HOW TO USE PERSONALIZATION TO CREATE A GREAT APP EXPERIENCE

IN 3 STEPS!

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LOCALYTICS
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Are you a marketer who hears the word “personalization” and shudders? Does the thought of collecting user data and customizing their experience simultaneously thrill and unnerve you?

If so, you’ve come to the right place.

Effective targeting is dependent on gathering accurate data about your users, prospects, and customers. Today, many of these practices, particularly when it comes to web, are considered questionable, which is probably why you’re feeling a bit uneasy at the prospect of mobile personalization. Privacy concerns are valid, and not something to be overlooked – but when done right, personalization meets user expectations, and even surpasses them.

The key to winning with consumers is by collecting data responsibly and using it to provide highly relevant offers or content that benefit the end user in some way.
And when it comes to mobile, this is even more apparent. Take push messaging, for example: we’ve found that 52% of users enable push messaging on their mobile devices, but **54% of users convert from a segmented push message (one that is tailored to their interests) compared to only 15% for broadcast messages.**

The rapid growth in mobile usage has lead to an influx of apps and a decline in new downloads – when a user finds an app that works, he or she will stick with it. But our number crunching shows that if you’re not delivering an engaging experience unique to your users, your app will get left in the dust.

**With the right data, personalization is the most advanced weapon in your arsenal for creating an epicly awesome user experience.**

In this guide, we’ll cover how and where to gain user information, how to group similar audiences, and where to put this data into marketing action.
Step #1
Gather data to create complete user profiles

Do you understand your customers through-and-through? To accomplish this, you need a host of relevant data - from more places than one.
First, get a complete view of your users

Your app is an increasingly important business channel, but it’s also a supremely different medium in terms of functionality and user experience. What users do in-app gives insight into the mobile usage patterns of your audience, and how they like to regularly interact with your brand. Using in-app behavior to inform personalization is one way to ensure a great app user experience; but it’s only half of the equation.

Many brands are stuck when it comes to tracking the right metrics and determining what works. More than that, an app can be viewed as a solitary channel, one that’s profoundly different from in-store, web, and traditional medias companies use to engage customers today.

But if your users are interacting with you across a host of other channels, why should their app experience be limited to how they act in-app? Your audience wants an experience tailored to their interests and needs, regardless of when or where they provided the information necessary to inform that experience. They want it to be streamlined, efficient, and personalized.

Capturing and harnessing user data from all of the channels you employ and using that to inform your app experience is how you build a foundation for true personalization. Using a tool like Profiles, you can collect, manage and share relevant data about your customers across channels, enabling you to capture a complete view of who your users are. With Profiles, gathering and retaining customer information from every channel is easy – and,
the data is stored together for a holistic view of your users.

Then, tightly integrate user information (profile data) with user action (behavioral data)

Profile data, or the information gathered within Profiles, is a collection of individual user attributes, such as age, location, gender, customer type, and more, that include user data gathered across every channel (as we’ve covered, this includes your app, in-store, online, email, and others).

Behavioral data is how your customer uses your app or interacts with your business across other channels. This is typically expressed in-app by the completion of an event (an action) or a screen viewed. Online, this could be emails opened, and in-store, it could be events attended. If profile data is the attributes, behavioral data is the action.

Using profile data in conjunction with behavioral data, you have a clear look into who your user is and how he or she likes to interact with your business.
By integrating profile and behavioral data, you’ll have **one unified, cross-channel** database of user insights. With these, you can:

- Identify buyer personas and target audiences
- Run transactional push messages
- Create cross-channel marketing campaigns

All of which create a better user experience and improve engagement.
Defining a buyer persona is a necessary step to personalization. Staying relevant to users is the key to creating a great user experience. Don’t ignore the correlation!

Step #2

Use data to create groups of similar audiences
Segment to create similar audiences

Implementing app analytics and letting them run isn’t enough to give you the actionable insights you need – what you need is to organize and structure your analytics appropriately. Think of it this way: if you don’t have a lense with which to read and make sense of your analytics, how are you ever going to improve the user experience?

Segmentation is how you go about making sense of your user data. It is the tie that binds your analytics and marketing. Analytically, it allows you to discover common patterns between users and what that means about your audience and for your app. Then, you can target relevant marketing campaigns to specific segments.

For instance, with segmentation you can determine which users:

- Have less than seven days in between app sessions
- Came from a Facebook acquisition campaign
- Have made at least one in-app purchase
- Are between the ages of 18-30
- Have less than seven days in between app sessions
Why does this matter? Because this segment represents possible high-value users who are engaging with your app and converting on a purchase. You can use this data to personalize (and therefore improve upon) their app experience, build loyalty, and encourage conversions. Plus, with segmentation, you can track which of these user groups have the highest customer lifetime value (LTV), or how their value increases once personalization is implemented.
The best way to put personalization to work for your app is using app marketing. Not only do these techniques prompt additional app opens and boost usage, they can effectively steer users to the app features or offers that interest them most.

Step #3
Run truly personalized app marketing

Sometimes you gotta pay a little, so you can ball a lot!

Rent-A-Swag
Three words for you: Treat yo self! Here’s free shipping to help.

20% OFF
premium subscription
Treat yo self!
Create custom marketing campaigns

Just as emails drive subscribers back to your website and sales associates create positive interactions with in-store purchasers, push and in-app messages are the best marketing tool you have to engage and convert app users.

But, as we’ve discovered to be indisputably true over the past few pages, each of your users is different - meaning they’re not a homogenous group who will all respond positively to the same marketing campaign. This is where app personalization starts to shine, and becomes vital to creating and running marketing that speaks to user interests and encourages them through a personalized funnel.

Starting with segment-based campaigns

With segments, you can target similar groups of users based on common attributes or interests, making the app messaging they receive relevant and worthy of a swipe or a click-through. This is the most basic way to start running personalized campaigns. Because although user segments aren’t specific to one person, these groups will respond to the same kind of campaigns, which are all tailored to their interests. If you’re just getting started with personalization and don’t yet have profile data at your disposal, you can still segment to create similar audiences and run custom campaigns to each group.
Working in automation

Another way to run campaigns is when an app message is triggered by a corresponding event - say, a user has read 3+ articles on your news app (event), so he or she is sent an in-app message with a special subscription offer. This is a prime example of using behavioral analytics in real-time to serve up personalization, smack dab in the middle of the app experience.

Having automated campaigns that launch when your user completes an action creates targeted outreach at the right moment and with the right content. What’s great about this level of customization is that it happens immediately, but requires no immediate response from you, the marketer. Using event-based triggers, you can run ongoing, instantaneous (and still personalized) marketing.
Take it cross-channel

With profile data, you have the ability to deliver more targeted marketing messages and to reach users based on key profile information that affects your bottom line. Essentially, with profile data sourced from across all of your key marketing channels, you can create app messaging campaigns that hit a homerun with your users.

Now that we’ve covered profile and behavioral information separately, it’s time to bring them together to create advanced personalization. Here’s the equation to always have on-hand:

For example, say you’re looking to drive purchases in your eCommerce app - it’s a fairly common goal, and one that still often proves difficult to complete. You can target female users between the ages of 25-30 (profile data) who have added an item to their cart within the last week (behavior data) and send them a push message with a discount code, an offer for free shipping, or just a reminder that they left an item in their cart (personalized campaign).
Here are some other examples of personalized marketing campaigns, all of which help improve the app user experience, tailor to user interests, and improve conversions.

Campaigns that incorporate profile data help to:

- Drive purchases
- Boost engagement
- Retain users
- Increase awareness
- Build loyalty

Depending on your industry and overall mobile goals, some of these can be more important than others. In all cases, your marketing campaigns will be smarter, your user experience stronger, and your users happier with personalized interactions.
Remember: personalization doesn’t just work to inform your app experiences - you can also use in-app preferences, attributes and behaviors for individual users to market to them across other channels. Consider, for example, email campaigns to users who have purchased in-store and browsed in the app. Keeping users engaged with your brand is often a multi-channel effort.

**Keep it closed-loop**

If your analytics data and marketing campaigns aren’t part of the same closed-loop system, you can’t automatically feed the user data from those campaigns back into your analytics to improve and personalize the app experience. Meaning, you won’t be able to see within your segments which of those users converted at higher rates on a particular campaign.

You want any and all data from the success of your personalized marketing to automatically update your analytics hub. Otherwise, you won’t have the data integrity necessary to prove the absolute success of your campaigns, and it will be difficult to keep the data surrounding users in one central place (in order to easily and effectively improve campaigns as users change over time).
Here's the big question: how do you get cross-channel profile data all in one place? In order to move forward with segmentation and run app marketing, you need to be able to efficiently collect profile data and integrate it into some kind of system.
A great source of profile information is your CRM, as this already houses all of your users’ web and offline (in-store) activity, including in-store purchases, visits, email signups, and other metrics.

But how do you centralize this data in one place?

One option is to build a database yourself. This can be a good option for you if you want a highly customized platform that you and few others have access to. It will meet all of your needs, and have your engineers’ stamp of approval, but can cause more problems than it solves. Building your own takes a lot of time and maintenance, requires hiring of additional people to monitor and if it’s not the business’s core competency, it detracts the business from focusing on what it’s aiming to do - drive sales, build up customer bases, become a retail leader, etc. Plus, it can be difficult to import data from multiple sources, and it doesn’t allow you to run marketing campaigns from within your analytics database.

Another option is to use a platform specifically designed to track and house data, run app marketing campaigns and A/B testing, and keep everything closed-loop. With Localytics, you’re able to do just that. While this may mean a monthly fee depending on how many users you have, it is actually less expensive long-term when you factor in the money you lose when using in-house engineering time and resources.
Start collecting data immediately

Get to Know Your Users, Better

Even if you’re not ready to start personalizing your app, it’s still important to begin collecting user profile data, and tracking how target audiences use your app. It’s time to start tracking how your app experience evolves, how user expectations change, and what you can do to make your app.

Because your users are demanding a certain level of sophistication when they interact with your business app – so why not make it even better than they thought possible?
Need inspiration for building goal-crushing app marketing campaigns?

Start by looking at what leaders in the industry have done to drive revenue, engagement, and conversion from their apps.

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