



Getting a great mobile app into customers' hands

OVERBLIQ platform speeds and simplifies mobile app development with IBM Cloud

by Michelle Cloutier

5-minute read

Whether you operate a café or a castle, offer services to brides or boat owners, or want both tourists and residents to experience all that your city has to offer, you need an interactive mobile app. Gone are the days when a static website, even one optimized for mobile, was enough. Today's consumers, tourists and citizens expect an engaging and up-to-date experience when they connect with businesses and destinations on their mobile devices.



In Sweden, IBM Business Partner Sisyfos Digital AB provides consulting services to businesses, cities and tourist attractions that understand that they must embrace the trend toward digitization—including a great mobile app—or risk falling behind. In 2017, Wenngarn Castle approached Sisyfos to help it create a new mobile portal for guests of the 500-year-old castle. The aim was to enable visitors

to use their mobile phones to do everything from opening their hotel room doors to making restaurant reservations to exploring the nearby historical and natural sites.

During this project, Sisyfos realized just how onerous it can be for its customers to create interactive mobile apps. After spending hundreds of hours creating

the Wengarn app, Sisyfos asked how it could help its customers overcome this time-consuming hurdle.

“We needed to speed up every aspect of mobile development,” says Robin Eriksson, Chief Technical Officer at Sisyfos. “We wanted to find a way to take care of the deployment, operability, scalability and security. We can’t reinvent the wheel every time we’re doing a project, so it all needs to be in place so we can focus solely on the mobile app implementation.”

The Sisyfos team decided to launch a new offering for its customers based on the platform it created for Wengarn Castle. It renamed its mobile app development platform OVERBLIQ, from the Swedish word for overview. Sisyfos needed to host OVERBLIQ in a cloud environment for scalability and speed, so that customers could focus on developing content, not on building infrastructure for their new apps.

Mobile app
development time

50%

faster

Development costs
on the scalable,
flexible platform

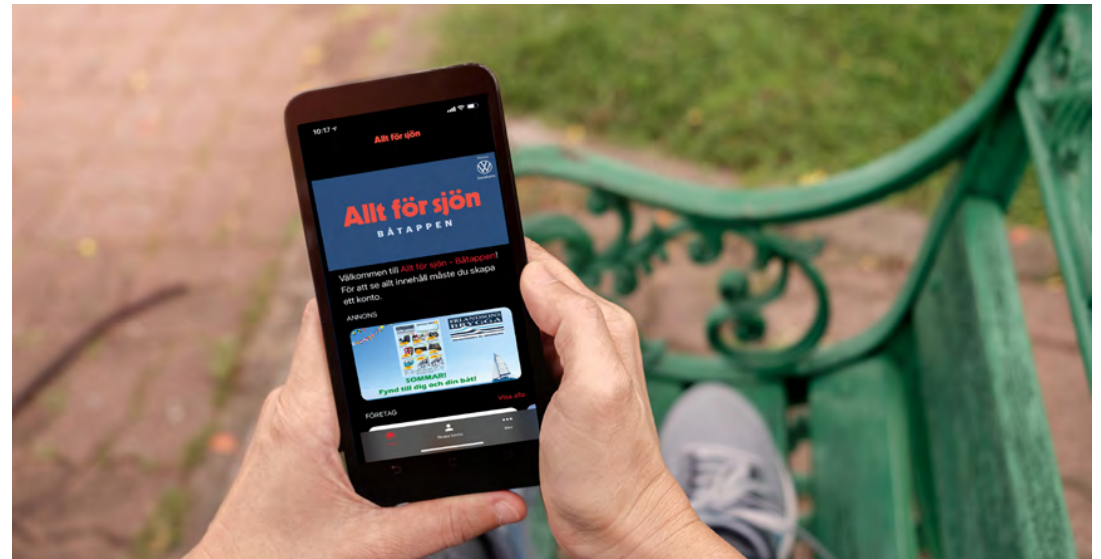
80%

less than typical in-house costs

IBM Cloud supports fast, flexible app development

As it had when developing the Wenngarn mobile app, Sisyfos chose [IBM Cloud®](#) as the hosting environment for its new OVERBLIQ platform. By building and deploying the infrastructure on IBM Cloud, Sisyfos can offer its customers a WordPress-like platform on which to build their content-rich mobile apps. Customers focus on content development and management, while Sisyfos offers solution-as-a-service (SaaS) support and hosting.

“We had used IBM Cloud in other projects,” says Jimmy Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer at Sisyfos. “It was the least expensive platform to build



“The OVERBLIQ platform is very user friendly, very straightforward.”

Tommy Bryngelsson, Digital Manager, Stockholmsmässan

on, and it had the all the functions that we needed for building a platform for mobile apps.”

Robin Eriksson concurs: “It suited our needs perfectly. Everything was packaged very neatly to host our solution.”

Sisyfos is using [IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service](#) and several IBM Cloud managed services offerings, including [IBM® Certificate Manager](#), [IBM Cloud Command Line Interface](#), [IBM Cloud File Storage](#), [IBM Cloud Log Analysis](#),

[IBM Cloud Monitoring with Sysdig](#) and [IBM Cloud Object Storage](#). The platform also includes critical databases such as [IBM Cloud Databases for PostgreSQL](#) and [IBM Cloud Databases for Redis](#).

“When we talk to the developers, what they really like is the ease of having things deployed on Kubernetes,”

Robin Eriksson continues. “If we were looking at other solutions, we would need an infrastructure-as-a-service offering; we’d need to host our own virtual machines and deploy Kubernetes ourselves. We’d need to take all these

extra steps just to get where we were from day one with IBM Cloud.”

Robin Eriksson also touts the flexibility and speed of the IBM Cloud Object Storage service. “We have a lot of image content, and it needs to be available in various formats,” he says. “Storage today isn’t really a problem. But we also need to have really hot access, where we’re not requesting images from an archive. We need to get rid of all the latency and have it cached, so when the user calls up a picture of a boat, they immediately see a boat.”

The (boat) show must go on

Offering a cost-effective development solution that allows its customers to quickly launch interactive, content-driven mobile apps proved its value for Sisyfos during the COVID-19 pandemic. One such customer, Stockholmsmässan, the largest event organizer in Sweden, turned to Sisyfos to make its annual boat convention a digital reality.

In 2020, the pandemic hit during the Allt för Sjön (All About Boats) trade fair, held in early March each year. Signaling the start of the boating season, it draws over 70,000 visitors and 400 exhibitors. For the 2021 show, Stockholmsmässan needed to create an Allt för Sjön digital



mobile app to bring those visitors and exhibitors together, entirely online.

As a company whose focus is on in-person conventions, Stockholmsmässan needed a digital pro to make an online convention a success. “We’re not structured to do anything in this field at all because we don’t have the app developers and support internally,” says Tommy Bryngelsson, Digital Manager at Stockholmsmässan. “And it’s my firm belief that if it’s out there, you shouldn’t develop it yourself. You should try to find the best solution that fits your needs, and then adapt it to your situation.” For Stockholmsmässan, that solution

was the OVERBLIQ platform and the support it received from Sisyfos.

Stockholmsmässan created the content for the Allt för Sjön app and then invited boat and boating lifestyle vendors to add their own content to reach visitors. “Looking back, it’s been quite difficult to get the exhibitors to actually provide their own information, because the other digital solutions we’ve had weren’t user friendly,” says Bryngelsson. “The OVERBLIQ platform is very user friendly, very straightforward.”

The OVERBLIQ customized editor interface doesn’t require any specialized coding or editing training

or experience. Sisyfos developed the platform to make design as easy as possible from a user standpoint, while still providing quality control.

“If you upload an image with the wrong dimensions, the wizard will let you know that this image is not usable,” says Bryngelsson. “Other tools might let you upload it anyway, which makes the overall quality of the platform feel lower.”

The Allt för Sjön app proved wildly successful for Stockholmsmässan. “It shot to number four on the app store on launch day,” according to Bryngelsson. And the IBM Cloud seamlessly supported the huge jump in users.

Mobile apps mean new revenue streams

By hosting the OVERBLIQ platform on IBM Cloud and using multiple IBM Cloud services, tools and databases, Sisyfos estimates that it cuts app development time by approximately 50%. Customers can be onboarded in minutes, which allows them to use the content creation tools within the OVERBLIQ solution almost immediately. Depending on the level of customization and personalization, Sisyfos can launch a completed customer mobile app within a few weeks.

In addition to being faster, Sisyfos estimates that launching a mobile app using OVERBLIQ is significantly less

expensive, up to 80% less, than the cost of developing one in house.

Because Sisyfos offers OVERBLIQ as a SaaS offering, its customers can continuously upgrade, change and add features to their mobile app as part of their subscription service. As Bryngelsson notes, “The great thing about working with Sisyfos is that it’s a partnership. I don’t feel like we’re just a customer that purchased something and then they just let us be.”

In fact, after its successful deployment of the Allt för Sjön app for the 2021 Boat Show, Stockholmsmässan is already

working with Sisyfos to enhance the app to integrate it into what it hopes will be an in-person boat show in the Spring of 2022.

“We have big plans for 2022, when Allt för Sjön celebrates 100 years,” says Bryngelsson. “We want the app to be a natural companion when people visit a trade show. We want location-based offers and happenings that are only available if someone has the app and is at the show. We want to add to, not take away from, the physical meeting because that is our core business.” Stockholmsmässan already has other apps in the works with Sisyfos.

As Sisyfos expands its customer base—which now includes tourist attractions, a major city in Sweden and sports events organizers, among others—it expects to pivot from its primary consulting business to offering a hybrid consulting and SaaS provider business model, as it did with Stockholmsmässan. “Digitization is really cool when it affects your business models, and you can actually find new ways to earn money,” says Robin Eriksson.

Sisyfos’ customers can also create new revenue streams from their apps. For example, they can offer paid advertisements or create multitier vendor packages for app communities such as Allt för Sjön. Driving new revenue with vendor participation and ads is a winning proposition for Bryngelsson. “Unlike in a physical exhibit hall,” he says, “with a digital solution you’ll never run out of ad space. If you sell all the ads in one area, you can just come up with a new one!”

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Robin Eriksson, Chief Technology Officer, Sisyfos Digital AB

OVERBLIQ

About Sisyfos Digital AB

[Sisyfos](#) (external link) was founded in 2017 in Uppsala, Sweden, to provide consulting services to companies along their journeys to digitization. In 2018, Sisyfos launched its OVERBLIQ platform to help its customers quickly create and launch interactive, scalable mobile apps that help generate repeat business and new revenue streams.

Solution components

- IBM® Certificate Manager
- IBM Cloud®
- IBM Cloud Command Line Interface
- IBM Cloud Databases for PostgreSQL
- IBM Cloud Databases for Redis
- IBM Cloud File Storage
- IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service
- IBM Cloud Log Analysis
- IBM Cloud Monitoring with Sysdig
- IBM Cloud Object Storage
- IBM Messages for RabbitMQ

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