

12 Ways to Lower the App Development Cost

App development can be expensive, but there are proven ways to reduce costs without compromising quality. From prioritizing essential features to choosing the right development approach, smart strategies can help you stay within budget. Read on to discover the most effective ways to optimize your app development expenses.

#1. Validate your idea and concept in advance

How can you reduce the cost to develop a mobile app? Start by making sure your idea is viable. In the world of software development, an early mistake means a cheap mistake. That's why validating your app idea is the main way to reduce the cost of mobile app development.

There are a lot of app idea validation techniques, and all of them are aimed at thoroughly analyzing your target audience, market, and competitors. You can:

- research the market with the help of TAM-SAM-SOM analysis;
- take an unbiased look at your product with the help of a SWOT analysis;
- find out the opinions of your target users with the help of focus groups;
- analyze the potential of your competitors with the Five Forces model.

At Mind Studios, we allocate experienced project managers and business analysts to conduct an all-encompassing discovery stage. Their main role is to guide the whole team and select the right tech solutions for developers to implement based on the target audience.



I often see how clients looking for a development team pay attention primarily to the developers' level of expertise. However, many tend to ignore such team members as project managers and business analysts [...] without proper business analysis, you might spend a fortune on a product that your audience doesn't need in the first place.



Dmytro Dobrytskyi

the CEO and co-founder
of Mind Studios



#2. Outsource mobile app development

As we've previously mentioned, outsourcing app development is a basic way to reduce costs, allowing you to save up to 60% of your development budget.

However, along with the stories of successful outsourcing like our client Leon's, there are also lots of less positive ones. In pursuit of cost reduction, many entrepreneurs hire outsourcing teams that promise to develop their apps at a conservative \$10,000 at the sales stage, which then turns into \$70,000 at the development stage, and ultimately swells up to \$150,000 at the launch stage.

So you should carefully choose your outsourcing software development partner. That's why the next step to reduce the cost of mobile app development is to outsource the right way.



#3. Outsource to a company with experience in your niche

Choosing an app development partner who's well-versed in your niche is the right way to cut the cost of development:

First, an outsourcing partner who has navigated your waters before will be able to deliver on each development stage faster and more efficiently, providing reliable advice based on previous experience.

Second, an experienced development team knows how to avoid industry-specific technical pitfalls that may occur during development. For example, the team can promptly define the right programming language, payment gateway, or tool for repelling robot-bot attacks your project requires.

As a result, choosing an outsourcing company with experience in your niche will save the time of the specialists working on your app, thereby reducing app creation costs.



#4. Choose the right type of contract

Outsourcing your app development to a third-party vendor means signing a contract. There are three types of contracts in software development outsourcing, and your choice will influence the final cost:

Contract Type	Description	Best Suited For	Key Considerations
Fixed Price Contract	Fixed Price Contract You pay a fixed price for the entire project	Small and medium-sized projects using the Waterfall methodology	Best for projects with well-defined requirements; compare vendors for the lowest price
Time and Materials Contract	You pay for the actual work done instead of a fixed price	Projects with unpredictable requirements, such as legacy system modernization	Suitable when accurate cost estimation is difficult; allows flexibility in development
Dedicated Teams	You hire a full team for long-term collaboration	Large-scale projects developed using Agile methodology	Most expensive option but provides flexibility and high-quality solutions

Analyze your project and choose the most suitable type of contract to reduce mobile app development costs.



#5. Choose progressive web app or cross-platform development if possible

Native apps are the most expensive and highest-end solutions. Sometimes, developing a native app for Android, iOS, or another operating system does make sense. For example, when 90% of your users own either Apple or Android devices and expect a high-end user experience.

However, if the share of Android and iOS users in your audience is nearly equal, you might consider cross-platform development that is able to cut your costs almost twice.

But take note that cross-platform development could not be a one-size-fits-all approach to reducing mobile app development costs. Despite being faster and cheaper in development, cross-platform solutions have a number of deficiencies:

01

Limited performance

02

Design and functionality constraints

03

Third-party tool integration difficulties

04

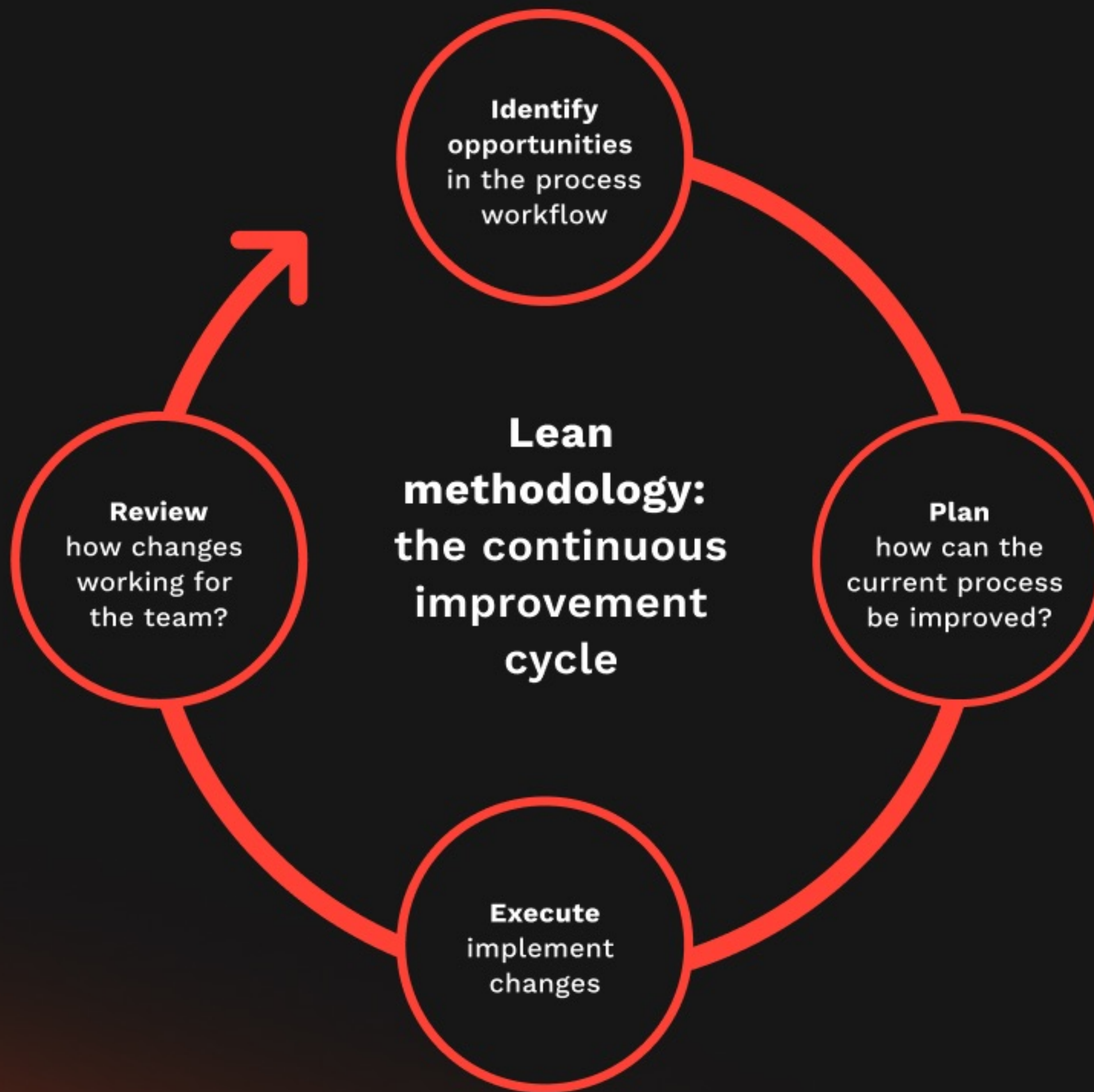
Hosting and data security issues

If these limitations don't apply to your app idea, then it makes sense to go cross-platform. There are lots of technologies including React Native, Flutter, and Xamarin that allow developers to build cross-platform solutions with user experiences that are very close to those of native apps.

If you choose to develop a native app, you can use all our other tips to reduce the cost of your application.

To help you orient what development method to follow in your particular case, we offer a free consultation with our business development expert.

#6. Follow the LEAN methodology at every step



The LEAN methodology was developed by Toyota with the goal of reducing the cost of automobile manufacturing while providing the best possible quality. Its essence is simple: you should test before investing.

As a result, the LEAN approach allows you to pay for the features your users really need without overloading your product with excessive and costly functionality. What's more, you may follow LEAN principles at each stage of software development, from validating your idea to promoting your launched product.



#7. Choose the Agile methodology

Agile and LEAN approaches to development are the perfect match when it comes to reducing mobile app development costs while staying flexible. According to the Agile approach, your technical team is always ready to adopt changes, taking your wishes and your users' preferences into account.

However, Agile makes sense only with core LEAN principles in mind. Too much flexibility can be risky for your budget. That's why each new hypothesis still needs to be validated, and adopting new practices requires careful preliminary research and testing. An article published by Villanova University explains how Agile and LEAN can work together in a healthy way.



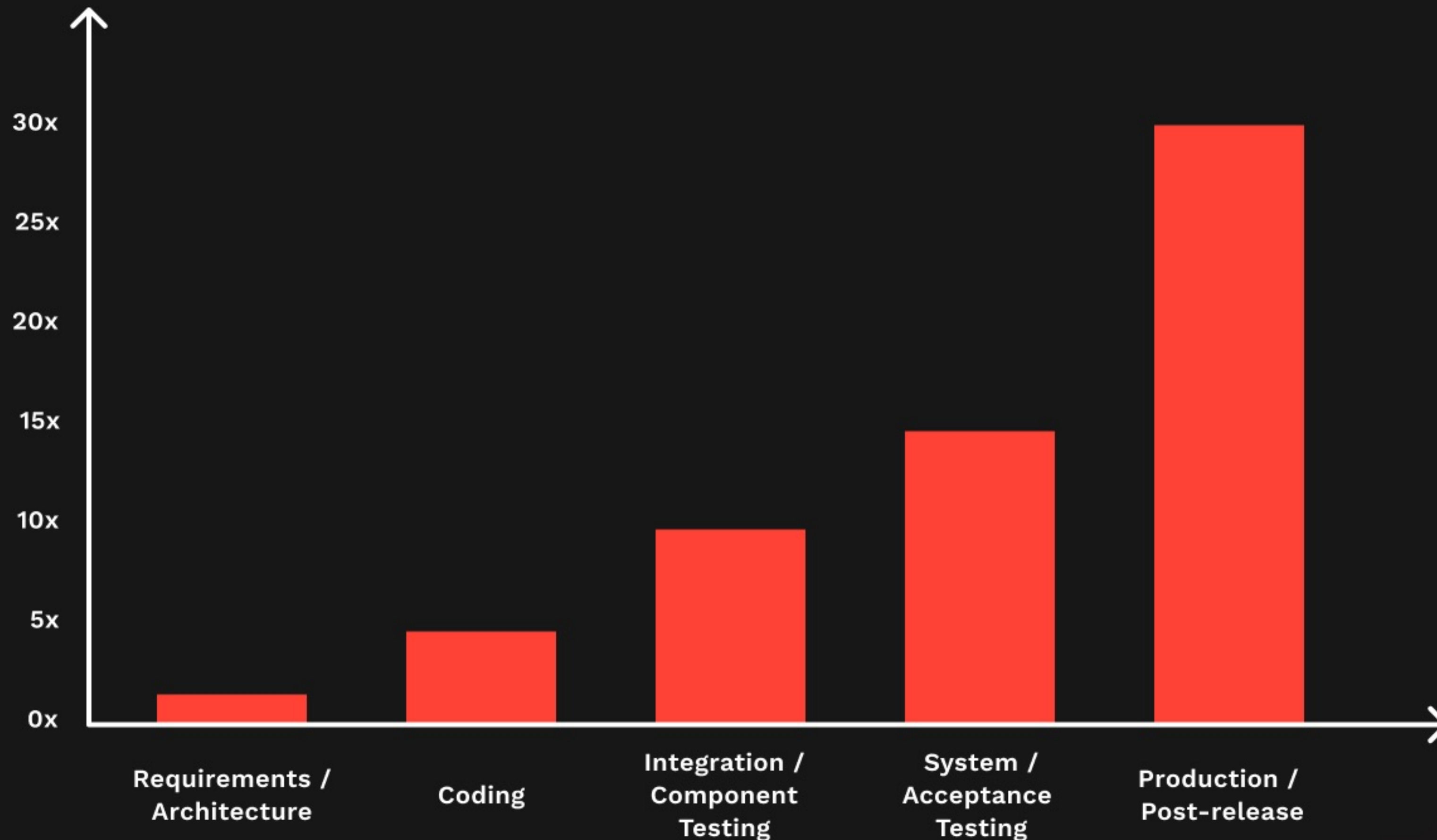
#8. Use third-party APIs when possible

Application programming interfaces (APIs) are pieces of code that can be reused by various solutions. A lot of them are free or almost free. The simplest examples of APIs are maps or weather widgets that you can integrate into your app. If your project requires integrating a scheduling solution, you don't need to build a custom booking appointment calendar from scratch — just use plug-and-play Calendly API.

Facebook or Google SDKs for easy user registration, Stripe or PayPal APIs for seamless in-app payments, or sensational ChatGPT API for next-gen communication — using APIs allows your tech team to save time on developing certain parts of your app, saving you some money.



#9. Be proactive with bug fixes



The earlier a bug is detected, the less it costs to fix it according to NIST. That's why it makes sense to carefully test each module as you create it. This will help you avoid a situation when a mistake made at the beginning of development will crash the whole system at the final testing stage.

#10. Look for simple but effective design solutions

Complex and extraordinary designs or numerous custom animations will extend the development process, making your app more expensive. Of course, custom design comes with a significant advantage. However, design solutions don't always have to be complicated.

In the case of design, simplicity is synonymous with efficiency. Yes, to achieve simplicity, you'll have to spend time looking for the optimal design solution and brainstorming ideas with your team, but the time invested in doing so will save you significant money on executing your design.



#11. Keep your finger on the pulse of the development progress

Different cooperation models, be it fixed price, time and material contract, or a dedicated team, require different levels of participation from the client's side. However, regardless of the type of contract you've chosen, it's always important to stay on the same page with your developers.

Does it mean being constantly involved in the development process up to micromanaging or you should let your team float freely, requesting only monthly progress reports? The only right answer here is to manage your team in the way you feel is right.

Let the development of your product take its course, but follow its progress. Even experienced developers sometimes make mistakes, and a mistake noticed immediately costs less to fix than a mistake that slips through the cracks. Wise management prevents you from over-budgeting and reduces the total cost of app development.



#12. Automate software testing

Automating any process can provide a better return on investment (ROI) compared to doing the same process manually. Automated software testing is a proven practice you should consider following.

However, keep in mind that this approach makes sense when testing repeated scenarios: for example, in the case of regression testing. High-risk scenarios should be tested manually, and this is an area you shouldn't try to save on.

Reducing app development costs is all about smart planning. By focusing on essential features, choosing the right development approach, and optimizing resources, you can build a high-quality app without overspending. If you want expert guidance on how to reduce expenses while maintaining quality, **book a free consultation** with our team today. Let's discuss your project and find the best cost-saving solutions for you!

