

■ As revolutionary as the iPhone was when it was introduced, the ultimate potential of this all-display device was realized when apps came along. Those amazing downloadable programs that sit on your screen are transforming the iPhone from a really great mobile phone into a device that can become virtually anything you need it to be. In the words of *NY Times* technology writer David Pogue: “they make the iPhone (or the iPod Touch) do absolutely amazing things...stunts a cellphone has no right to perform.” And apps not only make the device more functional and fun, they make the iPhone a device that changes around you — the things you like, your hobbies and interests, your career, your sense of humor. Although everyone has the same hardware, the apps people choose to add make every phone unique and personal.

While the selection of apps is wildly diverse (from dog whistles to apps that find your parking spot) what makes them great is surprisingly consistent. The best apps are all about looking and acting simple while leveraging the iPhone’s “senses” (multi-touch interface, accelerometer, GPS, camera, mic) in interesting ways. They’re like technology amplifiers that can help you make plans on the go (**Fandango**), get you out of a jam (**Urban-spoon**) or just make it more fun to waste some time (**Rolando**). And now as downloads top 800 million worldwide, they are also becoming an entirely new medium for brands.



■ The best branded apps are about finding the part of your brand that can become a great mobile experience, whether that’s providing entertainment, utility or social value. These bite-sized brand experiences show how technology can actually change audience behavior, and provide marketers with the chance to flex new creative muscles. Success though can’t just be about how cool it looks, or even how many downloads it’s gotten — success should be measured on the audience’s terms: good reviews and ratings, blog chatter, tweets and ultimately whether people find a use for them in their everyday lives.

While other mobile companies are beginning to throw their hat in the app ring, the iPhone App Store has a sizeable lead and will soon be the single largest distributor of mobile content. But, with over 30,000 apps and counting, the challenge for marketers is both to make a great app, as well as help people discover it.

When done well, branded apps will help customers interact with your brand in a more meaningful way because it becomes an extension of the brand, not simply an extension of the marketing.

Click on any of the featured branded apps to find out more about them, see customer ratings & reviews or to download them from the App Store.