

## How much does an app cost?



For many small and medium business owners, the idea of a custom app has probably passed through their minds, but often dismissed over concerns about cost. In this article, I'll outline some of the issues that affect app development, both the WHY question and the HOW MUCH.

### WHY (and why not)

I have a long-standing web client who has progressed from a brochure site, to online enquiries and on to online booking and payments. Last year he mused as to whether he should have an app. I quickly talked him out of it, for the following reasons.

His clients were mostly single purchase or annual purchase, so no impulse buying

His service required detailed description, text not images

His service offering only changed a few times a year

In essence, he was thinking of his website wrapped up in an app. Aside from the reasons above, making an app of a website achieves nothing. There needs to be a compelling reason, something that will increase sales or productivity, reduce waste or cost.

For an SME, an app is more likely to be a tool for employees or business partners rather than customers. Persuading a customer to download an app is no easy task. It needs a strong incentive and there is likely to be a lot of explaining and cajoling to do. So I'm going to concentrate on apps for internal or partner use.

I'll offer three scenarios that might be beneficial to a business. I'll outline the business case and indicate likely costs. Note that these costs assume a solo developer who manages the whole project. Using a development team (project manager, designer, coder, tester) brings much higher costs and is more appropriate for larger businesses pitching to the public.

### 1. Access images or documents

Imagine a sales or service representative who needs to show or even share images or documents with a client. The box-of-brochures day is gone, many businesses have everything on their website. But that has its limitations. Having the files on a tablet has significant advantages especially where mobile networks are poor. But even better, the representative can show and discuss customer requirements, then select which files the customer needs. The app generates an email with attachments that goes to the client. The company has a record of what the client requested.



#### Practicalities and Cost:

The app can download at base any new files, arranged by category. Documents are available even without a connection. Email to customer (cc to office) is sent when communication is re-established. Minimum requirements for back-end website. Cost in the range of €2,000-€4,000.

## 2. Record information and images

Smartphones have made documenting accidents, inspections and locations much easier. But there still remains the issue of sorting, annotating and distributing the images taken. A business that needs images, properly time-stamped, accurately located and securely stored can exert much more control with a custom app. Images can have information overlaid, be posted to a database, encrypted and categorised.

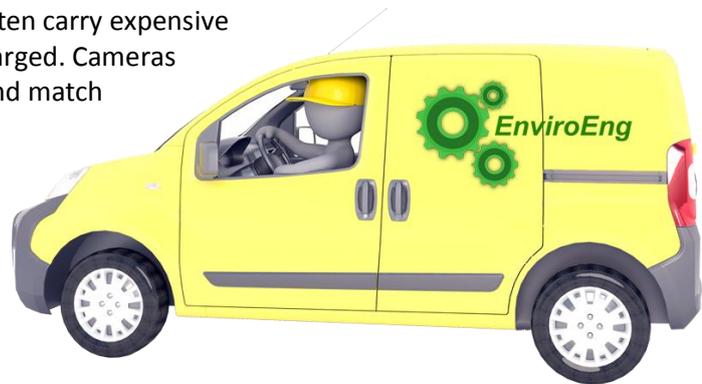


### Practicalities and Cost:

The user inputs information prior to taking photos, such as client, job number etc. Images are recorded. The user selects the best and they are processed and sent with the relevant information to base and/or the client. Some back-end website work will be required, including adding a database or tables. Cost from €3,000 - €7,000.

## 3. Stock Lookup & Control

Installers and maintenance professionals often carry expensive parts that need to be accounted for and charged. Cameras on phones and tablets can read barcodes and match them to stock lists. Items used can then be matched to job numbers, end users and clients. Customer reports can be generated and sent by email.



### Practicalities and Cost:

Stock list and barcode data needs to be available on a back-end system. Operative can scan-in stock from warehouse and update the central system as appropriate. Cost from €5,000-€12,000

For a discussion on options for your business please contact Conor O'Nolan [conor@apptoonz.com](mailto:conor@apptoonz.com)