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Writing Samples

24 June, 2016

Top Apps for Big Businesses

In the contemporary world, there is a proliferation of applications (apps, for short) that can be installed for an almost infinite variety of purposes on smartphones and related technological devices. Several of these apps can be utilized by businesses to optimize their operations. The purpose of the present APA sample paper provided by Ultius is to discuss the top apps on the current scene for big business. The essay will begin with a general overview of what an app is. Then, it will proceed to discuss five specific apps that can be used effectively by big businesses. These will be: one, TripIt; two, Evernote; three, Uber; four, LinkedIn; and five, Todoist. The essay will dedicate attention to each of these important apps for big businesses in turn.

Overview of Apps

Before discussing the best apps for big businesses, it would perhaps be appropriate to describe and clarify the concept of the app itself. This is what Campbell (2011) has written in this regard: "an app is not just any old software program—it's a special type of software program. An app typically refers to software used on a smartphone or mobile device such as the Android, iPhone, Blackberry, or iPad, as in 'mobile app' or 'iphone app'" (para. 6-7). The idea is that a person can download an app onto his smartphone or related device, and then proceed to use this app to enhance his personal and/or professional lives in a variety of ways. An app is different from software in general that access to the apps is literally at one's fingertips at all times: after

all, most people consistently carry their phones in their pockets, and the apps are accessed primarily through phones.

According to Gibbs, apps are becoming an increasingly important part of the contemporary business scene, to the point that a big business can no longer reasonably expect to succeed if it fails to make an effective use of apps: "With app numbers expanding and becoming almost as common as websites, smartphone users could eventually avoid sites and services that do not have dedicated apps. . . Apps are entering the next stage of their evolution as the smartphone becomes the central point of connectivity with other devices and services" (para. 8 &10).

This is a good statement of the importance of the app today. However, it is a comment on how big businesses should in fact develop their own apps. The present essay, though, will focus on the already-existing apps that big businesses should use to optimize their performance and maximize their success.

App 1: TripIt

TripIt is an app that streamlines travel logistics. As Chowdry (2013) has written: "if you travel a lot, then TripIt is a must-have app. TripIt makes it easier to organize and share travel itineraries, especially for people that travel every week. . . . TripIt can recognize reservations from over 3,000 booking sites including cruises, concerts, and reservations" (section 5). Several of the employees of a big business probably travel quite a bit, as one of the aspects that does in fact make a business "big" is that it has operations spread over a wide geographical area. In this context, TripIt becomes an indispensable resource that can both enable any given employee to organize his travel agenda and allow for different employees to coordinate their travel agendas as well. Difficulties in logistics in this respect could potentially end up costing a big business a

great deal of money over time, as small mistakes add up and snowball. The effective use of the TripIt app could go a long way toward helping big businesses avoid this kind of unfortunate scenario and streamline travel logistics.

App 2: Evernote

Evernote is one of the more popular apps that have emerged within the business world. Duffy (2015) has reviewed this app with the following words: "When it comes to taking all manner of notes and using them to get work done, Evernote is an indispensable tool. Its magic lies in its flexibility. You can bend Evernote to your will and use it for practically anything, from recording meetings to marking up PDFs to keeping a daily diary" (para. 1). An employee within a big business will likely use several of these functions on a regular basis; and moreover, depending on the level of the employee within a big business, he could tailor his use of Evernote to his own purposes. Evernote is thus a multipurpose information management tool; and such a function is clearly indispensable at every level of a given big business.

There would seem to be a lot of subjective testimony from actual businesspeople regarding the value of Evernote. Dalessio (n.d.), for example, has stated that "if you walk away from this article not having Evernote in your pockets, I will not be happy. Evernote is the best tool you will ever come across and if you use it right you will gain huge benefits from it. . . . Evernote is one of the best productivity apps I use" (para. 1). In broad terms, productivity refers to the ratio between results produced on the one hand versus efforts invested on the other; and a productivity app would be one that seeks to maximize this ratio. According to many reviewers and commentators, Evernote is one of the best apps for concretely enhancing productivity within the business setting. And it is easy to see why. A major part of productivity consists of gathering and recording information, and organizing one's thoughts in a coherent way; this is the

foundation of efficient and effective action. And this is precisely the function that Evernote seeks to fulfill. It can thus be said that every big business should probably figure out of to streamline Evernote into its own workflow processes.

App 3: Uber

Uber is a transportation app: the main idea is that one requests a car ride on one's smartphone using the Uber app, and the ride then shows up in a matter of minutes. Uber has proven itself to be far superior to traditional cabs on two fronts: reliability and cost effectiveness. In terms of reliability, the Uber app features an actual map that shows one's requested ride moving toward one in real time. One thus does not need to wonder about whether one's ride will show up, or waste time with actually hailing a car down from the street. In terms of cost effectiveness, Uber rides are ridiculously inexpensive, to the point that one almost wonders where the company's profit margin is—and on top of that, there are no tips involved, either. For a big business that has its employees travel often, the Uber app is thus an indispensable resource. The savings on both time and money can be huge as those savings accumulate, ride by ride, for every employee.

One thing to bear in mind, though, is that Uber is not (yet?) active in all major cities. There have been legal issues involving the new and emergent ridesharing industry, as well as political problems as the traditional cab companies have organized their efforts against this new form of competition. Uber, for example, recently left the city of Austin, due to new regulations that would have required the company to invest in more intensive security screenings for its drivers (McCann, 2016). The Uber app would thus only be effective for a big business if that business has employees regularly travel to cities where Uber is in fact active. However, not only is Uber already active in many cities, it is also poised for significant expansion over the coming

times. If a big business is in a city without Uber, then it will likely have to continue having employees relying on old-fashioned cabs. If and when Uber shows up, this should clearly become the preferred transportation option for big businesses.

App 4: LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social networking app. It is indispensable for big businesses because LinkedIn has become the emerging venue for finding new talent, as well as finding the specialized skills that a big business may need to utilize at any given time. As Lemann (2015) has indicated, LinkedIn is rapidly replacing traditional resumes and other ways of finding employment and/or employees. A big business that uses the LinkedIn app would thus have a distinct competitive advantage over a big business that does not, insofar as it will have ready access to a wide pool of talent and human resources that its rival would not. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that unlike its counterparts such as Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn is quite specifically a social media site that is dedicated to professional networking. It is not about sharing one's personal life; it is specifically about marketing one's skills and finding the skills that one needs for one's big business.

The LinkedIn app has come under fire over time for being far less effective and efficient than the company's actual website. However, this is changing. D'Onforo (2014), for example, has indicated that now, "when you open LinkedIn's Connected app, you'll be greeted with a list of the most important updates in your network—if it's someone's work anniversary or birthday, or if they changed jobs, or were mentioned in the news. It's an easy prompt to reach out to those people, to congratulate them or ask them about their new gig" (para. 3). Moreover, the LinkedIn app is getting better at salience: that is, it is increasingly providing users with the specific updates that will be most important to them, and on which they will be the most likely to act. A

big business depends on maintaining existing professional connections and consistently developing new ones. Insofar as this is the case, it would be impossible to overstate the importance of the LinkedIn app for big businesses.

App 5: Todoist

Todoist is primarily an information management app. D'Alessio (n.d.) has indicated that the app is a "super useful service that will allow you to manage your tasks throughout your day. Todoist is a very minimalist service with a great design across all the applications. You can create lists, email in tasks, colour code and manage tasks with friends or assign and delegate business colleagues. It's a great app for immersion in task management" (para. 2). Like Evernote, then, Todoist can be expected to significantly enhance productivity, where productivity is again defined in terms of the ratio between results produced and effort expended. Streamlining task management is one of the most effective ways to enhance productivity, especially within the big business context, where there is always almost a wide array of tasks that need to be managed in a streamlined and coordinated fashion. Big businesses should thus seriously consider making good use of the Todoist app.

Conclusion

In summary, the present essay has consisted of a discussion of top apps for big businesses. The essay began with an overview of the concept of the app itself, and then proceeded to consider five specific apps that big businesses can utilize in an effective way in order to enhance their productivity and success. An important point that has been made here is that apps would seem to be here to stay: they are becoming increasingly omnipresent within the business world, to the point that a big business that knows how to effectively use apps will find itself at a distinct competitive advantage over a big business that is not skilled at the use of apps.

The present essay has discussed five specific apps for big businesses. This however, is only the beginning. Given the ongoing proliferation of apps, big businesses would be well-advised to search regularly for apps that can meet their specific emergent needs.

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