

# Beginners Guide to App Store Optimization in India



Are you looking to increase your app's visibility in the app stores? Do you want to increase traffic and the number of downloads of your app? Wondering what will improve your conversion rate (CVR) and get the maximum volume of organic downloads?

You have got your hands on the right guide! AppTweak's Beginner's Guide to App Store Optimization in India will help you understand how to make the most of organic app marketing in India.

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# 1. What is App Store Optimization?

**App Store Optimization (ASO)** is the process of improving an app's visibility in the app stores to increase organic app downloads.

ASO primarily focuses on two pillars: **keyword optimization** and **conversion rate optimization**.

For an app to rank higher on various search terms, it needs a strong keyword optimization strategy.

Excellent **conversion rate optimization tactics** will make sure that this increased visibility leads to more app downloads.



## How do app stores' search engines work?

Apps are **more visible** when they rank high for various search terms, maintain a high position in the top charts, or get featured on the store.

Several apps will show up in search results if you enter **generic keywords** like "document scanner" or "photo editor". Apps are listed based on **the search terms used** and put into a ranking order by the **store algorithms**, highlighting why keyword optimization is so valuable for App Store Optimization.



## 2. Why is App Store Optimization important?



**India's app sector** currently leads the globe in terms of installations, with over **28,456 Indian publishers** listed on Google Play. As the industry grows at a quick pace, it is critical to remain current on current trends and **new developments** that might inform your marketing approach.

To work in tandem with the **app stores' algorithms**, app developers and marketers need to optimize their app metadata, creatives, reviews and ratings, and more, all of which are mentioned in detail throughout this guide.



**Organic approaches** to app marketing aim to consistently **increase** the potential of finding higher quality users within the stores.



# 3. Which factors impact your app store ranking?

To get started with ASO, you need to understand the app store algorithms. Hereunder, we describe the main ASO ranking signals that impact the algorithms on **Google Play and the App Store**.



## 1. Keywords in metadata

For the app stores to decide whether or not to rank your app for a particular search term, the algorithms look at the keywords provided in the **app metadata**. If the keyword that users searched for has been added to your app's metadata, your app has a chance of **ranking** for that **search term**. The store algorithm will further assign your app a **higher position** if the keyword is found in your app title.

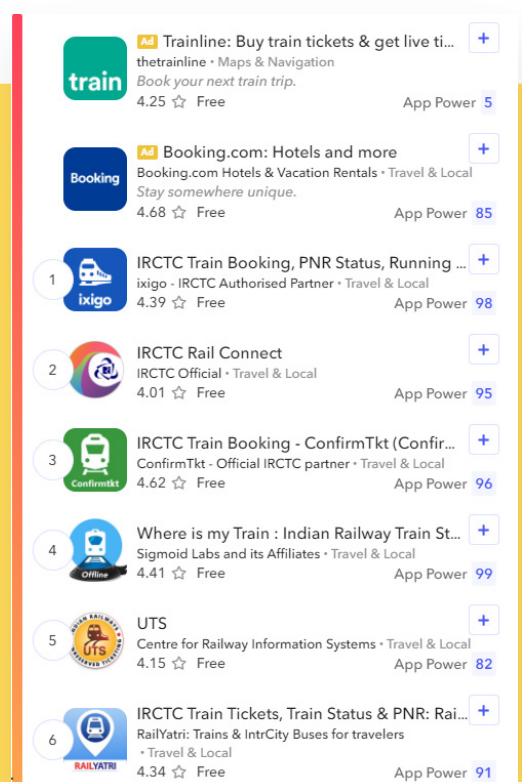
As a **general rule of thumb**, keywords in the app title carry more **weight** than keywords in the **short description** (or subtitle), which, in turn, carry more weight than keywords in the **long description** (or iOS keyword field).

## Expert Tip

When looking at the **live search results** for the keyword "train ticket booking" on **Google Play**, we see that all the apps that rank for the **keyword** have added it to their title. This suggests that apps that don't have this keyword in their title have a **lower chance** of **ranking** for this keyword.

Source: [www.apptweak.com](http://www.apptweak.com)

Example of conducting a Live Search using the keyword "train ticket booking" on Google Play.



## 2. App download volume & velocity

The number of daily app downloads is one of the most vital ranking signals on Google Play and on the App Store. A high number of **daily downloads** will help increase your ranking for a wide variety of terms. **Therefore**, it is crucial to consider the quality of keywords added to your **app's metadata** so that more users can discover your app.



## 4. Ratings and reviews

Your ratings and reviews represent another **major ranking** factor. Having a lot of **positive reviews** signals to the algorithm that users tend to like your app. **Therefore**, it is vital to encourage your users to leave reviews and ratings to **increase** your **app's weight** in the **algorithm**.

**More importantly**, the Google Play Store gives a higher weight to the latest reviews. So, when releasing a new app or update, the newly launched app should have all **bugs ironed out** to avoid an influx of reviews that might negatively impact your **long-term visibility**.

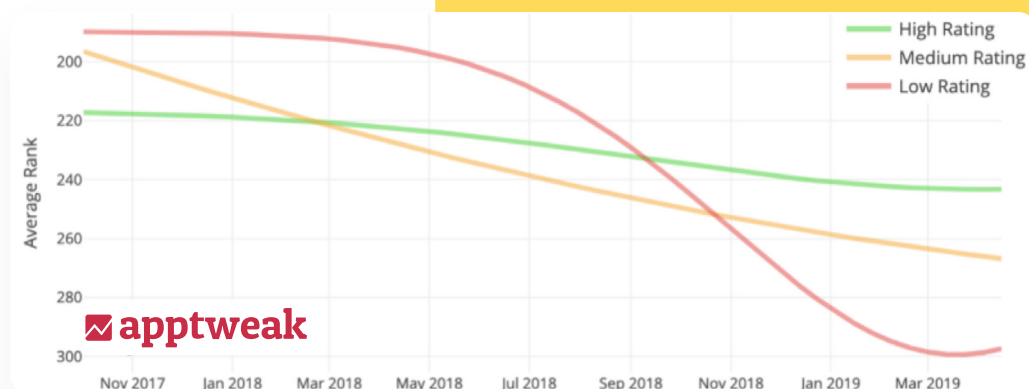
## 3. Conversion rate

The **algorithms** also consider your app's **conversion rate** (the share of people who download your app after seeing it in the search results). The Google Play Store and App Store want to provide users with a great **user experience** by showing the best apps in the search results; if your app has a **high conversion rate** for a specific keyword, this signals to the store that users are satisfied with the apps that the algorithm is showing.

### Expert Tip



**In 2019**, Apple updated its algorithm to allocate more weight to the **average rating**. Based on data from the **top 500 iOS apps**, AppTweak found that apps with a high rating rank an average of **25 positions higher** than apps with a medium rating and **60 places higher** than apps with a low rating.





## 5. Retention rate

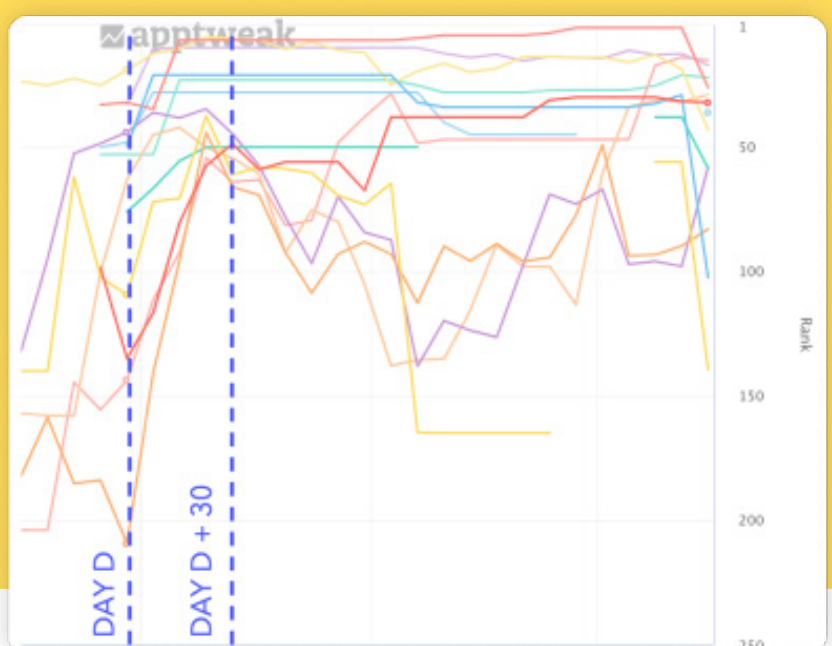
The stores also consider an app's **retention rate** as an important ranking factor. If many users **uninstall** your app shortly after downloading it, this signals to the algorithms that users are not happy with the app. Many argue that other **metrics**, such as session duration or the number of launches, are also ranking signals.

### Expert Tip

To show the importance of the **retention rate** on **Google Play**, let's look at the following example. An AppTweak client suddenly experienced a massive spike in overall **keyword rankings** and a significant increase in **category rankings**. They are active in ASO but had not made any updates in the period before this spike.

They discovered that they had experienced a high uninstall and reinstall rate on **"day D"**: Due to a bug, **300 users** uninstalled and immediately reinstalled the app as they were very loyal users. The retention rate after day D then reached up to **95%**, causing rankings on high-volume, competitive keywords to improve.

Keywords	Vol.
fanocode	34
live cricket app	30
espn cricinfo	29
espn	24
wwn network	23
sport like	16
live match	15
wwn wrestling	15
cricket apps	15
score cricket	14
sport	14
live cricket score app	14
wwn app	12



## 6. App performance

If your app is not built well and crashes often or consumes a lot of battery on users' phones, the algorithms (especially for Google Play) will rank your app below other apps.

A key metric to monitor your app performance is the **Android Vitals** you can find in your Google Play Console. These are various metrics logged by Google that measure the performance and stability of apps.

**Metrics you need to keep an eye on include:**

- **Crash rate**
- **Excessive wake**
- **Stuck partial wake lock**

## 7. Backlinks

**The Google Play Store algorithm** also looks at how many backlinks your app webpage receives. **Similar to SEO**, the more backlinks, the higher your app's authority. A high authority signals your app is widely known and will result in a **higher rank**.

### Expert Tip

When reviewing your app, Google will **benchmark** your app's performance against the average in the category. They will give your app a **higher weight** in the algorithm if the performance is higher than the **category average** and vice versa.

Therefore, it is essential to consider the **performance metric** of apps in your category and peer groups when deciding which category to choose. For example, an AppTweak client changed the subcategory of one of its games and saw a positive impact in their overall **keyword visibility** as their performance metrics were higher than the average in this new subcategory.

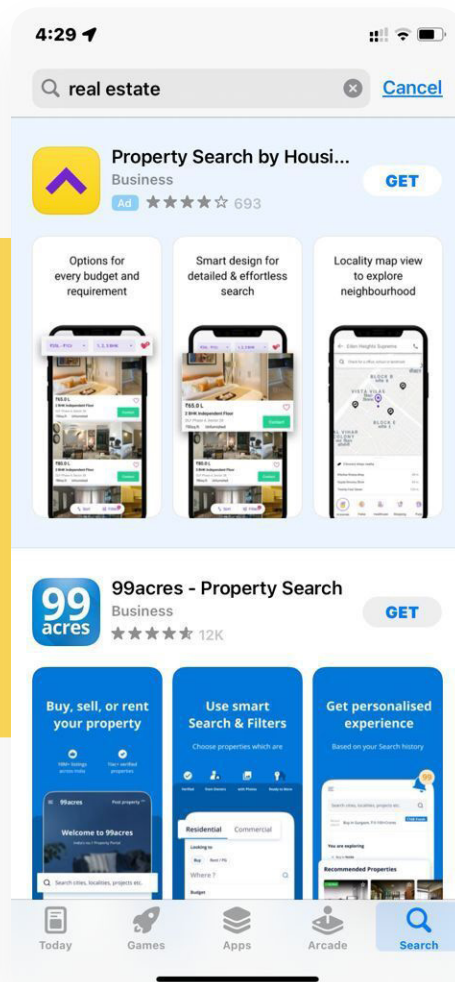
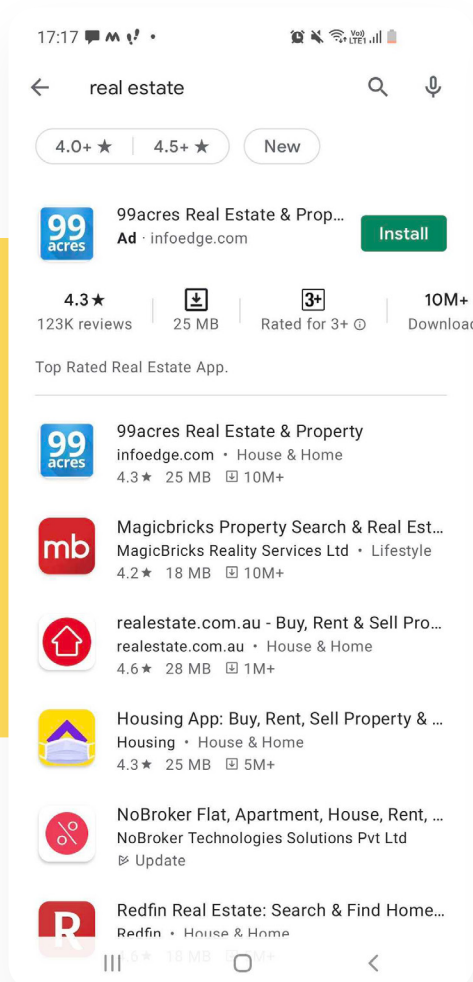




## 4. How is ASO different on the Google Play Store vs. the App Store?

**App pages** have similar elements on Google Play compared to the App Store, including the app name, short description or subtitle, long description, screenshots, video preview, and ratings and reviews. There are, however, some significant **differences** between how these elements should be used to optimize your app on Google Play and the App Store.

Live Search results for the keyword **"real estate"** on the App Store vs. the Live Search results for the same keyword on the **Play Store**.





## 1. App title

From an **ASO perspective**, the app title is a strong **ranking signal** on the Google Play Store and App Store. This means that for both **Android** and **iOS** apps, you should always include your most important **keywords** in your **app title**.

An app title should further explain to users what your app is about. This is very important, especially for Android apps where the app title, icon, developers name, tags, and ratings are the only **visible elements** in the Google Play search results. If a user is searching with branded keywords that exactly match the app name, Google Play also shows the **promotional video** along with the app screenshots.

On the other hand, the app icon, title, subtitle (probably cut short), and screenshots show in the **App Store** search results.

For Android apps and iOS apps, your app title is limited to a maximum of **30 characters**. It is prohibited to add keywords that suggest store performance (such as "top", "best", "#1") and emojis on the Google Play Store.



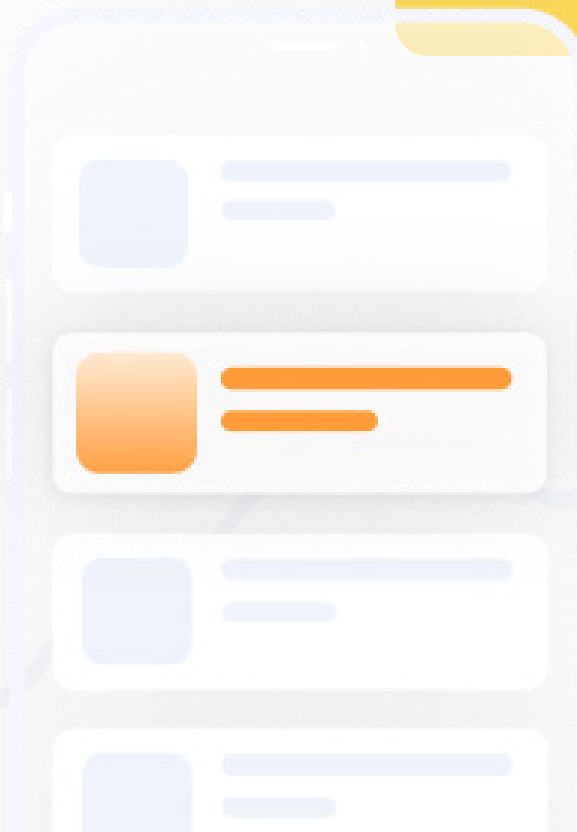
## 2. Short description (Android) or subtitle (iOS)

The short description (**80 characters**) does not appear in the search results **for Android apps** but shows on the app listing above the fold (and above the screenshots). An app's short description occupies a prime spot on an Android app listing and should grab people's attention and explain why they should download the app.

**For iOS apps**, the subtitle (**30 characters**) appears underneath the app title in the search results or underneath the screenshots on the app page. The app subtitle should contain strong keywords and explain to users what your app is about.

### Expert Tip

On Google Play, **increasing the density** of your top keywords by repeating them in your metadata helps Google better understand what your app is about and might result in a **higher rank**. However, you should be sure to stay away from keyword stuffing! On the other hand, it is recommended to **avoid repeating keywords** in your app title and subtitle on iOS. Repeating keywords won't add a higher weight to the keyword and is instead just a **waste of space**.



### 3. iOS keyword field



Like in the old SEO days, there is a **100-character** keyword field **for iOS apps**. These keywords are an essential ranking factor and help Apple decide where to show your app in the search results. When writing your keyword field, always separate words with a comma, use single words, and avoid competitor brand names.

**The Google Play Store algorithm** is more complex and does not rely on a keyword field. Instead, the Google Play Store algorithm looks at the keywords used in your app title and a short description and the keyword density in your long description.



#### Expert Tip

**Avoid** adding terms like **"free"**, **"app"**, or **"iPhone"** to your keyword field - Apple will automatically rank your app for those keywords. Apple also automatically ranks your app for your **category name**. For example, if you have chosen the "Education" category for your app, you don't need to add the word "education" to your keyword field; if your app has a **high** enough app power, it will rank for that keyword either way. Adding the keyword to your **metadata** will not help to further **increase your ranking**.

## 4. Long description

Both **Android** and **iOS** apps provide the option to add a **long description** (4,000 characters).

The main difference is that the long description is a **primary ranking** factor for the Google Play algorithm, whereas it is not a ranking signal on the App Store.

That means that the keywords used in the long description of an iOS app do **not rank**.

The **long description** should explain what your app is about and highlight how users will benefit from downloading your app. To **optimize** your long description for discoverability on **Google Play**, consider repeating your most **important keywords** a few times to increase their density and signal to Google that they are important keywords that **describe** your app's main features.

### Expert Tip

Consider these tips to optimize your long description on **Google Play**:

- **Try to include** your most important keywords in the first paragraph.
- **Keep the layout easy** to read and split your copy into paragraphs with headers.
- **Use rich formatting** and highlight certain sections or features.
- **Include mentions**, awards, or excellent reviews, but do not add unattributed or anonymous user testimonials.

## 5. Screenshots

The Google Play Store allows you to add up to **8 screenshots** while the App Store will let you add up to **10 screenshots**. However, this is not the only difference.

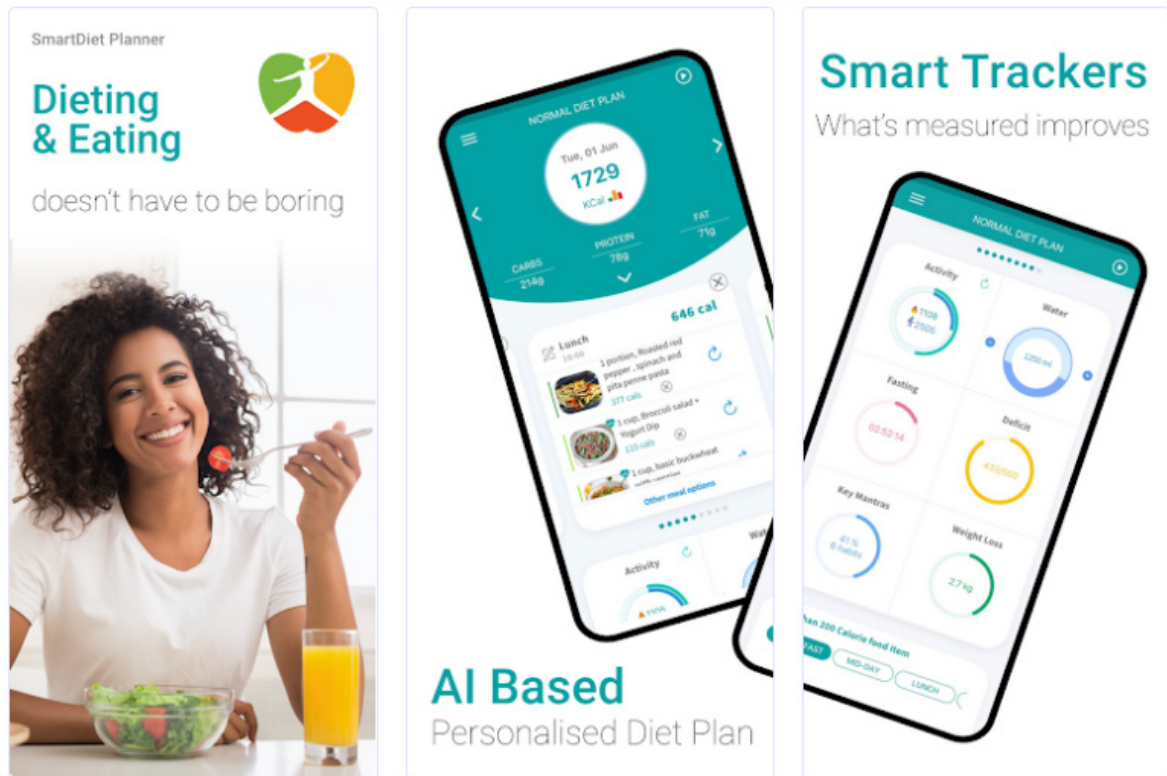
On Google Play, screenshots are usually **hidden** if your app is being searched for with **generic keywords**. If branded keywords are used, the screenshots are usually hidden in the app listing of the Google Play Store, while the first three screenshots show in the App Store search results.

That means that screenshots have a major impact on the conversion rate in the App Store. So, make sure to use screenshots to grab **people's attention**. We have also seen that 'connected screenshots' or 'telling a story' has a stronger impact on your conversion rate than standalone screenshots.

Screenshots have a **less prominent** spot for Android apps, as they generally don't appear in the search results unless a user searches for an app specifically. Even though screenshots are less visible on an Android app, they are still important and should show your app's main **features**. The prohibition of keywords that suggest store performance ("top", "best", "#1") also prohibits such terms in your **creatives**.

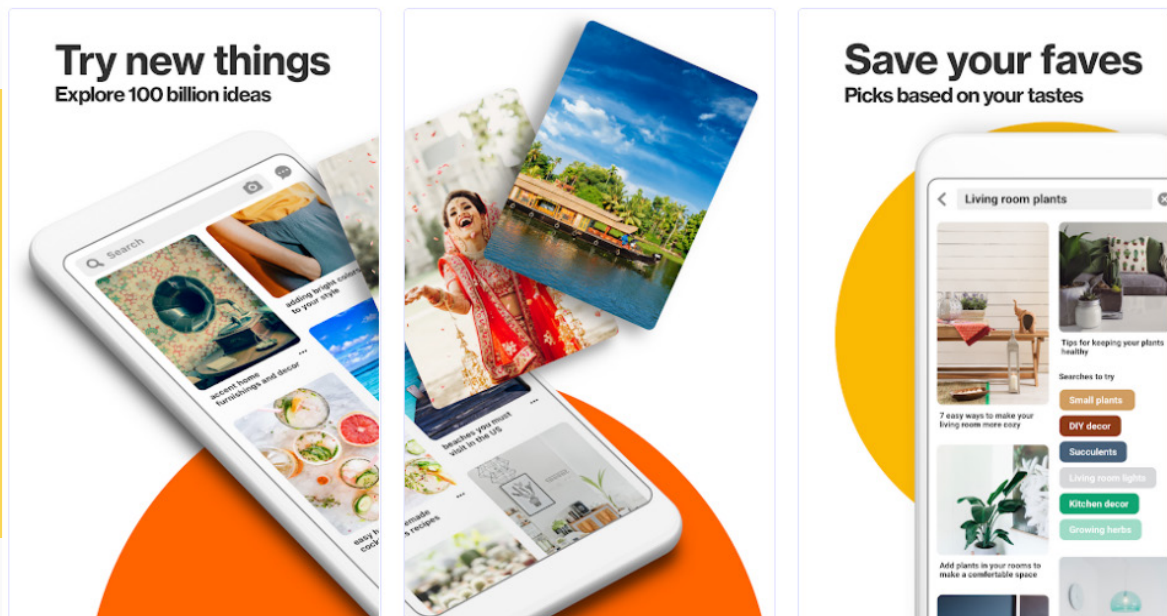






Source: [www.apptweak.com](http://www.apptweak.com)

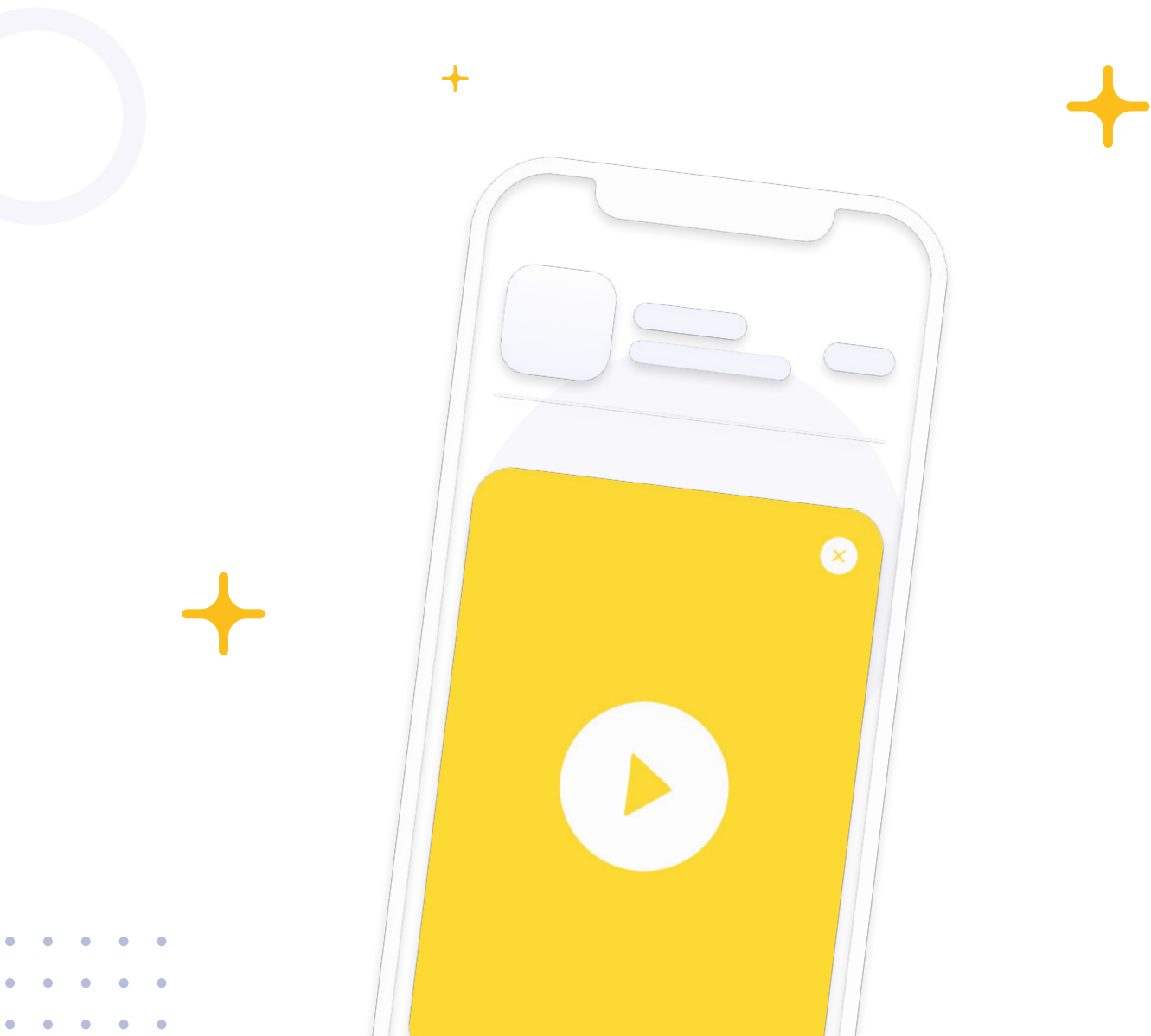
Example of connected screenshots from SmartDiet Planner and Pinterest on the Google Play Store.



## 6. Promo videos (Android) vs. app previews (iOS)

For Android apps, the **promo video** appears on your app listing in the featured image banner at the top and is displayed with your screenshot. To show a promo video on your store listing, you need to upload the video to **YouTube** first. That means that the video needs to be shot in **16:9** (landscape) format.

For iOS apps, the app previews video **autoplay** (alongside the first two screenshots) in the App Store search results. As people like to consume video content, adding a preview video will definitely make your app stand out from **competitors** in the App Store search results. The videos should be **short** and quickly **explain** how the app works.



# 5. How to get started with App Store Optimization?

## 1. Identify your competitors

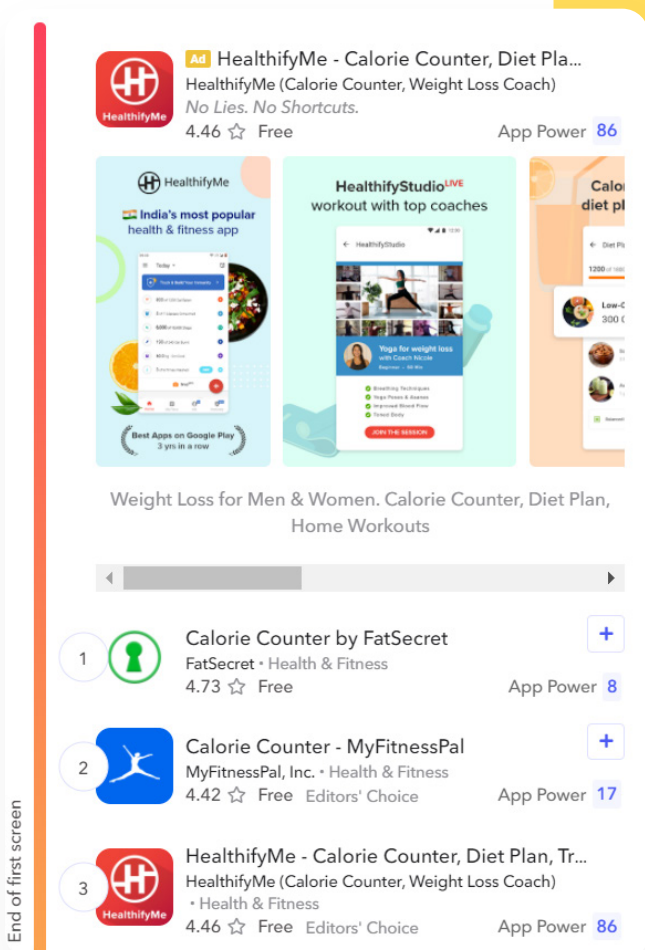
**The first step** in your **ASO strategy** is to know which apps you are competing with and to understand their strategy. When identifying your competitors, you should consider your direct competitors and apps or games that compete for the same keywords in the app stores.

### Expert Tip

AppTweak's **Live Search feature** lets you quickly identify which apps are ranking for your target keywords. You can add these apps to your **dashboard** with one click to analyze their **strategy** and monitor their **performance**.

**For example**, if you are launching a calorie counter app, the first competitors that come to mind are MyFitnessPal or HealthifyMe. But when you look at the **Live Search results**, there are less famous apps that occupy the top search results and might steal away **visibility** from your app. It is imperative to also monitor these apps and spy on their **ASO strategy**.

Source: [www.apptweak.com](http://www.apptweak.com)  
Live search results for "calorie counter" on the Google Play Store.

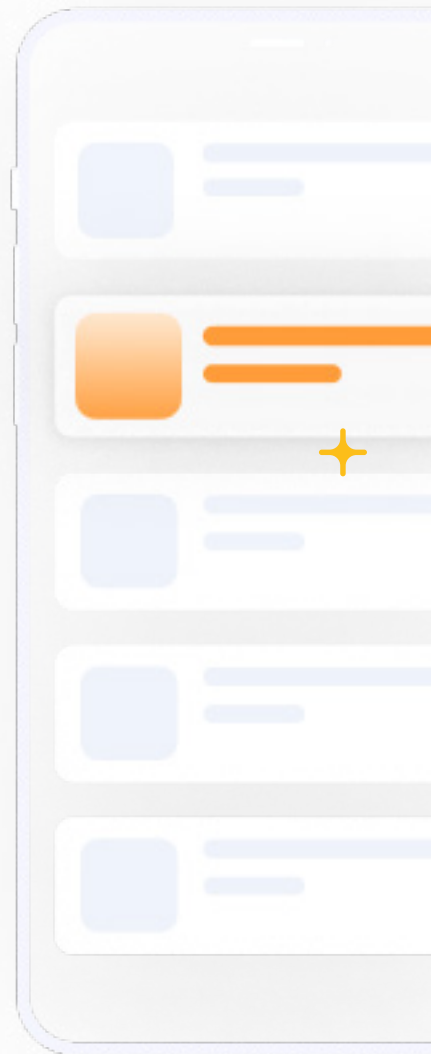


## 2. Analyze your competitors' ASO strategy

**Before** you start digging into keyword research, take a step back and have a look at what your **competitors** are doing in terms of **ASO**. Not only can you learn a lot from this exercise, but it will also help you define realistic **benchmarks** or key performance indicators (KPIs) for your own **strategy**.

### Try to follow these steps:

- **Compare** your app's **category ranking** and App Power with your competitors'. This will help you understand which competitors are your main threats in the app stores.
- **Have a look** at your **competitors' download** or revenue estimates. This is a valuable exercise to help you set realistic KPIs.
- **Compare** your competitors' **metadata** and understand which keywords they focus on in their app title, short description, and long description.
- **Use** AppTweak's **Timeline feature** to determine how often competitors have updated their metadata/visuals and take in learnings. You can also identify if your competitors have run **A/B tests** on their metadata and identify the winning version.
- **Have a look** at the keywords your competitors are ranking on and identify **opportunities** for your app.



### 3. Find relevant keywords



Now, let's start with **keyword research**. To maximize your app's visibility in the app stores, you must understand which keywords users employ when searching for your product or service in the app stores.

AppTweak has a variety of tools that can help you build keyword lists:



- **The Search Bar:**

You can look for any keyword you already have in mind by manually typing it in the search bar.

- **App Metadata:**

When you click on «App Metadata», all the keywords that are currently in your app's title, subtitle/short description, and description. The great part is that you can also see this information for apps that you've added as «competitors».

- **Top Search Terms:**

The section «Top Search Terms» shows up to 50 keywords for which you rank well and that also have a good volume. The idea is to show you the keywords that are potentially bringing a lot of organic downloads to your app. You can also see the top keywords of your competitors.

- **Ranked Keywords:**

The «Ranked Keywords» will show you all the keywords for which your app has ranked at least one day in the last 3 months. This section is broken down by rank 'top 1' to 'top 100'.

- **Search Ads Recommended Keywords:**

This section is a great source of ideas if you're looking for high-volume keywords. Through this section, you are able to get both Search Ads Recommended and Related Keywords for any app on the App Store. Plus, the official Search Popularity indicator (a number between 5 and 100) will be displayed right next to them.



- **Ad Campaigns (Apple apps only):**

The «Ad Campaigns» section shows you the keywords from your Search Ads campaigns you have been running for this app.

- **Install Keywords (Google Play Store only):**

In the «Install Keywords» section, you can discover the keywords that brought the most downloads to your app from Play Store search traffic!

- **Category:** These keywords are the most popular keywords for which top apps in the specific category rank the highest. Only the categories associated with the selected apps are shown. You can switch between categories in the left menu.



**Once you have built** a list of keywords that are relevant to your app and describe your product or service, you need to decide which keywords you want to add to your metadata. Keep the following tips in mind when selecting keywords:

- Choose the keywords that are the **most relevant** to your app and that answer user queries
- Choose keywords with a **medium or high** volume
- Choose keywords with a **high chance score** - keywords for which your app has the highest chance of ranking based on its current App Power

**Next,** optimize your metadata using these keywords. Add your most important keywords to the app title as it contains the most weight on both the Play Store and App Store. Don't forget to also focus on keyword **density** in your Google Play long description.



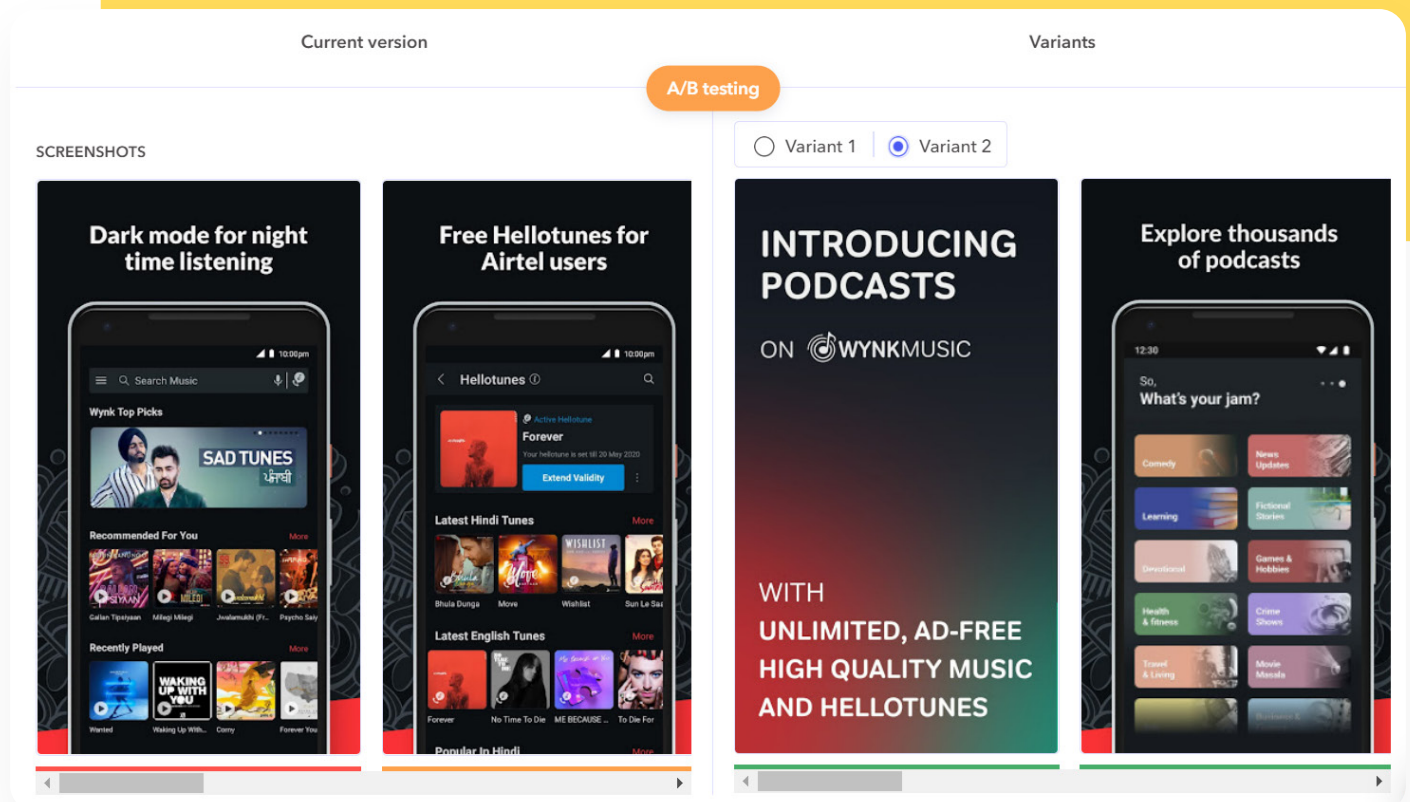
## 4. Optimize your visual elements

Throughout this guide, we have explained how essential your visual elements are for conversion rate optimization. In particular, **screenshots and a video** can also positively impact retention. Take the time to design well-thought-out creatives.

### Expert Tip

**Apps and games** can run **A/B tests** on the **Google Play Store** to test which version of their screenshots or icon converts better. **Apple** is also introducing this feature with their new **iOS 15** update, where you can test app icons, screenshots, and preview videos. You can use AppTweak to spy on and learn from your competitors' A/B tests.

For example, using **AppTweak**, we found that Wynk Music tested screenshots on Google Play by **highlighting** their latest podcast features. After monitoring store visitors' preferences, they decided to implement the screenshots introducing the podcast.



Source: [www.apptweak.com](http://www.apptweak.com)

Screenshot updates for Wynk Music on Google Play Store

## 5. Monitor your competitors

Make sure to regularly monitor your competitors' visibility. Keep track of what they are doing and make sure to review your keyword strategy when **necessary**.

## 6. Localize your app

**The app stores** reach global audiences; to increase your app's visibility **around the world**, it is very important to localize your app. App localization is the process of adapting your app (**including the app title, descriptions, and screenshots**) to all the different languages and cultures you want to target. Localization goes beyond just translating your app's metadata and graphic assets. People in other countries might also search differently; to localize your app effectively, you need to **properly research** which keywords people in your target country prefer to use and optimize your metadata accordingly. Keep in mind that there might also be **local competitors** you need to monitor to spot additional opportunities.

## 7. Get more user reviews

Ratings and reviews are a major **ASO ranking signal** and should be a key part of your **ASO strategy**. Start by asking friends and family to review your app. Then consider adding a pop-up asking other users to review your app. However, keep in mind that when asking for a review, **timing is essential**. Only invite people to **review your app** after they have used it a few times or when they have completed a positive action or event on your app.

## 8. Monitor ranking and visibility

It is vital to monitor your app rankings and **visibility regularly**. Not only do the app stores update their algorithms regularly, competing apps are constantly launched on the stores, and users' search behaviors also change over time. Make sure to spot trends early and adjust your **keyword strategy** when necessary.



Are you ready to get started with ASO? AppTweak is the easiest and most effective tool to grow app businesses of all sizes.



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