

A Marketer's Guide to

In-App Messages

Insights by WebEngage



00 OVERVIEW

01 EFFECTIVENESS

02 THE NEED

03 USE CASES

04 TYPES

05 BEST PRACTICES

06 LIMITATIONS

OVERVIEW

In-app messages are snippets of information sent to an app user by an app publisher when a user is active on an app.

In-app messages appear either on the top or bottom or centre of the app screen for a limited period. They form an integral part of the larger mobile engagement strategy which also includes push, email and SMS.

HIGHLIGHTS

While push notifications are used to bring users to an app, in-app messages are used to **encourage an app user to take the desired action**.

Though app publishers can always use OTT messaging apps to communicate with users, relying on a third party for creating a personal communication channel is a tricky concept, one that has many flaws. This is precisely why app users have started to incorporate the in-app message feature in their apps.

Inbuilding in-app message feature into an app is a relatively easy and simple process.



ANATOMY OF IN-APP NOTIFICATIONS

In-app notifications make the perfect channel via which marketers can draw a user's attention to relevant features in real time. They **enhance user experience** and **add to the dynamic appeal of any app**. Marketers can benefit by setting event-based triggers like new user onboarding, delayed user activity, etc. for launching in-app notifications.

In-app notifications either fade or slide on a user's screen like a mini pop-up or full-modal notification. The header text of an in-app notification usually contains a keyword that is helpful in attracting the attention of readers. Followed by body content which is nothing but the message you wish to send to app users. Body Content can include **text, images, videos** and **hyperlinks**. Last, there should also be an effective CTA prompting users to take action.

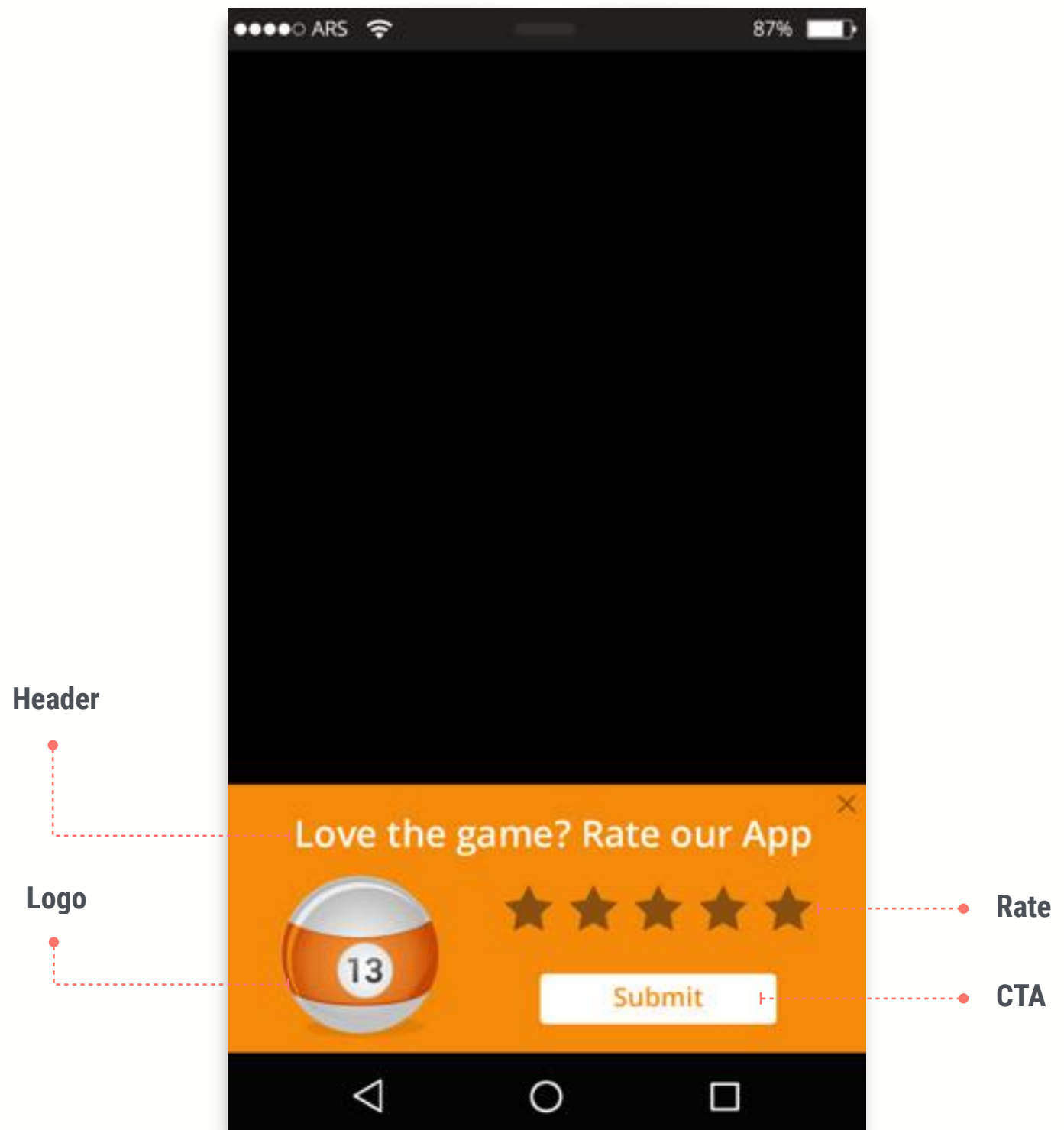
In-app notifications can also include rich text, deep links and videos that can act as demo guide. They can also be used for product and service discovery and routing traffic to the promoted screens within an app.



ANATOMY OF IN-APP SURVEYS

In-app surveys make an excellent channel through which marketers can understand their audience better. Moreover, using user behavioural data marketers can target a specific audience for surveys. In-app surveys could help garner **insights around user demographics** like gender, age, etc. and user preference data like product, pricing preference, etc. When used right, in-app surveys can **convert anonymous app users to contacts** and **get their preferences** around app usage.

It is a good practice to present a survey to a mobile app user based on event and user attributes. Right triggering rules for in-app surveys would increase the context of the survey and improve the user experience within the app. You can begin with - asking for **product feedback** on completion of checkout, asking for **contact information** on inactivity within the app, **progressive profiling** of user on the repeat visit to the app, etc.







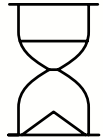
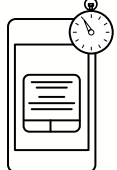
EFFECTIVENESS

App publishers do not require permission to send in-app messages to an app user. Compared to push messages, which reach only about 45% of app users, in-app users reach almost 100% of app audience. That apart, In-app messages are not time-sensitive and marketers can push them to users at any time of the day. In-app's expanded character count allows marketers to package more content into messages. In-app notifications also have a relatively higher success rate as these are messages sent to an audience that is already engaging with an app.

METRICS TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF IN-APP MESSAGES

Measurement is the first step towards improvement. Here are the list of metrics you need to track to measure the effectiveness of in-app messages.

Metrics to measure effectiveness of In-app Messages

- **1 Count of in-app messages delivered**
The number of in-app messages successfully delivered.
- **2 Click through rate**
Measures count of users who have taken action towards your communications.
- **3 Goals/Conversions attributed to in-app**
Count and value of conversions driven by the in-app messages.
- **4 App-Uninstall rate**
Measures count of users who uninstalled the mobile app after interacting with the in-app campaign.
- **5 Session time**
Specifies if the session time has actually increased after the user started interacting with in-app messages.
- **6 Time in App**
Effective in-app campaigns drive users to spend more time in the app and come to the app more often.

EFFECTIVE CHANNEL FOR ENGAGEMENT/COMMUNICATION

In-app messages do not require customers to opt-in. They can also be designed in different formats and sizes. Moreover, they can contain rich text; they support videos and graphical content. Since in-app messages interact with an already engaged audience, they prove to be a very effective channel of communication. Most marketers use in-app messages to **send time-sensitive information** to users.

Needless to say, with in-app messages, marketers get more freedom about content and design.



THE NEED

In-app messages serve a variety of functions. From enhancing an app's session time to welcoming them aboard, in-app messages can be used to achieve a variety of results. Here's why marketers need in-app messaging.

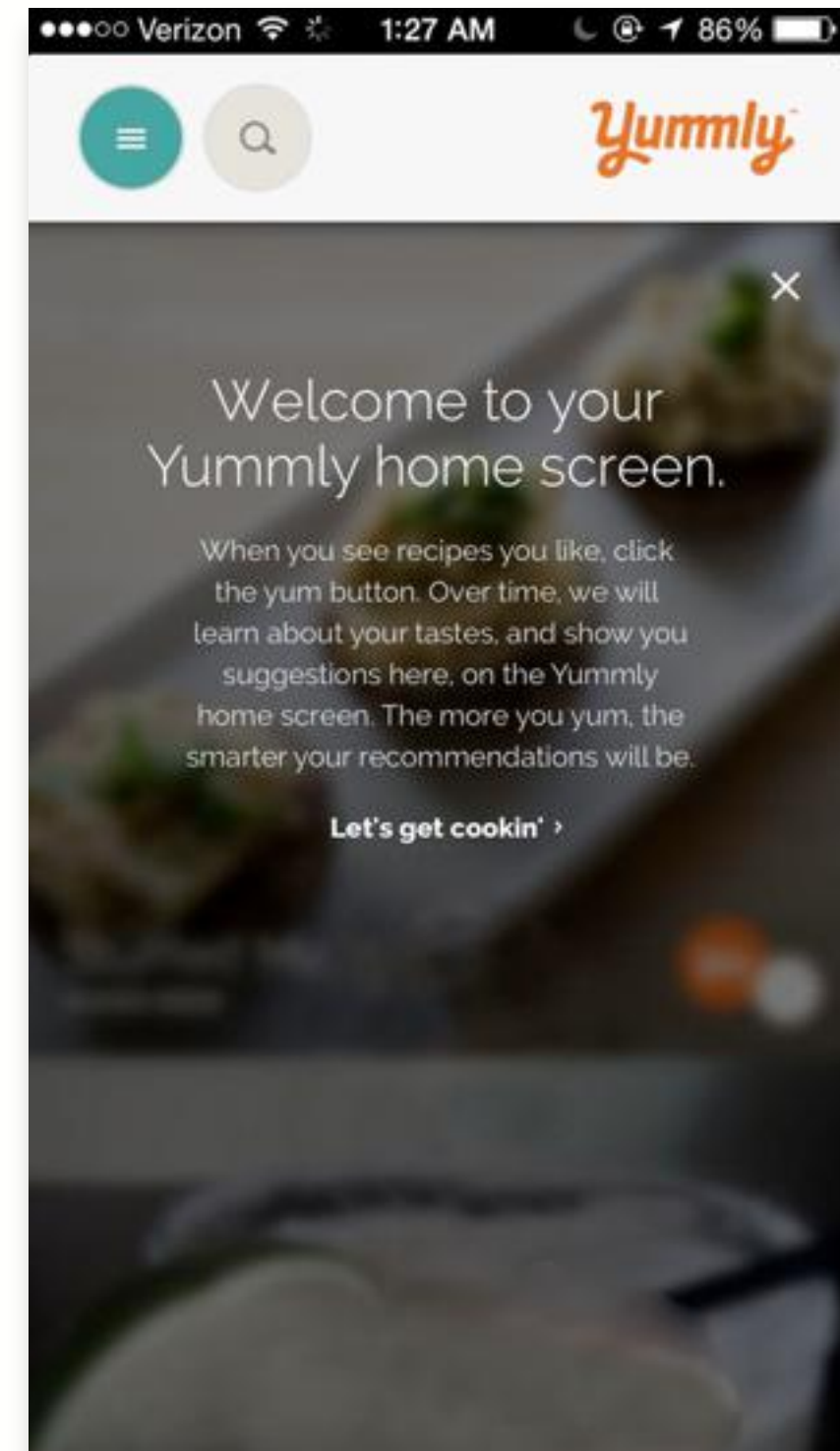
NEW USER ONBOARDING

In-app messages make the perfect medium to welcoming a new user on an app and initiate a digital relationship. When a user downloads an app and starts using it, a marketer can benefit by sending him an in-app containing all details on how to use the app.

Similarly, in-app messages can also be used to familiarize a new user with the numerous features of an app.

Example:

Yummly, a mobile app and website that provides recipe recommendations personalized to the individual's tastes, uses in-app message for onboarding users to the app.



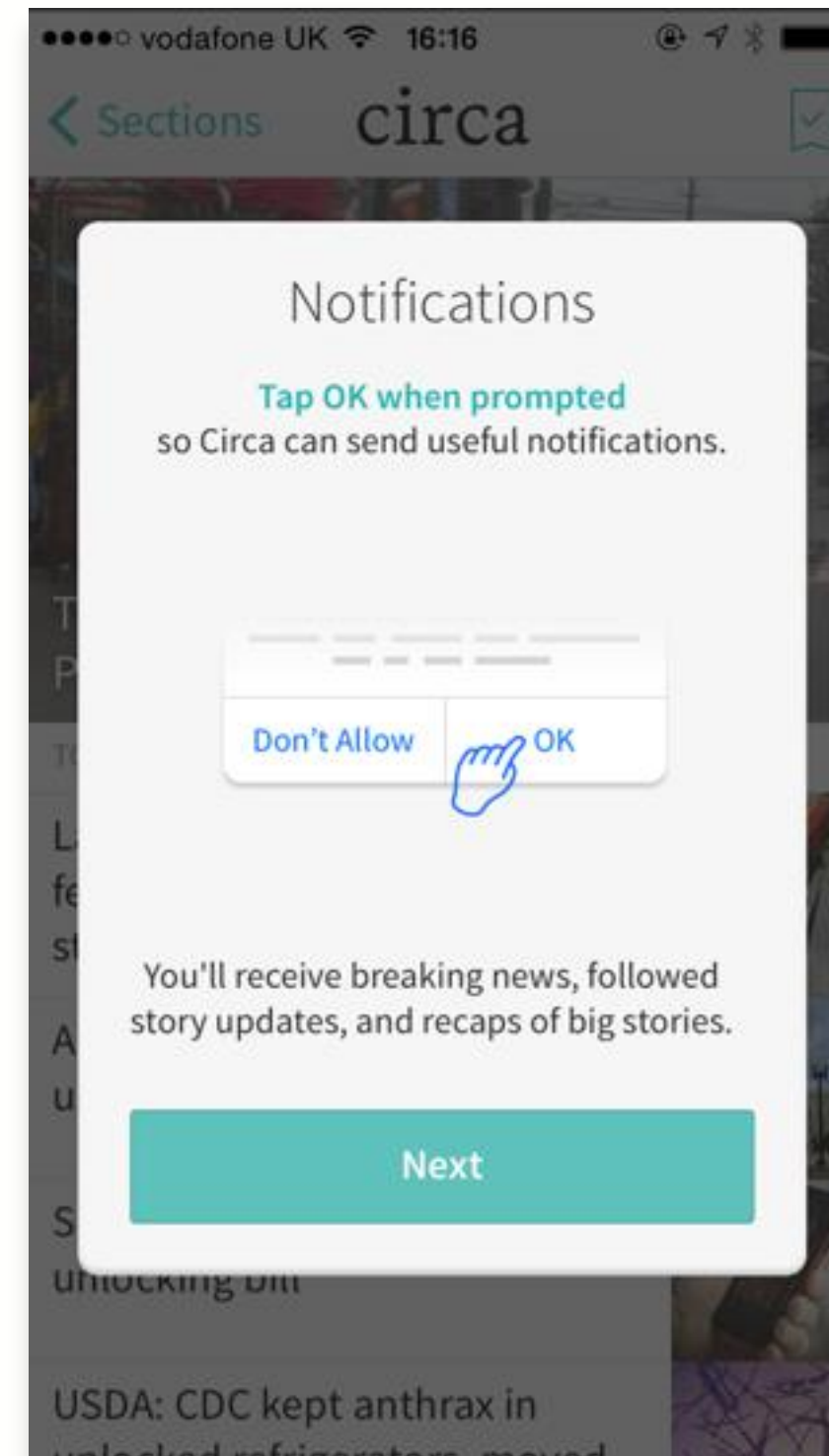
PROMPT USERS TO OPT-IN FOR PUSH MESSAGES

Sometimes, users even while interacting with a website do not fill in all the information that marketers would like them to fill. Using in-app messages, marketers can request app users to provide that extra bit of information that will help them build user profiles.

Similarly, using in-app messages, marketers can drive app-users to take the desired action. For instance, marketers can push app users to opt-in for push notifications.

Example:

Circa sends in-app messages to its users elaborating to them why they should sign-up for push notifications and give them an option to opt-in.



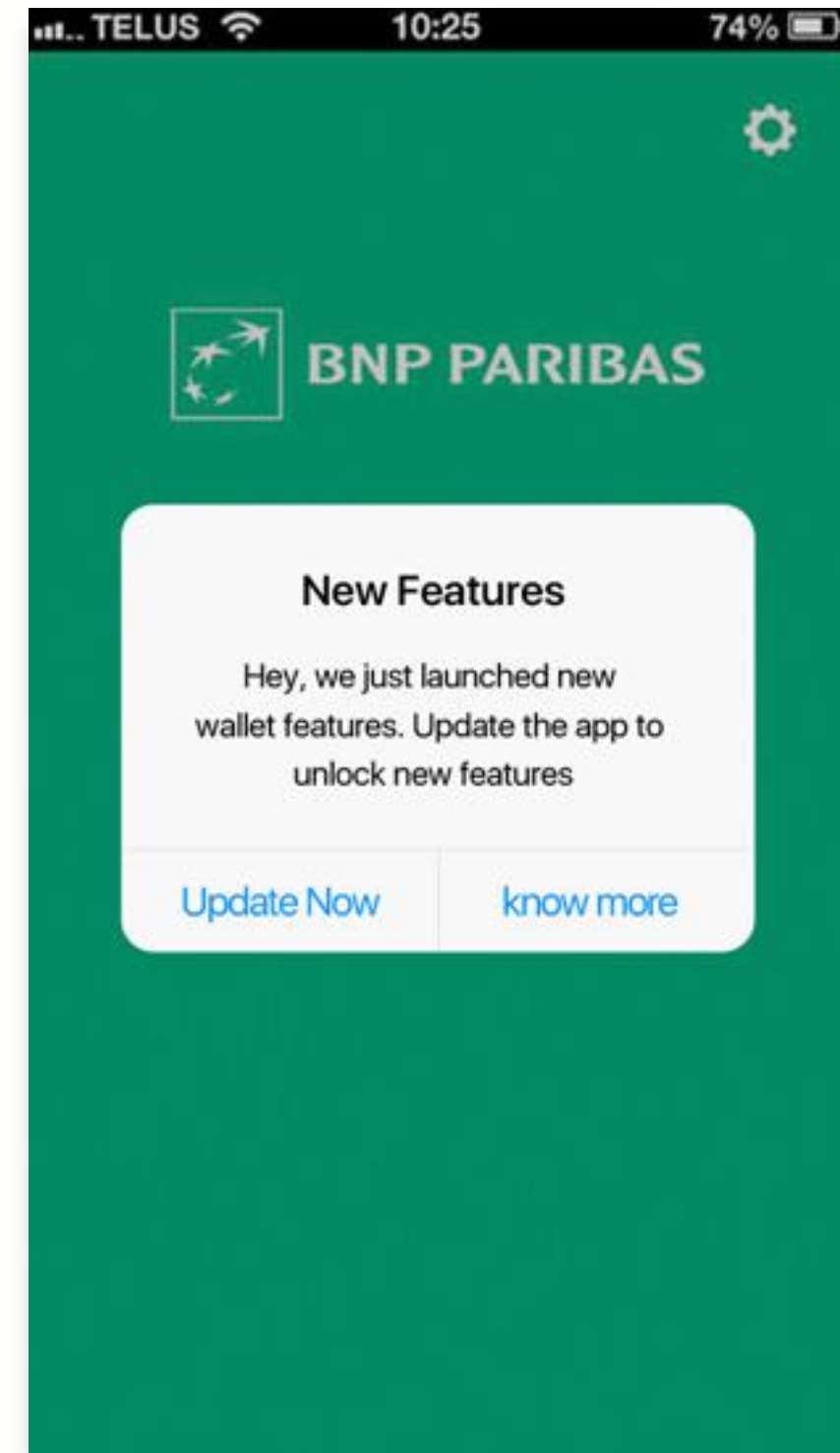
The Need

NEW PRODUCT/FEATURE ANNOUNCEMENT

In-app messages make the perfect channel to notify an app user about new features and launches. Not just that, marketers can also push app users to try new features and leave their opinions on it.

Example:

BNP Paribas notifies its users of new features and versions via in-app message.



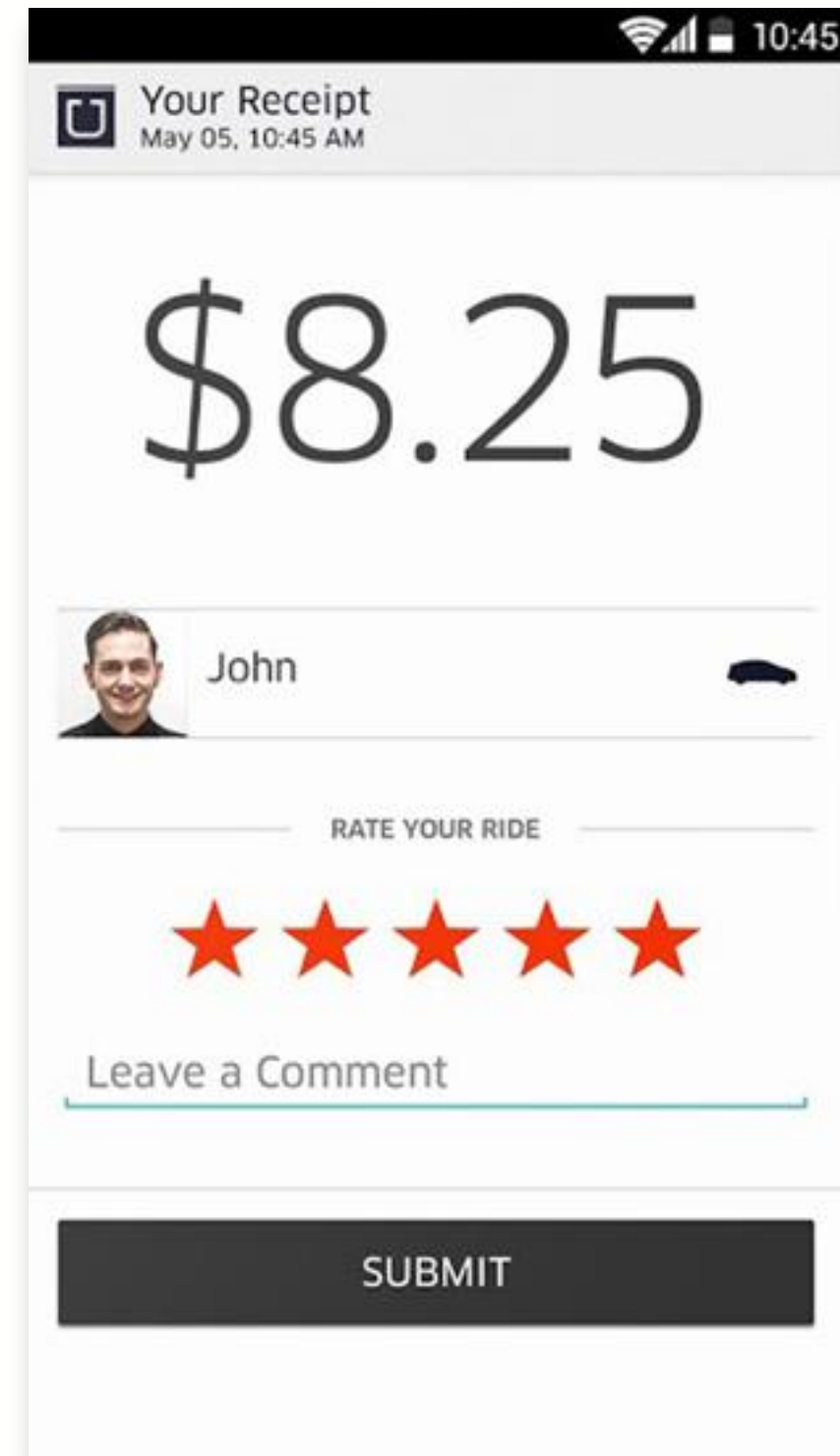
The Need

MEASURE VOICE OF CUSTOMER

In-app messages are a good way to hear back from a user about their experience. App publishers can solicit user feedback after users complete a transaction or use a feature. Fundamentally, In-app message should not be intrusive to user experience.

Example:

Uber sends in-app requesting for feedback (on their last ride) after a user opens an app to book another ride. Similarly, **news pulse** asks its app users to rate their app.



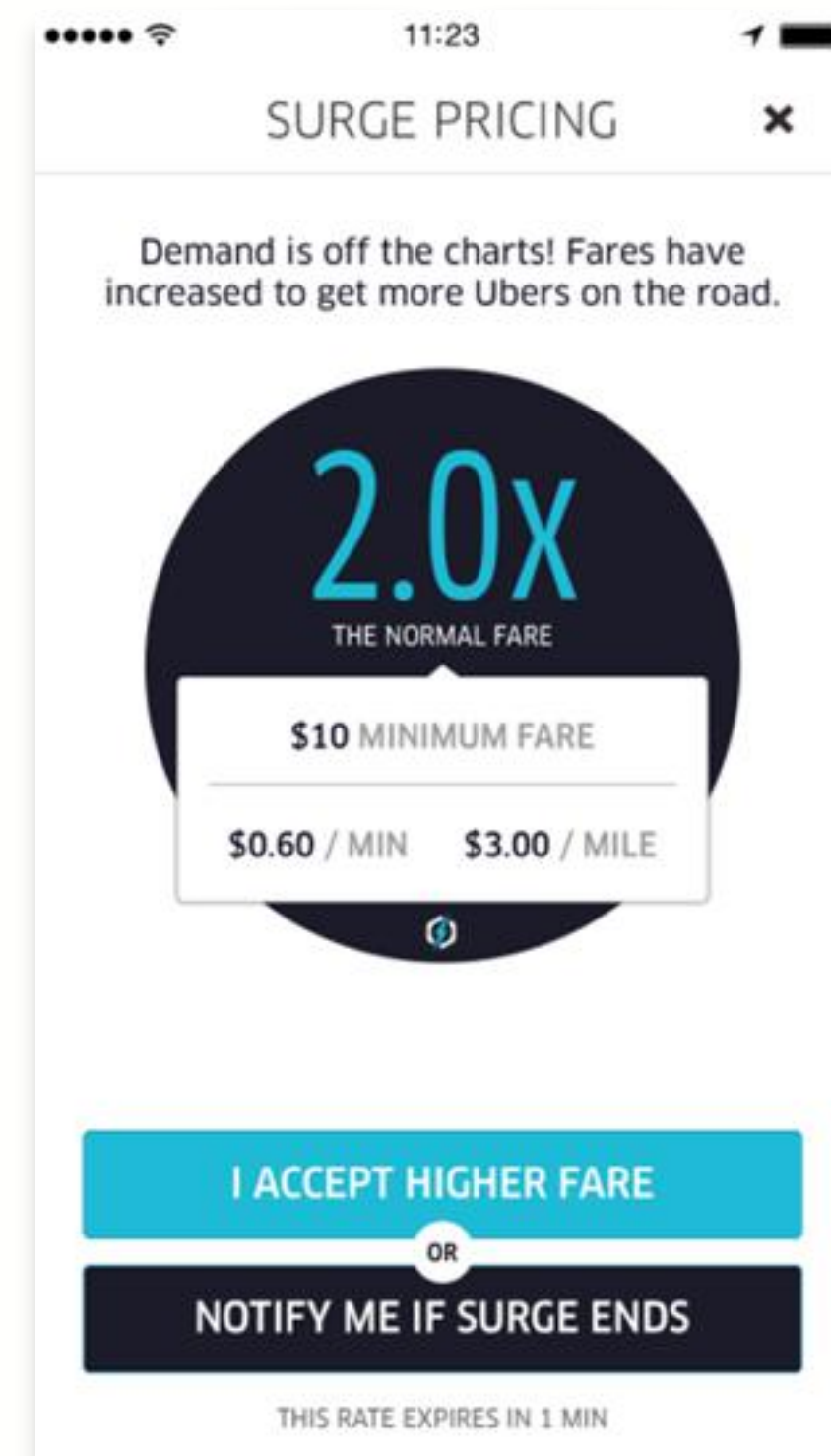
The Need

INCREASE USER ENGAGEMENT

Marketers can increase their app's engagement rate by pushing relevant offers to app users via In-app messages. This will not only help in increase session time on app, it will also help in increasing total revenue.

Example:

The **Boston** times pushes relevant subscription plans to its users as soon as they launch its app on their phone. Likewise, businesses like **Ola** and **Uber** constantly send in-app messages to inform users about surge pricing.



USE CASES

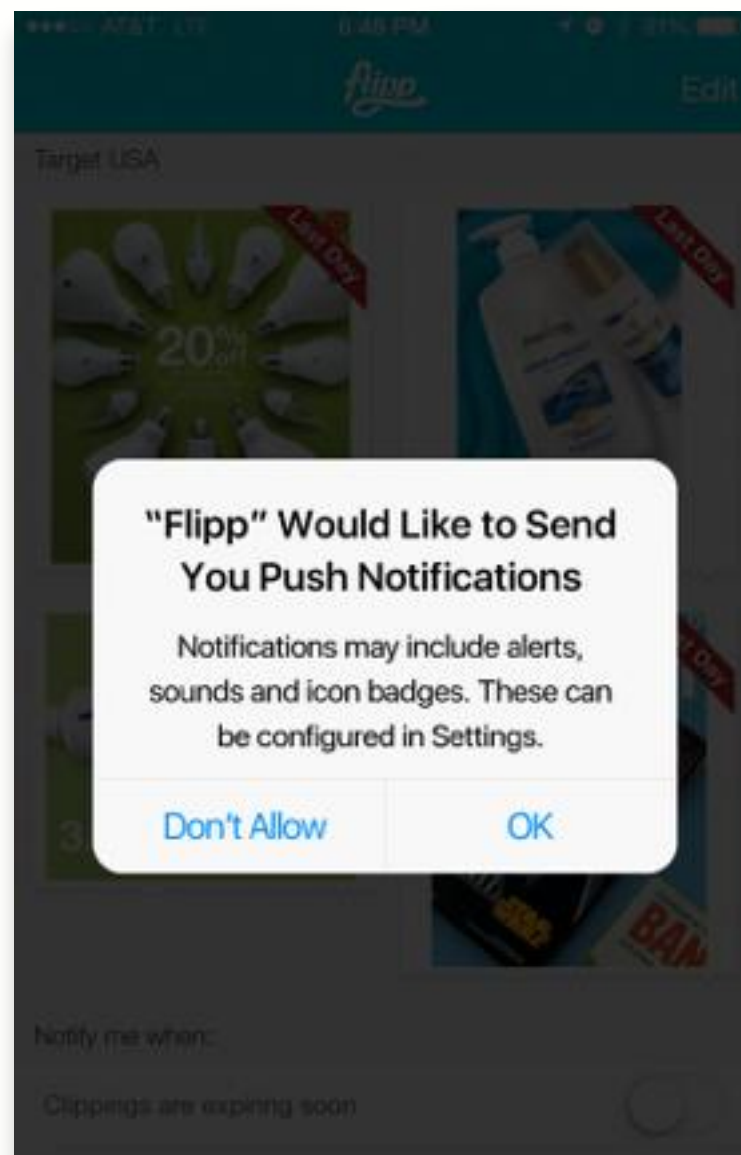
We have already discussed in great detail how marketers use In-app messages to achieve desirable goals. Let us now move to more industry-specific use cases which will help you gain deeper insight into the world of In-app messages.



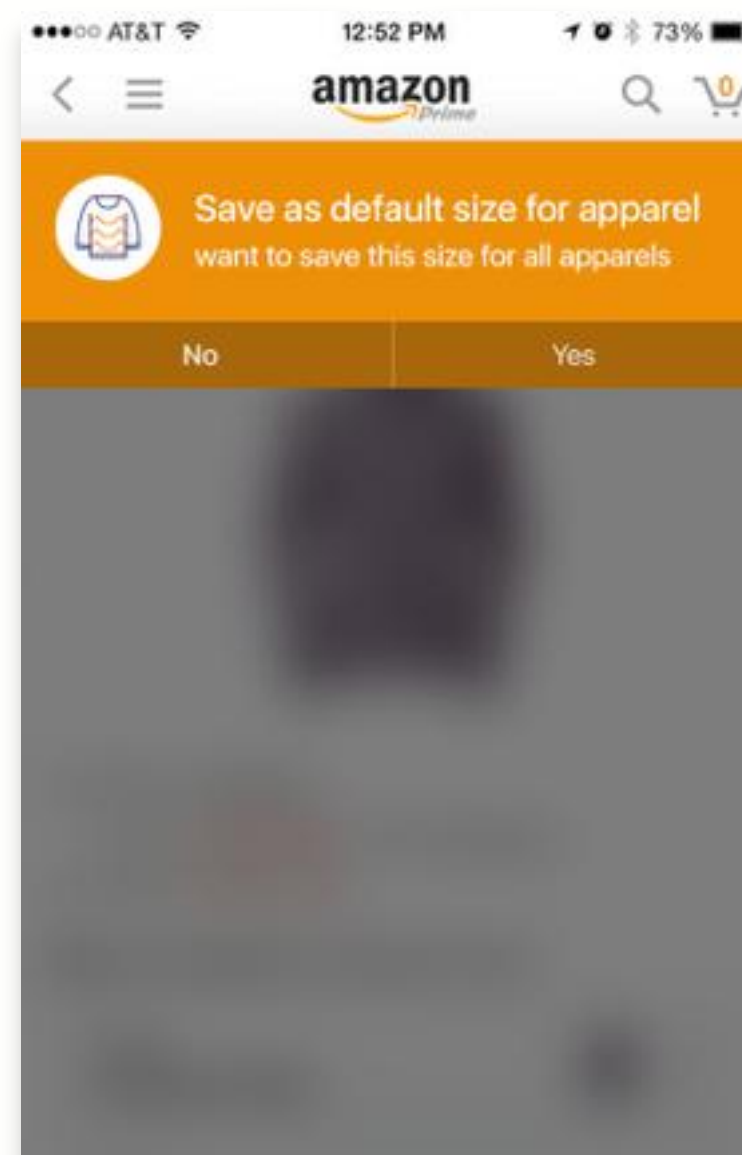
ECOMMERCE/RETAIL APPS

Retail apps can use in-app messages to promote real-time offers when users are using the app. Not just that, they could also help in tackling issues like **cart abandonment**, **gather feedback** in real time, push **hyper-targeted discount campaigns**.

Push Notification Opt-ins



Personalize User Experience



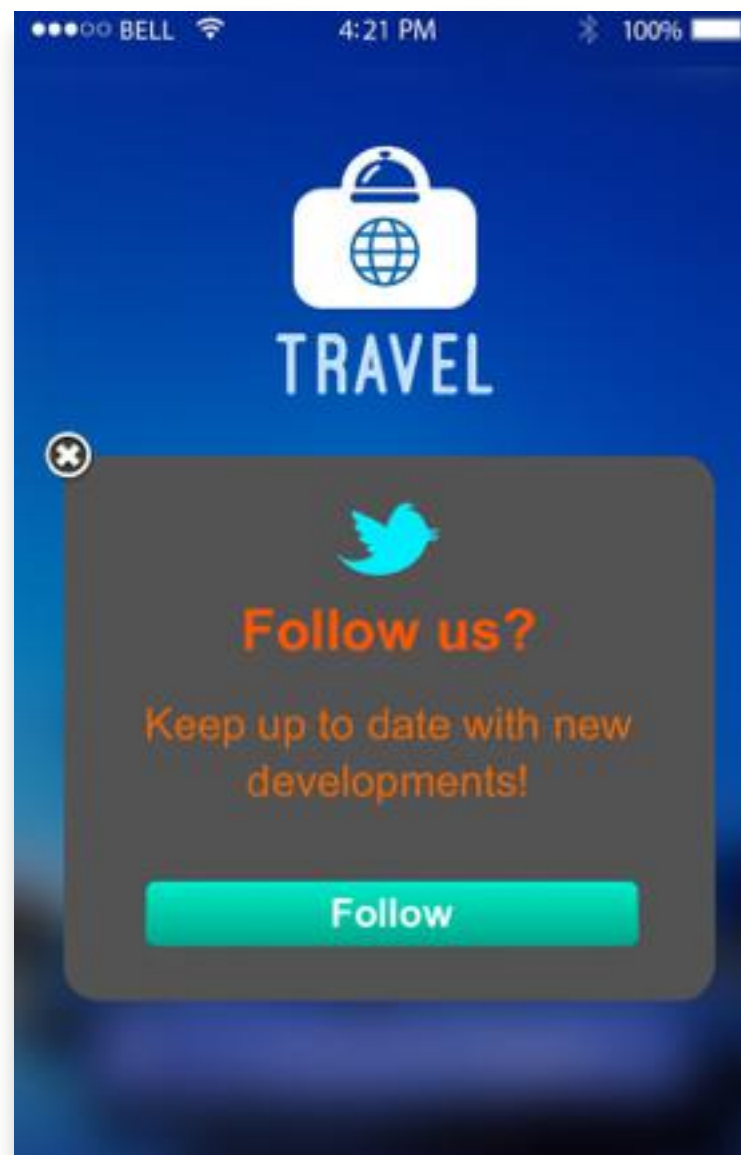
Limited Period Offers



TRAVEL APPS

Travel apps can use in-app messages for a wide range of communication campaigns with app users. It can range from **cross-selling** to **up-selling**.

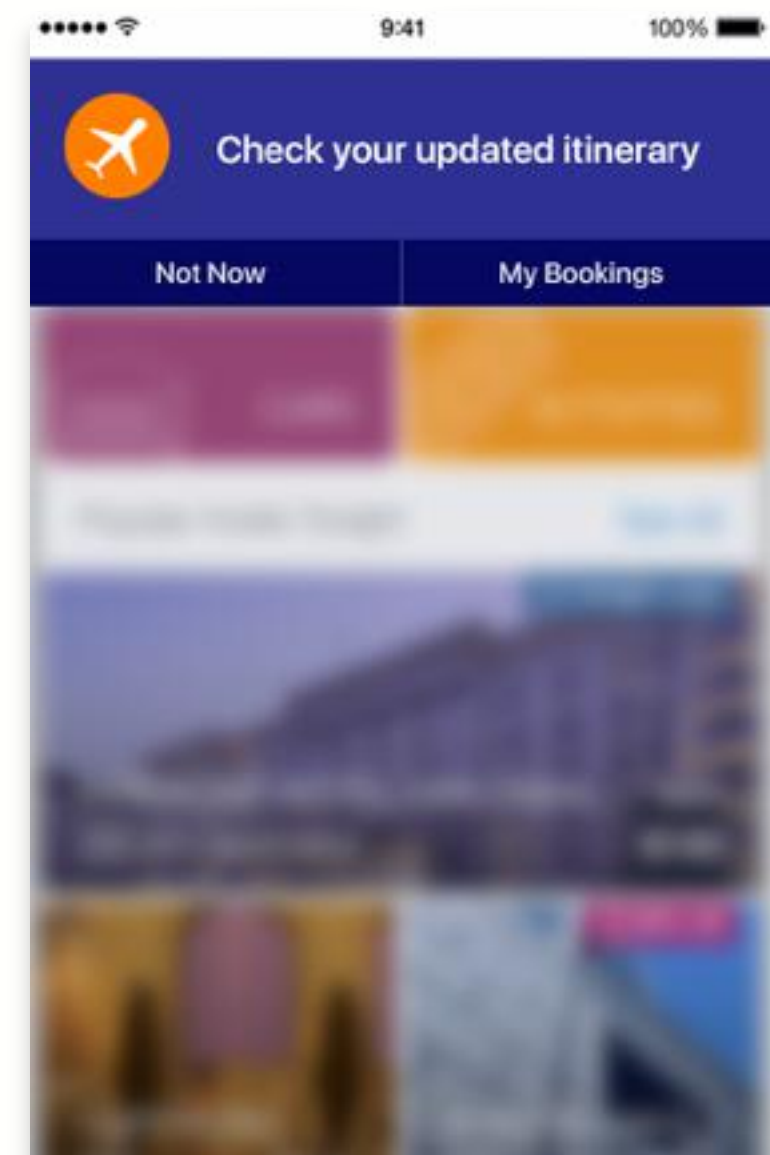
Get Social Media Followers



Push Promotional Offers



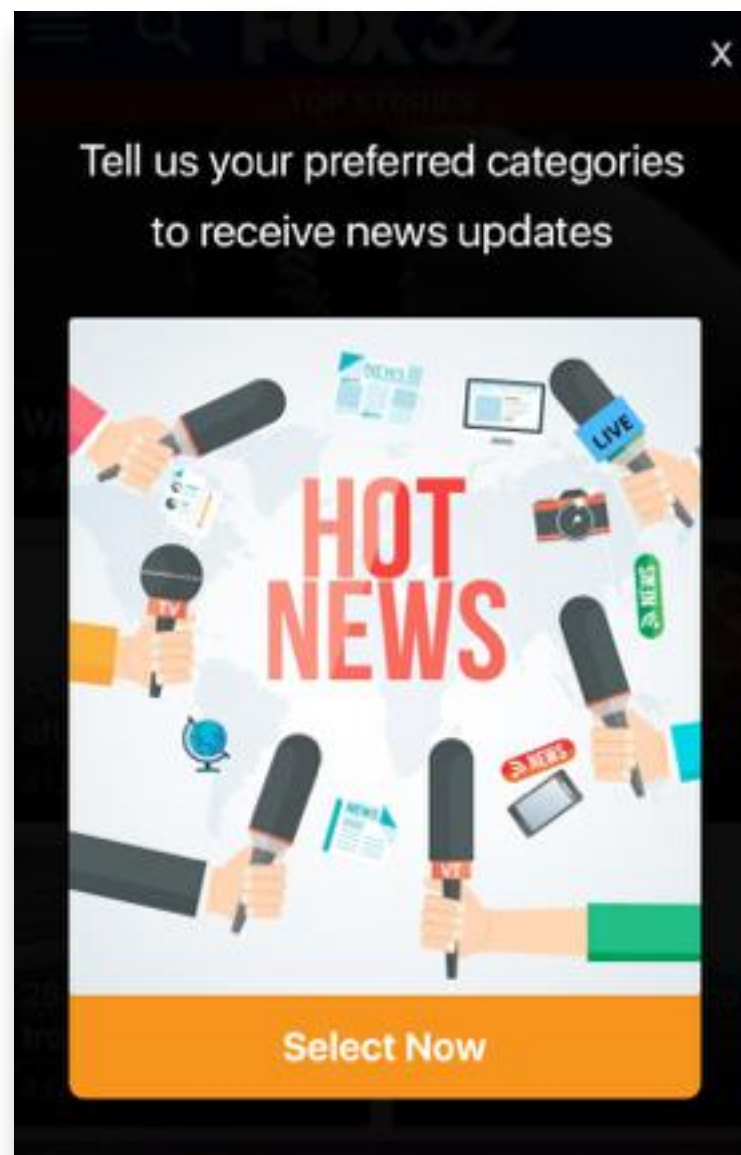
Send Informational Updates



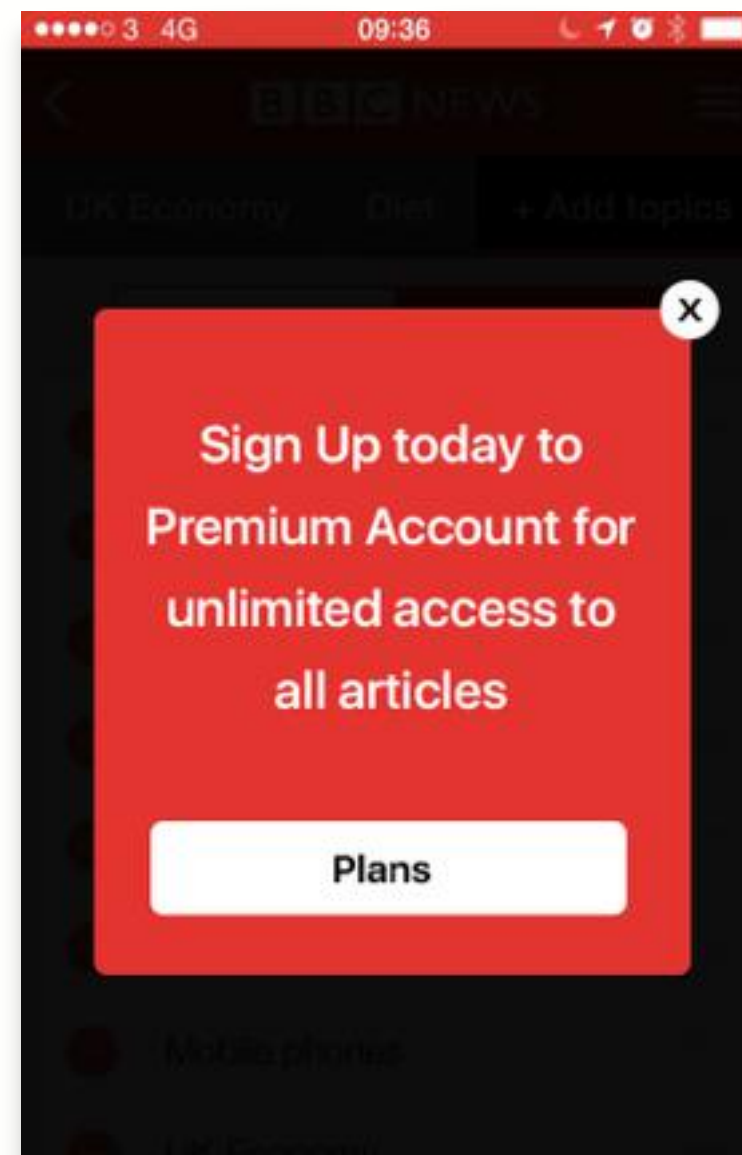
NEWS APPS

News apps can run various campaigns using in-app messages. It could include **promoting paid subscription**, guide users to **specific interest category**, contextual **content recommendation** etc.

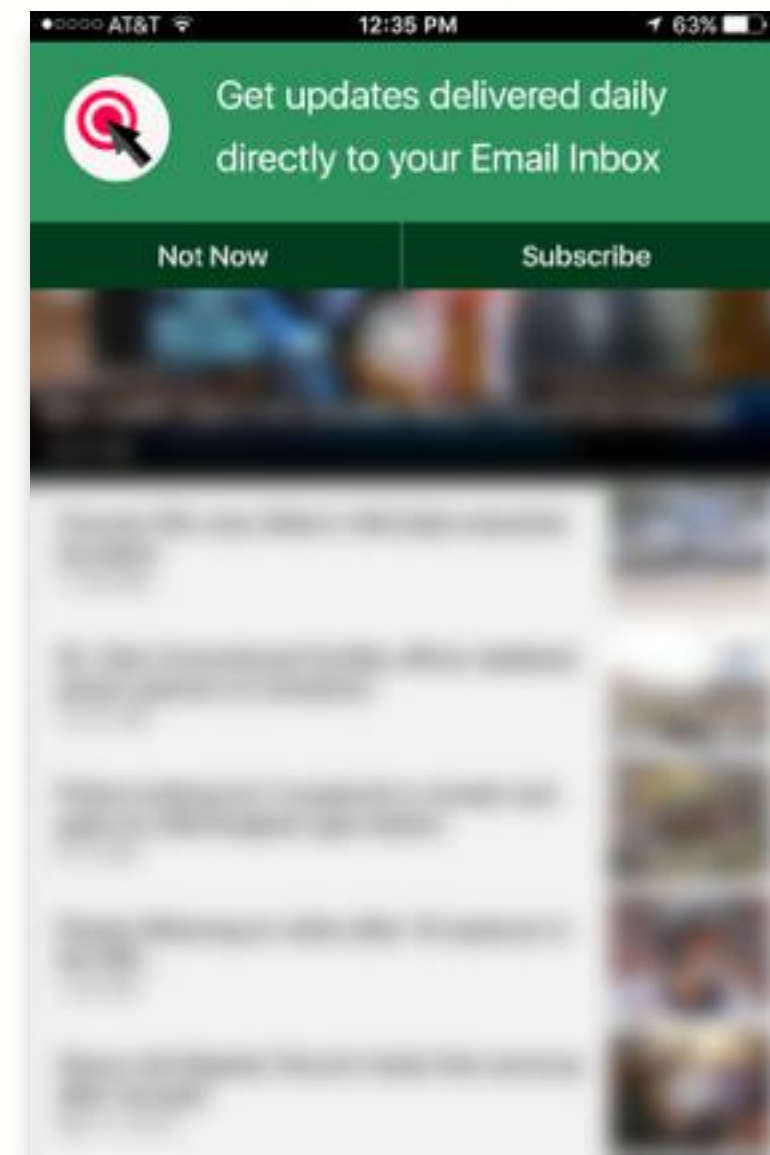
Preferred News Category Selection



Promoting Premium Content



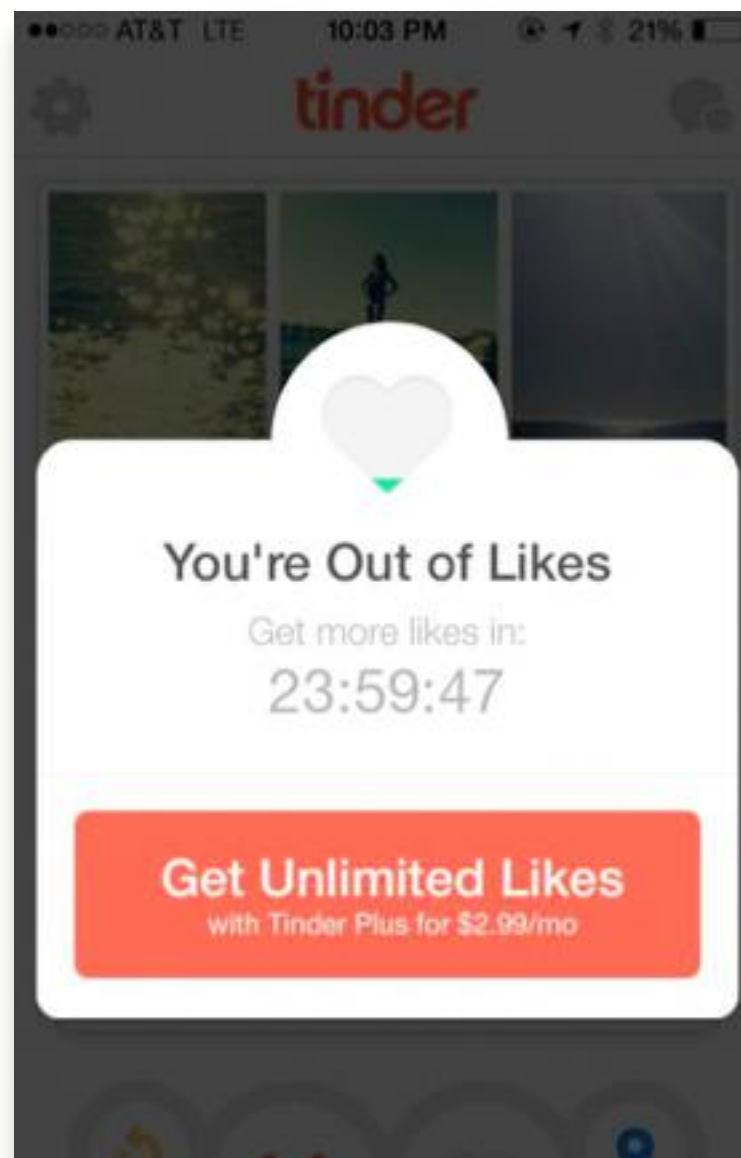
Newsletter Subscription



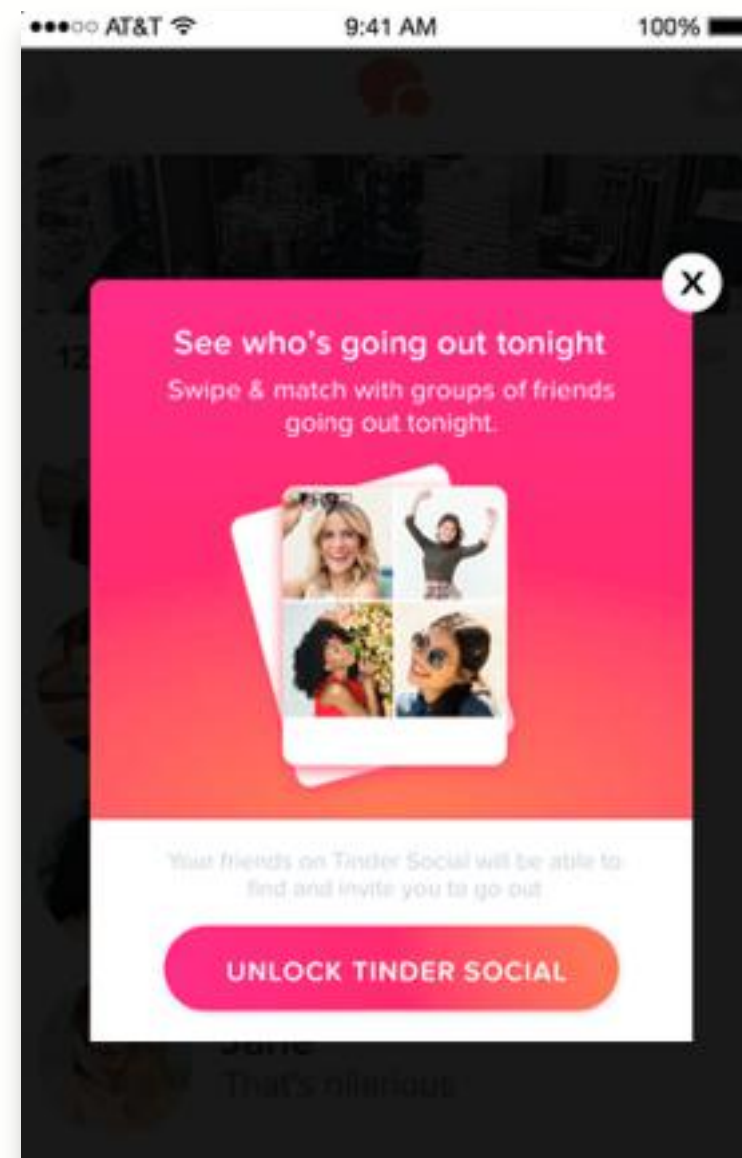
SOCIAL/CHAT/DATING APPS

From **completing the profile** to **selecting preferences**, social apps can do a host of things using in-app messages.

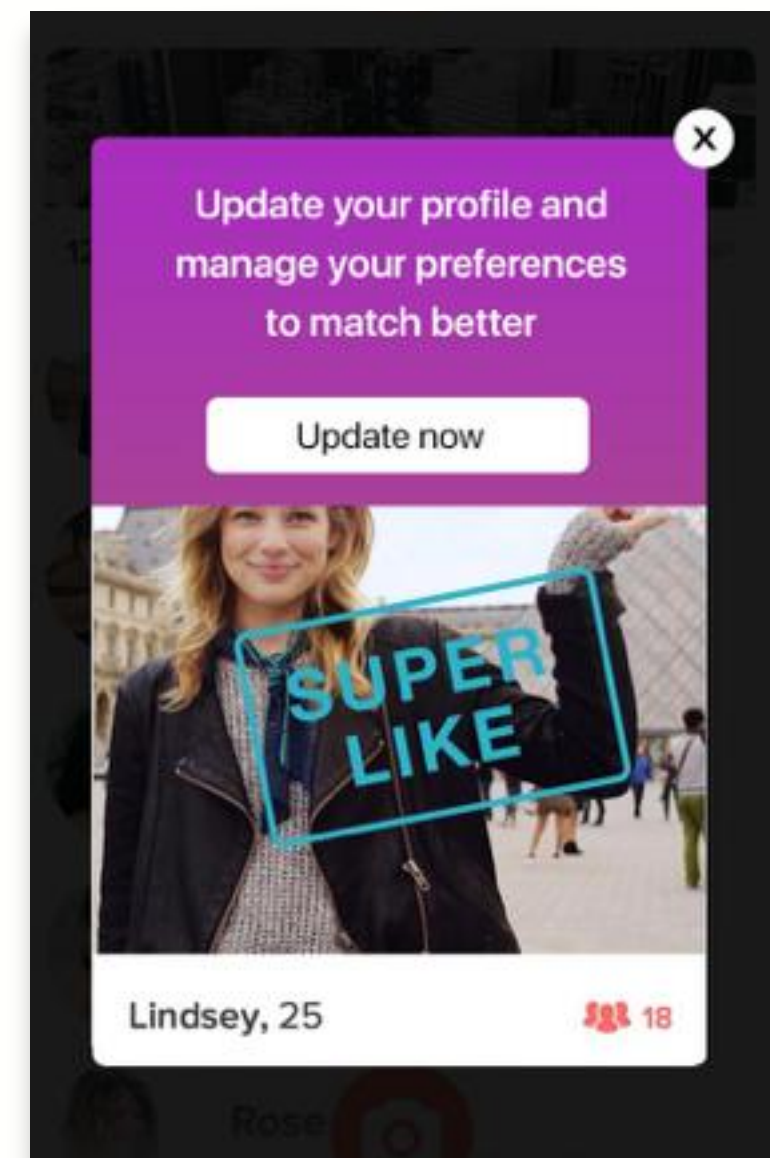
Promote Premium Plan Subscription



User Profile Update



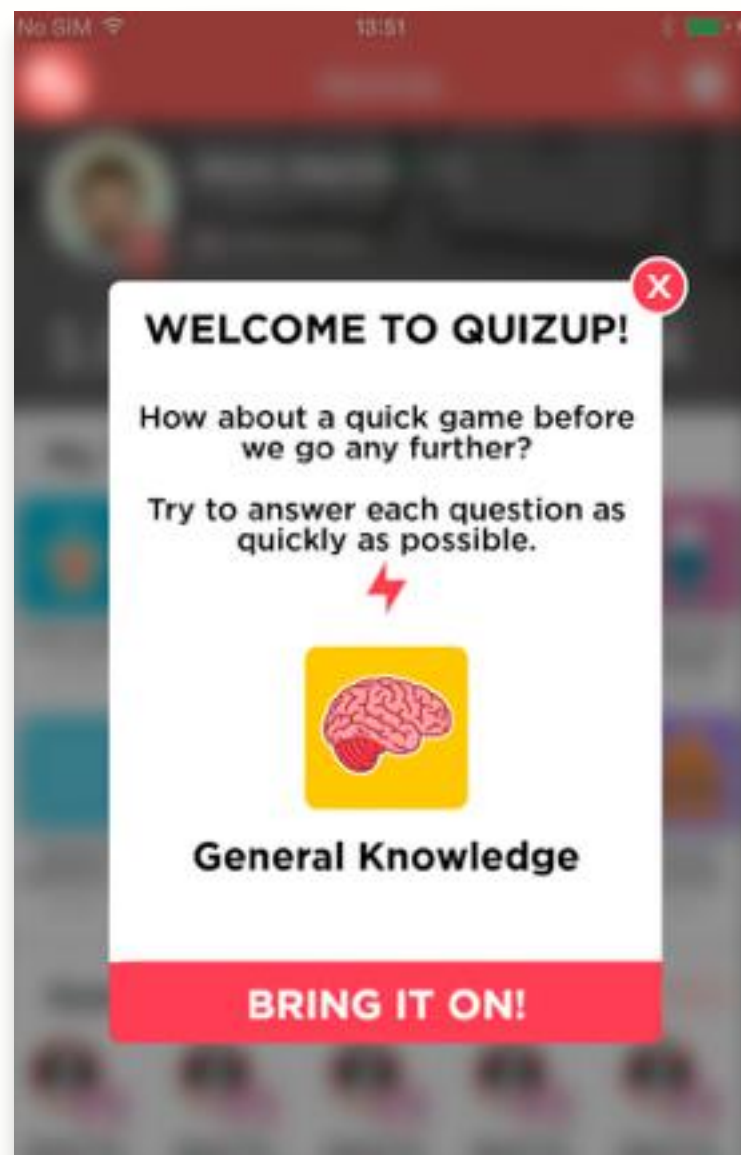
Announcing New Feature



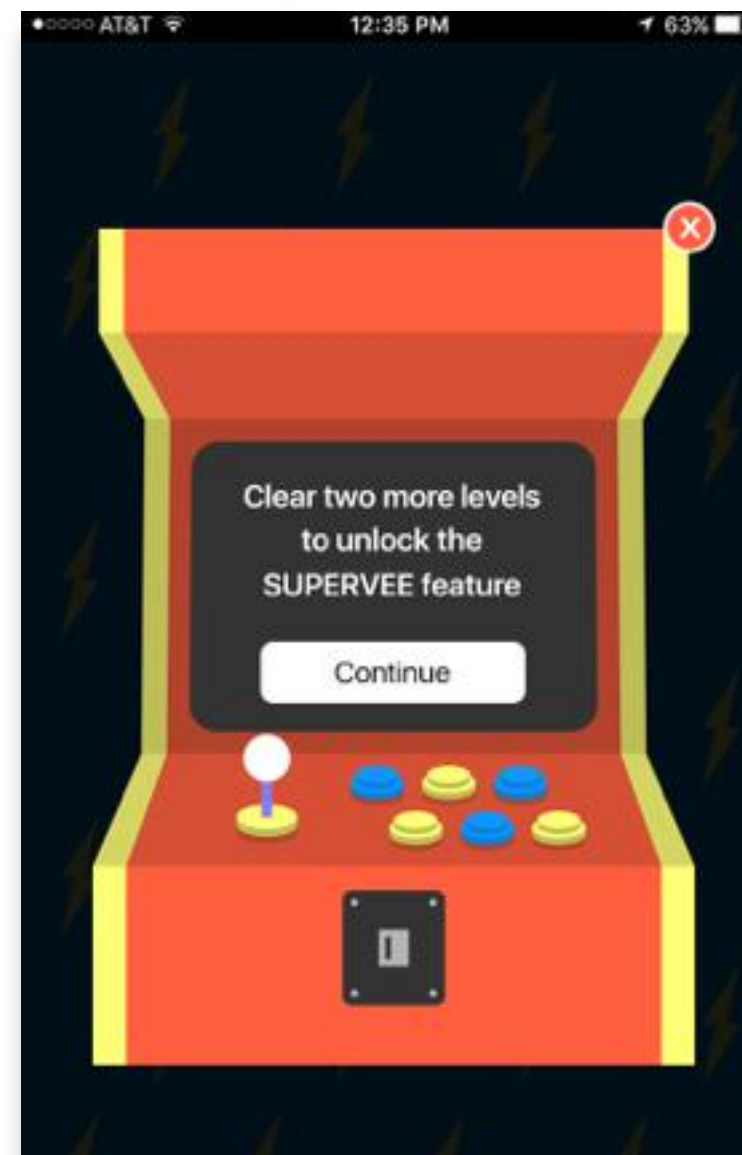
MULTI PLAYER GAMING APPS

Gaming apps can engage with gamers with quintessential information helping them clear **subsequent game levels**, **congratulate players** on reaching milestones and **promote other games**.

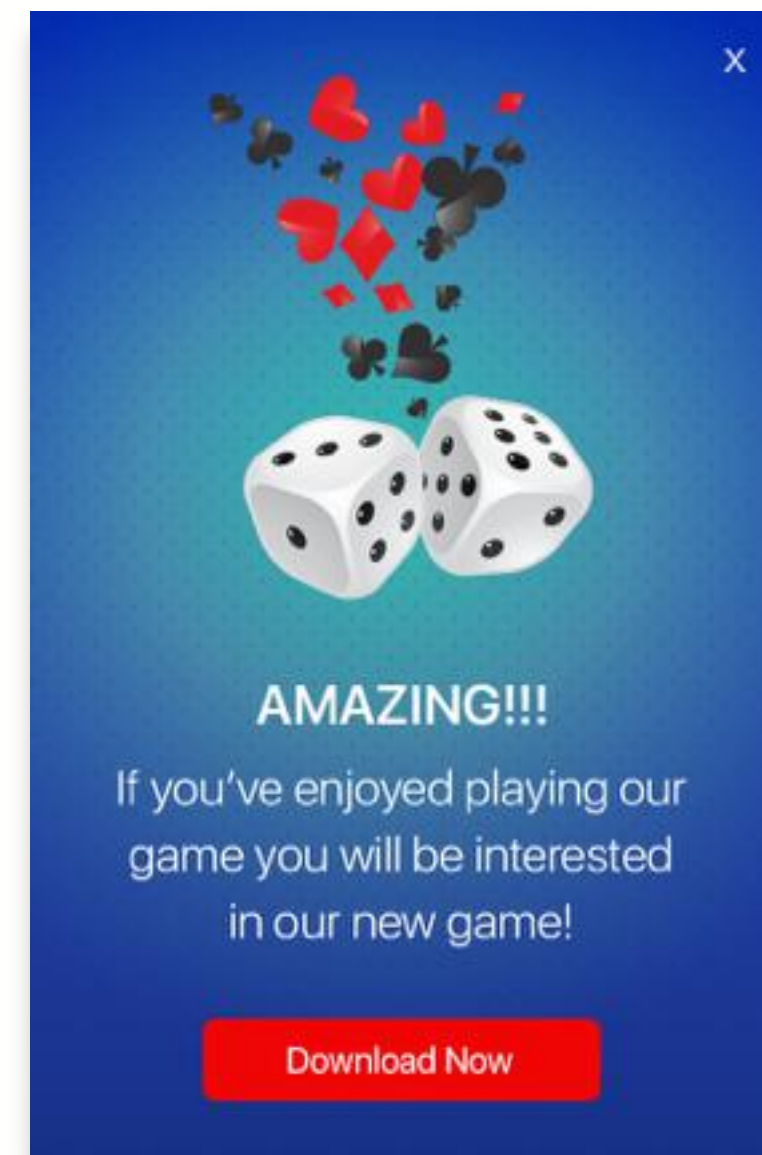
Welcome Message



Prompting Restricted Access



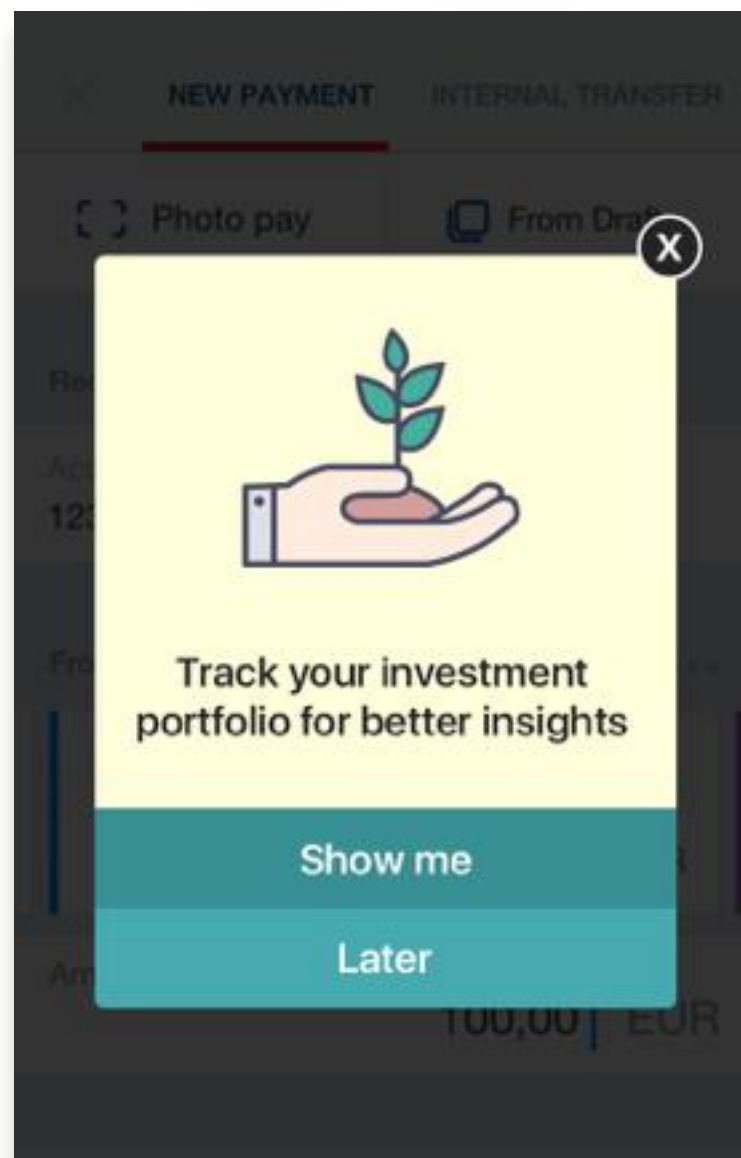
New Game Promotion



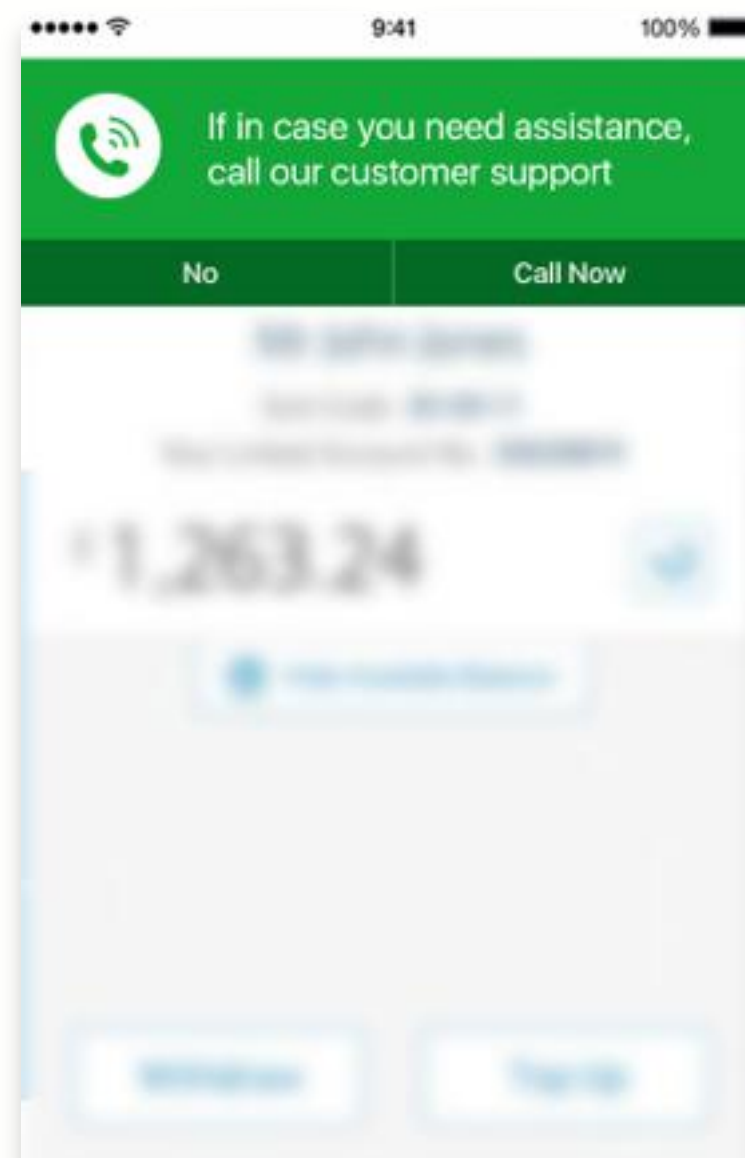
BANKING/FINANCE APPS

The use-cases for BFSI apps can help guide the user through the whole range of activities they perform while in the app.

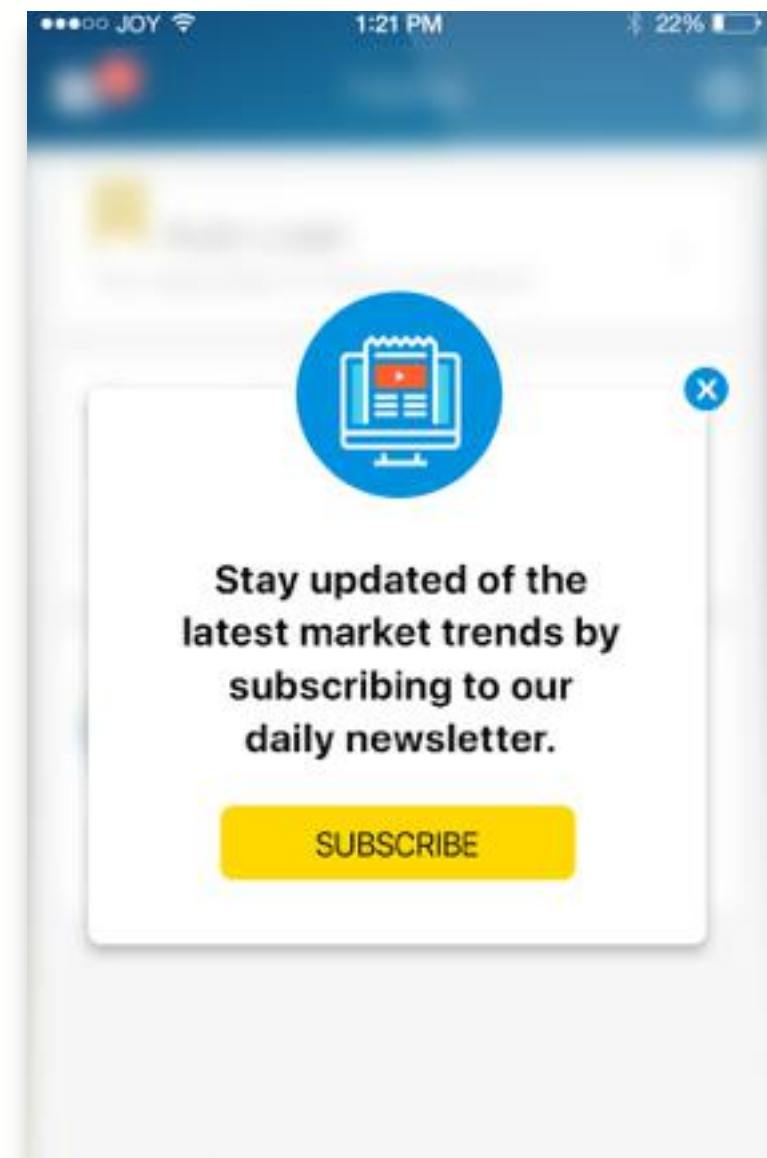
Offering In-App Support



Portfolio Summary Display



Newsletter Subscription



TYPES

Much like push notifications, in-app messages are classified based on their utility or the purpose. We will now discuss the different types of in-app messages.

Types

EDUCATIONAL IN-APP MESSAGES

An Educational in-app message is triggered **purely to guide and help an app user**. There is no hidden intention of promoting a service. These in-apps can offer step-by-step guided flow of the app and highlight key features via in-app message navigation. They may also be sent with the purpose of launching a new feature or version.

Educational messages are sent during or after:

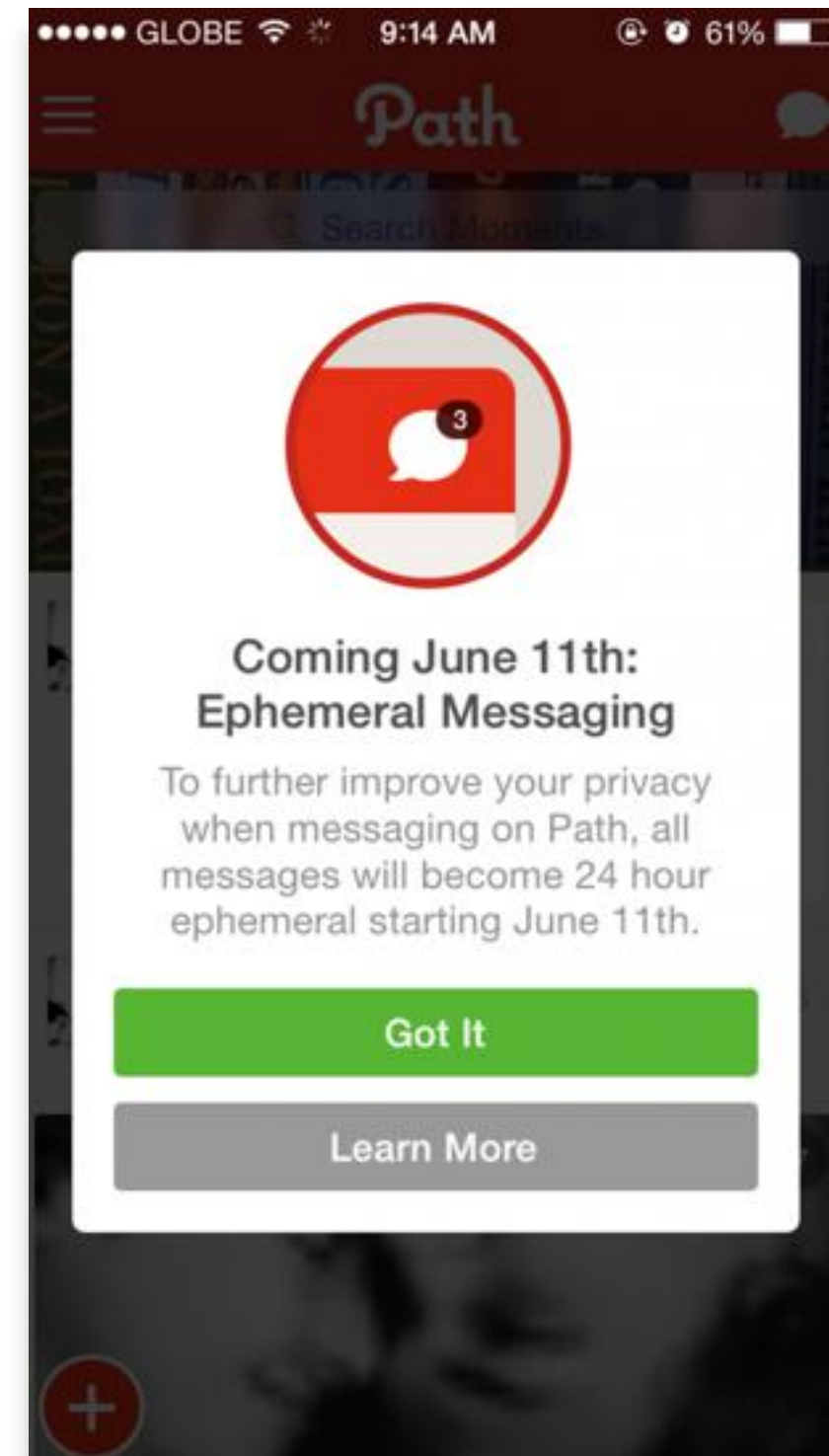
Lifecycle

Onboarding

Dropouts from signup flow

Loyalty points expiration

New feature launch



Types

PROMOTIONAL IN-APP MESSAGES

In-app message sent with the intention of promoting offer/flash sale, upsell/cross-sell or increase user engagement, they are referred to as Promotional In-App Messages. Action-based in-app messages can help marketers achieve increased conversion rate and revenue.

Promotional messages are sent during or after:

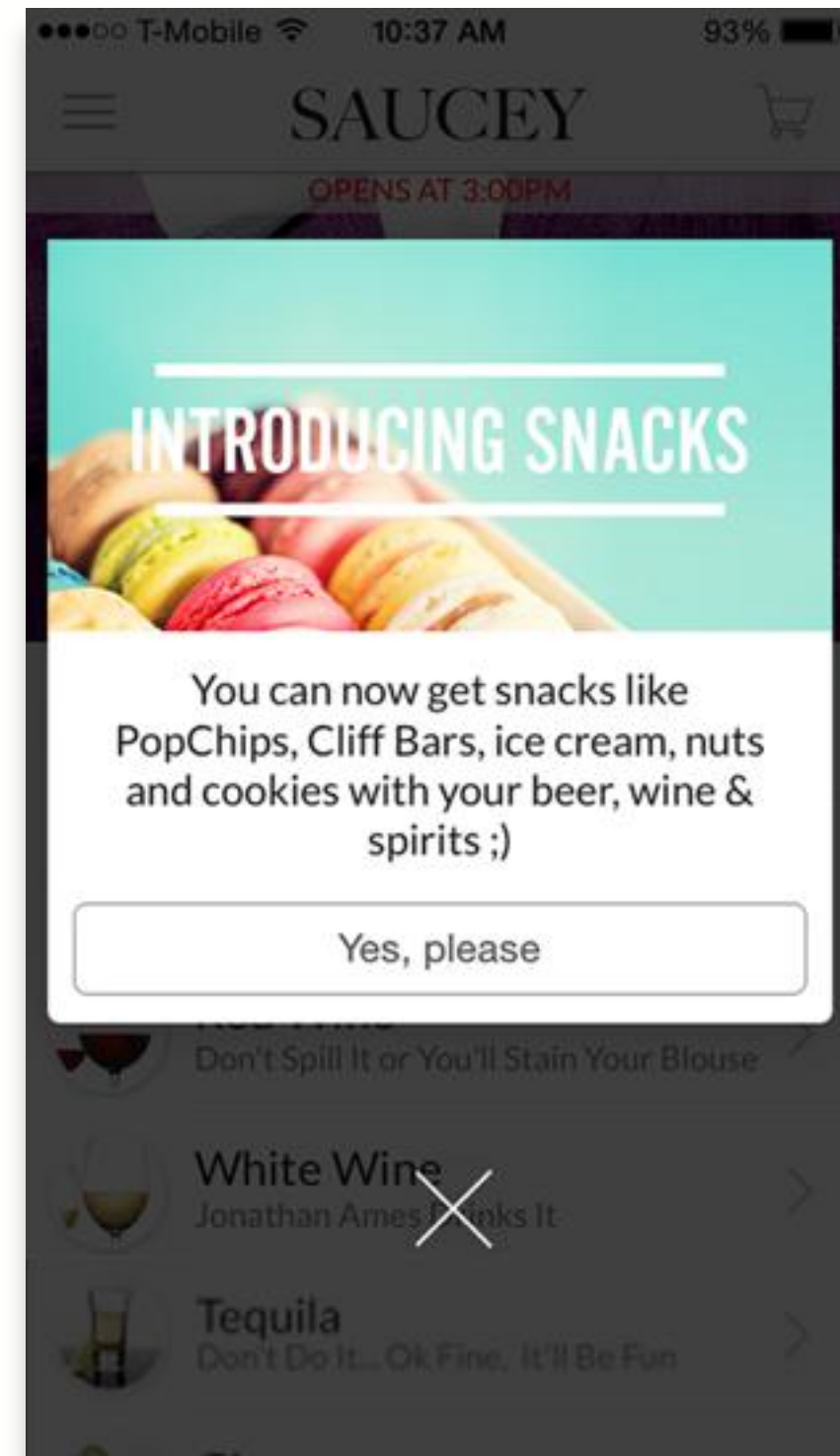
Flash sales promotion

Brand news

Product launch

Newsletter updates

Affiliate/Referral programs



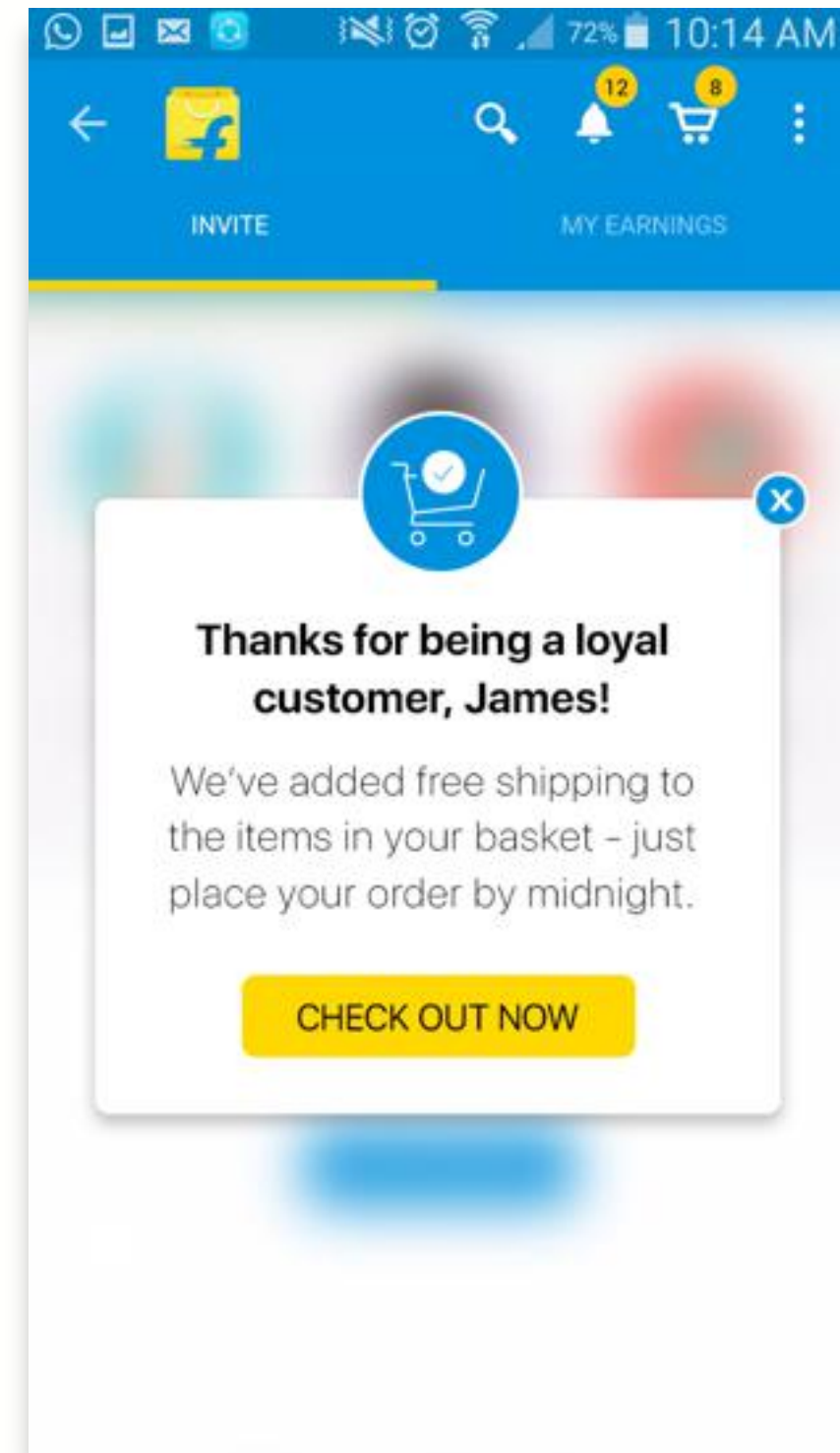
Types

TRANSACTIONAL IN-APP MESSAGES

Transactional In-app messages are in-app messages triggered on the basis of user-initiated events or user lifecycle state/attribute change.

Transactional messages are sent during or after:

- Order confirmation
- Payment success/failure
- Shipping status
- Return/refund
- Billing update/upgrade/downgrade
- Account update
- Signup confirmation
- Account quota limit reached



BEST PRACTICES

There is so much more that marketers can achieve by using in-app messages in the right manner. The starting point must begin with benchmarking against best practices.

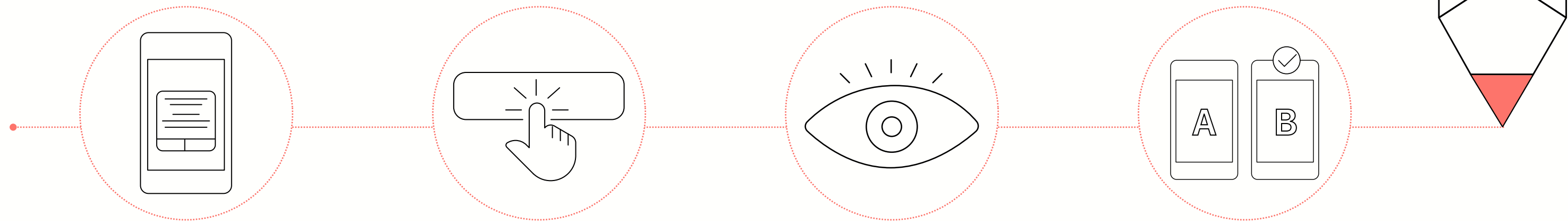
SET GOALS

While strategizing their in-app campaigns, marketers must remember to define clear goals. In-app campaigns can have numerous goals-**triggering app installation, pushing in-app transactions, enhancing app session time, or creating brand awareness**. Marketers must define their goals based on business analytics and user funnel.



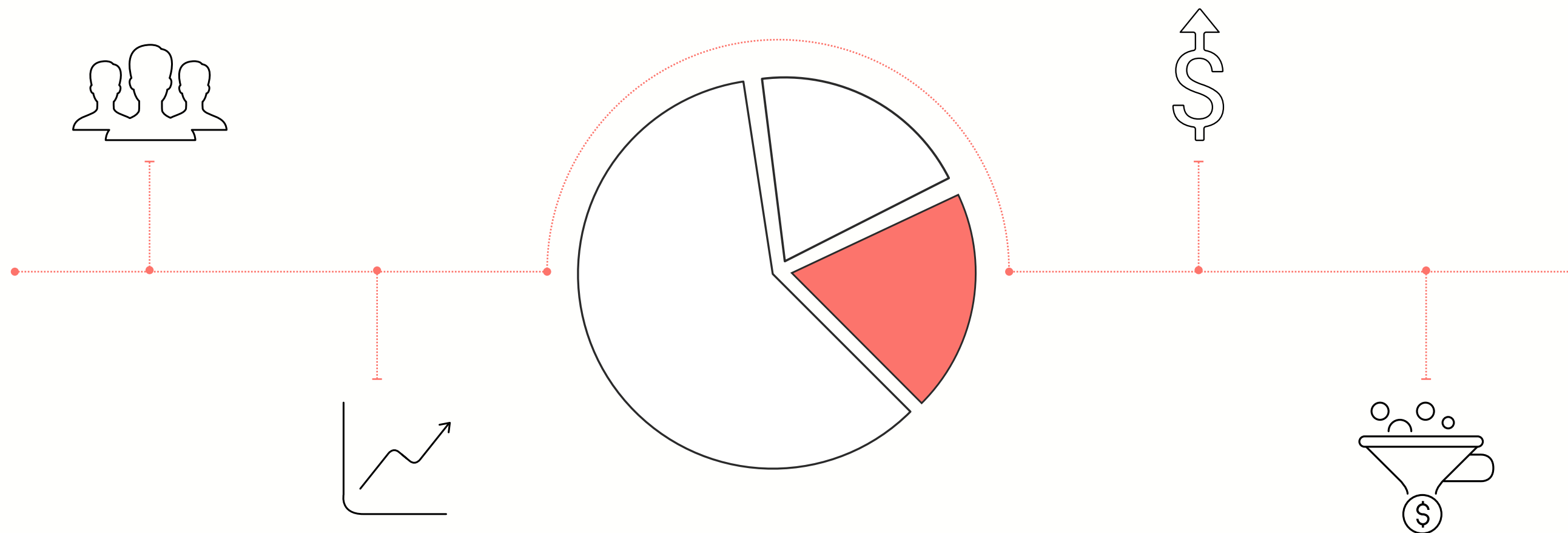
USE APPROPRIATE CONTENT

In-app messages have the advantage of rich text making it attractive channel of communication. The content usually includes a call-to-action along with an interesting image that catches the reader's eyes. The copy could be put to **intensive A/B testing to determine what works best**. A/B test can be for **header text, body content/image** and **CTA button** attributes like text, colour, shape, etc. Also, even though marketers can pack longer messages into in-app, they should refrain from doing so and keep them succinct.



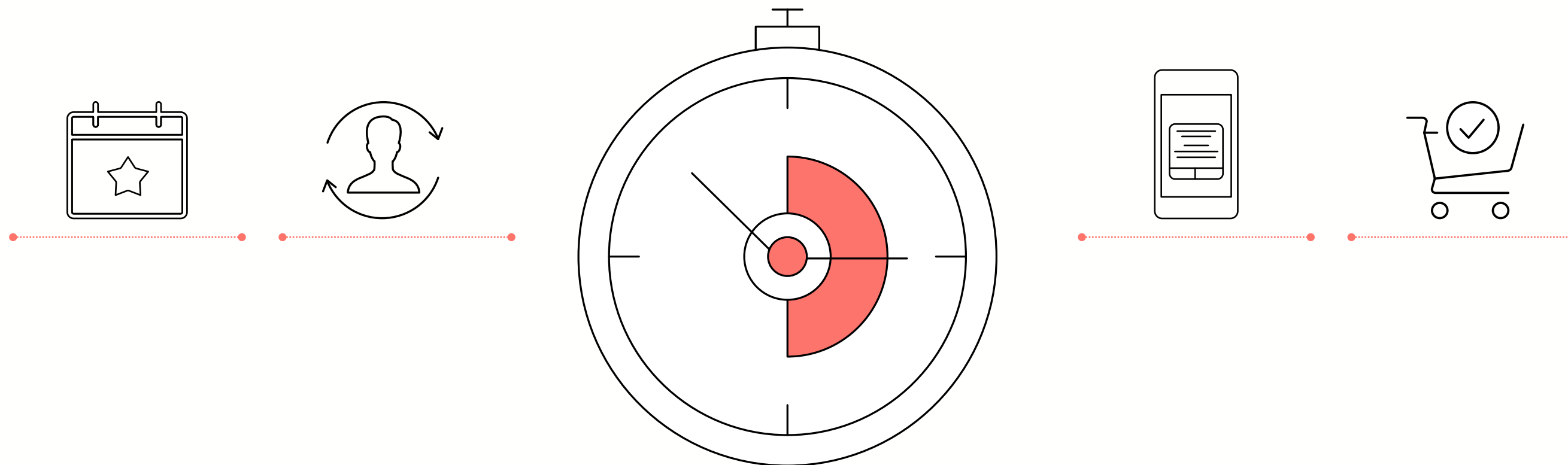
USE SEGMENTATION

For an in-app campaign to be successful, messages must be segmented. Marketers can get maximum benefit out of personalization tools when they **merge segmentation with content personalisation**. Likewise, funnel metrics should also be taken into account while strategizing in-app campaigns. Micro-segmentation based on **user events** and **behavioral data** can make micro-marketing campaigns more efficient.



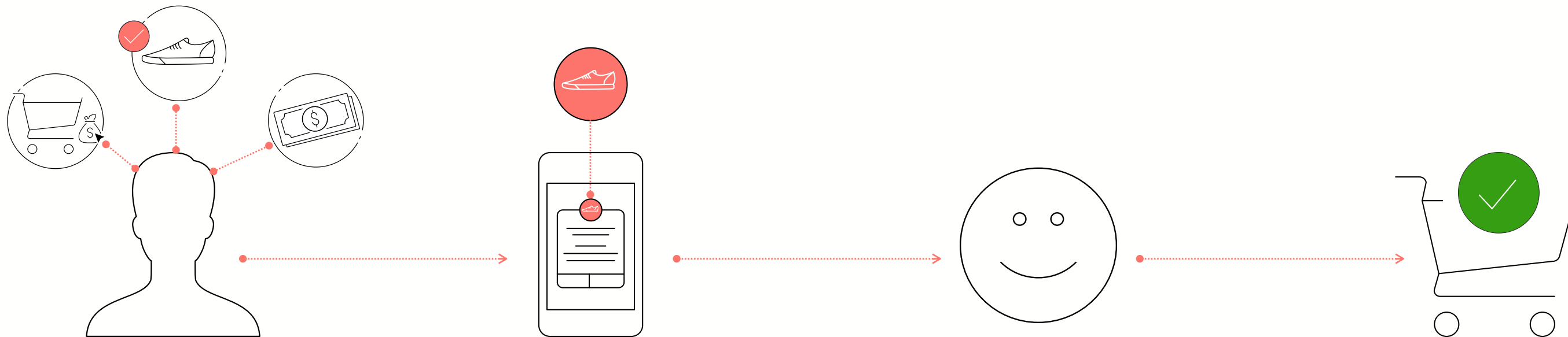
OPPORTUNE TIMING

Since in-app messages are sent to achieve a specific purpose, they are usually **time-bound**. They appear at a specific time and for a specific time until engaged with by the user. Marketers can **time in-app messages** to appear in the **occurrence of specific events**. For instance, marketers can entice users by showing relevant in-app messages in case of an event like cart abandonment.



PERSONALIZE CAMPAIGN

Going beyond basic personalisation is the key. In-app messages should be personalized based on **tokens** and **custom data** passed via CRM. Put to use user behavior data to personalize in-app campaigns. Consider using **transactional data**, preferred **mode of payment**, **selected interest categories**, or **volume of transactions** based on **RFM model**.

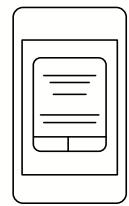


LIMITATIONS

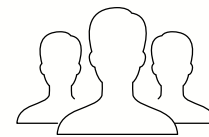
In-app messages are sent to an already engaged audience, users that are active in the app. By their very nature, they come across as obtrusive to the user experience. Let us look at some of the limitations of in-app messages.

LIMITATIONS OF IN-APP MESSAGES

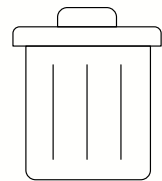
Like all things, in-app messages have their shortcomings. Here are a few of them:



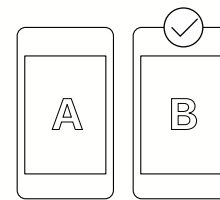
In-app messages can be sent to a user only when they are using an app.



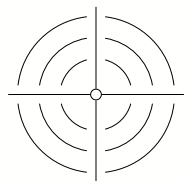
In comparison to push and email, in-app messages have a smaller audience.



In-app messages, when sent too frequently, can drive a user to delete the app.



It is quite difficult to test in-app messages.



In-app messages require better targeting to improve the user experience.

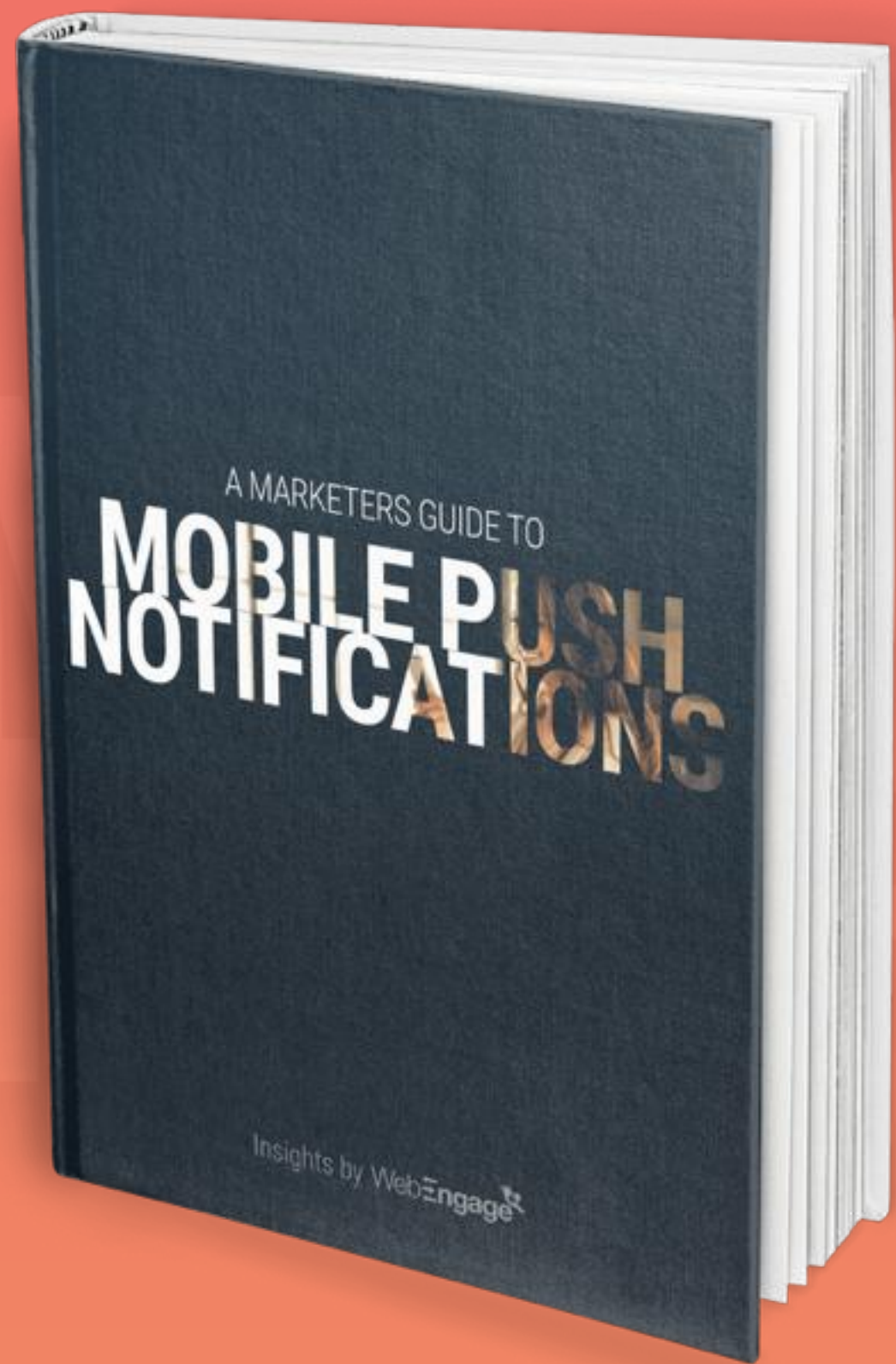
IN A NUTSHELL

23% of users uninstall an app after just one use. And it becomes increasingly difficult to hold on to users after the initial three months of use. These unsettling stats make it imperative for marketers to engage users with relevant communication. In-app messages, when used right, can help marketers in retaining app users as part of their larger mobile engagement strategy.

In-app message is a **valuable channel, but also prone to abuse.** Marketers need to monitor campaigns, test and optimize them. Understand what works for them and do more of it.

In this ebook, we have intensively covered in-app messages. We hope this helps you carve out an in-app message based mobile engagement strategy for your business.





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