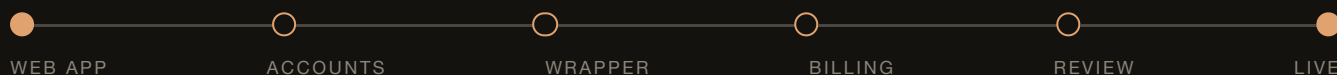


Web App to *App Store.*

The step-by-step route from a working web app to a live app on the Apple App Store and Google Play. Twelve stages, every checkbox in order, with the store rules, fees and rejection traps checked for 2026.



US\$124

STORE FEES TO LAUNCH
ON BOTH STORES

6–12

WEEKS FROM WEB APP
TO LIVE LISTING

238

CHECKBOXES, IN THE
ORDER YOU TICK THEM

START HERE

You already built *the hard part*.

If you have a working web app, you can have it live on both the Apple App Store and Google Play in **6 to 12 weeks**, for **about US\$124 in store fees** plus your own time. No rebuild. No second codebase. This playbook walks you through every step, in order, with a checkbox for each one.

Who this is for: founders, coaches, creators and small teams whose product already runs in the browser (a membership site, a SaaS tool, a community, a course platform, a booking app) and who want a real app in both stores without starting again.

YOU GET

One codebase

The same product ships to the web, iPhone and Android.

YOU GET

A review-ready app

Push, deep links and store billing where the rules require it.

YOU GET

Accounts done right

Developer accounts, agreements, tax forms and listings.

YOU GET

The legal basics

Privacy policy, terms, account deletion, data protection.

US\$124
TO LAUNCH ON BOTH

That is the only unavoidable cost: **US\$99 a year to Apple** and **US\$25 once to Google**. Everything else in this playbook is free, optional, or only costs money once you are already earning from the app.

HOW TO USE IT

1 Work top to bottom

The stages are in the order that avoids rework. Skipping ahead is how people get rejected twice.

2 Start the waiting early

Stages 1, 7 and 10 mean waiting on Apple, Google or third parties. Start them first and build while you wait.

3 Tick every box

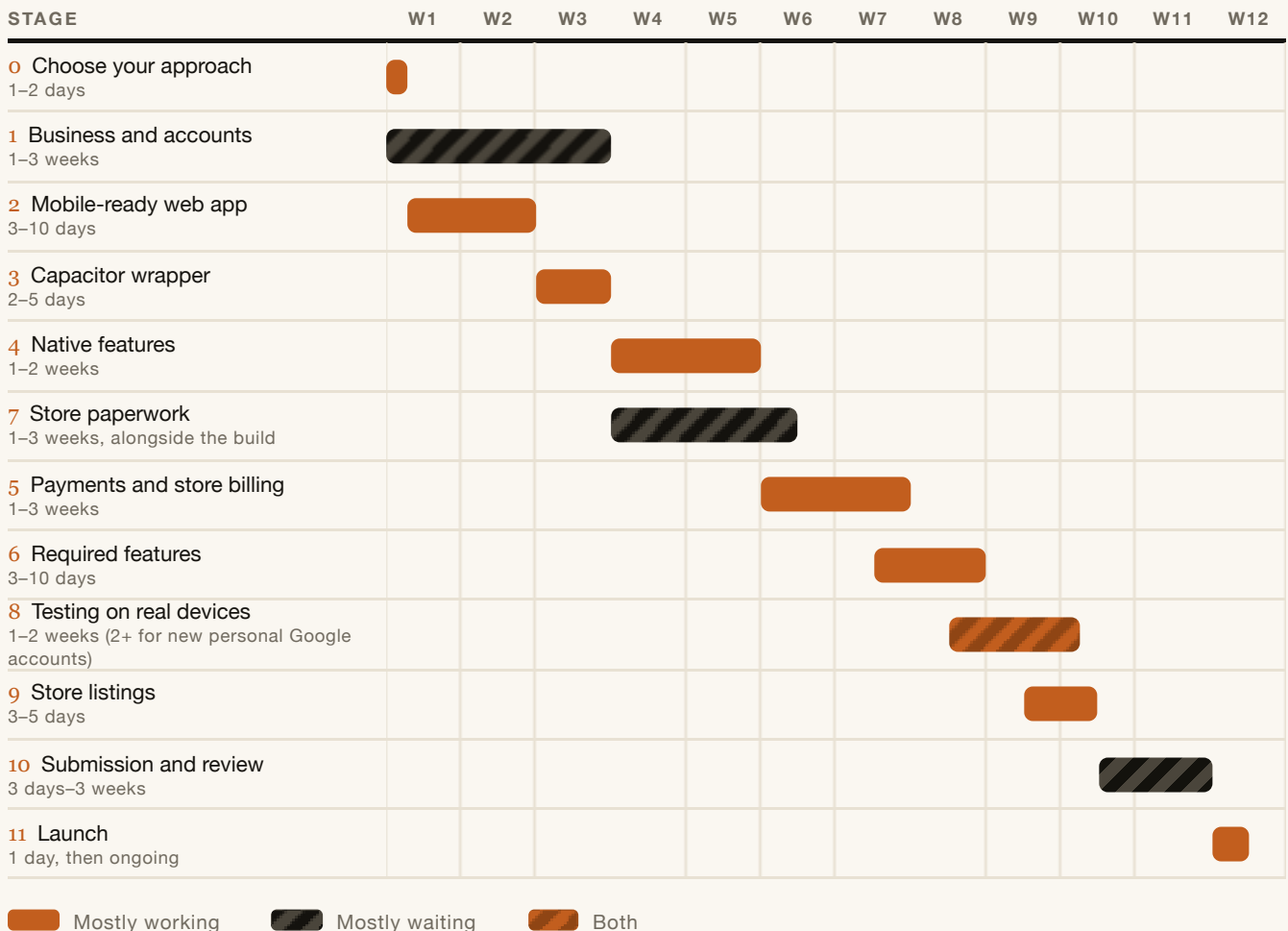
Each box is a thing a reviewer, a customer or the law will check. If it is not ticked, it is not done.

CHECKED Rules and fees in this playbook were checked in September 2026. The stores change them often, so confirm anything marked as a rule against the store's current guidelines before you rely on it.

THE ROADMAP

Two tracks, *one launch*.

The fastest route runs two tracks at once: **paperwork you wait on**, and **building you do while you wait**. Here is a realistic schedule with that overlap built in. Push hard and it compresses toward 6 weeks; hit a rejection and it stretches to 12.



DAY ONE

Start Stage 1 immediately

Account approval is the slowest step in the whole playbook, and you cannot rush it.

THE GATE

Billing waits on paperwork

Apple will not let you create in-app purchases until its Paid Apps Agreement is active.

THE REST

Everything else can start now

Stages 2, 3 and 4 need no approvals. Build them while the stores decide.

What it *actually* costs.

The unavoidable cost is **US\$99 a year to Apple and US\$25 once to Google**. Everything else is optional, or free until you earn revenue. Prices are in US dollars; Apple and Google charge the local equivalent.

ITEM	COST	REQUIRED?
Apple Developer Program	US\$99 a year	YES for the App Store
Google Play Console	US\$25 once	YES for Google Play
D-U-N-S number	Free through Apple's lookup tool	YES for organisation accounts
A Mac with Xcode	An existing Mac, or a cloud Mac rental	YES for iOS builds
Capacitor	Free, open source	RECOMMENDED
Push notifications (Firebase Cloud Messaging)	Free	RECOMMENDED
RevenueCat (store billing)	Free up to US\$2,500 a month in tracked revenue, then 1%	RECOMMENDED if you sell digital goods
Store commission on digital sales	About 15% for small developers on both stores (see Stage 5); Apple's standard rate is 30%	IF you sell digital goods in the app
Trademark registration	UK £205 for one class (from April 2026) · US US\$350 per class	OPTIONAL recommended
Data protection registration	UK ICO fee: £52 a year for most small businesses	DEPENDS on your country
Business address service	A virtual office address, typically a small monthly fee	ONLY for EU sales, if you want your home address private
Minimum to launch on both stores	US\$124 in year one	Then US\$99 a year

US\$99
EVERY YEAR AFTER

Google's fee is one-off. Apple's renews every year, and if it lapses **your app is removed from sale**. Put the renewal in your calendar the day you enrol.



STAGE 0

Choose your approach

1-2 DAYS

WORKING

For most web apps, a **Capacitor wrapper** is the right choice: it reuses your existing site, reaches both stores, and adds the native features review requires.

APPROACH	WHAT IT IS	STORE LISTING?	EFFORT	BEST FOR
Progressive web app (PWA)	Your site, installable from the browser	Google Play only, via a Trusted Web Activity; not the App Store	Low	Testing demand before committing
Capacitor wrapper	A native shell around your site, plus native plugins	Both stores	Medium	Most web apps: this playbook
React Native or Flutter rebuild	A new native app sharing your backend	Both stores	High (months)	Apps needing heavy native performance
Fully native (Swift and Kotlin)	Two separate codebases	Both stores	Very high	Games, camera or hardware-heavy apps

Two ways to run a Capacitor app

LOAD THE LIVE SITE (SERVER.URL)

Every deploy reaches the app instantly with no store release. Fastest to build and simplest to maintain. It needs a signal, and Capacitor's own documentation describes this mode as intended for development, so test it thoroughly.

BUNDLE A STATIC BUILD

The web files ship inside the app. Works offline and feels more native, but every change needs a store release, and it only suits apps that can be exported as static files.

VERDICT Most server-rendered web apps start with the live site and a branded offline page (Stage 3). If your app exports cleanly to static files, bundling is the safer long-term choice.

ANSWER THESE BEFORE YOU START

- ☐ **Do you sell anything inside the app?** List every product: subscriptions, courses, downloads, event tickets, coaching, physical goods.
- ☐ **Which of those are digital goods or services used in the app?** Stage 5 explains why this matters: they usually must use Apple's and Google's billing.
- ☐ **Do people sign in with Google, Facebook or another third-party account?** Google blocks its sign-in inside embedded web views, and Apple then requires Sign in with Apple or an equivalent (Stage 2).
- ☐ **Do members post content others can see?** You will need reporting and blocking (Stage 6).
- ☐ **Which countries will you launch in first?**
- ☐ **Will you publish as an individual or as a company?** A company is strongly recommended (Stage 1).

01

STAGE 1

Business foundations and developer accounts

1-3 WEEKS

MOSTLY WAITING

Start this stage on day one. It is the slowest, and store billing cannot be set up until it is done.

DECIDE Individual or organisation? Publish as a registered company if you can. The store shows your company name as the seller instead of your personal name, and Google exempts organisation accounts from its 14-day closed-testing rule for new personal accounts.

FOUNDATIONS

- ☐ Register your company, if you have not already
- ☐ Open a business bank account (both stores pay out to it)
- ☐ **An email address on your own domain** (e.g. you@yourapp.com). Apple checks that it matches your company website, and a free webmail address can slow approval.
- ☐ Make sure your website is live, shows the company name and has a contact page
- ☐ **Request a D-U-N-S number** through Apple's free lookup tool, using your legal name and address exactly as your company registry shows them. Allow up to 5 business days, plus 1-2 days for Apple to receive it; a newly registered company can take up to 2 weeks.

APPLE

- ☐ Create an Apple Account with your business email and turn on two-factor authentication
- ☐ **Enrol in the Apple Developer Program as an Organisation** (US\$99 a year). Approval usually takes 2-7 days after the D-U-N-S number and may include a verification call to confirm you can sign for the company.

GOOGLE

- ☐ **Create a Google Play Console account as an Organisation** (US\$25 once)
- ☐ Complete organisation and identity verification (a few days to 2 weeks)
- ☐ **Personal account instead?** New personal accounts must run a closed test with at least 12 testers for 14 continuous days before they can publish. Plan for it in Stage 8.

TOOLS

- ☐ A Mac with the latest Xcode (iOS apps can only be built on macOS)
- ☐ Android Studio (Mac, Windows or Linux)
- ☐ Node.js 22 or later (the minimum for Capacitor 8, which also needs Xcode 26)
- ☐ At least one real iPhone and one real Android phone for testing

02

STAGE 2

Make your web app mobile-ready

3-10 DAYS

WORKING

Reviewers judge the app as an app, so your site must look and behave like one inside a phone frame. Fix these on the web first; they improve the site for mobile browsers too.

LAYOUT

- ☐ Every page works at 375px wide with no sideways scrolling
- ☐ Buttons and links are at least 44×44 points
- ☐ Nothing depends on hover (menus, tooltips, previews)
- ☐ Add `viewport-fit=cover` and pad for `env(safe-area-inset-*)` so content clears the notch and home indicator
- ☐ Fixed headers and bottom navigation sit inside the safe areas
- ☐ Text inputs are at least 16px, so iOS does not zoom in on focus

SIGN-IN

- ☐ Sessions survive the app being closed (cookies or tokens that persist)
- ☐ **Google sign-in:** Google blocks its sign-in page inside embedded web views. Use a native sign-in plugin or the system browser instead.
- ☐ Offer any third-party login? Plan to add **Sign in with Apple** or an equivalent privacy-focused option (Apple 4.8)
- ☐ Password managers work on your login form (correct `autocomplete` attributes)

DETECTING THE APP

- ☐ **Decide how your site will know it is running inside the app.** A simple approach is to add a marker to the app's user agent (Capacitor's `appendUserAgent`) and read it on the server. You will use this to hide web-only purchase buttons in Stage 5.

NAVIGATION

- ☐ **Every screen has a visible way back:** an app has no browser back button
- ☐ Members never land on a marketing page they cannot leave; send in-app links to in-app pages
- ☐ Links to other websites open in the system browser or a new tab, not inside the app

DEVICE FEATURES

- ☐ File uploads and camera capture work on iOS and Android
- ☐ Downloads open or save correctly on a phone
- ☐ Video plays inline and does not autoplay with sound

WHY Everything on this page is visible to a reviewer within the first minute. A site that scrolls sideways or traps people on a sales page reads as "just a website", which is Apple's most common rejection for wrapped apps.

03

STAGE 3

Wrap it with Capacitor

2-5 DAYS

WORKING

Pick your app ID first and never change it. It is the bundle ID on the App Store and the package name on Google Play, and neither store lets it change after the first upload.

Use your domain, reversed: *yourapp.com* becomes *com.yourapp.app*

PERMANENT
AFTER UPLOAD

CHOOSE YOUR IDENTITY

- ☐ **App ID** (e.g. `com.yourapp.app`), written down and never changed
- ☐ **Display name**, up to 30 characters (check it is not already taken in either store)

CREATE THE PROJECT

Keep the app in its own folder (e.g. `mobile/`) so it does not tangle with your web build.

TERMINAL

```
$ mkdir mobile && cd mobile
$ npm init -y
$ npm install @capacitor/core @capacitor/ios @capacitor/android @capacitor/app @capacitor/splash-
screen @capacitor/status-bar
$ npm install -D @capacitor/cli
$ npx cap init "Your App" com.yourapp.app --web-dir www
$ npx cap add ios
$ npx cap add android
```

- ☐ Project created and both platforms added
- ☐ `mobile/node_modules` excluded from your web project's type checks, linter and deploy

CONFIGURE `capacitor.config.ts`

- ☐ `server.url` set to your live site, and `server.appStartPath` to the page members should open on (e.g. `/app` or `/dashboard`)
- ☐ `server.errorPath` pointing at a branded offline page in `www/`
- ☐ `ios.appendUserAgent` and `android.appendUserAgent` set to a marker such as `YourApp/1 (ios)` and `YourApp/1 (android)`
- ☐ Status bar style set to suit your background colour
- ☐ Splash screen background colour set, spinner off

03 Wrap it with Capacitor

CONTINUED

ICONS AND SPLASH SCREEN

- ☐ **1024×1024 icon:** square, opaque, no rounded corners (iOS rounds them)
- ☐ **Android adaptive icon:** a foreground layer with the logo inside the central 66%, and a background layer
- ☐ **2732×2732 splash image** with the logo small and centred
- ☐ Generate every size with `npx @capacitor/assets generate --ios --android`

FIRST RUN

- ☐ `npx cap sync`, then `npx cap open ios` and run on the iPhone simulator
- ☐ `npx cap open android` and run on an Android emulator
- ☐ In Xcode, choose your team under Signing & Capabilities once your Apple account is approved
- ☐ **Set iPhone-only** (Targeted Device Family = iPhone) unless you want to design, screenshot and test for iPad as well
- ☐ Set `ITSAppUsesNonExemptEncryption` to `false` in `Info.plist` if the app only uses standard HTTPS; it skips the export compliance question on every upload

IN-APP BEHAVIOUR

- ☐ **Android back button** goes back a page, and puts the app in the background from the first page (listen for the App plugin's `backButton` event)
- ☐ Pages that sell outside store billing redirect to an in-app page when the app's user agent marker is present

Your first-run test

YOU ARE DONE WITH STAGE 3 WHEN

The app opens on both simulators, lands on your members' page, shows your icon and splash screen, and the offline page appears in airplane mode.

YOU ARE NOT DONE IF

The app opens on your homepage, the Android back button closes it from a deep page, or any "buy" button is visible inside the app.

04

STAGE 4

Native features that get you through review

1-2 WEEKS

WORKING

Apple rejects apps that are "just a website" (guideline 4.2, minimum functionality). The fix is not to hide the website; it is to give the app **things a browser tab cannot do**. Aim for at least two of the features below.

PUSH NOTIFICATIONS the strongest single feature

- ☐ Install `@capacitor/push-notifications`
- ☐ Create a free Firebase project and add the Android app (download `google-services.json`)
- ☐ Create an APNs authentication key (.p8) in your Apple Developer account and add the Push Notifications capability in Xcode
- ☐ **Ask for permission at a meaningful moment** (e.g. after the user switches on reminders), never on first launch
- ☐ Store each device's token on your server against the user; delete it when the token is rejected
- ☐ Send from your server through Apple's (APNs) and Google's (FCM) push services, beside any existing web push

DEEP LINKS links in your emails open the app

- ☐ iOS: add the Associated Domains capability with `applinks:yourapp.com`
- ☐ **Serve `/.well-known/apple-app-site-association`** from your site: JSON, no file extension, no redirect, listing your Team ID, app ID and the paths the app should open
- ☐ Android: add an intent filter with `android:autoVerify="true"` for the same paths
- ☐ **Serve `/.well-known/assetlinks.json`** with your package name and the SHA-256 fingerprint of your signing key (Play Console → App integrity)
- ☐ Listen for the App plugin's `appUrlOpen` event and navigate the web view to the link; also check `getLaunchUrl()` for a link that started the app
- ☐ Only list members' pages and sign-in links, **never pages that sell** outside store billing

04 Native features

CONTINUED

SAVED PASSWORDS

- ☐ Add `webcredentials:yourapp.com` to Associated Domains and a `webcredentials` entry to the association file, so iOS offers passwords saved for your site

OPTIONAL NATIVE TOUCHES add these if Apple pushes back

- ☐ Haptic feedback on key actions (`@capacitor/haptics`)
- ☐ Face ID or fingerprint unlock
- ☐ Home screen quick actions or widgets
- ☐ The native share sheet (`@capacitor/share`)

HOW REVIEWERS READ YOUR APP

REJECTED

A website in a frame

Opens on a marketing page, no push, links that leave the app, a checkout button in plain sight.

BORDERLINE

A tidy member area

Opens on a dashboard and navigates well, but does nothing a browser bookmark could not.

APPROVED

An app with a job

Push reminders, email links that open the right screen, saved passwords, native touches.

2+

NATIVE FEATURES

The minimum to aim for. **Push notifications plus deep links** is the combination that most reliably moves a wrapped web app from "just a website" to "an app", and both pay for themselves in engagement after launch.

05

STAGE 5

Payments and store billing rules

1-3 WEEKS

WORKING

If a user buys a digital good or service to use in your app, Apple and Google generally require their own billing (in-app purchase), and take a commission. **Getting this wrong is the most common reason a web-app launch is rejected.**

WHAT YOU SELL	STORE BILLING?	NOTES
Subscriptions and memberships unlocking app content	REQUIRED	Apple 3.1.1, Google Payments policy
Courses, videos, downloads, templates	REQUIRED	Digital content used in the app
Group live classes, cohorts, group coaching	REQUIRED	One-to-many services count as digital
One-to-one live services between two people (e.g. personal training, tutoring)	NO	Apple 3.1.3(d), person-to-person services
Physical goods	NO	Use your normal checkout
Real-world services and in-person event tickets	NO	Consumed outside the app
"Reader" content bought elsewhere (e.g. existing subscriptions)	ACCESS ONLY	The app may let people sign in to what they already bought, but may not sell it

Rules change by country

UNITED STATES

US storefronts now allow buttons and links to your own web checkout. Apple takes no commission on those at the time of writing, although the rate is still being fought in court. Google now offers alternative billing and external links too, with enrolment and its own fees.

EUROPEAN UNION

Alternative payment and distribution options exist under the Digital Markets Act on both stores. Apple moves EU apps to one new set of business terms from 1 October 2026. Each option has its own fees, so read the current terms before choosing one over standard billing.

EVERYWHERE ELSE Including the UK at the time of writing, assume the app may neither sell digital goods outside store billing nor tell people they can buy more cheaply on the web. The UK regulator (the CMA) consulted on changing this in July 2026, but no decision has been made. Check the current rules for each market you launch in.

05 Payments and store billing

CONTINUED

HIDE WEB PURCHASES INSIDE THE APP

- ☐ Every web checkout button (Stripe, PayPal and similar) is hidden when the app's user agent marker is present
- ☐ Every link to a page that sells is hidden or redirected
- ☐ Managing an existing membership (cancel, update card) may stay: it is not a purchase

ADD STORE BILLING

- ☐ **Choose a billing layer.** RevenueCat is the common choice: one SDK for both stores, receipt validation, and webhooks to your server.
- ☐ Create each product in App Store Connect and Play Console (subscriptions in a subscription group; one-off purchases as non-consumables or consumables)
- ☐ **Pick store price points.** Stores offer set tiers, so £47 may become £46.99. You may charge more in the app to cover the commission.
- ☐ Grant access on your server from store webhooks, exactly as your web payments do, so **one account works everywhere**
- ☐ Record where each purchase came from (web, Apple, Google), so "Manage membership" sends people to the right place to cancel
- ☐ Add a **Restore purchases** button (Apple requires one)
- ☐ Before the buy button, show the subscription's name, length, price, that it auto-renews, and links to your terms and privacy policy (Apple 3.1.2)
- ☐ Free trials and introductory offers are set up in the store, not in your own code

COMMISSION

- ☐ **Apple:** apply to the App Store Small Business Program. You pay 15% instead of 30% if you earned under US\$1M in proceeds last calendar year (new developers qualify).
- ☐ **Google, in the US, UK and EEA** (since 30 June 2026): a 10% service fee on your first US\$1M a year and on all auto-renewing subscriptions, plus a 5% billing fee when you use Google Play Billing. About 15% in total.
- ☐ **Google, everywhere else:** the older structure applies until the new fees reach your region (worldwide by 30 September 2027). Enrol in the 15% tier for your first US\$1M a year; subscriptions are already 15%.

~15%

SMALL DEVELOPERS

What a small developer typically pays on both stores once enrolled. Price your in-app products with that in mind: in the UK, **a £46.99 in-app price nets you about £33** once the stores remove 20% VAT and then their 15%.

06

STAGE 6

Features every store now requires

3-10 DAYS

WORKING

These are not optional polish. **Each one is a named rule, and reviewers test for them.**

ACCOUNT DELETION Apple 5.1.1(v), Google's account deletion policy

- ☐ Any app that lets people create an account lets them delete it from inside the app, not just deactivate it
- ☐ Deletion cancels any web subscription you bill yourself, then removes the account and its data
- ☐ If they subscribe through Apple or Google, tell them to cancel in the phone's subscription settings (you cannot cancel it for them)
- ☐ Keep only what the law requires (e.g. payment records for tax), and say so
- ☐ A public web page explaining how to delete an account, for Google's data deletion link

USER-GENERATED CONTENT Apple 1.2, if members post anything others can see

- ☐ A way to report objectionable content
- ☐ A way to block abusive users
- ☐ A filter or moderation process, and a promise to act on reports within 24 hours
- ☐ Terms that users agree to, stating zero tolerance for objectionable content
- ☐ Contact details that are reachable from inside the app

06 Features every store requires

CONTINUED

SIGN-IN

- ☐ Sign in with Apple (or an equivalent privacy-focused option) if you offer any third-party login
- ☐ If sign-in is required, reviewers need a demo account (Stage 9)
- ☐ Do not force sign-up for features that do not need an account

PRIVACY AND PERMISSIONS

- ☐ Privacy policy linked inside the app and in both store listings
- ☐ A clear purpose string for every permission you request (camera, photos, notifications)
- ☐ Ask for each permission only when it is needed
- ☐ **Tracking across other companies' apps or sites** (e.g. advertising pixels) means you must show Apple's App Tracking Transparency prompt. Many apps simply switch those pixels off inside the app.
- ☐ Add a privacy manifest ([PrivacyInfo.xcprivacy](#)) declaring your use of Apple's "required reason" APIs

ACCESSIBILITY not a hard rule, but reviewers and users notice

- ☐ Text scales with the phone's font size setting
- ☐ Colour contrast meets WCAG AA
- ☐ Buttons and images have labels for screen readers

TIP Build deletion once, properly. The same flow serves Apple's in-app rule, Google's public deletion link and your data protection duties. A single "Delete my account" page that works in the app and on the web ticks all three.

07

STAGE 7

Store paperwork

1-3 WEEKS

WAITING

ALONGSIDE THE BUILD

Apple will not let you create or test in-app purchases until its **Paid Apps Agreement** is active, so do this as soon as your account is approved.

APPLE App Store Connect

- ☐ **Accept the Paid Apps Agreement** (Business → Agreements)
- ☐ Add bank account details (verification can take a day or two)
- ☐ Tax forms: a W-9 for US companies, or a W-8BEN-E for companies outside the US
- ☐ Add a contact for each role: finance, legal, technical, marketing
- ☐ **Declare your EU trader status** under the Digital Services Act if you distribute in the EU. Apple removes apps without it from EU storefronts.
- ☐ Apply to the Small Business Program before launch. Approval is usually quick, but the 15% rate only starts after the Apple fiscal month in which you are approved.
- ☐ Create the app record: name, primary language, bundle ID, SKU. This reserves the name.
- ☐ Create an APNs key for push (Certificates, Identifiers & Profiles → Keys)

GOOGLE Play Console

- ☐ Set up the payments profile as your organisation and verify the bank account (usually a small test deposit, a few days)
- ☐ Complete the tax information
- ☐ Declare your EU trader status if you distribute in the EU
- ☐ **Check your service fee.** Outside the US, UK and EEA, enrol in the 15% tier (see Stage 5)
- ☐ Create the app: name, default language, app or game, free or paid ("free" still allows in-app purchases)
- ☐ Turn on Play App Signing and copy the SHA-256 fingerprints for `assetlinks.json`

PRODUCTS both stores

- ☐ Each subscription created, with its duration, price, free trial or introductory offer, and a display name and description
- ☐ Each one-off purchase created, with a price and a display name
- ☐ **Product IDs match exactly** across both stores and your billing layer
- ☐ Products linked to your billing layer (e.g. RevenueCat entitlements)
- ☐ Store notifications pointed at your billing layer (Apple's App Store Server Notifications, Google's Real-time Developer Notifications)

08

STAGE 8

Testing on real devices

1-2 WEEKS

BOTH

2+ FOR NEW PERSONAL GOOGLE ACCOUNTS

Simulators miss push notifications, purchases, deep links and real network conditions, so **test those on physical phones.**

DISTRIBUTE TEST BUILDS

- ☐ **iOS:** archive in Xcode, upload to App Store Connect, and install through TestFlight. Your own team can test immediately; outside testers need a short beta review (about 1–2 days).
- ☐ **Android:** upload an app bundle (`.aab`) to the internal testing track in Play Console. Available within minutes to up to 100 testers.
- ☐ **New personal Google account?** Run a closed test with at least 12 opted-in testers for 14 continuous days before you can apply for production access.

TEST EVERY PATH

- ☐ Install, first launch, splash screen and start page
- ☐ Sign up, sign in, sign out, password reset and email sign-in links
- ☐ Sessions persist after closing and reopening the app
- ☐ Push permission prompt, then a notification delivered with the app open, in the background, and closed
- ☐ Tapping a notification opens the right page
- ☐ Deep links from an email open the app, both when it is running and when it is closed
- ☐ Offline: turn on airplane mode, check the offline page, then recovery
- ☐ Android back button on every screen
- ☐ Uploads, camera and downloads
- ☐ **No web checkout button or selling page** is reachable anywhere in the app

CONTINUED

- ☐ iOS: create sandbox testers in App Store Connect → Users and Access
- ☐ Android: add licence testers in Play Console → Settings
- ☐ **Buy each product** and confirm access appears on the server and on the website
- ☐ Renewal: sandbox subscriptions renew every few minutes
- ☐ Cancellation, then expiry, removes access
- ☐ Failed payment and billing retry
- ☐ Restore purchases on a fresh install
- ☐ The same account on the web shows the membership bought in the app

- ☐ Account deletion completes, and the account cannot sign in afterwards
- ☐ Reporting and blocking work

GOTCHA The 14-day clock only counts continuous days. If your closed-test group drops below 12 opted-in testers, the count restarts. Recruit a few spares, and publish as an organisation if you can to skip the rule entirely.

09

STAGE 9

Store listings and assets

3–5 DAYS

WORKING

Your listing is **a sales page and a compliance form at once**. Prepare the text and images once, then adapt them for each store.

FIELD	APPLE APP STORE	GOOGLE PLAY
App name	30 characters	30 characters
Subtitle or short description	Subtitle, 30 characters	Short description, 80 characters
Full description	4,000 characters	4,000 characters
Keywords	100 characters, comma-separated	None (the description is indexed)
Promotional text	170 characters, editable without review	None
Icon	1024×1024, from the build	512×512 PNG
Phone screenshots	6.9-inch (1320×2868), up to 10	At least 2, up to 8
Tablet screenshots	13-inch iPad, only if the app supports iPad	Optional
Feature graphic	None	1024×500, required
Preview video	Optional, 15–30 seconds	Optional YouTube link

TEXT AND IMAGES

- ☐ Name, subtitle or short description, and full description written
- ☐ Keywords chosen for Apple (no competitor names or trademarks)
- ☐ Screenshots from the real app, with short captions showing the main benefits
- ☐ Feature graphic designed for Google Play
- ☐ No health, medical or earnings claims you cannot prove
- ☐ No mention of cheaper prices or buying on the web

LINKS

- ☐ Support URL (a page with a contact method)
- ☐ Privacy policy URL
- ☐ Terms of use (EULA) link, required by Apple for subscriptions: Apple's standard EULA or your own terms
- ☐ Marketing URL (optional)

09 Store listings and assets

CONTINUED

PRIVACY DISCLOSURES

- ☐ **Apple privacy "nutrition label":** each type of data collected, whether it is linked to the user, and whether it is used for tracking
- ☐ **Google Data safety form:** data collected and shared, encryption in transit, and how to request deletion
- ☐ Both match your privacy policy and what the app actually does

RATINGS AND DECLARATIONS

- ☐ Apple age rating questionnaire (user-generated content and unrestricted web access raise the rating)
- ☐ Google content rating questionnaire (IARC)
- ☐ Google target audience and content (set 18+ if children are not your audience, to stay outside the Families policy)
- ☐ Google declarations: ads, app access, government, financial features and health apps, as they apply
- ☐ Category and secondary category chosen

FOR THE REVIEWER

- ☐ **A demo account with realistic sample data**, which stays active throughout review
- ☐ Review notes explaining what the app does, where the main features are, how purchases work, and that web purchases are hidden in the app
- ☐ A phone number and email where the reviewer can reach you

Review notes that get approved

"[App] is the member app for [product]. Sign in with the demo account below. Main features: [feature one] (tab 1), [feature two] (tab 2). Push reminders are under Settings. Subscriptions are sold only through in-app purchase; web checkout is hidden inside the app. Account deletion: Settings → Delete account."

WHY A reviewer who can find everything in 60 seconds approves faster and asks fewer questions.

10

STAGE 10

Submission, review and common rejections

3 DAYS-3 WEEKS

WAITING

Apple reviews most submissions within a day or two, but a first app built on a website, with in-app purchases, often needs **one or two rounds of fixes**. Google reviews new developer accounts more slowly: allow several days, and up to two weeks for a brand-new account.

SUBMIT

- ☐ **Apple:** attach the build, fill in every listing field, add your in-app products to the version (first-time products must be submitted with an app version), and choose manual release
- ☐ **Google:** create a production release, upload the app bundle, complete every Policy and App content item, and choose managed publishing so you control the release moment
- ☐ Choose the countries and regions for each store
- ☐ Check the demo account works on the morning you submit

WHILE YOU WAIT

- ☐ Keep an eye on email and App Store Connect messages; reply to a reviewer's question the same day
- ☐ **Rejected?** Read the guideline cited, fix it, and reply in the Resolution Center explaining what changed. If you disagree, you can appeal to Apple's App Review Board.

A rejection is not a verdict. It is *a to-do list with a guideline number on it.*

FIX, REPLY,
RESUBMIT

AND HOW TO AVOID EACH

12
KNOWN TRAPS

Every one of these is avoidable, and every one is covered by a checkbox earlier in this playbook. **If you ticked Stages 2 to 9 honestly, you have already dodged them.**

11

STAGE 11

Launch, and keeping the app alive

1 DAY, THEN ONGOING

WORKING

Approval is not the finish line. Both stores set **yearly technical deadlines**, and an app that misses them stops receiving updates or disappears from search.

LAUNCH DAY

- ☐ Release manually on both stores at a time you choose; Apple can also roll out in phases over 7 days
- ☐ **Download from the live store listing on a fresh phone** and run through sign-up, sign-in and one purchase
- ☐ Add App Store and Google Play badges to your website, emails and social profiles
- ☐ Tell existing users, with a reason to switch (push reminders, faster access)
- ☐ Watch the first real purchases and renewals reach your server

EVERY WEEK

- ☐ Reply to store reviews (especially the negative ones)
- ☐ Act on reported content within the time your terms promise
- ☐ Check crash reports in Xcode Organizer and Play Console → Android vitals

EVERY RELEASE

- ☐ **Web-only changes:** deploy your site as normal. With `server.url`, the app updates instantly with no review.
- ☐ **Native changes** (plugins, permissions, icons, config): raise the version and build numbers, then submit a new build
- ☐ Collect different data? Update the privacy label, data safety form and privacy policy together

11 Launch, and keeping the app alive

CONTINUED

EVERY YEAR

- ☐ **Renew the Apple Developer Program membership** (US\$99), or the app is removed from sale
- ☐ Rebuild with the Xcode and iOS SDK Apple requires. The minimum rises each spring: since 28 April 2026, uploads must use Xcode 26 and the iOS 26 SDK.
- ☐ Raise the Android target API level to Google's requirement. The deadline falls each August: from 31 August 2026, new apps and updates must target Android 16 (API level 36).
- ☐ Update Capacitor and its plugins to a supported major version
- ☐ Review Apple's and Google's policy updates, and renew your Small Business Program status if asked

GROWTH optional

- ☐ App Store optimisation: test different screenshots and subtitles
- ☐ Custom product pages (Apple) and custom store listings (Google) for specific campaigns
- ☐ Promotional offers and win-back offers for lapsed subscribers

YOUR MAINTENANCE CALENDAR

SPRING	AUGUST	ENROL DATE	MONTHLY
New Xcode minimum Apple raises the required SDK. Rebuild and resubmit.	Android target API Miss it and updates stop being accepted.	Apple renewal US\$99, or the app comes off sale.	Payouts land Google around the 15th; Apple about 45 days after its fiscal month.



The legal checklist

BEFORE LAUNCH

GET IT REVIEWED

This is a practical checklist, **not legal advice**. Laws differ by country, so have a solicitor or lawyer review your terms and privacy policy, and an accountant confirm the tax points, before launch.

TERMS OF SERVICE

- ☐ **An in-app purchases section:** purchases are billed by Apple or Google, subscriptions renew automatically, cancellation is in the phone's subscription settings, and refunds follow the store's process
- ☐ How any money-back guarantee works for store purchases (Apple issues iPhone refunds itself; Google lets you refund from Play Console)
- ☐ Rules for user content: zero tolerance for objectionable content, and what happens when it is reported
- ☐ Users agree to the terms at sign-up

PRIVACY POLICY

- ☐ Every type of data you collect, why, and how long you keep it
- ☐ Every processor that handles it: hosting, email, analytics, payments, push (Firebase), billing (e.g. RevenueCat), Apple and Google
- ☐ Push tokens and device identifiers
- ☐ How to delete an account, in the app and on the web
- ☐ Contact details for privacy requests

DATA PROTECTION

- ☐ **UK:** pay the ICO data protection fee (£52 a year for most small businesses)
- ☐ UK and EU: a lawful basis for each use of personal data (UK GDPR, EU GDPR)
- ☐ **Health, fitness, body measurements or photos** are special category data: get explicit consent and write a data protection impact assessment
- ☐ US: check state privacy laws such as California's CCPA/CPRA if you have users there
- ☐ Sign or accept data processing agreements with each processor
- ☐ **Children:** if under-13s (US) or under-16s (EU) might use the app, COPPA and GDPR child rules apply. Most adult apps set an 18+ audience and say so.

§ The legal checklist

CONTINUED

EU DIGITAL SERVICES ACT

- ☐ **Selling in the EU makes you a "trader":** your business address, phone and email are shown publicly on EU store pages. Use a business address, or launch outside the EU first.

TAX AND MONEY

- ☐ Apple and Google are the seller to your customers and handle sales tax and VAT on app sales in most countries
- ☐ Confirm with your accountant how to treat store payouts in your books
- ☐ **Plan cash flow:** Google pays out around the 15th of the following month; Apple pays about 45 days after the end of each Apple fiscal month

BRAND AND CLAIMS

- ☐ Run a trademark clearance search on your app name in each market
- ☐ Consider registering your name (software, education and online services classes are common). UK: £205 for one class; US: US\$350 per class.
- ☐ No medical, health or earnings claims you cannot prove, in the app or the listing
- ☐ You own or have licences for every image, font, video and piece of music used

CONSUMER LAW

- ☐ Subscription terms are clear before purchase (price, renewal, how to cancel)
- ☐ Contact details and your company's legal name are easy to find

ORDER Write the privacy policy **after** Stage 6 and **before** Stage 9. It has to describe what the app really does, and both stores' privacy forms have to match it.

The launch-day *final checklist*.

Run this list the day before you submit. If every box is ticked, you have covered the reasons most first submissions fail.

- ☐ **Developer accounts active on both stores**, with paid-app agreements, banking and tax complete
- ☐ **App ID final** and identical in the project, both stores and your deep link files
- ☐ App opens on a members' page, never a marketing page
- ☐ **No web checkout, web price or "buy on our site" link** anywhere in the app
- ☐ Store purchases, renewals, cancellation and Restore Purchases tested with sandbox accounts
- ☐ Subscription details, terms and privacy links shown before every purchase
- ☐ Push notifications delivered on a real iPhone and a real Android phone
- ☐ Deep links from email open the app
- ☐ Account deletion works inside the app
- ☐ Report and block work, if users can post
- ☐ Offline page shows when there is no signal
- ☐ Privacy label, data safety form and privacy policy all match what the app does
- ☐ Age and content ratings complete
- ☐ Screenshots, descriptions, support URL and privacy URL in place
- ☐ **Demo account active**, with sample data and review notes
- ☐ Manual release selected, so you choose launch day

Every box ticked? *Submit to both stores.*

16 OF 16

ONE LAST THING

Your web app is about to become *a real app*.

Most people with a working web app never make this move. Not because it is hard, but because it looks hard: accounts, agreements, billing rules, review. You now have the whole route on paper, in order, with nothing left to guess.

The paperwork is slow. The build is not. Start Stage 1 today, build Stages 2 to 4 while you wait, and you will be closer to launch next week than most people get in a year.

The day-one challenge

Before tonight: request your D-U-N-S number, enrol in both developer programs, and write your app ID on a sticky note. Three tasks, one evening, and the slowest part of this playbook is already running.