

MOBILE

How Gilt uses app messaging to drive mcommerce

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Gilt is adept at mobile messaging

By CHANTAL TODE

With more than 50 percent of Gilt's revenue coming from mobile, the digital fashion retailer is more than just a leader in mcommerce – it also knows a thing or two about using messaging to drive sales.

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Mobile messaging is becoming an increasingly important strategy for retailers as consumers continue to spend more time with apps and the variety of messaging types grows. Gilt takes a sophisticated approach to messaging, using automation, personalization, push notifications and more to keep app users coming back and spending.

“Mobile messaging is a core element to any ecommerce app in driving sales,” said Guy Horrocks, co-founder and CEO of Carnival Mobile, who recently wrote about Gilt on the company's [blog](#). “Whether it's shopping cart abandonment, personalization of offers, retargeting, alerts for when waitlist items become available or wish list items go on sale, the scenarios are varied and extremely important.

“Gilt are true professionals in this space,” he said. “They carefully balance the goal of

driving more re-engagement and sales, with placing the majority of the power when it comes to mobile messaging, in the hands of their customers.”

Personalized messages

One way that Gilt makes the most of mobile messaging is by sending a personalized sale for each user once a day. While a lot of marketers track user behavior, Gilt is taking this strategy one step further by creating a profile for each user over time and then matching the single best sale each day for that user. This avoids having all of the messages based simply on which brands a user as looked at in the past.

Carnival reports that marketers can see up to triple-digit increases in messaging results when content and delivery are personalized.

Gilt also makes sure to use push notifications sparingly and to make sure the real-time reminders provide real value with useful information. This helps avoid having the messages turn into spam.

Screen Shot 2015-09-30 at 1.51.06 PM

Push messages from Gilt are limited to an announcement of when a sale is starting as well as notification of when a waitlisted item becomes available or an order is on the way. Gilt City shoppers who subscribe also receive a message when offers go live once a day.

In-app notifications can help marketers reach their most active users while they are using the app as opposed to push notifications, which are mainly used to drive users into the app when it is closed.


One way Gilt uses in-app messaging is by showing an overlay in-app message at the bottom of the screen for users browsing a list of sales. The message includes a relevant offer, such as free shipping. The overlay disappears as users scroll down and reappears as they scroll back up.

Consistent timing

However, Gilt takes steps to make sure in-app messaging is not overused, with messages going through the business side and the mobile team to make sure each message is important and relevant enough.

Gilt also leverages consistent message timing, one of the few apps that have done this. The retailer developed its own system in-house to support this capability.

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The retailer uses a custom soft sound to signify when a sale is starting, thereby informing users without the need to look at their phone or reading the message, that a new sale has begun.

Finally, Gilt gives each user control over what they would like to be messaged about so they do not receive information about unwanted sales and can be sure to not miss the sales they are interested in.

“Traditional retailers often seem to be a step behind,” Mr. Horrocks said. “Some have embraced mobile, but many of the largest retailers still don't have clear mobile strategy in place.

“With over 50 percent of Gilt's revenue now coming from their mobile app, they really have been paving the way in this area for quite some time,” he said. “There are new players on the scene with apps like Jet, Boxed and Spring who are also be doing smart things in this space.”

Final Take

Chantal Tode is senior editor on Mobile Commerce Daily, New York

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