Building Great Web-to-App Experiences

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Introduction

A mobile acquisition campaign that weaves in great web-to-app experiences is an increasingly popular strategy to boost in-app conversions. More marketers are now utilizing the mobile web to overcome the confines of the app store by delivering richer content and incentives to users before landing them on the app store.

Our studies have found that 60% of all brands' acquisition campaigns send users to the web first, even though mobile apps are their main product service. In other words, while app installation and in-app conversions are the ultimate goals, more than half of all campaigns direct users to the mobile web first.

Campaign Type 1: Directly send to App

Campaign Type 2: Send to Web, Web to App

While the mobile web experience varies from service to service, a common thread across all these websites is the presence of CTA buttons that encourage users to download the mobile app or open a specific in-app page (e.g. Download the App, Open in App, Get the App, etc.), which we call Smart App Banners. Ultimately, Smart App Banners help facilitate smooth and seamless cross-platform journeys (web to app) to increase app installation and in-app conversion rates.

Read on to learn the types of web-to-app strategies and how you can build the best Smart App Banners that maximize in-app conversions.

App Store or Web?

Depending on the type of app you have, you need to choose the appropriate final destination of your campaign. For instance, if you're servicing a game app, you will want to send your users directly to the app store for them to see the screenshots and potentially download the game and test it out immediately.

On the other hand, if you're running an e-commerce website, your campaign is likely to show items that a user might want to view or purchase. For such a case, it makes more sense to have the users browse the selection of products on the web first before making a decision of downloading an app. In other words, you will want to direct users to the web first in this case.

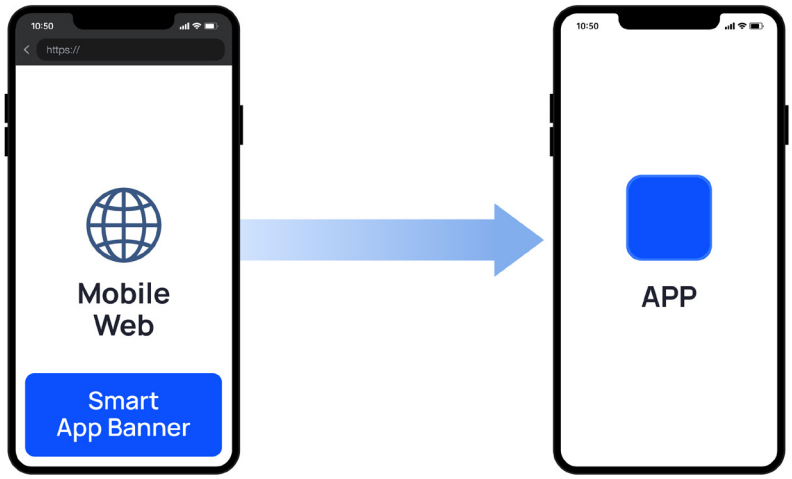
Using web-to-app Smart App Banners on your website to drive app conversions

Our internal studies show that more than one-third of first-time web visitors interact with a Smart App Banner at least once within 72 hours upon arrival to the website. In other words, if your mobile website is not equipped with Smart App Banners, you will lose the opportunity to convert at least a third of users to your mobile app. According to a study[1] by AppMySite and Jmango, apps have three times higher conversion rates and users view four times more products per session within apps, compared to mobile websites. These higher marketing performances are likely due to a more convenient experience in the mobile app than a mobile website, such as a smoother log-in and product check-out experience.

1 https://www.appmysite.com/blog/tips-to-convert-your-web-traffic-to-mobile-app-users-and-retain-them/

Best Practice

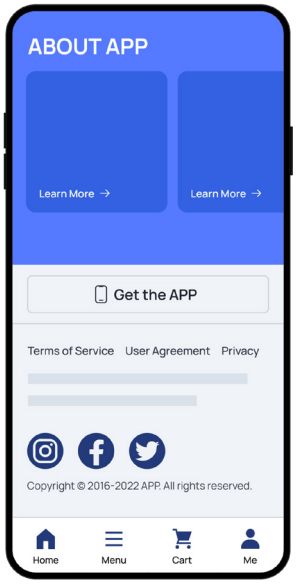
If you are running a full-fledged web and app service, it's highly recommended that you send users to the mobile app through a Smart App Banner on your mobile website.



Choosing the right Smart App Banner position to drive web-to-app conversions

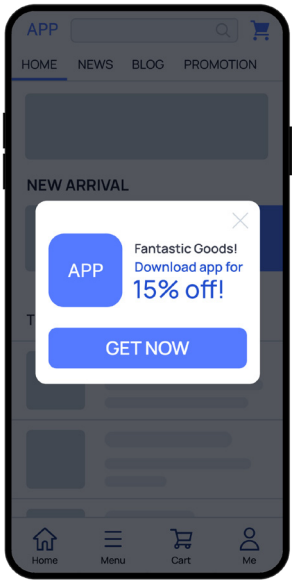
2
Click-through rate (CTR) generally means the ratio of clicks to impressions on a mobile advertising campaign. Here, we divided the number of clicks of the Smart App Banner by the number of times the page is loaded.

User experience is always critical, and this is no exception in the world of Smart App Banners. Airbridge's internal research found out that there are typically four variants that are either winning or losing in terms of their CTRs[2].



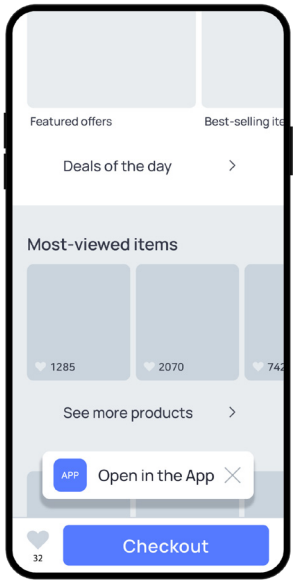
Variant A
Smart App Banner on the bottom of the website.

Result
Variant A shows the lowest CTR (3%) amongst all variants.



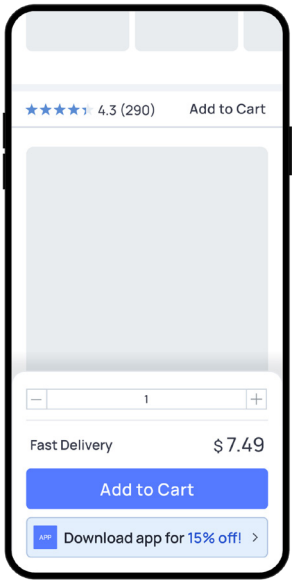
Variant B
Smart App Banner popping up as a modal or slider upon entering the website.

Result
Variant B shows the 2nd lowest CTR (5%) amongst all variants.



Variant C
Floating Smart App Banner underneath the main content without much interference.

Result
Variant C shows a higher CTR (32%) than other variants.



Variant D
Showing Smart App Banner when user clicks the purchase button.

Result
Variant D shows the highest CTR (71%) among all variants.

Wins and losses explained:

- **Variant A (Losing)**
  According to ContentSquare's '2022 Digital Experience Benchmark Report', there is a 54% of average scroll rate across all industries. This means that most users stop scrolling down when they reach half of the website and thus miss the banner that is located on the very bottom of the page. If half of all users did not encounter this Smart App Banner, how will we achieve high CTR?

- **Variant B (Losing)**
  In the case of Variant B, this type of banner is recognized as both a Smart App Banner and a pop-up at the same time. As expected,

there are countless statistics about consumers' bad experiences with pop-ups. In particular, according to a research[3] conducted by WisePops, the second most common answer to the question of why users hate pop-ups was "They appear as soon as I land on a website." This implies that users tend to be annoyed by the pop-ups triggered immediately after their arrival at the website and click the "X" (close) button to continue browsing through the content. Even though it is obvious that Variant B will be viewed the most by users, the statistics clearly suggest that users would instinctively search for the 'X' button rather than clicking on the banner.

- **Variant C (Winning)**
  The advantage of this type of non-intrusive Smart App Banner is that users can still view the main content while having the CTA button floating at the bottom of the page. In other words, users have freedom to take time to view the main content before deciding on when to download the app.

- **Variant D (Winning)**
  It is always right to engage with the users at the moment of value exchange. Users clicking the "purchase" buttons already shows the strongest intent to engage with your product. Hence, it is very natural for them to download the app through the Smart App Banner to continue their shopping experience.

Best Practice

In order to achieve higher CTR, it is recommended to position a Smart App Banner in a non-intrusive way that does not interfere with the user's browsing experience and also to display at the right moment when the user has conducted certain critical actions (e.g. view content more than X times, complete sign-up, click the purchase button, etc.).

3 https://learn.g2.com/case-study/why-your-visitors-hate-pop-ups

Using deep links to bridge installed users to a specific in-app page

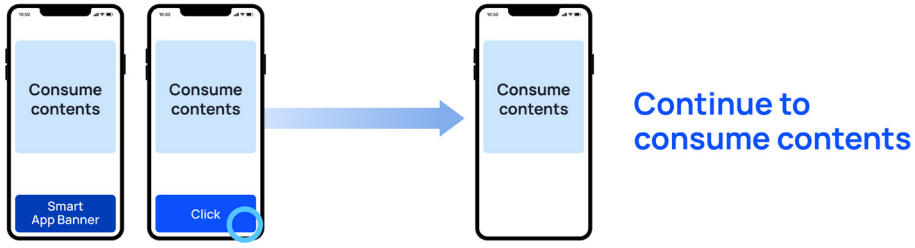
Chances are that 25% of users who interact with the Smart App Banner have already installed your mobile app. As mentioned above, users in a mobile app show higher conversion rates than users on a mobile website.

Let's say a user clicks the Smart App Banner while browsing a specific content on a specific mobile web page, and this user already has the app downloaded on his or her mobile. After clicking the banner, chances are that the user will be brought to the app store again to open the app. In this situation, the Smart App Banner could be seen as an interruption. By using a deep link to direct users to a specific in-app page after clicking the Smart App Banner, you can successfully prevent at least 25% of users from having their browsing journeys interrupted (pausing or leaving the journey).

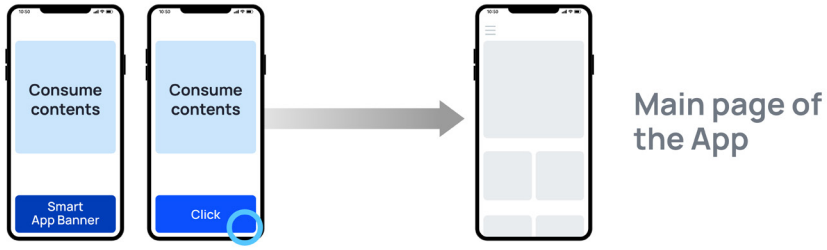
Best Practice

Add deep-linking capability to your Smart App Banner to seamlessly direct users into the mobile application if they have already installed the app and if not then to App Store or Google Play Store as a fallback.

Seamless User Journey (Deep Link ✓)



User Journey with Friction (Deep Link ×)



Iterate with different types of web-to-app Smart App Banners

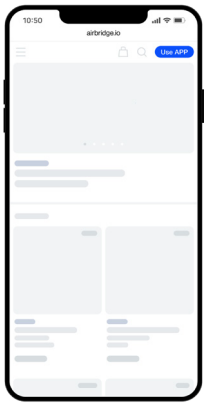
4
https://www.invespcro.com/blog/multiple-call-to-actions-increased-conversions-by-20/

According to non-ecommerce services that use Airbridge, we discovered that the majority of these advertisers use around three to four Smart App Banners in their app. In fact, in various research and case studies, multiple Call-To-Actions proved to lead to a higher conversion rate. In particular, according to Invesp's case study[4], its client company 'Fulcrum Gallery' experienced more than a 20% increase in conversion rate only by placing a few more CTA buttons on its own website. Likewise, Smart App Banner can be used for many different purposes, in many different places, with many different styles.

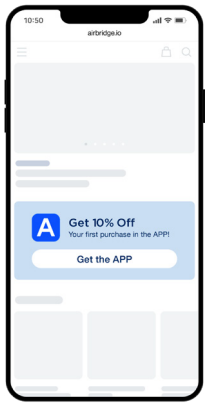
Best Practice

To increase the likelihood of web-to-app conversions, it is helpful to have at least a handful of Smart App Banners. Below are types of Smart App Button used by major industry players which you can consider iterating.

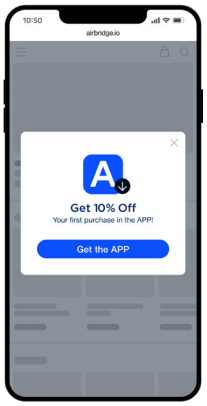
Standard



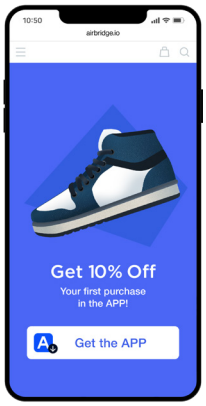
Button in the top navigation bar



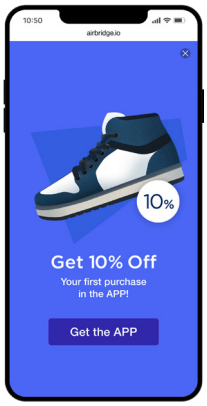
Interstitial in content



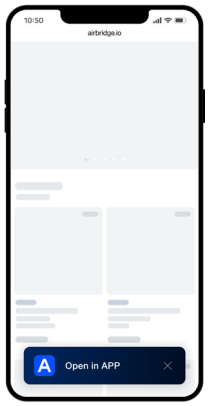
Interstitial modal



Full-page Interstitial in content



Full-page Interstitial modal

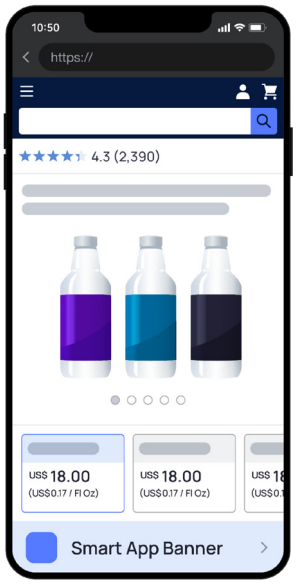


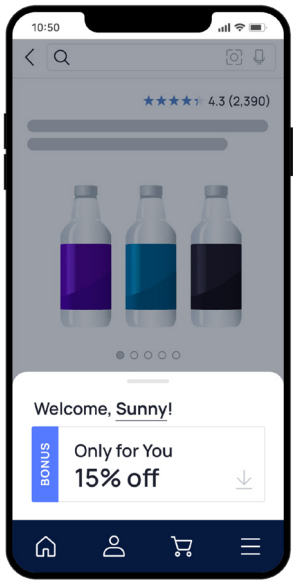
Floating button

Use Smart App Banner with contextual deep link capability in each content page to reduce after-landing drop-offs

We discovered that using over 10,000 Smart App Banners with contextual deep link capabilities (hereafter 'contextual deep links') was a common practice for e-commerce platforms with a large number of SKUs in Asia (amongst Airbridge clients). Contextual deep links are deep links that have the capability to deliver context information to the destination (mobile app). Examples of these contextual deep links include customized welcome pop-ups or automatically applied promo codes on the product detail pages.

There are two benefits of using contextual deep links on the product detail page. First, all contextual deep links in the product detail pages are linked to the corresponding product detail page on the mobile app. This would mean that customers will not lose sight of the product when they move from web to app. Second, more personalized user experiences can be provided to the customers after landing on the mobile app. Customized welcome screens or automatically applying promo code could be examples of the personalized user experiences.





COVID-19 has globally accelerated the time spent on mobile and thus the growth of e-commerce. During the pandemic, we observed a significant increase in the use of Airbridge's contextual deep link generator by clients. In this sense, we are confident that the commerce platforms located out

of APAC (especially, North America and Europe) that pioneer the active use of contextual deep links in product detail pages will have a significant comparative advantage. The new practice will ensure seamless continuity of shopping experiences and contribute to increased conversion rate.

Best Practice

Smart App Banner should not be redirecting users only to the main home page or a fixed page, but to the corresponding pages to ensure the continuity of a customer's shopping experience. In addition, it would be better if contextual information could be conveyed from the web to provide users more personalized experience.

Using contextual deep links on detail pages is strongly recommended for services that provide a large volume of contents (including not only e-commerce platforms, but also social media or online communities). This will certainly differentiate your platform from others.

Dynamic web-to-app tracking reveals the true performance of your web campaigns

It's common that businesses lack a proper unified measurement solution and are left with no choice but to use separate analytics for web and mobile environments. In such cases, only in-browser conversions can be attributed to the web campaigns, and all app installation and in-app conversions that came through the web are merged into 'Organic/ Unattributed'. This results in an underestimation of the performance of the web campaigns.

Internal studies show that across all paid installs analyzed by Airbridge's unified web & mobile analytics, 10%[5] are attributed to web campaigns. Moreover, web campaigns for businesses with full-fledged websites and mobile applications show a 5~10%[6] app install conversion rate on average. Not understanding the true source of the 10% installation, regardless of the number, poses a great threat in operating your future campaigns.

Hence, it is recommended that you attribute not only in-browser events, but also both app installation and in-app conversions (triggered from web-to-app Smart App Banner) back to the web campaigns that originally generated the traffic to the website.

5
(the number of app installations attributed to web campaigns) / (the number of paid installation)

6
(the number of conversions) / (the number of web campaigns)

Best Practice

You should start attributing app installations and in-app conversions to web campaigns to better account for their performances. To correctly discover the true sources of growth, it is best to use a solution that measures and provides both mobile and web analytics.

Web SDK with unified analytics capability helps deliver attribution information from the web to app. It is also able to parse dynamic parameters and retain touchpoint context data from major advertising platforms such as Meta, Google, and TikTok. Whenever users install app or open a deep link by clicking the Smart App Banner and then generate post-install conversions, these conversions can be attributed back to the Smart App Banner. Subsequently, you can correctly attribute the conversion back to the web campaign and not attribute it as organic.

For more information about dynamic parameters, check out below articles from the advertising platforms.

Meta↗ Google↗ Snap↗ Pinterest↗

Conclusion

The content covered in this paper can be summarized into two main points.

1. Utilize the Smart App Banner with contextual deep link capabilities at the right place and time.
2. Correctly attribute in-app conversions and app installations to the true source by taking the entire user journey into account.

Ultimately, crafting the best Smart App Banner experience would require multiple rounds of A/B testing under different contexts. This trial period is necessary because by applying the learnings and making minor changes to the banners, you will be able to achieve drastic improvement on your business metrics. Using an attribution measurement partner may also come as a great help. For example, Airbridge helps generate deep links and accurate reportings on the performances of these contextual deep link Smart App Banners, while providing full web-to-app measurement capabilities to properly map conversions down to the right campaign and platform.

For example, after using the web-to-app integrated analytics, D.code[7], a leading 'fashion pre-order platform', discovered that the purchase

7 https://www.airbridge.io/case-studies/dcode

conversion rate of users who entered through their web campaign was much higher than that of users who entered directly through the app installation campaign. Since then, just by increasing the allocation of the budget of the web campaign, D.code has experienced a tremendous increase in its purchase conversion rate.

About Airbridge

Airbridge↗ is a unified attribution and incrementality measurement platform, helping brands identify the true sources of their digital growth across web and mobile. Leading brands such as GS Retail, Standard Chartered Korea, and Samsung Securities rely on Airbridge's full-suite measurement toolkit: from unified web and mobile analytics to contextual deep linking, to bootstrap their campaign measurement from start-to-end.

About App Growth Network

App Growth Network↗ is an award-winning, North America-based app marketing agency trusted by major brands like Ten Percent Happier, Keap, Amwell, Kings of Capitalism, Cardiogram, Portable North Pole, ThinkUp, Carrie Underwood's Fit52, Color Collab, Breethe, Zynga, and Sage. Our team of experienced app marketers and specialists help leading apps meet growth objectives with our key services, which include App Store Optimization, Paid User Acquisition (Apple Search Ads, Google UAC, Facebook Ads), CRM (engagement & retention strategies), Data Analytics (performance reporting & insights with our premier partners' industry-leading tools) and Creative development (ad creative, screenshots, app preview videos).