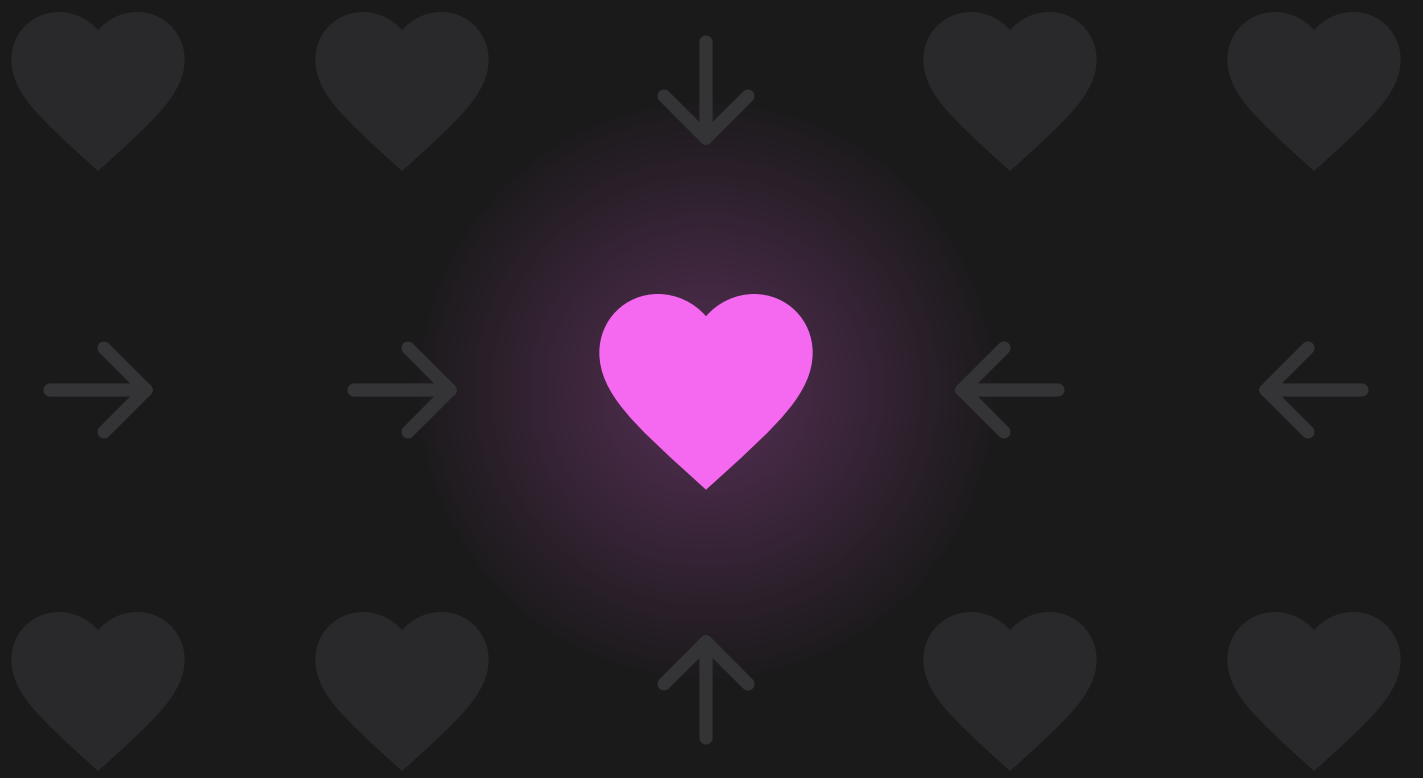
social.plus

From Casual App Users to Brand Advocates

Creating loyal fans through social features



CONTENTS

What's inside

01 Overview

02 About social.plus

03 Learn how brand advocates can be game-changers for your app

07 Discover how integrating social features can help you create brand advocates

16 Measure your success with the right metrics

22 Conclusion

OVERVIEW

Today's most successful brands and products have their loyal fans to thank.

These companies create platforms and user experiences that turn simple customer-brand interactions into long-lasting relationships that yield positive results for any company.

However, turning your app users into your brand advocates can be a challenge. As with anything, building a relationship with your current customers takes time, patience, and strategies to help keep them coming back to your app. You need to engage and then retain them with the right features to ensure app loyalty.

With today's competitive app market, how do you make sure that your users keep your app on their devices, and maybe share it with their network, too?

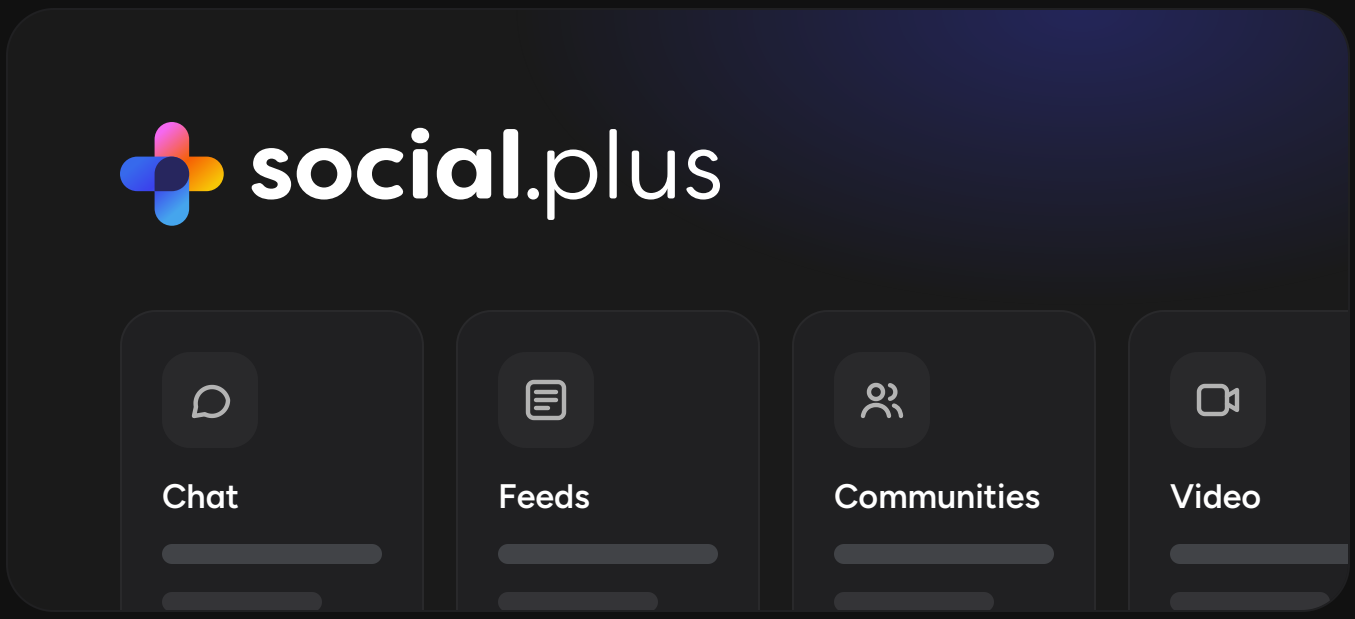
IN THIS REPORT, WE WILL

- → Learn how brand advocates can be game-changers for your app
- → Discover how integrating social features can help you create brand advocates
- → Understand the importance of measuring your success with the right metrics

Let's start building brand loyalty right now!

ABOUT US

About social.plus



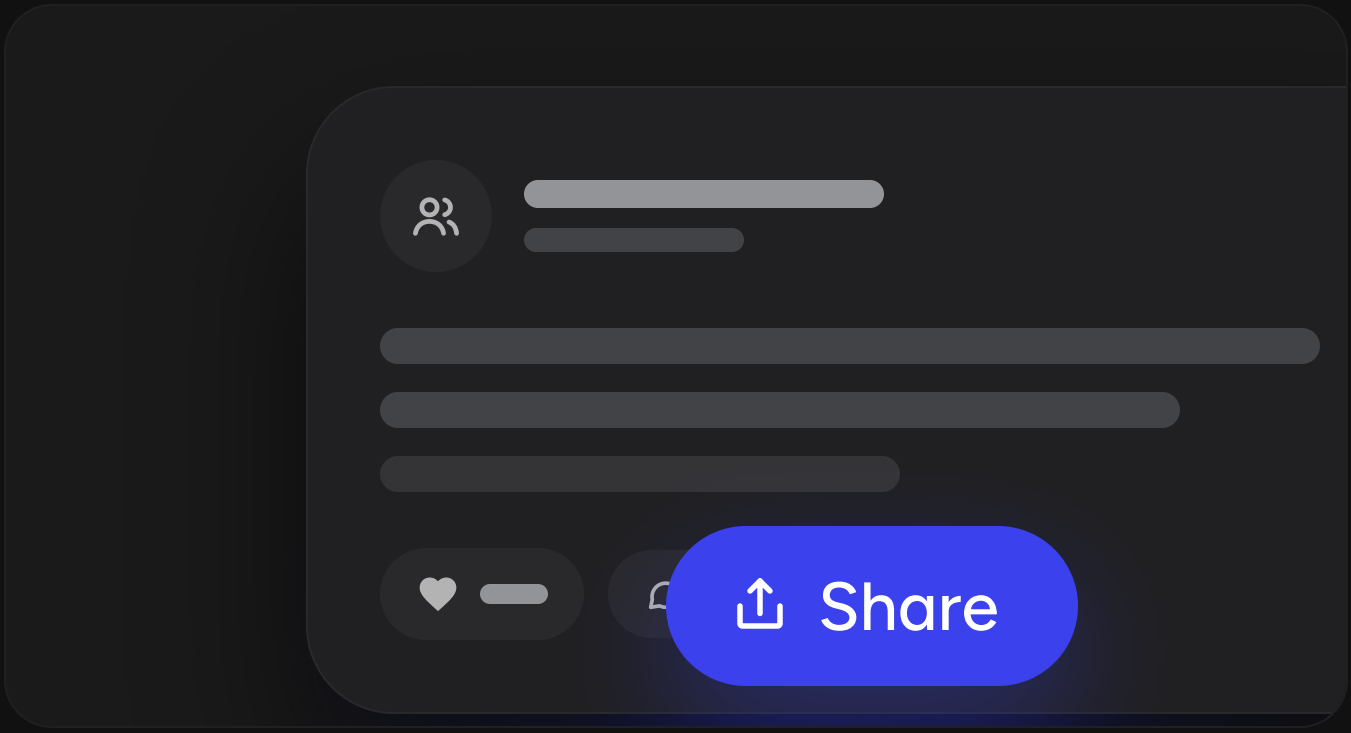
social.plus is a leading enabler of social experiences. Our mission is to make social experiences more accessible by providing scalable solutions that allow companies to integrate social functions into their apps and digital channels.

social.plus offers plug-and-play social features, including chat, feeds, communities and video, to help unlock the power of social experiences. Once integrated, these features can drive engagement, increase retention, build communities, and grow revenue.

Learn more at social.plus

CHAPTER 1

Learn how brand advocates can be game-changers for your app



Who are brand advocates?

Brand advocates, as defined by the Social Media Examiner, are "any customer who has been officially commissioned to speak on behalf of your brand without compensation."[1]

They are not just your average customers: they engage with your brand on a deeper level. Brand advocates believe in what you do. That's why they genuinely use your product and promote you in various ways, including social media and word of mouth.

---

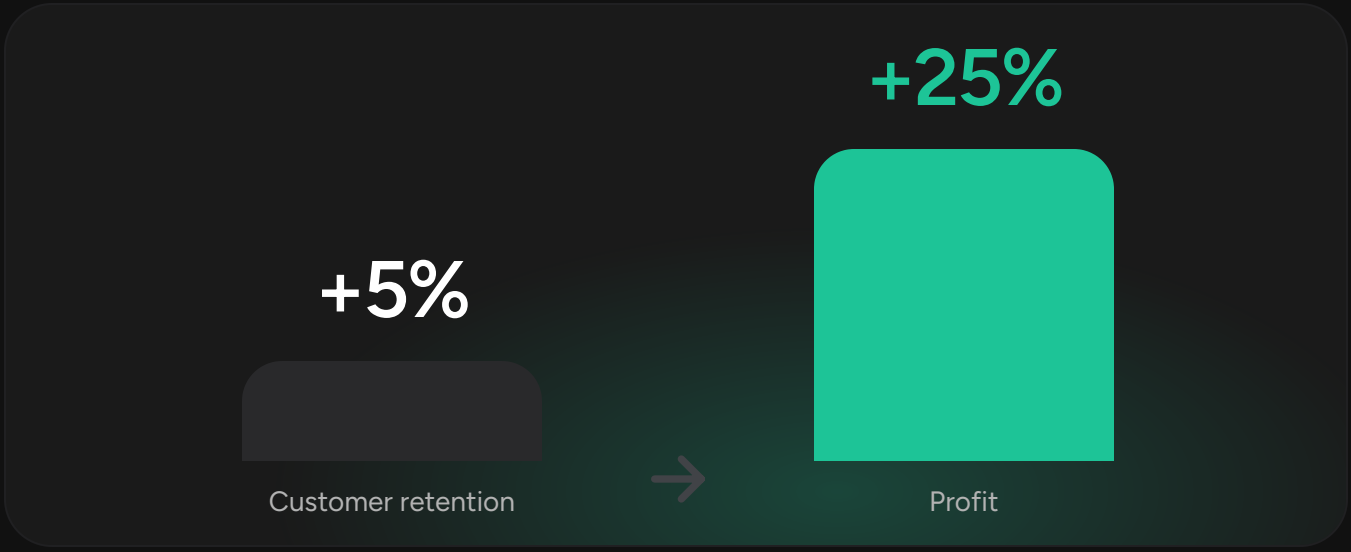
1 Mershon, P. (2019, January 20). 9 Reasons Your Company Should Use Brand Advocates: New Research. Social Media Examiner. https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/9-reasons-your-company-should-use-brand-advocates-new-research/

01 –

Brand advocates drive revenue growth

They proactively share about your company and your product with their network because they understand the value you give them. As brand advocates believe in you and your products, they'll probably buy whatever it is that you're selling! What sets brand advocates apart from casual users is that they're unlikely to think twice about what you are offering.

Having loyal customers is even more crucial as the cost of attracting new customers outweighs the cost of keeping your current customers satisfied and engaged. And that's good for your brand.



According to Bain & Company, **a 5% increase in customer retention produces more than a 25% increase in profit**;[2] it's clear that brand advocates are drivers of your revenue growth. Digital marketing community ClickZ also said that the probability of selling to an existing customer is 60–70%,[3] compared to 5–20% for a new customer.

2 Reichheld, F. (2001). Prescription for cutting costs. Bain & Company. https://media.bain.com/Images/BB_Prescription_cutting_costs.pdf

3 Charlton, G. (2016, September). Are ecommerce customer retention strategies improving? ClickZ. https://www.clickz.com/are-ecommerce-customer-retention-strategies-improving/105454/

02 –

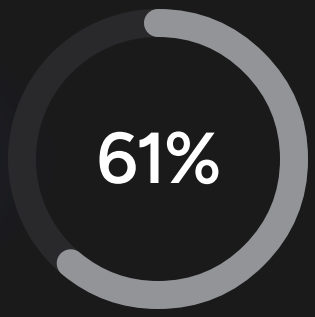
They also attract new users

Reviews are crucial to attracting new users as people rely on other customers' feedback to make their decisions. Spiegel Research Center found in their survey that **95% of shoppers read online reviews before making a purchase.**[4] That's why brand advocates who openly speak about you and your product are key to raising awareness and promoting your brand through different channels.

User-generated content (UGC) is one way your brand advocates can help you attract new users. A survey from Stackla found that 79% of people say UGC highly impacts their purchasing decisions.[5] Meanwhile, TurnTo found 61% of customers reported that UGC encourages them to engage with brands.[6]



of people say UGC highly impacts their purchasing decisions (Stackla)



of customers say UGC encourages them to engage with brands (TurnTo)

Having authentic UGC from your brand advocates alleviates skepticism, distrust, and suspicion from new users; that's why having loyal fans is a crucial win for your brand.

4 How Online Reviews Influence Sales. (2017). The Medill IMC Spiegel Research Center, Northwestern. https://spiegel.medill.northwestern.edu/online-reviews/

5 Consumer & Marketing Perspectives on Content in the Digital Age. (2019, February 20). Stackla. https://stackla.com/resources/reports/bridging-the-gap-consumer-marketing-perspectives-on-content-in-the-digital-age/

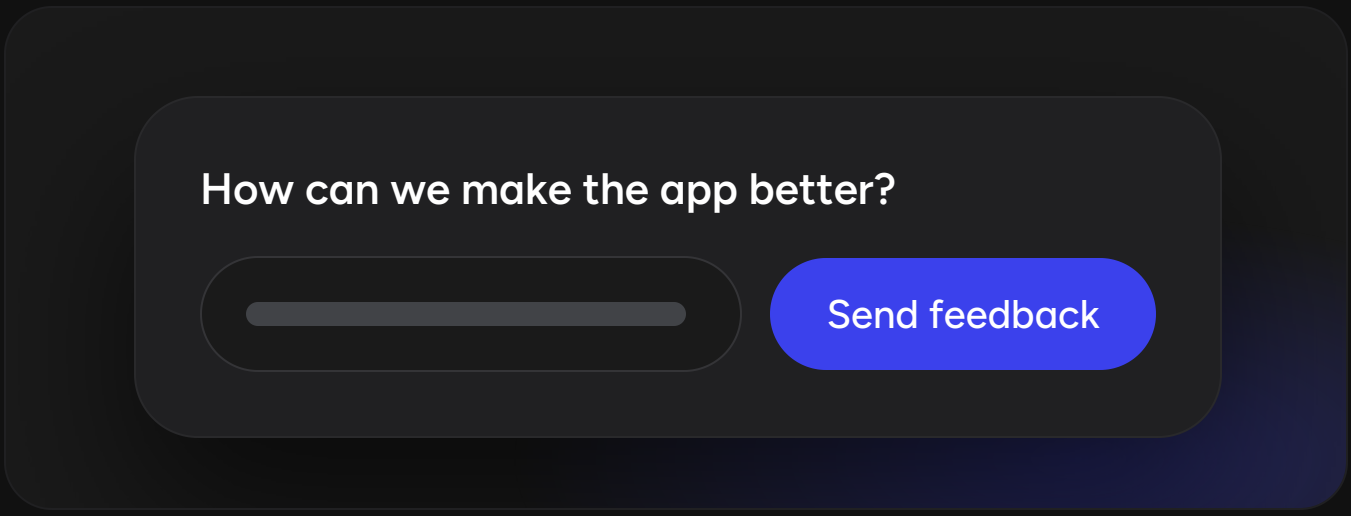
6 2017 TurnTo Consumer Study: UGC and the Commerce Experience. (2017). TurnTo Networks. http://www2.turntonetworks.com/2017consumerstudy

03 –

They help improve your product, too

Another significant advantage of having brand advocates is their willingness to get involved in the product development process. AspireIQ found that customers crave a two-way connection with the brands they like, and **42% of customers they surveyed want to contribute feedback** to a product or service.[7]

Because they're invested in your app, brand advocates are the most informed and eager to share feedback on your app and their user experience. Using their feedback to improve your product is extremely valuable, as you have direct access to the customer's mind, needs, expectations, and behavior. It also gives you all the elements to improve your product and increase customer satisfaction.

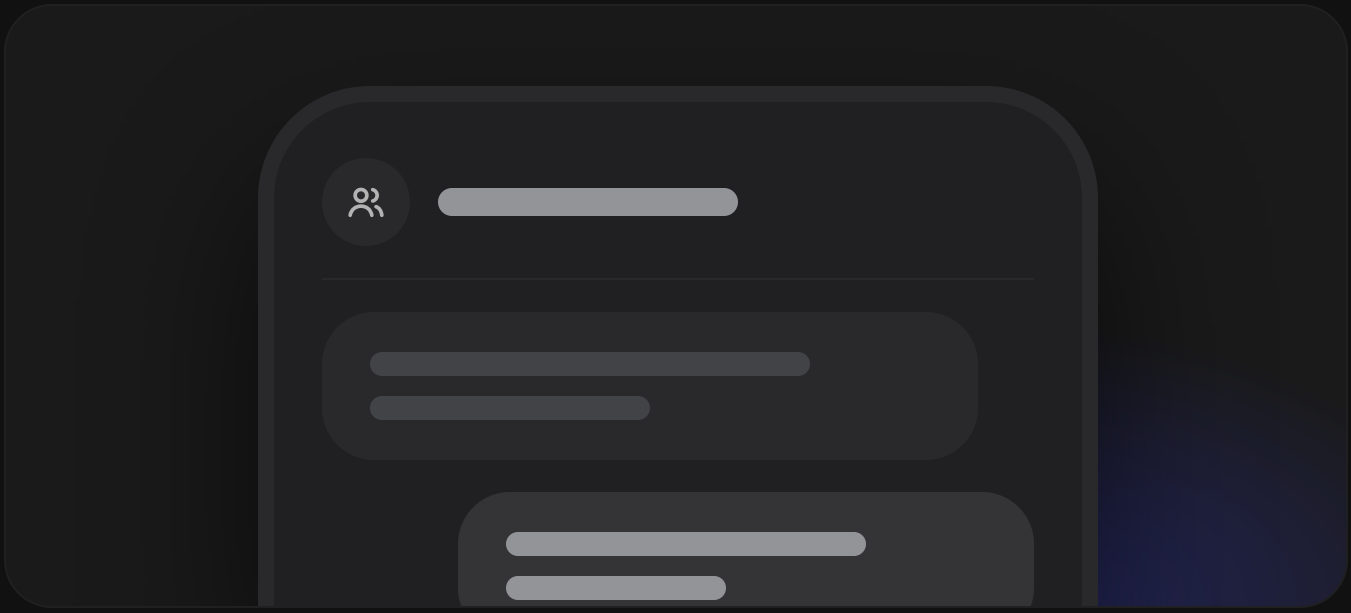


Brand advocates can drive your growth, improve your current product, and help you attract new customers through reviews and influence.

7 Deconstructing the consumer engagement gap. (2020). AspireIQ. https://discover.aspireiq.com/deconstructing-engagement/

CHAPTER 2

Discover how integrating social features can help you create brand advocates



We all know that building a stable app with a smooth user interface is only a fraction of what's required to create outstanding customer experiences. To create brand advocates, you have to go the extra mile: connect with your users and, at the same time, allow them to express themselves and find a sense of belonging among other users.

Social media applications are good examples of how brands stay connected with their customers. They enable users to connect and showcase expertise, and let brands connect with their customers efficiently.

How do you then translate this to your app?

If you already have an app and want to make sure that your users keep coming back to your platform, adding social features from today's most successful social platforms might be an untapped solution to help reach your app's full potential.

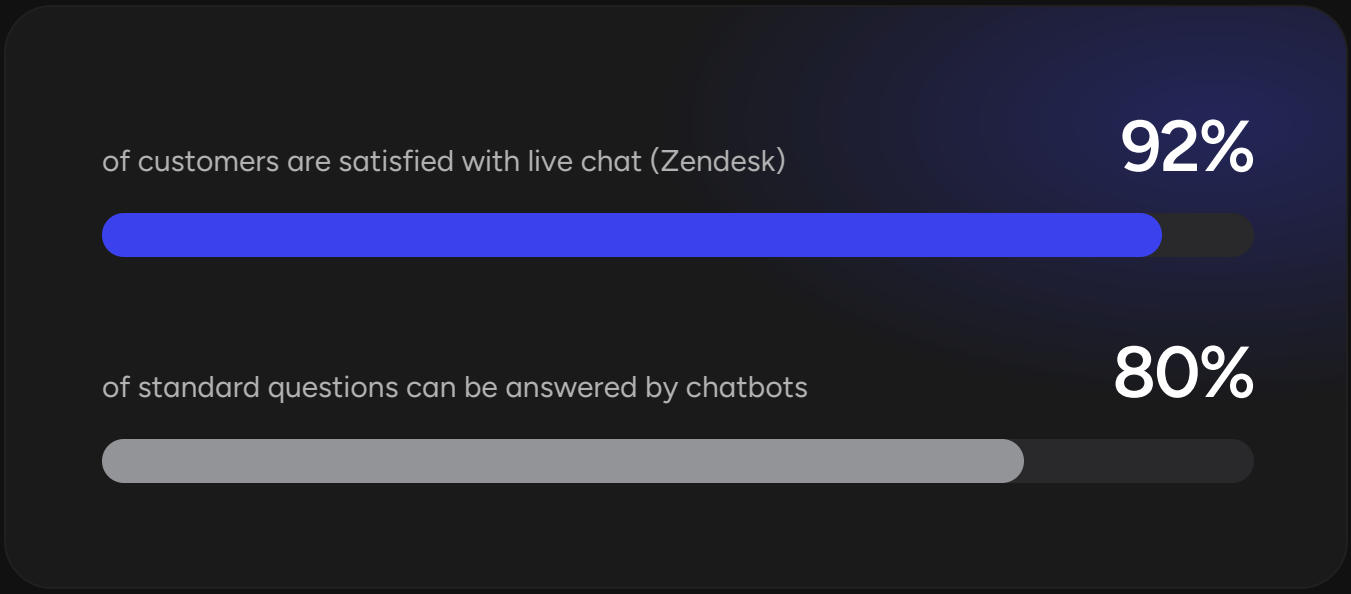
Three ways adding social features can help reach your app's full potential

01 –

Improve customer service

Customers don't want to waste their time. They want instant answers to their queries and put high regard on companies that respond immediately to their concerns and provide convenience.

That's why fast customer service is an essential part of building trust with customers and a crucial factor in turning users into advocates. Adding solutions such as live chat and chatbots to your app can be a game-changer and the best way to improve your customer service.



According to a report published by Helpshift, **83% of consumers** said they'd make messaging their primary means of contacting customer support if they could be guaranteed an immediate response.[8] Zendesk reports that live chat has the highest consumer satisfaction rate at 92%.[9]

Those solutions have gained popularity, with time efficiency being the main contributing factor.

Meanwhile, using chatbots ensures 24/7 customer support and can cut up to **30% of customer support costs**, with chatbots able to answer 80% of standard questions. That lets companies assign trained human agents to more complex inquiries and provide better service.[10]

And with these strategies, there's no doubt that customers will feel strongly attached to your app, making them more likely to come back for more and speak highly of it to their circles.

83%

of consumers would make messaging their main support channel if guaranteed an immediate response (Helpshift)

30%

potential reduction in customer support costs with chatbots (Chatbots Magazine)

8 State of Customer Service Automation 2019. Helpshift. https://go.helpshift.com/rs/113-UDX-599/images/Report_State_of_CS_Automation.pdf

9 Zendesk Benchmark: Live Chat Drives Highest Customer Satisfaction. (2015). Zendesk. https://www.zendesk.com/company/press/zendesk-benchmark-live-chat-drives-highest-customer-satisfaction/

10 Maruti Techlabs. (2017, April 21). Can Chatbots Help Reduce Customer Service Costs by 30%? Chatbots Magazine. https://chatbotsmagazine.com/how-with-the-help-of-chatbots-customer-service-costs-could-be-reduced-up-to-30-b9266a369945

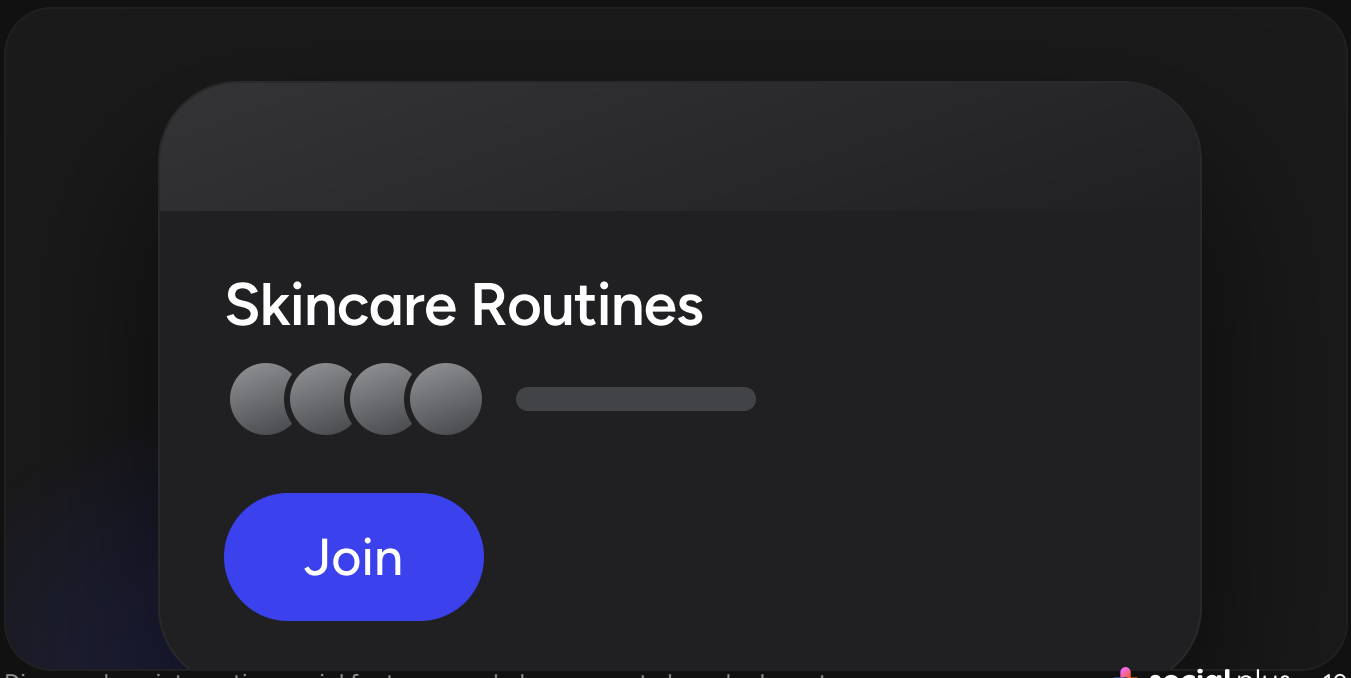
> Community building has become more important with the rise of customer success goals and metrics [...] it's not only important to reach audiences and drive them down the funnel, but to be able to develop an engaged community and fuel customer lifetime value.
>
> — Robb Hecht, Adjunct Professor of Marketing, Baruch College, New York

02 –

Build in-app community

A strong community following can help drive in-app user engagement. Aside from providing a way for users to connect with others, it can also be an effective way to share UGC to build brand awareness and trust, especially with your new users.

Think of your current community inside your app as your brand ambassadors. From in-app groups where they discuss their passions to profiles where they showcase their expertise and experience, brand advocates help create a more engaging in-app environment with the knowledge they share.



Further, many brands also use their in-app communities to test their products. And users like to be involved in product development: it makes them feel that they impact your app's success, with valuable feedback and data that help shape your product.

With this positive experience, you can ultimately create an engaging in-app community among your users. It shows the power of in-app communities with solid, knowledgeable brand advocates who play a vital role in retaining app users.

2.7x

more likely to stay in-app for a sense of community and belonging, according to Facebook IQ[11]

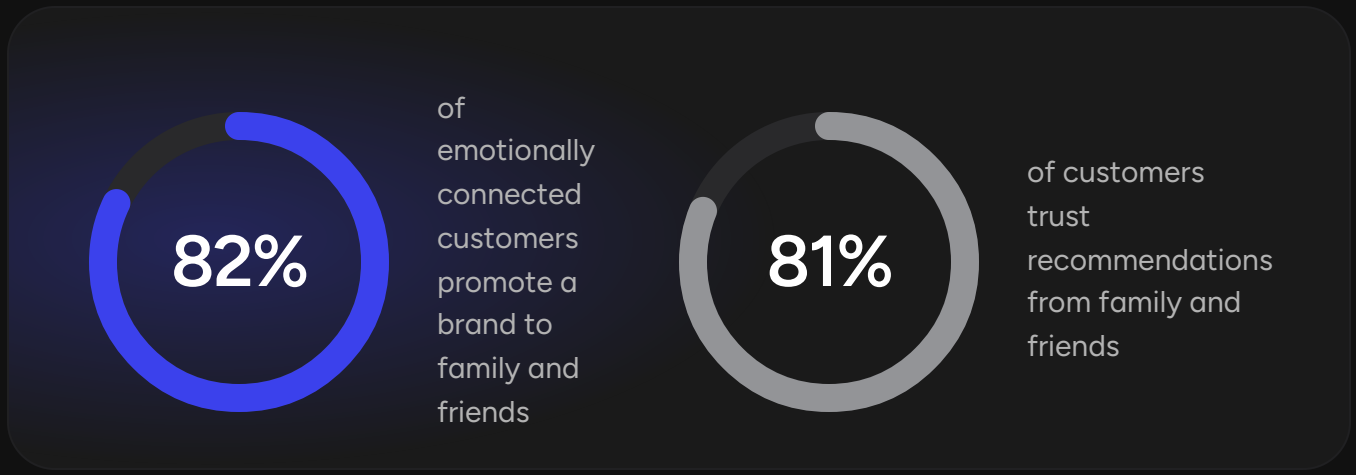
11 Game On: Five Global Mobile Gaming Trends. (2018). Facebook IQ. https://www.facebook.com/business/news/insights/game-on-five-global-mobile-gaming-trends

03 –

Create personalized experiences

Nothing beats providing personalized experiences if you want users to stay loyal to you and your app. Segment reports that personalization leads to repeat business, with **44% of surveyed consumers** saying they would be likely to purchase again in the future.[12]

And of course, who doesn't want to share good, personalized experiences with their network? Capgemini found that 82% of emotionally connected customers will also promote a brand among their family and friends.[13] Meanwhile, HubSpot found that 81% of customers trust recommendations from family and friends.[14]



You can implement personalization through tailored in-app notifications, invitations to private groups with exclusive content and offers, and preference-based news feeds where users find information tailored to their needs, all ways to improve the customer experience.

12 Segment. (2017, October 25). Segment Survey Finds Consumers Will Spend More When Their Shopping Experience is Personalized. GlobeNewswire. https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2017/10/25/1300518/0/en/

13 Loyalty Deciphered: How Emotions Drive Genuine Engagement. (2017, December 5). Capgemini. https://www.capgemini.com/resources/loyalty-deciphered/

14 Redbord, M. (2018). The Hard Truth About Acquisition Costs (and How Your Customers Can Save You). HubSpot. https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-acquisition-study

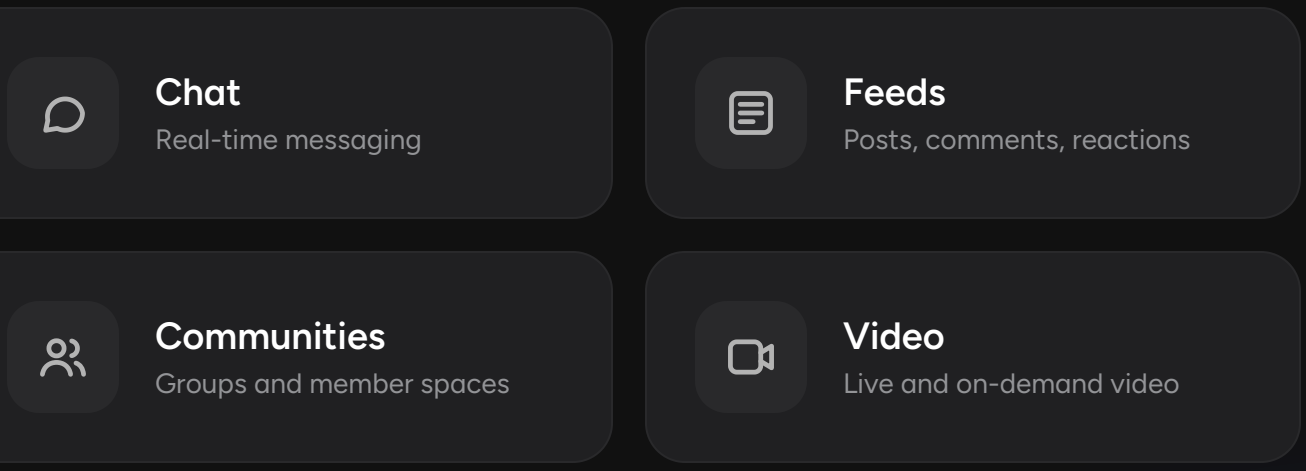
INTEGRATION TOOL

Easily integrate social features with social.plus

Developing such features requires numerous resources: a skilled team of developers and a considerable amount of time and money to get an app up and running on the market.

social.plus can help you achieve that. **social.plus** is a suite of powerful plug-and-play social features designed specifically for companies looking to upgrade their current app and drive better engagement without the hassle of building everything from scratch.

It combines the essentials of today's top social platforms, including chat, feeds, communities, and video, to deliver the best social experience to your end users. Every part is scalable, customizable, and easy to integrate, so it fits your needs.



Discover social.plus →

BRAND STORY

Sephora

> The way we think about loyalty is that our clients are the core of everything we do. We are driven by what our customers love and want more of.
>
> — Allegra Stanley, Sephora's vice president and general manager of loyalty[15]

It all started back in 2010 with the launch of **Beauty Talk**, where Sephora created topic-based groups for users to ask questions, share feedback, and get best practices from other beauty enthusiasts.

With millions of users' posts and replies, and threaded stories about confidence, self-image, and personal experiences, Sephora created a highly effective way to engage with its products and its community.

Building on this successful idea, Sephora decided to move further into community building and brand advocacy and launch an app entirely dedicated to it.

The app, **Beauty Insider**, gave users a way to keep communicating with one another, with experts, and with the brands they love. It also gave Sephora a way to reward its most loyal customers with exclusive discounts and perks, and let them share their experiences with family and friends.

15 Danziger, P. N. (2020, January 23). How To Make A Great Loyalty Program Even Better? Sephora Has The Answer. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/pamdanziger/2020/01/23/how-to-make-a-great-retail-loyalty-program-even-better-sephora-has-the-answer/

It delivers a more holistic and dynamic approach to beauty. It is thoughtful and intuitive, addressing users' questions comfortably no matter where they are on their customer journey.

Multiple channels such as groups, conversations, and other features boost in-app community spirit and help create a safe space where people support each other with personal stories and tips. Finally, it is curated for each user, making the experience even more authentic and increasing monetization opportunities.

Groups

Topic-based spaces for questions and best practices

Conversations

Personal stories, tips and support between members

Rewards

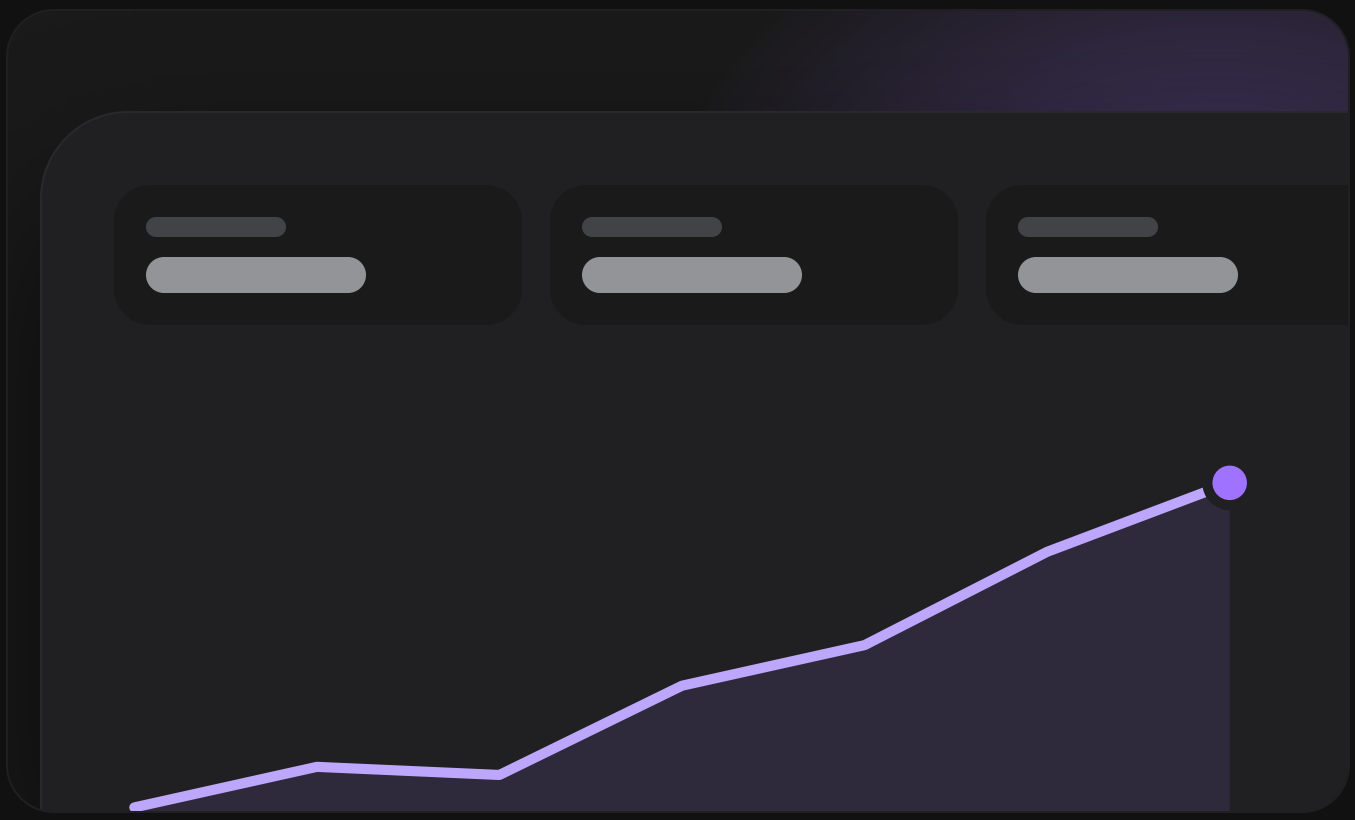
Exclusive discounts and perks for loyal customers

READ MORE

What can we learn from these top branded communities? →

CHAPTER 3

Measure your success with the right metrics



To make sure you devote your marketing and development spend to the experiences and the users that bring you the highest return, continuously track the effectiveness of these features to make sure they matter to your users.

You can do so by tracking the metrics that match each stage of your customer funnel.

01 –

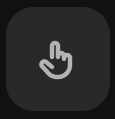
The number of downloads



This metric is the first step in tracking an app's success. Knowing how it evolves gives you insight into how effective your marketing campaigns are and can highlight areas of improvement (e.g., app store listing, optimization).

02 –

Activation rate



But it doesn't end with downloads. You can also look at the activation rate for more accurate data. The activation rate measures the percentage of people who downloaded and opened your app.

03 –

Average visit time



It gives you insight into the time users spend in your app, providing a look into the overall user experience and engagement. If visits are short, you may want to look at your features and design and ask for user feedback to improve your app engagement.

04 –

Active users



Once you know the number of app downloads and who started using your app, you need to find out how many users actually use it regularly. Active users can be segmented into Daily Active Users (DAU) and Monthly Active Users (MAU).

DAU

Users who visit your app at least once per day. They are your most active and engaged users, who consider your app an essential part of their daily routine.

MAU

Users who start a session in your app at least once a month.

By combining DAU and MAU, you can track your app's potential to captivate users, which brings us to the next point.

05 –

App stickiness

To see how many of your users are active daily versus those who only use your app now and then, or just monthly, measure app stickiness.

$$\text{Stickiness} = \frac{\text{Daily Active Users}}{\text{Monthly Active Users}} \times 100$$

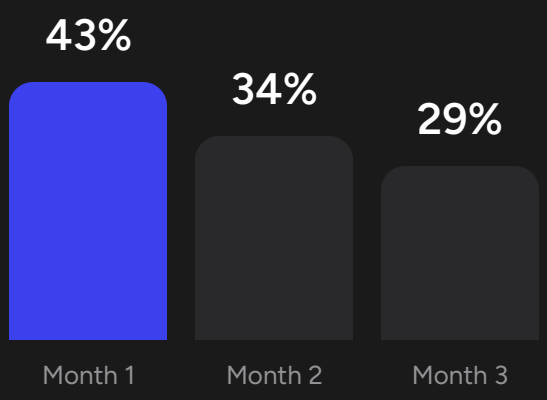
06 –

User retention

A crucial metric for any brand with an app: it tells you how many people return to your app. There are a few ways to measure retention, the most valuable being the percentage of users returning to your app over a period of time: daily, weekly, or monthly.

DID YOU KNOW?

Upland Software says an average of 43% of users return to an app at least once within one month of downloading it, before it drops to 34% in the second month and 29% in the third.[16]



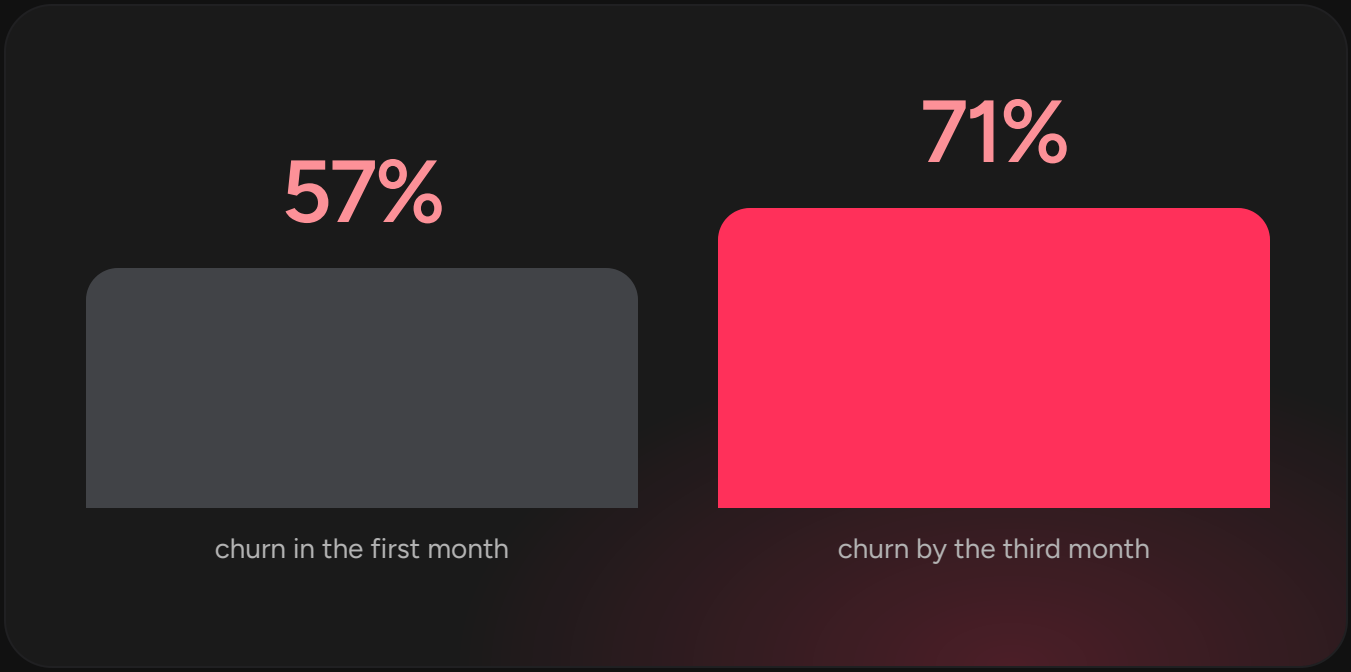
16 Mobile App Retention Rate: What's a Good Rate & 8 Strategies. (2020). Localytics / Upland Software. https://uplandsoftware.com/localytics/resources/blog/mobile-apps-whats-a-good-retention-rate/

07 –

Churn rate

The percentage of users who stop using your app is directly related to the retention rate. What could cause a high churn rate? It could be an unstable app environment: bugs, crashes, and a poor user experience and onboarding.

Another reason may be that you don't have the right target users and, therefore, need to look into your acquisition strategy. Looking into these factors helps you address the reasons your app is losing users and lower your churn rate.



DID YOU KNOW?

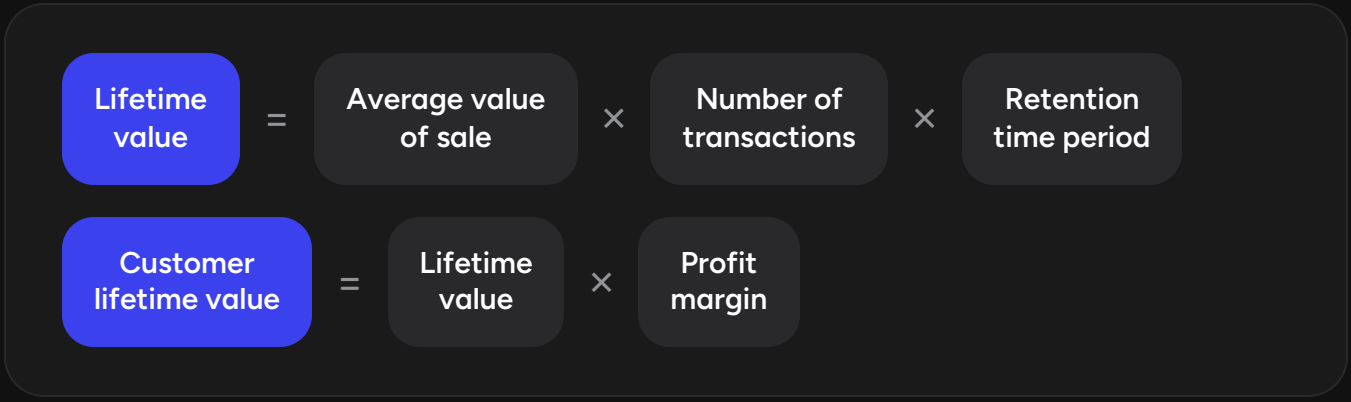
Localytics says that 57% of users churn in the first month and 71% by the third month.[17]

17 Mobile App Retention Rate: What's a Good Rate & 8 Strategies. (2020). Localytics / Upland Software. https://uplandsoftware.com/localytics/resources/blog/mobile-apps-whats-a-good-retention-rate/

08 –

Lifetime value

LTV highlights the total revenue you make from an active user. It tells you the worth of each new user, how much to spend on customer acquisition, and how long you should retain a user to generate profit. Customer lifetime value (CLTV), on the other hand, indicates your marketing strategy's success (or failure), providing a forecast of your growth. Here's how to calculate LTV and CLTV:

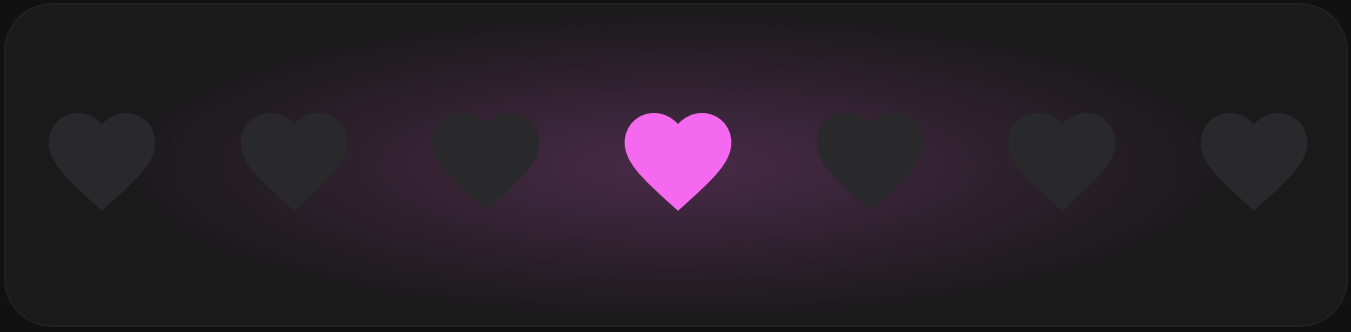


With all these metrics under your belt, you now have various ways to measure your app's performance and gain a deeper understanding of your users, the effectiveness of your in-app engagement strategy, and what drives your app's growth.

These metrics provide in-depth knowledge of your app and users, so you can address potential flaws, build an effective action plan, and adjust your tactics to delight your customers and turn them from casual users into brand advocates.

CONCLUSION

Behind every great brand or product are loyal brand advocates who help propel them to success.



Brand advocates are the ones who help drive revenue and growth, attract new users to your app, and provide the feedback needed to elevate your products. Yet, even with these benefits in mind, companies still fail to recognize the impact brand advocates have on their products.

We think it's time to change that.

Fostering brand advocates should be a priority for your app. To do so, take this opportunity to start providing them with a better in-app experience, starting with integrating social features into your app.

From seamless onboarding to functionalities that promote open communication, community building, and personalization, integrating social features can help cultivate meaningful brand-customer relationships that yield positive results for your app.

And once you have those social features in place, remember to use the right metrics to constantly improve your users' in-app experience.

> **It's not enough to launch your app; it's how you continue to provide the best user experience that builds meaningful relationships with your customers that last a lifetime.**

social.plus

Ready to unlock the power of social experiences with social.plus?

Our mission is to make social experiences more accessible by providing scalable solutions that allow companies to integrate social functions into apps and digital channels, without the hassle of building from scratch. Our SDKs and UIKits enable endless customization and an upgradable UI, making it easy to add social features to your app.

Join successful companies like Unilever, True Corporation, and AirAsia and experience how social.plus can drive better user engagement, increase user retention, build a vibrant branded community, and generate new revenue streams for your app.

If you would like to learn more about how social.plus can help you achieve better results, get in touch with our team today.

Contact Sales →

TRUSTED BY

Unilever True Corporation AirAsia