

The AI App Design Playbook

Your System for Turning a Generic AI App Into One Users Open Daily

01

Research the Top Charts for Free

Open the App Store or Google Play top charts — no subscription or scraping tool needed — and search your niche. Find apps already making an estimated \$50K a month and study their onboarding, color system, and icon style. This is free competitive design research most solopreneurs skip.

QUICK TIPS

- Pick 2-3 competitors max, not ten — more dilutes the research
- Screenshot the full onboarding flow of each one, start to finish

02

Build a Focused Mood Board

Turn your competitor screenshots into a simple mood board: note what you like, what you don't, and where you can add your own twist. This becomes the visual reference you hand to an AI design tool in the next step, instead of trying to describe a style from memory.

QUICK TIPS

- Write one line under each screenshot: 'keep', 'skip', or 'twist'
- The 'twist' notes are the differentiator competitors aren't doing yet

03

Generate a Requirements Doc With Gemini

Feed your mood board references into Gemini and ask it to produce a detailed design requirements document: color palette, typography, icon style, and screen-by-screen layout notes. This turns loose inspiration into a brief an AI design tool can actually build from.

QUICK TIPS

- Ask Gemini to cite which competitor each recommendation is pulled from
- Keep the doc to one page — a bloated brief produces a bloated design

04

Run the Same Prompt 3x in Parallel

Paste the requirements document into an AI design tool and run the identical prompt three separate times in parallel, not once. More outputs means more real options to compare, instead of anchoring on whatever the first generation happens to produce.

💡 QUICK TIPS

- Judge the three outputs against your mood board's 'twist' notes first
- It's fine to mix and match elements from more than one output

05

Create a Custom Mascot With ChatGPT

Use ChatGPT to generate a custom mascot with a transparent background — a single character that becomes the recognizable face of your app. Place it in onboarding, empty states, loading screens, and push notifications. That one asset is what makes users open the app every single day.

💡 QUICK TIPS

- Ask for a transparent PNG so it drops cleanly into any screen
- Keep the mascot simple enough to read at small icon sizes

Ready to go deeper?

This playbook is the short version. Inside the hub you get the full build walkthroughs, the prompt library, and the systems I use to ship this in a weekend.

Join the Build →

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