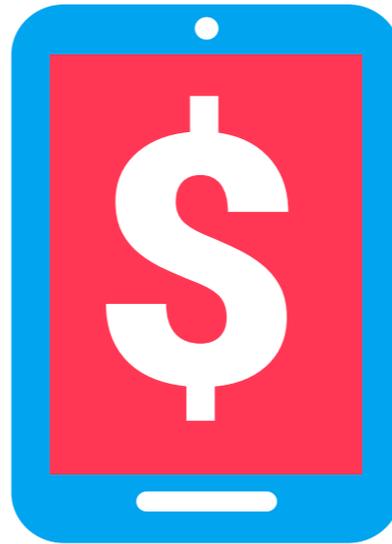


# Subscription Apps on Google Play: User Insights to Help Developers Win

May 2017



Revenue from subscriptions on Google Play has increased 10x in 3 years. So how can you build apps that users want to subscribe to?

We talked to 2,000 Android app subscribers in the US and UK and asked them how and why they use the apps they do. We covered a variety of categories from dating to sports, and from entertainment to education and uncovered a range of insights about what, how and why people subscribe.

# Key Findings



Free trials and discounts are important tools to drive acquisition.

78% of users start with a free experience.



Valuable and fresh content gets and keeps users paying.

It's the most important driver in converting users from free to paid, and 44% say content keeps them paying.



Users are willing to pay real money for subscription apps.

Acceptable price ranges from \$5 - \$20 a month based on category, and few cite price as a reason to churn from a paid subscription.

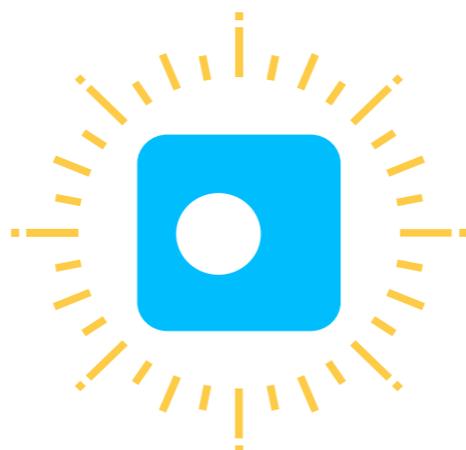
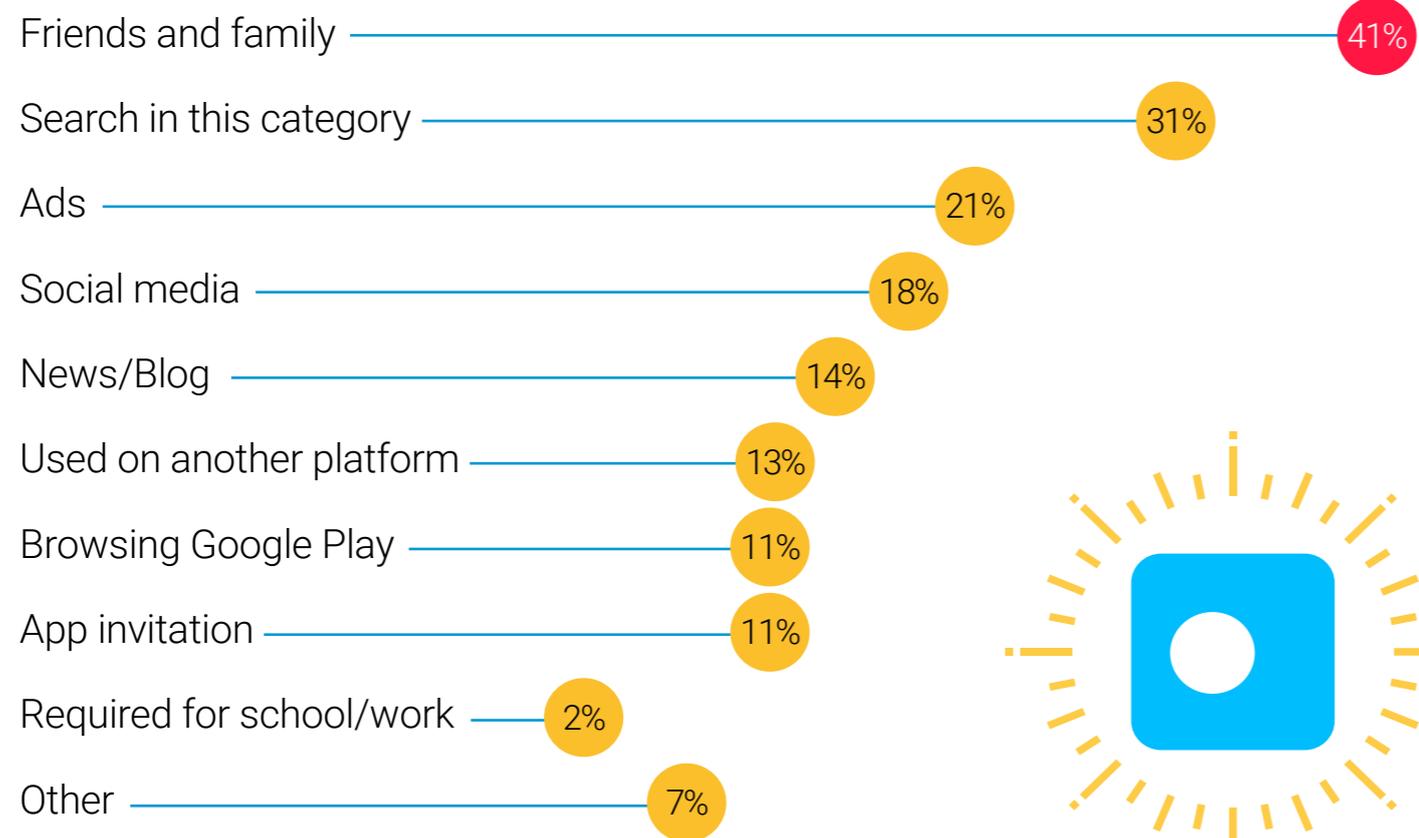


Take a multi-channel approach to  
user acquisition

# Android users discover subscription apps through many channels

'I was looking for a music app that had good music and a wide selection and was referred by a friend.'

## Methods of Discovery



## Google Play



Word of mouth plays a huge role in app discovery and carries a lot of weight. When it is used, fewer additional channels are employed. However it's important to remember that it's not the only channel.

On average, 1.7 channels are used to discover new subscription apps.

Sports app subscribers reference the most channels (2.54) while entertainment app subscribers reference the least (1.36).

## Developer Checklist

1



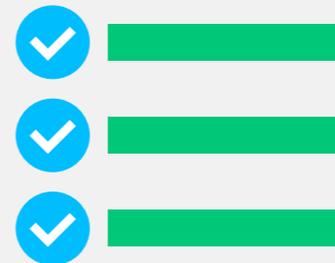
Encourage users to talk about your app. Drive referrals through [Firebase Invites](#), reward subscribers who recommend your app to others, use influencers to help publicize your app, and interact directly with users by [replying to ratings and reviews](#) on the Play Console.

2



Use a mix of tactics to market your apps on Google Play, including [Universal App Campaigns](#), [linking from other online properties](#), and nurturing your community of social networks.

3

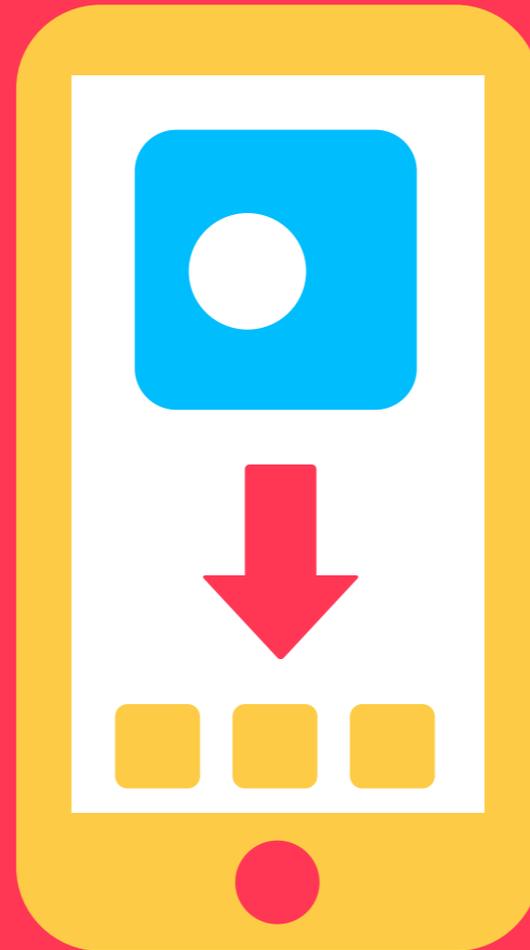


Communicate the value you provide via your [store listing](#) and test it with [store listing experiments](#).

4



Remember that app quality is important—people aren't going to recommend apps that aren't up to par. Pay attention to [app quality guidelines](#) and [best practices](#) and [test and use pre-launch reporting](#) before you launch.



Give your users a reason to pay

A user has found and installed the free version of your app, but how do you convince them to pay?

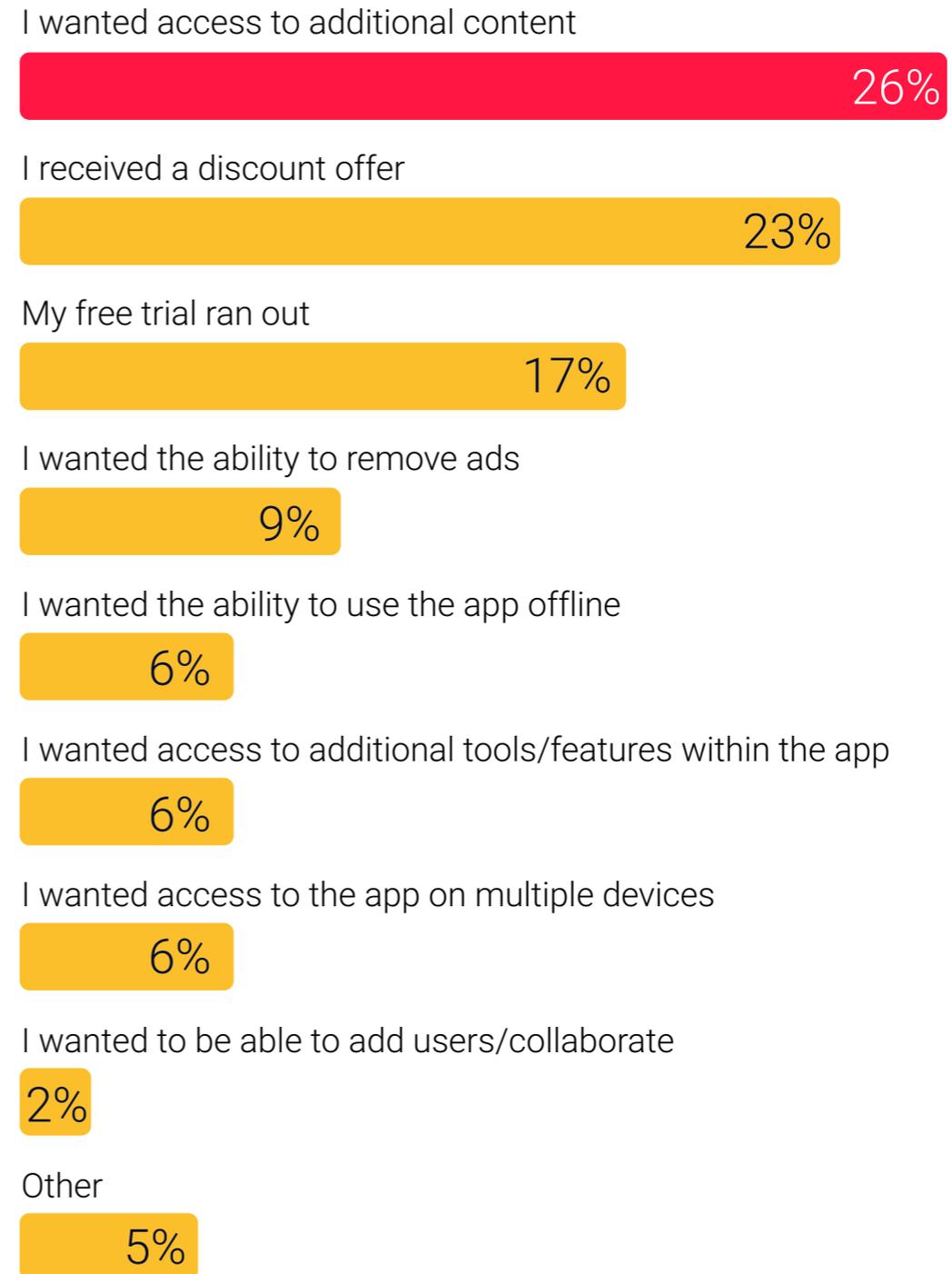


78%  
of subscribers start with a free experience



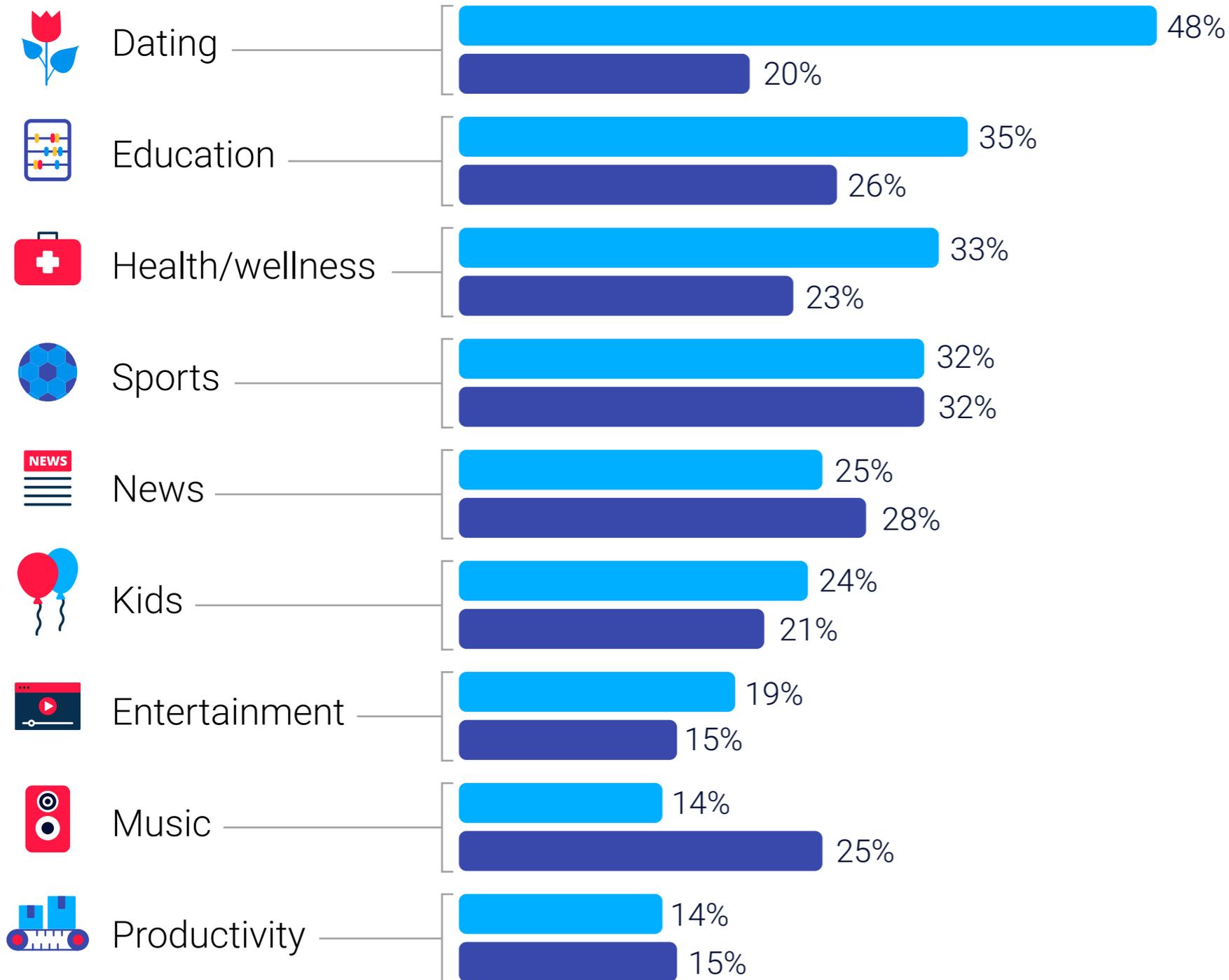
The opportunity to try an app for free can go a long way to encouraging eventual conversion, but content is key to moving beyond free.

### Most Important Conversion Drivers



While additional content is key as a conversion tool for most categories, discounting is more prominent in news and music.

 % who said that **access to additional content** was the most important factor  
 % who said that **receiving a discount** offer was the most important factor



'The app only allows 10 articles to be viewed per month for free and I read many more articles so I decided to subscribe.'

'I had signed up for a free trial because I got some kind of offer on it. I didn't even really know what it was all about but my kids ended up loving it so I kept it and still pay a subscription for it.'

# Developer Checklist

**1**

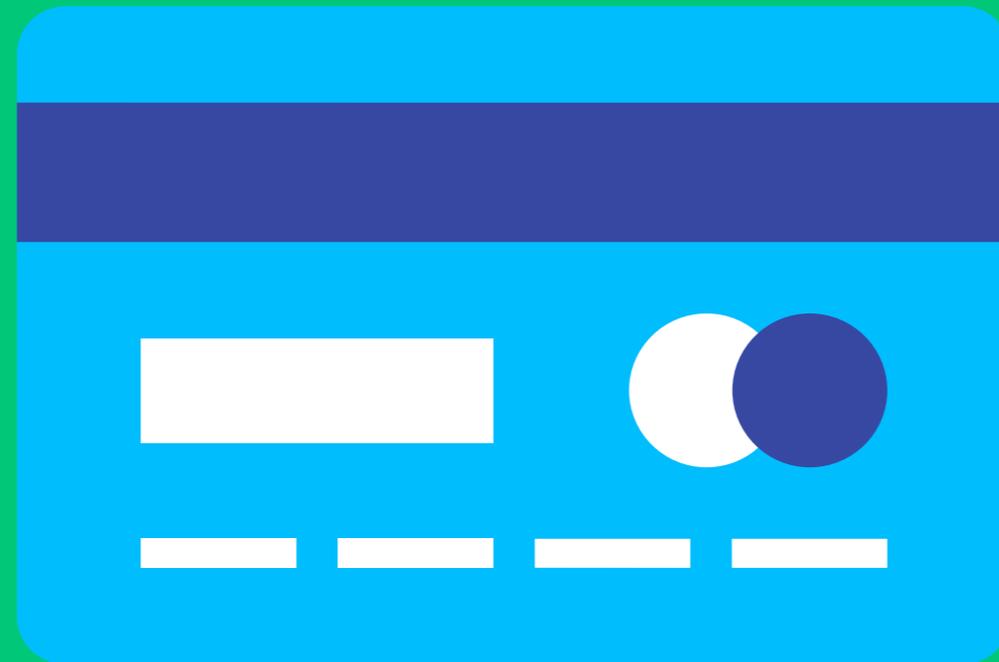
Focus on the positives. Users want to pay for great content, not remove annoying features.

**2**

Allow users to try your app before they buy with [free trials](#).

**3**

Test different discounts via introductory pricing and other promotions.



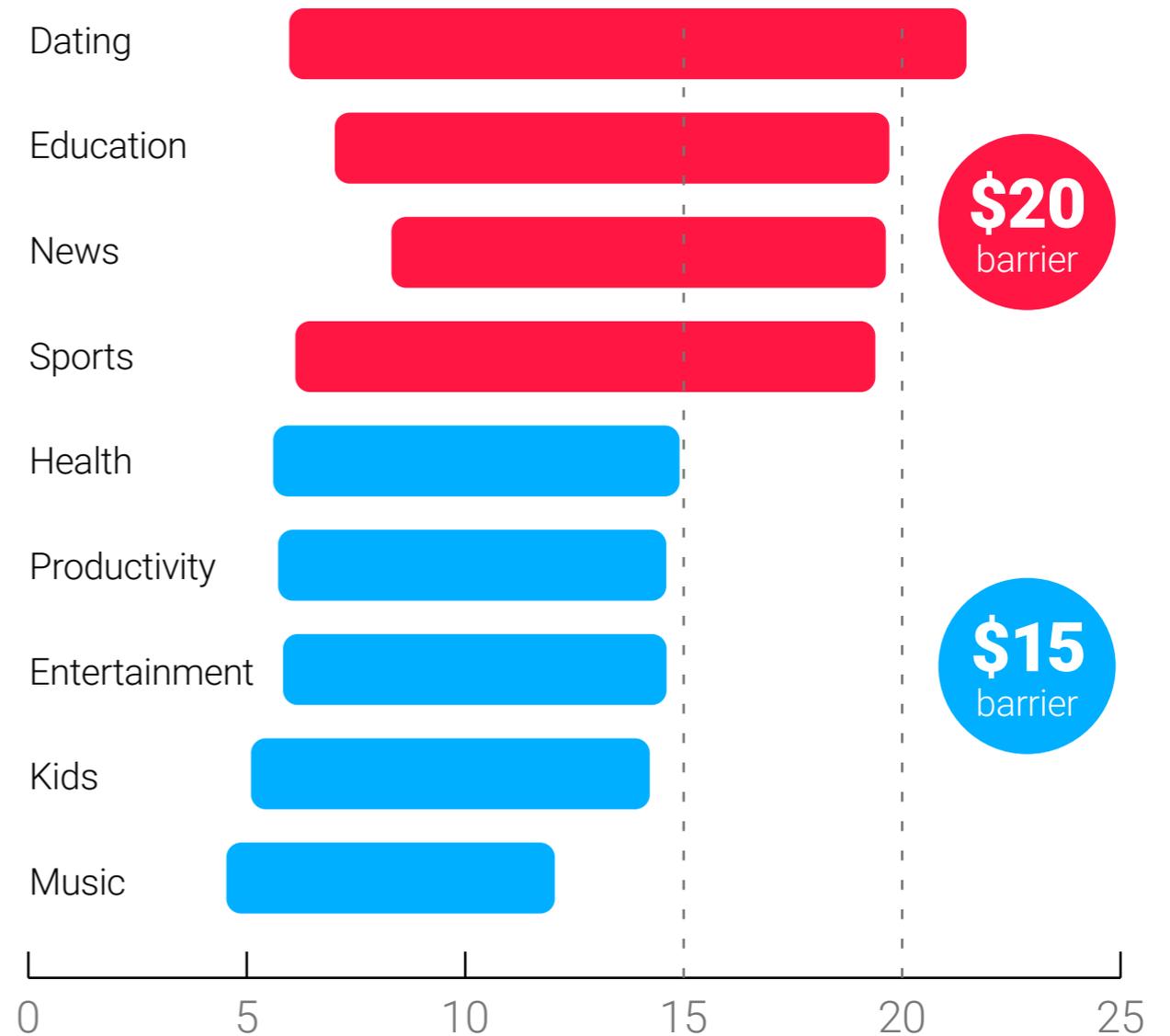
Get the price right

# You've found users willing to pay for your app, but how much do you charge them?

What's an acceptable price? That varies by category, often driven by established norms or industry standards. Some categories are more flexible than others, with a wide range of acceptable prices for dating and sports, and a far narrower range for music and entertainment.



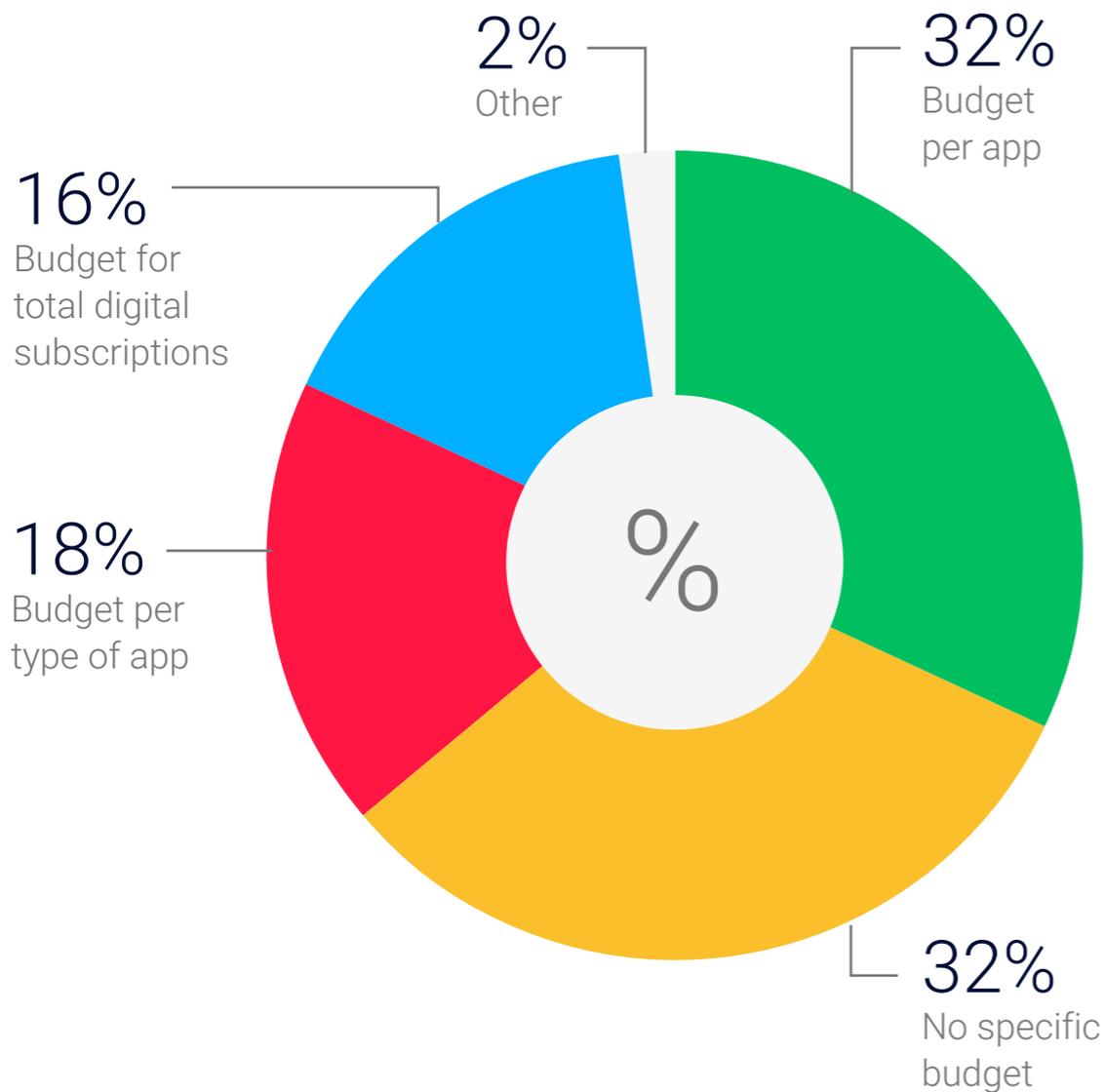
What Android Users are Willing to Pay in the US (by month)



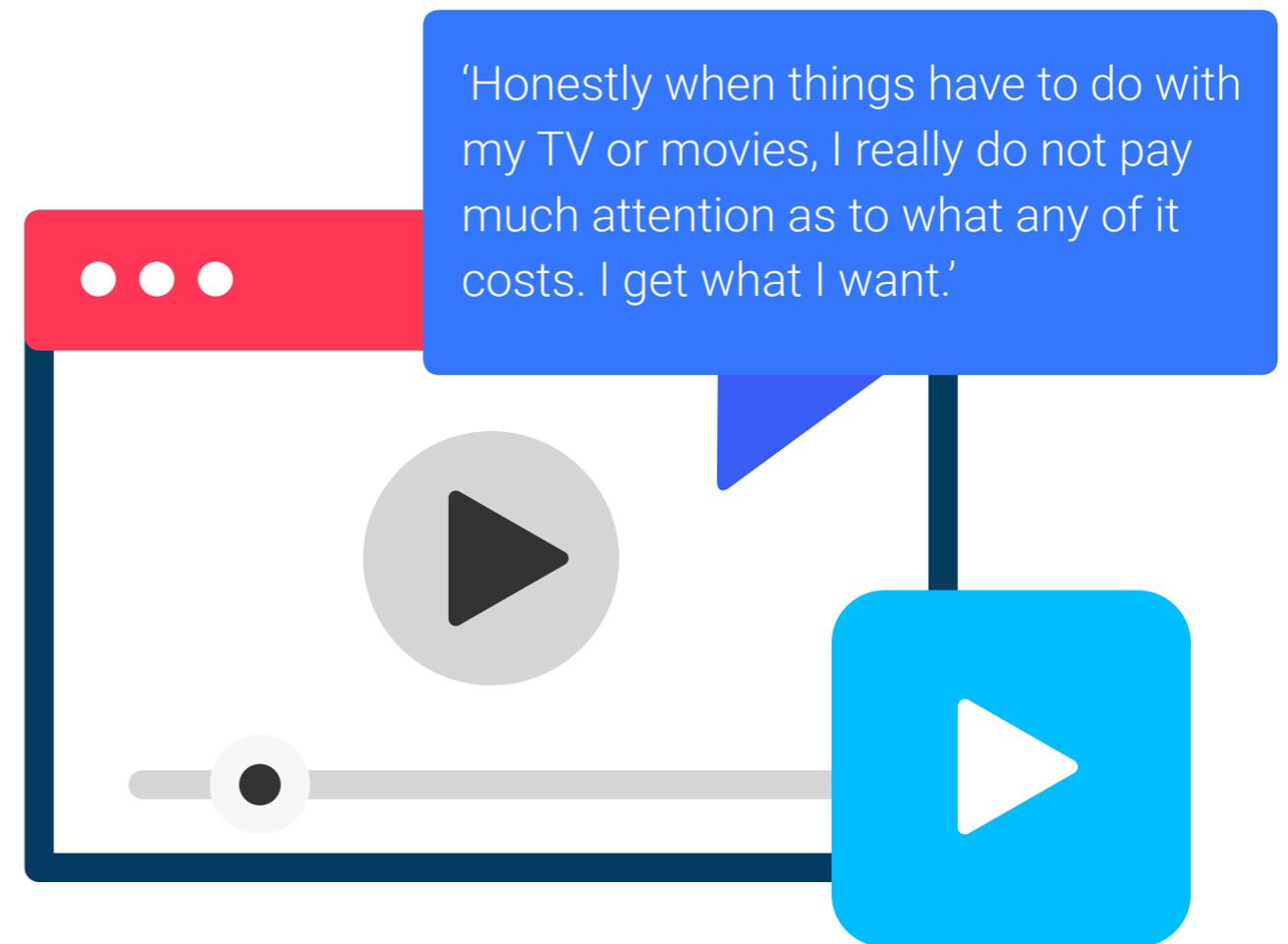
Each category has a range of potentially viable prices. The lower boundary is the point at which a bargain becomes 'too cheap to be of any quality.' The upper reflects the breaking point beyond which people won't even consider the purchase.

# Budgeting approach

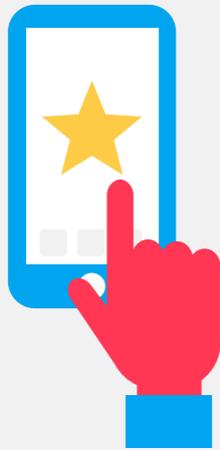
How Android Users Budget for App Subscriptions



Cross-subscription budgeting is rarely a consideration, with 64% either budgeting on a per app basis, or not budgeting at all. Few allow other subscriptions to influence their decision to pay for a single app.



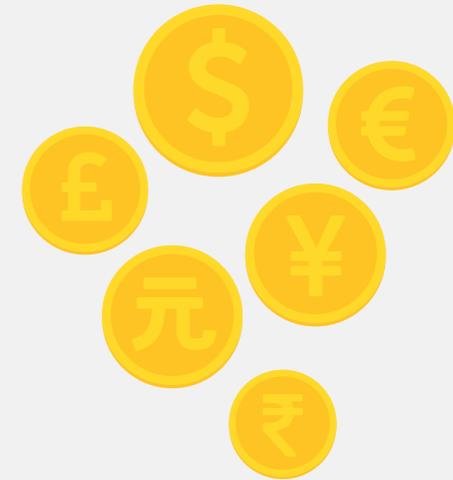
## Developer Checklist

**1**

Don't shy away from using the subscription business model on Google Play. Android users are willing to pay for great content across multiple subscriptions.

**2**

Test different price points as there is some elasticity in subscriptions pricing for Android.

**3**

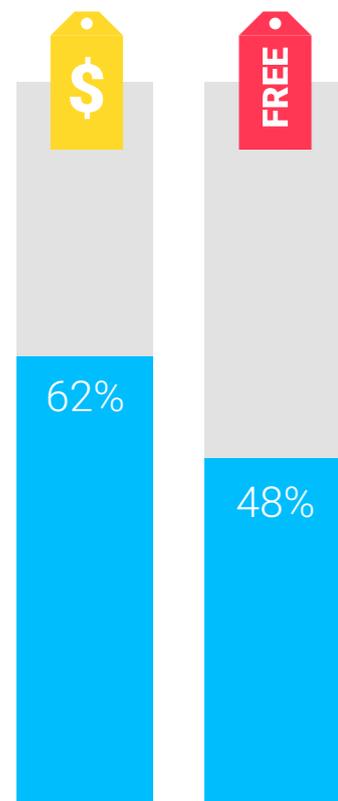
Make use of our [global pricing tools](#) to localize your price to the market.



Create an engaging experience  
people want to use every day

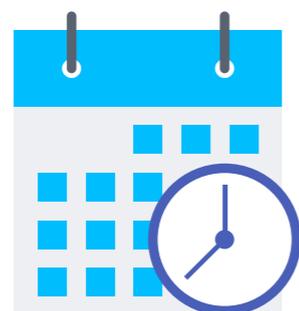
# You've got them, now how do you keep them?

What encourages subscribers to stay subscribers? Content. 44% indicate content as a key reason for continuing to pay. Frequency plays a role as well. While the majority of paid Android subscribers use their apps at least daily, less than half of free users do.

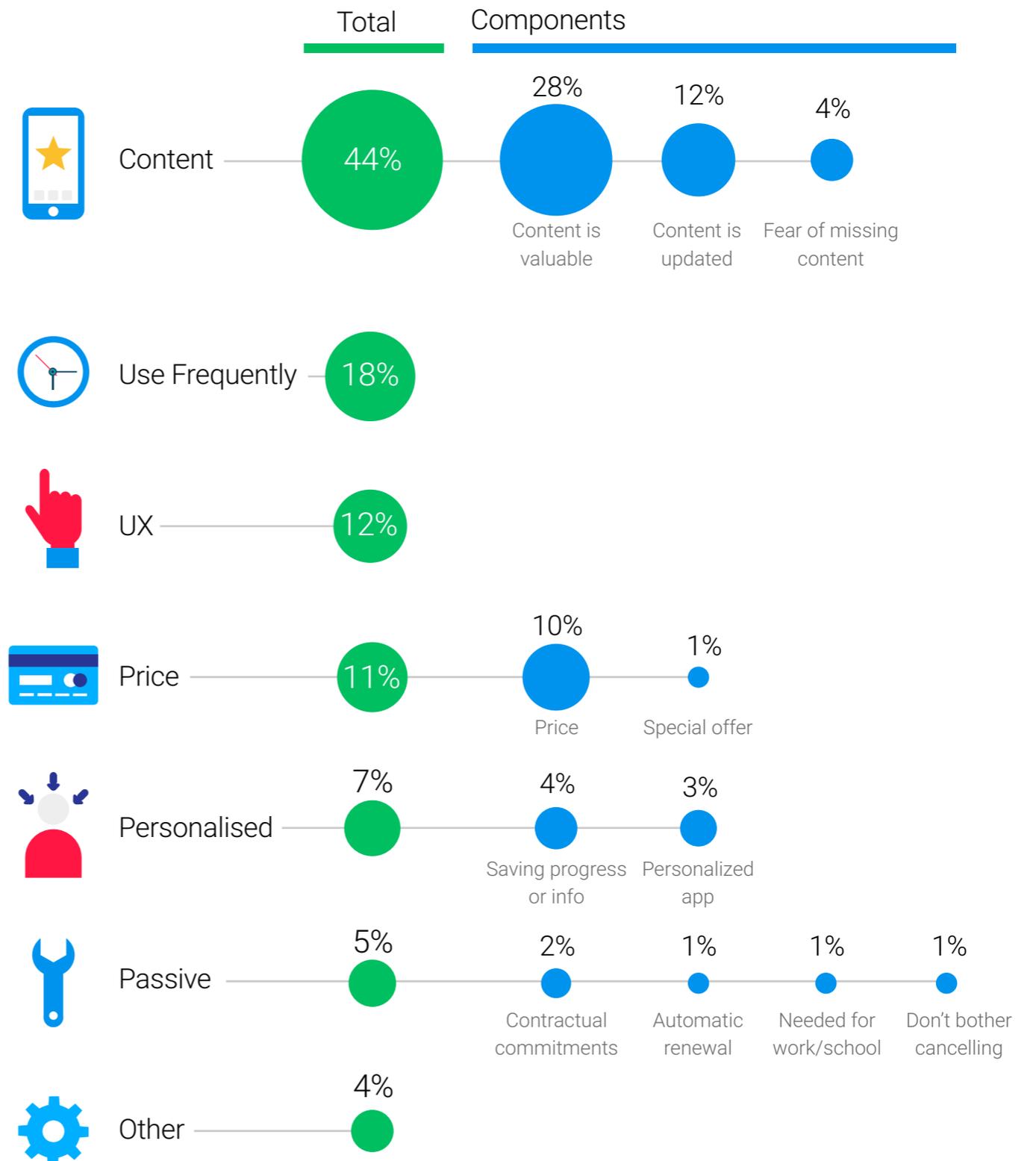


62%

of paid Android subscribers use their apps daily or multiple times a day vs. 48% of free users.

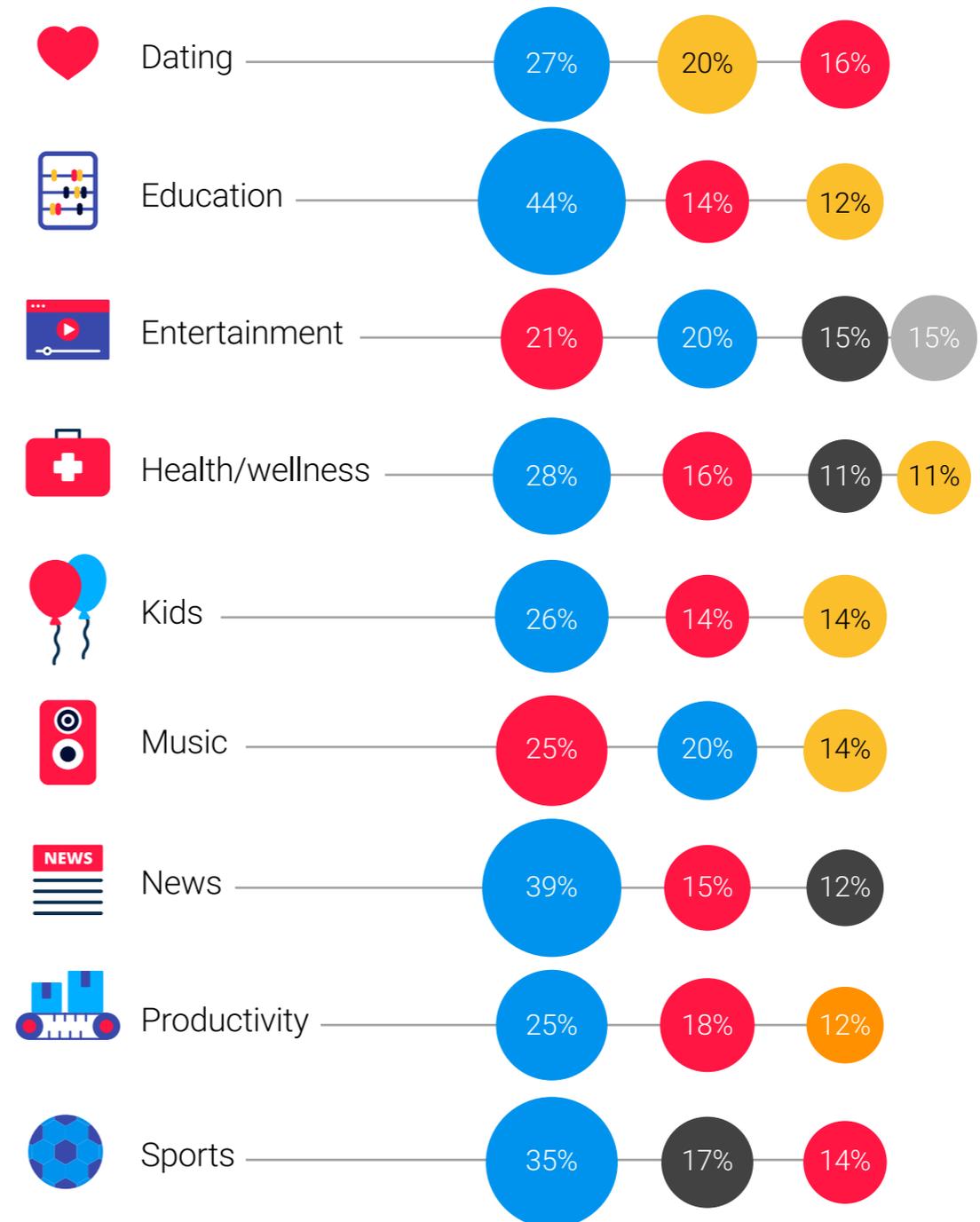


## Why Android Users Keep Paying for their Subscription Apps



Top Factor for Continuing to Pay by Category

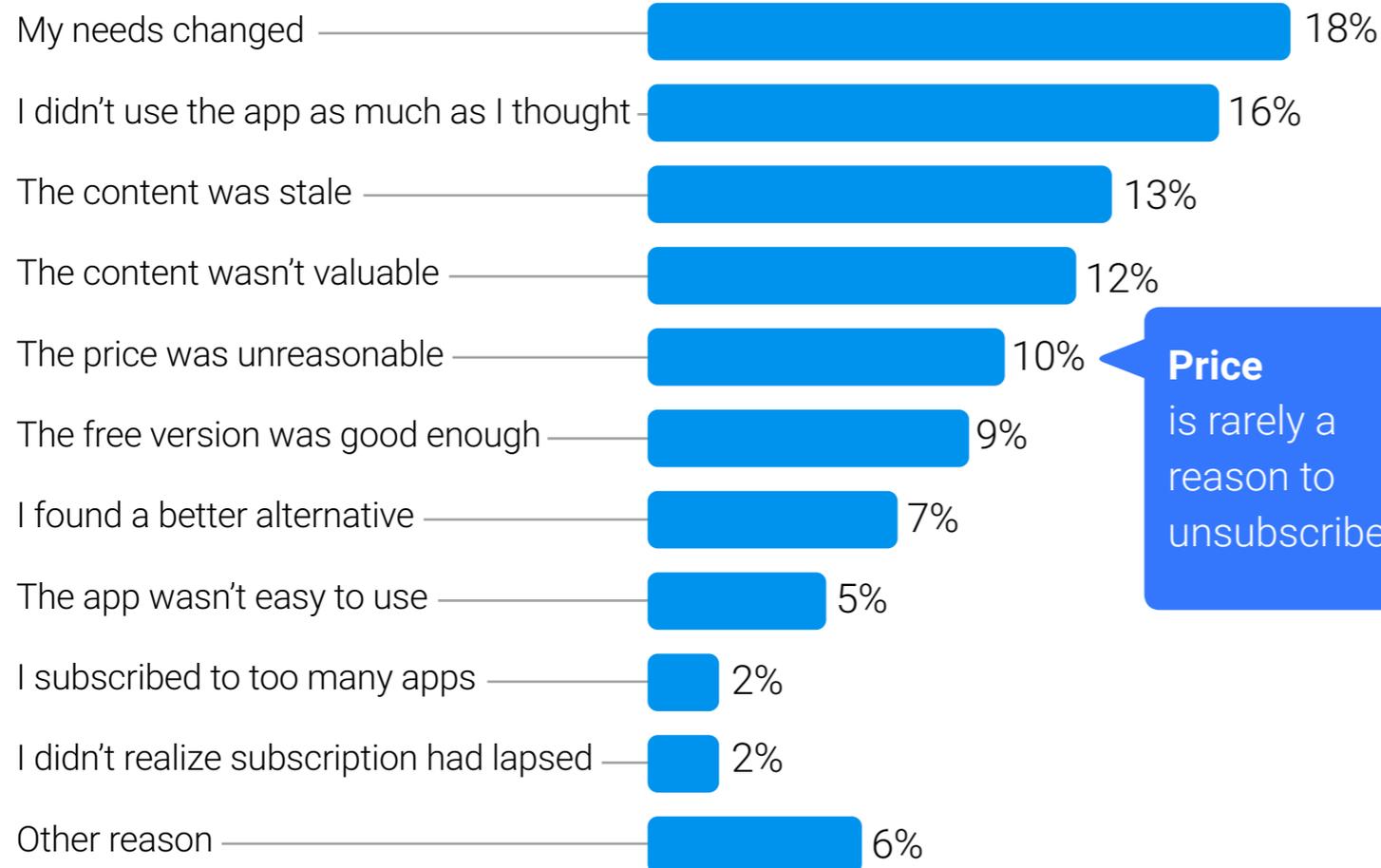
While valuable content and frequency of use are key for retention, there are some interesting differences across categories in terms of their relative influence. In dating, user experience is a big driver (20%). Pricing (15%) and freshness of content (15%) is particularly important for entertainment.



# Why do some Android users lapse?

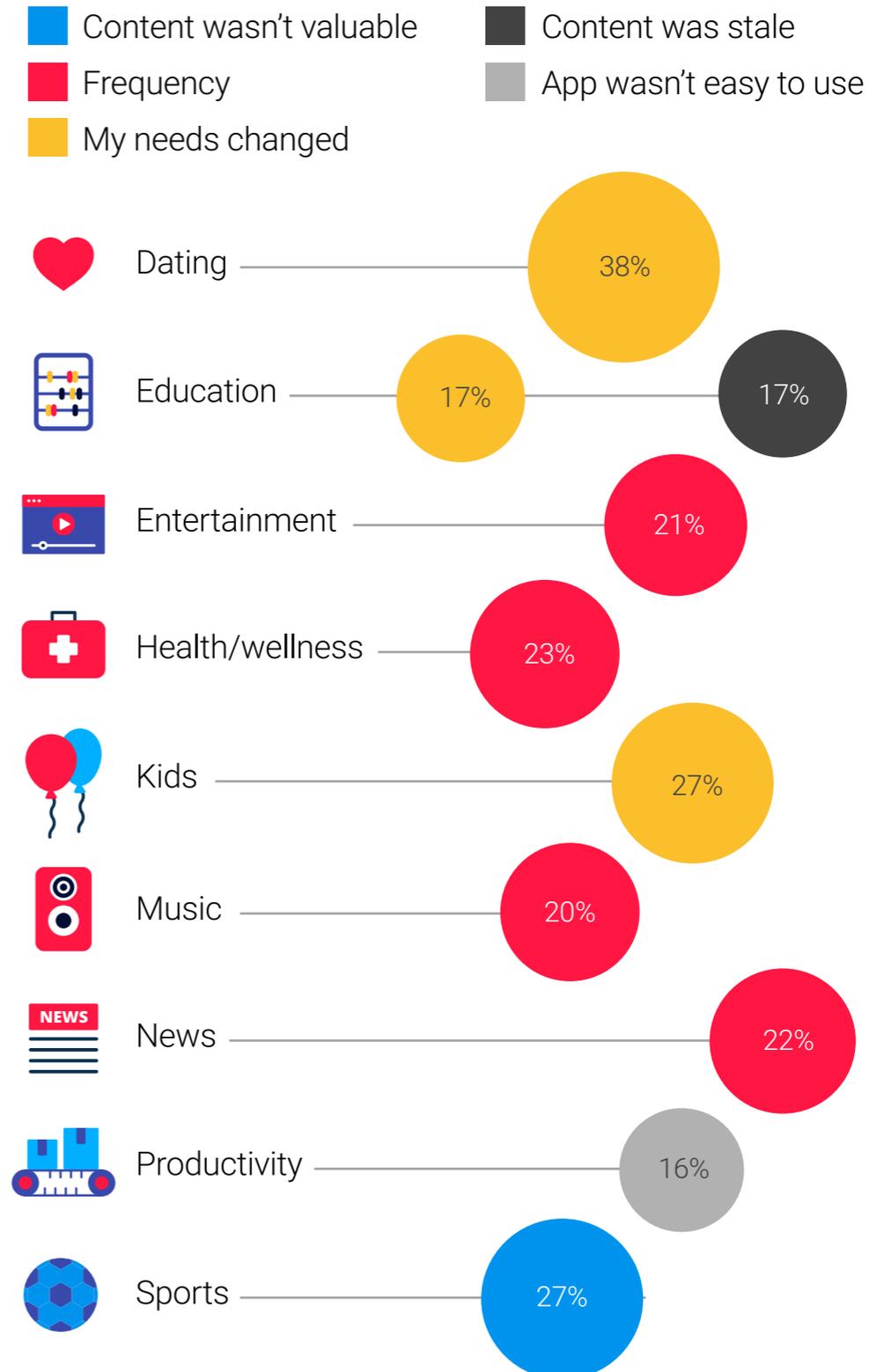
Changing needs are a major driver of lapsing, especially in dating, education and kids subscription apps. Infrequent usage will drive churn in music, health & wellness, entertainment and news.

## Top Reasons Android Users Stop Paying

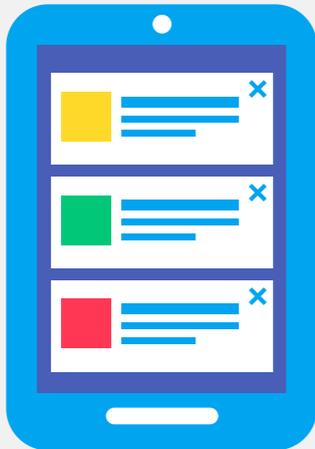


**Price**  
is rarely a  
reason to  
unsubscribe

## Top reasons users stop paying for an app - by category



## Developer Checklist

**1**

Create a habit by giving users a reason to come back to your app on a daily basis, and [use actionable notifications](#) to drive them back.

**2**

Time your content releases strategically so users feel like they're consistently getting new and updated content.

**3**

Consider offering an alternative to meet changing needs in your user base, e.g. apps for older children, maintenance versions of weight loss apps, etc.



For more information on growing your subscriptions business with Google Play, visit the [Android Developers Website](#).