FREE SCORECARD · HIRING AN APP DEVELOPER · 2026

Vet any developer.

12 questions that predict a good build, and how to score the answers.

Why this matters: star ratings are easy to inflate. Since October 21, 2024, an FTC rule bans fake reviews, bought reviews and insider reviews that don't disclose the connection, but rules don't catch everything. And many listings that say they serve your city are based somewhere else.

How to use this: ask every developer on your shortlist the same 12 questions (pages 2 and 3), score each answer 0, 1 or 2, and compare totals on page 3. Use me as one of the developers you score.



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QUESTIONS 1-6

Proof and ownership

☐ 01

Can I download an app you've shipped?

WHY Screenshots can be mocked up. A live app shows real quality, speed and polish.

DO Ask for App Store or Google Play links. Install one and use it for 10 minutes.

☐ 02

Have you built something like mine?

WHY A team that has built booking or payment apps will price and plan yours more accurately.

DO Ask for one similar project and what went wrong on it.

☐ 03

Can I talk to two past clients?

WHY Reviews can be curated. A 10-minute call can't.

DO Ask: would you hire them again, and what would you do differently?

☐ 04

Who will actually write the code?

WHY Many shops sell locally and build elsewhere. That can work, but you should know.

DO Get names and roles, and whether they're employees or subcontractors.

☐ 05

Whose name goes on the accounts?

WHY If the developer owns your store accounts, code repository or domain, they own your app's future.

DO Store accounts, repo, domain and hosting in your name, with them added as users.

☐ 06

What's in version one, in writing?

WHY Vague scope is how $15K turns into $40K.

DO A written list of features in and out of scope, signed before any deposit.

QUESTIONS 7-12

Process and protection

☐ 07

How do change requests work?

WHY Every app changes during the build. The question is how it's priced.

DO A written change process with a rate or a re-quote for each change.

☐ 08

How often will I see working software?

WHY Long silences hide problems until they're expensive.

DO A test build on your phone at least every two weeks, plus a short weekly update.

☐ 09

What happens after launch?

WHY Bugs show up with real users. Someone has to fix them.

DO A warranty period in writing and a clear support rate after it.

☐ 10

How do you handle privacy and security?

WHY Apps that collect personal data carry legal and reputational risk.

DO Ask how they handle logins, data storage, deletion requests and third-party analytics.

☐ 11

What's the payment schedule?

WHY Paying everything upfront removes your leverage.

DO Milestones tied to things you can test: designs, test build, store release.

☐ 12

If we part ways, what do I get?

WHY Projects stall. You need to be able to take your code to someone else.

DO Full code, credentials and documentation handed over on any exit, in the contract.

SCORE Side by side (0–2 each, max 24)

QUESTION	DEV A	DEV B	DEV C
01 · Can I download an app you've shipped?			
02 · Have you built something like mine?			
03 · Can I talk to two past clients?			
04 · Who will actually write the code?			
05 · Whose name goes on the accounts?			
06 · What's in version one, in writing?			
07 · How do change requests work?			
08 · How often will I see working software?			
09 · What happens after launch?			
10 · How do you handle privacy and security?			
11 · What's the payment schedule?			
12 · If we part ways, what do I get?			
Total / 24			

RED FLAGS Reviews that don't add up

- ✕ A burst of five-star reviews in the same week, or short reviews that could describe any business.
- ✕ Reviewer profiles with one review, and big rating gaps between Google, the BBB and Clutch.
- ✕ A "local" listing whose address is in another county. Check the contact page.

Sources: FTC, Trade Regulation Rule on the Use of Consumer Reviews and Testimonials, 16 CFR Part 465 (Federal Register 2024-18519, effective Oct 21, 2024). Expertise.com, software development companies serving Menifee, CA (2026).

Want a developer to score? Software Dev Bytes is based in Menifee, CA. Book a free 30-minute consultation at softwaredevbytes.com/book-appointment. General information, not legal advice.