the user
- 04 Be supported by back-end systems
- 05 Present a uniform experience to the user

# Think back just a few years....

Remember Palm Devices?


What about Blackberrys?

Among the dominant operating systems today, screen sizes and device functionality can vary widely. For example, BlackBerry still is widely used in many industries, so

**no device or operating system should be discounted.**



**Designing with this degree of precision requires a considerable amount of planning upfront,** which is why developing a product roadmap and a low level design should occur before the first line of code is written.



A responsive user interface is designed to adapt to different form factors and screen sizes.

# 03

## Respect the user



01

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05

Present a uniform experience to the user



How many apps have you tried to use and quickly abandoned?



Did they take forever to load, fail to respond to your needs and drain your phone battery too quickly?

**Regardless of whether an app is aimed at consumers or business users, it should respect the user, providing the necessary information as quickly and as unobtrusively as possible.**

Again, this goes back to proper, deliberate planning on the front end to determine what the app will deliver and how it will accomplish its goal. This is an area where art meets science.

**A better way to improve the user experience is by using persistent data, limiting the number of times data needs to be pushed or pulled from the device.**

An app that pushes or pulls excessive data from a device can bring slowdowns that turn off users and shorten battery life. So does excessive use of GPS functionality.





# Increasingly, app use is not confined to any one geography or language.

If it's appropriate, plan for your app to support multiple languages across multiple geographies. It's much easier to develop these functionalities on the front end than to retrofit an app later.



# Users will abandon apps that don't perform well.

Therefore, apps should be **optimized** for the platform, be **touch-friendly**, **limit data** transmitted to/from the device and not overwhelm a device's memory.

# 04

## Be supported by back-end systems



01

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05

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This issue is especially critical for business mobile applications that need to access or interact with back-office systems. Most enterprises were never designed to support mobile connectivity with the necessary access, security, authentication and protocol requirements.



**However, each is a vital consideration to not only protect company information but also deliver a superior user experience.**

# Will your app require access to your back-office systems? If so, how will that be accomplished?

Developing robust architecture to link the appropriate systems will ensure a good user experience without unnecessary delays or glitches. If the app requires access to sensitive information (think Social Security numbers or credit card information), proper safeguards must be developed and deployed to authenticate the user and the device before any information is transmitted. There should also be limits on the type of information that's transmitted.

To speed app development at a lower cost, consider how the app will be used and whether it requires access to sensitive information before IT becomes involved.



**It's much easier to plan and build the right app at the right time than to develop, then substantially change, an app to fit unanticipated needs.**

# 05

## Present a uniform experience to the user



01

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05

Present a uniform experience to the user

**A uniform user experience across a company's app portfolio requires standard technologies, frameworks and processes.**

Each of these relies on the other two, so all are necessary to be successful.



**Using standard technologies, frameworks and processes helps ensure that one app component is compatible with another, since they were built in a similar manner with common tools.**

- This increases the likelihood that app components can be reused in new applications without the cost associated with new development. It also reduces the risk of failure and shortens development timelines since the reused components already have proven worthy.

# Finding the right technologies and developing the necessary frameworks and processes requires input from across the enterprise.

Although the specifics of a particular app should be led by a project manager, the overarching effort to develop a strategy and put the right tools in place should be led by the IT department.

This is another instance where a mobile center of excellence or a core team responsible for all of a company's apps can help a company leverage its app portfolio.

# App development shouldn't occur in a silo.

It should be a thoughtful,  
deliberate process that puts the  
user at the center.



# The best way to these goals is to establish a mobile center of excellence that is responsible for all app development.

Avoid any **bottlenecks** with a dedicated team in place, so a company can drive down the cost of app development, shorten delivery timelines and reduce the risk of failure by developing, deploying and reusing app components that have been built using standard technology.

# GOT MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT DESIGNING APPS? Just let us know.

We get you past  
the bottlenecks!<sup>TM</sup>



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