# Mobile Customer Engagement Benchmark Report: 2017 Edition

Apptentive is excited to release our second annual Mobile Customer Engagement Benchmark Report: 2017 Edition. Data included in the report serves as a benchmark for companies seeking to understand how their apps' engagement stacks up against the entire mobile ecosystem. The metrics will also help brands understand if their 'pull' marketing strategies are up to industry standards, as well as help identify where their customer experience needs improvement.

The benchmark report data presents a comprehensive look at how the nature of mobile communication is changing. Consumer marketing, galvanized by mobile, is shifting towards open dialog between consumers and companies. Historically, mobile communication strategies have been centered around 'push'. Now, the adoption of proactive 'pull' mobile communication strategies are not only emerging, but accelerating at a rapid rate. This acceleration is demonstrated by the more than 50% increase in two-way, in-app conversations between brands and their customers.

The data in this report are from over 5,000 unique Android and iOS apps across all app categories from April 2016 to March 2017, unless otherwise noted. The data was captured by interactions deployed using Apptentive's Mobile Customer Experience software, which has powered a quarter of a billion customer conversations for Fortune 500 brands across a billion devices worldwide.

**Interested in benchmark data for your specific app category? Find your report below:**

- [Shopping](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Food & Drink](#)

- [Media (News & Entertainment)](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
- [Infographic by app category](#)

# Benchmark metrics

The metrics we discuss provide a deep dive into customer interactions from private data, including in-app survey response rates, messages sent, Love Ratio, Net Promoter Score, and overall customer engagement and responsiveness. Public ratings and reviews data are also included.

For reference, how we define each metric and the contents of each section is laid out below.

Want to jump ahead? Click on the links below to skip to specific sections.

**Surveys:** Average response rate to in-app surveys.

**Ratings and reviews:** Average volume of ratings and reviews, the distribution percentage of star ratings, and the opportunity cost of a star.

**Messages:** Average number of in-app messages sent by customers to brands, and average number of in-app messages received by customers from brands.

**Interaction and response rate:** Percentage of app customers who companies interact with, and the percentage of those customers who respond to the interactions sent.

**Love Ratio:** The average percentage of customers who respond 'Yes' to Apptentive's Love Prompt.

**Net Promoter Score (NPS):** The average response rate to in-app NPS surveys and the average score.

# Surveys

In-app surveys serve many purposes. Brands use them to conduct mobile focus groups, understand customer satisfaction with their customer experience, and to gain deeper insight into how customers use their app.

The value in mobile surveys is tied to the volume of responses. A higher response rate equals a higher likelihood that the data can be applied more broadly. When we calculate the survey response rate, only submitted surveys are counted as a "response."

## Apptentive Benchmark
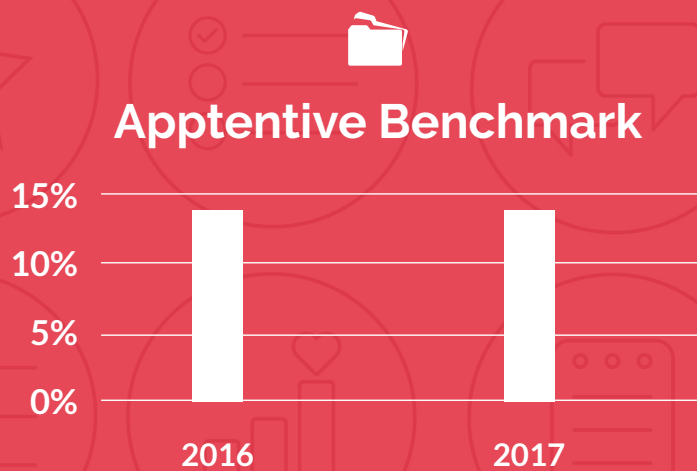


Average in-app survey response rate, across all app categories, is 13%.

Year over year, the average in-app survey response rate has stayed the same. However, this is a considerable improvement compared to the industry average mobile survey response rate of 1-3%.

While a 13% response rate is markedly higher than the industry average, several Apptentive customers have been able to achieve a response rate over 60%—showing what's possible when you reach out to the right people, at the right place, and at the right time.

When kept short and concise, shown at the right time and place in the app, and optimized for mobile, surveys allow you to gather thousands of responses in a short amount of time, allowing you to make data-driven decisions faster than ever.

For tips on how to improve your survey metrics, check out our post 10 Tips for Writing Mobile Optimized Survey Questions.

# Ratings and reviews

Public app store ratings and reviews are the first impression your app makes on consumers and are crucial in understanding customer sentiment. Not only do they help peel a layer back of how customers feel, they impact your app's discoverability and conversion rate. In a recent survey we conducted, 77% of respondents reported they read at least one review before downloading a free app, and 80% before downloading a paid app.

It's important to note that reviews influence more than conversion—they also affect your brand's overall reputation. In the same survey, 55% of respondents said a one-star or two-star app store rating of a well known brand's app negatively impacts their view of the brand as a whole, while 71% of respondents said a four-star or five-star app store rating positively impacts their view.

The data in this benchmark is cumulative of all US iOS apps and all English Google Play Store apps since the launch of the app store to better demonstrate the average volume of ratings and reviews per app over time.

## Apptentive Benchmark

### THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF RATINGS ACROSS ALL APP CATEGORIES

| | |
|---|---|
| 1500 | |
| 1000 | |
| 500 | |
| 0 | |

Apple App Store
124

Google Play Store
1,173

⌒⌒ Apptentive
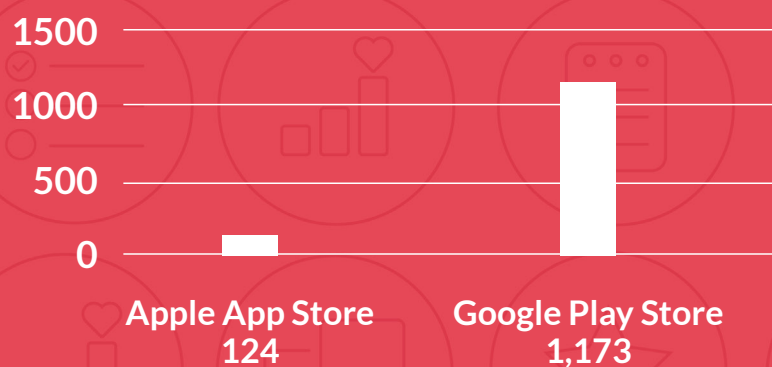
# 2017 AVERAGE BREAKDOWN OF STAR DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN ALL RATINGS

### IOS
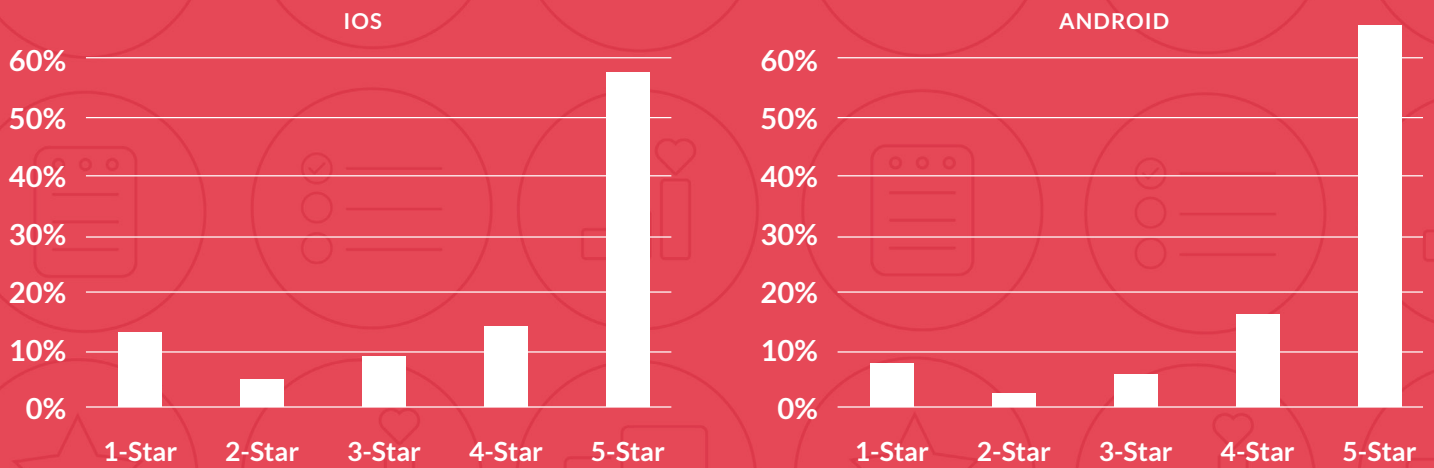


### ANDROID



Historically, Google Play has allowed app publishers to respond to reviews in the app store. This ability may contribute to the significant difference in the number of ratings and reviews between Android and iOS apps. With Apple's release of iOS 10.3, app publishers have the same capability to respond to reviews in the app store, which may eliminate the disparity. Additionally, consumers who receive an in-app rating prompt with iOS 10.3 have the ability to submit a rating and review without having to leave the app for the app store. The hassle free method is also likely to help close the gap between the number of ratings and reviews iOS apps receive compared to Android apps.

## AVERAGE BREAKDOWN OF STAR DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN ALL RATINGS (IOS AND ANDROID)
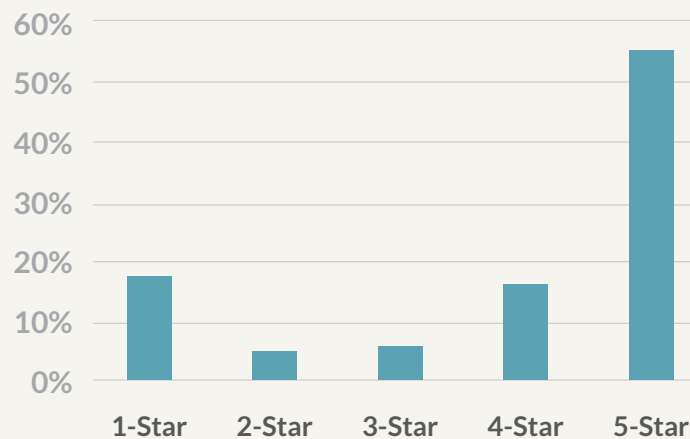


**Apptentive**

The opportunity cost of a star is huge. How huge? Moving a 3-star app to 4-stars, for example, can lead to an 89% increase in conversion. For a look at the full opportunity cost analysis, consider the chart below.

| Jumping From... | To... | Is Expected to Increase App Store Conversion by... |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| ★ | ★★ | 30% |
| ★ | ★★★ | 340% |
| ★ | ★★★★ | 730% |
| ★ | ★★★★★ | 770% |
| ★★ | ★★★ | 280% |
| ★★ | ★★★★ | 540% |
| ★★ | ★★★★★ | 570% |
| ★★★ | ★★★★ | 89% |
| ★★★ | ★★★★★ | 97% |
| ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | 4% |

Want to learn more about the importance of ratings and reviews? Check out our guide full of proprietary research: The Guide to Mobile App Ratings and Reviews.
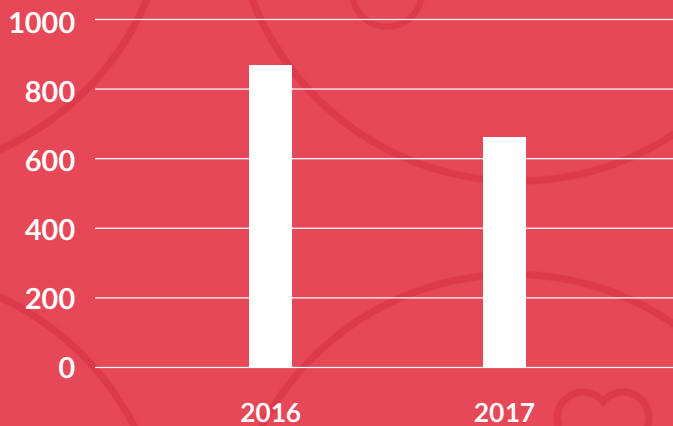
# Messages

The gold standard of customer interaction is truly two-way dialog. In 2016, chatbots were a hot topic of conversation and brands responded by being more willing to listen to customers. **Brands acted fast, highlighted by the 649% year-over-year increase in the number of apps that enabled two-way conversations and the 56% year-over-year spike in messages sent to consumers**.

Consumers appreciate the ability to talk to a real person. While more than 30,000 chatbots came to market in 2016, they had a 70% failure rate, which means that only 30% of requests could be processed without a real person taking over to see it through. Bots certainly made a splash, but the increase in two-way in-app conversations between consumers and brands proves bots can't replace real conversations.
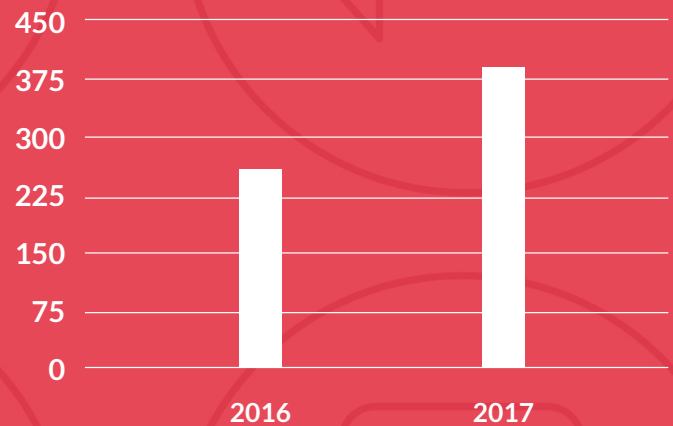
# Apptentive Benchmark

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF MESSAGES
SENT TO BRANDS PER APP**

| | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|
| 1000 | | |
| 800 | | |
| 600 | | |
| 400 | | |
| 200 | | |
| 0 | | |

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF MESSAGES
SENT TO CONSUMERS PER APP**

| | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|
| 450 | | |
| 375 | | |
| 300 | | |
| 225 | | |
| 150 | | |
| 75 | | |
| 0 | | |

The number of apps that use Apptentive's Message Center increased by 649% year-over-year. That's a massive acceleration in the adoption of two-way, in-app communication capabilities.

An average of 649 messages per app were sent to brands by consumers over the course of a year via Apptentive's Message Center. For reference, an average of 846 messages per app were sent to brands in 2016's benchmark.

In the same time period, an average of 384 messages per app were sent by brands in response to consumer messages over the course of a year via Apptentive's Message Center. For reference, an average of 246 messages per app were sent to consumers in 2016's benchmark. That's a 56% increase in messages companies sent to their customers.

**This rise in the number of messages brands sent to consumers combined with the explosion of apps that adopted Message Center is a signal that brands are investing more heavily in open, two-way dialog with their customers.**

Giving customers the ability to speak to you directly without having to leave the app sends a strong message to customers that you care about what they have to say. Having two-way conversations with customers also affords you the ability to form real relationships with your customers, which fosters loyalty and a deep sense of connection that consumers will want to tell their friends about. Not only that, but you'll receive invaluable feedback that you would otherwise miss.

Want a better way to talk to customers? The rise of Slack has made engaging in two-way conversations easier and more accessible. Our new Slack integration for Message Center was heavily requested by customers in order to help their teams drive even higher response levels.

# Interaction and response rate

The popularity of "push" marketing has created an environment where mobile customers are disengaged. To avoid annoying customers and falling into the push marketing trap, it is important for companies to keep track of consumer receptivity to messages. This can be done by measuring the percentage of customers you're reaching out to and how many of those customers are responding.

**The average number of mobile customers brands reach out to is captured in the interaction rate.** Surveys, Dialogs, Notes, and Messages are included in this metric.

**The average number of mobile customers who respond to interactions are captured in the response rate.** Surveys, Dialogs, Notes, and Messages are included in this metric.

## Apptentive Benchmark
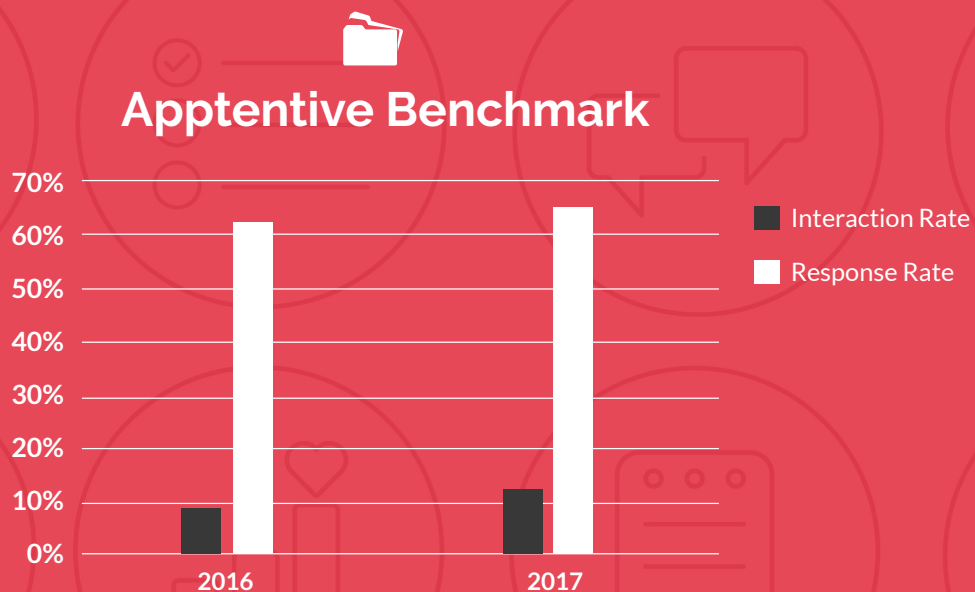


The average interaction rate is 12%, meaning that on average, brands using Apptentive interact with 12% of their mobile app customer base over the course of a year. For reference, last year's interaction benchmark was 9%. That's a 33% increase year-over-year.

The average response rate to interactions is 65%. This means that of the 12% of customers who brands interact with, an average of 65% of customers respond to the interactions. For reference, last year's response rate benchmark was 62%.

Not only are brands reaching more customers, more customers are responding positively to the outreach from brands. Companies are getting better at targeting the right person, at the right time, and the right place in the mobile app experience.
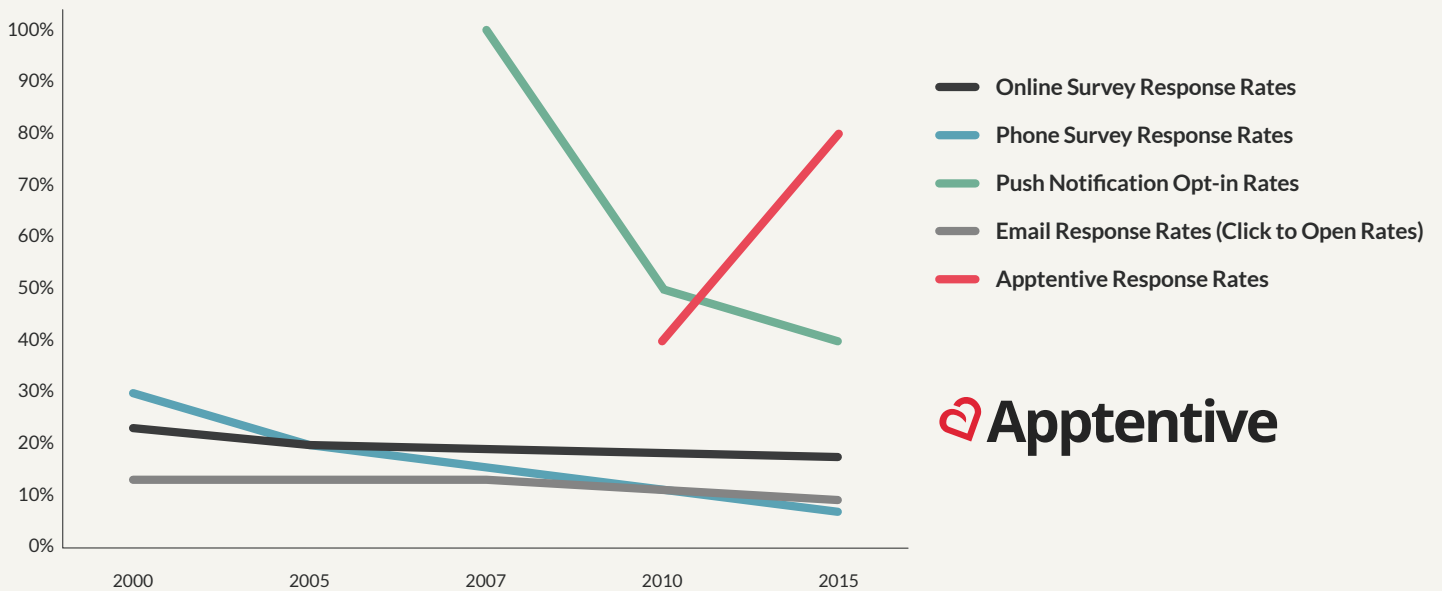


## Interaction rate

**12%**

## Response rate

**65%**
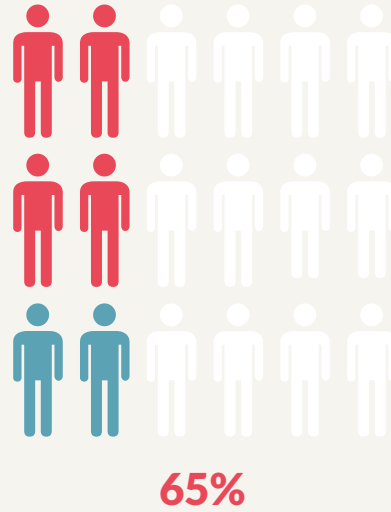
There wasn't a trade off in efficacy for increasing the number of customers that brands reached out to; in fact, there was an increase in engagement. This means that customers are open and receptive to communication from brands, so long as it doesn't interrupt their experience.



Online Survey Response Rates
Phone Survey Response Rates
Push Notification Opt-in Rates
Email Response Rates (Click to Open Rates)
Apptentive Response Rates

We advise our customers to be selective in how often they reach out to customers and choosy about who they target to avoid annoying or disrupting their in-app experience. An average response rate of 65% is an improvement year-over-year, but still has room for growth. To us, this number means 35% of customers were unreceptive to the interaction because they were either irritated or they didn't see value in it, causing them to not respond.

There are several ways companies can improve their response rates. Check out Robi Ganguly's (Apptentive's CEO) advice on finding the right place, right time, and right person to reach out to in his Mobile Moments video series.

# Love Ratio

"Mobile MVPs" are big contributors to the success of your app (and business). The 80/20 rule—80% of your revenue usually comes from 20% of your total customer base—applies to apps, too. Mobile MVPs are key to growth and, once identified, can be targeted in highly personalized ways (such as inclusion in focus groups, access to special perks, and more) to maximize their engagement with a brand.

"Love" is an emotional stop word, which means if customers only "like" a brand, they won't commit to saying they love it. Apptentive's Love Prompt was specifically designed to put this stop word to work to identify MVP customers. Customers who respond "Yes" to Apptentive's Love Prompt fall into the MVP category.

In addition to identifying mobile MVPs, our customers use the Love Ratio to keep a daily pulse on how their customers feel about their brand and mobile experience. When they release new app versions or make significant changes to the app, the Love Ratio gives them a quick gut-check on how customers are responding to the updates. If the Love Ratio dips, it means customers aren't loving the updates. If the Love Ratio remains the same or spikes, it means the updates have had a positive impact on customers' feelings towards the app and brand. Ultimately, the Love Ratio is a tool that unlocks the next level in loyalty management and measurement.

# Apptentive Benchmark

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF CUSTOMERS WHO RESPOND 'YES' TO THE LOVE PROMPT
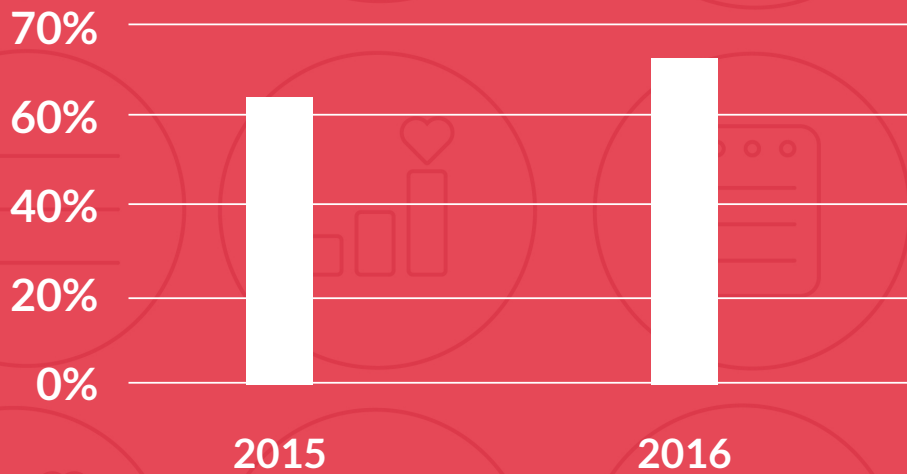


The average percentage of customers who responded 'Yes' to Apptentive's Love Prompt in 2016 was 63%. For comparison, the average in 2015 was 62%.

The slight bump in our customers' Love Ratio is indicative of their ability to meet and exceed their mobile customers' expectations. Contributing factors to this growth are likely the rise in the number of customers that are being interacted with, the uptick in two-way conversations brands are engaging in with their customers, and the increase in the number of companies who have made listening to their customers a priority.

For more advice on how to step up your MVP game, check out our blog: How To Identify and Activate Your Mobile MVP Customers.

# Net Promoter Score (NPS)

NPS is considered a leading growth indicator across industries. It's a measure of customer loyalty and sentiment that can be benchmarked against competitors. As a refresher, respondents to an NPS question are grouped into three categories based on their ratings:

1. **Promoters** (score 9-10): Loyal customers who will keep purchasing and will refer the business to others

2. **Passives** (score 7-8): Satisfied customers, but may be swayed by competitive offerings

3. **Detractors** (score 0-6): Unhappy customers who can damage your brand by negative word-of-mouth

NPS is a new addition to our benchmark report, as Apptentive began offering in-app NPS surveys in July 2016. The data for this benchmark is from July 2016 - March 2017.

## Apptentive Benchmark

The average NPS score is 39 and the average in-app response rate is 20%.

To get more out of NPS, we recommend companies add the verbatim that allows consumers to explain why they chose the score they gave. Gathering open-ended feedback with NPS empowers brands to derive context out of their quantitative NPS score to better understand where they're succeeding and how they can improve.

For more tips on how to use NPS, check out our blog: Why Net Promoter Score Isn't Enough: Tips for Leveraging NPS+.

# Takeaways

The benchmark metrics in this report are meant to provide a clear picture of how your app measures up to the industry as a whole. Collectively, these metrics provide a comprehensive view of the health of your app, how engaged your customers are with your brand, and how well your mobile experience is living up to industry standards.

By comparing your apps' metrics to the benchmarks listed, you'll be able to identify which aspects in your customer experience need special attention to meet customer expectations. In the case that your app exceeds some or all of the benchmarks, use your success to continue forging new standards for mobile app experiences and showing customers you care about what they have to say.

Additionally, the benchmark metrics paint a picture of the state of the mobile ecosystem. The increase in interaction and response rates, two-way conversations between brands and their customers, Love Ratio, and 5-star ratings signals an evolution in mobile strategies. While 'push' marketing's effectiveness is waning, 'pull' marketing is becoming the most effective communication strategy.

The shift to 'pull' communication methods highlights brands' changing priorities from talking at customers to talking with customers. This emphasis on customer feedback and conversation is generating a full-circle reaction from customers who are showing companies love by becoming more engaged with the brand.

## Missing the (bench)mark? We can help!
Sign up for an Apptentive demo here.

# Join these companies in Being Apptentive.

Visit www.apptentive.com to get started today

## About Apptentive

Apptentive's Mobile Customer Experience software empowers companies to build brands customers love by understanding their behavior and expectations. The product gives brands the opportunity to listen to, engage with, and retain their customers through intelligently timed surveys, messages, and prompts. Integrated into thousands of mobile apps, Apptentive helps companies proactively engage customer segments, track customer sentiment, boost app ratings, drive downloads, and earn loyalty. The company powers millions of customer interactions every month for companies including Buffalo Wild Wings, eBay, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Philips, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Viacom.