

COLUMNS

3 ways to keep mobile shoppers from ditching app shopping carts

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You do not often see grocery store customers leaving a full cart in an aisle and wandering out of the store outside of a first responder or a parent of a screaming toddler, but this happens all the time in mobile application shopping carts.

There are many reasons why customers do not check out, but in many cases they simply forgot or needed more time to think about their purchase. But what can we do to attract them back and encourage them to go through with check out all without losing brand appeal?

The best way to re-engage these customers is to prompt them: send a timely push notification that reminds the customer of their forgotten items. But the key is doing it right.

What will separate your mobile app and brand experience from the rest is by not relying on just any old and basic push notification. To really capture your customer and bring them back, you need to consider three main components: audience, content and timing.

Audience

Make sure you know who you want to engage. It may seem like a great idea to send a push notification to every customer with items in his or her cart, but this really is not a good practice.

Consider this: you want to make sure your notification does not alienate the customer, so think about the types of users that will have a positive or, at least, neutral response to an intrusive message inviting them back.

Take a look at your current user base and user activity, and determine how to operationalize happy customers who are on the path to purchase. Some potential push campaign recipients could be consumers who:

Spent at least one minute looking at page, then adding the item

Searched through seven products, then added something to the cart

Added a high-value item

Added more than five items to their cart

Read reviews before adding an item

Previously purchased from your app

Remember, most people do not like indiscriminately receiving flyers. The same goes for push notifications, so

make sure the recipient list is well thought-out.

Content

Creating a call-to-action that incentivizes re-engagement could be a discount offer, recommendations or just really great marketing copy. It needs to get the user's attention and give him or her a reason to want to come back and re-engage with your app.

But what will make the push notification stand out really is down to creativity and personalization.

A message reading, "Hi Mike, you still have your iPad Mini in your shopping cart. Would you like to checkout?" will likely yield better results than, "You left items in your shopping cart."

There are a variety of different ways you can customize push notifications, but our favorites include:

Offer a 10 percent discount if the items in the cart add up to \$100 or less, and an even higher discount if it is more than \$100

Recommend a discounted promotional item they can add to the cart

Offer free shipping on their order if they complete the purchase in the next 24 hours

You can use A/B testing with different messages to see what content works best for your user base.

Just remember: avoid A/B testing discount versus no discount. Users might get upset if they find out their friend received a discount but they did not.

Timing

In addition to content, the timing of a push notification can have a large or not-so-large effect on its reception.

There is something magical about receiving a push notification right when you need it: could be a gate change two hours before your flight departs, or a friendly reminder to bring an umbrella because there is a high chance of rain today.

This same strategy applies in mobile to abandoned shopping carts.

To determine what works best for your customers, you should experiment with different amounts of delay before sending a push reminder:

Twenty-four to 48 hours after the last item was added

Twenty-four to 48 hours after the last app login

You can take this a step further and send the push notification to each individual user based on when he or she is most likely to open it.

Recent data from our experiments demonstrate that optimal time push notifications delivered 15 percent higher average revenue per user.

IF USERS RECEIVE content that is pertinent and interesting at a convenient time such as around lunchtime, or after work, and certainly not in the middle of the night - they will have a much better impression of your brand and will be more likely to convert.

When you find the right balance, your abandoned shopping carts will all roll through the checkout line.

So in the event that your customer drops out of the app, the sale has not been entirely lost, and should not be treated as much.

It just takes smart personalization, an incentive and great timing to encourage them to come back and complete their purchase.

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