The Push Notification Playbook for Retail Apps
Mobile Is the Hub of All Communications Today.

Smartphones enable brands to capitalize on new ways to reach their users, via personalization, location, and in-the-moment content. Communicating is less about advertising and more about building an experience that encourages customers to come back over time. In other words, it’s about creating meaningful relationships on the most personal device people own.

An effective communication strategy involves coordinating messages across multiple channels. One very successful channel is **push notifications**. Push notifications engage users during every step of the funnel, from account registration to purchase and beyond.

We’re here to break down the key moments in which push notifications drive conversions — and how to deliver them so they have the most impact.
According to Aberdeen, **companies that leverage personalized push notifications** increase revenue by **13.8 percent**. Push is a powerful tool for app growth and retention.
To first send personalized push notifications, apps must obtain permissions. **On average, only 42 percent of people opt-in to push notifications.** This means mobile marketers lose opportunities to engage over half their customer base.

In part, the default iOS prompt requesting permissions is to blame. The prompt appears at the worst possible time. The first time someone opens your app, they’re bombarded with requests. The app may ask to access the phone’s camera, photos, contacts, location, microphone, and more. It’s no wonder when users see a message requesting push permissions, they immediately click no. They’re overwhelmed and don’t yet recognize the value in receiving notifications from the app.
Too Many Asks with Unproven Value

"App" Would Like to Access Your Photos
Don’t Allow  OK

"App" Would Like to Access Your Microphone
Don’t Allow  OK

"App" Would Like to Access Your Contacts
Enables "App" to search your Contacts for people you may know on "App"
Don’t Allow  OK

"App" Would Like to Send You Notifications.
Notifications may include alerts, sounds and icon badges. These can be configured in Settings.

Don’t Allow  OK

Only 42% opt-in for push notifications for iOS
Top Use Cases to Drive Mobile ROI with Push Notifications
Luckily, there’s a tool that requests permissions at a more ideal time in the user experience. This tool is called Push Pre-Permissions. Pre-Permissions has been shown to increase push notification opt-ins by as much as 182 percent, enabling marketers to build relationships with their customers founded on trust and mutual communication.
Last Minute Travel is a one-stop travel app that manages bookings for flights, hotels, rental cars, and activities worldwide. It wanted to improve its conversion rate for push notification opt-ins, to deliver the most relevant messages possible.

Last Minute Travel only obtained a push notification opt-in rate of 22 percent. To build meaningful relationships with its customers, Last Minute Travel implemented Leanplum’s Push Pre-Permissions feature. Pre-Permissions relayed the benefits of enabling push notifications. It reminded travelers it would send critical information about flight reminders, exclusive coupons, and more. Read the case study here.
Push Pre-Permissions is out-of-the-box easy to implement and conveys personalized information that lets the user know you’ll only send relevant information. It looks like the image on the right.

After you’ve acquired permissions, you can engage your users with push in a multitude of situations. The next few pages features examples of some ways Leanplum helps you get the most impact out of your campaigns.

“Leanplum Shopping” Would Like to Send You Push Notifications
Notifications may include alerts, sounds and icon badges. These can be configured in Settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Allow</th>
<th>OK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Default Prompt

Opt-In to Push Notifications?
We’ll alert you when styles you’ll love hit the stores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Allow</th>
<th>OK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

With Push Pre-Permissions
Three out of 10 users abandon an app after the first use, meaning your first impression is everything. Help users understand your app with a short on-boarding flow. Using a combination of Leanplum’s Visual UI Editor, in-app messages, and push notifications, you can simplify registration with a social login and create a tutorial that guides users through the app’s functions.

Set up a series of in-app messages that guide new users through your app’s navigation. You may ask them to select the kinds of content or the types of products they’re looking to buy.

This can help you create a customized feed from the beginning, and tailor future recommendations. If users abandon the onboarding process part-way through, send a push notification to remind them to complete registration. With Leanplum’s integrated platform, you have the ability to optimize messaging and in-app content, creating a great end-to-end user experience.
Move users towards their first conversion by setting up an onboarding drip campaign in our Lifecycle Engine.
At Leanplum, we advise marketers to start a conversation with customers based on what they do and who they are. Start by segmenting users based on behaviors and preferences.

Understand your users by tracking their app behavior with holistic analytics. For example, recognize user content preferences, like favorite brands, so you can make relevant recommendations, such as flash sales or new items.

3. Send Notifications Based On User Behavior
Susan Liu

Email: sliu@gmail.com  
Total Occurences: 10 total purchases

Age: 25  
Total Value: $276 value

Gender: Female  
Device Model: iPhone 6

City: San Francisco  
Push Enabled: Yes

Country: United States

Language: English

Previous Time Spent in App  
- Last Email: March 11, 2016  
- Last Session: March 15, 2016  
- Last Push: March 16, 2016  
- Last App Purchase: March 17, 2016  
- Last Item Added to Cart: March 17, 2016

Last Purchase: New Yoga Mat

Personalization Based on:
- Technology
- Lifecycle Stage
- Localization
- Demographic Information
- Behavioral Attributes
- Data Enrichment
4. Reduce Shopping Cart Abandonment

Some customers may get halfway through the purchase process, but abandon the cart. Perhaps they’re busy searching for better deals or were distracted along the way. Re-engage with a gentle reminder encouraging checkout. As a bonus, you can deep link them directly to the buy page.

Leanplum’s end-to-end solution means that your messaging, automation, and in-app content are all coordinated. In every messaging campaign, include deep links back to specific content, then optimize in-app content for a synchronized experience. You can customize everything and A/B test each variant for the best possible performance.
5. Move Users Towards Milestones

Now that you understand what your users prefer, bring them back to your app with curated content prepared especially for their interests. Let them know when you stock similar products or update them on seasonal sales to keep the excitement going. Every time a user does or doesn’t interact with your campaigns, you can use our Lifecycle Engine to influence the path they’re on and guide them towards that milestone.

The integrated value of Leanplum means you can A/B test individual messages, or entire lifecycle campaigns, against a control group and one another. With our automated insights, we highlight the relevant data that gives you real-time insights into performance, so you can measure results and improve your next iteration.

Comprehensive metrics to improve campaigns.
Within the Lifecycle Engine, you can experiment with “micro commitments”, or asking customers if they’re interested in using various promotions. These give you insights into user preferences in order to segment customers into different campaign flows. Each campaign flow works to influence users to reach certain milestones, guiding them towards conversions.

For instance, ask users via push notifications how likely they are to use coupon codes versus flash sales. One flow could offer coupons, while the other could promote new flash sales. Then, A/B test each flow to improve performance and ROI.
7. Re-Engage Shoppers via Geo-Location

If you have a brick-and-mortar store, leverage geofencing technology to encourage users in a pre-defined radius to swing by your shop. By inspiring offline engagement, you create more revenue on all channels.

With Leanplum, you can leverage external data sources to enrich personalization. Deep dive into customers’ order and browsing history to discover their app behavior, such as items they looked at, and send messages that drive them to the nearest store. Or pull just-in-time Linked Data, such as real-time weather and inventory, to lend a helping hand on a stormy day with a message like, “Forget your umbrella today? We’re offering 10% off rain gear today.”
When users come back to your app, you can customize the in-app experience for deeper relevancy. For example, if you send a push notification promoting rainy-day apparel to your Seattle users, use our Visual UI Editor to adjust your homepage content so the first thing they see when opening the app are umbrellas and raincoats. If you’re sending Linked Data push notifications to your Miami users, then alter the homepage content to showcase a new line of swimwear. With Leanplum, you can treat each customer as an individual. **Deliver content that is relevant and contextually rich and easily scales to millions of users.**
8. Encourage Users to Share Across Social Media

Nothing is better than generating word-of-mouth buzz about your app to encourage organic installs. After users make a new purchase, prompt them to share the retail love across their social media channels.

Ask users when they display loyal behavior, during “happy” moments within your app. Send users a push notification after they purchase a new item or leave a review.
9. Re-Engage Dormant Users

From time to time, some shoppers forget about your app. Re-engage dormant users by A/B testing the best time frame to contact them. You can segment campaigns based on the last time a user opened your app, and test how people respond when seeing a message one week after the last open versus one day.

7 Days Inactive

In-App Message
Get a free gift when you checkout today! Tap to learn more.

14 Days Inactive

Push Notification
Hi [Name]. Get a 20% discount on your first purchase if you buy today. Tap to learn more.

15 Days Inactive

Email
Hi [Name]. Get a 20% discount on your first purchase if you buy today. Click to learn more.
10. Send Every Message at the Right Time

With every push notification you send, you can employ a Leanplum-exclusive feature called Optimal Time. Optimal Time uses a predictive machine learning algorithm to analyze past behavior and automatically deliver messages when users are most likely to open. For example, if you want to send all your users a notification that Coach is having a sale, Optimal Time takes into account each user’s past behavior. It may send Katy a message in the morning while she’s commuting on the bus, but Brian a message in the evening, when he’s relaxing after work.

One Leanplum customer who implemented Optimal Time is Pixowl. By sending a promotion for in-game currency with Optimal Time, Pixowl increased their overall revenue by 17 percent. Read the case study here.
Once you bring shoppers back to your app with push notifications, your work is only halfway done. Optimize your purchase page to maximize conversions.

Our Visual UI Editor gives you the ability to make changes in minutes, not weeks, by bypassing App Store resubmissions. Try optimizing the buttons and content placement on the purchase page to see which encourages the most sales.
Now that you've mastered your push notifications, it's time to master your in-app content. As we like to say, "a great push notification won't save a bad app." Make sure that you optimize your onboarding and conversion pages, and test everything from messaging to the app experience.

Since Leanplum was built on a foundation of A/B testing and analytics, we give you the insights you need to go from data to action. You get everything you need inside one integrated platform.
Our world-class customer success team works with our customers to deliver results like these:

**WANELO**
+27% engagement by A/B testing three new product feed strategies.

**lmt**
+182% push opt-ins with Push Pre-Permissions.

**Pixowl**
+17% revenue by using Optimal Time delivery.

---

**Contact Us**
leanplum.com
hello@leanplum.com

**Social Media**
Lyft  Tesco  The Times  StumbleUpon
Additional Resources

Leanplum Blog

Breaking Barriers to Push Notifications

Personalize or Bust: The Impact on App Engagement

Learn how an integrated mobile strategy can drive more app ROI. Schedule your demo today.

hello@leanplum.com     www.leanplum.com