MAPPO & GOOGLE

A Story of Places, Memories and Possibility

Developed by App-Titude Labs

Introduction

Every startup begins with an idea.

Mappo began with three moments.

A place we did not have time to visit.

A story we could not understand.

An experience we wanted to share.

Together, these moments shaped a platform designed to help people remember places on the go.

Today Mappo exists as a working travel memory platform developed by App-Titude Labs, a South African startup founded on a simple belief:

Meaningful places deserve meaningful memories.

This document tells the story of that journey, the lessons learned along the way, and why we believe Google's ecosystem represents the natural technological foundation for helping Mappo reach its full potential.

The Three Moments That Created Mappo

Curiosity

Paternoster, South Africa

While travelling to visit friends in the fishing village of Paternoster on South Africa's West Coast, my wife Janine and I spotted an intriguing farm stall beside the road.

It looked exactly like the kind of place we would love to explore.

Unfortunately, we were already running late.

As the farm stall disappeared into the distance, I turned to Janine and asked:

"What if there was an app where you could simply press a button and save this place for later?"

The idea was simple.

One tap.

Save the place.

Continue the journey.

No searching.

No notes.

No trying to remember where it was.

Just one tap.

I described it as:

"Shazam for Places."

That moment became the foundation of Mappo.

Understanding

Prague, Czech Republic

While travelling through Prague, we stopped to admire a beautiful historic statue.

Like many travellers, we took photographs.

Beneath the monument was a plaque explaining its significance.

Unfortunately, it was written in Czech.

The only thing we could understand was a single date:

1683

The photograph survived.

The story did not.

That experience revealed something important.

People often remember what they saw.

They do not always remember what it meant.

We realised that preserving memories requires more than preserving photographs.

It requires preserving context.

This inspired one of Mappo's core principles:

Helping people remember not only where they were, but why those places mattered.

Connection

The Postcard Moment

Several months ago, friends of ours travelled to the United States.

While there, they discovered a shop selling traditional postcards.

Remembering stories from their childhood about grandparents sending postcards home, they decided to experience it for themselves.

They bought a postcard.

Addressed it to their own home.

And mailed it.

When they returned from their holiday, they were genuinely excited to receive it.

Watching that unfold revealed something surprising.

An entire generation has grown up without ever experiencing the simple joy of receiving a postcard from someone else's journey.

That moment inspired the third pillar of Mappo.

Not simply remembering places.

Not simply understanding them.

But sharing them.

Today, Mappo includes a digital postcard system using templates inspired by authentic antique postcards, bringing a classic travel tradition into the digital age.

Because meaningful memories become even more meaningful when shared.

Building Mappo

Guided by these experiences, App-Titude Labs began building Mappo.

Our mission was simple:

Help people capture, understand, preserve and share meaningful places.

Today Mappo enables users to:

• Capture meaningful places instantly

• Build personal memory libraries

• Receive behavioural-based recommendations

• Enrich memories with contextual information

• Create and share digital postcards

• Navigate directly back to meaningful places

The result is a platform focused on memory rather than navigation alone.

Our Journey With Google

During early development we integrated Google Places APIs into Mappo.

The results were transformative.

Place identification was accurate.

Location information was rich.

Images were visually compelling and highly relevant.

Descriptions provided meaningful context.

For the first time, we experienced the version of Mappo we had imagined.

Unfortunately, a coding error unintentionally generated multiple API calls each time a location was pinned.

As a self-funded startup operating from South Africa, the resulting charges quickly became significant.

When we contacted Google, their response left a lasting impression.

Rather than simply enforcing the charges, Google's team investigated the issue, reviewed the implementation, identified the coding error and determined that the situation was an honest development mistake.

The charges were waived.

We remain genuinely grateful for the professionalism, fairness and generosity shown throughout that process.

Lessons Learned

The experience taught us two important lessons.

The first was technical.

We learned the importance of carefully monitoring and managing usage-based services.

The second was strategic.

As a self-funded South African startup, recurring US Dollar costs can quickly become significant when converted into local currency.

To continue development responsibly, we moved toward a collection of lower-cost alternatives and built extensive custom integrations to replicate key functionality.

Over the following months we evaluated numerous providers including TomTom Places, Foursquare Places, Mapbox APIs, Geoapify, HERE Routing and Wikimedia-based image sources.

• Place information

• Location intelligence

• Images

• Contextual enrichment

• Discovery experiences

The product continued to improve.

Yet one conclusion consistently emerged.

Google remained the benchmark.

Its combination of accurate place information, relevant imagery, contextual richness and ecosystem integration repeatedly demonstrated what the best version of Mappo could become.

One memorable challenge involved sourcing meaningful images for restaurants and points of interest. Alternative providers frequently returned irrelevant imagery that failed to represent the locations users were discovering.

Google consistently delivered the quality, relevance and trustworthiness that users expect. In early Google Places prototypes, venue image carousels transformed a simple pin into a richer memory. A photograph of a meal could be accompanied by images of the restaurant itself, along with accurate place information and contextual descriptions, helping users remember not only what they experienced, but where they experienced it.

Experiences like these reinforced our belief that Google's ecosystem represents the strongest foundation for Mappo's future.

What We Have Built

Over the past eight months we have:

• Built a functional travel memory platform

• Developed a personalised recommendation engine that learns from user behaviour and interests

• Created a digital postcard system using templates inspired by real antique postcards, bringing a classic travel tradition into the digital age

• Implemented personal memory libraries

• Released Android support

• Established App-Titude Labs

• Continued development through self-funded resources

Most importantly:

We transformed an idea into a working product.

The Road Ahead

Today Mappo operates on web and Android platforms.

Our next major milestone is expanding the experience to iOS.

Making Mappo available across all major mobile platforms will allow us to reach a significantly larger audience of travellers, explorers and memory-makers.

Beyond platform expansion, we see enormous opportunities to deepen:

• Place intelligence

• Contextual enrichment

• Visual storytelling

• Discovery experiences

• Personalised recommendations

All areas where Google's ecosystem has already demonstrated exceptional value.

Why We Believe A Partnership Makes Sense

Mappo was born from curiosity.

It evolved through understanding.

It grew through connection.

Google's technologies helped us discover what Mappo could become.

Today we are not presenting an idea.

We are presenting a working product.

A product built through persistence, experimentation and a belief that meaningful places deserve meaningful memories.

We believe Google's ecosystem represents the natural technological foundation for helping Mappo reach its full potential.

Looking Forward

Imagine a platform where travellers can:

Discover meaningful places.

Understand their stories.

Preserve their memories.

Share their experiences.

And inspire others to explore.

That is the future we are building.

We believe Google can play an important role in that journey.

MAPPO

Remembering Places on the Go

Today Mappo exists as a working travel memory platform developed by App-Titude Labs, a South African startup focused on building simple technology for meaningful everyday experiences.

Capturing curiosity. Preserving understanding. Sharing connection.