

# Why your mobile strategy should be top-of-mind

 By [Nick Durrant](#)

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Mobile app usage increased by 40% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020 and in-app spending hit a record high of \$27bn. We're using food delivery apps to order dinner because we can't visit restaurants, streaming movies because cinemas are closed.



Nick Durrant, CEO at Bluegrass Digital

According to GSMA's 2019 State of Mobile Internet Connectivity [report](#), the mobile industry currently connects over 3.5 billion people to the internet, which is just under half of the global population.

Fifteen years ago, the idea of carrying a personal computer in your pocket was unfathomable. The fact that modern mobile devices are millions of times more powerful than the spacecraft guidance computers that helped astronauts navigate all the way to the moon in the 1960s is equally hard to believe.

And the current Covid-19 pandemic has only driven mobile appeal. As countries across the globe implemented nationwide lockdowns forcing citizens to stay at home, our mobile devices proved a welcome distraction. So much so that the second quarter of 2020 was the largest yet for mobile app downloads, usage and consumer spending, research from US app store intelligence firm, App Annie, reveals.

We have embraced the world of online banking and shopping because the idea of visiting a bank or shopping mall during a global pandemic holds limited appeal. With all of this in mind, developing a mobile strategy isn't a nice-to-have, it's a must-have.

So why are brands still focusing so much of their attention on the desktop experience?

### **Going mobile first**

Back in 2010, Eric Schmidt, a former Google exec, encouraged businesses to adopt a 'Mobile First' approach to designing web experiences. As the name suggests, this entails starting your product design journey with mobile in mind and then expanding features to create a version suited to tablets and desktops.

Gone are the days when your mobile user interface (UI) was considered a 'secondary' scaled down version of your desktop experience; with your mobile site only offering a fraction of your website's functionality.

A mobile first design approach starts with the smallest screen resolutions, before working your way up to larger screen sizes. If you've ever visited a website on your mobile phone and the page isn't designed to automatically fit different devices automatically, you'll understand why this aspect is so important.

More importantly, when we talk about 'mobile', we are referring to the mobile web and mobile apps. Designing with the mobile web in mind, is about making sure that your website can adapt to any screen size and resolution.

Alternatively, going mobile first can also entail developing a mobile app. This mobile strategy not only allows brands to have more personalised interactions with their users but it also acts as a useful information gathering tool.

App data can ultimately be used to improve customer experience (UX). But this doesn't mean that desktop optimisation should fall by the wayside. It's all about adapting and meeting your customers where they are.

### **DinePlan case study**

When we created the DinePlan app, our aim was to help consumers make a restaurant booking on-the-go. As South Africa's first instant restaurant booking app, users can find a restaurant based on their current location, restaurant availability, desired cuisines and even based on customer ratings. But when the coronavirus lockdown halted restaurant visits, the app had to evolve.

Keen to help the restaurant industry weather the lockdown storm, the Dineplan app launched a feature that allowed customers to purchase restaurant vouchers that they could then redeem at a later stage. This, in turn, helped the hospitality industry generate cashflow during the national shutdown. Again, meeting customers where they are.

Back in 2015, Casey Carl, a former chief strategy and innovation officer for US retail brand Target, explained that mobile had become a business' new front door. Customers want to shop and do business whenever they have time and flow seamlessly across various different channels, he said. "We've got to make that happen by having the right underlying architecture."

And this is what a mobile first strategy is all about. It's about developing with the end user in mind - the different devices

they're using, how they're using them and what the most common screen sizes may be.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter if you have a website, a mobi site, a PWA or an app, you need to create something responsive, informative, easy to navigate and that provides clear directions and calls to action. If your platform doesn't do this, it's time to rethink your mobile strategy

## ABOUT NICK DURRANT

Nick Durrant is MD at Bluegrass Digital, a digital solutions company with offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg and London. We are experts in crafting web and mobile products and platforms. After spending 17 years in working the tech industry in the UK and setting up the Bluegrass in London in 1999, Nicholas now runs the company from Cape Town, developing the business into Africa and Europe offering world class digital solutions.

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