

A MARKETERS GUIDE TO

MOBILE PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Presented by WebEngage

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OVERVIEW

For marketers, push notifications are one of the most effective way of communicating with users. Push notifications can be sent to any user at any given time. Unlike email, they do not get caught in the web of spams and unlike in-app, they can be sent when a user is not using an app.

In this ebook, we will not only discuss push notifications in detail, we will also shed some light on practices that can play a pivotal role in making a push notification campaign successful.

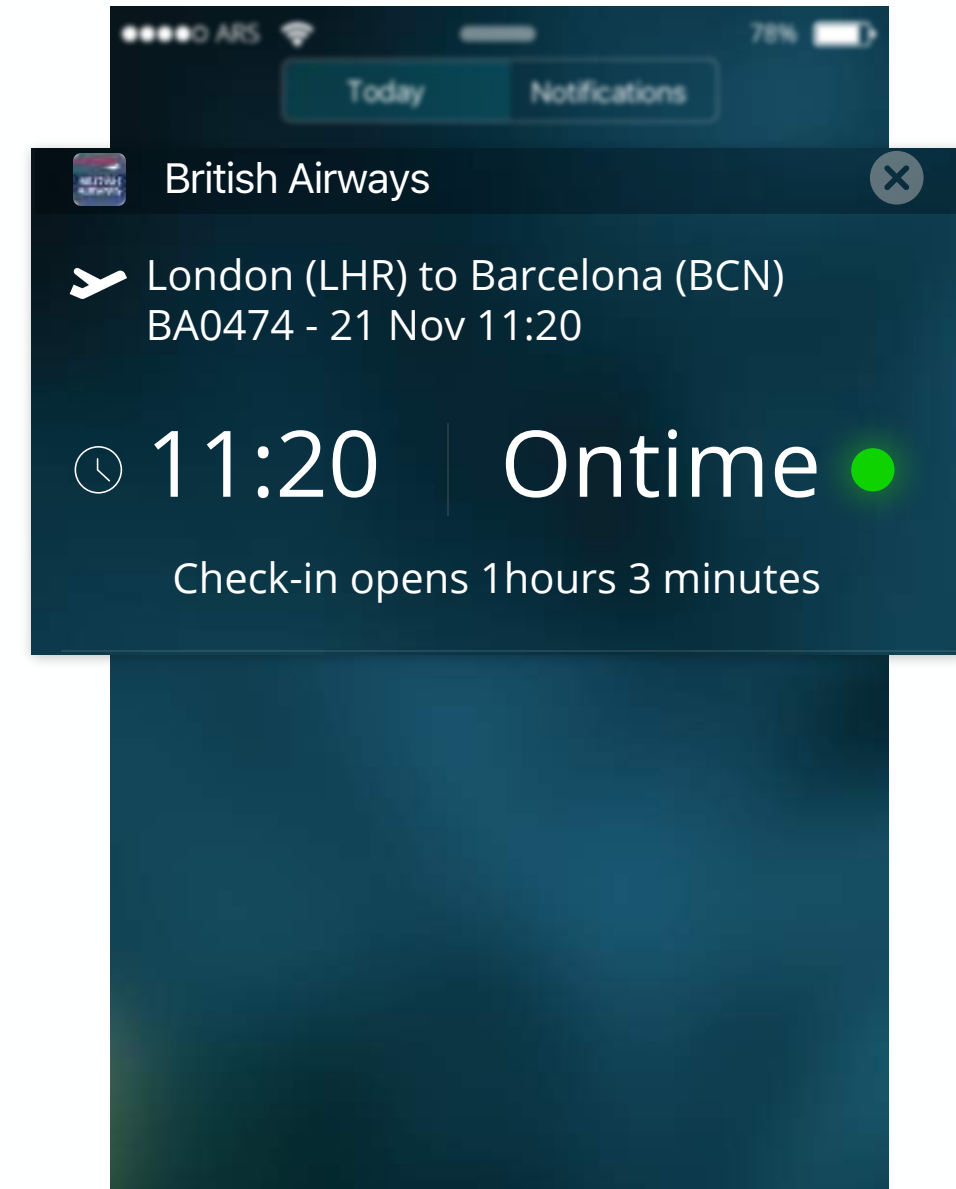
What are Push Notifications?



Push notifications are snippets of information delivered to a smartphone user by an app publisher.

They are called push notifications **because the updates are initiated by the publisher, not the user.**

Push messages allow businesses to **interact with users after they have downloaded the app.**



The history

**2003**

Blackberry Limited

Research in Motion(RIM) Limited came up with the concept of push emails.

Blackberry primarily used push emails to instantly inform users about a new email.

Blackberry had developed Push Emails with the intention of enhancing their device's connectivity and efficiency.

2009

Apple

Apple successfully launched the Apple Push Notification Service with its iOS 3.3.

Apple Notification Service was unique in the fact that it allowed users to subscribe to third party notifications.

2010

Google

Google launched its Google Cloud to Device Messaging Service.

Google further expanded the functionality of Push Messages by giving them the power to include images as well as action buttons.

2013

Google

Google came up with the concept of 'rich notifications'.

Rich notifications were different in that they could contain both images as well as action buttons.

2014

Apple

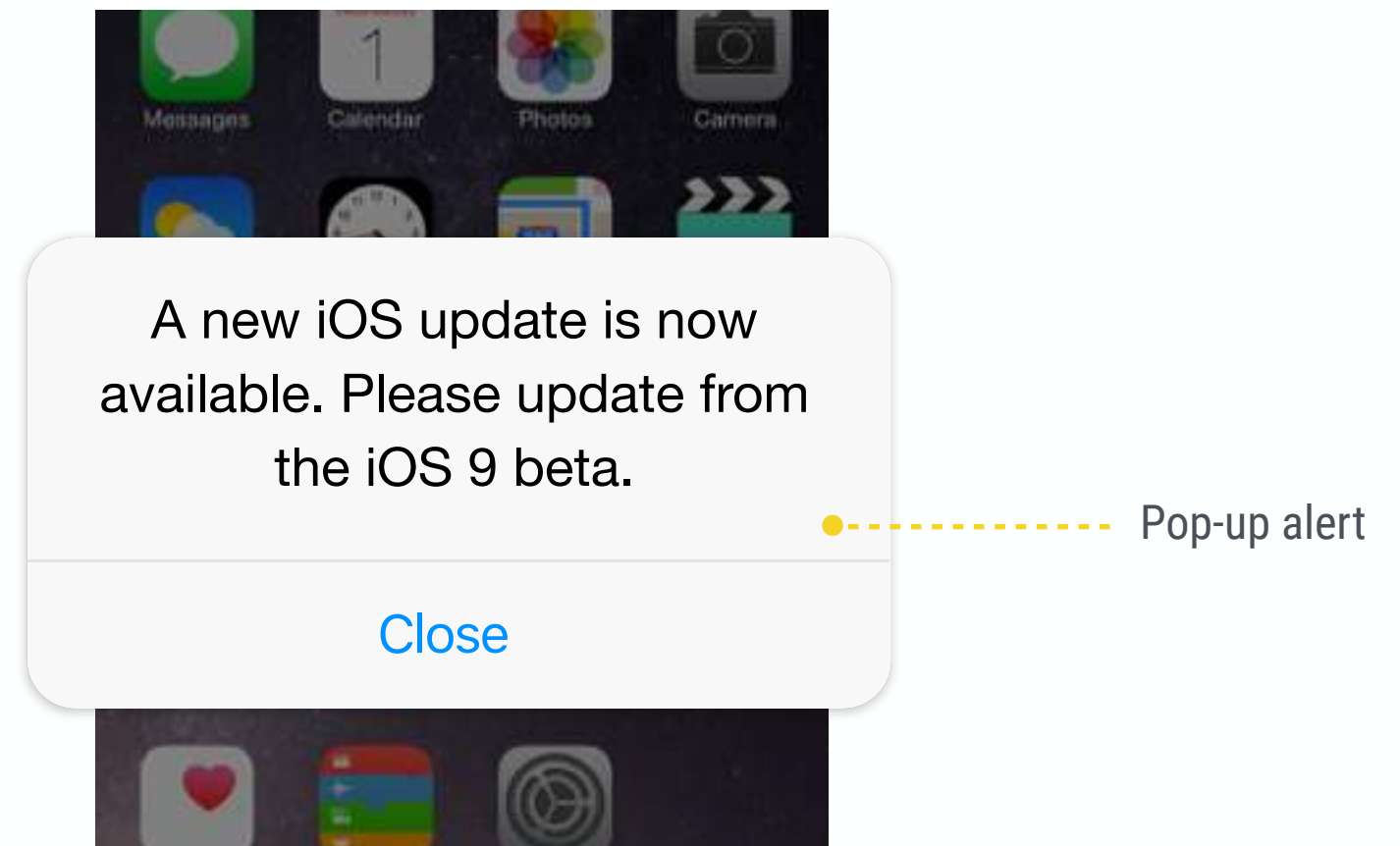
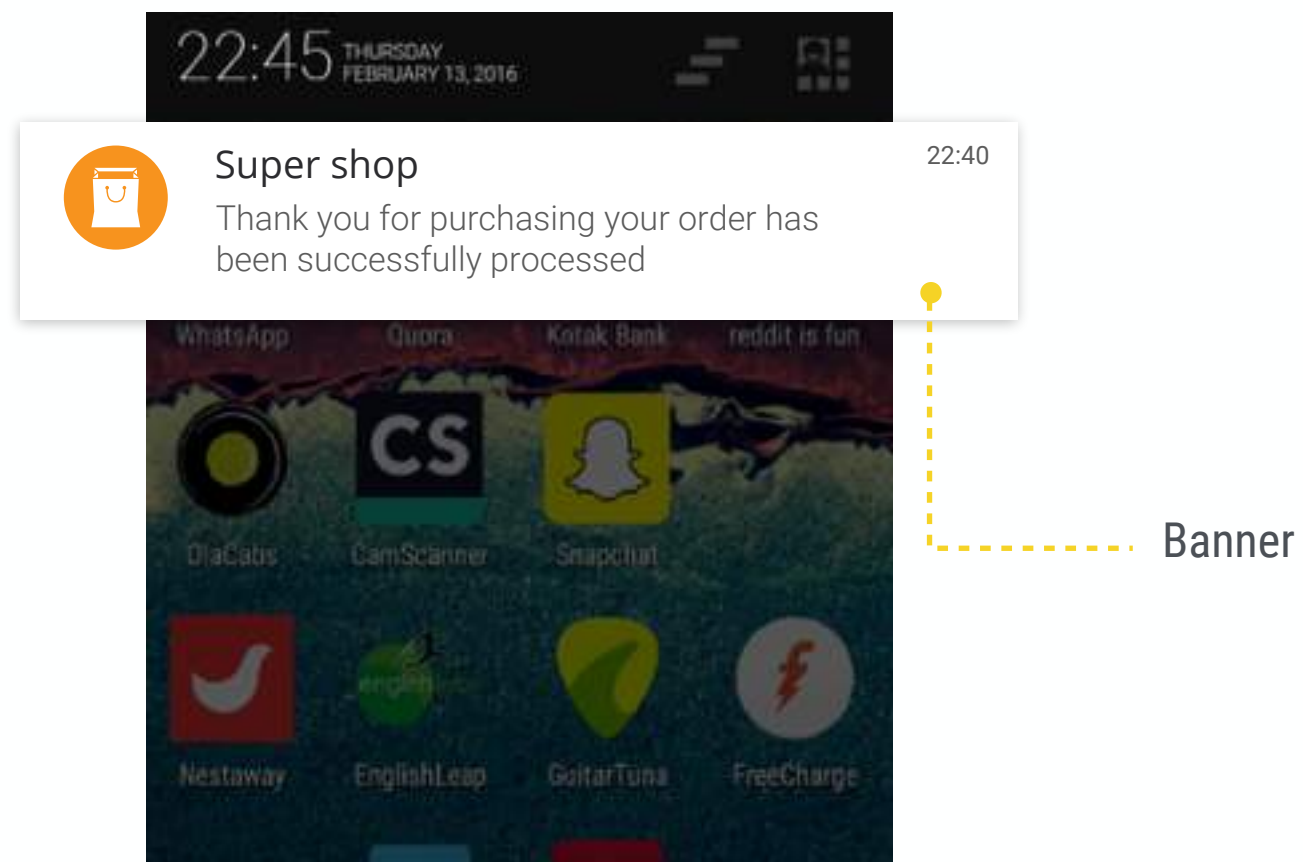
Apple came up with the concept of interactive buttons.

After this innovation, Apple also introduced Push notifications to the Apple Watch.

Styles of push notifications



Push notifications appear as a **banner** or a **pop-up alert** on the user's home screen.

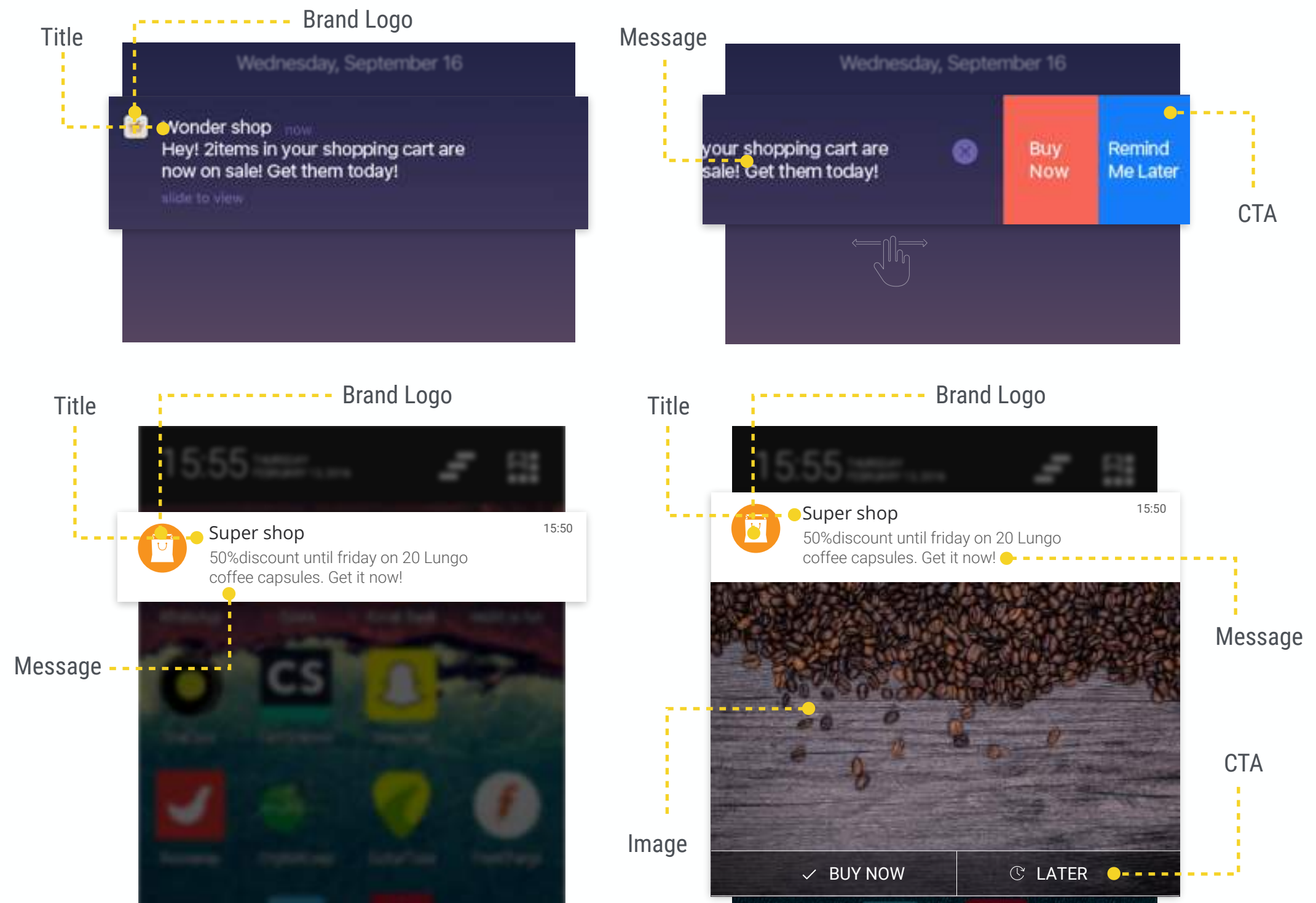


Anatomy of push

Push notifications usually contain a **title**, **message** and a **CTA button**. The technological innovations have given marketers the power to incorporate **rich media**, **backlinks** and **images** into push notifications. Push messages must be interactive and interesting.

The inclusion of images makes a push notification visually gripping. The message included must be concise, creative and should always contain a very enticing call to action button. **The message delivered should also be personalized.**

Make your push notifications more interesting by including actions that can be performed from within the app. Likewise, marketers can also include emojis to make push messages more interactive.



EFFECTIVENESS

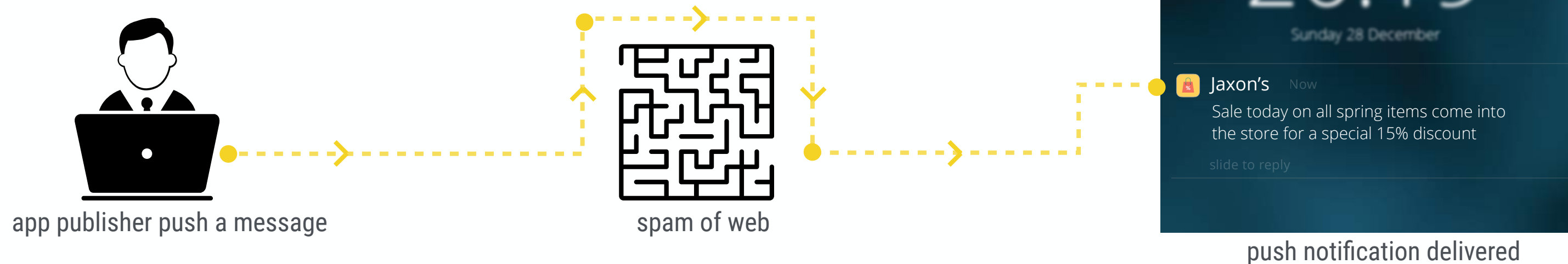
A smiling woman with blonde hair, wearing a straw hat and a light-colored top, is holding a white smartphone. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting. The word 'EFFECTIVENESS' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a slight green-to-white gradient. The letters are partially obscured by the woman's hat and face.

In recent years, push notifications have gained prominence over text messages because unlike text, push notifications can be segmented and personalized to target fixed groups of users. Effectiveness of push notification is a function of OS (iOS/Android), Industry and geo location of the user.

Push messages increase app engagement



Push Notifications make an effective channel of communication for app publishers as the messages delivered do not get caught in the web of spams and instead, reach the customer directly.



Push notifications are ideal for inciting app users to take an **immediate action** or move them towards a **desired goal**. These can also be employed to solve the issue of a **low app open rate**. With push notifications, app publishers can direct **inactive users** back to the app and put them in a **desired funnel**.

Push notifications **enhance app engagement by up to 3 times**.

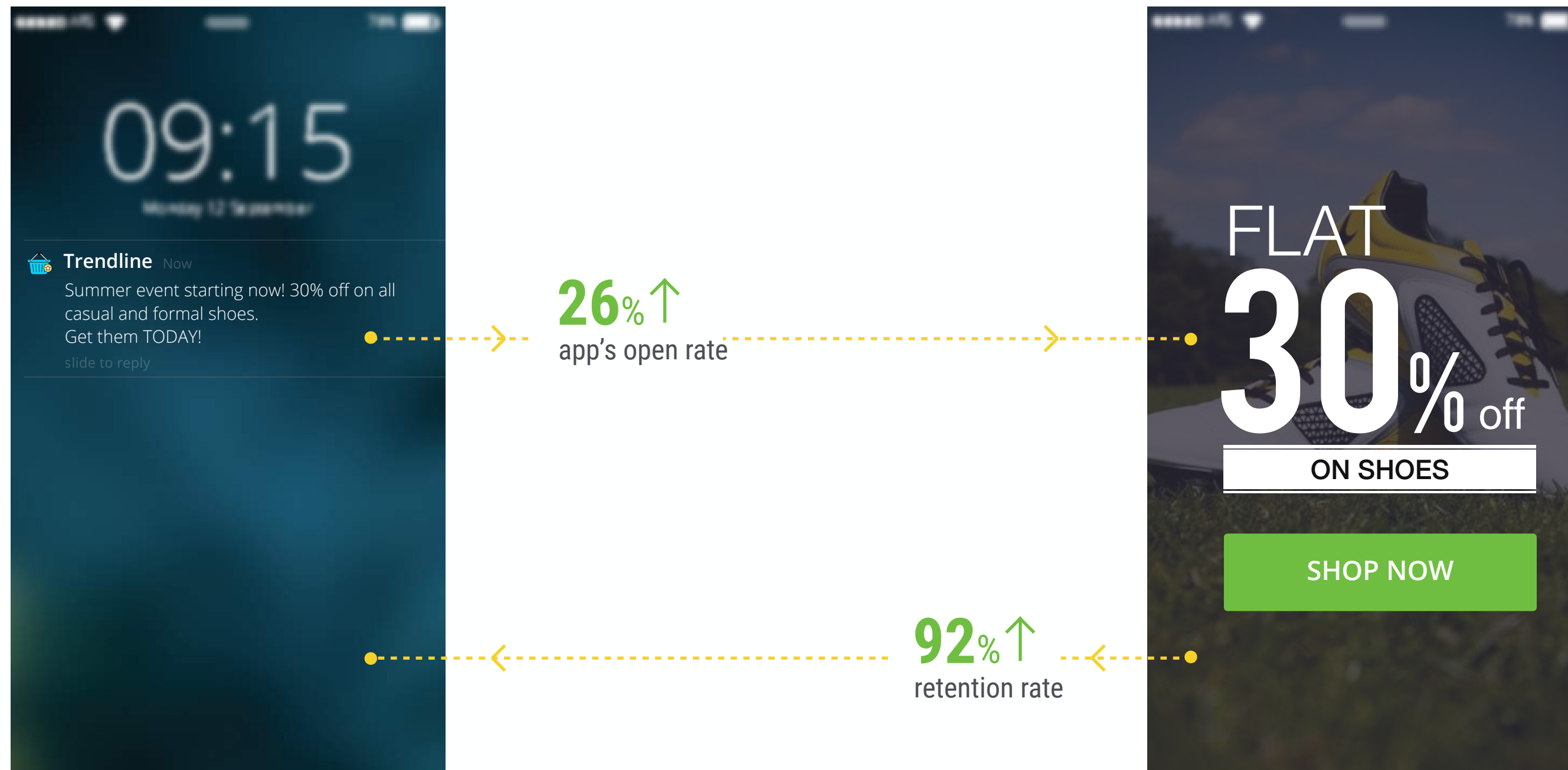
There are 2 main reasons for this:

- **People carry their smartphones all the time**
- **Push notifications are received on request of the publisher, not the user. This makes people want to check their phones when they receive one.**

Push messages are known to increase app open rate



They can increase a mobile app's open rate by almost **26%** and scale up the retention rate by almost a whopping **92%**



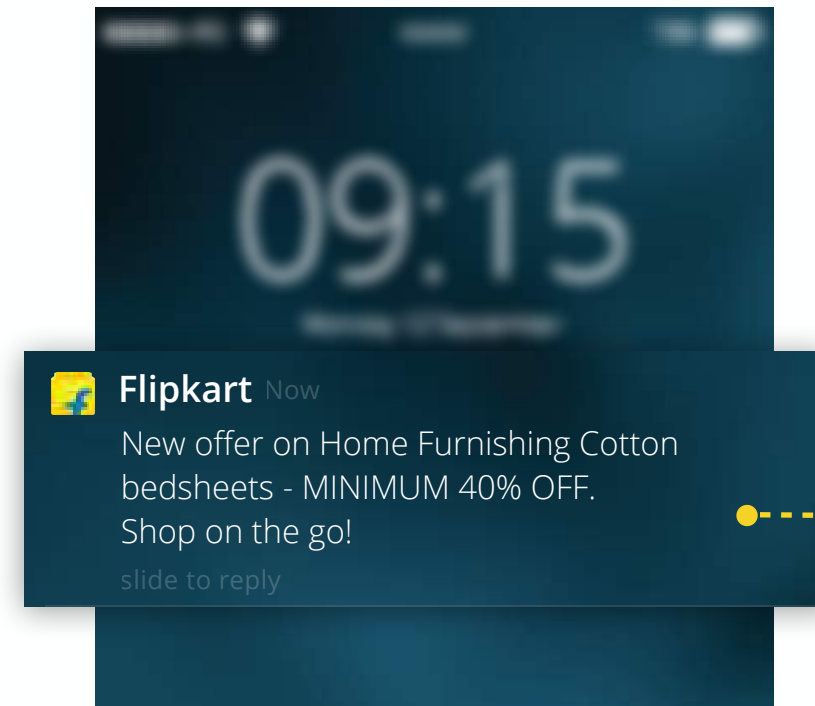
Push messages are more effective than email campaigns



Push notifications are more effective than email. According to a study by Xtify, open rates for push notifications vary between **30%** and **60%**.

Their interaction rate is as high as **40%**. In comparison, the average open rate for emails is **20%** and the average click-through rate is only **5.4%**.

This means, on an average,
push notifications are 2 times more effective than email campaigns.



30-60%
open rate of push
notifications



20%
open rate of emails

They enhance conversion rates



Push notifications lead to more sales – **50%** of the people that sign up for push notifications do it in order to gain access to special or exclusive offers.

In others words, these people are already looking forward to buying from you.

Of the people who open push notifications, **54%** convert from segmented push. In comparison, only **15%** convert from broadcast messages.






This means you have a **300% better chance of converting** if you use your analytics and send your messages.




Metrics to measure effectiveness of push



Push notifications, by virtue of their nature, share effectiveness with email, social and display banner ads. End goal of notifications is to impact the metrics that need to be measured.

The Metrics to measure effectiveness are mentioned below

- **1 App Launched Via Push Messages**
measures count of users who have been reactivated
- **2 Goals Achieved/Conversions Attributed To Push Campaign**
count and value conversions driven by the push message
- **3 Number Of Push Messages Delivered**
measures count of active users (who have installed and not yet deleted your app) for your mobile app

- **4 Open Rate**
measures count of users who have taken positive action towards your communication.
- **5 Opt-Out/App-Uninstall Rate**
measures count of users who have either opted out or uninstalled mobile app after interacting with the push campaign
- **6 Click Through Rate**
measures count of users who have taken strong action towards your communications.

THE NEED

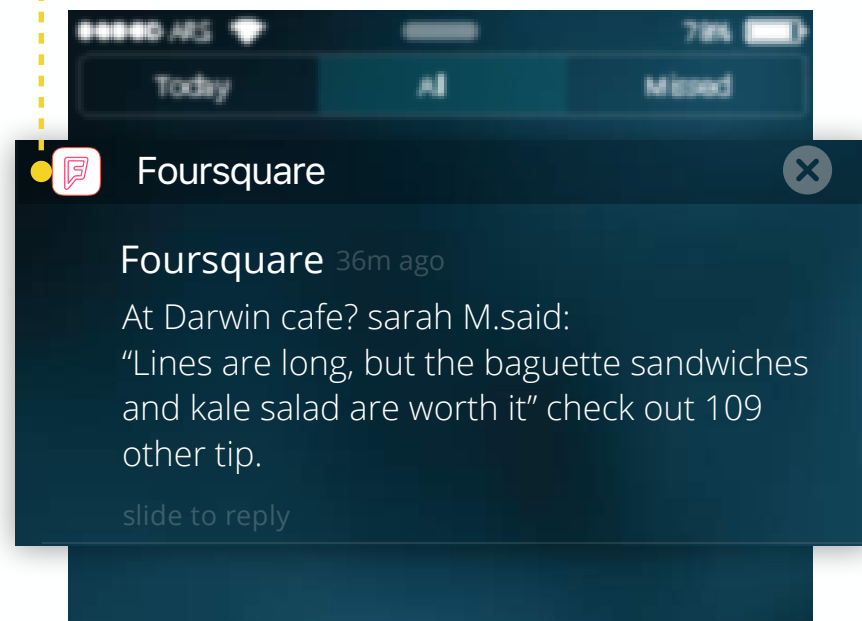
When a user downloads an app, they open a new and more concrete channel of communication that marketers can use to their advantage. Push notifications have gained immense popularity mostly because they make a channel of communication that is impossible to ignore.

Inform users in real time



Many sports apps use push messages to keep their users updated about events and scores. Similarly, news app publishers use push messages to send subscribers the latest news updates. Likewise, geo-targeted push notifications, when used relevantly and smartly, can encourage customers to make a purchase.

Foursquare sends geo-targeted push notifications to encourage customers to make visit nearby places.



News apps like **CNN** use push messages to send latest news updates and breaking stories to subscribers.

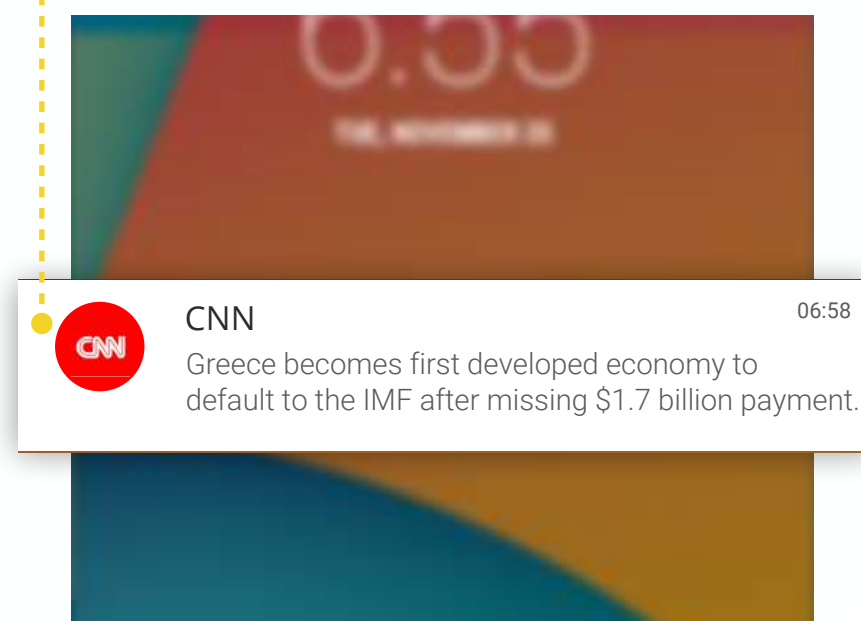
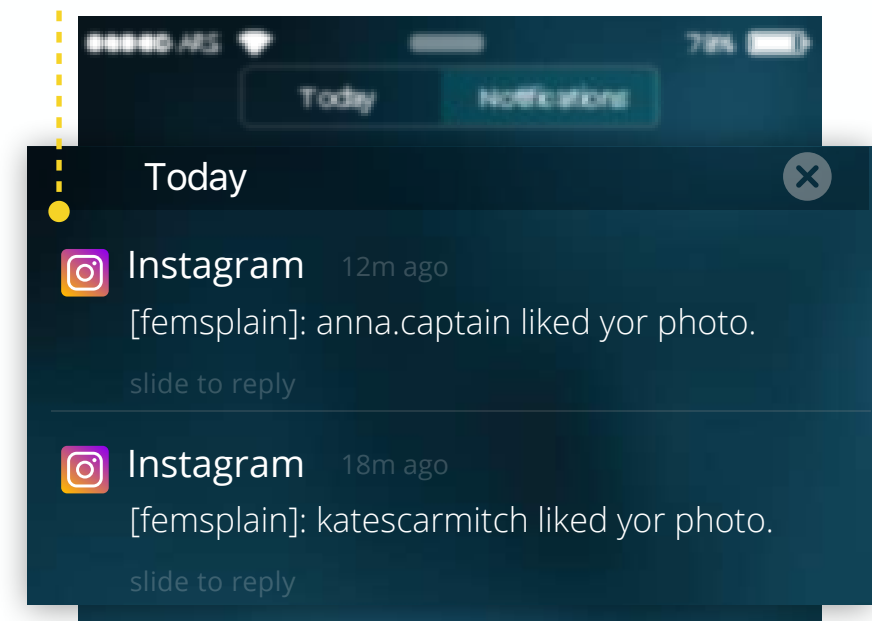


Photo Sharing apps like **Instagram** send push notifications to users to notify them in case someone likes or comments on their photo.

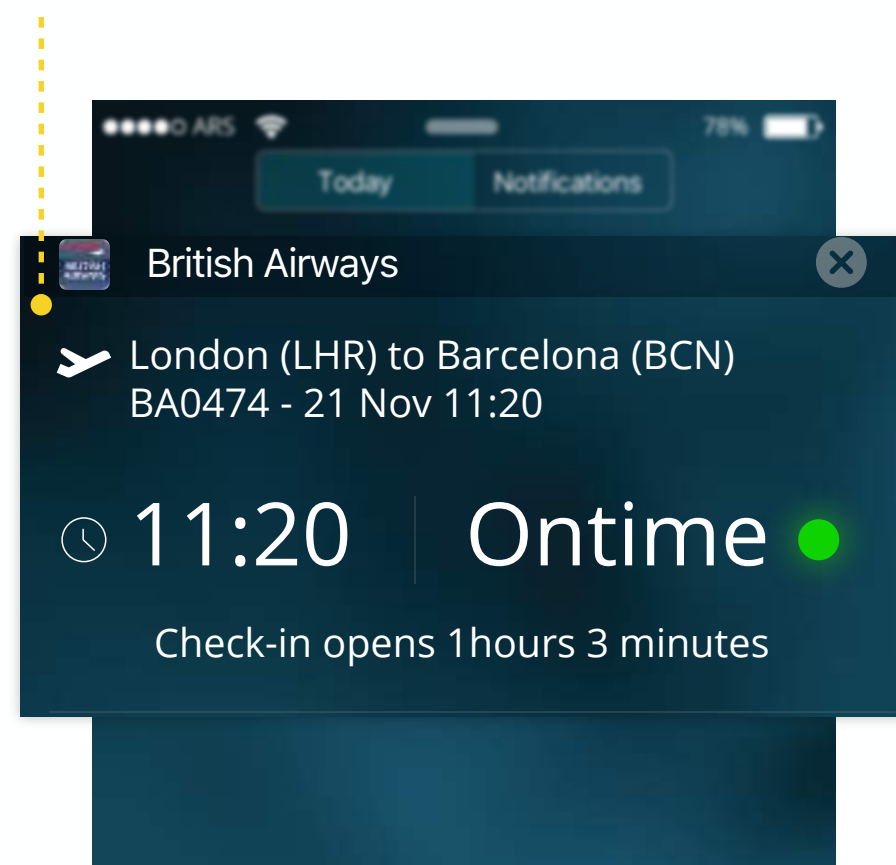


Send time-critical messages & update alerts to users

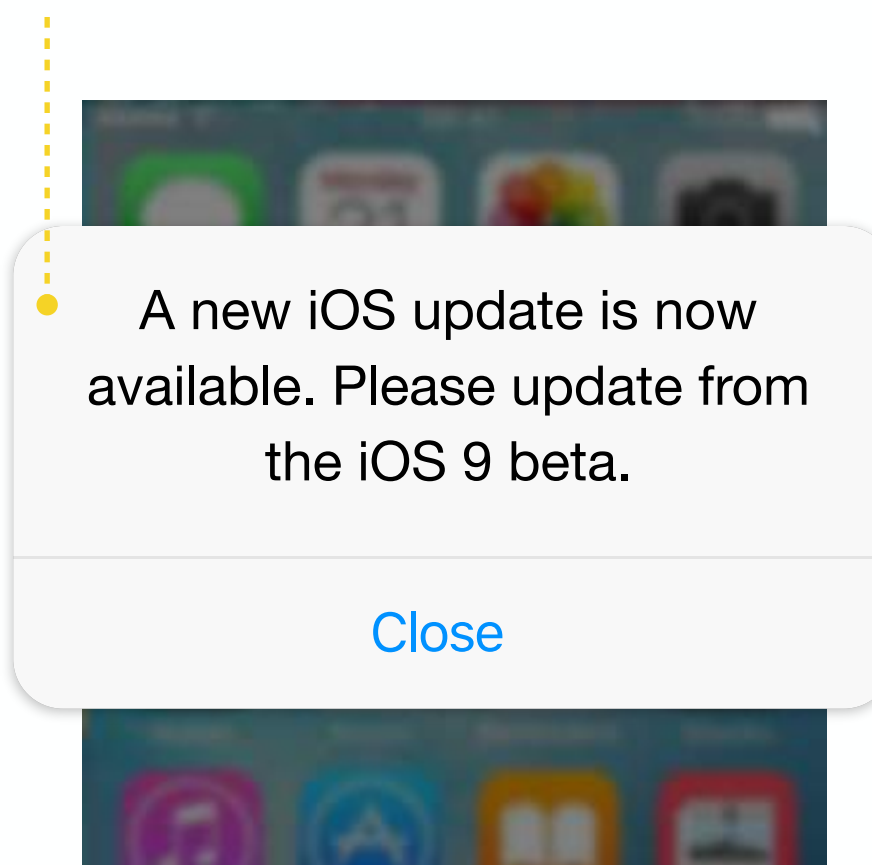


Many apps use push notifications to send time-critical messages as well as update alerts to users. For example, travel apps use push messages to inform users about their upcoming bookings. Similarly, numerous airlines use push messages to update flyers about any changes in flight timings, booking, etc.

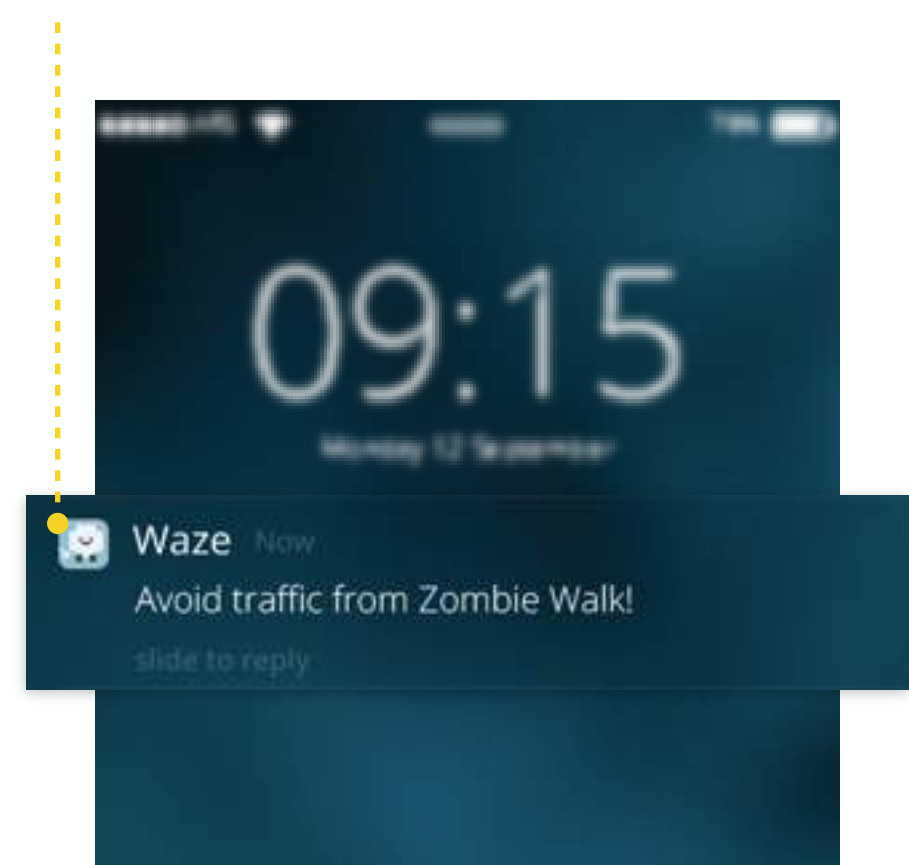
British Airways sends updates to flyers through push notifications.



Apple uses push to inform its users about the software updates.



Waze sends push to inform users about traffic situation.

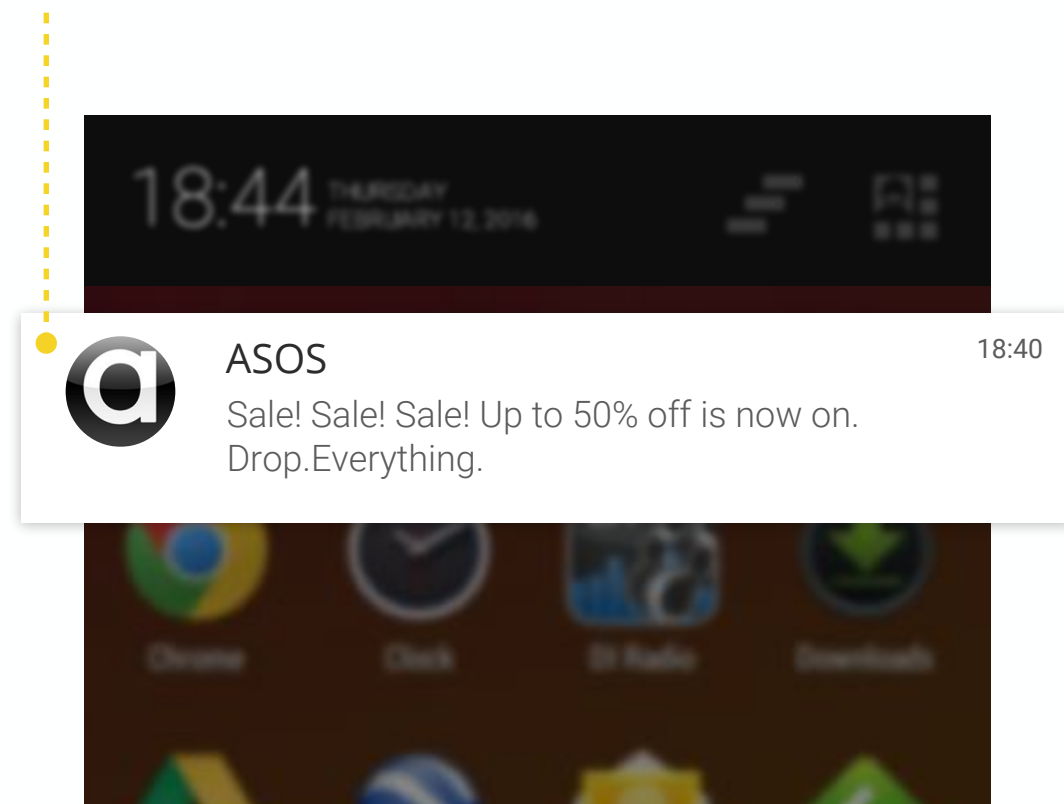


Informing about upcoming events or notify on product arrivals

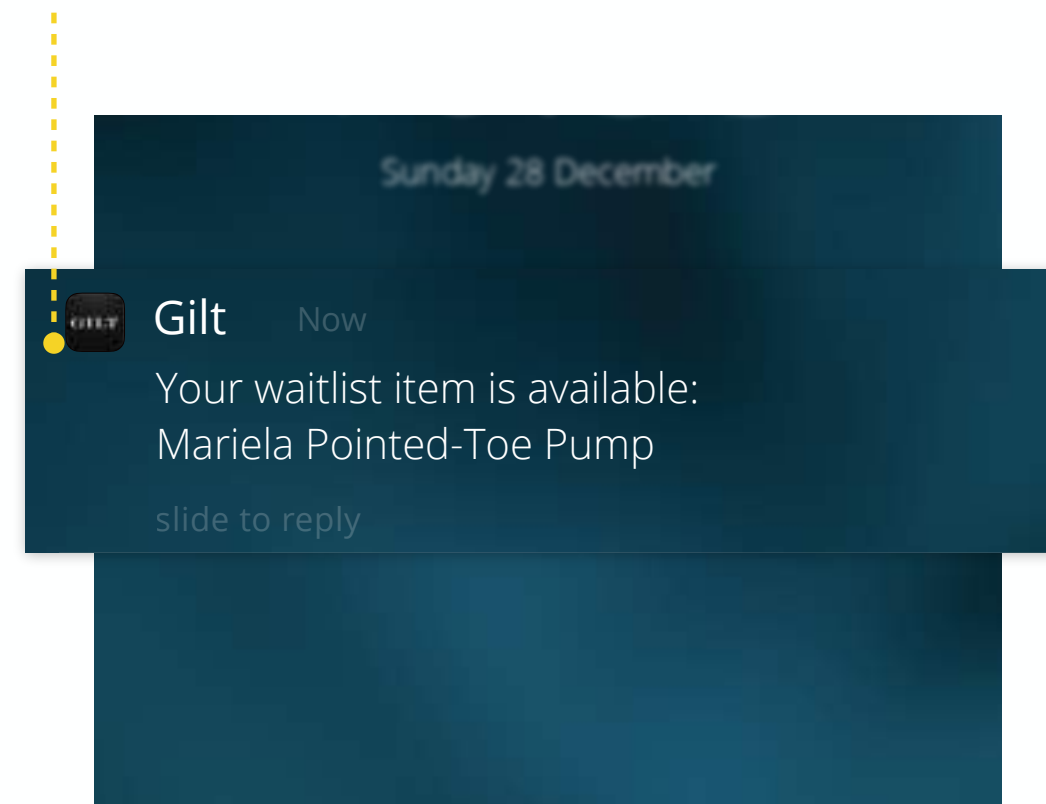


Push notifications can also be used to Inform users about an imminent event. Many ecommerce companies utilize the services of push to inform users about various offers or upcoming sales. Similarly, some ecommerce apps send push notifications to users to notify them when a new or wait-listed product arrives.

ASOS.com sends push notifications to its users to inform them about various offers and any upcoming sale.



Gilt sends push notifications to its subscribers to inform them when a wait-listed product is available.



Is the easiest & quickest way to send transactional receipts

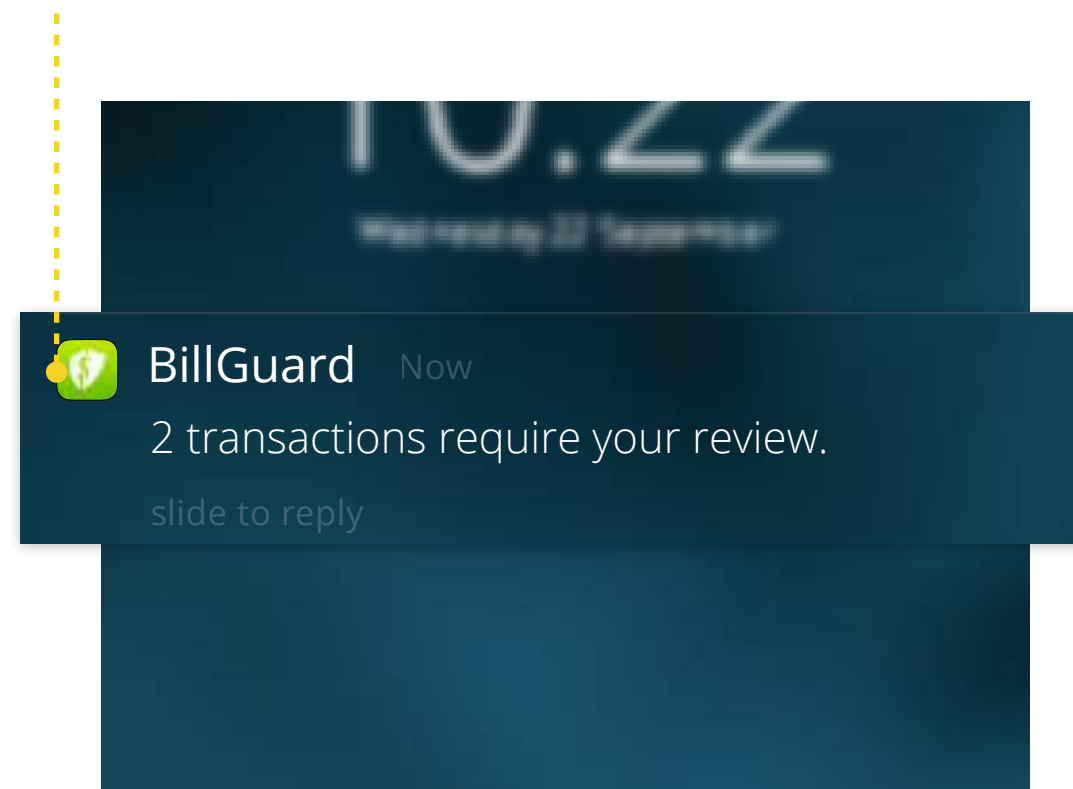


Push notifications make the easiest and quickest way to send transactional receipts. Food apps use push notifications to update users about the progress on their orders. Likewise, banking apps send push notifications to users about various transactions made.

Grubhub sends push notifications to app users to notify them about the progress on their order.



Billguard, a personal finance security company, sends push to its users to ask them to review transactions.

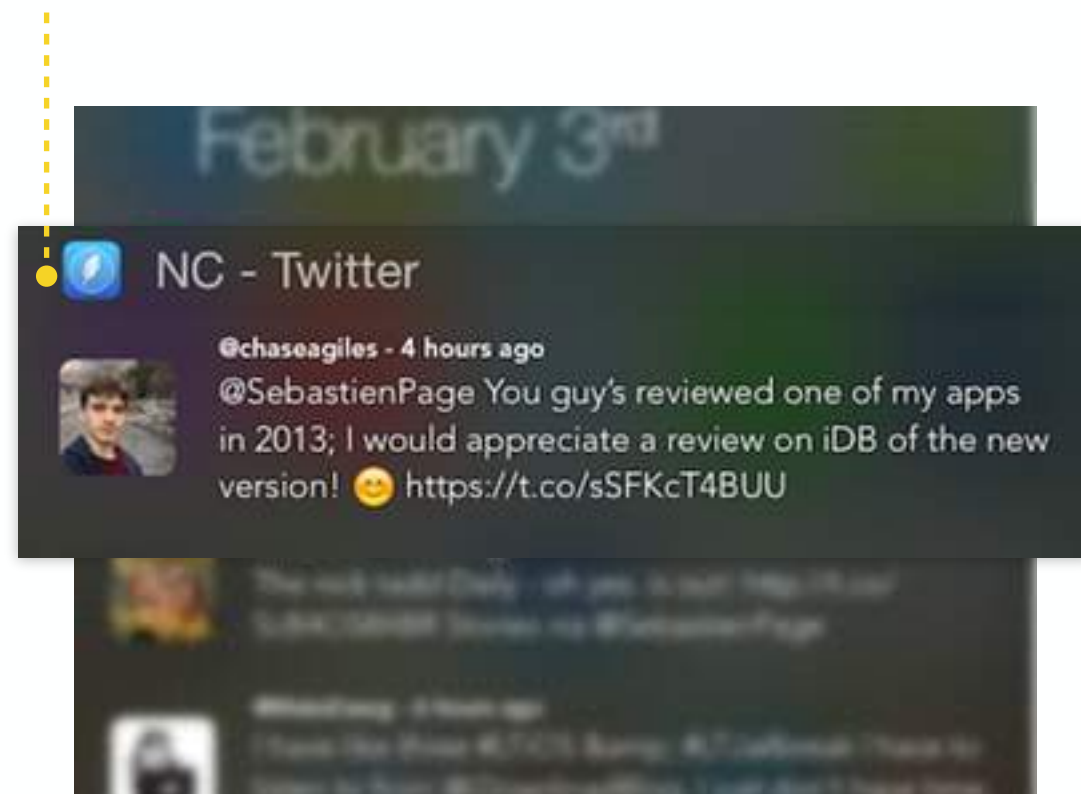


Achieve app re-engagement & increase an app's open rate

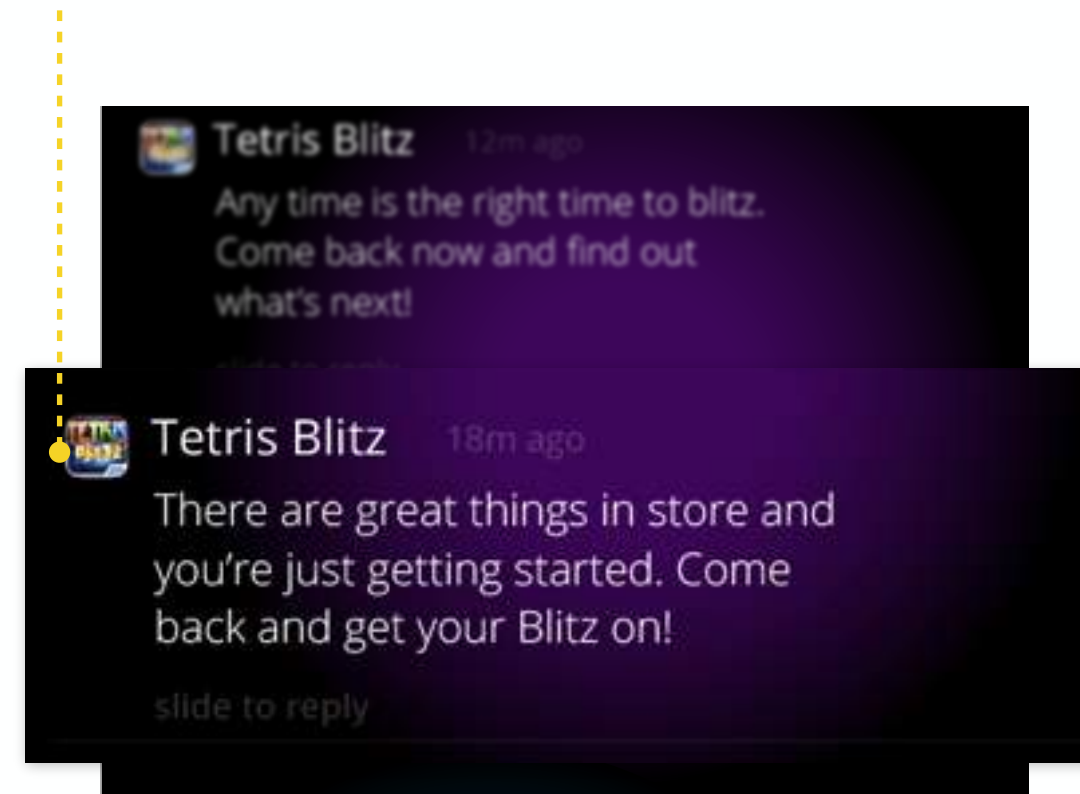


Given the higher user acquisition cost of mobile apps along with high uninstall rate, it has become all the more imperative for marketers to keep users engaged within the mobile apps.

Facebook and **Twitter** send push notifications to nudge users about new updates related to their profile.



Gaming apps like **Tetris Blitz** and Last Inua regularly sends players push notifications to invite them back to play.

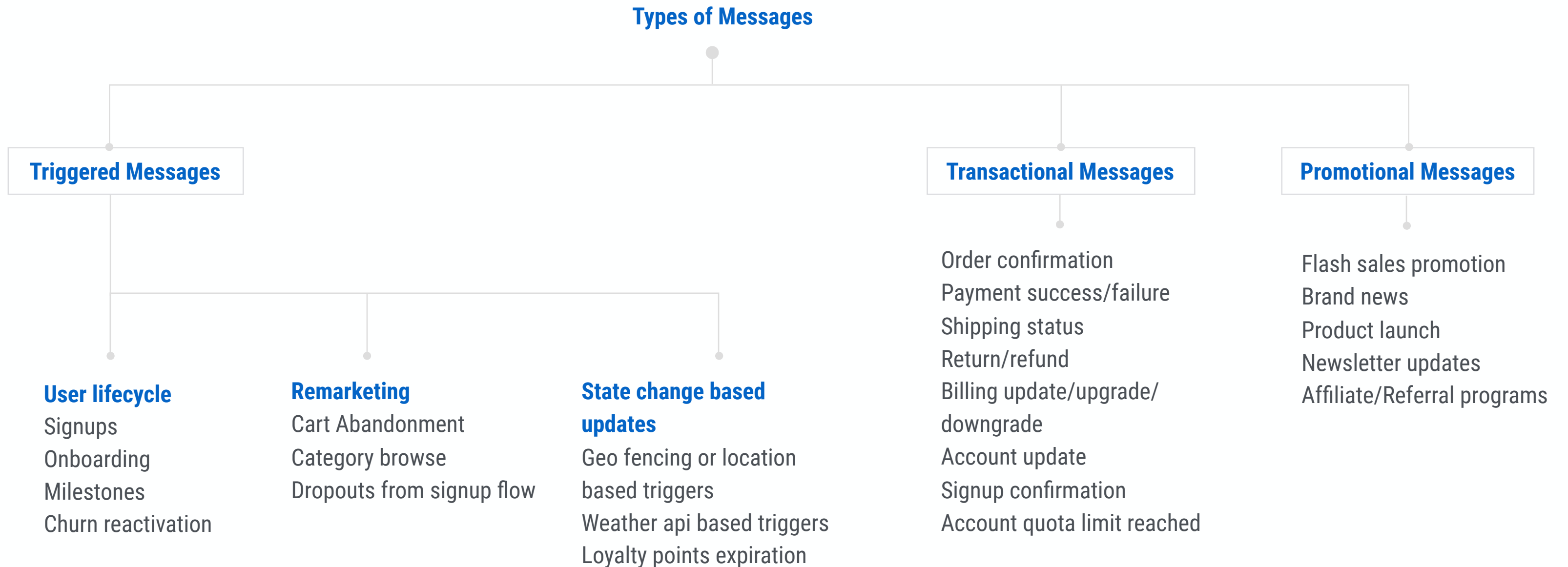


TYPES

It is reported that almost **44%** of all businesses are already using push notifications to interact with users and consumers. Push Messages or notifications are usually categorized based on their utility or the functions they perform.

We will now discuss the three most commonly used kinds of push messages.

Overview of types of messages



Triggered Messages



These are sent based on a change in a user's life cycle, event that qualifies for re-marketing or changes in state of user's attribute.

Triggered messages are sent during or after:

User lifecycle

- Signups
- Onboarding
- Milestones
- Churn reactivation

Re-marketing

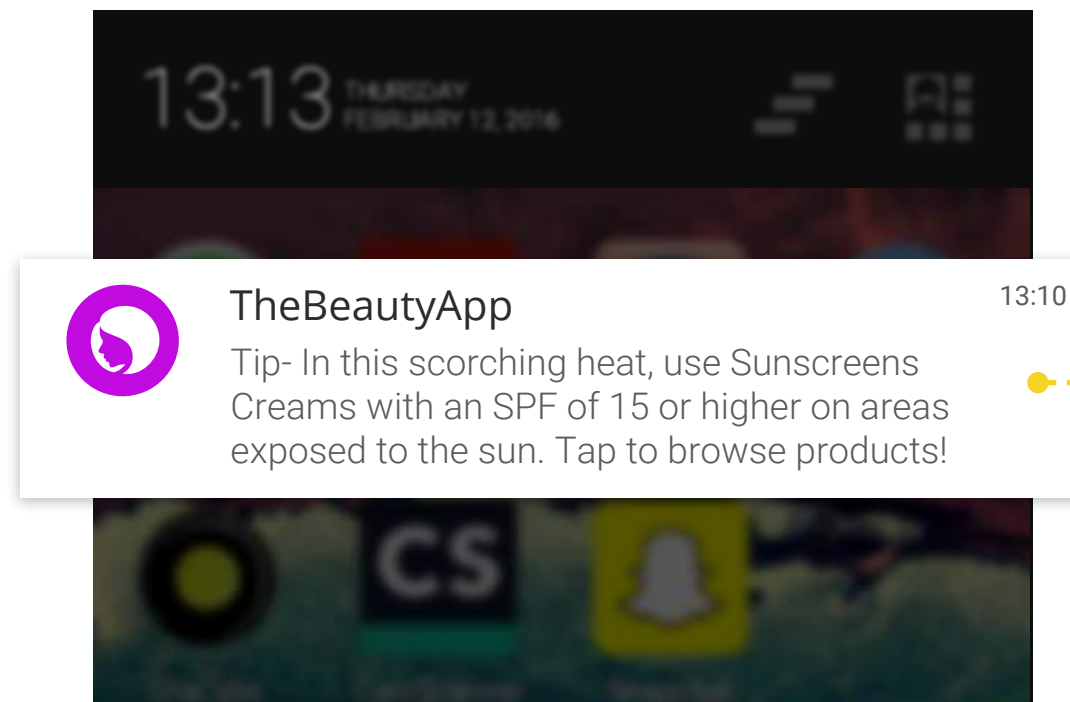
- Cart Abandonment
- Category browse
- Dropouts from signup flow

State change based updates

- Geo fencing or location based triggers
- Weather api based triggers
- Loyalty points expiration



Cart Abandonment



Weather api based triggers

Transactional Messages



Transactional Notifications are push messages sent with the intention of notifying a user about a recent transaction. Transactional notifications are only used to send follow up on transactions.

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



Order confirmation



Shipping status

Promotional Messages

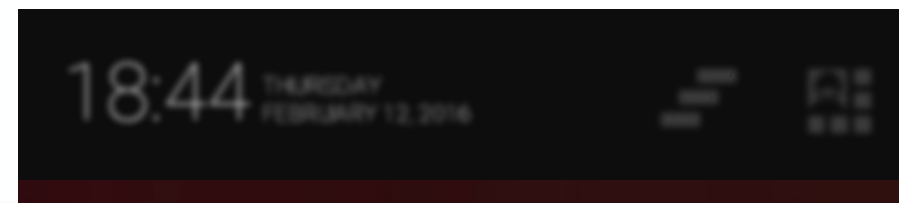
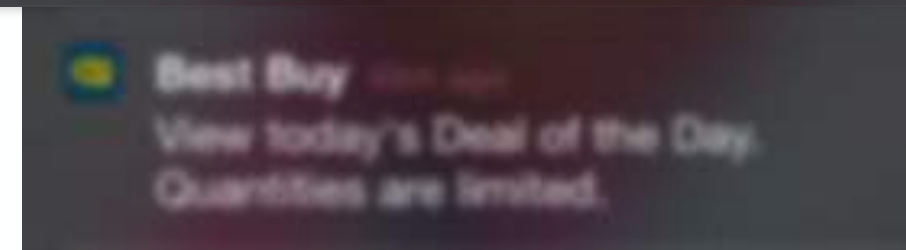
Promotional messages are generally generic, driven in bulk with least personalisation. Primary goal of these communication is to drive sales, update users on flash sales and new product launches. Any update on brand or milestone achieved by the brand would also fall under promotional messages.

Promotional messages are sent during or after:

- Flash sales promotion
- Brand news
- Product launch
- Newsletter updates
- Affiliate/Referral programs



Flash sales promotion



Brand news

BEST PRACTICES

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt, is looking down at a smartphone she is holding in her hands. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a path.

There is so much that businesses can get out of push notifications. However, push messages are most effective when strategized well. This includes taking into account various factors like personalization, segmentation, timing, etc. which can play a pivotal role in determining the success of a push notification campaign.

We will now discuss some best practices for push messages that can help businesses reach their customers more effectively.

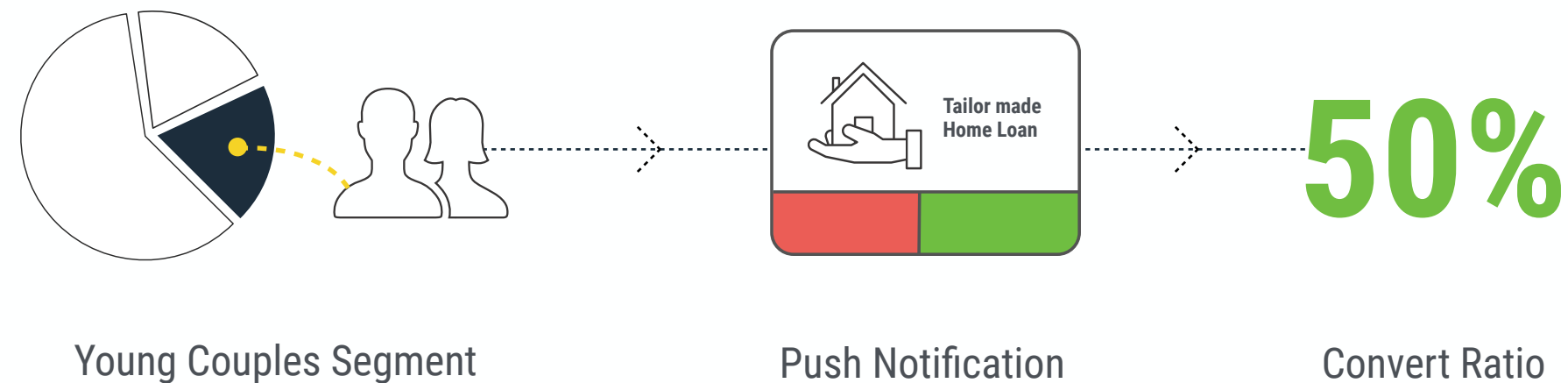
1. Send push messages to right Segment



Segmentation is the process of categorising users in groups based on their action or attributes. Segmentation allows push messages to become context-driven and goal-specific. **Segmented push messages convert about 50% of the people they reach.**

Marketers must send segmented push messages to enhance conversions.

For instance, banking apps can benefit greatly by dividing their customer base into relevant segments. For instance, young couples starting a new life can be put into a separate segment and targeted via. home loan or joint loan push messages.



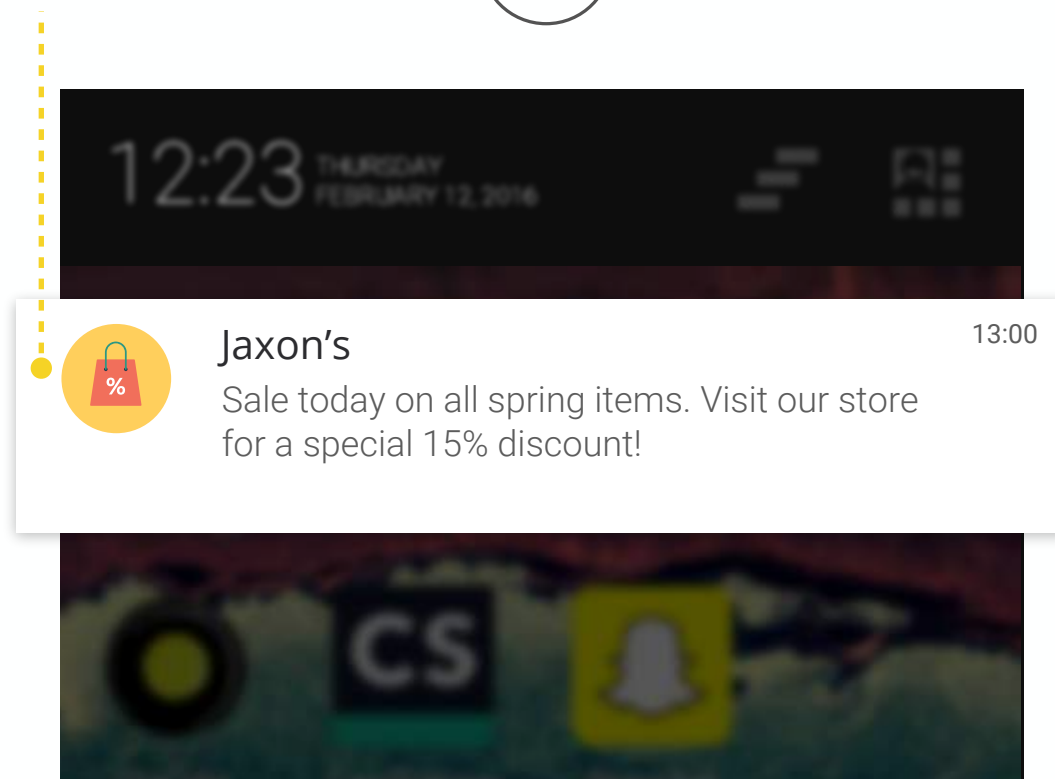
2. Keep your push messages short, contextual and interesting



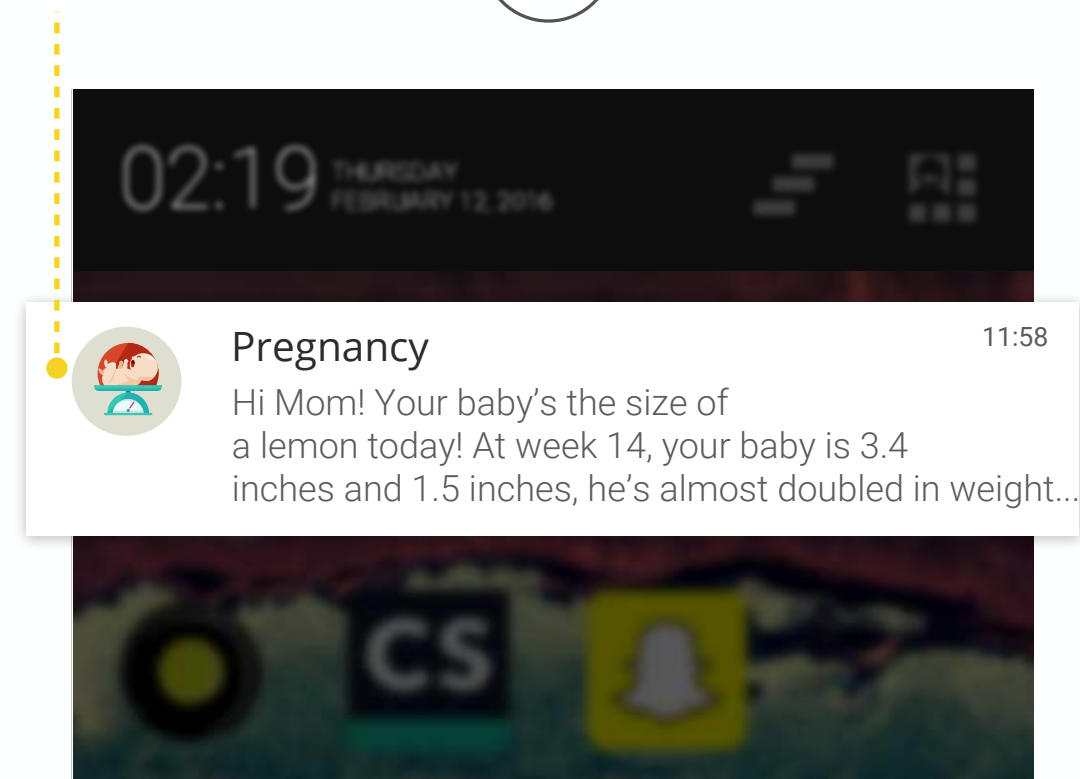
Marketers get extra marks for offering solutions rather than asking questions.

Long push messages like the one shown below will only irritate a user.

Short push messages



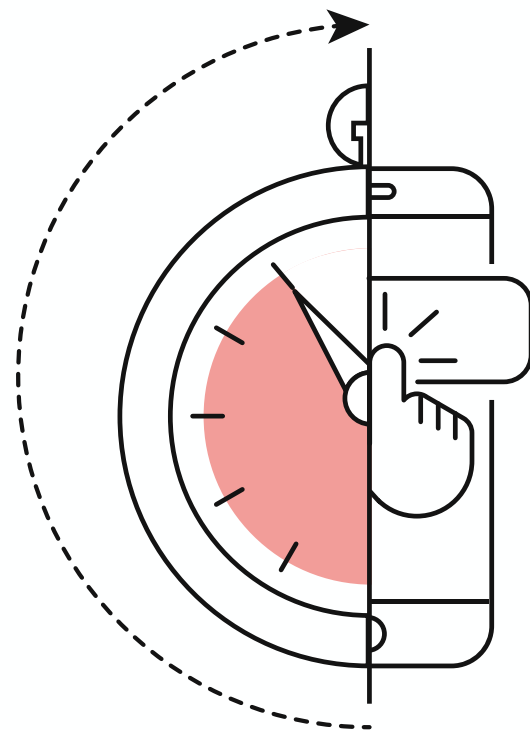
Long push messages



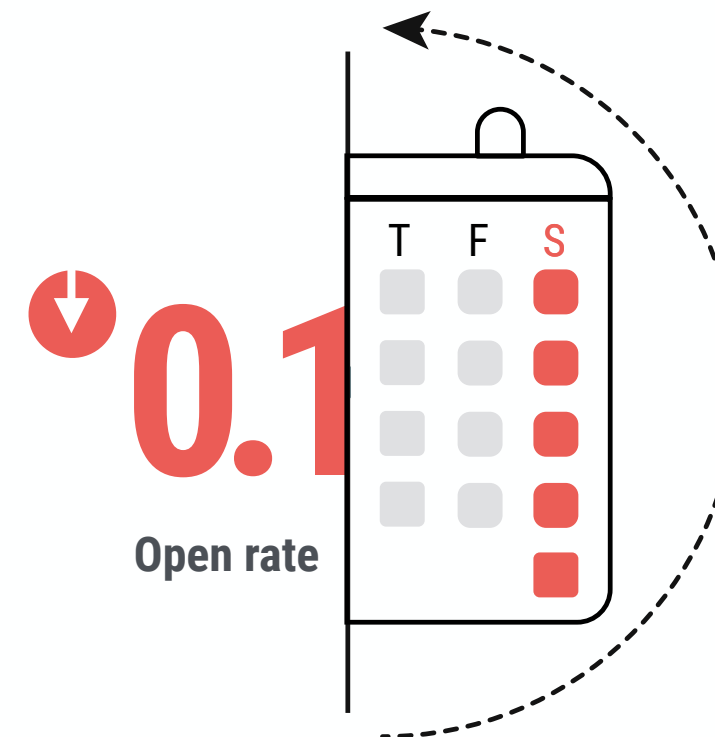
3. Timing, frequency and finding the right cadence is important



If you bombard users with irrelevant push notifications, they will end up uninstalling your app. **Finding the right cadence is unequivocally important.** For instance, sports, news and utility apps can easily get away with a very high frequency of push notifications as users engage with these apps on regular basis.



Push messages sent between 12 pm and 5 pm are more likely to be opened and acted upon by the user.

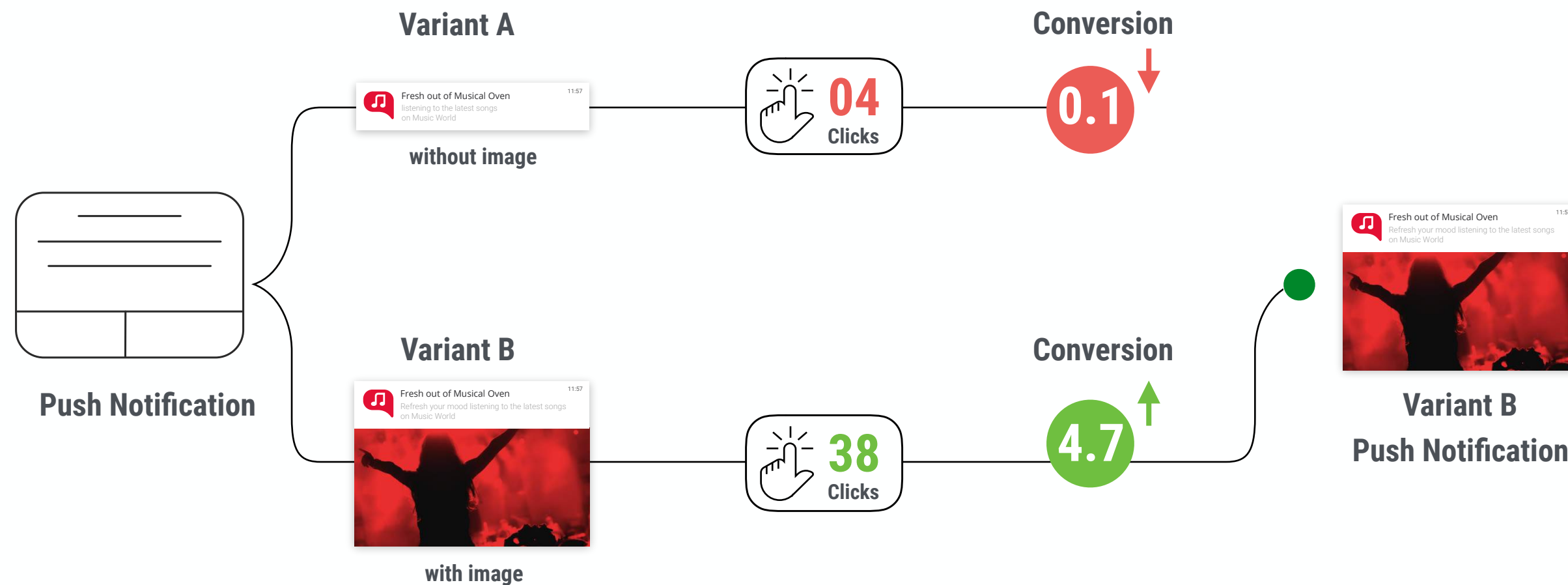


Push messages sent on weekends have registered a lower open rate.

4. Assess your performance with A/B testing



Push messages can be considered effective only when they achieve measurable goals. To make their push message strategy effective, **businesses must keep assessing their performance. A/B testing can play an important role here.**

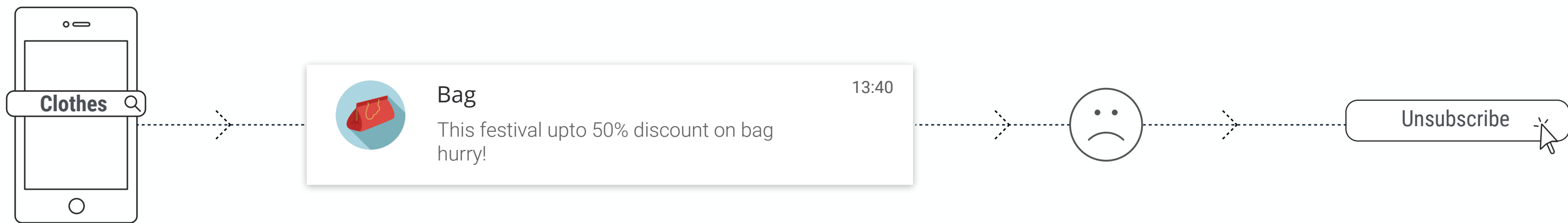


5. Personalise your push messages for right impact

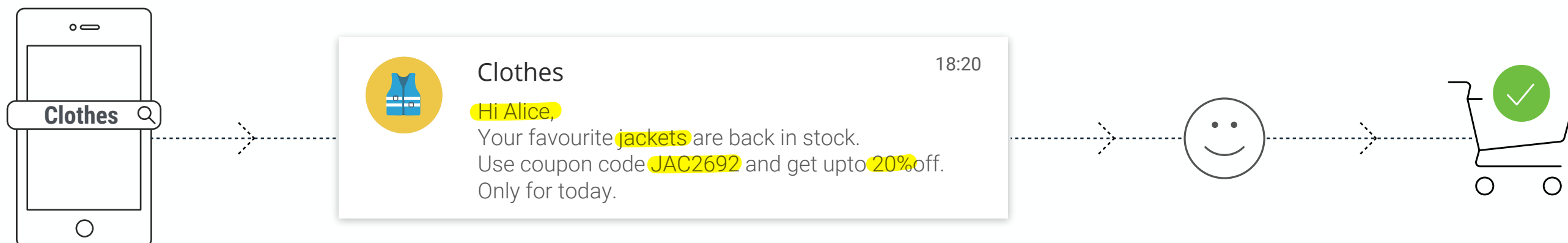


Personalization is not only about sending a push with the name of the user to whom it is being sent, it is much more about sending push based on a user's profile. Personalization is about sending messages that are relevant to a user. Relevancy, on the other hand, can be gauged from factors like response to previous campaigns, past transaction amount, loyalty reward points, CRM data, etc.

Non Personalised Message



Personalised Message



USE CASES

A man in a blue button-down shirt is standing outdoors, holding a clear plastic cup with orange juice and a straw in his right hand, and a white smartphone in his left hand. He is looking down at the phone. The background is a blurred green forest. The title 'USE CASES' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow-outlined letters across the top of the image.

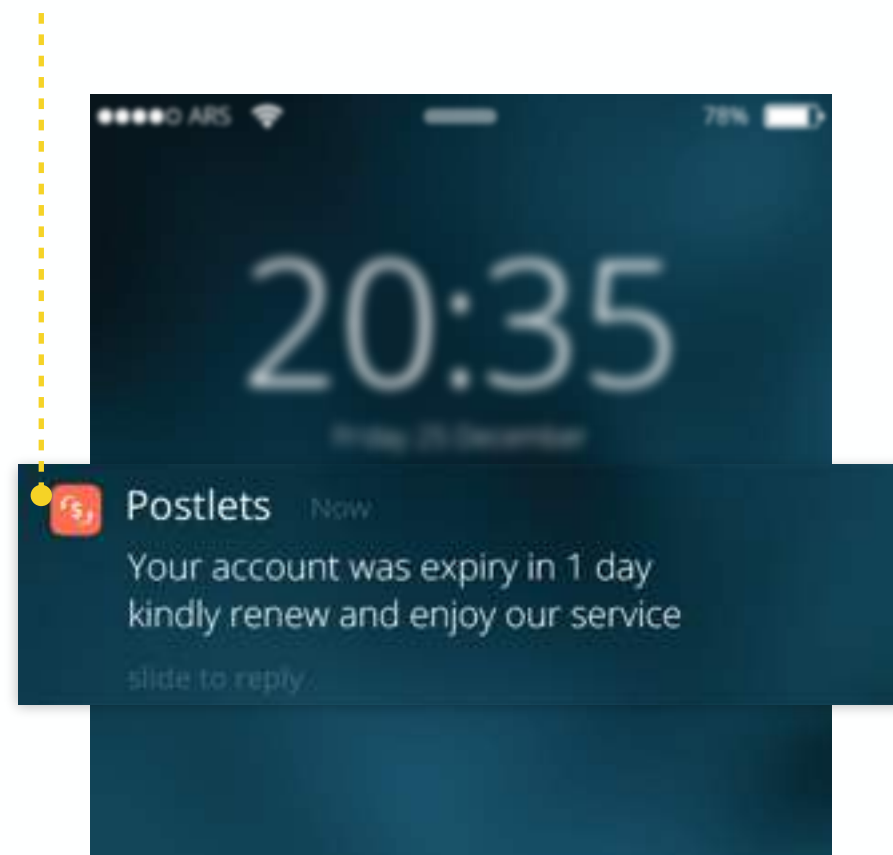
We have already discussed in great detail how marketers use push notifications to achieve desirable goals. Let us now move to more industry-specific use cases which will help you gain deeper insight into the world of push notifications.

For business apps

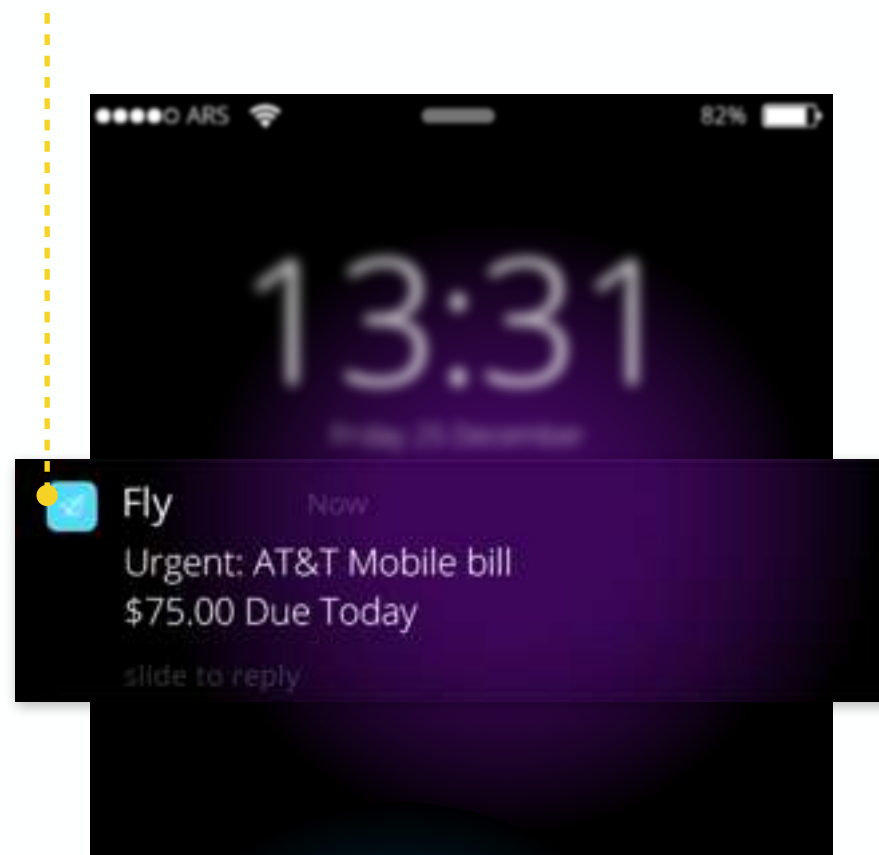


Business apps can use push notifications to targets events like **account expiry** and sending **payment reminders**. Not just that, push notifications can also be used to provide **real-time support** and **product usage recommendation**.

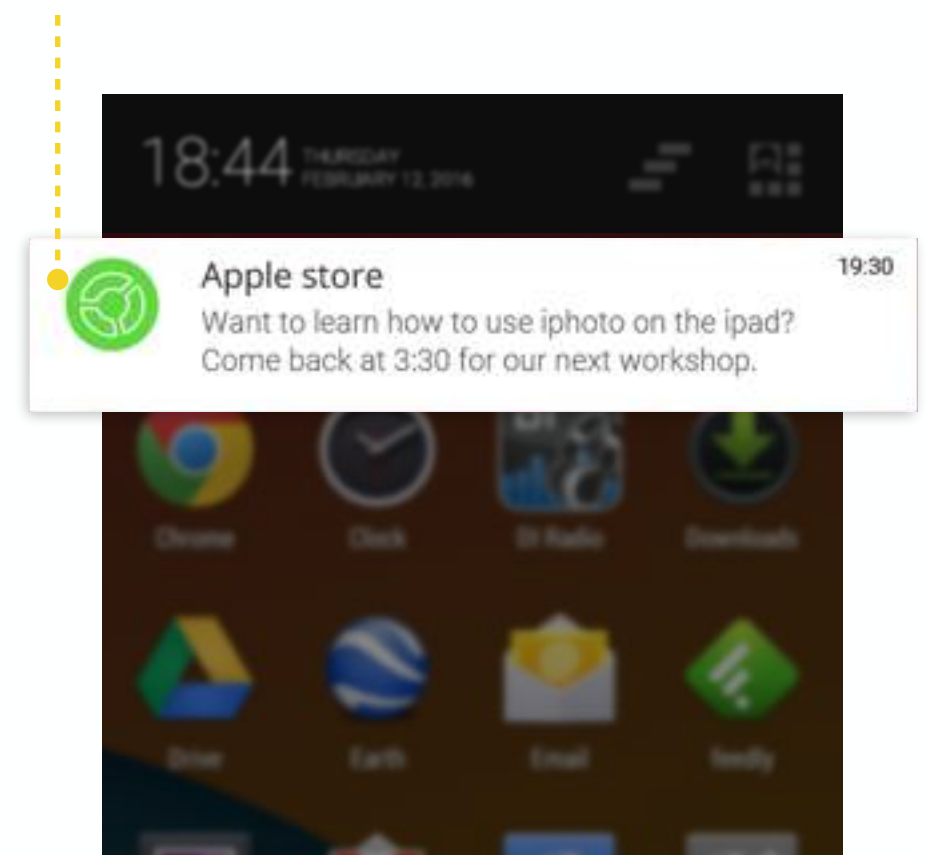
Account expiry



Payment reminders



Real time support

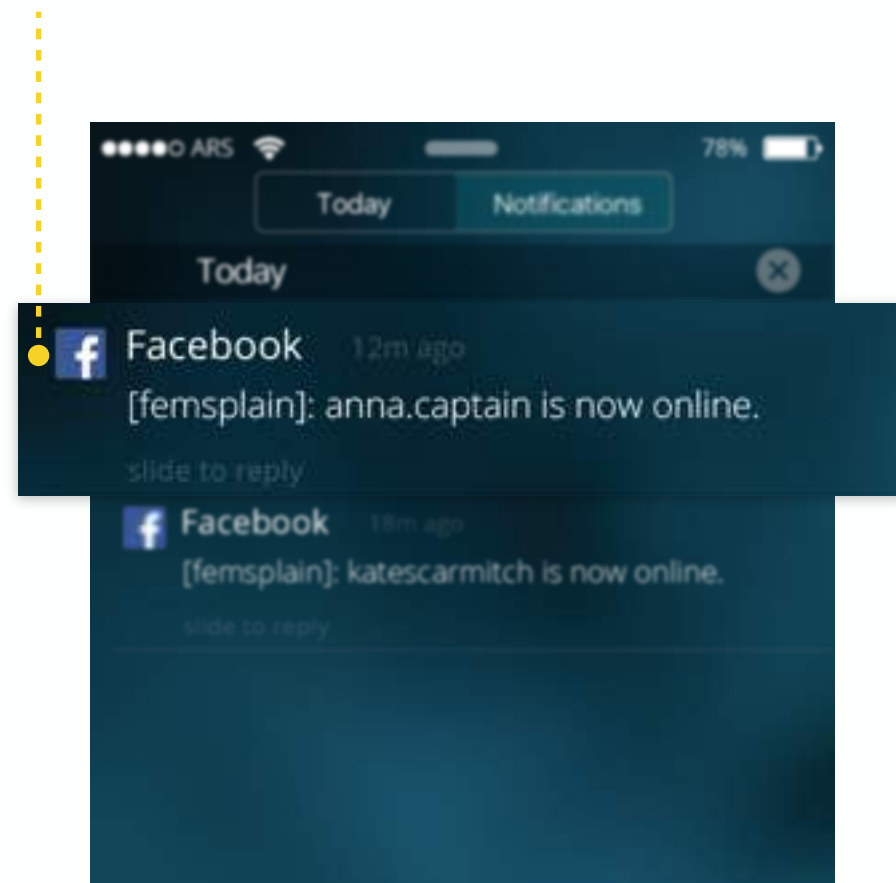


For social/chat/dating apps

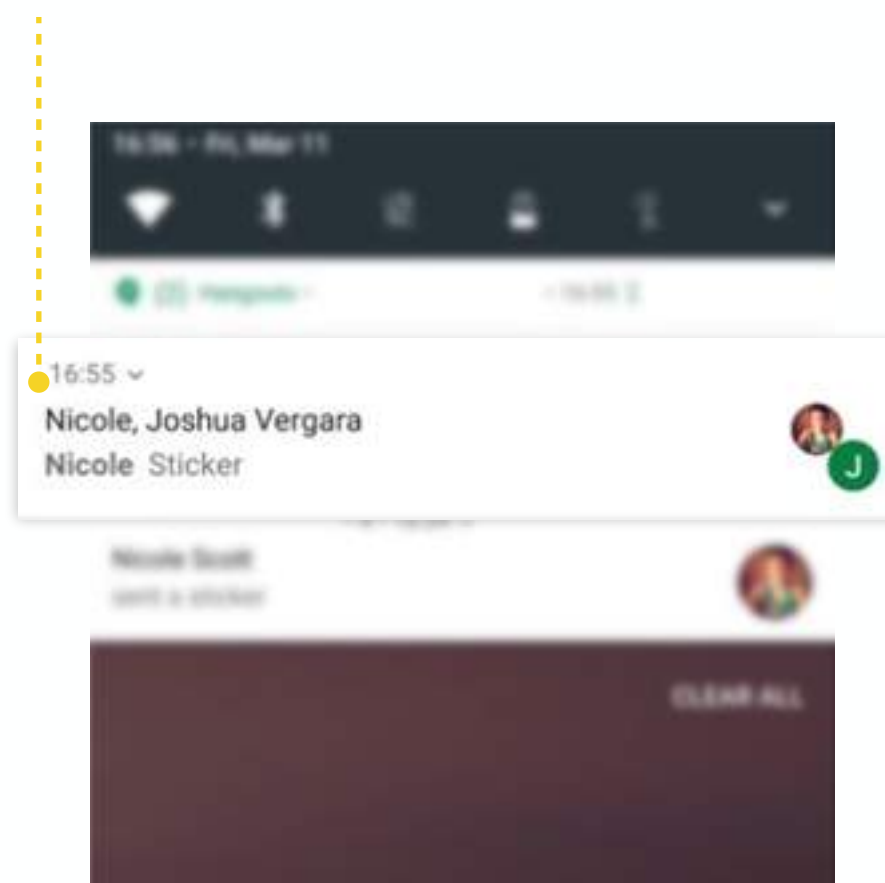


Most of the social and chat apps are already using push notifications to their advantage. Most of these apps use push to **keep users updated about their friends** when friends go online, when they commented on a post, etc. They can also be used to **send RSVP'd event reminders**.

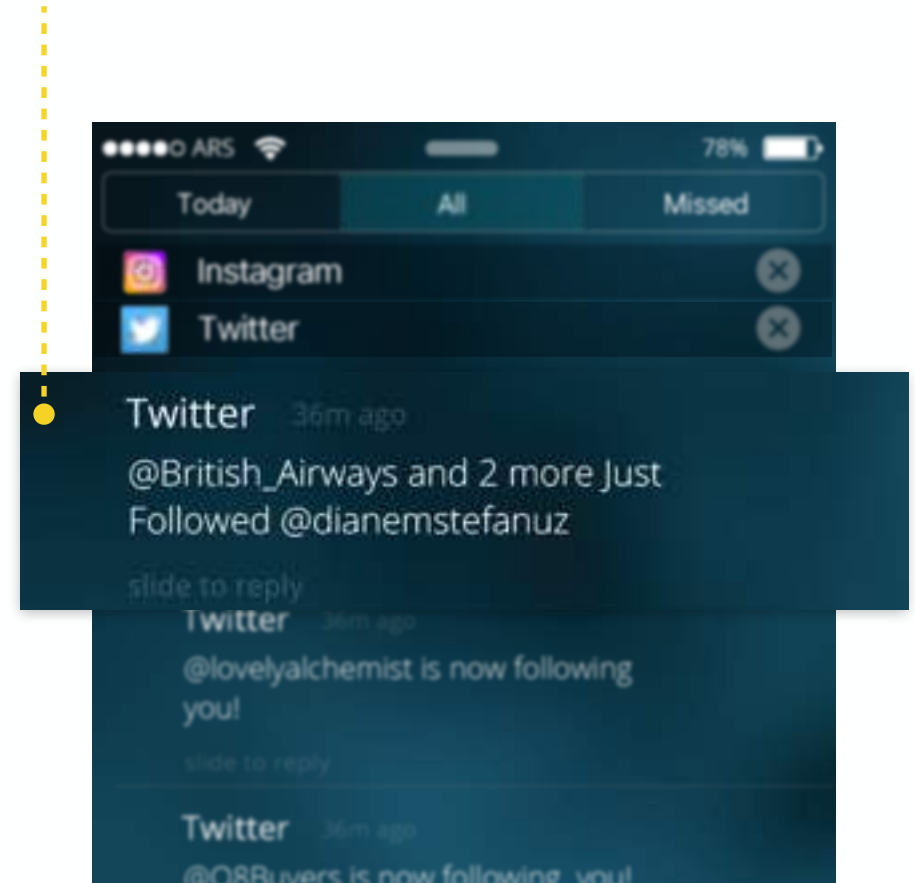
Inform user when a friend goes online



Update from friends



Comment updates from friends

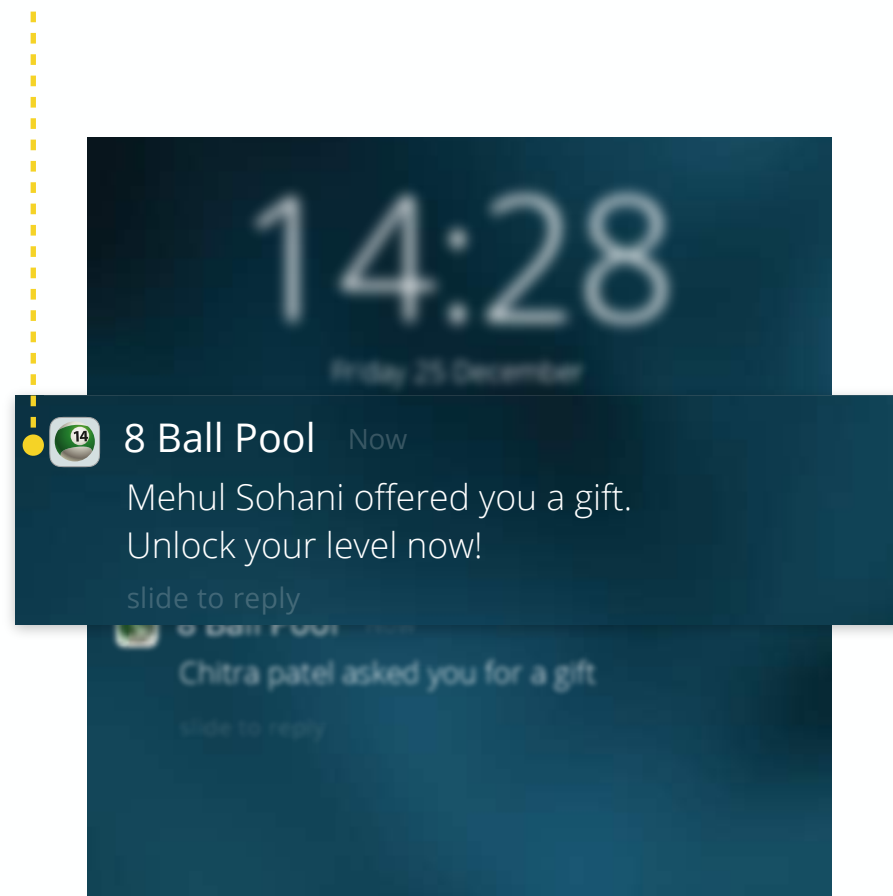


For multi player gaming apps

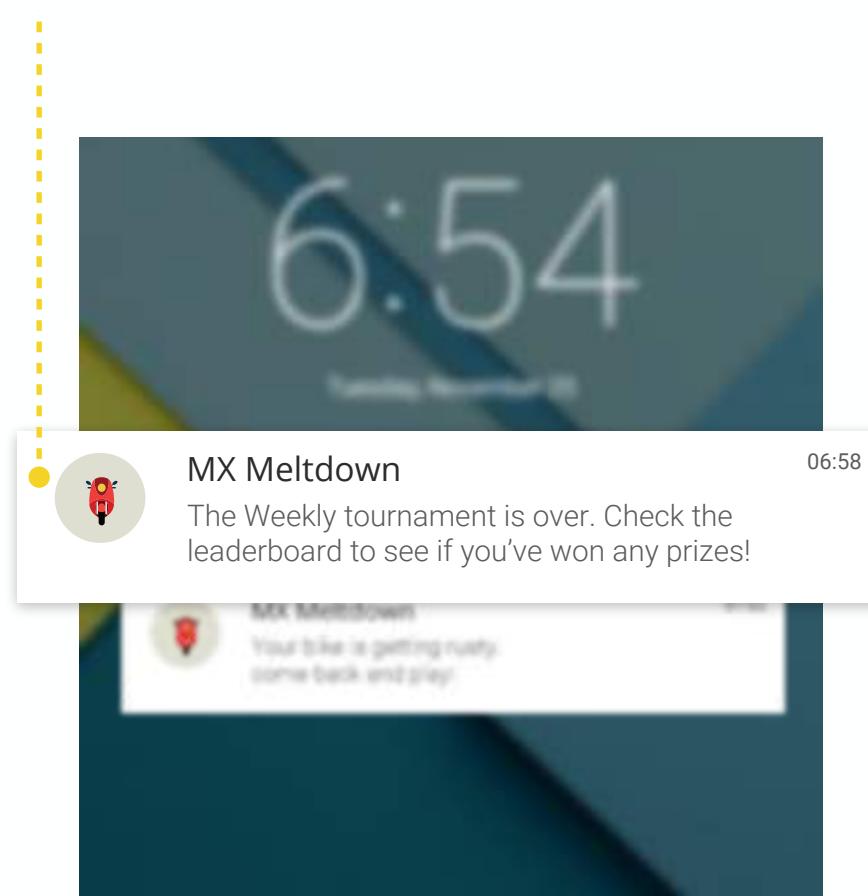


Multiplayer gaming apps can use push notifications to **help users stuck on a particular level** in a game. Likewise, they can also be used to **provide leaderboard details, congratulate players** on reaching milestones and **upsell paid credits** to engaged users.

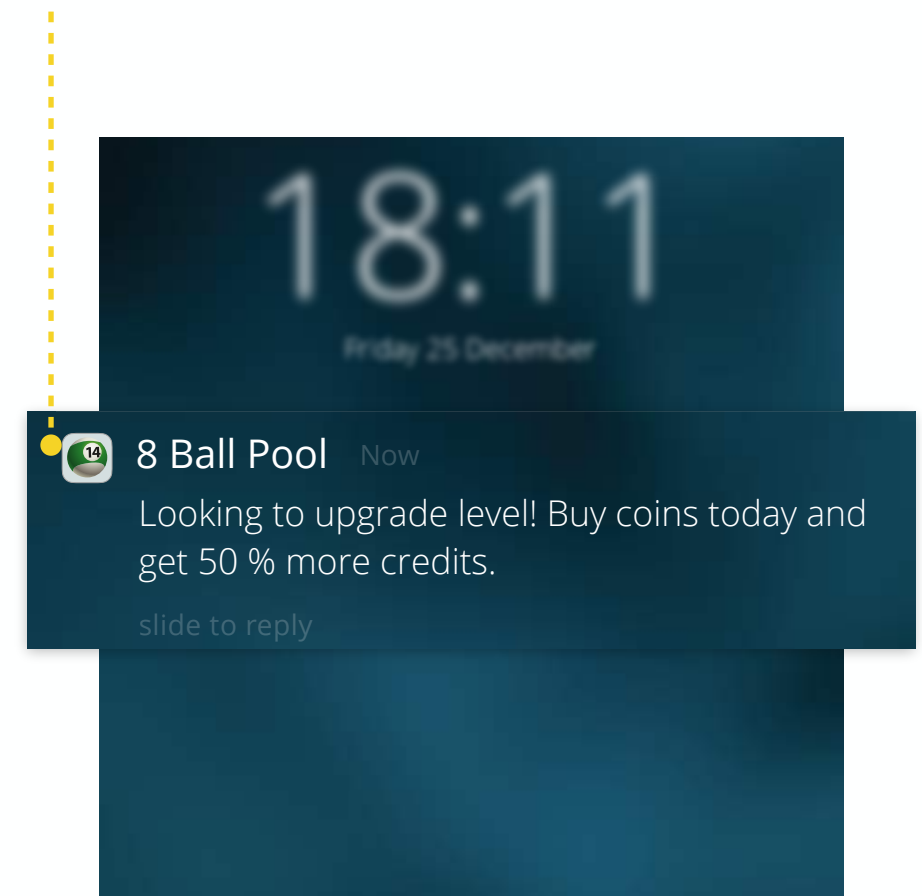
Push help to user stuck at a game level



Leaderboard details



Upsell paid credits to engaged users



For news apps

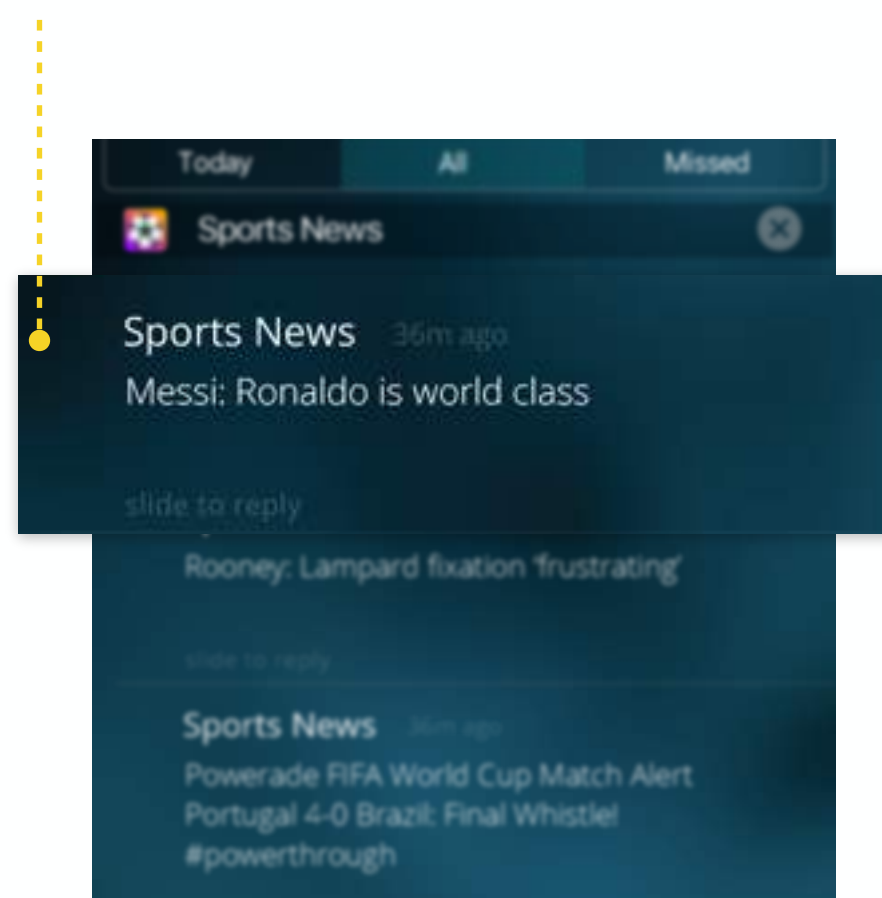


News apps should use push notifications to send **relevant news alerts** and to achieve **contextual content recommendation**. In case of recently downloaded apps, push notifications can also be used to entice users to **opt for paid subscription**.

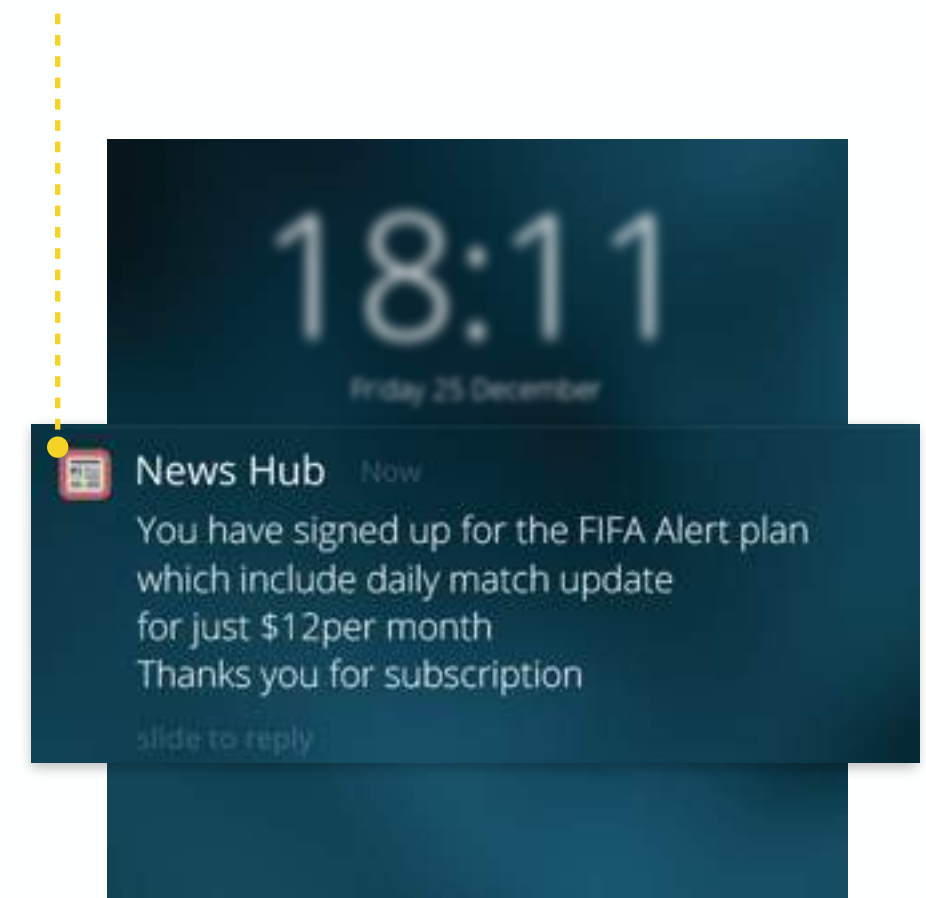
Relevant news alert



Contextual content recommendation



Upselling paid subscription to engaged user

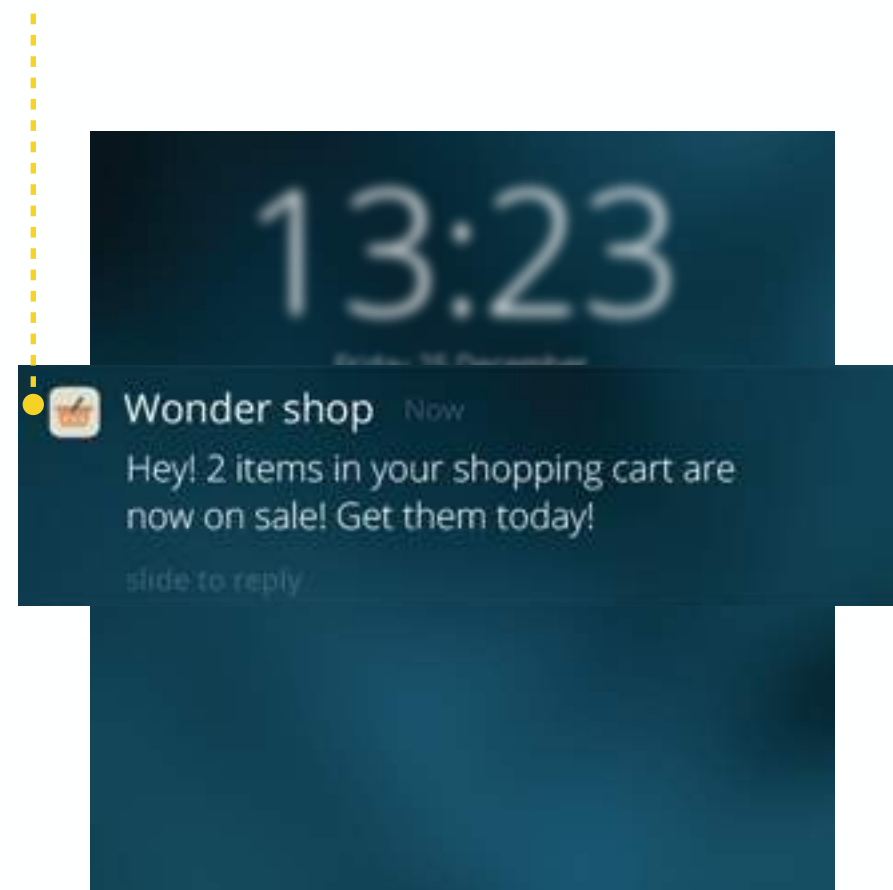


For ecommerce/retail apps

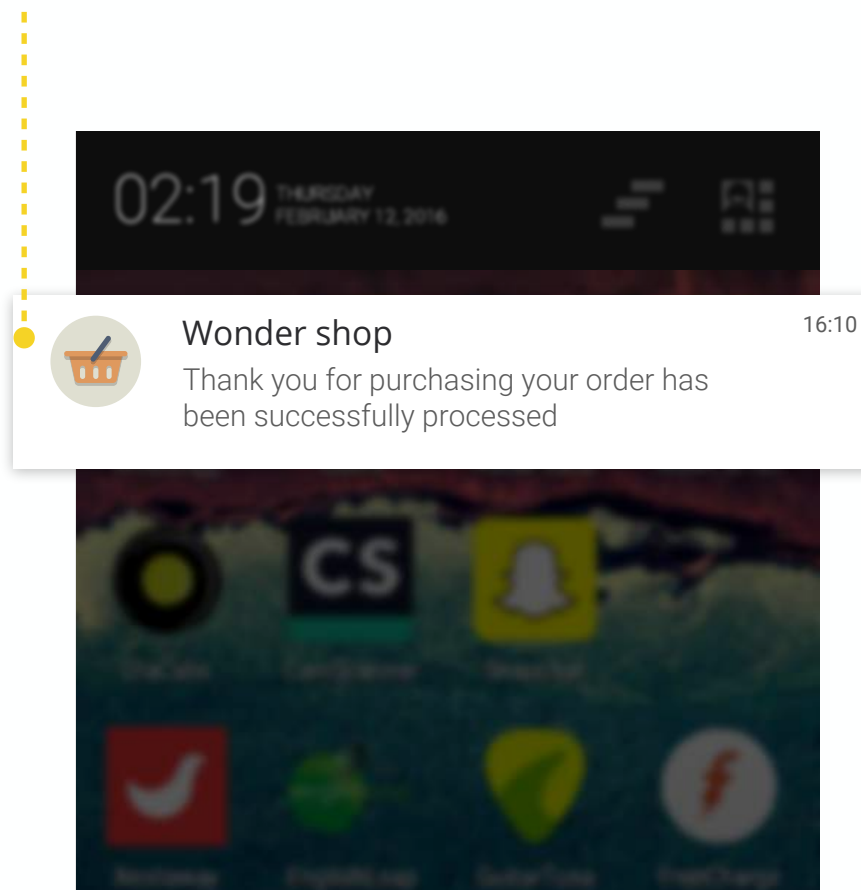


Push notifications can be effectively used to tackle issues like **cart abandonment**. Ecommerce or retail apps rigorously use these to inform users about **checkout completion**, **shipping status**, **targeted flash sales** or **deal of the day**. Likewise, push notifications can also be efficaciously used for **omni-channel marketing** and initiating a **two-way conversation** through Feedback survey posts, etc.

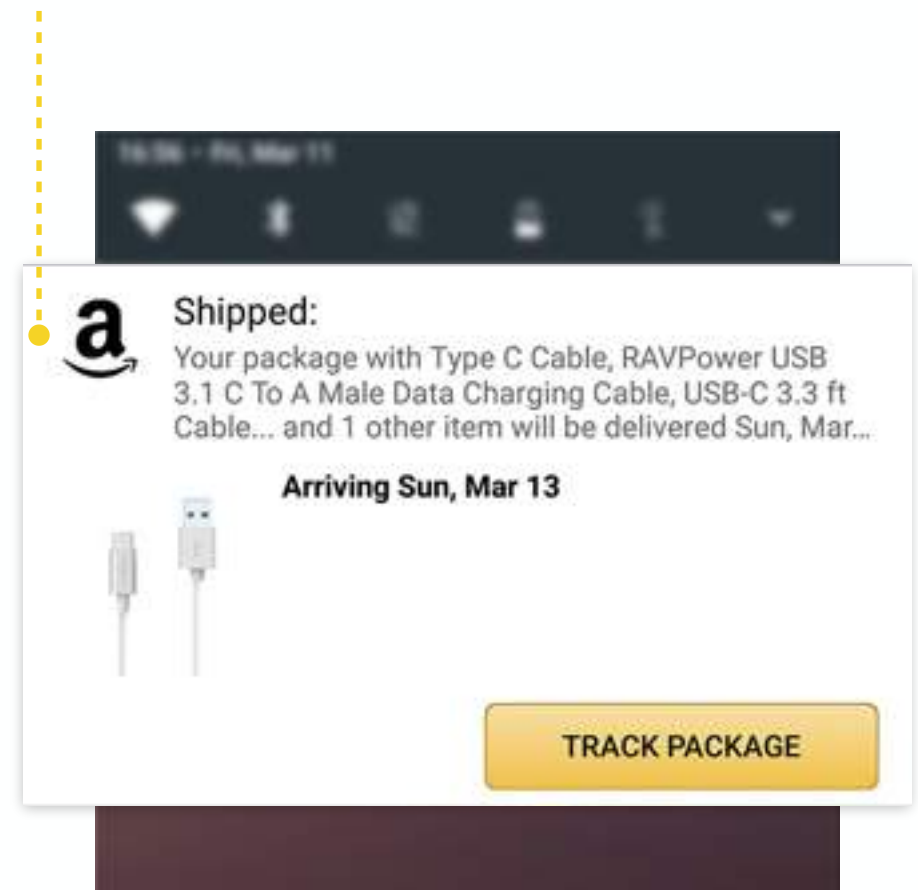
Cart Abandonment



Checkout completion



Shipping status

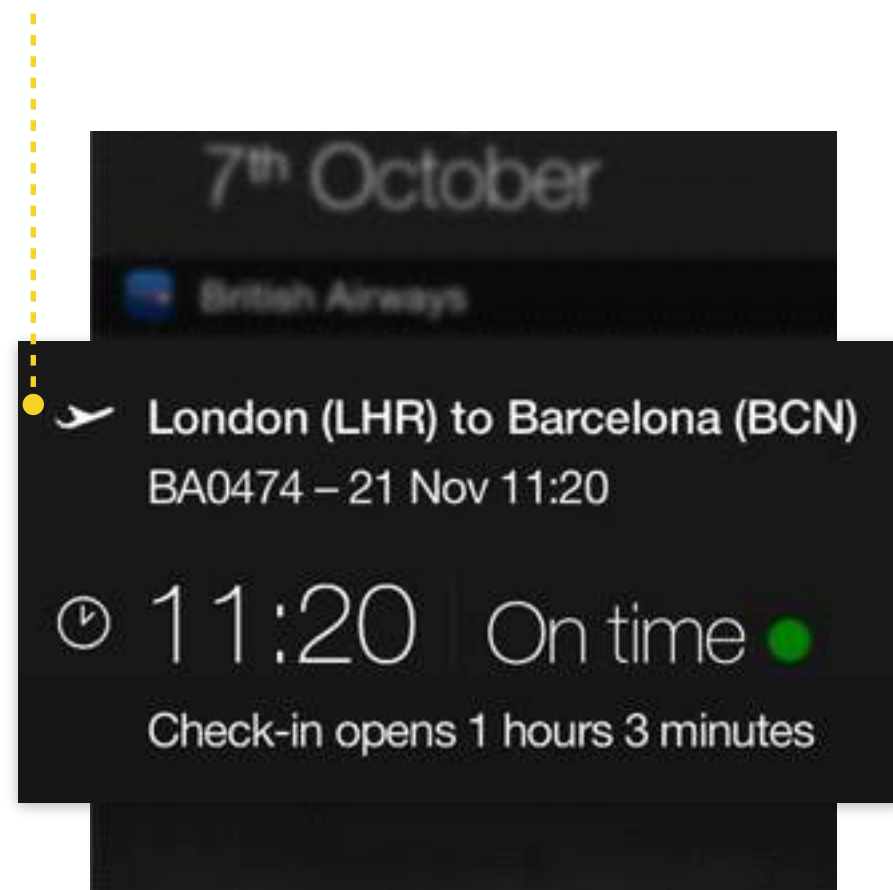


For travel apps

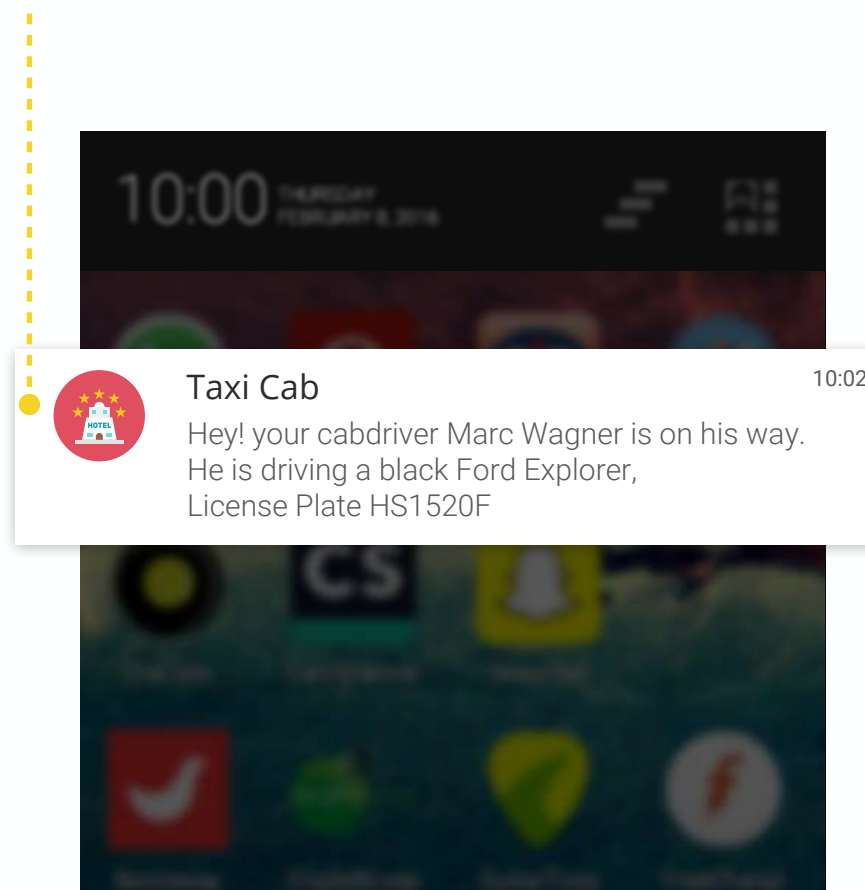


Travel apps can use push notifications to **update users** about **flight status**, **taxi status** or **last-minute updates** for upselling premium features like window seat, meal plans or additional baggage plans. Likewise, they can also be used to **cross-sell services** like taxi or hotel booking. Travel apps can specially benefit by **sending geo-location based push notifications** around a user's places of interest.

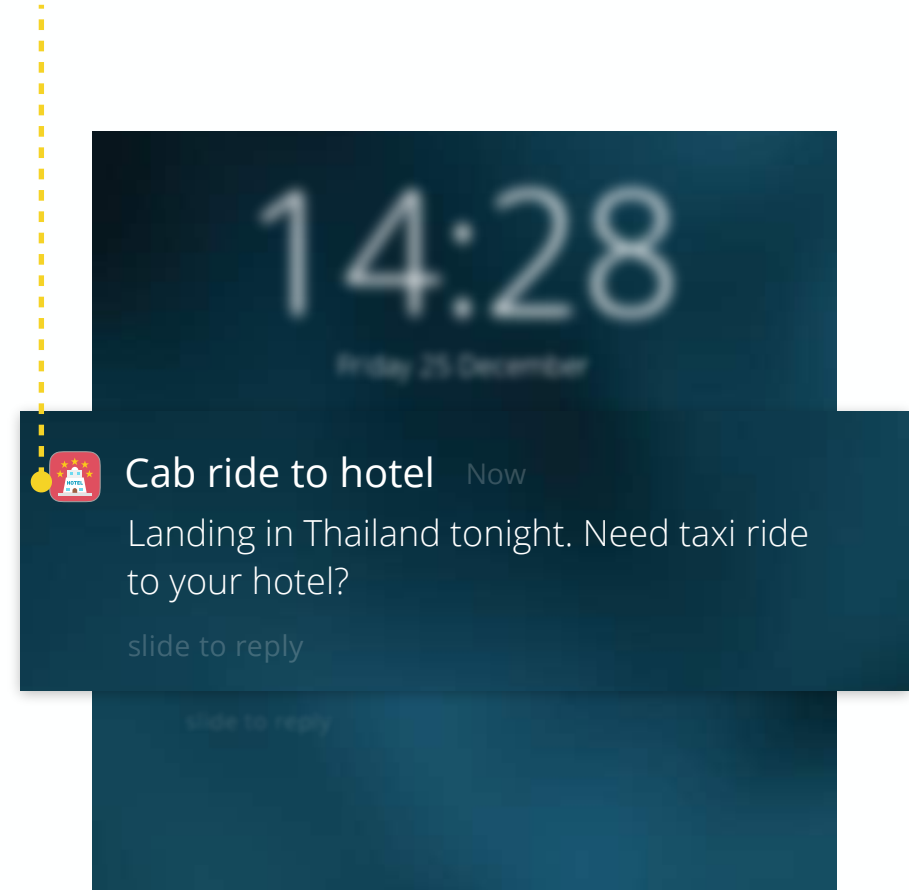
Flight status update/reminder



Cab arrived update for booked taxi



Cross selling of services like taxi/hotel booking

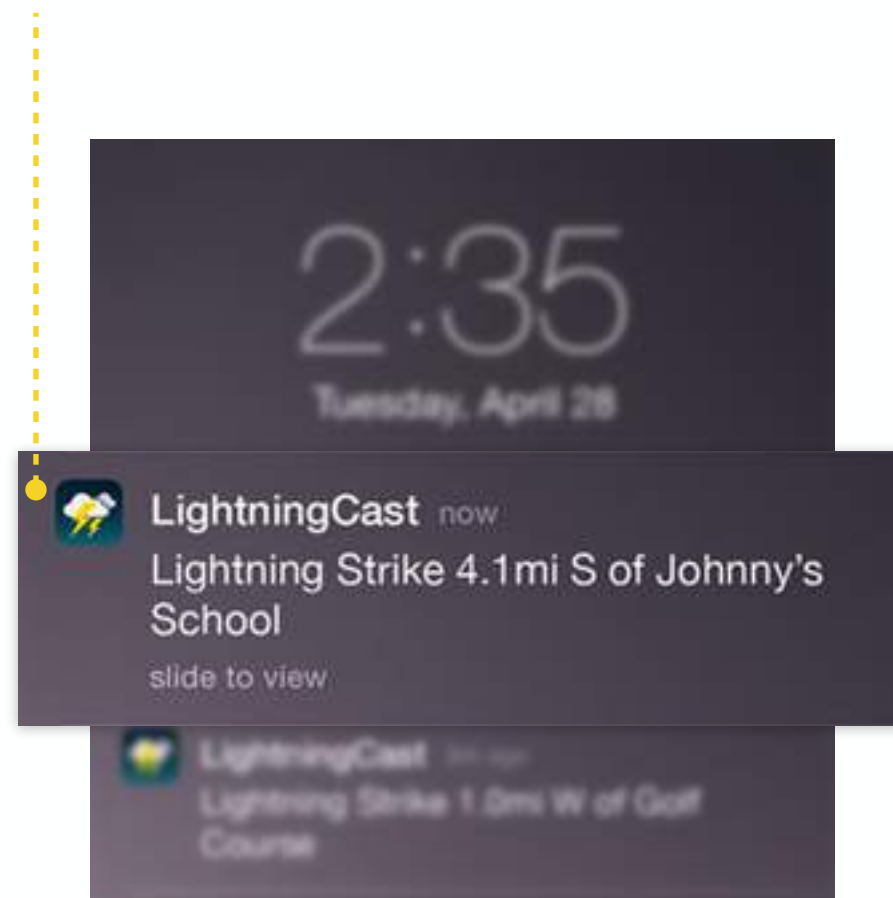


For weather apps

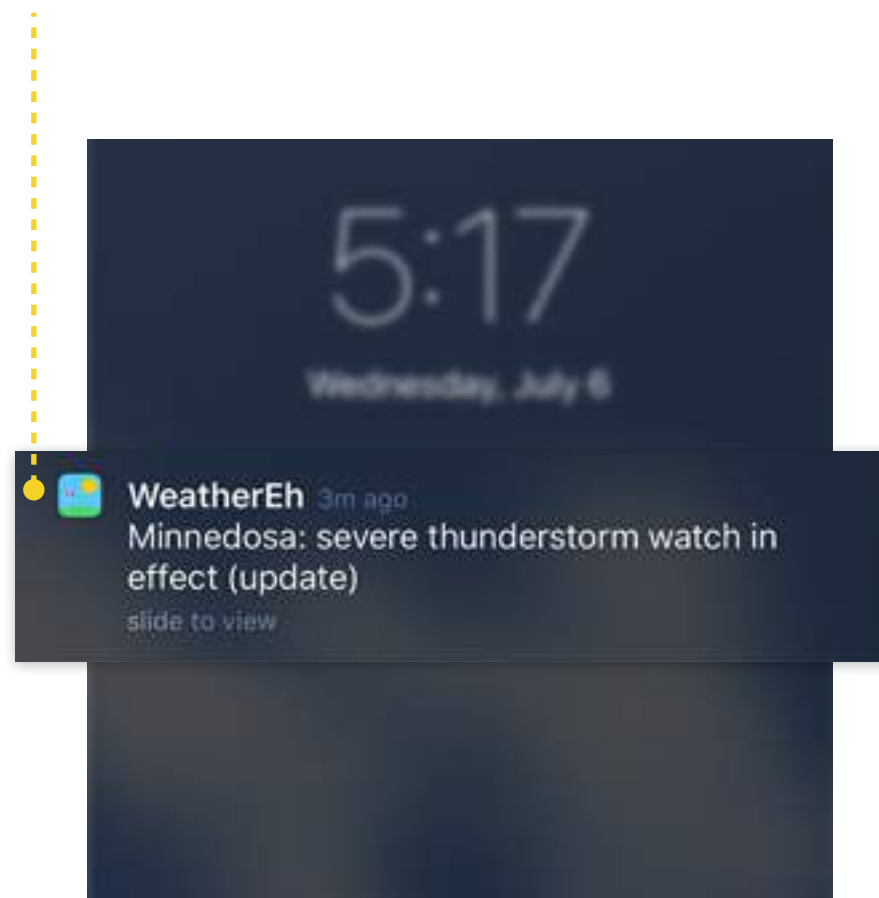


Weather apps can use push notifications to send **daily weather updates**, provide **real-time alerts** and **forecasts**. Likewise, when a user syncs a weather app with their travel schedule or fitness app, push notifications can be sent to update the user about imminent bad weather conditions that might impact the travel time or send updates regarding what precautions a user can take in accordance with the changes in the weather.

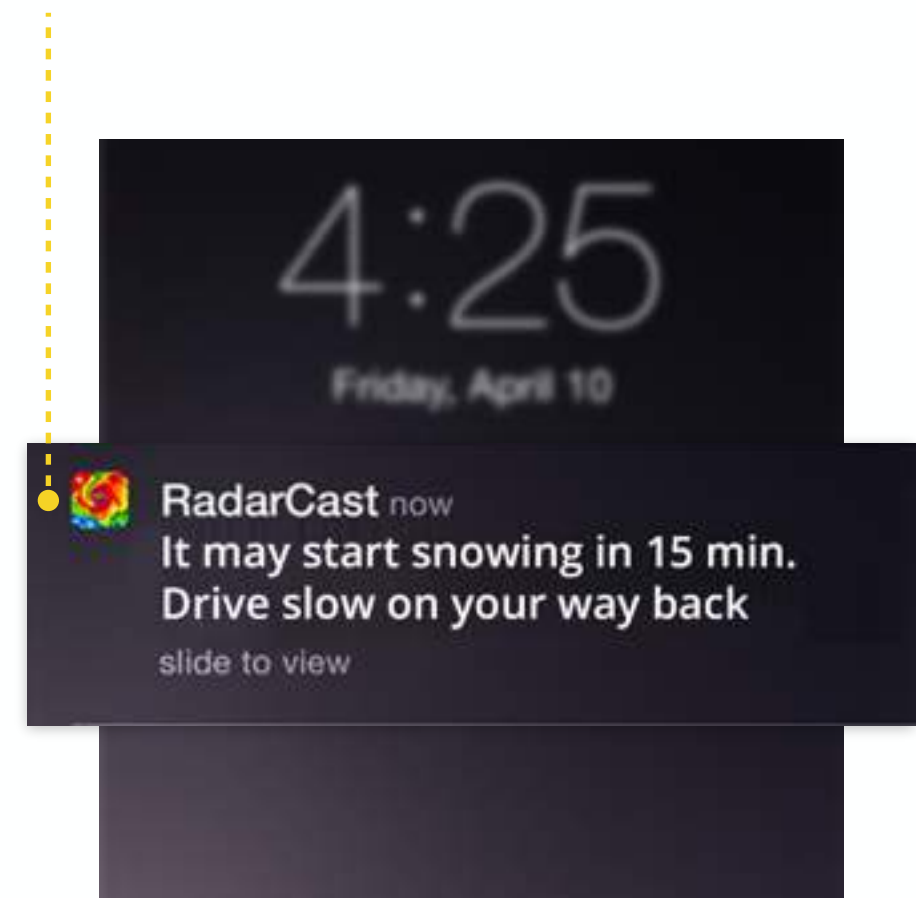
Real time alert and forecasts



Daily weather updates



Sync with travel schedule



LIMITATIONS

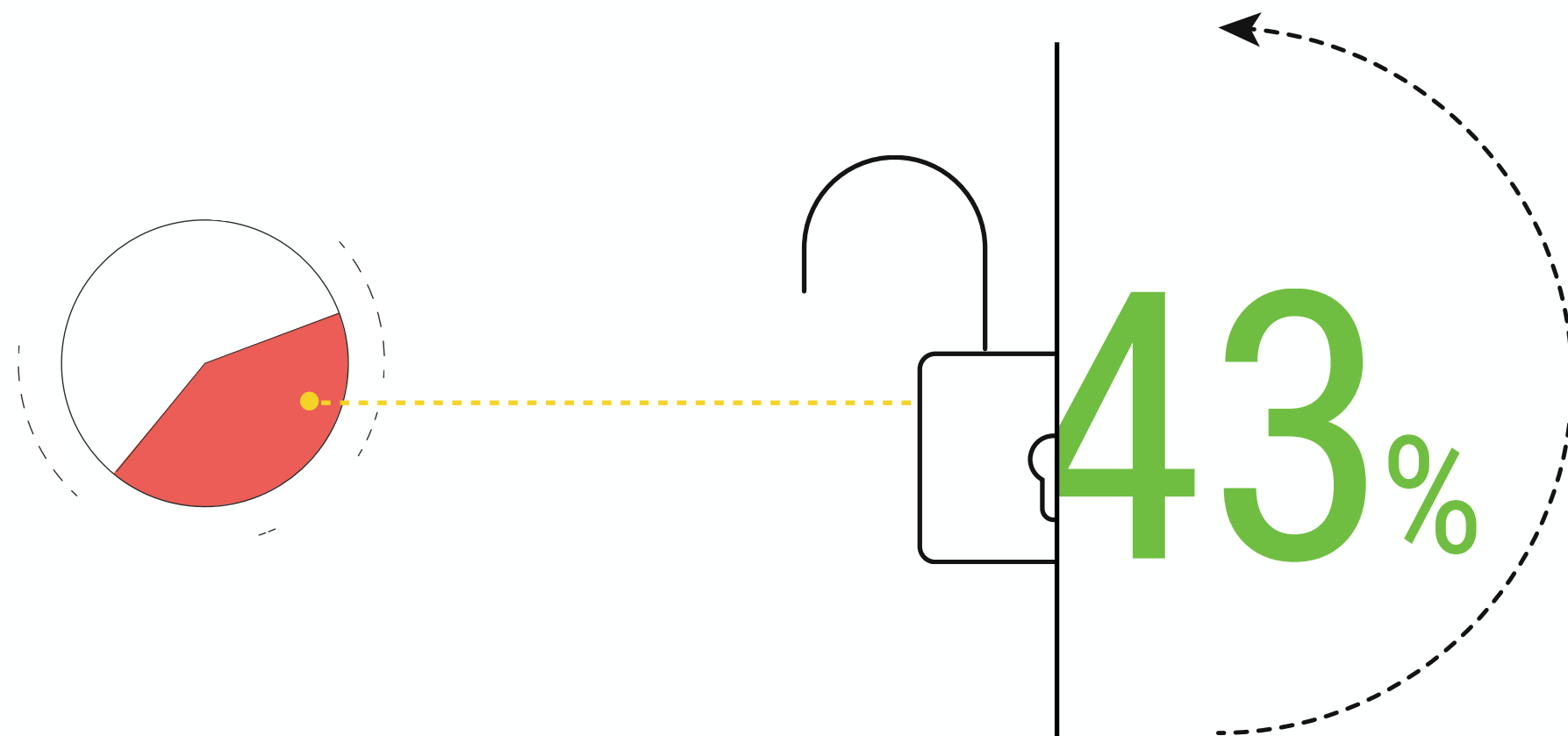
Unfortunately, push notifications have certain limitations and they offer only limited possibilities.



Limitation of push notification as a communication channel



- Biggest problem with Push notifications is that they can **only be sent to users who have opted in**.
- Push notifications can **only be sent to users who have downloaded the app**.



The average **opt-in ratio** for push messages

Payload limit

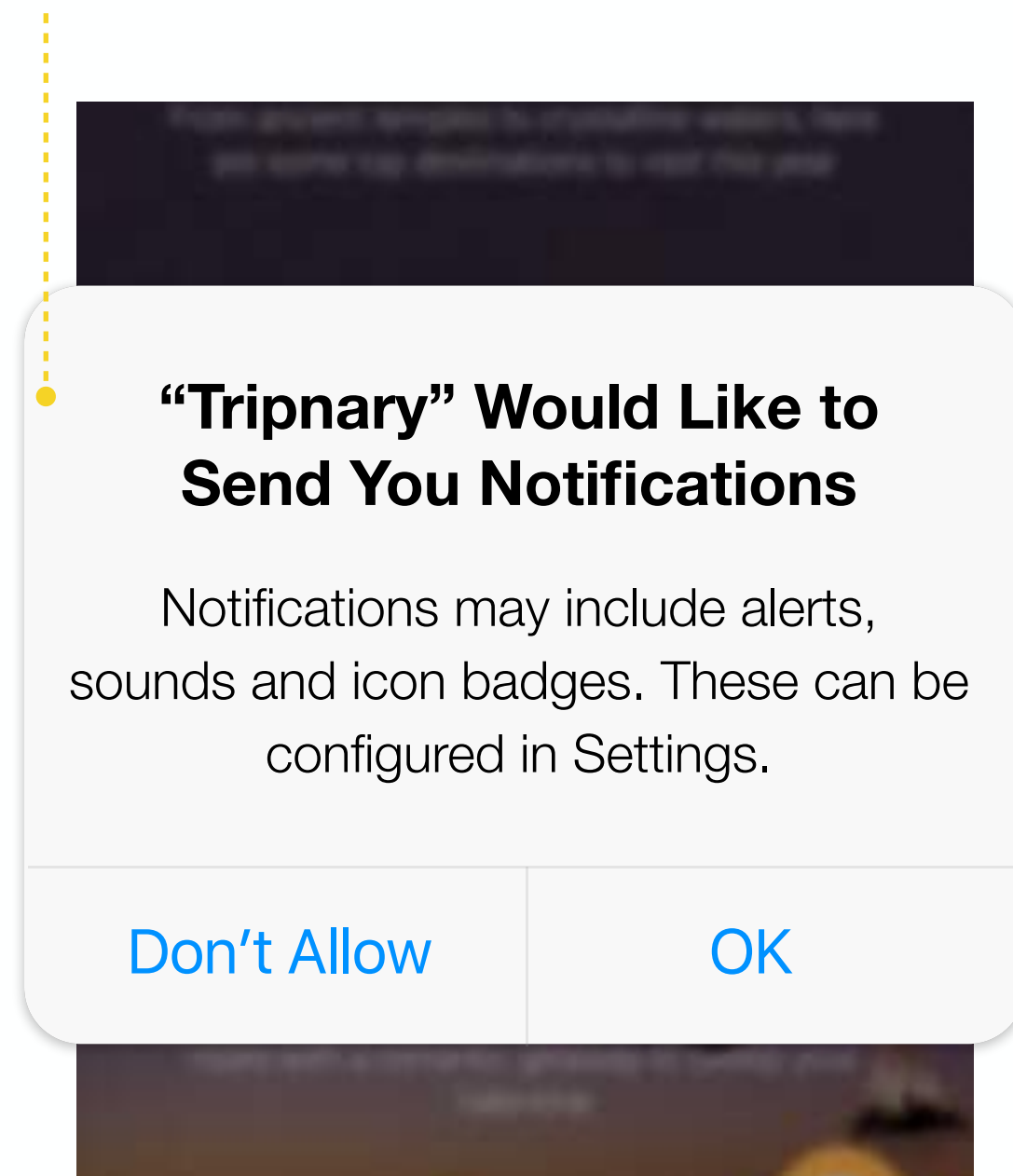


The message size limit in **GCM** is **4 kilobytes**. In **iOS 8**, the maximum size allowed for a notification payload is **4 kilobytes**.

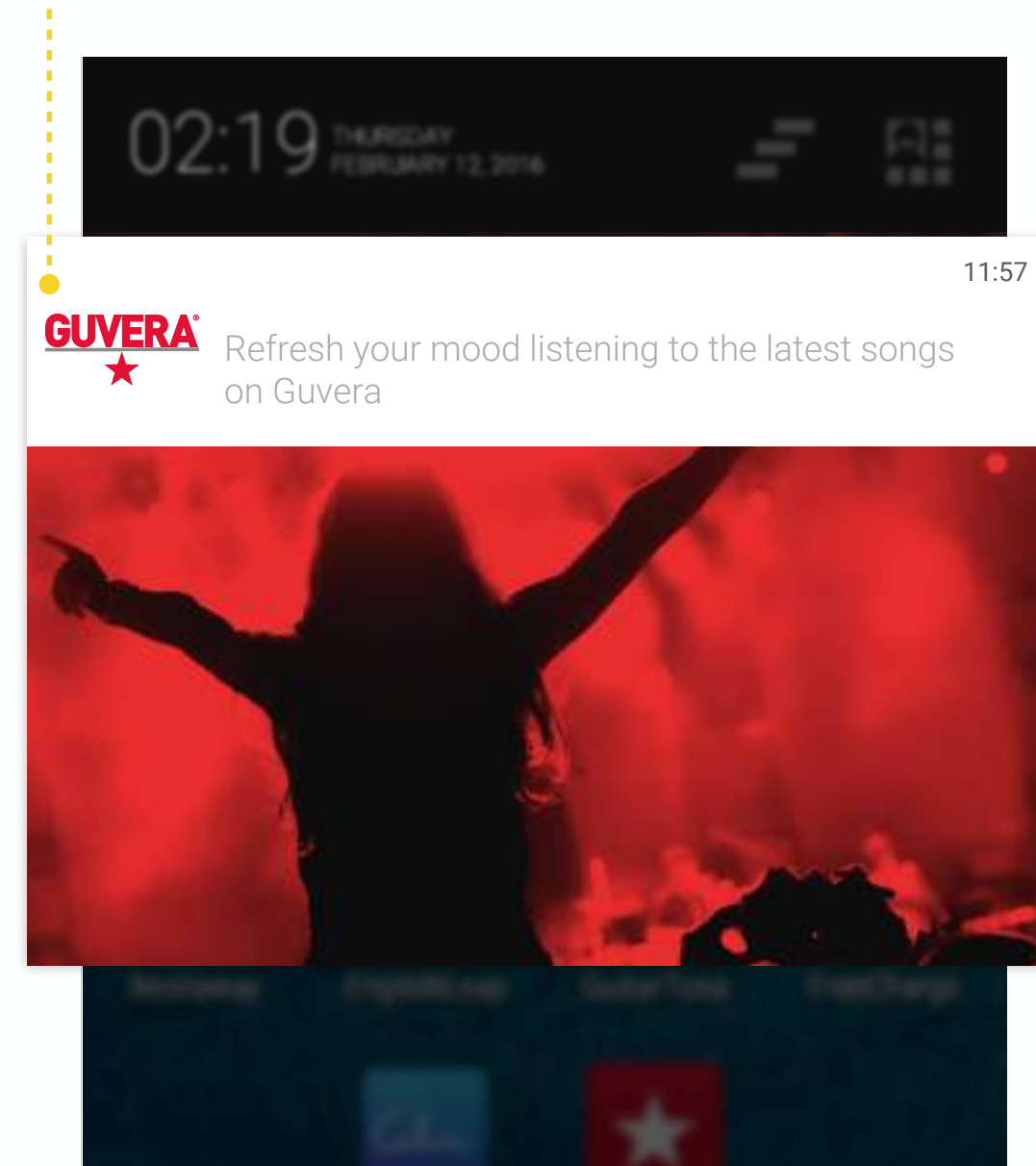


Opt-in rates by OS

Apple Devices: App publishers **need permission** to send push to iOS users.



Android devices: App publishers **do not need permission** from an app user to be able to send them push notifications.



In a nutshell



Research has proved that push notifications, when used as an effective element of a larger multi-channel engagement strategy, can drive **conversions** and **engagement** and enhance the **utilitarian value** of a mobile app. It is one of the most effective tools that marketers can use to open a **two-way communication** between users and themselves.

Personalized and **segmented** push notifications have proved to be far more effective at achieving the aforementioned results. Companies that use personalized push messages and engage users using interesting and effective content at the right time have exhibited better customer engagement ratios, which in return reflects in key metrics like **funnel reports**, **conversion rates** and **customer lifetime value**.

In this ebook, we have elaborately discussed ways to make your push notification campaign effective and relevant. It is now up to you to decipher what will work best for you and your organization.



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