



Icons

Without getting deeply into design theory, there are strategies that work to make a great icon in the eyes of a marketer. For example:

- **First Impressions.** The icon is usually the first thing people see, and it can be really easy to ignore your app if you don't have an icon that really nails it. People need to get it right away. When they see your app, they need to say, "Okay, I at least know that I understand 1) what this is about, 2) the quality I am getting, and 3) what keywords this is focusing on."
- **Main Topic.** Focus on one thing that the app does.
- **Identify.** Make the icon identifiable so that it is still recognizable by the user over an extended period of time after the download.
- **Beautiful Graphics.** Step up your game and make it look really nice.
- **Primary Keyword.** Consider your primary keyword and how to package it into a graphical representation.
- **What to Avoid.** Avoid complex designs, text, and photos.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluate your icon against itself. Compare its versions but do not focus on your competition's icons. Instead, load up two icons for A/B testing.

Screenshots

Screenshots are a big part of app design, and your strategy will be similar to that for icons: first impressions, what to include, what to avoid, and how to evaluate. Their real estate allows you to give more information than the icon.



- **First Impressions.** Highlight benefits rather than functionality. Allow it to tell the story of the experience your user will have, or how much better their life will be if they download your app. Keep them scrolling through all five of your screenshots.
- **Consistency.** Match and reinforce expectations that the keywords and icons have established.
- **Simplicity.** Limit your information to one benefit per screenshot. Use text, but keep it simple or punchy – a “Tada!” moment.
- **Beautiful Graphics.** Your graphics do not have to be straight design work; you can use stock photography if you do it well. It is often a combination of layering app images with lifestyle photos or templates that you build. Ensure that the images reflect the quality of your app.
- **Highlights.** Highlight the best moments in the app, such as images of users enjoying the experience. Give the impression of depth.
- **What to Avoid.** Avoid regular screenshots from your device, shots that communicate no benefit to the user, orientations that don’t match your app
- **Evaluation.** Monitor analytics of your conversion rate and follow any changes when you update the screenshot. Ask people what they think and listen to their feedback. Use A/B testing tools at the app store.

Research

Research icons and screenshots, not only for image concepts, but also for keywords, themes, and benefits to lead with.

- **How to Find Them.** Search keywords, categories, top charts, etc.



- **What to Look For.** Look for the most successful apps first. Notice common design themes. Consider what would work if you took it and made it a bit different – more unique.
- **What to Avoid.** Avoid too much focus on the top grossing apps, because they might be buying traffic while they still have poor graphics that are not contributing to their conversion rates. Also, avoid trying to get it perfect from the start. Avoid modeling concepts and not specifics.
- **What to Do First.** Research before and measure along the way. Keep a spreadsheet of what does and does not work for you, and why.

Outsourcing

Most of us out there are not designers. The designer outsourcing process has four steps:

1. **Graphics.** Match the icon and the screenshot graphics style to your app. Remember that ugly graphics will cost you downloads. Create an emotional response. Reflect the needs of your audience. Stay clear of stock photography.
2. **Your Skill Set.** Start simply and gauge whether you are up to the task. Hire someone to design 10 icons, then hire someone else to test them; there are affordable prices out there. Use templates.
3. **Find the Talent.** Look at Upwork, 99Designs, Fiverr, or Elance. Ask your app-related friends or established publishers for referrals
4. **Find the Right Person.** Look at their portfolio and reviews, and do a small demo project with them.