COLUMNS

Best-practice tips for push notifications

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Stephanie Trunzo is chief operations officer of PointSource

By Stephanie Trunzo

We are increasingly mired in noise instead of signal as our world becomes more context-rich and personalized.

As marketers seek opportunities to engage their customers, it is tempting to send push notifications for promotions, wish list price changes, retargeting pushes based on shopper preferences, or notifications when the customer is in close proximity to the store.

However, it is important to consider the customer's experience before you hit send on a notification.

The world is overly saturated with branded content, so much so that messaging can easily get lost.

While notifications are a tempting engagement solution, we have to be careful to create content that adds value, and not noise.

Finding the balance
Notifications and badges have become the norm, but using them effectively takes a delicate balance.

Too many messages and the customer will simply shut off your notifications. Other users may not take the time to change their preferences, but instead ignore your content.

So what do we do?

How do we ensure a solid and responsible notification strategy that brings value in signal, not desensitization in noise?

Start by segmenting the notification categories and audience so that each message is relevant and useful to the person receiving it.

Categorizing messages
First, determine the message's purpose.

Notifications are best used as tools to reaffirm that something is happening as expected, to alert that something unexpected is taking place and to push a process forward to the next actionable next step.

Then categorize the audience as individual 1:1, a segment 1:some, or a market 1:many.

Some examples:

1. *Reaffirm*

a. 1:1 - "Thanks for signing up!" "Your payment has been processed." "Your package has shipped." "You are unsubscribed."

b. 1:some - "Your backordered item has arrived."

2. *Alert*

a. 1:1 - "Your membership will expire in two days." "Your credit card was declined." "Order has been delayed due to weather."

b. 1:some - "Special discount on the brand of baby food you purchased." "Today only 30% off all drinks at the State St. location."

c. 1:many - "Online registration is now open." "Holiday sale ends Friday." "Early Bird registration is open."

3. *Push forward*

a. 1:1 - "Items in your shopping cart are waiting." "Your order is ready for pickup." "Form is ready for your signature."

NOT EVERY NOTIFICATION is appropriate for every customer. It is key that marketers determine the best audience for each message to avoid adding to the noise.

When making these decisions, think about the user journey and the next steps that the user will take when you deliver the notification. Ensure that the message is clear and the requested action is as simple as possible.

Once a push notification is sent, you should track its value. Determine if users are viewing it and taking action or if it is just falling flat.

You should be immediately aware if a notification results in low engagement so that you can restructure your strategy.

While it is tempting to blast your audience with notifications every chance you get, being selective with when and to whom you send these messages will create more value for your brand.

Stephanie Trunzo is chief operations officer of PointSource, Raleigh, NC. Reach her at strunzo@pointsource.com.