

Factors That Impact Developer Engagement & Number of Apps Built



Powering software competitions that drive innovation and awareness

1 Prize Money

More prize money generally means more apps. We recommend a \$10,000 prize minimum, and there is no real cap (we've done app challenges with \$500,000+ in prizes).

2 Prize Diversity

Crafting the competition so that many different types of submissions (games, social media, utilities, etc.) and developers (students, independent shops, big corps, etc.) feel they can win leads to more submissions.

Note: There is some risk associated with assigning categorical prizes, as the same app could potentially win two prizes (e.g., Best Overall and Best Game), and weaker submissions could win prizes in categories with low participation.

3 Mission

Cause-based app challenges (e.g., "Apps for an [Insert Environmental, Health or Humanitarian mission]") encourage more sharing from non-developers, which expands overall exposure. Developers for whom the prizes alone don't merit involvement may hop on board too.

4 Public Recognition

The more winning developers are put on stage (virtual or real) and in front of people they admire (execs, VC's, journalists, other devs) the harder they will work for this spotlight.

5 Brand

The more developers know and trust your name prior to the competition, the more they'll want to be involved.

6 Developer-friendliness of Tools

If APIs, SDKs and other tools are thoroughly documented and easily accessible, developers will have a better time using them to innovate.

7 Staff Resources

Running an effective app challenge requires at least 1.5 full-time resources split pretty evenly between new developer outreach and existing community management. Developers will stop caring quickly if technical questions aren't being addressed, logistical updates aren't being dispersed and nobody is actively getting the word out.

8 Monetization/Commercialization Potential

If developers feel there is good potential to monetize on their app even if they don't win a prize, then you'll get more submissions.

9 New vs Existing Requirements

Submitting or modifying (i.e., "porting") an existing app is far less work than creating a new one, so you'll naturally get more apps if they don't need to be new.

10 Timing

Short submission periods don't do as well as long submission periods. We recommend 3 to 4 months, because it takes a month to get the word out, and at least another month to build a market-ready app you'll be proud to display on your homepage.

11 Platform

Challenges announced and run off a blog post, landing page or other stagnant site aren't exciting, even with big brand names and prize dollars. They should be run on an engaging, social platform specifically built to ease back-end management and showcase quality participation.