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User journey checklist

Acquisition

Goal:

This checklist provides tips that can help app businesses improve engagement across user journey stages.

- Retention is impacted by who you attract to your app. Make sure you attract the right audience by tracking your install attributions:
  - Track and segment user retention by acquisition campaigns, channels, and creatives.
  - Use these insights to adjust your acquisition mix by investing in better-performing channels.
  - Test different messaging and ad creatives using hypotheses informed by user research to acquire users who engage more deeply with your app.
- Personalize communication based on the audience:
  - Be clear and state your app's value proposition to your new installs. If the user installed from paid channels, personalize the user's initial experience based on the content of the ad they clicked on before signing up.

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Onboarding

- Map out the key moments in the onboarding funnel. Then critically analyze the reason for each step with a goal to streamline users' progress to the app's "aha" moments.
- Analyze drop-off between steps and identify problem areas.
- Get feedback from different types of users through user testing and focus groups.
- Continually A/B test and iterate the onboarding flows:
  - Start by testing big differences (screens or messaging approaches), then move onto more nuanced changes by further iterating on the winning variant.
  - Change one thing at a time (such as CTA, benefits, or image), so you can tell what made a difference.
  - Keep iterating. What's valid today may not apply tomorrow.
- Identify core motivations or needs of target users, then provide a personalized onboarding experience that acknowledges those needs.
- Automate onboarding using a customer engagement platform to store users' preferences and send relevant messaging.

Activation & Commitment

- Identify your core action, "aha" moment, and optimal usage targets.

- Do not reveal every feature at once. After the basic setup, add adaptive onboarding during the first few sessions, guiding users to features they haven't engaged with. Consider how you could replicate the early steps your retained users took.

- Give users a head start by making use of the [endowed progress effect](). For example, illustrate progress by ticking off a list based on key early actions such as registering an account and setting personal preferences.

- Get users to the "aha" moment as quickly as possible because many users won't come back for a second session otherwise.

- Help users experience as many "aha" moments as possible. For example, remove unnecessary steps to reduce cycle time (the time spent in the core action loop).

- Use goal formation (short and long-term goals for users) to help users stay motivated, then celebrate wins to build habits.

- Identify, measure, and track committed or loyal users in your app. Committed users are your app's foundation and will help you predict the needs and behaviors of other users.

- Build the habit loop by tapping into natural triggers, such as sending a push notification hint at the time people normally do an activity.

- Use personalized notifications to increase core action loop completion rates and stay at the front of your users' minds.

- Implement [the right app rewards to boost motivation]().

- Benchmark your engagement performance against best-in-class peers on the Play Console [(blog post)]().

Reactivation & Winback

- Occasionally check the goals and motivations users shared during onboarding. Use in-app prompts, reminders, and surveys to "pulse check" if those goals have changed.
- Pulse checks can provide insight about users during times of demotivation and tell you how users' goals and motivations are evolving.
- Track your core actions as a metric to predict involuntary lapse. If the completion of core actions by committed users slows down, that's often an early indicator of lapse behavior.
- Segment your approach to re-engage users based on user journey stage, lapse type, length of lapse, and monetization tier.
- Send re-engagement messages to:
  - Remind users about the apps' benefits that best match their needs.
  - Remind users of their last engagement.
  - Highlight what they've achieved.
  - Highlight what they will miss out on, such as updates, new launches, streaks, etc.
- At the subscription renewal window:
  - Nudge users to complete actions, remind them if they are close to completing a goal.
  - Make sure that the subscribers and trialists who want to stay can by implementing grace periods and account holds to avoid involuntary churn.
  - Offer users the opportunity to pause instead of canceling.
  - Test different ways to present renewal opportunities.
- Build a robust re-onboarding flow (distinct from onboarding flow) to ensure users who reactivate are welcomed back appropriately.

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