

Take Your Mobile Marketing to the Next Level with Push Notifications

Do you want to find new ways to interact with your existing customers on mobile devices? Mobile usage is on the rise and smart marketers are always trying to expand their reach and engage with their customers who use smartphones. One of the best ways to do that is to start using push notifications.

What Are Push Notifications?

In case you are unfamiliar with push notifications, let's start with a simple definition. A push notification is an automated notification that gets sent to people who have downloaded your app onto their phones, appearing even when the customer is not actively using the app, and even when the phone is in power save mode. In other words, the notification "pushes" through, even at times when a user might seem to be inaccessible.

Customers who use your app will have to opt in to receive push notifications – something that guarantees that only the people who want to get them will get them. The opt-in option minimizes the chances of people unsubscribing or deleting your app – and that's what you want.

Adding Push Notifications

Most mobile app developers including an option for sending and personalizing push notifications when they design a new app. If you are thinking about offering an app for your company, including push notifications is a relatively easy thing to do. Just ask your programmer to include them and think about how you want to use them. You will also want to talk about how you allow customers to opt in and opt out of push notifications.

How Do Customers Opt In for Push Notifications?

The process for opting in to receive push notifications varies depending on the operating system of the user's phone.

1. iOS users receive a prompt to either opt in for push notifications or opt out of receiving them when they first launch a new app.
2. Android users are opted in automatically, and sometimes the process of opting out can be a nuisance.

There are benefits to both options. The level of engagement tends to be higher with Android users because they are automatically opted in. However, there is also a greater chance that Android users will find the notifications to be a nuisance because they were not given a choice about whether to receive them. iOS users have agency from the beginning, which might yield a lower opt-in rate, but a higher ROI due to the fact that the users who get notifications are those who have chosen to get them.

One way to get around the Android issue of push notifications being a nuisance is to work with your app developer to ensure that the method for opting out is easy and intuitive.

Push notifications typically appear in a banner on the user's phone. iOS users have more options than Android users, including the ability to set notification tones and methods.

Tips for Using Push Notifications

Now that you have a clear idea of what push notifications are and how they work, let's talk about some of the specific ways you can use them to improve your mobile marketing.

1. Transactional push notifications are notifications that are specifically tailored to individual users.

Here are some examples of apps that use transactional notifications and what they do:

- a. Facebook uses transactional notifications to let users know that a Facebook contact has sent them a message or interacted with something they have posted. The goal of the notification is to get the user to respond to their friend.
- b. Gilt is an apparel retailer. People who use their mobile app can sign up to get notifications when a desired item becomes available or goes on sale. The push notification offers them the opportunity to make an immediate in-app purchase of the item in question.
- c. Level Up uses push notifications to deliver receipts for completed transactions.

All of these options add value and convenience for customers, and they are a good way to use transactional push notifications effectively.

2. Geographical push notifications can be used to segment your mobile audience based on where they are. Even big national chains sometimes offer services that vary from state to state. You can use push notifications to inform users in a particular area of new events, sales, and benefits – and you won't be bothering people who don't live in the affected area.
3. Personalized shopping notifications are a great way to encourage users of your app to let you know their preferences – and then market to them accordingly. For example, the coupon and discount app RetailMeNot asks users to select the brands they prefer from a list. They will automatically receive push notifications advising them when their chosen brands are on sale or when coupons are available. This is an easy way to make app users feel that you are tailoring content to them
4. Integrated push notifications can combine data from your website and your app to provide customers with a seamless experience. A good example is NBC's content streaming app. If a user watches one episode in-app and the next online, the app can "talk" to the website and send a push notification to remind the user to watch the third episode (the next one in line based on combined app and web activity) using the app. Uses like that cut down on the nuisance aspect of push notifications because they take activity outside the app into consideration
5. Push notifications based on in-app activity alone are important too. If you collect data that tells you that a user is in the habit of checking prices for a particular product, you can send them a notification that informs them of changes in the price or encourages them to check out new products in the same area.

6. Finally, you can combine two or more of the above options to create highly personalized and effective push notifications that will get huge user engagement. For example, you might combine a well-timed geographical notification with a personalized notification about a sale or promotion of a customer's favorite brand. When you use push notification in this way, you can be sure that you will see a big return on your investment.

The bottom line is that push notifications are an extremely effective way to interact with customers in a manner that makes them feel valued. Because personalization is so easy, you can deliver a level of customer service that just isn't possible with traditional mobile marketing or text messages – and that can increase customer loyalty and repeat business.