

With SAP mobile solutions, your business runs wherever your people do.

See how. ▶

RUN BETTER.

SAP

Business

FOLLOW MASHABLE >



1.1m



3.2m

Tech Office Hours



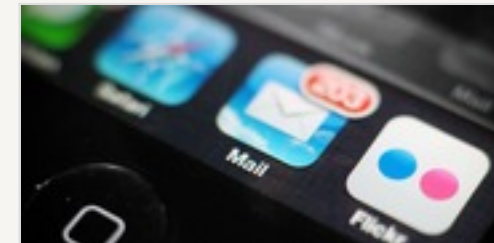
Build a mobile or a Web App?



Why Dayparting Must Be Part of Your Mobile Strategy



iOS vs. Android: What App Platform Should I Choose?



What's the Best Way to Communicate With Your Users?

Use your



keys to browse more stories

PREV

4 / 5

NEXT

What's the Best Way to Communicate With Your Users?

787
SHARES

130
f Share

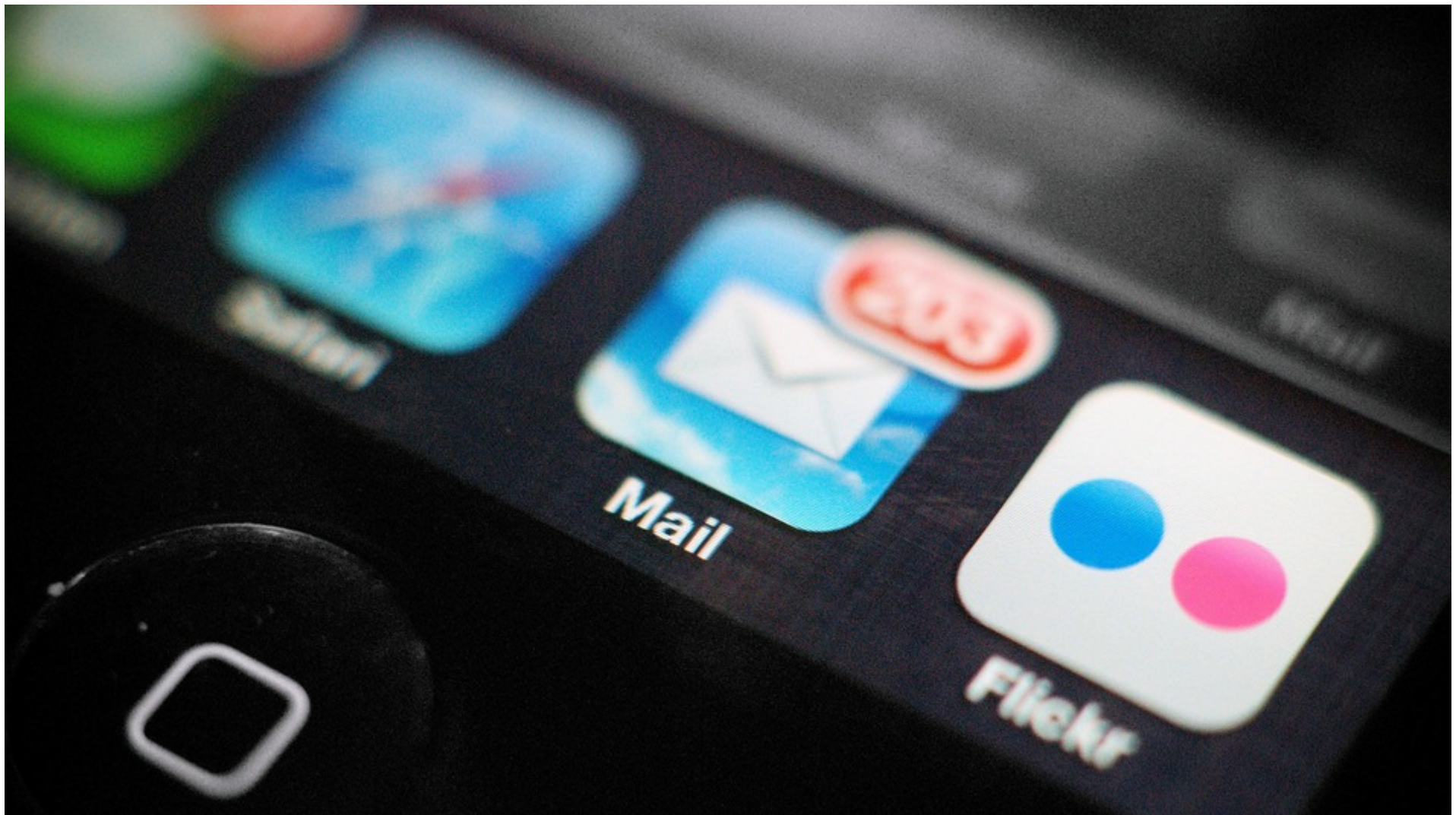
573
T Tweet

22
g+ Share

60
in



WHAT'S THIS?



SPONSORED BY SAP

Technology Office Hours is presented by SAP, the world's leading provider of business software. The best-run businesses run SAP.

BY DANI FANKHAUSER / AUG 19, 2013

Sam asks,

What are the best messaging platforms to communicate with users?

Like many questions, this one can be answered rather easily, with: "It depends." Every startup's product is different, every message is different and there are a lot of ways to send messages to users. The number of channels you can use to communicate with users continues to rise. Social platforms built for connecting with friends turned out to be effective at spreading messages about products and services.

SEE ALSO: [10 Must-Follow Breaking News Accounts on Twitter](#)

Even email, while it is a single platform, has many nuances in terms of how email campaigns can be targeted based on user habits or actions inside your product, if it's an application that can trigger reminders or affirmations. Let's take a deeper dive into the many options so you can learn which messaging platform is best for your needs.

Messaging Channels

Let's pretend you have an app where users can keep a daily log the number of crunches, minutes running or biking and a variety of other exercises. [Users make profiles](#), so you have their email address (always collect email addresses, if you can!). During the sign-up process, you might include the option to follow the

company on Twitter or to like the company page on Facebook, which provides two additional channels to reach this user.

Asking users for their phone number is less frequent, but apps with high security settings such as Chase's banking app may use text messages to send security codes. Some news publications offer to send news alerts via text message. If you can present a compelling reason to users, you may be able to convince them to let you send them information via text.

Robert Livingstone, CEO of [RoyalText.com](https://royaltext.com), says, "With a 97% read-rate and 90% of which occur within a minute, there isn't a better way to reach people with urgent notifications."

Messages aren't always mass-communicated to an entire userbase, though. IT consultant Oleg Moskalensky uses Google+ for any and all communications with customers.

"They have a full suite of tools to relay any message via text, photos, videos, graphics as well as face-to-face video conferencing," he says.

Don't discount the niche networks, which might be right for you, all depending on the type of message.

Most Frequent Message Types

Back to our made-up fitness log app — can you imagine if the company allowed

users to sign up, then ignored them completely? Don't do that. When might you message users?

- **Sale or special:** A text message will ensure a high read-rate and sense of urgency, says Livingstone, noting these are especially good qualities for a message announcing a sale. In lieu of capabilities to text your users, an email newsletter is preferred. Email doesn't have the same urgency as text messages, but many people do read email on their smartphone and thus may get the information at the time it is needed.
- **Service down:** Most businesses don't like to bring attention to the fact that their product isn't working. But, even if users might not be using the product at the moment and it will be fixed before they notice anything was awry, it's nice to let them know you're paying attention. In the case of [Bluehost](#), [HostGator](#) and [HostMonster](#) going down, most users just needed confirmation that they weren't the only person seeing a problem. Also, letting users know service is down also suggests your team is working on fixing it. Obviously, the trick to messaging is that you most likely cannot use your service itself to message customers. When the [New York Times' website was down](#), they let users know via social media (and began publishing full text articles on Facebook). This shows urgency and makes information readily available, but is not as disruptive of users as sending an email might be.
- **"We messed up":** Here, the apology is important. For most companies,

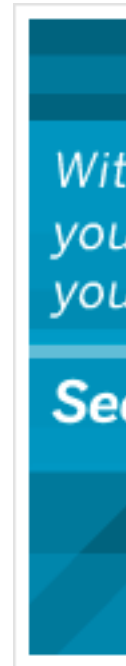
an email newsletter is best because it allows enough space for you to cover your talking points, include some sort of coupon or discount to appease unhappy users and include a support email address for users to voice complaints. That said, it's not out of the question to post something like this on a Facebook Page, where users can easily comment. While some might express dislike for your product, other might accept the apology and include positive comments. Even in the case of negative comments, Facebook allows you to address them through threaded comments, so this might be better in the long run. The biggest downside of social is that this message may not reach everyone in your userbase — email likely will.

- **New feature or other update:** Yes, you're super excited about this thing you just built and you just want to blast it everywhere! But hold up. David Jessurun, who advises startups, recommends you include this information on your website. "Customers really don't care that much," he says. "They want to know stuff that helps them in some way right away, the rest should always be offered in a way that they can peruse the information at their leisure." A blog post is a great way to make an announcement that's not intrusive and can be referred to later, by new users who might not be around when the awesome product feature first comes out.
- **Based on user actions:** Often times, messaging to users will be triggered by time away, rather than usage. You might build a program that will email users when they haven't opened the app in seven days, with copy saying, "We miss you!" and listing a few use cases of the app.

Another option would be push notifications if the app is mobile, but some users will have turned those off — so this might be less effective. Ultimately, email is ideal for communicating to users about their use of the app, because it's personal.

Image: Ekkehard Streit

TOPICS: BUSINESS, CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT, MOBILE, SMALL BUSINESS, TEXTING



↻ Load Comments



Powered by Livefyre

ABOUT US

JOBS

ADVERTISE

SUBSCRIBE

PRIVACY

TERMS



Mashable

©2005-2013 Mashable, Inc.

Reproduction without explicit permission is prohibited. All Rights Reserved.

Designed in collaboration with Code & Theory