



Lesson 4 teaches you how to build and customize your foundation templates.

Choosing a Great Template

A great template is one that matches what you are looking for. It might be a small personal game or large business database. Great templates contain:

- Features— solid development with good documentation, bug-free source code, and easy user interface will be evident when you download the original version and use it yourself.
- Support team and/or documentation— someone with the original team to answer questions from your developers. Good communication skills are key.
- Clear ways to customize— customization is less about tangible factors and more about ease of understanding.
- Factors to assess— price, language or platform, resource count, and minimum viable product (MVP) for launch. MVP is the quantity of energy, money, time, and risk required to get the app up and running.
- Common mistakes— fear of competition, narrow focus on core function, lack of planning.
- A decision— don't succumb to analysis paralysis, have a strategy mapped down, take action, and institute slight edge principles to narrow down your choice a little each day.
- Template Function— once you gain several functions in one app and it is working well for a marketplace, you can create a new app; however, consider a new marketplace using that same app.



Adding Value

The core of your strategy should be to add value by creating something unique that matches the people you are targeting.

1. Target Marketplace vs. Topic. This is an important piece. Marketplaces are people and topics are topics. Add value for Roger in Poughkeepsie who is 35 and likes baseball on the weekends when he is not busy with his family. Research Google Trends, BuzzFeed, or BuzzSumo to learn what Roger wants.
2. Problems and Solutions. Identify users' core problems and find the solution. Solve one problem well, rather than many problems mediocrely.
3. Long-Term vs. Short-Term Value. The longer your users keep the app, the more they will spend. The better it gets, the more your customers use it.
 - Reward long-term users.
 - Have quality, regular updates.
 - Show that you understand the users. Consider push notifications, language, punctuation, messaging, etc.
4. External Value. External value builds your brand.
 - Build a Facebook fan page.
 - Create an email marketing campaign.
 - Create a website so people can check you out, like you on Facebook, follow you on Twitter, and build credibility.
 - Build communities around your app. It usually requires massive popularity such as with Clash of Clans, but it doesn't have to be that crazy.



- Pioneer an Instagram account. Create a hashtag there that connects everyone using your app.
- Start a discussion on Facebook. Create a group for everyone who uses your app.

Long-Term Planning

When you buy a template, there is more to think about than purchase and enhancement. You must think about long-term development. Your plan does not have to be a 40-page mission statement, but you do want to think about certain things that will increase your success.

Consider:

1. Development Needs

- Choose the type of development team that will work for your template – whether you hire a full-time developer, use contractors, do it yourself, or combine all three.
- Keep a record of their coding. Have your team document each version and maintain a change log.
- Have an update strategy in order to maintain value.
- Choose your platforms: iOS, Android, Windows, Samsung, GetJar... There are 500 different platforms out there.
- Choose your stores. Your developers will code for a very specific app store and platform set. Plan where to start and where to eventually go.



2. Partnerships

- Partnering is one of the hardest things to do in businesses, especially as an entrepreneur transitioning away from a solo effort.
- There are two different types of partners: yin/yang and yang/yang. You either complement and compensate for each other or you pair as a twin set with similar assets.
- Yin/yang promotes a full-fledged business but can be stressful in its periods of discord. Successful yin/yang partnerships are about objectives, meetings, focus, and direction without emotion.
- Yang/yang is about comfort with someone similar to you. It is fun but more difficult to grow a big business because you will have too many problems that prevent scaling up.
- Choose partners that solve issues in your business. Ask yourself what stands in your way of growing and find someone who can help with your specific dilemmas.
- Partner with companies or joint ventures that can promote you when you are ready to grow.

3. Constant Attention

- Work your template consistently and do it as often as you can to produce your unique template.
- Use a timeline in order to hold your team accountable to giving constant attention and focus.
- Constantly ship, meaning stay, in the mindset of creating updates and trying new ideas.



- Create operating procedures in order to outsource this attention with easily reproducible practices and scale up when the time is right.

4. Your Role

- Growth. If growth is your focus, your role should be entirely about creating systems. Lack of them is the number one thing that destroys businesses because, as you begin to grow, you find yourself working 80 hours a week with no greater profit. Systems allow scaling.
- Product. If product is your focus, your role should be about creating greatness in both simple and detailed features. Focus on customization. Improve user experience.
- Biz Dev. If business development is your focus, your role should be internally driving new templates to plug into your model and publicly promoting your product. This is the point when you become the front end of the company.

As a final note on long-term planning, keep in mind that accountability is the hardest piece. Find ways to hold yourself accountable. You can reach out to accountability partners, create calendars and timelines, set goals, and write everything down. Honor your systems, because entrepreneurship is hard.