The Push Notification Playbook for Travel 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

Only 42% opt-in for push notifications on iOS
Top Use Cases to Drive Mobile ROI with Push Notifications
1. Maximize Your Push Notification Opt-Ins

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 feature examples of some ways Leanplum helps you get the most impact out of your campaigns.
2. Improve Your Onboarding Flow

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 onboarding 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. 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 frequently searched flight itineraries, so you can make relevant recommendations, such as fare deals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:sliu@gmail.com">sliu@gmail.com</a></th>
<th>Total Occurrences: 10 total purchases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Total Value: $276 value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Device Model: iPhone 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Push Enabled: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personalization Based on:**
- Technology
- Lifecycle Stage
- Localization
- Demographic Information
- Behavioral Attributes
- Data Enrichment

- **Previous Time Spent in App:** 3m 42s
- **Last Email:** March 11, 2016
- **Last Session:** March 15, 2016
- **Last Push:** March 16, 2016
- **Last Flight Booking:** March 17, 2016
- **Last Search:** Round Trip SFO to JFK
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 booking. 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 Conversions

In the weeks up to the flight, bring the user back to your app with curated content prepared especially for their trip. Great deals for rental cars or city guides can fuel their excitement. 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.

- Average session length: 3.09m
- Daily active users: ▲ 802.1
- Time in app per daily users: ▲ 6.34m
6. Create Loyalty with VIP Rewards

Thank frequent fliers, hotel guests, and rental car regulars, by sending a notification that recognizes their loyalty. It will make your app top of mind when the next trip rolls around.

Then A/B test different kinds of rewards, like points, free stays, or upgrades. Each user is unique; make sure to understand their individual preferences for better personalization and ROI.
When a traveler is ready to jet set, track their trip up to the minute. Geofencing technology can alert you when users arrive at the airport. If their gate changes or the flight is delayed, sending an alert is not only useful — it creates a delightful moment between the app and customer.
8. Get 5-Star App Store Ratings

The key to acquiring positive App Store ratings is to send users an in-app message after a moment of delight. This could be after users book multiple flights, car rentals, or hotel rooms, or finish a trip in a ridesharing app.

Use push notifications and in-app messaging to survey users and learn if they are happy with the app. If they respond with a “yes,” ask them to provide a positive rating right at that moment, deep linking them to the App Store reviews.

If they respond with a “no,” don’t miss the opportunity to gather insights from their dissatisfaction. Deep link to a feedback page, where they can privately share ways to improve your app with your customer support team. You can also use these surveys in response A/B test modifications, to improve performance, user satisfaction, and drive more ROI.
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
    - Book a trip today and earn double miles on your flight. Learn more by tapping here.
  - Push Notification
    - Hi [Name], get a seat upgrade on your next flight when you book today. Tap to learn more.

- **14 Days Inactive**
  - Push Notification
    - Hi [Name], get a seat upgrade on your next flight when you book today. Tap to learn more.

- **15 Days Inactive**
  - Email
    - Hi [Name], get a seat upgrade on your next flight when you book today. Click for more information.
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 Virgin America is hosting a flight 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.
Create an Integrated Experience

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.
Why Leanplum

Now that you’re up to speed on push notifications, it’s time to create a great in-app experience. 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 with a platform that allows you to bypass App Store resubmissions, and test everything from messaging to all facets of app content.

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 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