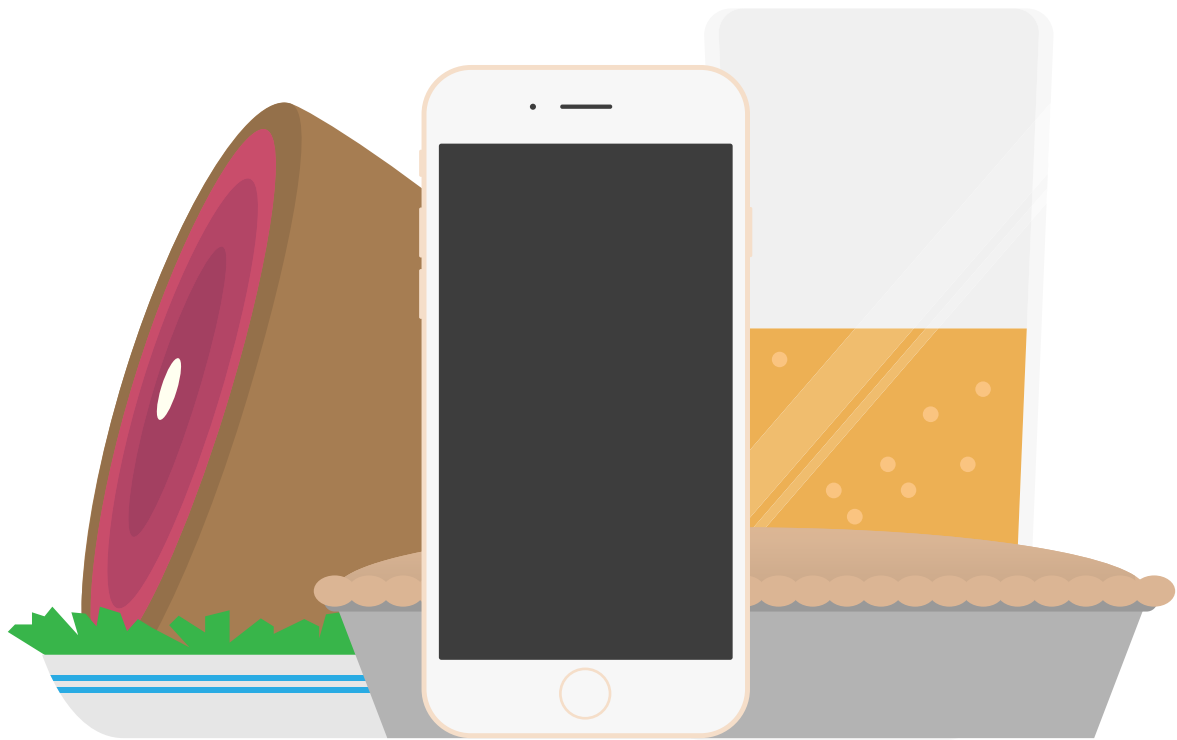


RECIPES FOR

Perfect Push Messages



In This Cookbook

The Essential Ingredients	2
- #1 Time of Day	2
- #2 Day of the Week	4
- #3 Text Length	6
- #4 The Right Punctuation	8
- #5 Word Choice	10
Cooking it Perfectly	12
- Starting with Segmentation	13
- Determining the Best Offer	14
- Automating for Efficiency	15
- Putting on the Finishing Touches	16
Four Samples Recipes for Smarter Marketing	17
- The Transactional Push	18
- The Mobile-Only Offer	19
- The “New for You” Notification	20
- The Upgrade to Unlock	21
Repeat to Perfect	22

LOOKING TO COOK UP SOME SERIOUSLY GREAT PUSH MESSAGES TO ENGAGE YOUR APP USERS?

Everybody wants the secret ingredient to success. That one dash of this or pinch of that that sets your business apart from the competition (and creates happy customers). When it comes to app marketing, we've found that the "secret" is a delicious combination of data and creativity, that, when used together, delivers exactly what your app users are looking for.

Push messages have gotten a bad rep. Between perceived notions of limited design and content options and the nature of interrupting (or irritating) app users, this marketing tactic has been cast in a poor light.

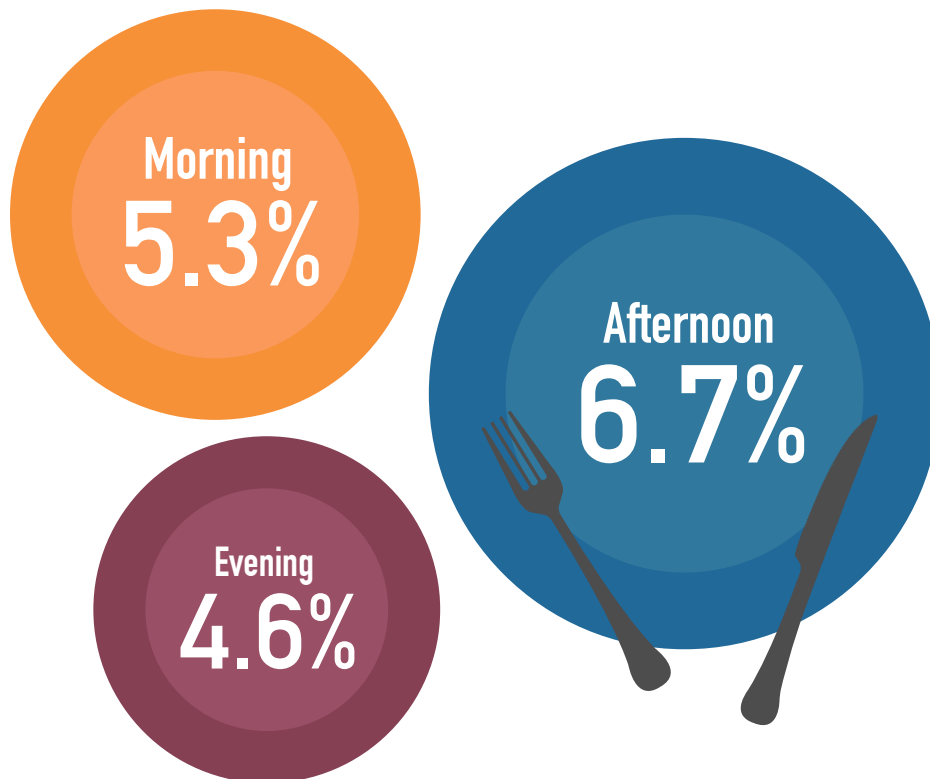
In reality, push messages are a hugely effective marketing tool for re-engaging users with your app, announcing new versions and updates, and improving conversions. **About 52% of users have push enabled on their mobile devices, and that group of users account for 88% more app launches than other users.** All it takes are well-baked campaigns backed by smart data, and you've created messages that users want to receive.

In this guide, we'll cover the five essential ingredients you need to create powerful push messages and how to "cook" them to perfection, plus four sample "recipes" of great campaigns by industry.

#1. Time of Day

Most of us know not to send push notifications to users too late at night or early in the morning (even for breaking news - although there are always exceptions to every rule!). This timing can be disruptive, and even worse: irritating.

So, what time of day does work best for clicks?



Localytics, November 2014

Data shows that there's a discrepancy between when most app marketers send notifications and when they see the highest click rates.

Most apps currently send their push messages in the evening, likely thinking that this is when people are home from work and willing to engage spend more time in-app.

In actuality, push messages have the highest click rate in the afternoon, between 12pm-5pm. In fact, the evening is the least desirable time to send a push message (this could be a vicious cycle in which users are receiving so many notifications from apps in the evenings that it's leading to a lower click rate - or simply that users are less inclined to be on their phones at night).

WHAT YOUR MESSAGE COULD LOOK LIKE:

Sent to users at 12:30pm: "Take advantage of your lunch break to catch up on today's most popular news stories."

#2. Day of the Week

Who would have thought weekends could be so unpopular? Data from the past couple of years has consistently shown that app usage spikes on weekends - making it the perfect set of days to send push notifications, right?

Not so. Instead, push message click rates are fairly consistent throughout the week, but drop on the weekend. During the week, the click rate average is 5.8%, but for the weekend the click rate drops down to 3.5%.

Push Messaging Click Rate

Day of Week



Localytics, November 2014

This means there's a 66% higher click rate on push messages that are sent on weekdays. Tuesdays and Fridays, in particular, seem to be the most popular for actual click throughs.

Why the gap? It could be because users are looking for distractions at work (hence why afternoons during the workweek see the highest overall click rate) or because their attention span is longer on weekdays. Another option is that users are already spending so much time in the apps they love on the weekends that they can't be swayed by notifications from other apps.

Our hypothesis: People are near their phones more during the workday, and often seek out distractions for quick work breaks. Target your campaigns to send on days with the highest click rate to capitalize on this behavior and appeal to users when they're looking for a 5-minute break.

WHAT YOUR MESSAGE COULD LOOK LIKE:

"It's Friday – check out our weekend sale and shop early-bird access now."

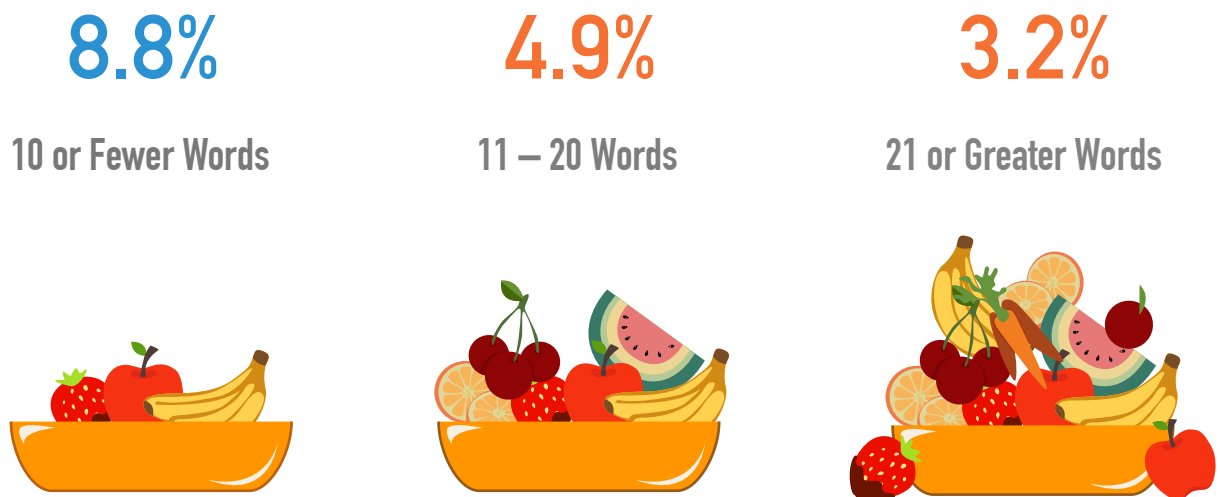
#3. Text Length

The phrase “short and sweet” could have been inspired by push messages (if, of course, mobile apps had been around in the 1500s).

Depending on the actual smartphone your push is received on, the amount of words that appear on the lock screen varies. Certain smartphones have smaller screens, which results in fewer words appearing on the lock screen. Because of this, it’s not terribly surprising that shorter messages are generally more effective since the entire message will appear on the screen.

Push Messaging Click Rate

Number of Words in Message



Localytics, November 2014

What is surprising is the change in click rate by a margin of just one word. Notifications with 10 words are fewer see almost double the click rate than those that jump to 11-20.

Those with over 21 words have a paltry 3.2% click rate on average - so it's clear that the "10 Items or Fewer" rule reigns supreme here.

What does this mean for your perfect pushes? Keep your messages clear, concise, and compact. You want to quickly make clear the purpose of the push message. With few seconds to catch a user's attention (or sitting as just one in a list of notifications upon checking their phone), your message needs to identify the value, goal or reward behind the notification to prompt an open. Be upfront with the Ask, but make it primarily about what benefit the user will gain from clicking through.

WHAT YOUR MESSAGE COULD LOOK LIKE:

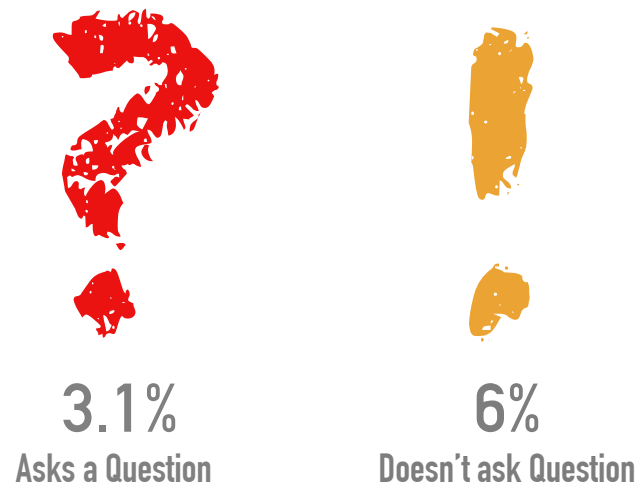
"Shop now: members get 50% off new arrivals."

#4. The Right Punctuation

Another aspect of being upfront and concise? Don't ask; tell.

Push Messaging Click Rate

Sentence Type



Localytics, November 2014

The push messages we studied contained a combination of statements and questions. The messages that delivered a statement performed twice as well as those that asked a question.

Asking a question and then answering it may seem smart in practice, but remember that you are working with limited real estate on the lock screen, and most users are looking for more definitive content. In this case, statements carry more weight (and more information) than questions - and are clearer.

This is further evidence of what we've discovered: you should be straightforward with your language, and avoid wasting space with questions. Instead, ask this one of yourself: why should the user open this message? The answer is what you need to highlight in your campaigns.

WHAT YOUR MESSAGE COULD LOOK LIKE:

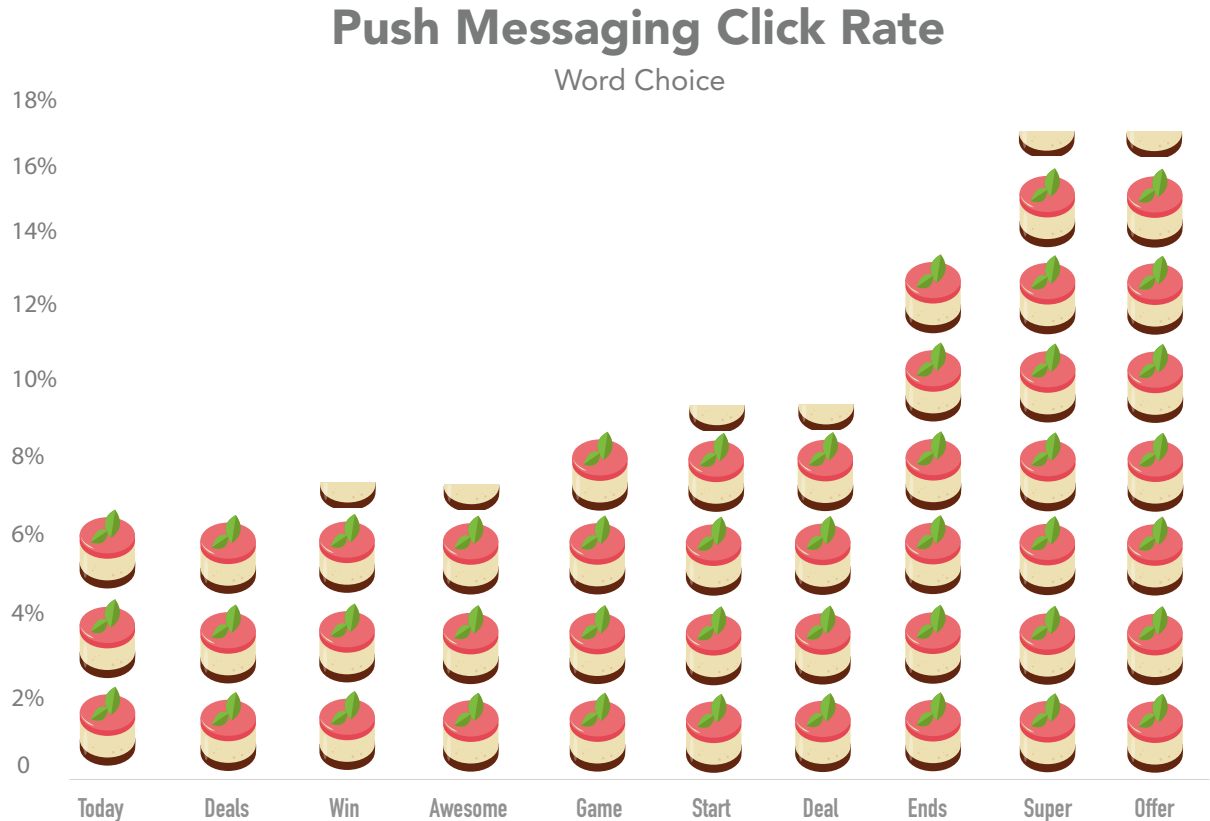
“Invite your friends and get \$10 off your next ride with our referral program.”

#5. Word Choice

Often, it can be helpful to think of push notifications as similar to email headlines - what garners a click through? And what kind of language is most enticing to the end user?

The answer is often the words that will convey the most value for the click. Essentially, how do you best communicate that the user will get something out of the app open?

While this differs by vertical (if you're a retail app your language is going to be substantially different than that of a travel app), but there are themes on the most commonly used and clicked on words.



Localytics, November 2014

For example, we have found that words like “offer,” “super,” and “ends” surprisingly have a higher click rate than game-specific language. “Win,” “deal” and “today,” in particular, saw poorer performance, signaling that while sales-based terminology garners more clicks, sweepstakes or one-day only deals might be less popular.

Overall, however, exciting or actionable words promoting an offer of some sort see higher click rates than others.

Here’s what works: Exclusivity

Here’s what doesn’t work: Gimmicks

WHAT YOUR MESSAGE COULD LOOK LIKE:

“Offer ends soon: swipe to get free shipping on all purchases.”



Cooking it Perfectly

STARTING WITH SEGMENTATION

All great recipes start with a base. When it comes to push, segmenting to create user audiences is your base.

Audiences are groups of similar users who have all completed the same action or set of actions in-app, within a given time period. These can be reflective of your buyer personas, or just groups of users based on their app behavior.

When you create user audiences, you already have targeted groups of users you want to engage with your push messages or reach out to with personalized offers or notifications.

Segmented push messages (or, those sent to a specific user audience) have almost double the open rate of broadcast push messages. Additionally, **54% of users who click on a segmented push end of converting**, as opposed to 15% of those who click on a broadcast push message.

- Group people based on important characteristics
- Target push messages to right segments
- Remember it's never one-size-fits-all

DETERMINING THE BEST OFFER

Audiences also help you determine the best content or offer to use in your push message. What is the purpose of receiving the push? Typically, it contains an offer, discount or special announcement that your users want to receive.

But, the best pushes are those that personalize the offer in each campaign to a particular set of users:

Audience: Users who opened the app 2+ times in one week and looked at restaurants in Portland.

Potential Campaign: Send users a notification of a new restaurant opening in their area including an exclusive coupon.

Push message: “Dumpling Cafe in Portland is now open! Get our special offer for app users: \$20 coupon for your first visit.”

The best way to ensure your push campaign is attractive to users is to give them something they’re actually interested in redeeming or learning more about. Over time, you can create smaller, more personalized segments and campaigns that are even more relevant and have higher conversion rates.

AUTOMATING FOR EFFICIENCY

If you're cooking for a large group of people, chances are you're relying on some pretty important tools to facilitate the process.

As your app grows, so will your MAUs. So, creating, managing and measuring push messaging campaigns for larger groups or multiple segments can get tricky without the right tools. Marketing automation makes it easy for you to keep track of ongoing campaigns and keep users engaged (through more than just a one-time message).

Using automation, you can:

- Auto-enroll new users into campaigns, so that when a user qualifies to receive a message based on their in-app behavior, they're automatically added to the campaign.
- Chain push messages together in a series, the same as you would for an email nurture campaign. This allows you to create a campaign that touches users multiple times in a more sophisticated effort to increase app opens and engagement.

PUTTING ON THE FINISHING TOUCHES

The cherry on top of any good campaign? Personalization. Whether it's a real-time notification to a user containing pertinent details (see “the transactional push” recipe, below) or a campaign that's targeted by audience, in-app behavior, session data, or profile data from outside of the app (such as store credit or email opens), the more relevant the push, the better received it is by users.

Granular targeting and personalization is dependent on collecting user information from inside the app and by tracking their interactions with your brand across other channels. To get started planning and tracking this information, [try this guide](#).



**Four Sample Recipes
for Smarter Marketing**

THE TRANSACTIONAL PUSH

Transactional push messages are real-time, highly-personalized alerts pertaining to specific action a user completed in the app. Ever ordered a pizza using an app? The alert push notification you receive that updates the delivery time and order progress is transactional - it's specific to your order, and timely.

WINNING RECIPE: Say Dropbox wants to send users a message to alert them when someone has added a new file to a folder they own - they would send a transactional push message containing that information.

THE MESSAGE: Chris added the document "2015 Plans" to your folder "Marketing."

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

- Timeliness (immediate)
- Relevance
- Personalization

THE MOBILE-ONLY OFFER

If you sell products via your app, chances are one of the primary reasons users download it is to access exclusive offers and discounts. This expectation is one reason deal-based language prompts such high click-throughs. Users who enable push do so because they're expecting value, and there's no better (or easier) way to deliver than that by providing offers just for them.

WINNING RECIPE: A shopping app wants to target active users in the past 30 days who made a purchase and then did not have a session with a re-engagement campaign. They may decide to reward loyal customers with a special offer that will also work to bring them back to the app.

THE MESSAGE: Redeem our weekend sale offer - early! All sale 20% off.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

- Language
- Day of the week
- Word count

THE “NEW FOR YOU” NOTIFICATION

By now we know that relevancy is key, and using data to inform campaigns is the best way to ensure success. Music apps, for example, can create highly-personalized campaigns based on user favorites, playlists or saved artists. Understanding your users’ interests gives you a strong platform for running campaigns introducing them to new content that will get them back in the app.

WINNING RECIPE: Music apps like Spotify often look for ways to get users to spend even more time in-app, and engage with more features, like playlist creation or sending music to friends. One way is to utilize push campaigns to send users notifications of new music they would like based on their interests, new albums available from their favorite artists, or playlists they might enjoy.

THE MESSAGE: Check out our new James Taylor-inspired playlist for your morning commute.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

- Day of the week
- Timing
- Segmentation

THE UPGRADE TO UNLOCK

Free-to-download apps offer users a variety of ways to interact with content, features or activities. But when it comes to games with premium features or news services that require subscriptions for unlimited access, the ideal conversion event is clear: get users to upgrade to paying customers.

WINNING RECIPE: A news app lets non-subscribers read 10 articles for free each month. They want to target non-subscribers who are daily or heavy readers with a subscription offer. They set up a push campaign targeted to people who had at least five sessions, or those who read 10 articles in the past seven days and are not subscribers.

THE MESSAGE: Subscribe now and get one month free - offer ends soon!

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

- Segmentation
- Language
- Word count
- Relevance

REPEAT TO — PERFECT —

It's normal to get a recipe wrong or not quite right on your first try, which is why trying, learning and repeating is the best way to create campaigns that work. And, as your users and their expectations evolve over time, so will your push messaging strategy. We've compiled the best practices, but determining what best suits your users is a task up to you and your app analytics.

THE NEXT STEP? FINDING THE RIGHT TOOL FOR PERFECT PUSH MESSAGES.

Smart marketing demands powerful analytics. Only Localytics brings app marketing and analytics together in one solution. Used in more than 28,000 apps on more than 1.5 billion devices, Localytics helps companies like ESPN, eBay, Fox, and the New York Times drive user engagement, loyalty and customer lifetime value.



Our platform helps mobile marketers and developers gather deep, actionable user insights that power rich targeting, automated marketing programs, and personalized push and in-app messaging.

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