



# Six Ways An App Can Help Save Time In The Busy Tax Season

Joel Oliver



Joel Oliver  
CEO  
My Firms App

## Biography

Joel is the CEO of My Firms App™ ([www.myfirmsapp.co.uk](http://www.myfirmsapp.co.uk)) and is no newcomer to the Fintech market or working with professional service companies. Joel owns Insight Marketing, SalesForAccountants and Insight Digital Media, with over 20 years' experience working with Accountants, IFAs, Financial Planners, Law Firms and professional service companies.

He pioneered the My Firms App product back in 2012 as he could see the huge benefits of Apps for professional firms who wanted to care for existing clients and market profitably to potential new customers. Now the company provide the only compliant approved and endorsed Apps for accountants and bookkeepers in the world. With hundreds of professional firms subscribing to the software and over 130,000 end users.

Over recent months the My Firms App platform has been successfully launched in UK, Ireland, Australia and America – with growing demand from markets such as New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

Joel has a hands-on role within the family of companies and enjoys meeting clients and helping them future-proof their businesses. As the App continues to expand in the UK and overseas, Joel continues to ensure the App puts accountants first and the product gets get better and better with the help and support of the entire team.

Outside work you will often find Joel with his friends or family enjoying varied hobbies from salmon fishing to watching his son play rugby or sailing. Joel is also an assistant pastor at a local church and runs numerous youth groups.

**Keywords** Smartphone, App development, Productivity, Tax, Accounting, Mobile, Client experience

**Paper type** Research

## Abstract

*The smartphone is a mere decade old, and yet with every year it has become ever more integral to people's lives. No other personal device has had the same commercial and societal impact as the smartphone. As relentless innovation continues at device and network levels, exciting times lie ahead for both consumers and businesses.*

## Introduction

Everyone is online. There can be no doubt that the move to digital technology has become a mobile-first experience and Smartphone adoption among UK adults has risen to 85%, according to the *Deloitte Mobile Consumer Survey 2017*<sup>1</sup>. Only five years ago, adoption stood at 52% but the real shift is in the amount of time spent within Apps, and not on mobile websites, with research by App Annie<sup>2</sup> revealing that over 900 billion hours were spent using Apps in 2016.



---

*Technology and Innovation*

The business world is changing because of the rate of mobile adoption and Smartphones have become ever more integral to people's lives. It is the first option for faster and easier communication and never more so than in the tax season when up against deadlines and accountants need urgent information from their clients.

There are a number of ways that giving your client a digital App can help boost profitability by saving you and your team time in the tax season. Here are just a few:

1. **Tax dates Rates and automatic reminders all in App** – The world we live in is now mobile first. For most Smartphone owners, checking their phones is among the first and last things they do in a day, plus every five minutes in-between and it is the most efficient way of giving clients easy access to up-coming deadlines such as the 31st January cut off.
2. **Calculators and tables in the App** – One of the top ten most visited pages within the App are the calculators – clients love them – and instead of Googling a query, the answer lies in their pocket and keeps the accountant top of mind. In the platinum version of the App, businesses have access to 17 including Dividend versus Salary, Income Tax, Contractors, Payslip, Company Car and Mortgage calculators.
3. **Receipt Manager** – One of the App's most popular features allows clients to simply use their phone to take a photo of a receipt. The dropdown menu in the Receipt Manager helps the client allocate all expenses against a specific category making it very easy for the accountant to allocate to nominal ledger codes. The captured receipts and information can then be exported and emailed saving hours of sifting through paper receipts.
4. **Income Tracker** – Income can be logged whether it is personal or business related and it is all saved onto your client's device instantly taking away all the concerns of lost paper. It's easy to export to the accountant at any time with the click of a button.
5. **Mileage Tracker** – Another very useful, time saving feature within the App allows clients to share journey information in real time. A simple 'tap' on the start button instructs the App to track your journey, even when it is minimized. Once finished, hit stop, give it a name and you're done. The mileage can then be exported as a csv file with the click of a button and the accountant can instantly import it into Xero, QuickBooks, MYOB or Excel throughout the year so there's no big rush in the days leading up to year end.
6. **PUSH is the big 'saviour'** – A Push Notification is a short message, a little like a text message that App clients can send out to all their App users. It takes just seconds to write, it's sent instantly and automatically lands on all App users' phones or tablets.



These 1:1 push notifications are invaluable in the Self Assessment season to send reminders to individual clients, say eight weeks out, of the need to forward all expenses and other items that are necessary for the preparation of the tax return and specific requests for document signings. If the client doesn't respond, these are the most effective way of getting their attention as they appear on the home screen of their Smartphone and make a direct request for the information required. For example, 'Please can you forward outstanding items for your tax return by end of play Friday.'

Push notifications are proven to save time and get an 80% response from clients versus 20% typical by email and for most clients; the Smartphone is something they have with them all the time. Never before has this level of customer interaction been possible and the accountant's message doesn't have to fight for visibility with hundreds of other emails in a crammed-full inbox or a pile of junk mail carefully filtered by a secretary or PA.

Better still, thanks to a handy inbuilt scheduler, messages can be programmed a month, a quarter or even an entire year ahead.

### **How an App keeps you on top of tax season**

The tax season is often the most chaotic in the firm's calendar with partners being pulled in every direction but what if that chaos could be minimized?

An App solution developed specifically to eradicate bottle-necks by encouraging a real-time exchange of information throughout the tax year allow staff to work at optimal efficiency levels at their busiest time. If information to complete this year's tax returns is received as the clients generate it, staff can work more efficiently without all the stopping and starting normally associated with the tax season. And firms that operate as efficiently as possible using new digital technology will have a very definite advantage.

#### **Reference**

- <sup>1</sup> [https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/assets/img/download/global-mobile-consumer-survey-2017\\_uk-cut.pdf](https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/assets/img/download/global-mobile-consumer-survey-2017_uk-cut.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.appannie.com/en/insights/market-data/2018-app-predictions-mobile-convenience-will-drive-transformation-across-industries/>