



AppsVillage

## Israeli start-up helps businesses get an app 'in a snap'

AppsVillage wants to do for apps what Wix.com did for websites: make them easier and cheaper to create

By Shoshanna Solomon 24 August 2017, 7:31 pm



AppsVillage aims to help businesses, from the small nail salon to the coffee shop and larger businesses, create their own app quickly. (YouTube screenshot)

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Israel's Wix.Com has made it **cheaper and quicker** for businesses and anyone who wants to set up a website. Now, another Israeli firm, AppsVillage, is seeking to do for apps what Wix.com did for websites.

As our cellphones become an extension of our arms and are an integral part of our daily lives, so has the use of mobile apps grown: we have apps to show us the way, apps to count our steps, apps to touch up our photos and apps to keep in touch with friends.

According to App Annie, a business intelligence firm headquartered in San Francisco, the time we spend using apps **continues to increase**. On average, smartphone users use over 30 apps per month, and an average of at least nine apps per day. These are used mainly for social networking and communications, but also for photos and video, gaming, music, entertainment and shopping.

Businesses have caught on to this, and many have created apps to reach their clients.



**AppsVillage**

What AppsVillage is proposing to do is to help businesses, from the nail salon to the coffee shop, to larger businesses, create their own app quickly, “in a snap.”

“Today, the best channel to get to a customer is via an app,” said Max Bluvband, who founded the firm a year ago with two of his high-school chums, Shahar Haidu and Nadav Daniel; all three are now aged 39. “For stores, 80 percent of revenues are based on 20-30 percent of their loyal customers.”

But why do businesses need an app to get to their customers when there are newsletters and text messages and social media?

Well, explained Bluvband, an app created using AppsVillage becomes something like a membership card. If you sign up for the app of a business — say, your favourite coffee shop or a clothing boutique — the store can alert you via the app about special deals and send you coupons and offers that you can present to the store or use to order online.

The shop can message the customer directly as well – with popup notifications conveying promotions, updates and coupons; by chatting directly with the customers; by offering them cash back bonuses, the possibility to sell products online and even setting up appointments, for a haircut with your favourite stylist, for example.



AppsVillage CEO and co-founder Max Bluvband (Courtesy)

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So basically, two things are needed: the app itself — which can be created via AppsVillage — and getting people to download it. Businesses do the latter by approaching their best customers at their stores and giving them a special offer that they can use if they download the app – like a free drink or a glass of wine. Many do. And then they are hooked.

But how does one go about building the app? AppsVillage does that.

Many companies that give you the opportunity of setting up an app, take the do it yourself (DIY) approach, Bluvband explained. “You need to be a techie to set it up,” he said. But most people prefer the “do it for me” approach, that tells them what they need and then gives it to them at the click of a button.

So, this is how it is done. A business goes to the Apps village website and clicks on start now. The person is asked to login with Facebook and then asks to create a new app. AppsVillage then confirms that the Facebook profile is yours – and then starts building the app, taking all the information it needs from Facebook: all about the firm, phone numbers, address.

The process is so simple, Bluvband said, that “you can have your coffee and create an app at the same time.”

Once it is ready, you see how it looks and check its features. Then you submit it to the app store. Within a week your business will have its own app available on app store and Google play, Bluvband said.

An Israeli clothing chain called Discreet, for example, created its app via AppsVillage, to offers customer clothing items – with the picture shown and sizes available – at a discount. All customers had to do to order the item on sale was click on the “buy now button.” Similarly, Remax Israel, a real estate firm, uses an app, also created via AppsVillage, to rent property. The app users can click on the properties shown and check out their features, without having to go onto the website of the firm.

Some 1,000 new customers have set up their app via the firm in the past three months, mainly in Israel, said Bluvband, a computer scientist graduate who his free time composes Jewish music. The company is now launching the feature in the US.

AppsVillage, which operates out of the Israeli city of Rishon LeZion and employs 7 people, has raised \$1 million to date in seed financing round.