

# How To Succeed With Mobile Initiatives



PointAbout's phased approach to mobile development ensures that our Clients can knowledgeably evaluate the mobile landscape, articulate their wants and needs, and develop mobile products accordingly. Our process consists of three main steps, which are reviewed below:

## Step 1: Defining Goals, High-Level Strategy Overview & Data Architecture Review

When a company refers to "mobile," it's typically using the term to cover both mobile websites and apps, each of which should be addressed separately. Mobile websites have broad, although inconsistent, distribution. Every phone has a different browser; there is no standard of Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome like there is in the desktop world.

Mobile apps are typically used to drive deep, rich interaction and experiences. Smartphones are the fastest growing segment of mobile, and for some users they are replacing computers entirely.

## Pre-Development

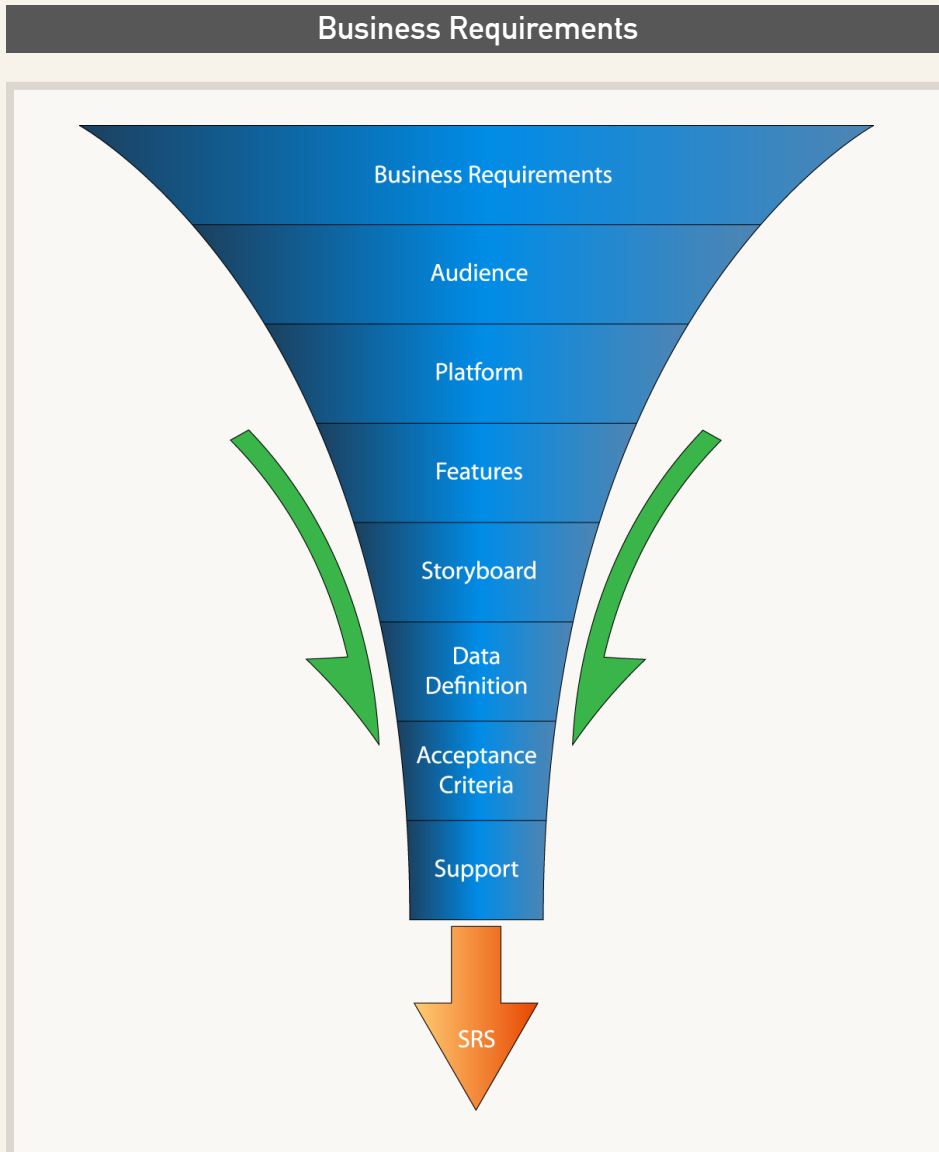
PointAbout uses the Process Funnel below as a guide to help Clients map out their mobile strategy. The funnel emphasizes that building mobile products is a holistic process with a series of interconnected decisions.

Potential clients often send out expansive RFPs and RFQs that require detailed responses regarding a proposed development solution and related quote. The cost of mobile projects varies widely, however, depending on a number of intangibles. PointAbout consults with clients in the pre-development phase to guide them through the process funnel. If a Client has not considered every aspect of their business requirements, audience, platform, features, storyboard, data definition, acceptance criteria, and post-development support, any quote resulting from an RFP or RFQ will be preliminary at best, and could result in costly mistakes throughout the development period.

Pete Johnson, PointAbout's VP of Professional Services, describes the negatives

associated with rushing into development work based on responses to RFQs and RFPs: "For the client, there is a collision course set when a mobile solution with high level requirements is bought for a fixed price. Mobile is a medium in which slight differences have significant cost implications. Additionally, client requirements or clarifications continue to emerge throughout the project, and usually accrue negatively to the developer's bottom line."

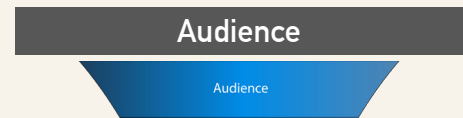
PointAbout consults with Clients to develop a System Requirements Specification (SRS) document that lays out a development plan for apps and/or mobile websites based on each individual Client's expectations, targeted platforms, and preexisting data architecture. The SRS document provided by PointAbout at the end of the consulting period can be used for in-house development, serve as the basis for development by PointAbout, or be distributed to multiple vendors in the form of a Request for Proposal (RFP).



reach new customers and keep them coming back if they truly stand out from the competition. This means having the foresight and patience to create a best-in-breed app as well as the fortitude to see it through. What utilities will make your app a must-have? What apps that aren't necessarily "competition" contain elements you'd like to see in your apps?

*New Sales* - How can app sales help bolster the bottom line? How can you increase user uptake of your app to drive new sales, in-app sales, and/or advertising sales?

*Market Research* - How can you use analytics to optimize User Experience?



Your intended target market defines who the app should be designed to reach. Defining the audience influences decisions in the Platform, Features, and Storyboard sections.

*Target Users* - What is the demographic profile of your intended target audience?

*Stakeholders* - Before an app can be released in the wild, it



Business Requirements spell out some of the most important components of a Client's application.

*Ad Sales* - How can you maximize user downloads and ad revenue?

*Education / Engagement* - How can/should you engage users to keep them coming back?

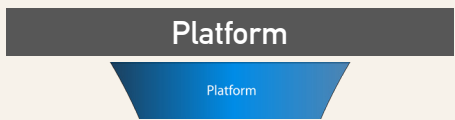
*Branding* - What kind of feedback channels do you want to open? What social media outlets do you want to tap and how?

*New Customers / User Acquisition* - Apps only

needs to meet the approval of a range of stakeholders, including operational and economic.

**Competition and Precedent** - What can you do that your competitors aren't already doing? What should you do that they're already doing?

**Advertisers** - Which advertising vendors should you consider, which do you already use, and what kind of advertising would you prefer to include in your app? Banner/interstitial/sponsorship?



PointAbout helps Clients strategize which platforms to target with their mobile apps. We examine all platforms to gauge whether there would be significant benefits to creating apps on them.

**iPad** - The iPad is a new technology platform, and although it's an extension of the well-known iPhone SDK, building software for the iPad carries its own inherent challenges.

**iPhone/iPod Touch** - PointAbout's AppMakr service has been the force behind more than 1200

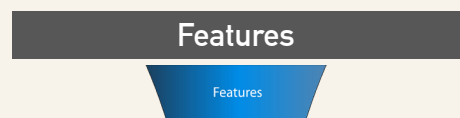
iPhone apps, which have had over 1.2 million downloads in the App Store.

**Android** - Smart phones running on Android OS are rapidly gaining market share, and Google's plans for web-based apps on Chrome have the potential to challenge Apple's dominance in the app market.

**RIM/Blackberry** - Blackberry accounts for more smart phone users than any other device, yet their App World contains roughly 1/10th the number of apps as Apple.

**Windows Mobile** - Microsoft has been very silent in the app space, but is the 'lurking giant' and is starting to re-prioritize for apps. Other considerations come into play with Windows Mobile such as: What languages will optimize speed of development, UXP, and content delivery to apps? Which of these considerations is most important?

**WWW** - Do you want to create a mobile website, or just mobile apps?



PointAbout has strategic partnerships with a number

of mobile solutions providers. We also have reusable code libraries and access to open source that is specific to the mobile app space.

Some primary technology categories that we explore during Step 1 include Push Notifications, Analytics, Advertising, eCommerce, and Social Media/Sharing. Considerable energy will be spent pinning down what you can and should do to maximize user retention and acquisition through the use of features.

## Storyboards

### Storyboard

Storyboards are visual designs of the app's expected look, feel and functionality. Storyboards and wireframes provide the groundwork for necessary decision-makers to understand exactly what the app will be able to do. Additionally, they allow development teams and data providers to understand expectations for back-end data processing and front-end display.

Wireframes - Have you thought through every nook, cranny, back button, swipe, and pinch/zoom of your app? Developed use cases?

Pixel Perfect Images - Images created based on wireframes that developers use as the basis for app creation.

Style Guide - How should the app look and feel? What message do you want it to present? What are your company's color schemes, preferred fonts, etc.?

## Data Definition

### Data Definition

What does your data architecture look like? Is it equipped to deliver what you need to create these mobile applications?

Are you running legacy systems that do not interface with web-based protocols and API calls? If so, what data mapping needs to be done to extract the data from the system so it can be utilized by the app?

Do you already have APIs created to allow for extraction of data by the mobile device?

Is your data kept up to date automatically? If not, does it need to be updated manually?

Mobile tends to uncover data issues, including instances where data is not updated often enough, which can go unnoticed on the desktop but in mobile becomes very

apparent.

Do you have ways to allow data to be inputted by the mobile user (i.e. comments, user locations, blog postings)?

On mobile web this is typically just http based form submissions.

On mobile apps this is typically via direct API access to the data sources.

Are you counting on RSS feeds to deliver data to the app? If so, are those RSS feeds displaying full data feeds, or just summaries? Do the RSS feeds validate? How are the RSS feeds updated?

Do your various data sources speak to one another? If a query needs to be made that involves multiple data sources that are typically not queried together, will there be problems?

Do you have places to put new data that is created by mobile users? Examples include GPS coordinates, user generated content, time-based requests for information.

What analytics and tracking systems are you currently using? Will you be able to extend those to gain insight into mobile usage? Are

there native SDKs available (if mobile apps) for these analytics applications? What reporting will they be capable of? Will that satisfy all of your stakeholders' needs?

Do multiple systems need to be updated when something happens on the mobile device?

Have you moved to a Service-Oriented Architecture design? If not, do you want to do so to facilitate your mobile initiatives?

How can you achieve your mobile objectives without having to re-architect large parts of your internal systems?

**Acceptance Criteria**



Acceptance Criteria is a line-by-line explanation of requirements the app must fulfill before it can be deemed accepted by you and submitted to Apple's App Store.

**Support**



Our pre-development planning processes and project management systems employed during

the development phase ensure we are able to deliver successful, market-ready applications in a short window of time.

We update Clients on progress through email and conference calls, and give daily, weekly, or biweekly updates on each project's development progress.

Communication during all phases of development is critical to building successful mobile products. We encourage constant communication throughout the development process. We also use project management tools, namely Unfuddle, that enable Clients to stay apprised of developments via RSS.

PointAbout's work isn't over when the development phase ends. We remain on board after mobile products are launched to help Clients correct data or display errors and repeatable software-specific crashes. Post-development support offerings include: App Promotion, Support for the first 30 days, a comprehensive "Month One" report, and Optional Ongoing Technical Support.

the cars.com mobile website makes up **5%** of all cars.com web traffic.

the **6%** iphone app makes up

this adds up to a total of **11%**

Nick expects mobile to hit **25%** of all Cars.com traffic by 2011, and **50%** soon thereafter.

For more statistics, and information about why Cars.com continues to a successful mobile player, read our case study with Nick Fotis of Cars.com. Visit [link.PointAbout.com/cars-case-study](http://link.PointAbout.com/cars-case-study) or click below:

### Things to Consider and Review in Step 1

- Have you considered which mobile approach is best for your business?
- For mobile web: Are you going to do phone browser detection and serve content that's optimized for each phone's browser? Or will you be satisfied with one mobile website version of your content that does not render differently on each phone, but is more digestible on the mobile form factor than the desktop version of your content?
- For mobile apps: The app space is very fragmented. Since apps are software, and each operating system is different, apps created on one platform will not run on others. You have to individually consider each platform.
- Have you considered each layer of the process funnel?
- Have you reviewed and prepared for all aspects of the mobile process?
- Will your audience respond well to mobile initiatives, and how do you want to reach them?
- What kind of support does your business need throughout the mobile development process?
- What is your goal with your mobile initiative?
- Are you looking for an ROI off of each project, or are you treating mobile as a marketing expense item? Is your goal to drive increased awareness of, or engagement with your brand?
- You may often find the answer is a mix of the above. You may have different mobile goals for different parts of your customer life cycle. For example, you may be focused on generating awareness through mobile games, and then utility through mobile apps, and continued engagement with the brand post-purchase.
- Are you looking to generate revenue from each mobile initiative? If so, do you expect that to come from advertising, sponsorships, integrated purchasing (such as in-app purchasing), or direct sale revenue (i.e., charging for an app)?
- Does your sales force know how to sell mobile? Will you have to train your sales force up on mobile ad unit sizes and functionalities?
- The point above tends to be a big issue with app sponsorships. Sales teams typically sell on a CPM basis and are not well equipped to sell sponsorship deals.
- Do all stakeholders in your organization understand the steps involved to creating mobile initiatives?

Typically, involvement is as follows:

#### Executive Staff:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Get buy-in and a dedicated budget to fund mobile objectives over the next 12 to (ideally) 24 months.

Create and share a roadmap (see step 2) with time frames for various components. Get roadmap approval.

#### IT / Technology Staff:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Clearly articulate the required involvement by each component. Ensure bandwidth is available to execute.

Product Management:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Marketing:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Start planning messaging, roll-out and marketing integration of mobile initiatives within the overall marketing plan.

Define dedicated marketing budgets for marketing initiatives

Sales:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Human Resources:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Customer Support:

Get prioritized list of requirements for mobile initiatives.

Plan ramp-up of customer support staff on mobile questions that will be coming from user base

**Step 2: Define Long-Term App Strategy & Roadmap.  
Derive Short-Term App Strategy & Roadmap From Long-Term Plan**

In determining mobile strategy, a business must think about how its users will interact with its various components. Some typical examples are as follows:

- A business creates a mobile web presence that offers limited functionality found on the desktop version of its website. This mobile website might use browser detection to serve an optimized version of its site to each type of mobile phone (expensive) or it might just be a pared down, easy to read version of its desktop website (inexpensive).

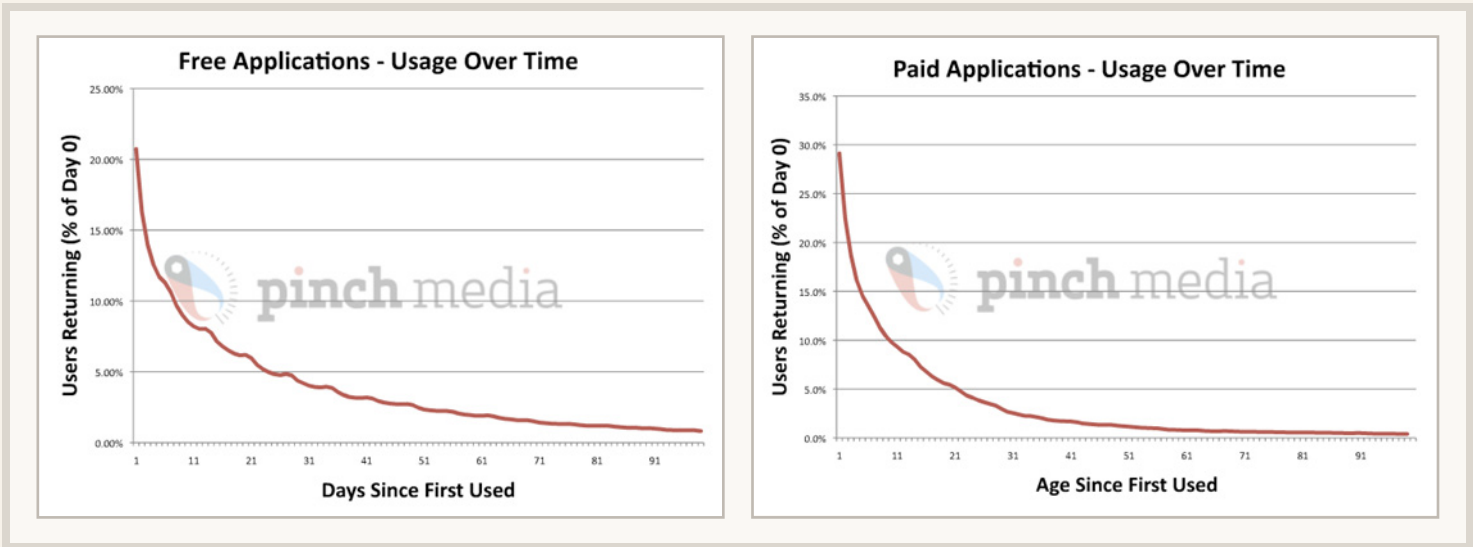
- Separately, the business might choose to make one or more mobile apps for each part of the customer life cycle, to drive awareness of the brand, engagement and interaction with its content, and customer loyalty.

- Mobile web and/or apps may be used to drive revenue. Content may be restricted unless a user has paid for the specific content, or functionality may only

become available once paid for.

- Businesses may choose to make one or two “flagship” mobile applications that are expensive to produce but hold the majority of the content and functionality the brand represents, along with a suite of lightweight, temporal apps which are relevant to users for specific events.

Specific to mobile apps, the usage patterns of returning users show that lightweight, temporal apps tend to produce the most value, as the percentage of returning users drops significantly over time (see on next page).



According to Pinch Media (since acquired by Flurry), long-term app usage tends to be 1% of total downloads. The entire Pinch Media deck, titled “App Store Secrets,” is available at ([link.pointabout.com/pinch-stats](http://link.pointabout.com/pinch-stats)).

**Things to Consider and Review in Step 2**

- How centralized or de-centralized do you want your mobile strategy to be? Do you want to allow individual business units to launch mobile initiatives independently?
- Related: Will the end user’s experience suffer from a decentralized mobile strategy (i.e., a user has to use one mobile website or app to perform one task, and switch to a different mobile website or app to perform a

different task)?

- How will the user experience differ in mobile web and mobile apps? How will you take advantage of what apps can offer, including:
  - GPS locating capabilities
  - Proximity sensors
  - Accelerometer
  - Camera
  - Augmented Reality
  - Access to address book
  - Compass
  - Pinch, swipe & dragging
- How will you market each mobile initiative to users?
- Set metrics against your mobile goals for three, six, twelve and twenty four month periods. Standard metrics include:

For Mobile Web:

- Total ad or sponsorship revenue generated
- Number of mobile web visitors (both uniques and aggregate)
- Total web page impressions
- Time spent on site
- Number of page views per visitor

For Mobile Apps:

- Total ad, app or sponsor revenue generated
- Total downloads
- Total page views
- Device usage patterns (based on accelerometer, proximity sensor data)

- Geographic usage patterns (based on GPS, WiFi triangulation)

- What are your immediate mobile goals (next 3 months) based on the questions above, and which project or projects do you want to tackle first?

- Ideally high-level design will be integrated into step 2 (whether the design is coming from your team or ours). We like to use rapid prototyping tools like Balsamiq ([www.Balsamiq.com](http://www.Balsamiq.com)) to ensure everyone is on the same page for proposed mobile web and app functionality, even at a high level.

### Step 3: Specify Mobile Web & Mobile App Requirements, Scoping & Versioning

(Repeat this step as needed for each distinct project based on goals from Step 2)

Mobile app development differs greatly from mobile web development in the fact that mobile apps are compiled software. This means that a very specific process must be followed to ensure a successful product launch.

Here are PointAbout's recommendations for mobile

web and mobile apps:

**Mobile Web:** Companies will generally start with free or nearly free solutions like Wordpress or Drupal plugins that will reformat content for the mobile device, but not do browser detection for specific phones.

There is an entire industry of mobile website solution providers, from templated solutions to software that integrates with CMS systems to reformat content appropriately by the requesting device. Cost can be from free on the open source CMS side, to \$100,000+ if software is installed in the enterprise to sit between the CMS and the end user. PointAbout can handle this through partnerships with leading vendors of this technology, and project manage the entire solution.

**Mobile Apps:** It is critically important that stakeholders be brought in early and requirements be specified in a detailed manner up-front, before a single line of code is written. Many companies are used to doing web-based development, where requirements can be reset after the process has begun – also known as an “agile” development process. However, since apps are

software, requirements must be set and signed off on before development begins – known as a “waterfall” development process, where the next piece flows from the last. Changing of requirements after development has begun with mobile apps is a very costly exercise.

A special note for the iPad: The iPad's larger form factor means it is a design-heavy device. While design is an integral part of the entire mobile initiative ecosystem, it's especially true for the iPad: Good design can make or break the app.

### Things to Consider and Review in Step 3

- What are the prioritized stakeholders' objectives for the project
- Which of those objectives can be accomplished in this project, based on its time frame and budget?
- How will the objectives that don't make it into the first version be treated? Ideally a roadmap is created that encompasses all objectives and is versioned appropriately (i.e., what is included in version 1.0, then 1.1, then 1.2, etc.)

- The requirements must be detailed in our Software Requirements Specification document located at ([link. PointAbout.com/SRS](http://link.PointAbout.com/SRS)) (sample copy also attached to this document) and signed off on before development begins. A project quote will be given based on these requirements.

- How will our design team interface with yours? Does your design team have specific mobile experience? If not, it's often best to simply provide assets and high-level design guidance to our team. Mobile design is very specialized, and designers who do not have mobile experience often do not realize this until it is affecting the project.

- As part of the SRS, detailed mockups (wireframes are OK) should be provided for each screen that include all functionality and content placement. The detailed mockups should be part of the sign-off process. These detailed mockups will then be turned into pixel-perfect mockups before the mobile websites or mobile apps are created.

- Who will interface with the development team to ensure project success? This person must also have the necessary

authority to make decisions on behalf of the stakeholders.

- Quality Assurance testing is a big part of ensuring a successful launch. We have an evolved QA process we run internally but also turn to you to QA within your organization once the app has passed our QA testing. It's important to ensure you either:

A) Have a group of people ready to perform the appropriate QA testing on the project, or

B) Define exact QA testing requirements up-front to allow us to perform all the necessary QA testing in-house

A special note about getting a signed SRS for Mobile Apps: Various stakeholders within an organization will often wait until after your internal deadlines to provide feedback. Often, these stakeholders may be executives at the company that do not have time to provide feedback until the finished (or nearly finished) project is presented to them.

Especially within the large enterprise, it's critical to ensure these stakeholders have ample opportunity to provide feedback early in the

process, before the SRS is signed, and understand the cost and time ramifications of waiting until development has begun to provide feedback on the project.

### Ready to Mobilize?

PointAbout offers expertise in all aspects of mobile development. We have a wide range of experience tackling mobile strategy and development. Pete Johnson, PointAbout's VP of Professional Services, and the rest of our staff are passionate about helping our clients meet their goals. You can find examples of some of our previous work here. PointAbout's consulting division offers a pathway to mobile success through our expertise, relationships within the mobile industry, and continued support throughout the development process. To get started defining your mobile strategy please contact Pete Johnson at [pete.johnson@pointabout.com](mailto:pete.johnson@pointabout.com) or 301.602.1210.

## SRS Document Sample

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 Terminology

- 2.1.1 Tab Bar:** a standard navigation component of iPad applications, whereby user is able to navigate between areas of the application by clicking tabs or “tiles” at the bottom of the iPad screen.
- 2.1.1.1 Tab** (referred to by The Client as “Channel”): A section of the application within which content is grouped into Articles and Lists of Articles.
- 2.1.2 View:** A screen configuration, for example:
- 2.1.2.1 Detail View:** The smallest Navigational unit of the application. An item in full detail (i.e. a full-text article or full-screen image).
- 2.1.2.2 List View:** The List of tabs arranged in a single column across the width of the iPad screen, via which users access Detail Views.
- 2.1.3 Action Sheet:** A list of options for possible actions, displayed on a translucent “sheet” that partially obscures a user's current view.
- 2.1.3.1 Apple Convention:** “Cancel” on the action sheet must appear at the top of the list of options, furthest from the tab bar.
- 2.1.3.1.1** Apple Standards dictate that icons for the tab bar must be approximately 30px x 30px in dimension, a single color.
- 2.1.3.1.2** Per Apple Standards, Tab bar highlight color cannot be changed.

## 3 Appearance

### 3.1 Wireframes

- 3.1.1** Application designs and/or mockups are included in each subsection of the SRS for reference only. Inclusion of designs provided by Client shall not signify contractual obligation to fulfill designs exactly. Where discrepancies exist between scope and design, vendor shall note which items are subject to revision and provide a suitable alternative.
- 3.1.2** Client must provide design assets to iPad specifications outlined by PointAbout.
- 3.1.3** PointAbout will advise on any disparities that could lead to Apple's rejection of the applications based on differences between Client's desired behavior or appearance and known standards as documented in Apple's Human Interface Guidelines and/or Resource Libraries. Client may access relevant Apple documentation at any time via the iPaddevelopers portals, or by requesting copies of such documents from PointAbout.

## 4 Back-end Set Up and Design/Data Sources

- 4.1 Final designs**
- 4.2 Server Set up and Hardware**
- 4.2.1 Content hosting server**

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