

MARKETING

Personalizing push notifications can increase open rates up to 800pc: report

May 23, 2016



Personalized push notifications perform significantly better

By CHANTAL TODE

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Marketers who blast out push notifications are missing out on an opportunity to encourage engagement, with personalized notifications driving significantly higher results across the 1.5 billion messages analyzed for a new report from Leanplum.

The report, Personalize or Bust: The Impact on App Engagement, analyzes how many push notifications were opened and the time it takes to open a push notification. A key finding was that while just 1.5 percent of people open a push notification sent with generic content, 5.9 percent open one that contains personalized content.

"The most important takeaway from the 1.5 billion mobile messages we studied is that if marketers don't personalize their mobile approach in some way, they miss out on key user engagement," said Momchil Kyurkchiev, CEO and co-founder of [Leanplum](#). "It's 2016 and users expect marketers to bring their A-game on mobile, because this personal device has basically become an extension of themselves."

"Our data reflects the fact that brands must tailor their approach to individual behaviors and provide real value for users to engage with them," he said.

The right approach

While users are more likely to open personalized messages, they also typically take longer to open these messages, according to the report. This could be because generic messages are immediately dismissed while with personalized messages, recipients wait for an appropriate time to open it.

Leanplum also considered how messages are delivered. Brands send more than 820 million notifications by scheduled blast and 1.9 percent of recipients open them.

Another 470 million notifications are scheduled by time zone but only 1.7 percent open these. The lower open rate is supported by earlier Leanplum research that showed users around the world engage with push notifications at different times of day.

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The more than 130 million notifications sent when users are prone to open the app see a 5.3 percent open rate.

Behavior-based delivery

Leanplum also considered how immediate and behavior-based deliveries performed.

Brands send approximately 73 million notifications immediately with an open rate of just 0.9 percent.

Brands send just 69 million notifications via behavior-based sends and the open is eight percent.

Of the different delivery types, brands were less likely to send message via immediate and behavior based methods even though behavior-based push results in open rates that are 800 percent higher than generic blasts.

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"App managers shouldn't blast push notifications; they should deliver push in a way that is intimate and human," Mr. Kyurkchiev said. "As we explored different ways to personalize both the timing and content of push notifications, we found that even simple approaches can make a huge difference.

"App managers can use a machine learning tool that analyzes individual app usage patterns, like Optimal Time, to send push at a time when the user is most likely to engage," he said. "Or they can trigger push based on user behaviors, like shopping cart abandonment, or customize content with something as small as a user's name.

"These strategies have a big impact, with open rates up to 800 percent higher due to personalization. These are all tactics brands need to employ to stay relevant."

Android vs. iOS

Personalized content can make a user feel more engaged by initiating a one-to-one conversation.

There are many different ways to personalize content. Marketers can consider previous time spent in app, last email sent, last session, last push, last Web purchase and last item added to cart when considering how to personalize a push notification.

Additional key findings include that the open rate for push notifications is twice as high on Android than iOS at close to 3.48 percent versus 1.77 percent, respectively.

The reason for the discrepancy could be that Android offers a much stronger user experience around push notifications compared to iOS.

There is also significant difference in how long it takes a user to open a push notification by platform. On Android, the median time is around 48 minutes while on iOS, it is seven minutes. This could be because iOS users have been trained to act quickly because they know notifications will disappear and moved into the hard-to-find notifications tray.

"The most surprising finding to me is how much more people engage with push notifications on Android than on iOS. Android users open push notifications twice as often as iOS users, which is a huge gap in engagement," Mr. Kyurkchiev said. "What's even more telling is those Android users also take much longer to open those push notifications, because the Android user design is more push-friendly."