

How To Build Apps With Zero Coding: Module 3 Building

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Starting the Building Process

Things are starting to get very exciting for you...

Now that you've made a decision on what apps and features you'd like to emulate, it's time to begin the process of building your new app.

If you're using [Universal App Maker](#), the building process is a lot easier for you. You can make changes to any of the app templates yourself using our Drag-N-Drop interface and our pre-made templates - or you can use a blank template.

Alternatively, you can hire a coder to do custom app for you if you choose, and then upload the resulting Javascript file to the Resource Manager available to you inside Universal App Maker - watch the short demo video for details. This way your app is deployed to every App Marketplace with one click.

Without Universal App Maker, it's very likely you'll need to build your app from scratch for each app marketplace. If you're not using Universal App Maker, there are two major things that you will need to do...

First, you'll need to hire a programmer to develop your app for you. Learning to code yourself is a very useful skill, but it will likely take you too long (months, possibly years) and you'll likely get frustrated with the process. Programming is not an easy task.

There are a LOT of great programmers and designers out there, ready to build great apps to your specifications. You're like an architect - you don't need to know exactly how the carpenter does his job, you just need to know what he's capable of doing for you. Again, if you're building a totally custom app and want special features, [Universal App Maker can handle the job](#), you'll just likely need a programmer to write the Javascript code you'll need to upload.

There's another reason you don't want to even think about programming the apps yourself...you want the ability to **create multiple apps at once** as your business grows, and if you're programming everything yourself, it becomes nearly impossible. It doesn't make sense to do it that way.

You want to be the overlord, the manager, the leader. You come up with the ideas, other people do the work. (That's how the most successful businesses in the world are run, and it's exactly what separates the "little guys" from the guys that get paid hand over fist.)

Second, you'll need to build the wireframe for your app. The wireframe is essentially a mockup of each and every screen that you want built into your app. You'll need to plan out every single screen, every single function, every

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single button.

I find building the wireframe to be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts - you get to close your eyes and “see” how the app works in your mind, every flick, every touch, every button without actually doing any of the work to get it there.

When your final app is published and it goes to market, you can compare it to the wireframe you built and it becomes blatantly obvious...

You're getting paid to use your imagination.

You're the Decision Maker...

It's simple.

This is the way I think about it as I'm coming up with ideas and developing apps: Programmers can do **almost anything** you can dream up, but the more complex your ideas are, the longer it will take and more it will cost.

Like anything else, the more apps you create, the easier it becomes to produce them. As I've already mentioned, and as you should expect, the first time you develop an app will take longer, and you'll make mistakes.

You can't be afraid to make mistakes!

This guide is designed to help minimize the mistakes you make and show you exactly what you need to do, but no matter how hard we try, it's bound to happen.

Something in your app might not look right, sound right, or act right. Your entire app might not turn out exactly as you wanted, or as you expect.

I can virtually guarantee that something like this will happen EVERY SINGLE TIME you develop an app. *It's natural and part of the process.*

The actual development process for an app is definitely a **“Ready, Fire, Aim”** approach. You can plan out the details for your app down to the T and you will still need to make adjustments as the app development progresses (potentially a lot of them if your app is on the more complex side.)

Don't let mistakes discourage you - either your own mistakes, or the mistakes of the team members you hire. You can do it. You are the decision maker, and the master of your domain. It's YOUR app.

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With all that said, there are a lot of smart things you can do before you even begin development of your app to drastically increase your chances of success - sometimes major success.

It should be obvious that your app can only be as good as the programmer who builds it for you, so it's important to make sure you find someone great.

Luckily, it's easy to make the great programmers stand out from the crowd if you know what you're doing.

Recruiting a Great Programmer

Finding the right programmer is important, and it's something that a lot of first-time app developers worry about. If you've never hired anyone to do work for you before, it might even be a little intimidating.

Don't let the hiring process intimidate you.

Hiring your first programmer is an invaluable learning experience, and done right, will yield benefits for you for years and years to come.

To find your programmer, you'll want to use one of these resources:

upwork.com

This is my preferred way to hire programmers and designers, especially if you are looking to hire someone who will work for you in the long-term as an hourly employee. I've worked extensively with upwork (previously oDesk) and recommend it.

The big advantage to upwork is the Work Diary for hourly employees. When someone is working and they are logging hours, upwork automatically takes snapshots of their desktop to ensure they are on task.

In addition, the Work Diary also calculates the number of clicks and keystrokes that a person has over the course of their workday.

This ensures that your freelancers are actually doing the work they say they're doing, in the amount of time that would expect. It's easy to keep an eye on your progress and ensure you're getting the work you're paying for.

On top of all that, upwork makes it a lot easier to directly contact your freelancers as compared to other websites. You'll be able to communicate directly with your programmers on Skype and e-mail. (It's against the terms of

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service for many freelance websites to communicate directly.)

That means you will be able to save on the 10% oDesk fee if you choose to directly hire someone and just pay them via Paypal, for instance.

Note: You will definitely want to complete full jobs directly on upwork to begin with, as it will allow you and your programmer to leave feedback for each other. Just like freelancers, reputable employers who are well-reviewed will get more job applicants.

[Freelancer.com](https://www.freelancer.com)

Freelancer claims to have a high number of programmers and is a great place for you to look. Freelancer.com is the result of the merging of multiple programming-targeted freelancing websites: GetAFreelancer, Scriptlance, vWorker and Rentacoder.

It's free to post a job, but it costs money to add certain “features” to your job posting. For example, for \$9 you can mark your project as urgent to get started within 24 hours. If you want your job to be private and hidden, it's \$19. To feature a job, it's \$29.

In addition, fees are charged when you pay freelancers as well.

Despite that, Freelancer is a great resource to take a look at, especially if you run into trouble finding high-quality programmers on oDesk (which shouldn't be a problem.)

[Guru.com](https://www.guru.com)

Guru is a higher-quality marketplace that seems to have the largest amount of first-world freelancers, but the cost is typically higher.

This is recommended for specialty jobs or app features that are considerably more complex. Hiring an expert consultant to help you fix a problem or increase the functionality of your app is likely the best use of Guru.

[Craigslist](https://www.craigslist.org)

Craigslist is a fantastic resource you can use to find low-cost, high-quality programmers in your local area. This is especially useful if you're looking to hire someone for the long-term, or someone you want to be able to meet with face-to-face. It can often be cheaper to hire directly through Craigslist as well.

The biggest problem is the potential lack of quality applicants if you live in a low-population area.

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Local Schools

If you live near a college or university, you have a potential gold mine at your fingertips. You can contact the college directly, or post fliers on campus to attract quality programmers.

Programmers who are currently attending college are often very high-quality applicants that are just getting their careers started and are eager to build their portfolio. That means you don't have to pay quite as much, and can potentially build a VERY strong long-term team.

You can also contact the heads of the computer science or art/design departments to ask for their best students. Many are more than happy to help their favorite students make some extra money and potentially land them a full-time job.

Developer Forums

There are several iOS and Android Developer forums out there, and you'll be able to find a lot of potential candidates:

iPhone Developer's Forum:
<http://iphonedevsdk.com>

Android Developer's Forum:
<http://androidforums.com/>

(There are many more, but these are a couple of the most popular.)

Many of the programmers and developers on these forums may be working on their own projects, but building the relationships with top people in the industry can yield partnerships and other unexpected benefits.

It's hard to put a price on the ability to call on a network of expert-level programmers that can help you solve problems, give you feedback, and much more. And you can build those relationships absolutely free.

Posting Your Job Request

You have a lot of options to find programmers, but many people will often start out using programmers available on the major freelancing websites.

When posting a job to ANY freelance website, Craigslist, or even posting fliers on a college campus, it's important that your proposal is well-written to ensure

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you receive only the highest quality applicants. So, let's talk about what you need to include in your job description.

Title

The title is one of the most important aspects of your job posting. If you post a title that doesn't get the “click” from potential programmers when they're browsing for jobs, your pool of applicants will be greatly reduced.

At the same time, you want to make sure that only qualified, high-quality programmers are posting to your job.

The best way to do this is to use some variation of the following title when posting your job:

Experienced iOS Developer Needed for Simple App

You want to be sure to include both the words “Experienced” and “Simple” in your title, or similar words. “Experienced” will mean you don't get unqualified applicants, and “Simple” will mean that the quotes that you get from programmers should be much lower.

Even if your app idea isn't simple, you will want to use the word “simple” in your title. That's because you will start the process gradually by testing your programmer with a simple job to ensure they're up to the task. The first app your programmer creates for you will be quick, dirty and easy. (More details on that shortly.)

Body

Depending on the requirements of your particular app, the body of your job proposal will change, but you can use this template as a framework:

[YOUR COMPANY], a mobile app/software startup, is seeking an experienced programmer who is very skilled in creating feature-rich, well-organized mobile apps for iOS devices.

[BRIEF SUMMARY OF APP FEATURES]

In your response, please include the following:

- A short description about you, your prior experience, and your capabilities.
- A detailed portfolio of iOS apps you have worked on.
- The number of hours you are available per week over the next 30 days.

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- References to contact those who you have previously worked with.
- Your Skype ID

In addition, please be sure to include the phrase “Roger Wilco” at the very top of your job proposal. This allows me to verify that you personally read the full job description and can follow instructions.

Full job details and app specifications will be provided to those who are deemed qualified. Successful completion of the job will likely result in long-term employment with [COMPANY NAME].

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]
[COMPANY NAME]

You can modify or use this template as you need. When posting your job and describing your app, you need not be too detailed, as you don't want to give away the components that will make your app unique. (Anyone can see your job posting on upwork, and many people do research there for app ideas.)

Instead, you can give a general description of the type of app and describe the skills needed to create your app.

For example, if you are creating a 3D game app, you will want to ensure that you include that in the description. If your idea is a modification of a flashlight app, you can include the fact it's a flashlight app directly in your description, without describing what makes it unique.

Skills

As you begin to type in “iOS,” “iPhone,” and “iPad,” upwork provides a dropdown list of skills. For example, “iOS-Development” appears as one of your options. You will want to be sure to include the various skills that apply to your job, particularly if you are looking to have your app work on multiple iOS devices.

“Cocoa” is the most common programming language for iOS, and it uses “Objective-C” and “C-Programming,” so include all of those too.

“Android-app-development” will work for all types of Android apps you are looking to develop. If you're using [Universal App Maker](#), you want someone proficient in Javascript to successfully deploy your apps.

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Budget

The budget you enter is arbitrary and non-binding, but it will give programmers an idea of how much you plan to spend on the overall project.

You will not be able to assess exactly how much the development will cost until your programmer has a chance to look at the wireframe you provide, and exactly what components you plan on including. A super-simple app can be created for as little as a \$50-\$100, whereas a complex, 3D app can cost several thousand.

Once you've set your budget and clicked the “Post” button, congratulations! You're getting very close to making your app a reality.

But first, it's time to...

Build Your Wireframe

With your job posted, it's time to nail down exactly what will be included in your app. You've done all the research already, now you just need to lay down the blueprint for what your programmer will do for you.

The “wireframe” for your app is a very simple sketch that lays out the design and functions of your app. You're literally designing what will appear on the user's screen, and where.

With a detailed wireframe, your programmer will be able to see exactly what goes where and what will happen when a button on the screen is pushed.

This might sound complicated, but it's really not. You're just using your imagination to “see” how the app works before it's actually built. You want to be able to build and visualize your app with the end in mind.

Obviously, simple interfaces and functions ALWAYS work best. People love simple. Even with a more complex app, you can break down multiple features into multiple simple screens. Complex apps might have anywhere from 5 to 20+ wireframes, whereas simple apps might only require 2-4.

You do NOT need to over-complicate the wireframe building process. You simply need to envision each screen that your app needs, and figure out what functions you want to be displayed where. You will need a separate wireframe for each screen to ensure you are as accurate and clear as possible.

To add context to your wireframe, you could also say to your programmer,

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“download app X on the iOS store for an example of how I want feature Y to look.” Using examples from existing apps and programs can help provide an additional level of explanation and clarity.

To build your wireframe, there are a number of tools you can use...

Paint

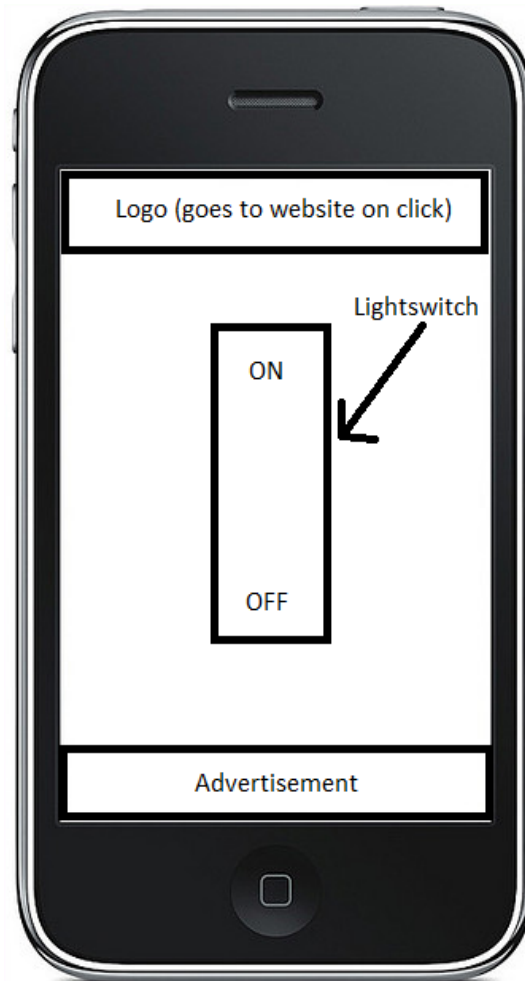
This super-simple design program comes with every PC sold, and there are several free versions available for the Mac as well.

You do not need any complex programs whatsoever to design your app wireframe. I usually prefer to design my apps using Paint simply because it's all you really need.

You can use the simple image editing tools available to place rectangles, lines, text, etc. directly on the wireframe to show what you want to be placed where.

Here is an example of a one-page wireframe for an ultra-simple flashlight app:

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You can see that the wireframe doesn't include any complex graphics, just placeholder graphics where each feature goes.

The wireframe is almost completely self-explanatory. In conjunction with the full list of features you want included in each screen (for example: “turn on the camera flash when the on button is pressed”), the finished app that your programmer creates should be almost exactly to your specifications.

You can download a blank iPhone screen for your mockup in the Easy App Formula member's area.

Alternatively, there are a number of different tools and programs that you can use to design your wireframe.

Pen and Paper

You can actually draw out your entire wireframe by hand, if you prefer, as long as you have a scanner or a camera that will enable you to take pictures so that

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your programmers and designers will be able to read the text.

Do not worry about the quality of your designs - most wireframes, even those built by the biggest companies in the world, start out as sketches that look like they are done by a 6-year-old.

Don't worry, and don't be ashamed - the most important part of the process is ensuring that EVERY single function is laid out, and that every button is explained.

LiveScribe

LiveScribe is a handy notebook and pen that allows you to take drawings and notes that you've written down and creates a digital version of the drawings online.

You'll be able to draw your wireframe with the Livescribe pen and paper, and it will sync the drawing in your notebook with EverNote in the cloud. You'll need to be connected to a wi-fi network for the pen to sync your drawings and notes to the internet.

It's more expensive than using a pen and paper and a camera/scanner, but if you plan on doing a lot of wireframes (or a lot of notes on pen and paper that you don't want to waste the time on typing out) then you should take a look.

Balsamiq

This is a tool that we just recently discovered. It allows you to create a well-designed wireframe, with numerous professional looking features, while still keeping the appearance of a "sketch."

The most beneficial feature of using Balsamiq is that it will give you great ideas for laying out your app. There are a ton of features and stylistic elements built directly into the program that can help make your apps look cleaner and, even more importantly, well-organized.

Building your wireframe is not a difficult task, and can be especially motivating. It's a big step in the right direction!

Now, it's time to seal the deal. While you were building your wireframe, there's no doubt that several applications came in from potential programmers.

Go take a look...

Interviewing Programmers

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Within 24 hours of posting a job, you'll generally get quite a few applications that come in. Some applications will be complete junk with poor english, or will fail to follow instructions that you provided (for example: Use "Roger Wilco" at the beginning of your proposal).

Those applications should be discarded immediately.

Next, you should look at the remaining applications and examine the portfolio of each candidate thoroughly. It will be obvious which ones stand out and which ones do not based on:

- The number of examples provided in the portfolio
- The completeness of the responses to questions in the original job posting
- The reviews of portfolio apps on the iTunes store
- The quality of the design on the apps
- The feedback and hours worked by the contract

One other thing to keep in mind: If it's too good to be true, it probably is. If an app developer seems to have a perfect portfolio with top-rated games, perfect feedback on oDesk, and is not asking for a premium price, you should be suspicious. (Don't deny the application...but give it extra attention and be sure to check out references. Ask for additional information if necessary.)

Once you've narrowed down 2 to 3 of the top programmers in your application list, it's time to start the interview process.

It's strongly recommended that you interview your programmers "face-to-face" using a webcam through Skype. This will give you a much better idea of who you're talking to and how confident they are in their abilities. You'll be able to read their body language while they speak.

Any programmer who is unwilling to speak with you over Skype voice chat should be denied.

During your 5 to 10 minute interview, you should be sure to ask the following questions, or variations of these questions:

- Can you provide a list of references with contact information?
- What was the most difficult app you've worked on? What made it difficult?
- How many hours per week can you work? What time do you usually work?
- Are you working individually or as part of a firm?
- If you are sick or there is an emergency, how will I get access to the code you've created?
- Are you willing to provide the code at each milestone payment?
- What apps have you published yourself?

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- What is the process of submitting an app to the app store?
- Does the payment schedule provided (see below) work for you?
- Are you willing to work directly with other members of my team?
- How many reiterations (changes) can I make once the project is over?
- How soon can you start? When can I expect to see a prototype?

If the answers given make sense, and the programmer appears to be the expert that they say they are, it's time to make your decision and have them get started!

If you have two great programmers and are undecided between the both of them, it may make sense to develop another app at the same time. Great programmers are worth their weight in gold, and while they are not difficult to come by, building a long-term rapport is invaluable.

Alternatively, you could test both of them with a similar project and see who completes it faster with a bug-free interface. The choice is yours.

Beginning App Development

With the wireframe in place and your programmer hired, there should be nothing stopping them from getting started.

At this stage, you might want to consider having your programmer sign a non-disclosure agreement. It's not absolutely essential like many people say it is (after all, an NDA is only worth how much you're willing to spend enforcing it), but it is nice to have and can come in handy in case there are problems down the road.

There are multiple templates available for this online. You can use a program such as Adobe Echosign to have programmers sign the NDA digitally, or you can have them fax it to you (there are several free fax services online, too.)

Because this is the first time you are working with this programmer, it's necessary for you to keep a close eye on progress. As soon as your programmer builds even an initial prototype, you should install it on your iOS or Android device immediately. The functionality doesn't necessarily need to be all in place, but the app interface should be able to load on your device, even if it can't yet do anything.

As your app is developed, you are bound to come up with tons of changes and additions. Resist the urge to implement all of your changes from the outset, as it will take longer to develop your app and become more expensive. Making updates to your app will help boost the popularity in the marketplace.

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To keep app development cheap and low-risk, I tend to offer payment in the following installments:

0% upfront. I do not like providing a large sum of money upfront before I have any work in hand. If someone is asking that you provide money upfront, be sure that they're very good. A few first-world programmers have insisted that 50% upfront is standard for countries like the US, UK and so on, but not all of them stick to this rule. Use your best judgment to determine what is worth it for your app.

With 0% upfront, you should make a payment as soon as the first prototype is sent to you, even if it's not functional. If it loads on your iOS device, you can be confident your programmer knows what they are doing.

25% for Alpha version. This version has only basic functionality and may lack many features.

50% for Beta version. This version should begin to look closer to the finished product, but may contain several bugs.

Final 50% on final version delivery. This version should have all functionality and be almost entirely bug free. It's natural to find bugs after the final version, no matter how closely you've analyzed your app during alpha and beta. These should be covered by your programmer for at least 30 days after the final delivery of your app.

During the actual development process, it's likely you will need to go back and forth with your programmers several times to help test features and ensure everything is up to specifications. The more complex your app, the more e-mails and Skype conversations you will need to have.

(Be sure to keep your Skype conversations saved so you can refer back to them as necessary!)

Try to be timely about returning e-mails to your app developers - I've sometimes found that I'm the one slowing down the development process because I'm not providing feedback quick enough!

With all that in mind, your app should be coming along nicely. In the next module, we'll be talking about the business side of your app business, including how to maximize your cash flow and build a brand.

Note: If you're using Universal App Maker, match up one of the starter templates that most closely matches the end project you have in mind before you hire a programmer and have them do any work. [Click here to find out more about Universal App Maker and see the 240+ app templates available to you.](#)