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The Do's and Don'ts of Push Notifications

by Ashley Alexander // Jan 04, 2018

Tech Tips



Ah, [push notifications](#). Those little messages from apps that pop up in the middle of whatever you're doing on your phone. But more importantly, they are the thing that allows for constant connection between your app and your users even when they're not in-app. From breaking news to letting a user know they're near one of your locations, push notifications can be incredibly useful to drive traffic to your app...if done correctly. We're here to help you learn the art of push notifications.

Benefits of sending push notifications

First, let's establish why you, as a business app owner, would even want to use push notifications.

It's true that if not used correctly, push notifications can be seen as annoying. We don't want users to feel harassed by constantly sending them messages they don't care about. But if used the right way, push notifications can have a wide range of benefits.

Push notifications are a really good way to keep app users connected to your app and your business. It's a little reminder that keeps your business top of mind, and encourages people to engage with your content. You should expect a traffic increase to your app when using push notifications. When someone is using their phone and see an intriguing alert from your app pop up, they are likely to click through. This might mean someone who wouldn't normally be going to your app at that moment might just land on it.

Another benefit is that you should be able to [track all this engagement](#), so you can see trends about who is using your app — when and why. And don't fret: the good thing about push notifications is that users have the control. If someone really is getting irritated by the push notifications it won't affect their whole perception of your app (or your business) because most users know all they have to do is opt-out of the push notifications from your app. But, to avoid this you will want to make sure you are using them efficiently by knowing when to send push notifications, and what to say in them.

When to send push notifications

It's easy to abuse the privilege of push notifications. It's a fine line between useful push notifications and unnecessary ones. The key to staying on your side of the line is to know when it's appropriate to send them. It's not the same for every app, but here are a few times that we see as most often a good use of push notifications:

- **Reminders:** If your app has any form of scheduling in it, people will want to be alerted when their schedule calls for it. When they see they have an event coming up, they will click through to find out details about it.
- **Encouragement (to reach goals):** Sometimes a user just needs a little motivation. This especially holds true in the goal-tracking world. If a user is close to achieving a goal or level you have created in-app, your push notification might just be the encouragement they need to not only complete their goal, but also to click through to your app to check out their status.
- **New messages:** If your app has messaging capability, alerting a user when they are being contacted within your app will be a great use of a push notification. As a result, they will likely click through to your app so they can read and respond as quickly as possible.
- **New posts:** If you have an app where users can create and upload their own content, other users might want the option to be alerted whenever specific accounts post (think: a user's favorite artist shares all their photos on your app or a user's favorite author releases information about their new book.)
- **An incomplete action:** If a user closed out of your app without checking out or without publishing a post, it may be beneficial to let them know they have these actions waiting for them. This will be a good way to draw them back to your app to complete the action.
- **Updates:** These can be tricky. Think about if the user will actually care about the app update. If it's an update that adds a feature that allows the user to take a new action, they just might be interested enough to check it out by coming back to your app.
- **Gamifying engagement:** Gamification is almost always a great way to keep users intrigued. Humans have that competitive edge to participate in the completion of a task. This being said, if your push notification alerts the app user that they are close to completing a task on the gaming app ("you're almost at Level 100.") a user is likely to click back into the app to complete the goal.
- **News:** If your app has the ability to share new information, creating a headline that will make people click through the original article on your app (think: shocking, mysterious, etc.) can be a great way to convert those push notifications.

Sending targeted push notifications

Sending the right push notifications to the right users is crucial to avoid making your users feel like they are getting spammed and instead create that effective conversion of notification to in-app activity.

There are few push notifications that make sense to send to every and all of your app users. It's important to know who is going to respond best to which messages. This can be done through targeting, which allows specific push notifications to be sent to only those who fall into the relevant demographic.

Remember: the point of push notifications is to get that conversion which results in the user back in the app, when they otherwise would not be. So, sending a targeted push notification is getting the attention of a user at a time that they specifically are most likely to convert.

Sending push notifications with Hatch

When building with Hatch, it's super easy to [incorporate push notifications into your app](#). Our platform enables you to write and send push notifications to your app users. You'll be able to decide whether you want to send it as soon as you've written it, or if you would rather schedule it for a later time. This means that you can schedule it for a time when people are generally more available and active, such as early mornings and evenings. But wait, what about those targeted push notifications you were saying we're so great? Yeah, we do that too. When managing your app users, you can create a "filter."

Send Notification

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You can broadcast a notification to all the app users. Please fill the title, notification text and press the send now button to broadcast.

+ Add Filter

Type notification title here...

Type notification text here...

Schedule this to send later.

Send Now

These filters allow you to classify your users based on various factors. One example is grouping users based on their last active date. Another filter in our [elearning app platform](#) allows you to group users based on the courses that they've completed.

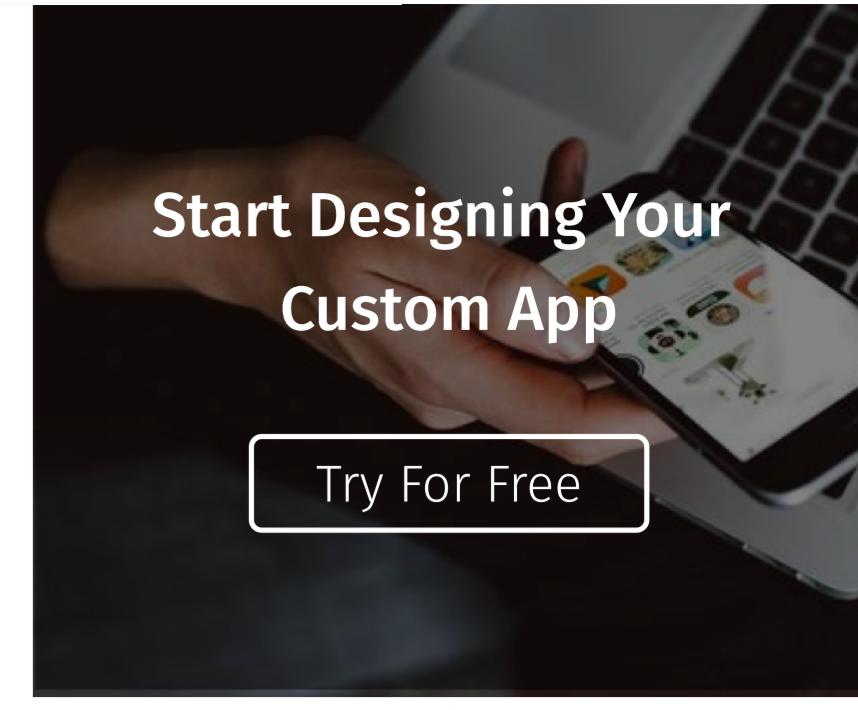
From there, you can go to where you create and schedule push notifications on the dashboard and select which filters you want to apply to the push notifications. So, for example, if you've made a filter that created a group of users that have not been active for multiple weeks, then you can choose to have a push notification only go out to those users who need that little push to become active on your app again.

Like we've said, sometimes push notifications are just what a user needs to become activated on your app. Need to see it to believe it? [Start sending push notifications with Hatch](#).

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