

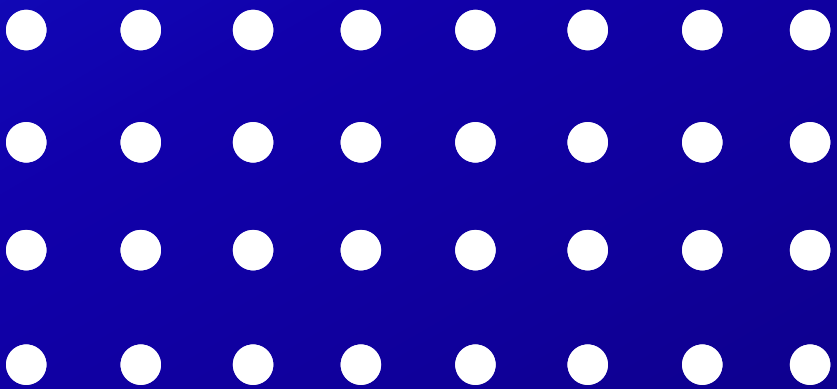


45 Ways to Boost App Engagement & Retention

Small Changes You Can Make
Today to Drive Big Results

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Introduction

In 2019, consumers downloaded a record 204 billion apps,¹ and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has seen continued growth in downloads and in-app spending.² But with millions of apps vying for attention, your success depends on experimenting, testing and continually improving the app experience. That means taking steps today to optimize your mobile app for your brand and customers.

In this eBook, we'll share 45 ways to help optimize your mobile app for every stage of the customer lifecycle. Whether you're looking for a few fresh ideas or hoping to brush up on some tried and true tactics, this eBook is for you!



Key Stats & Trends



STATS

Mobile App Use, Spending & Downloads Hit All-Time Highs In Q2 2020

40%

growth in year-over-year
mobile app usage⁽¹⁾

\$27B

overall spending in apps
in mobile apps⁽²⁾

35B

total app downloads
in Q2 2020⁽³⁾

STATS

But It's an Increasingly Crowded & Competitive Marketplace

2.56M

apps available on the
Play Store as of May
2020, and 1.85M on
the App Store⁽¹⁾

9

number of apps
used per day by the
average user⁽²⁾

24%

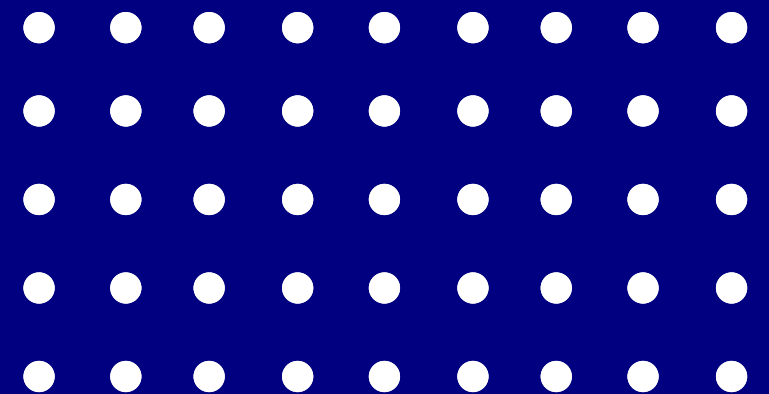
of all apps are used
only once⁽³⁾

ACQUISITION

Welcome & Onboarding

No matter your industry or competitive advantages, attracting new customers to your mobile app is expensive and time consuming. What's worse, even after downloading your app, they're more than likely to delete it after just one use.

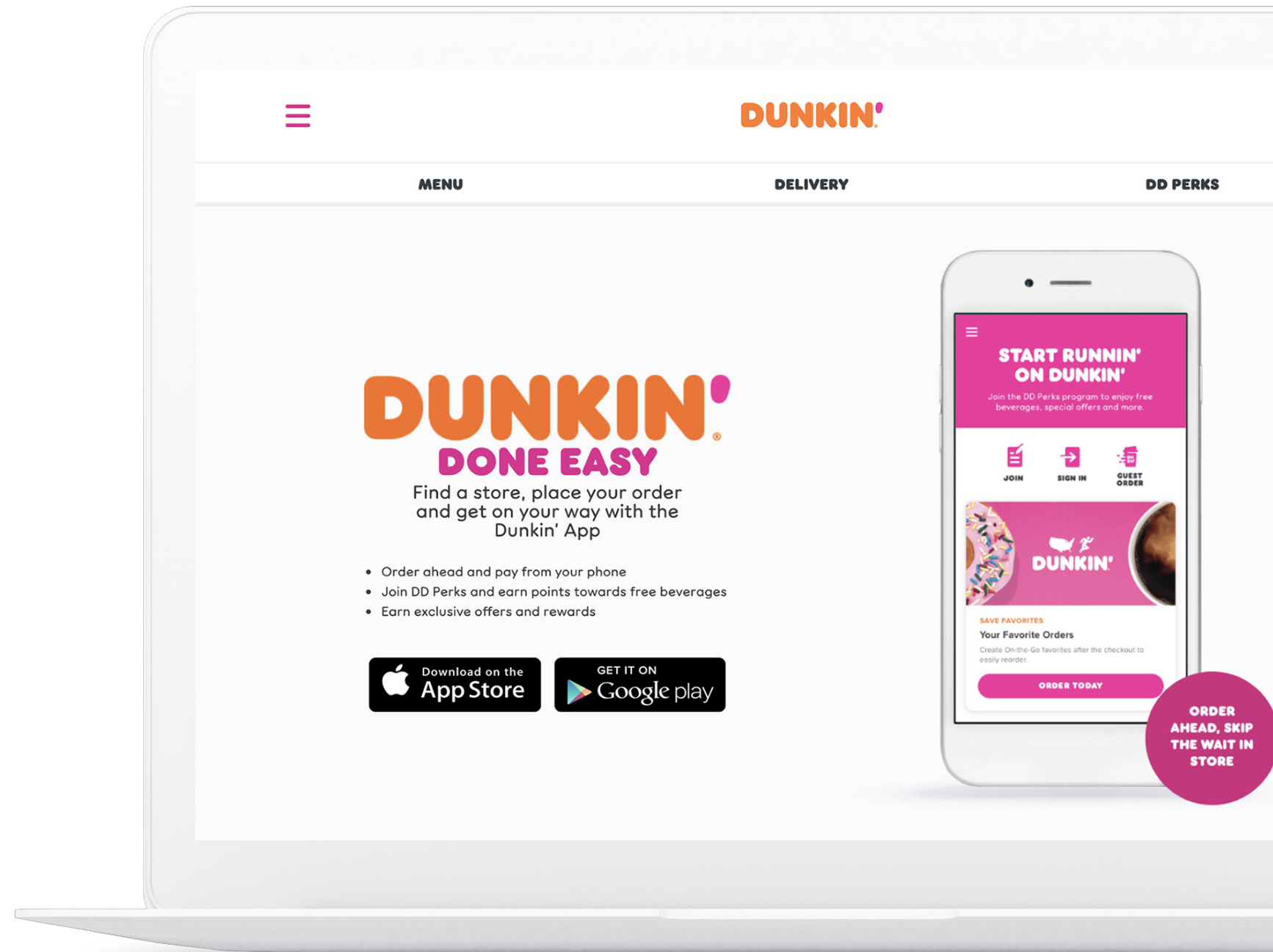
The key to overcoming these hurdles? Give your customers a warm welcome with a seamless experience that drives action and adoption. Try the following strategies to set a course for a long and valuable relationship.



Go Omnichannel

Use all of your channels to promote app engagement and downloads.

- E-mail
- Mobile App
- SMS
- Website



Let Customers Skip the Login

Allow customers to try the app before creating an account.

CASE STUDY: HotelTonight

15% Increase in conversions by eliminating mandatory account creation.

Account Creation

The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for account creation. At the top, there is a 'Sign Up' button with a back arrow. Below it is a 'Cancel' link. The main form has a blue button labeled 'Log in with Facebook'. Below this is an 'OR' separator. The form fields include 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email', 'Password', and 'Promo code' (marked as 'Optional'). At the bottom of the form is a purple button labeled 'Sign Up'. Below the button is a link that says 'Have an account? Sign In'.

In-line Checkout

The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for in-line checkout. At the top, there is a 'Sign Up' button with a back arrow. Below it is a header for 'AC Hotel Boston Cambridge'. The main form has two tabs: 'Credit Card or PayPal' (selected) and 'Apple Pay'. The form fields include 'First Name' (Required), 'Last Name' (Required), and 'Email' (Required). Below these are 'Check-in' (Thu, Nov 10) and 'Check-out' (Fri, Nov 11). The 'Room type' is 'Selected by hotel'. The pricing section shows 'Room (1 Night)' for \$189 and 'Taxes & Fees' for \$32. There is a 'Promo code' field (Optional). The total is displayed as '\$221'. At the bottom is a purple button labeled 'CONTINUE'.

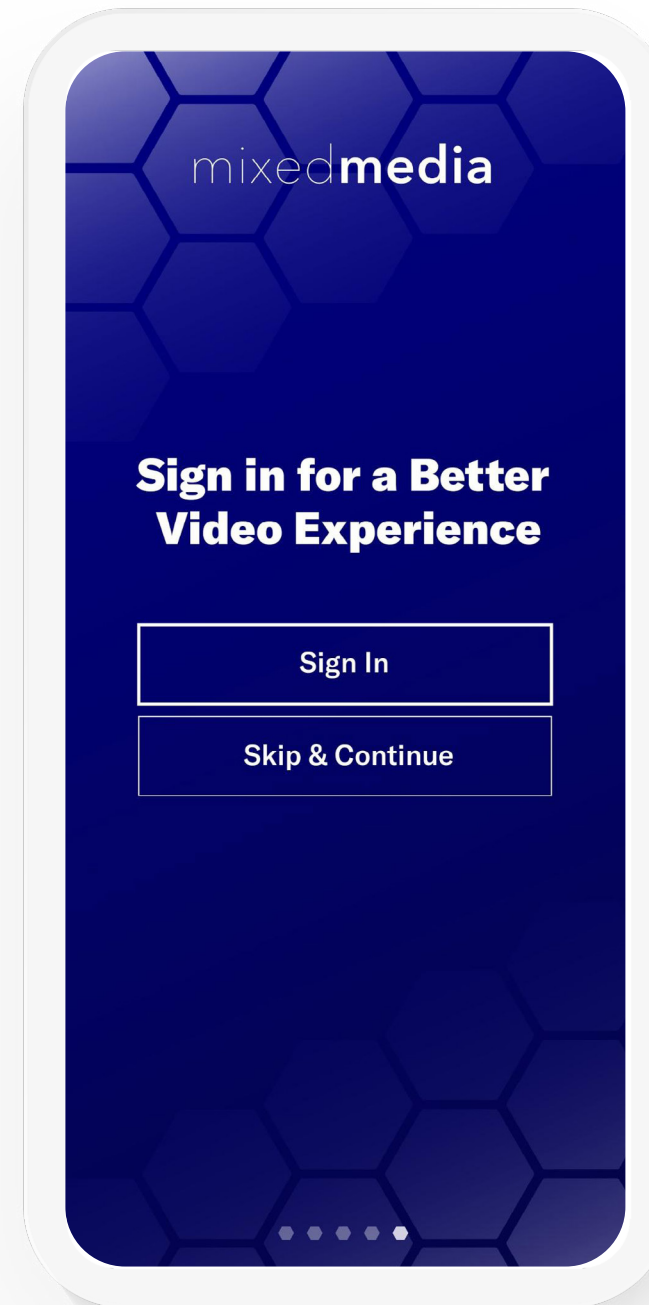
Make Onboarding Easier

Increase app registrations by removing long onboarding tutorials.

CASE STUDY:

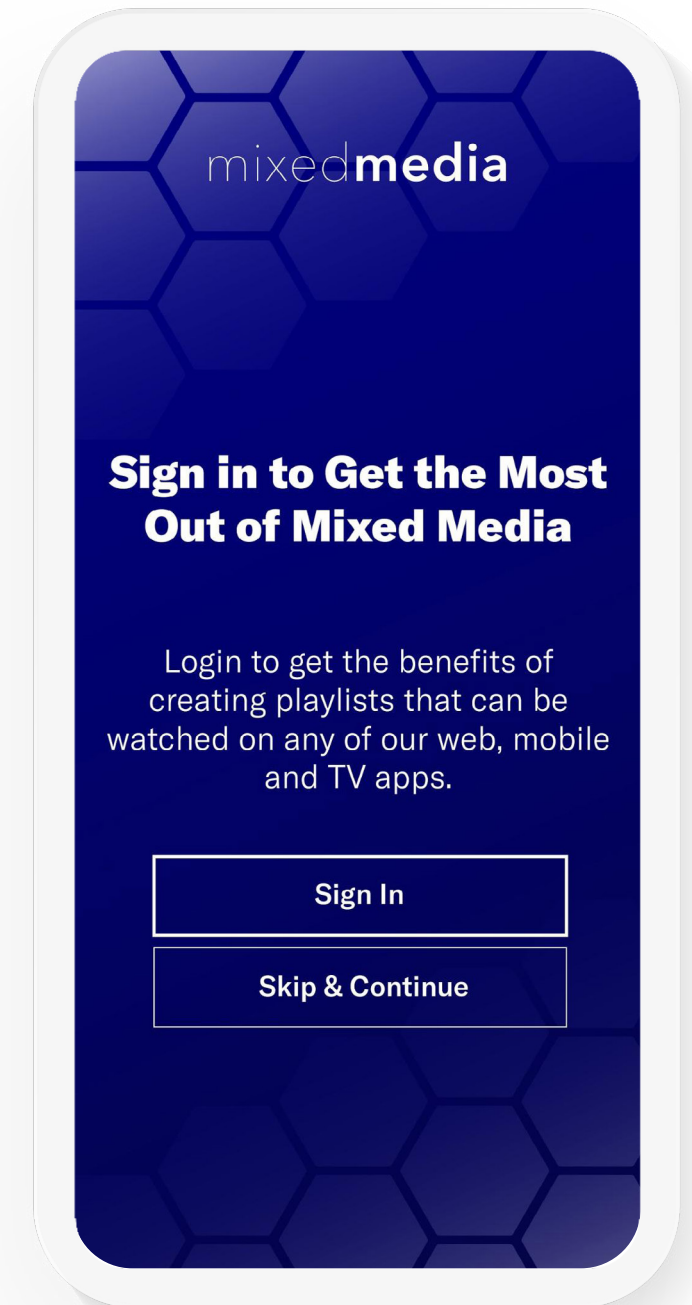
10% Increase in conversions and 6% increase in sign ups for a financial services brand.

Variant A



4 step onboarding flow

Variant B



No onboarding tutorial

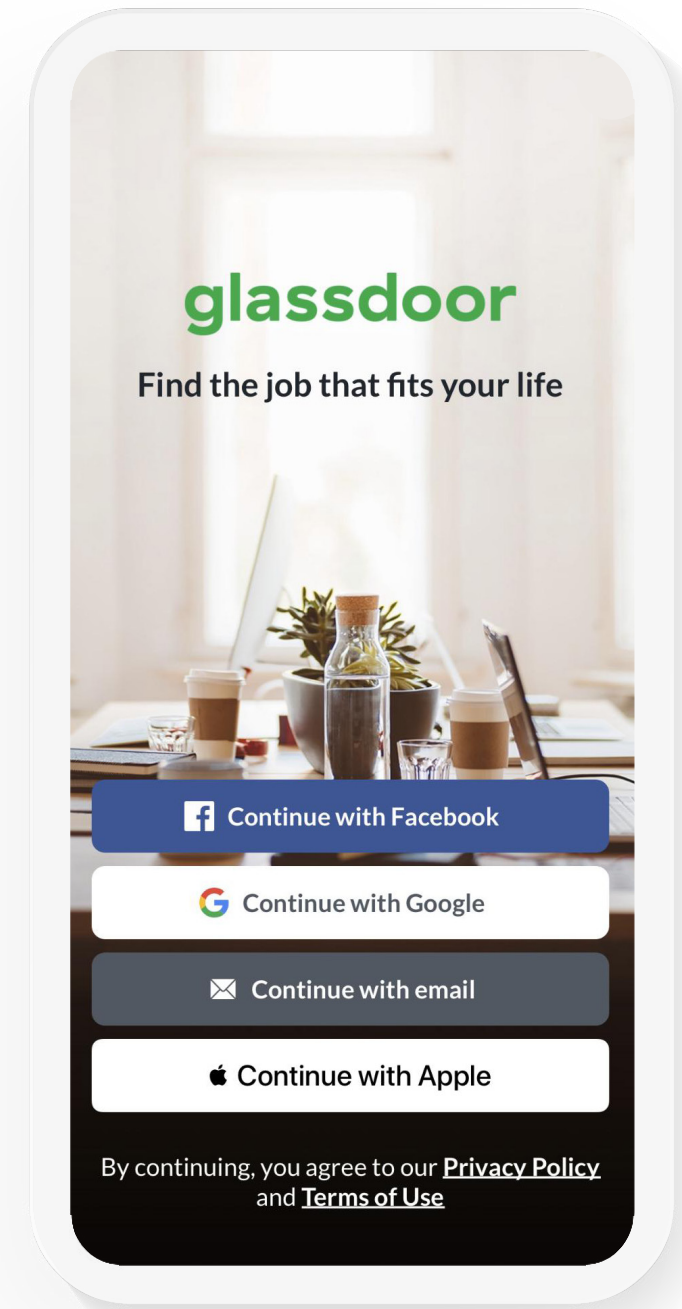
Simplify Sign Ups

Decrease friction with simple sign up options.

- Apple
- Gmail
- Google
- Facebook
- LinkedIn

88%

Of U.S. consumers say they have used social logins, with the number one reason being to avoid filling out online registration forms.¹



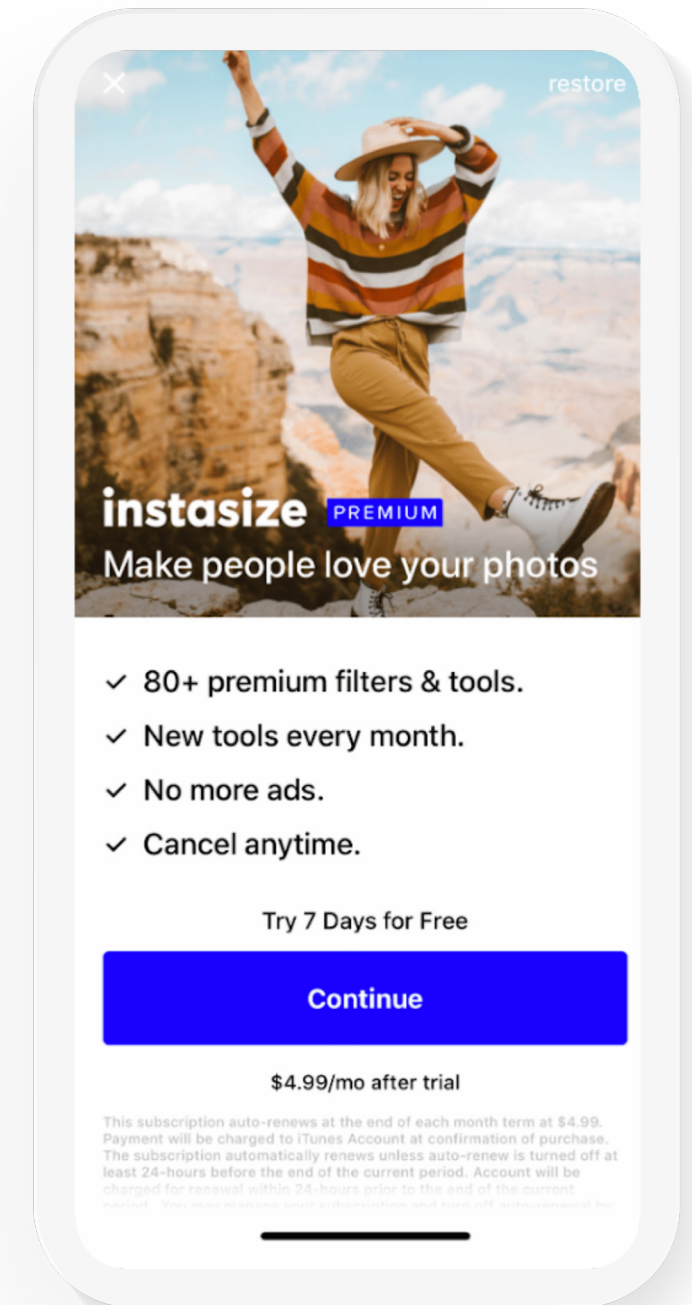
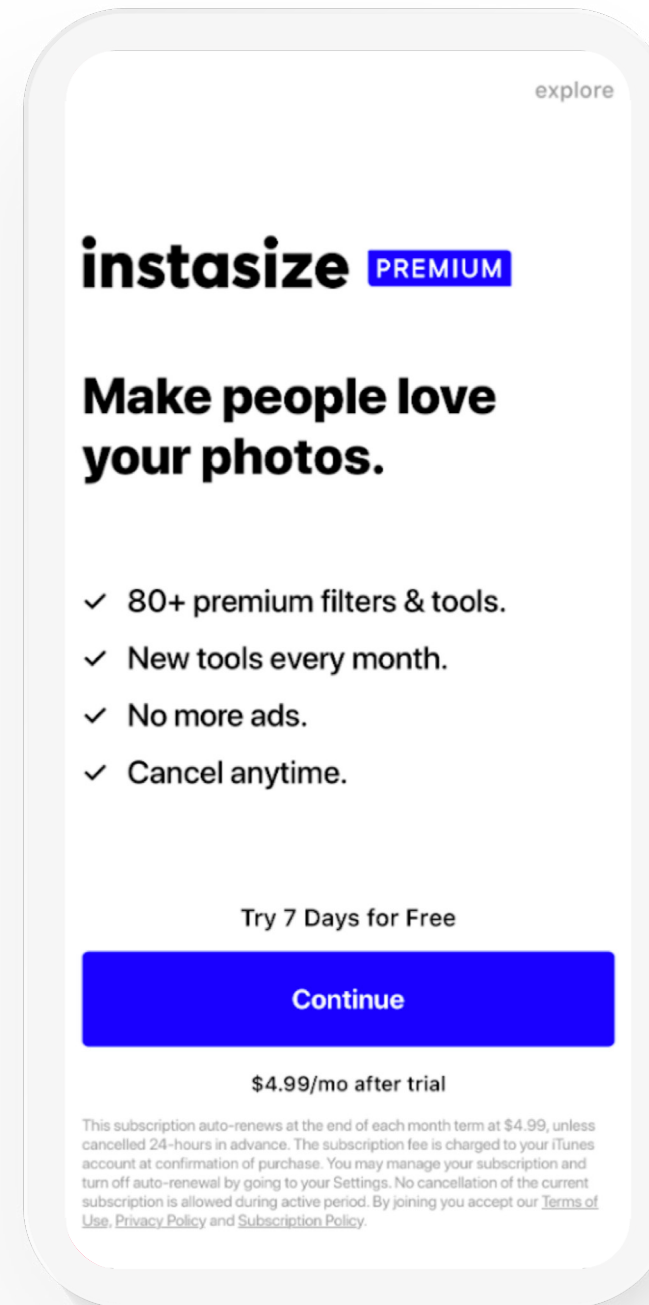
Test for UX Success

A/B test content and layout
to drive registration and
premium upgrades.

CASE STUDY:

Instasize

16% Increase in premium
conversions by A/B testing
paywall layout and design.



Test Your CTA Copy

Accelerate conversion by A/B testing for key metrics.

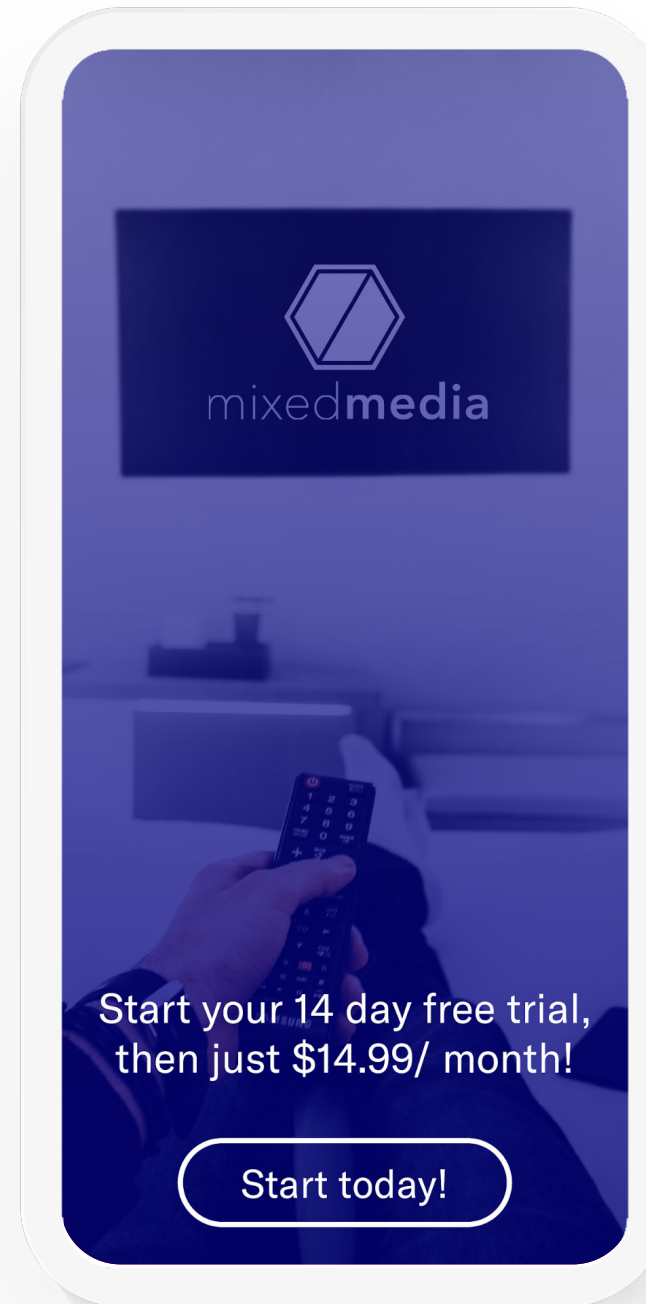
- Start Today Button Clicked
- Email & Password Creation
- Accept Apple Subscription
- Start & Complete Free Trial

CASE STUDY:

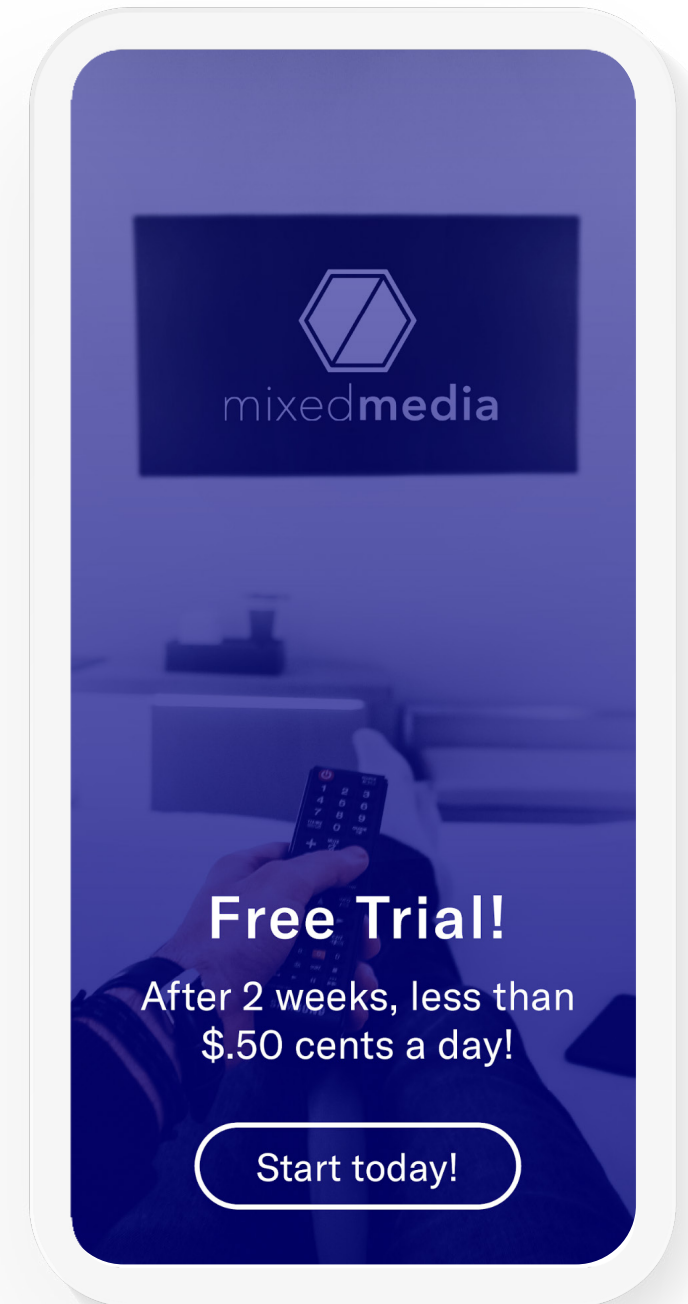
9%

Increase in conversions for a media brand that used this approach.

Variant A



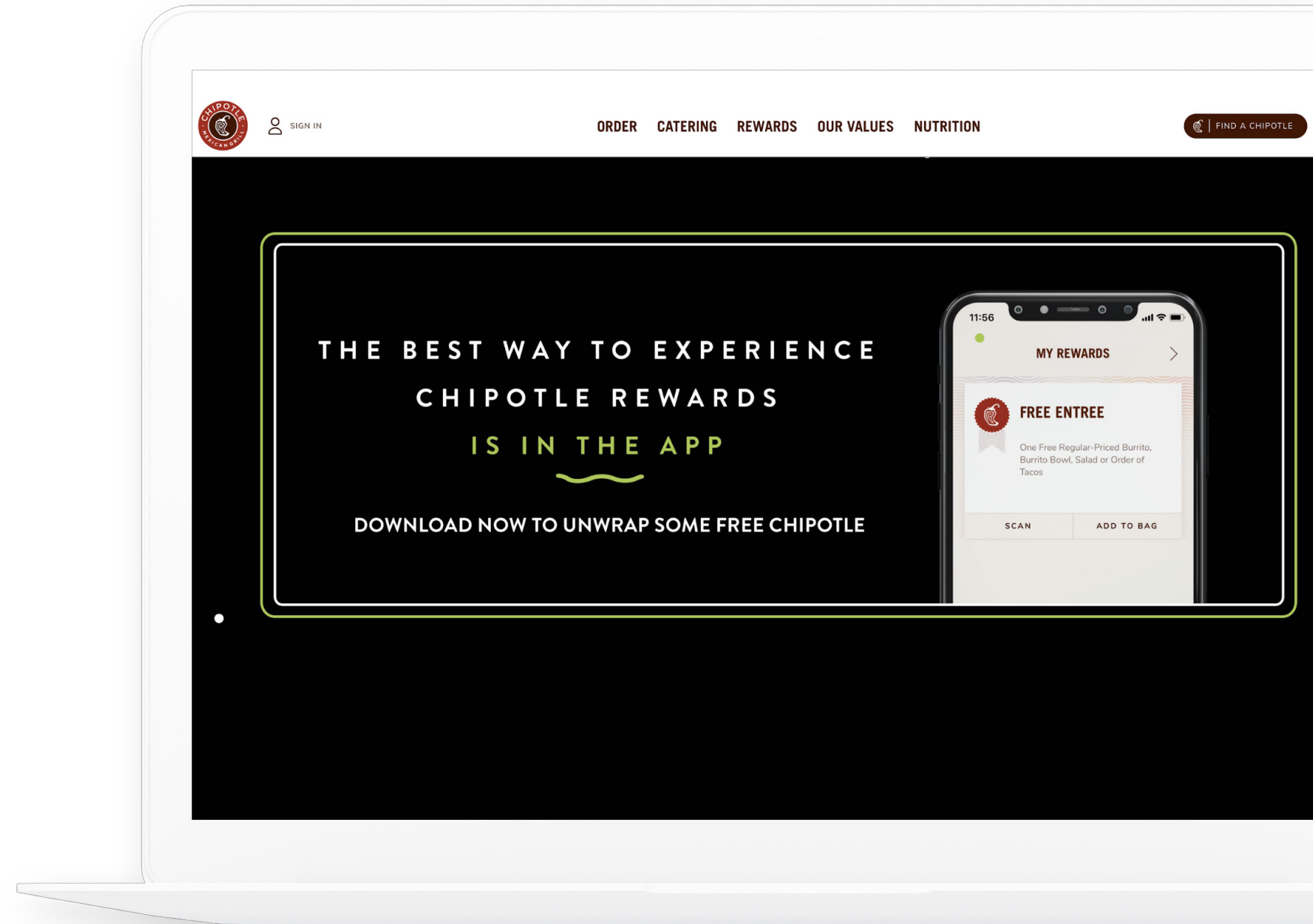
Variant B



Incentivize the Download

Drive app downloads with
incentives and rewards.

- Discounts & Rebates
- Free Items or Services
- In-App Rewards
- Cash Bonus

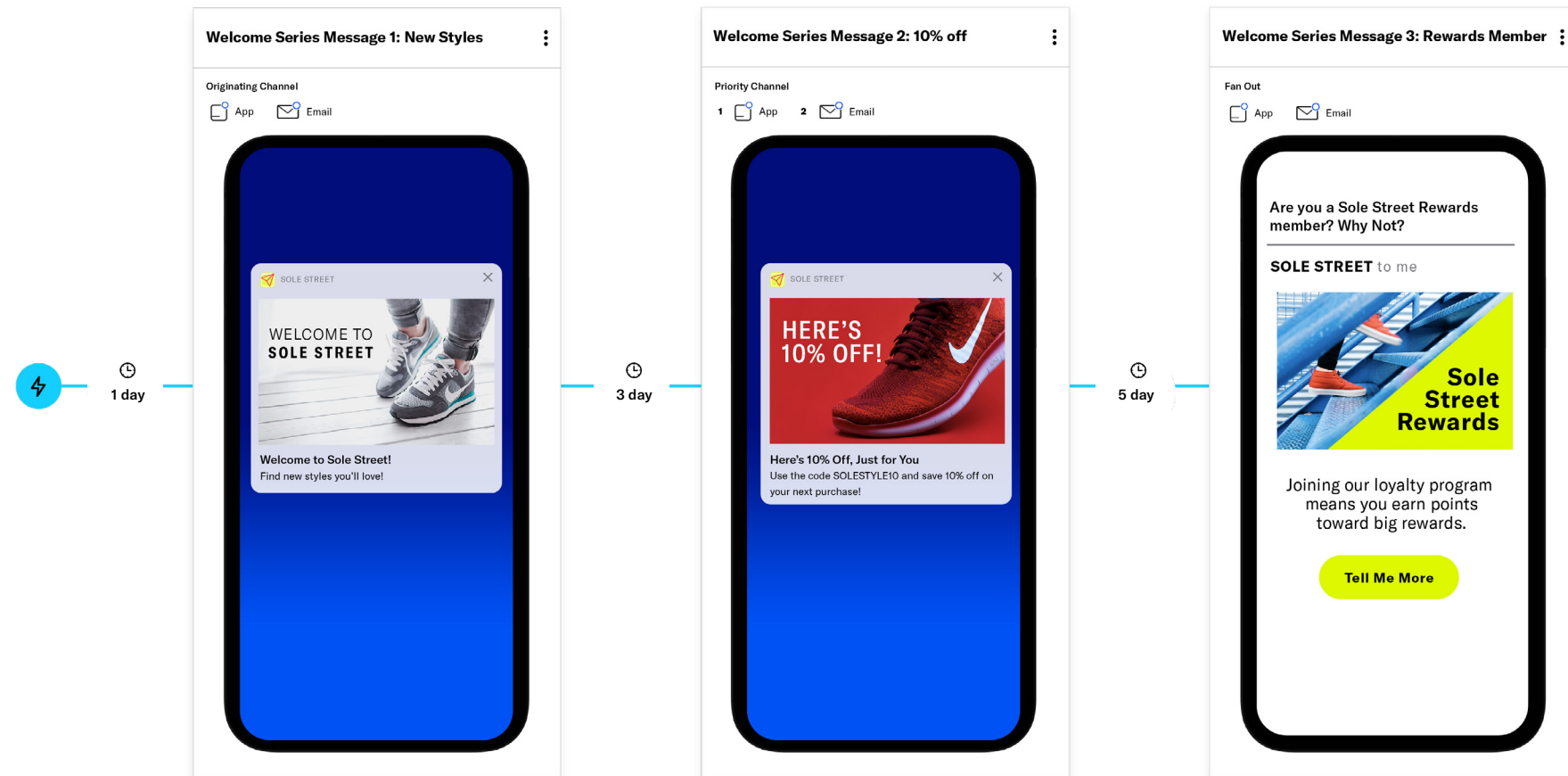


Send a Warm Welcome

Deliver a seamless welcome experience for new customers with a cross-channel welcome series that leads users to action.

95%

Of new, opt-in app users churn within the first 90 days if they don't receive any push notifications.¹



Mobilize Your Loyalty Program

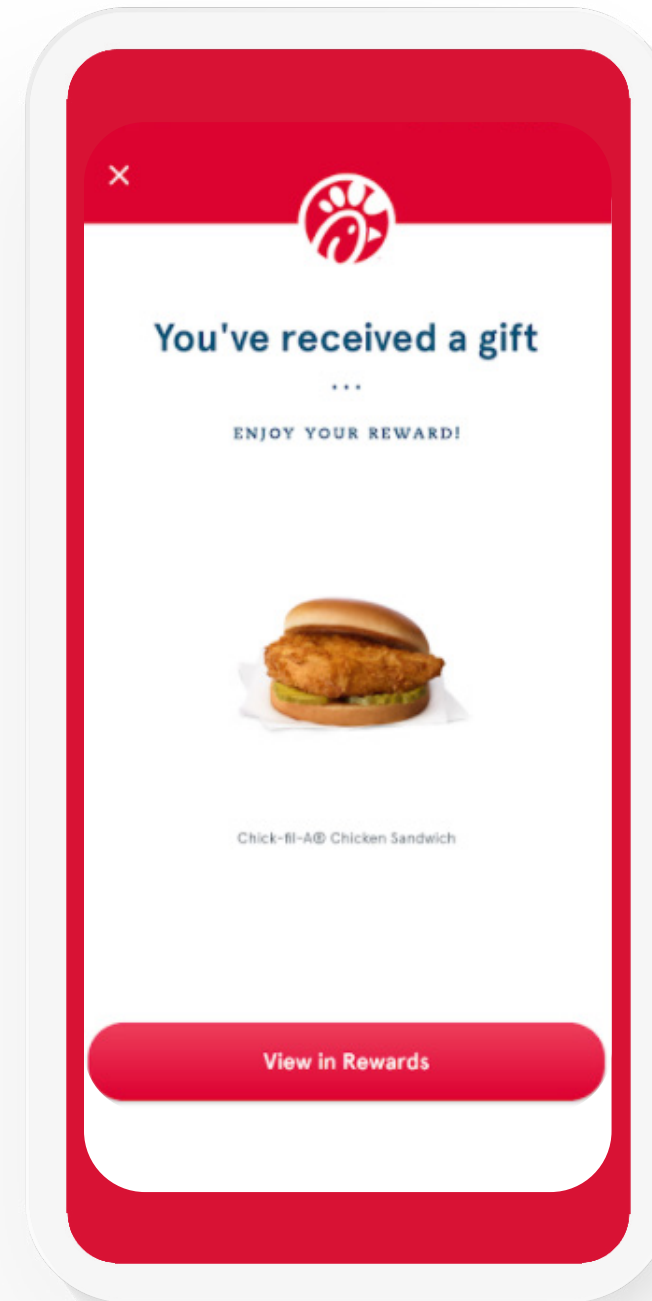
Drive user adoption of your mobile app by leveraging a loyalty program.

CASE STUDY:

Chick-fil-A

6.1% Increase in same store sales.

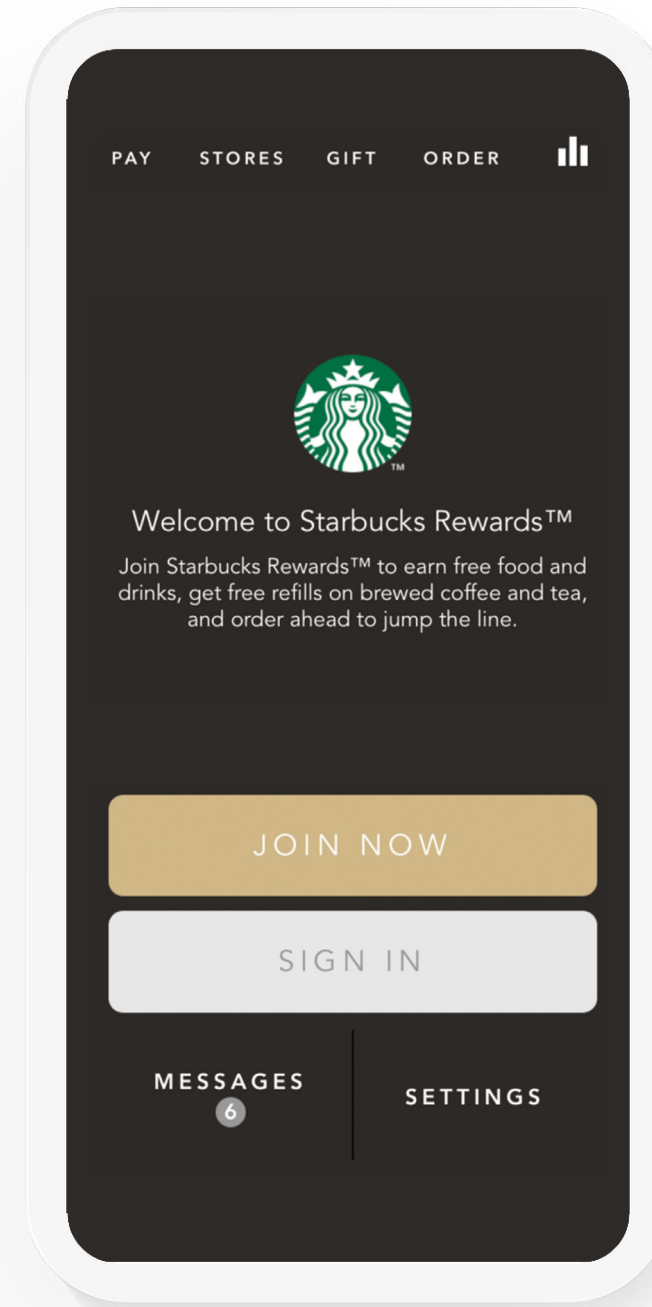
25% Increase in order sizes.



Lead New Customers to Loyalty

Increase app adoption by sending new users loyalty-specific updates.

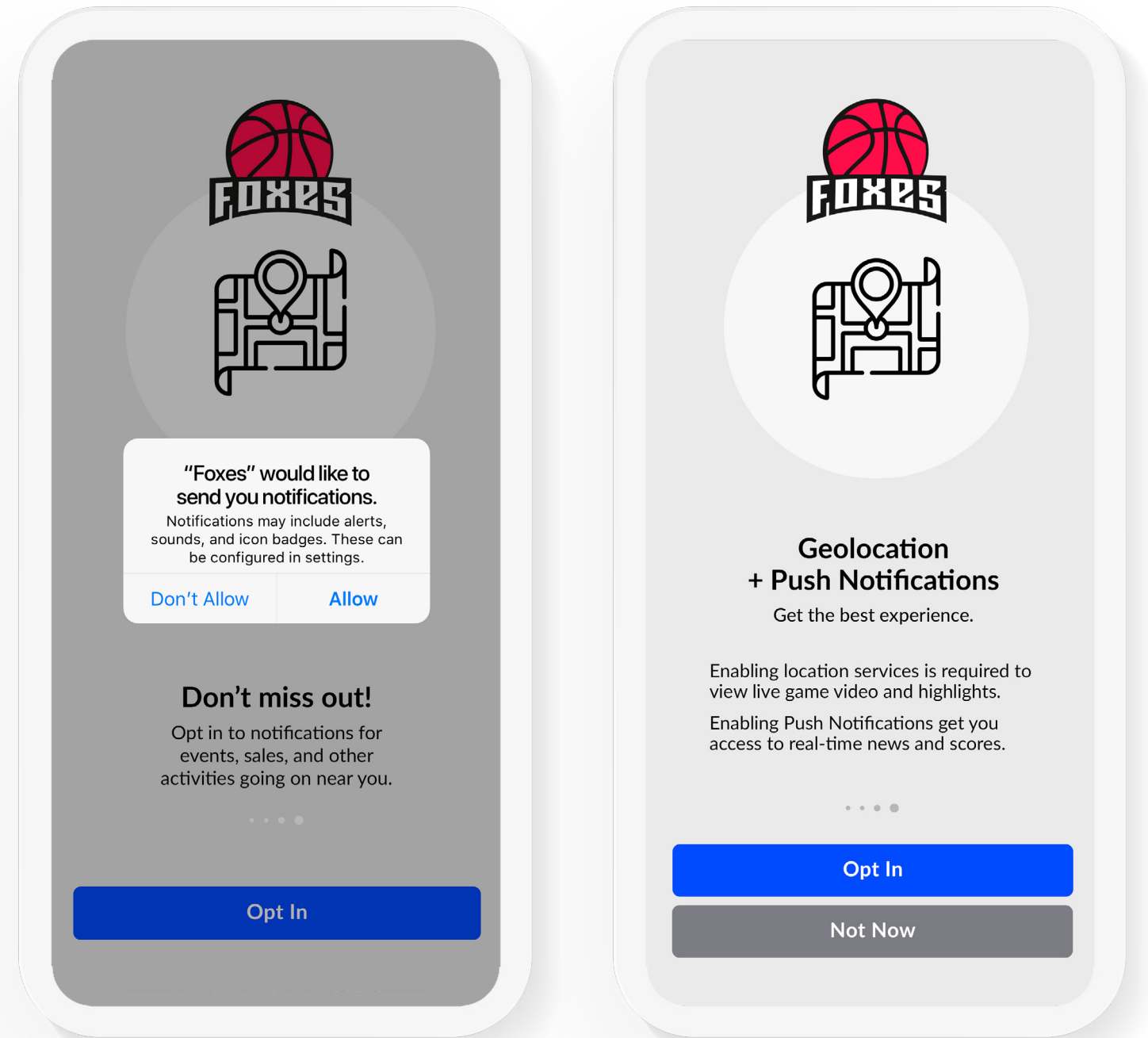
50% Of American consumers will join the loyalty program of a brand they make frequent purchases from.¹



Avoid Default Permission Requests

Use in-app notifications for soft asks to give your users more flexibility on when they take actions.

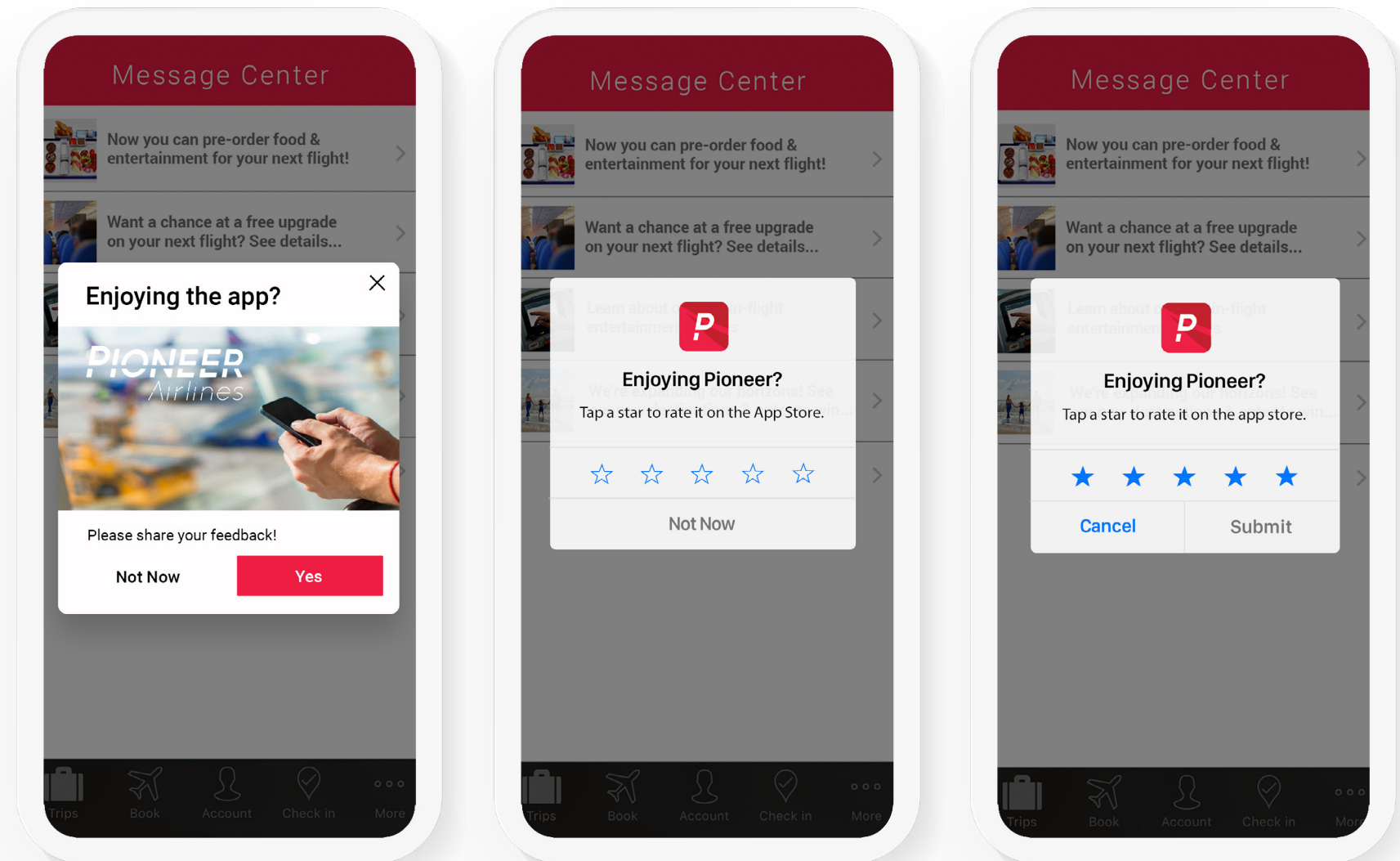
- App Store Rating
- Notification Opt In
- Location Sharing



Drive Positive Reviews

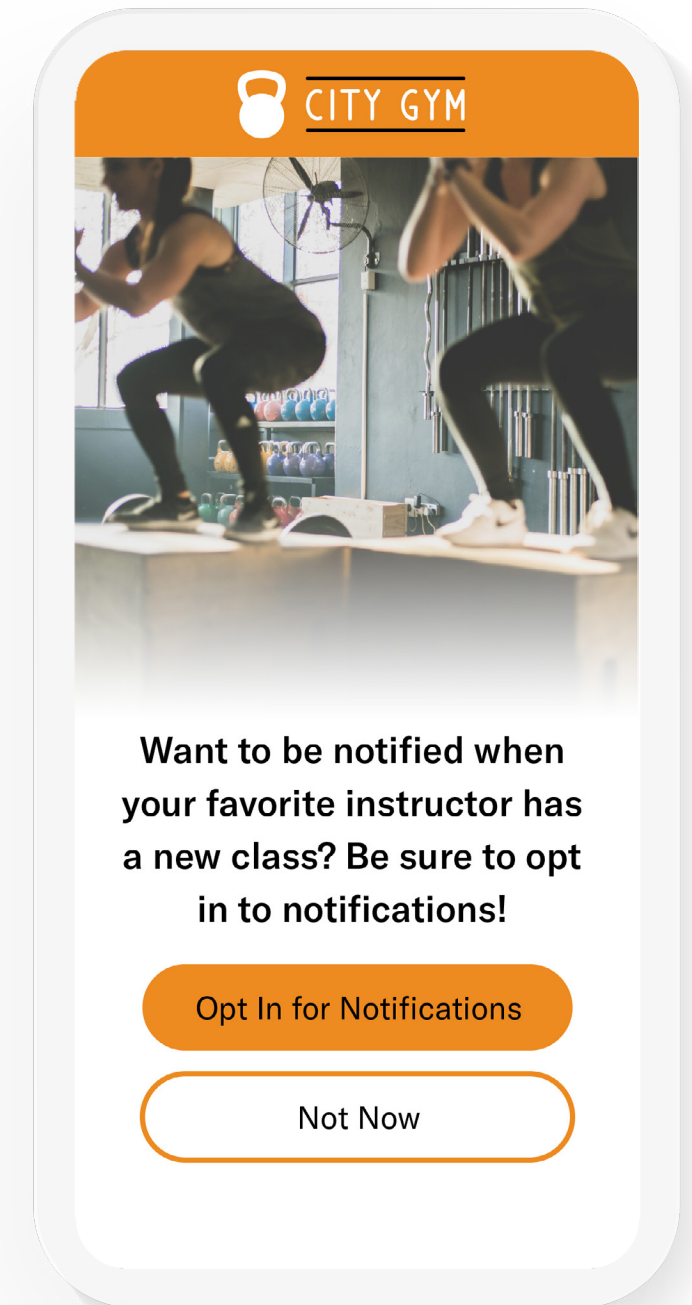
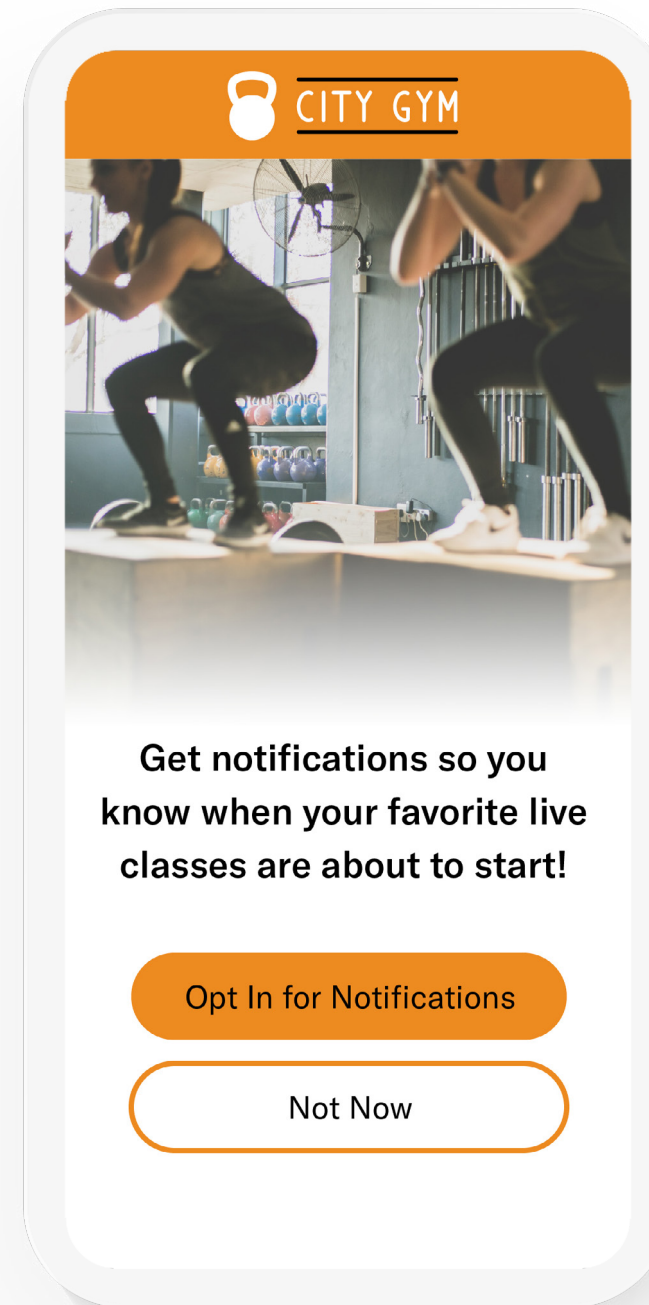
Stand out in the crowded app marketplace by using periodic or event-triggered interstitials to encourage positive reviews.

79% Of consumers check ratings or reviews before downloading an app.¹



Iterate the CTA

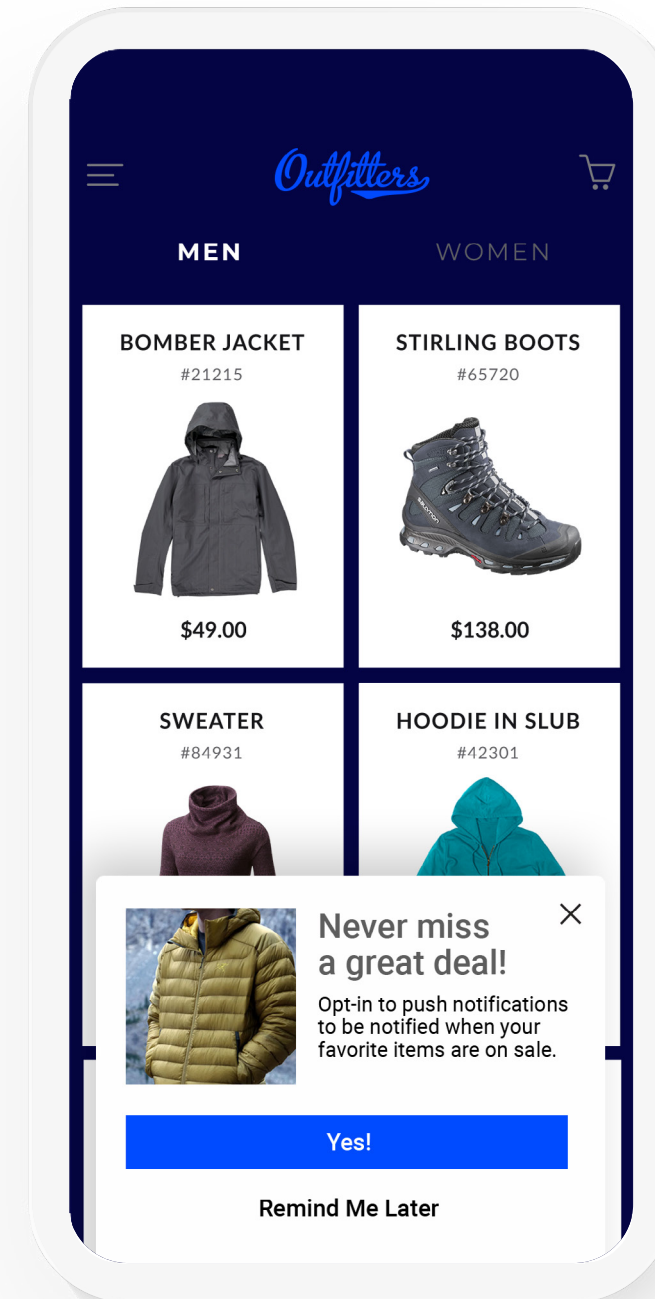
A/B test value-based messaging around the soft prompt to identify language that drives opt-ins to notifications and location services.



Improve Your Opt-In Ask

If users opt-out of location or notification services, test for optimal times to ask again.

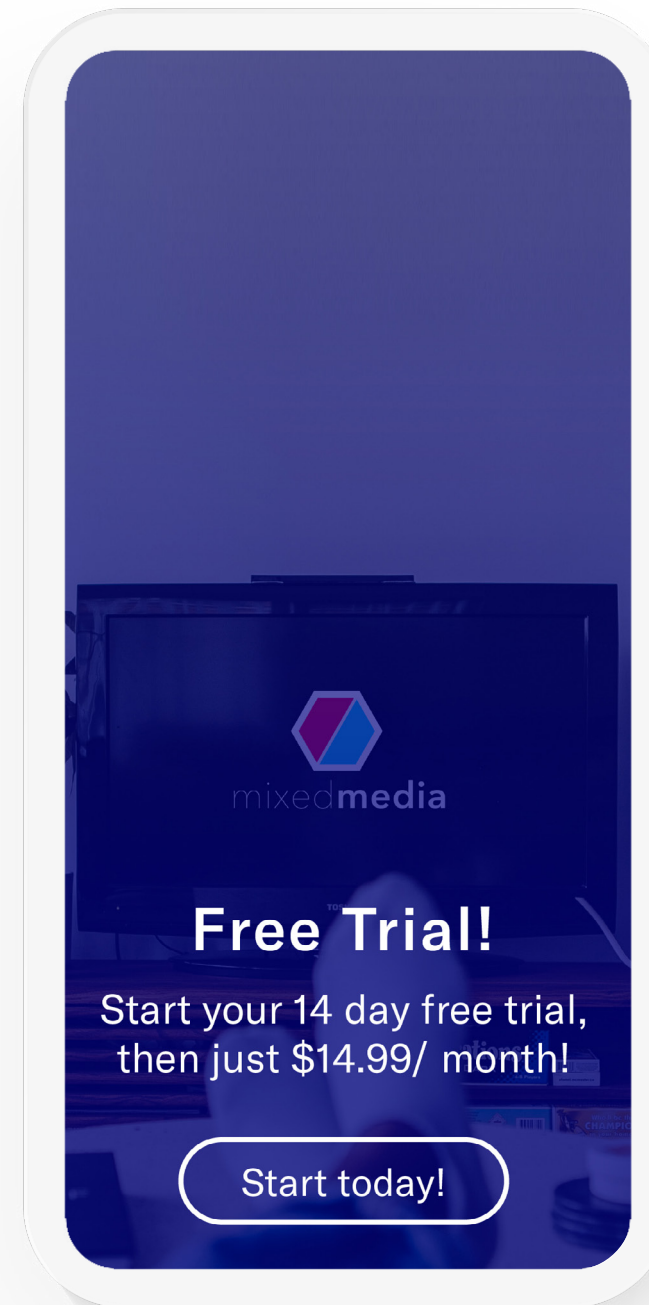
- **Retail:** After viewing an item
- **Media:** After reading an article
- **Other:** After a specific number of sessions



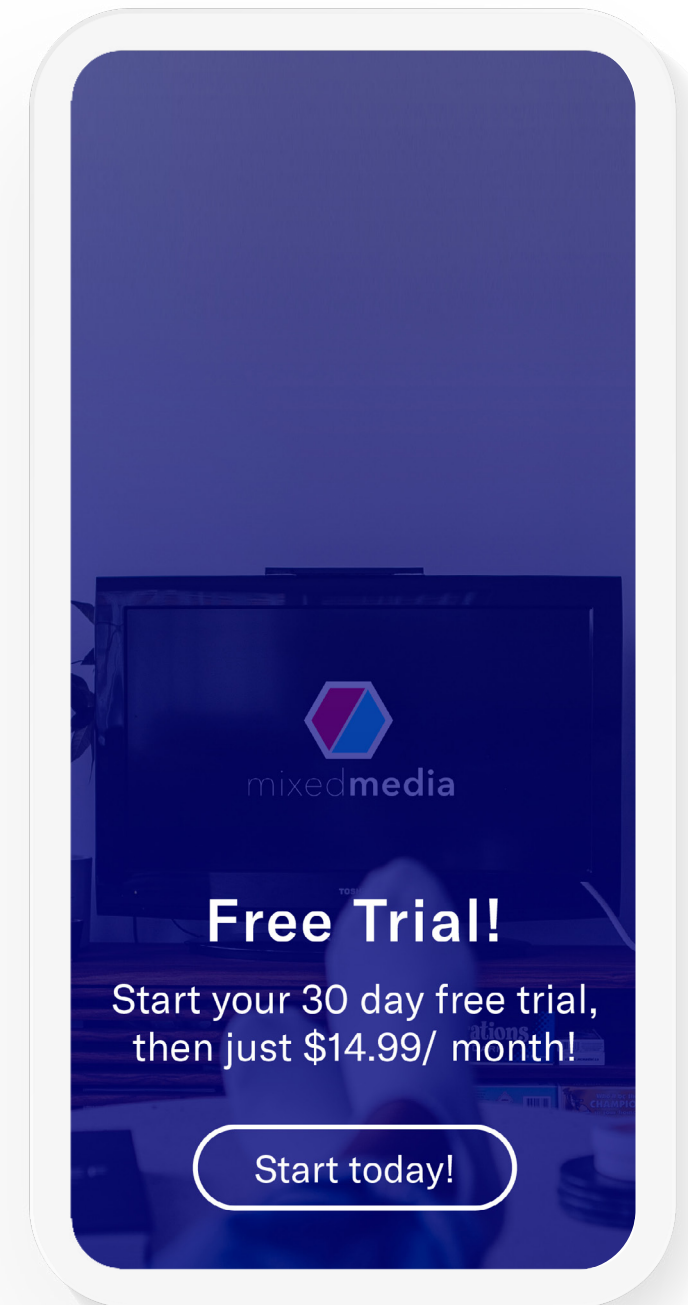
Run Tests With Trials

Test different trial lengths to improve time to paid conversions and decrease subscription opt-outs for segments and users.

Variant A



Variant B

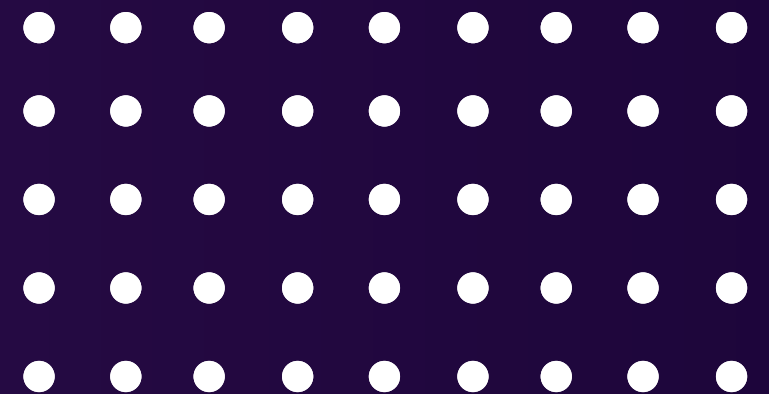


RETENTION

Keep Customers Engaged

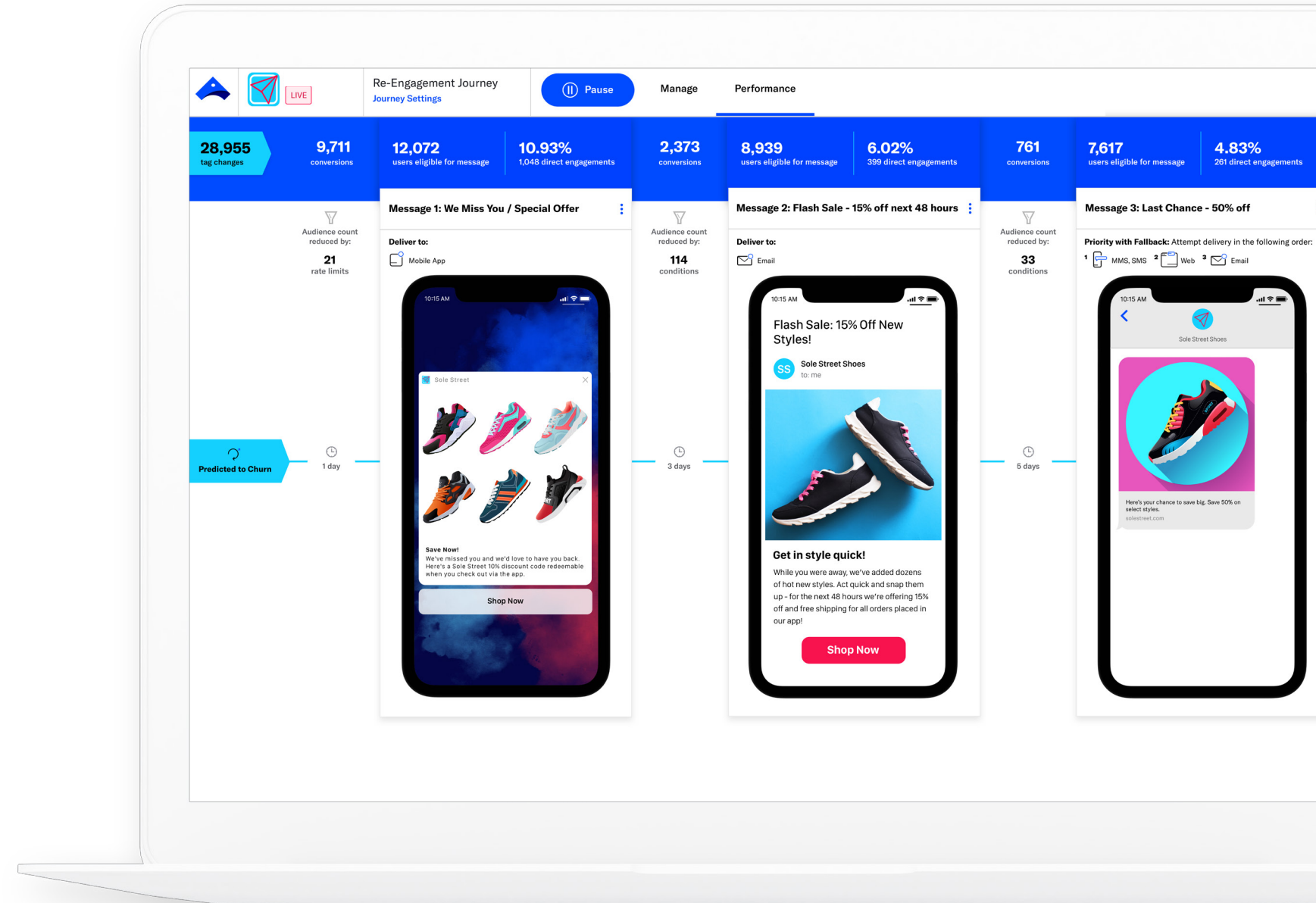
No matter how much you invest into acquiring app users, without a strategy for retention, odds are they'll eventually disengage. Plus, customer expectations are high, and rising, which makes every experience with your app even more critical.

During the retention phase, you need to be there with contextual and relevant content in the moments that matter most to your customers. Try these tactics to build loyalty and keep customers engaged with your app for the long-term.



Communicate Across Channels

Drive users back to your app with cross-channel customer journeys. Simplify the process with Airship's next generation solution, **Airship Journeys**.



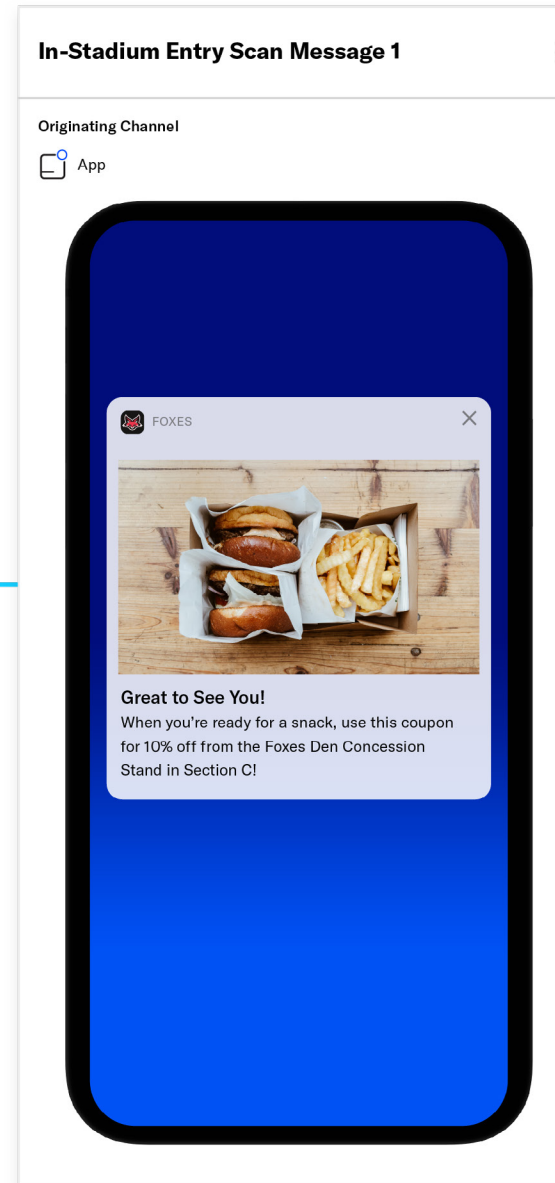
Create Custom Events

Use custom event triggers to make messages more timely and relevant.

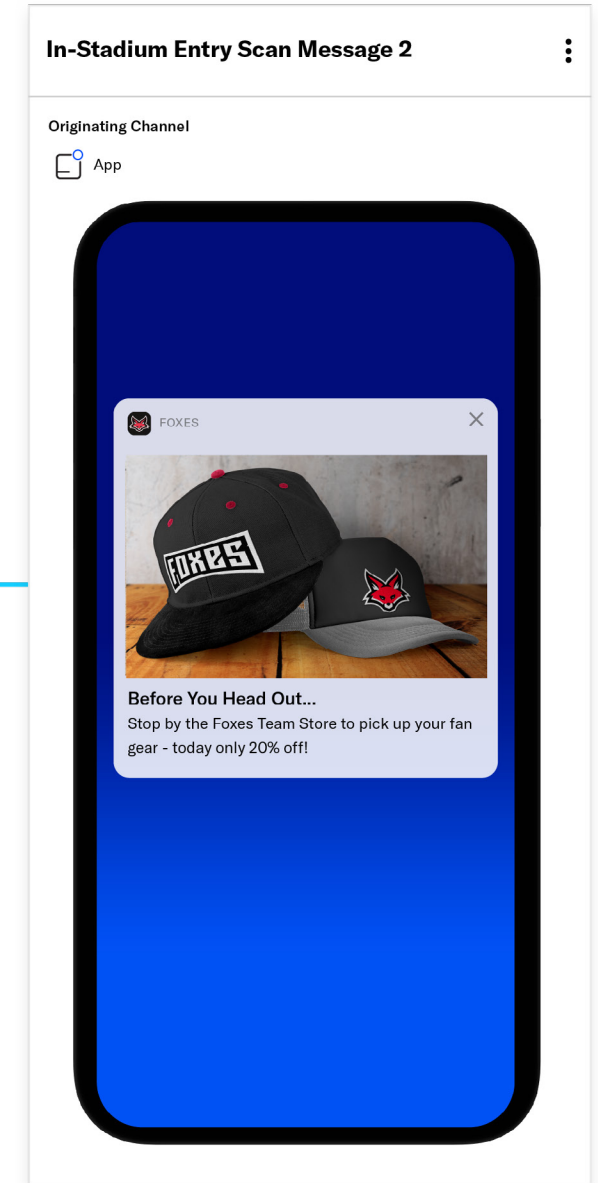
5x Greater response from event-triggered marketing vs. mass marketing campaigns.¹



1 day



3 day



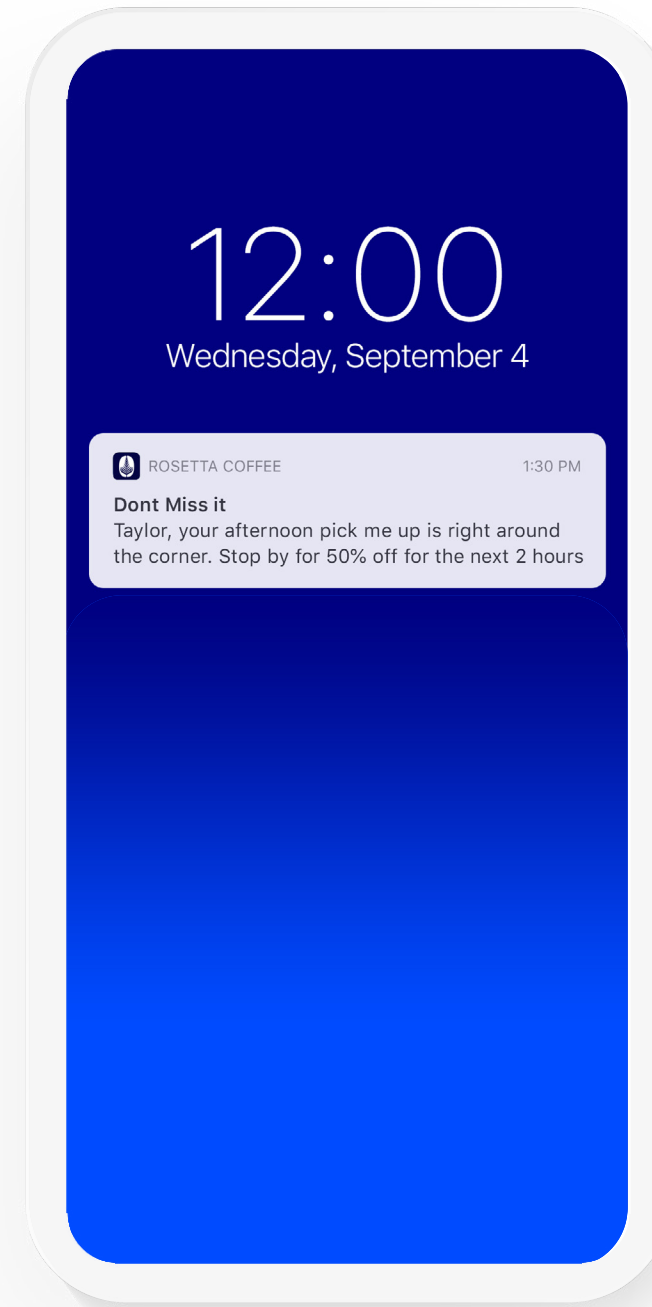
Make It Personal

Drive action and engagement with personalized messages across all of your app channels.

- Push Notifications
- Web Notifications
- Message Center
- In-app Messaging
- Wallet

52%

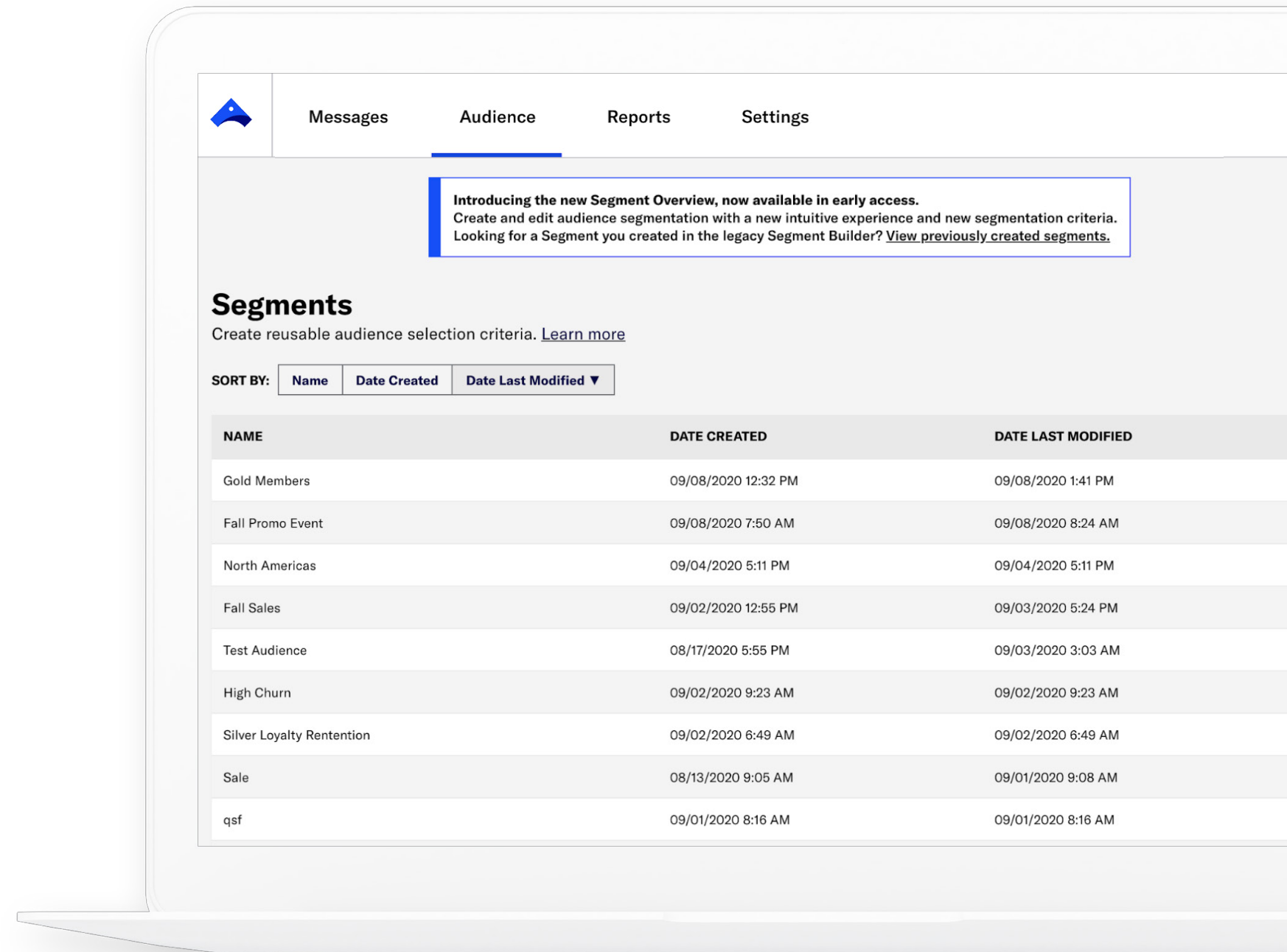
Of consumers say they'd switch brands if they didn't feel they were receiving a personalized experience.¹



Segment for Success

Segment your app users to provide better UX with personalized, relevant and relatable content.

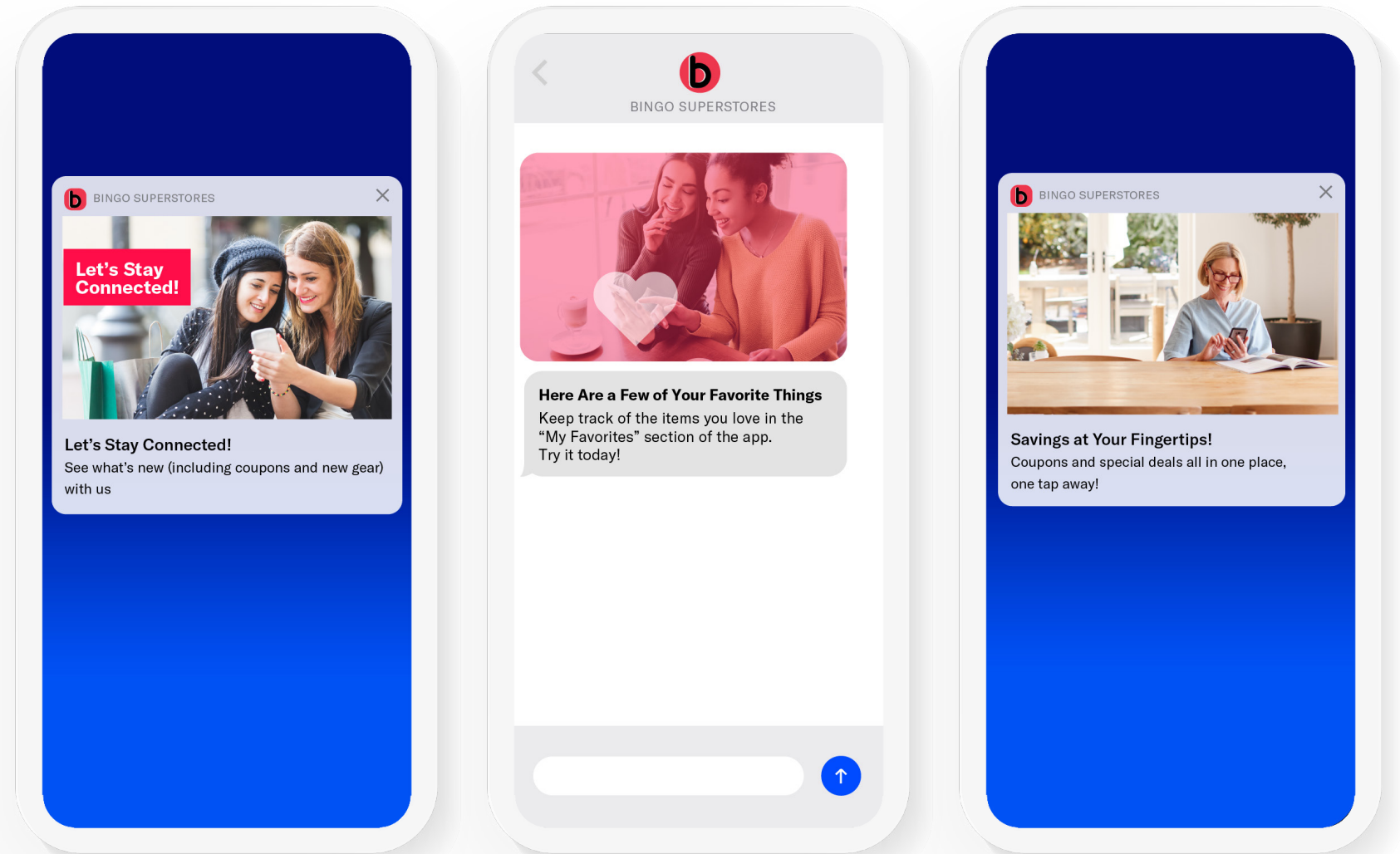
- Names
- Users
- Tags
- Attributes



Get Ahead of Churn

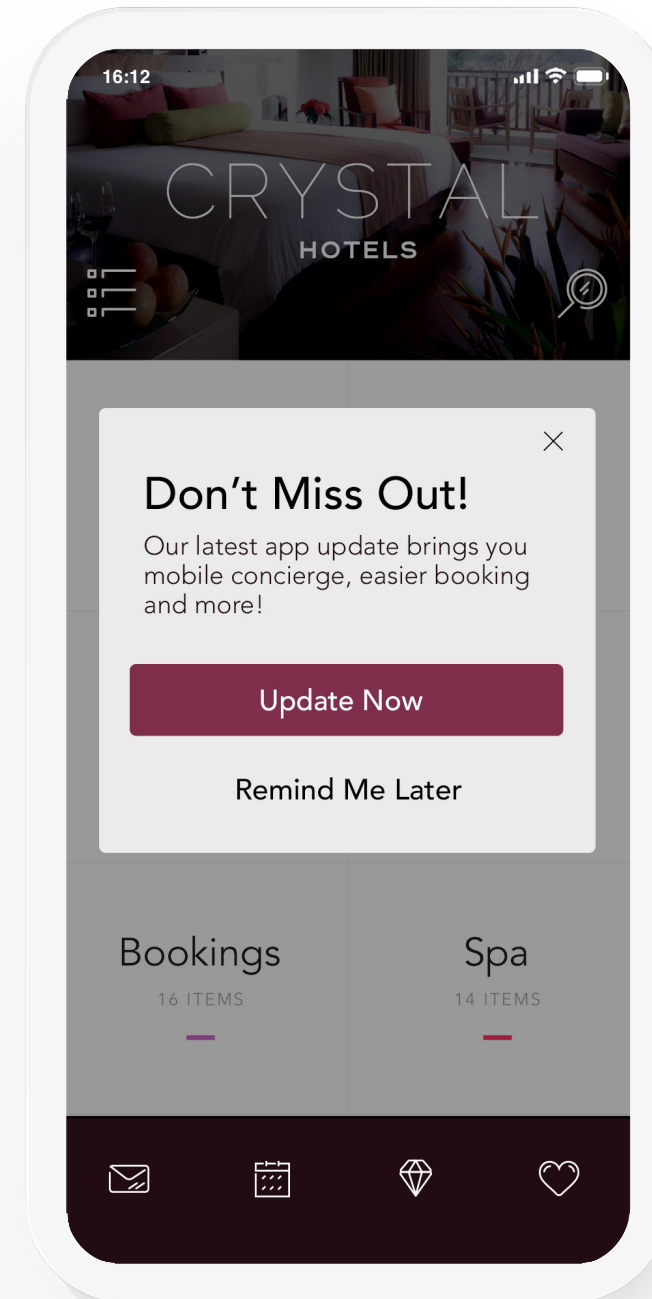
Leverage AI to predict which customers are at high risk of churn and re-engage — before it's too late.

25% Anticipated increase in profit for an increase in customer retention of just 5%.¹



Announce New Features

Use push notifications or in-app messages to educate users and help them discover new and valuable features.

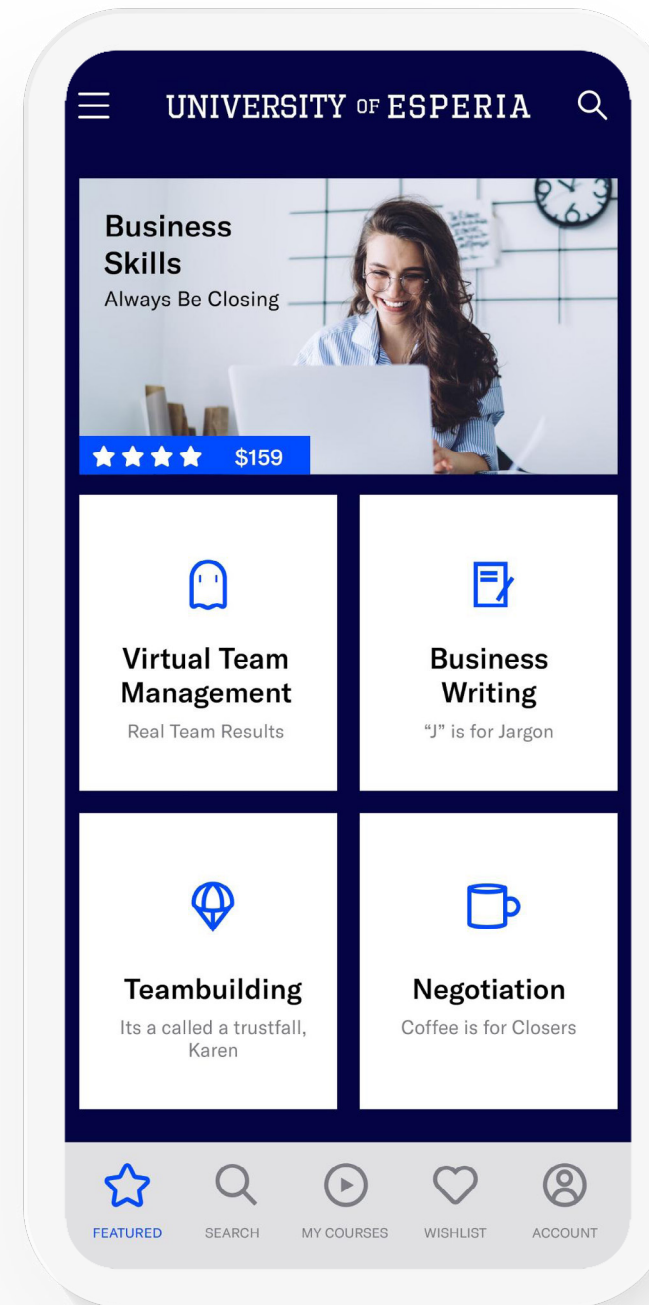


Retest Audience Assumptions

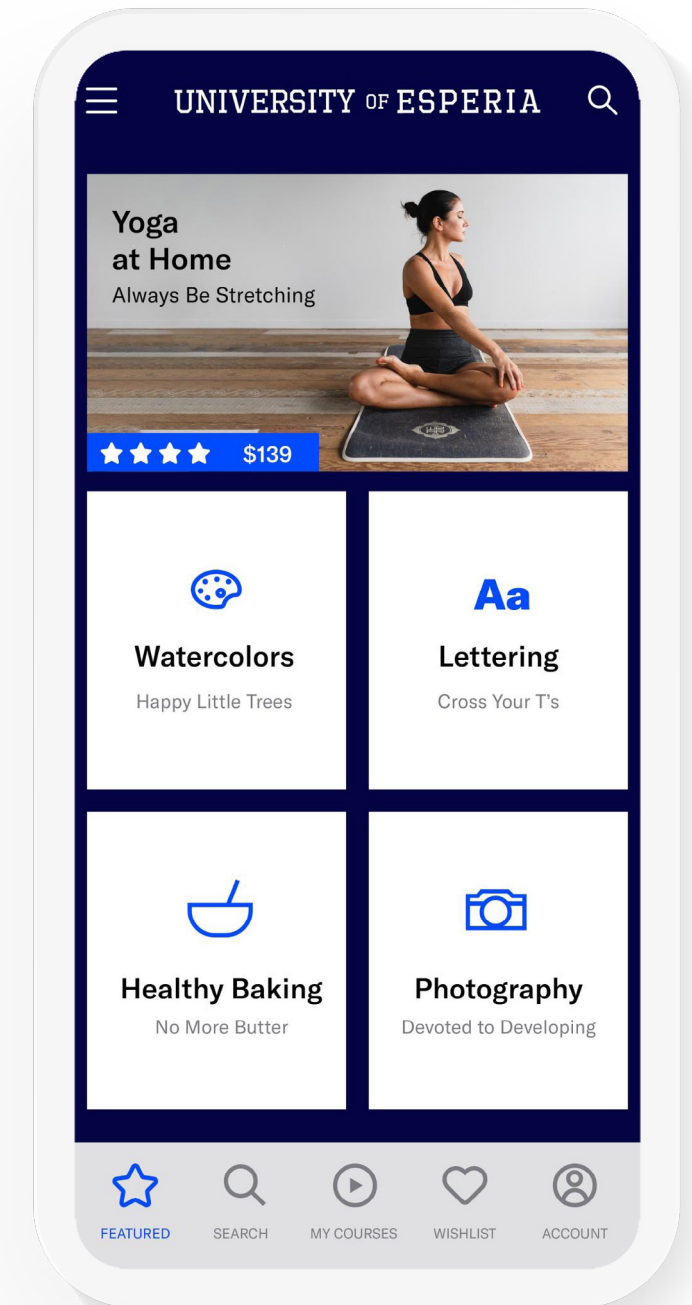
Stay abreast of your users' changing behaviors and goals by retesting old experiments — even the unsuccessful ones.

2x Organizations that prioritize testing are twice as likely to outperform their peers.¹

Variant A



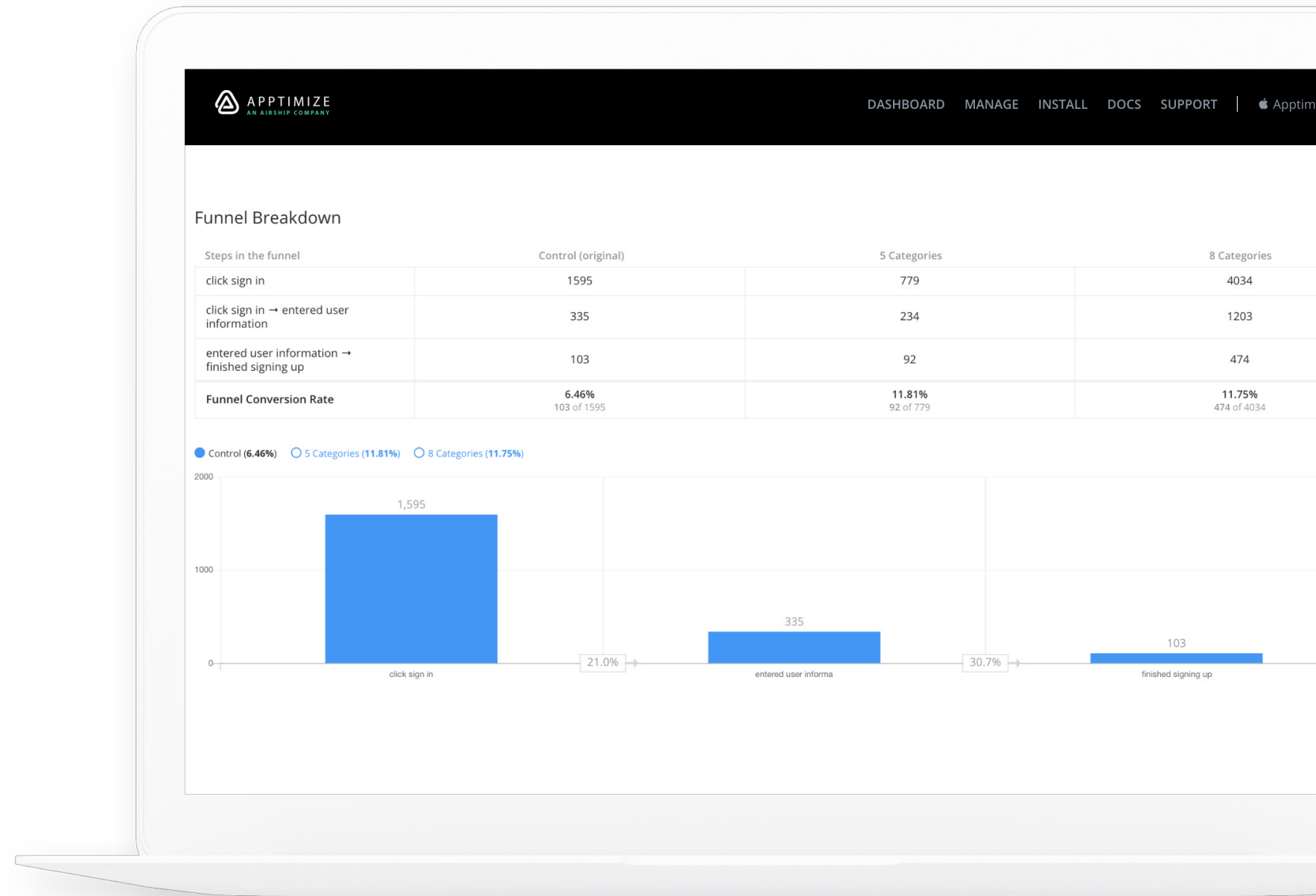
Variant B



Find the Friction

Regularly analyze user flows within your app.

- Conduct quarterly or biannual analysis
- Identify where users drop out
- Prioritize areas with the most room for improvement



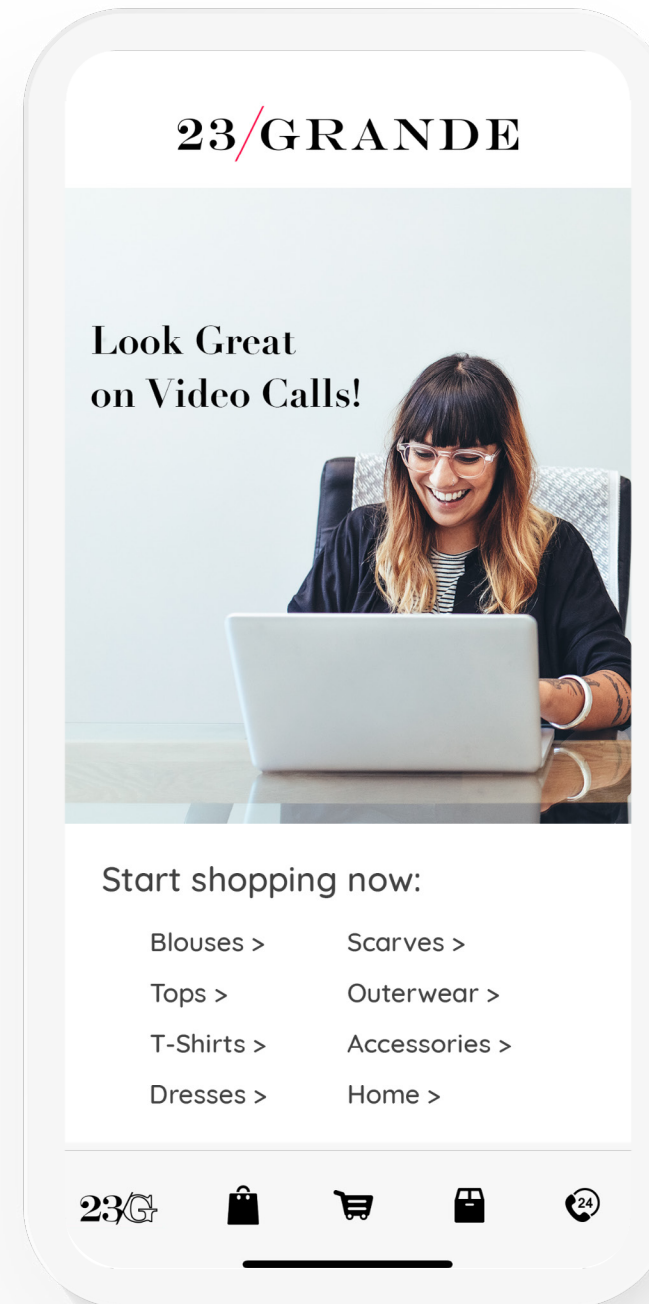
Perfect Your Personalization

Test personalization algorithms based on customer intelligence.

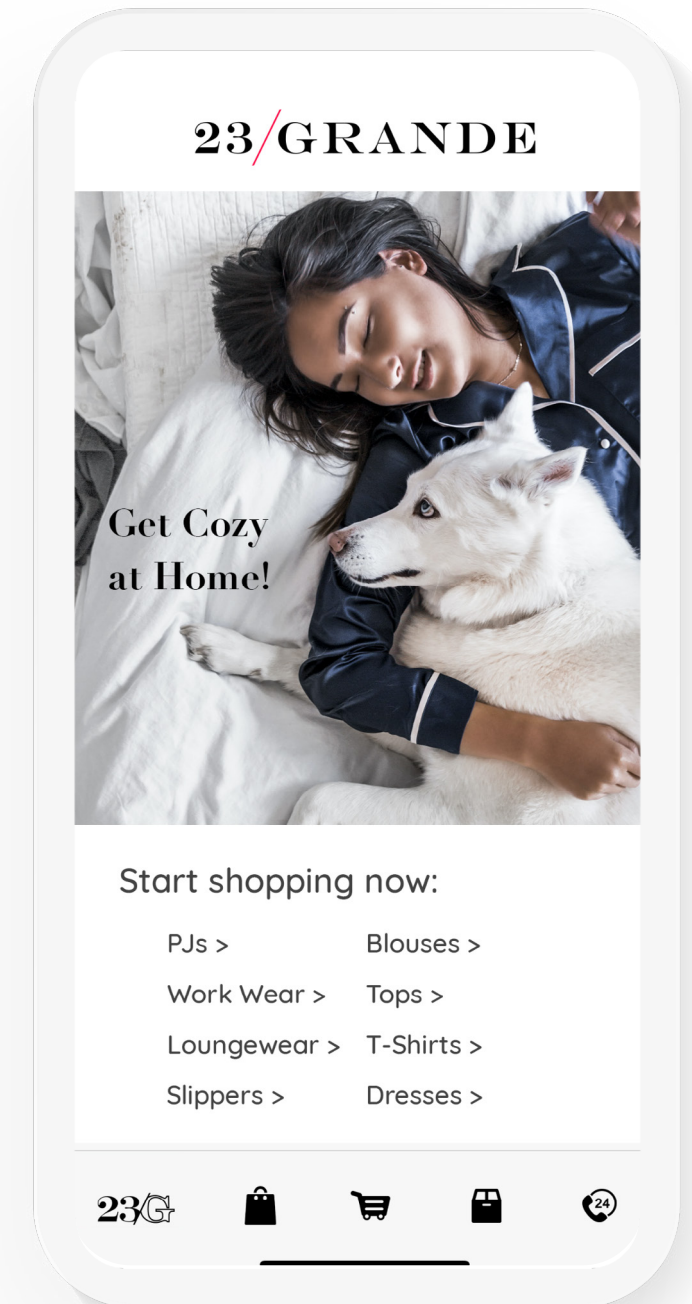
- Location
- Current Events
- User Behavior
- Date & Season

81% Of consumers want brands to get to know them, and understand when to approach them.¹

Variant A



Variant B

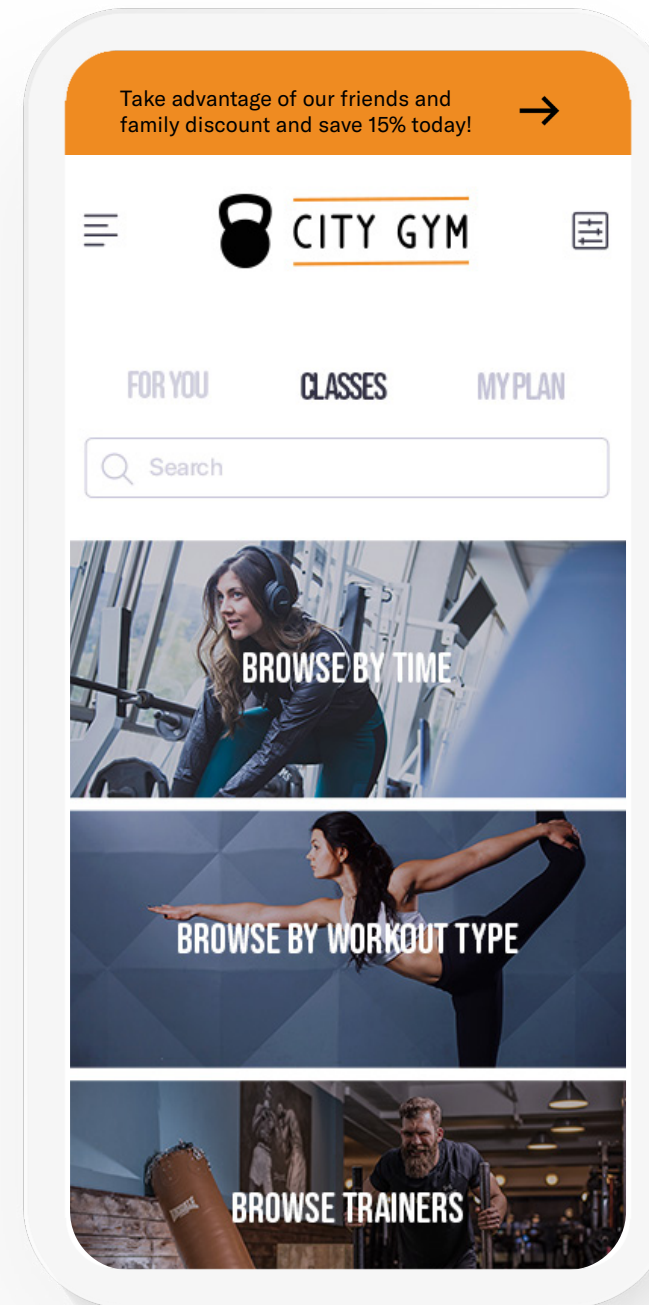


Optimize In-App Ads

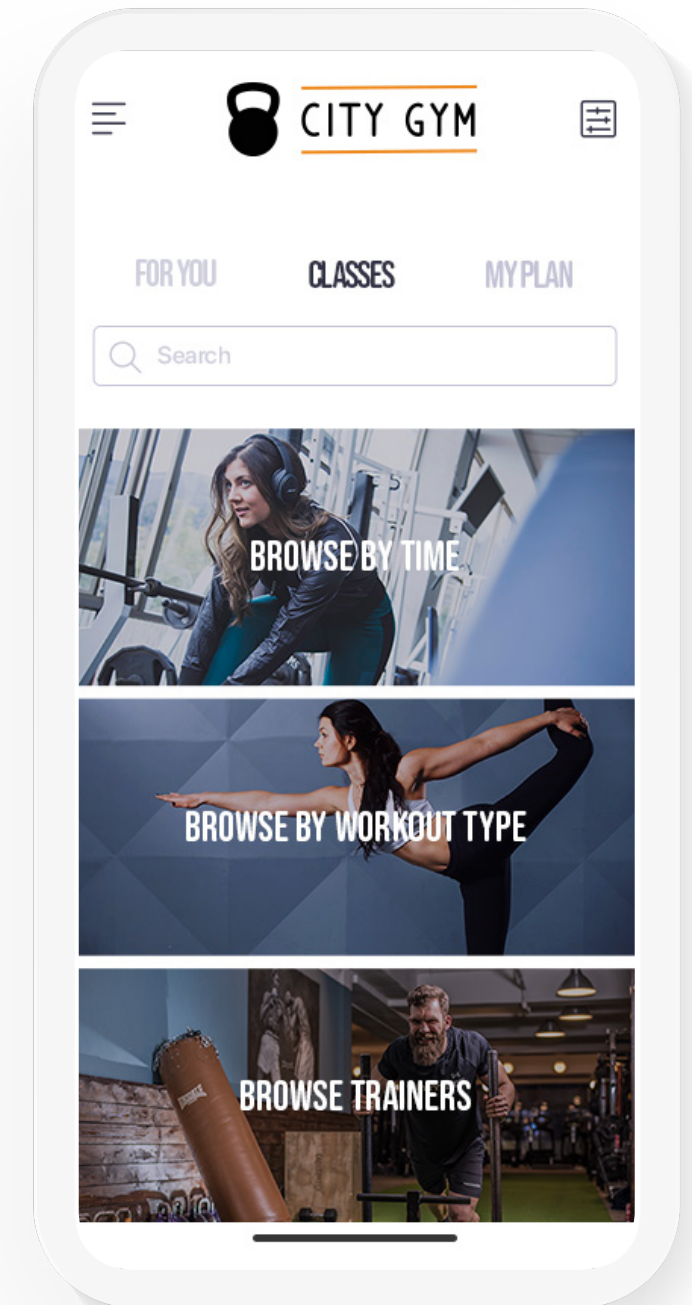
Increase ad revenue by A/B testing and optimizing ads within your app to drive engagement and impressions.

- Placement
- Length
- Ad Type

Variant A

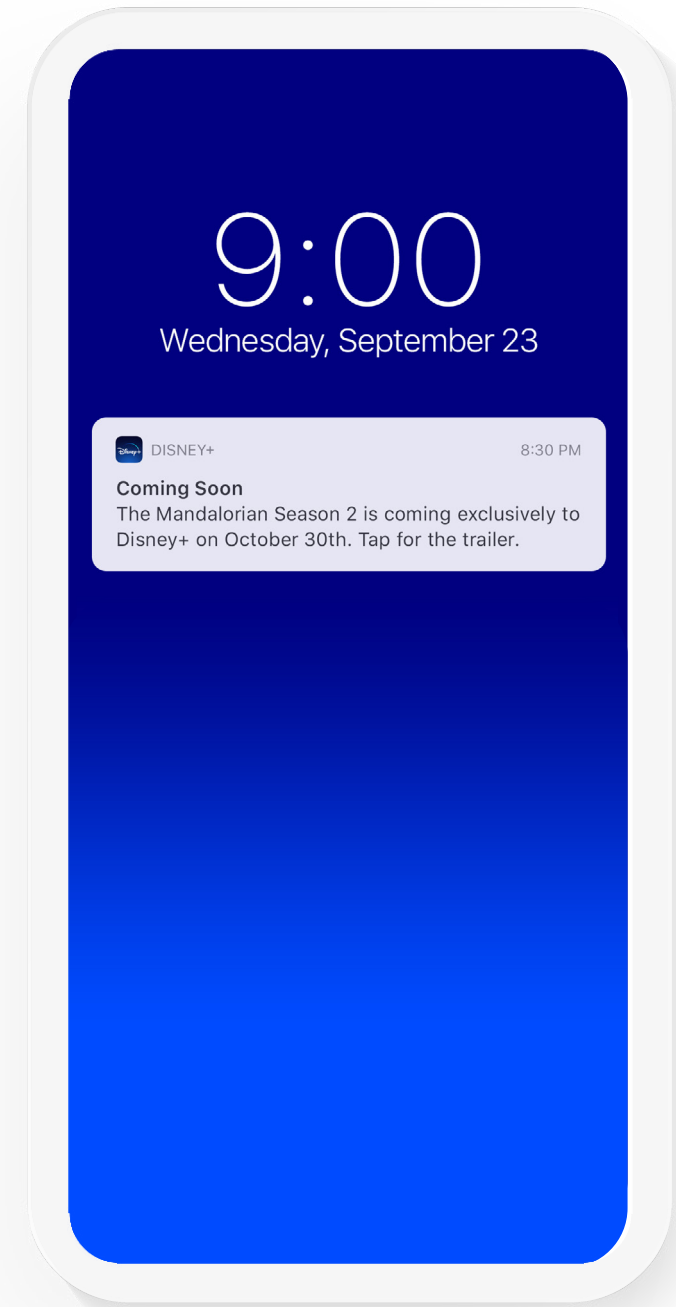


Variant B



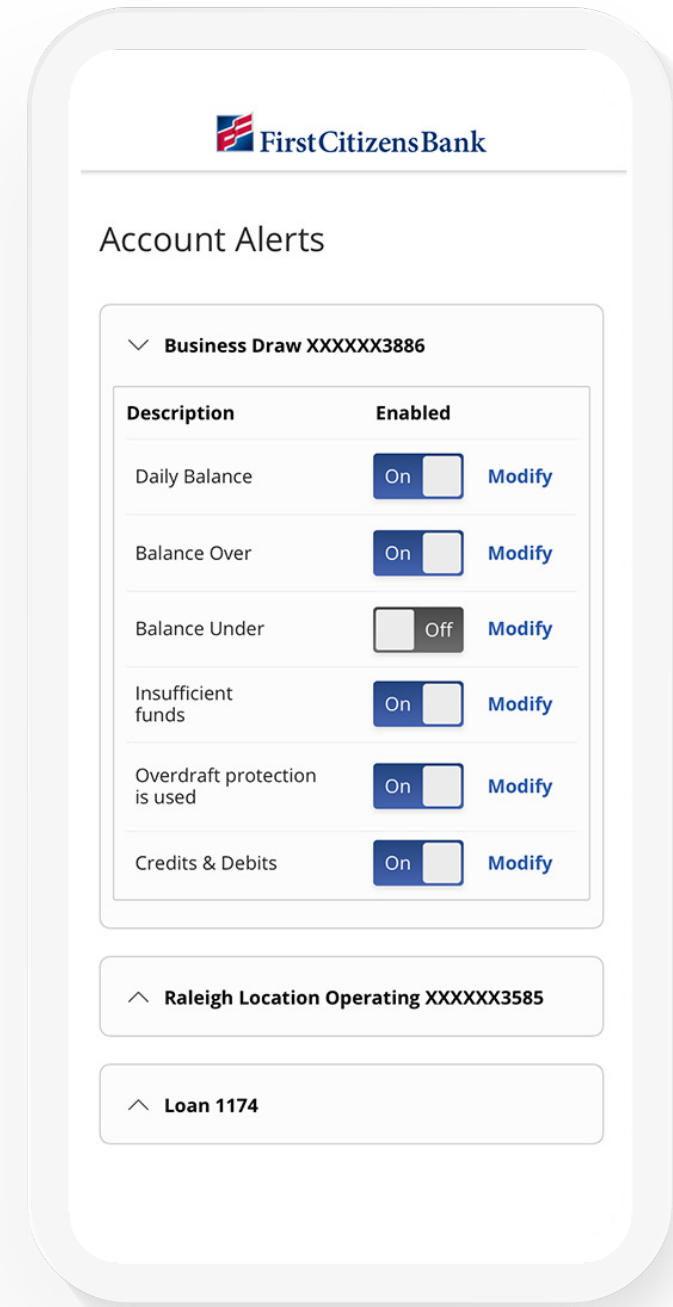
Keep Customers Curious

Build excitement and anticipation with sneak peaks and highlights. Then analyze your messaging data to learn which messages drive the most engagement.



Get Personal With Preference Center

Use a mobile preference center to give customers more choices in how they share their preferences — and reward them with a more personalized experience.



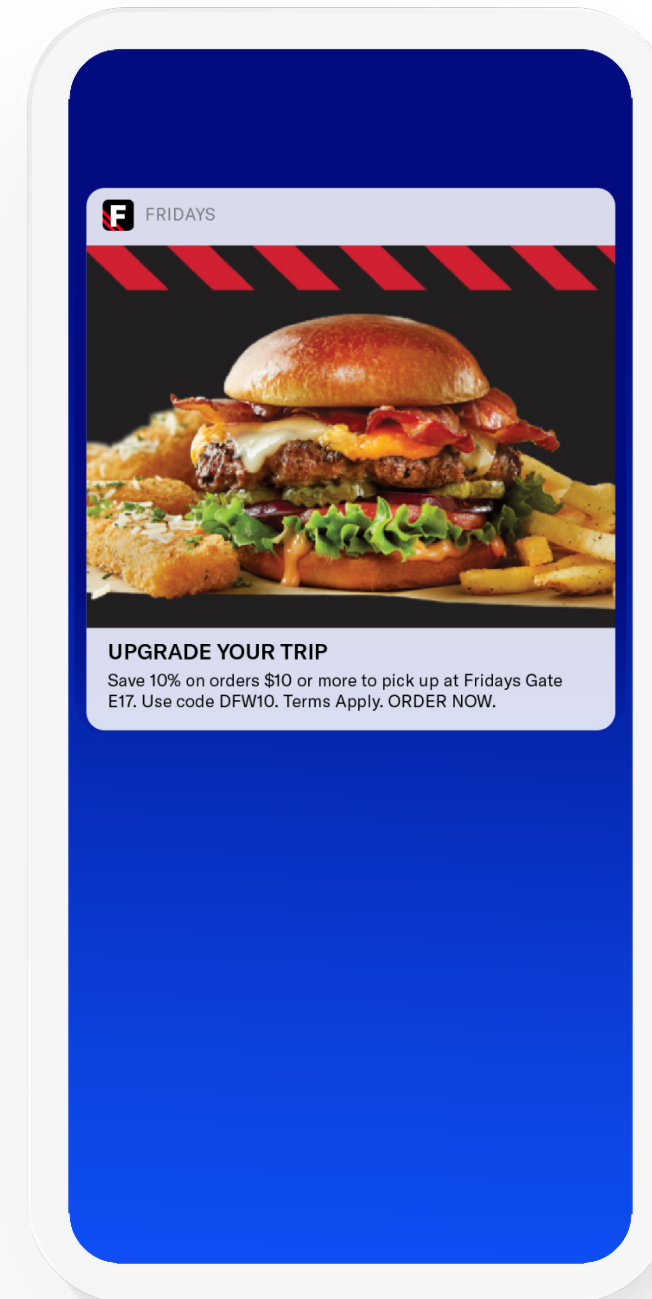
The image shows a mobile app interface for First Citizens Bank. At the top is the bank's logo. Below it is the heading "Account Alerts". There are three expandable sections. The first section, "Business Draw XXXXXX3886", is expanded and contains a table of alert settings. The table has two columns: "Description" and "Enabled". Each row has a toggle switch and a "Modify" link. The second section, "Raleigh Location Operating XXXXXX3585", and the third section, "Loan 1174", are collapsed.

Description	Enabled	
Daily Balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Modify
Balance Over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Modify
Balance Under	<input type="checkbox"/> Off	Modify
Insufficient funds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Modify
Overdraft protection is used	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Modify
Credits & Debits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Modify

Make It Visual

Drive significantly more engagement with rich push notifications.

56% Increase in open rates for push notifications with pictures.¹



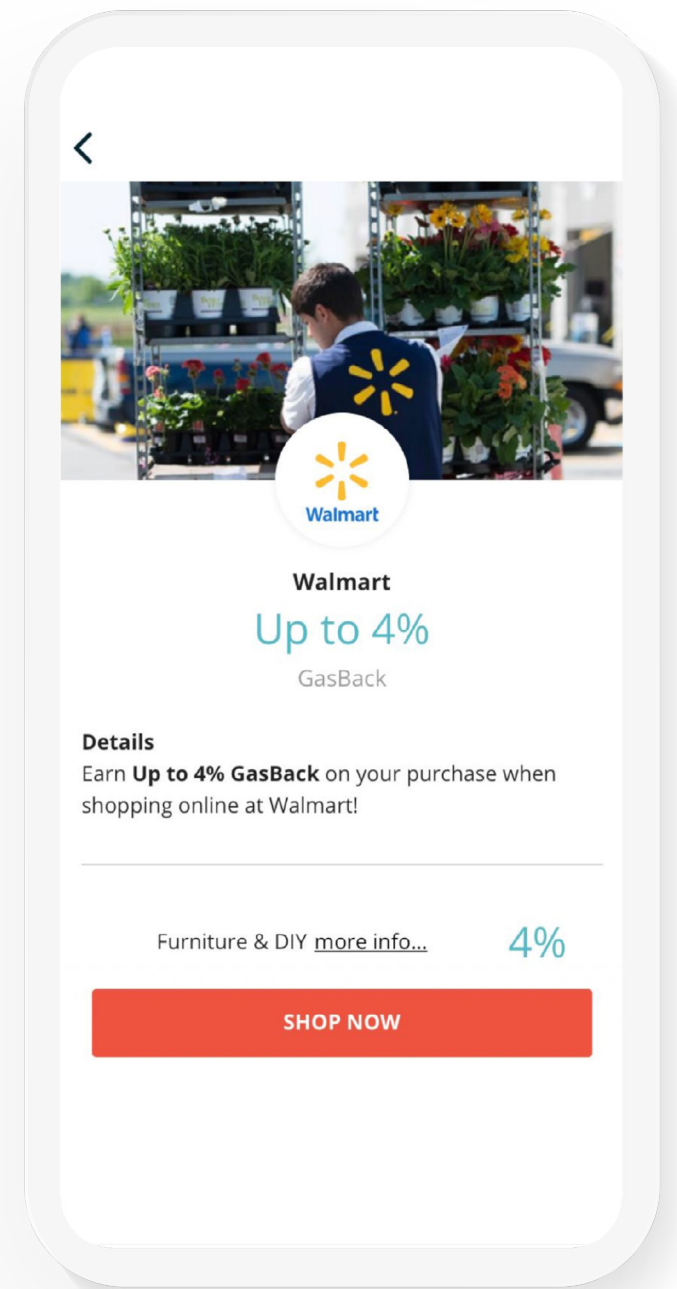
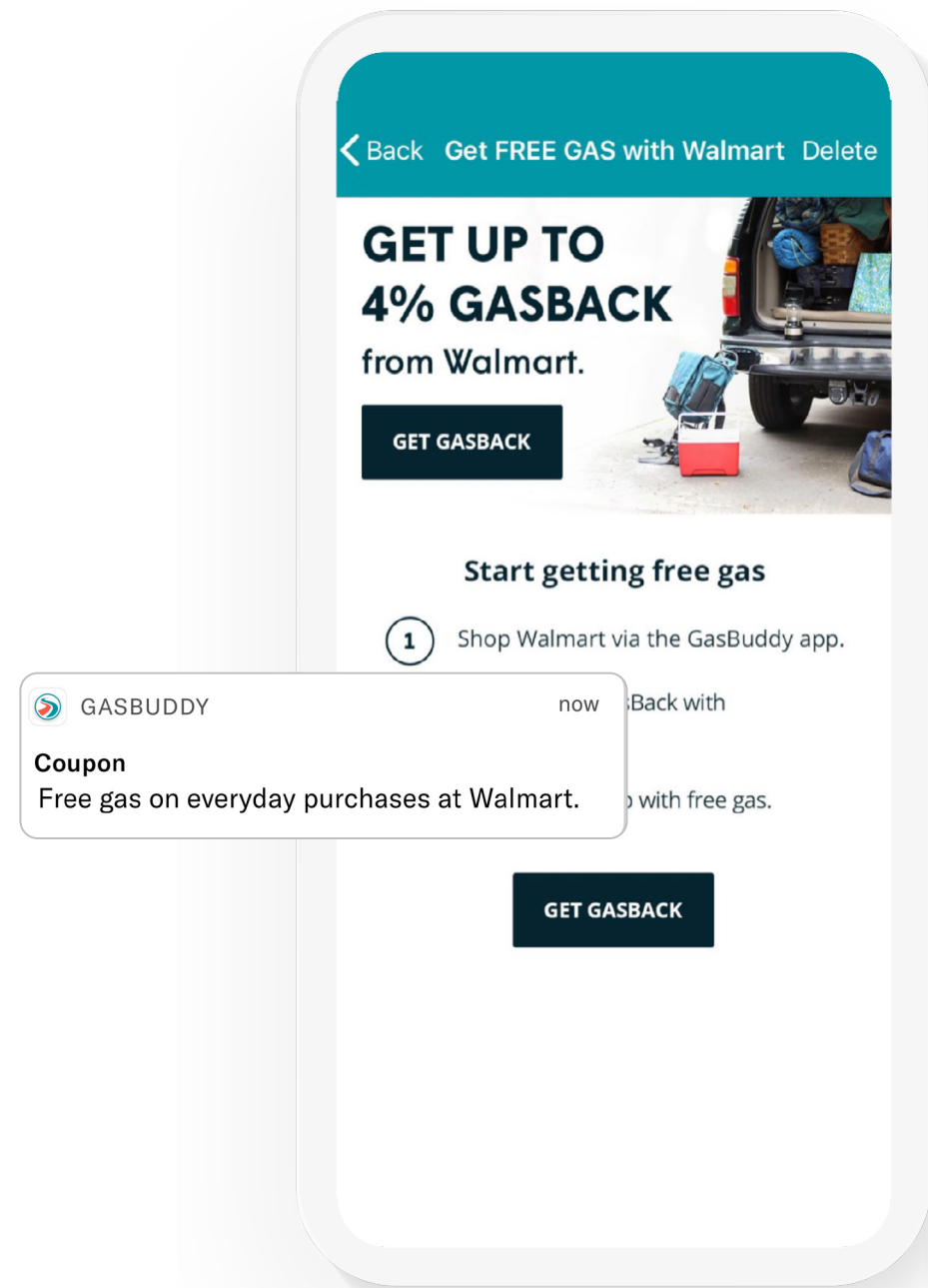
Make It Actionable

Drive user adoption of your mobile app by leveraging a loyalty program.

CASE STUDY:

Gas Buddy

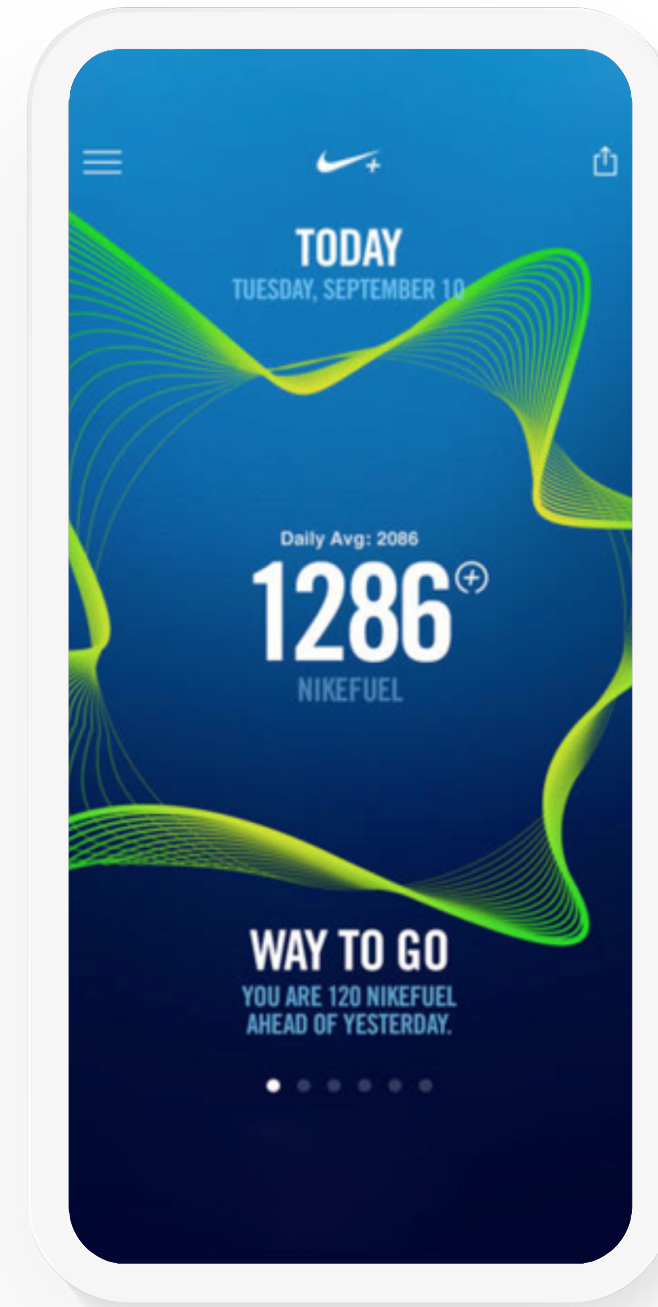
24% Boost in daily active users on days they send an Airship notification.



Gamify It

Incentivize and reward engagement with gamification.

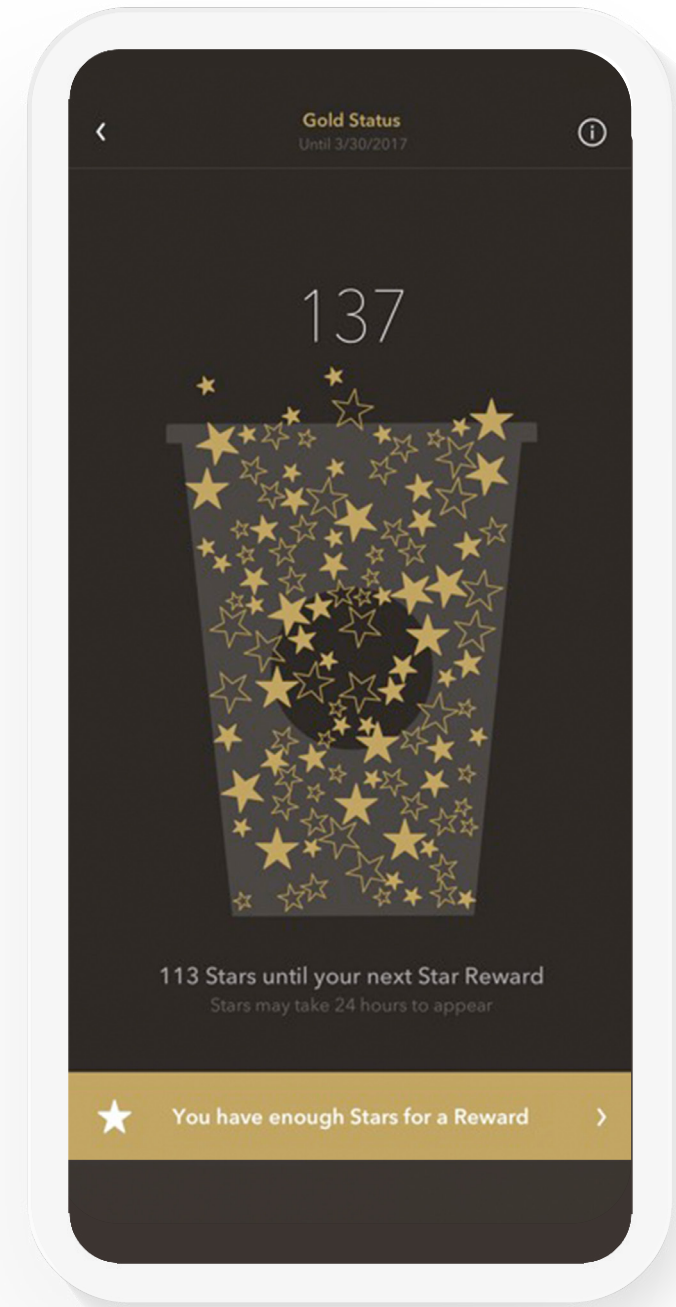
- **Fitness:** Remind users to log meals, weight
- **Finance:** Send updates on savings goals
- **Retail:** Notify when watched items go on sale



Entice With Rewards

Identify users' goals and use notifications to help them get there.

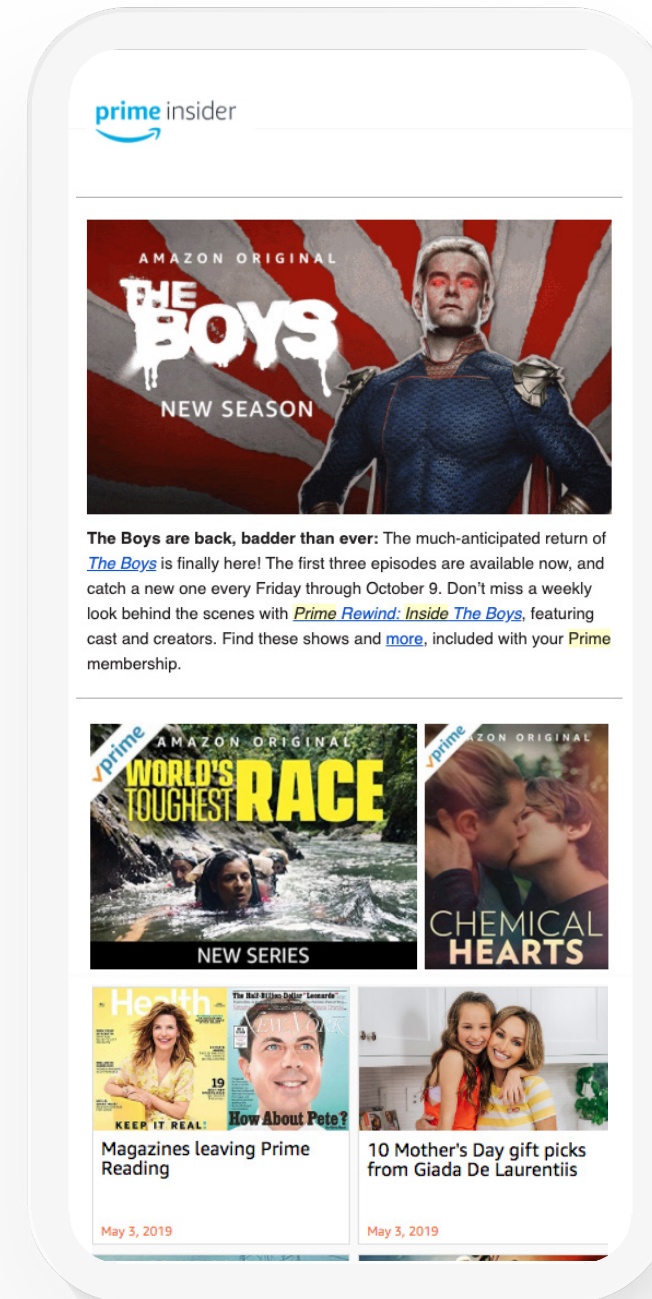
1.6x Lift in brand satisfaction for customers who redeem incentives, vs. customers who don't redeem.¹



Automate for Action

Stay top of mind and drive action with automated daily or weekly messages.

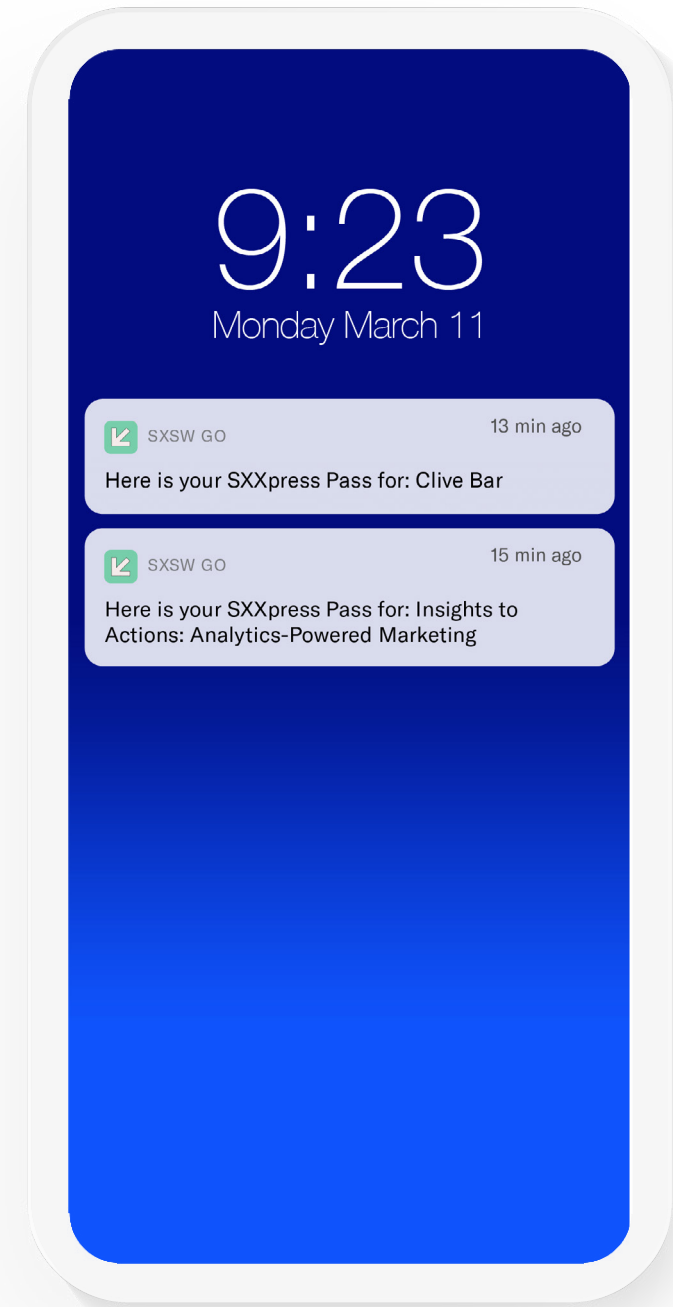
- Daily Deals
- Transactional Notifications
- Reminders



Increase Value With Geofencing

Set geofence triggers to engage customers who are near a physical location.

- **Entertainment:** Lead them to concessions or merch
- **Transportation:** Entice with last minute upgrades
- **Retail:** Encourage walk-ins with sales or support
- **Finance:** Offer perks for visiting a branch

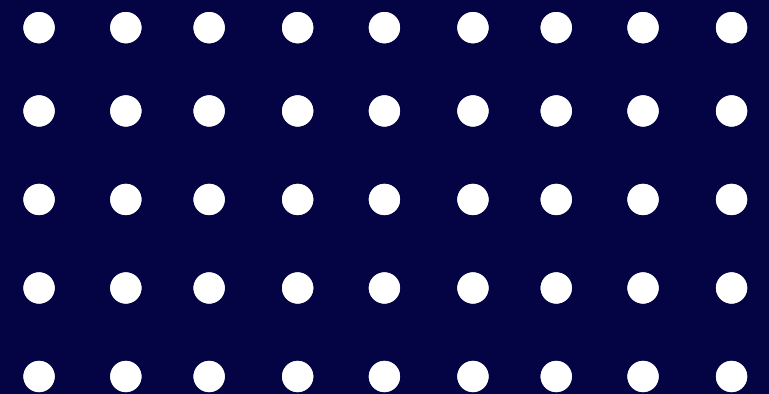


G R O W T H

Keep Customers Growing

Once you've established rapport with your app users, you need to grow those relationships. Get it right and you can create incredible value for both your brand and your customers, making their lives easier while driving toward your KPIs.

To continue growing your customers' lifetime value, you need to show that you "get them" by engaging on the right channel, at the right time with personalized and contextual content that matters. The following strategies will help you get there.

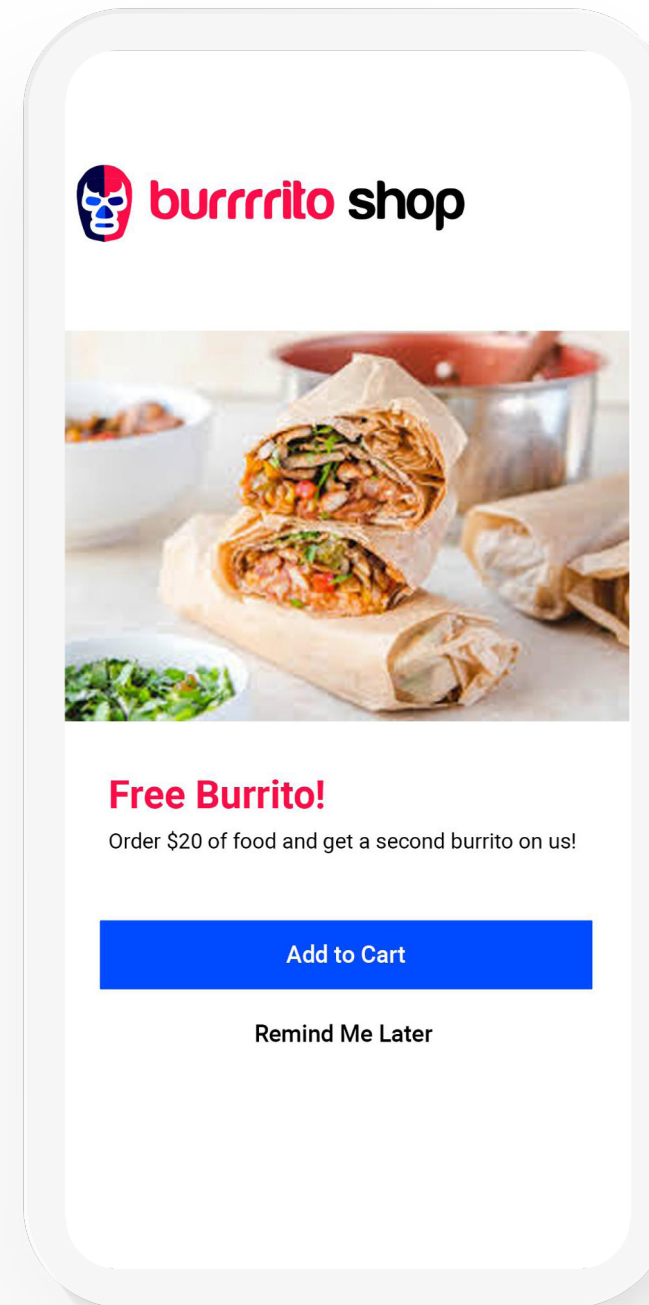


Fine Tune Promotions

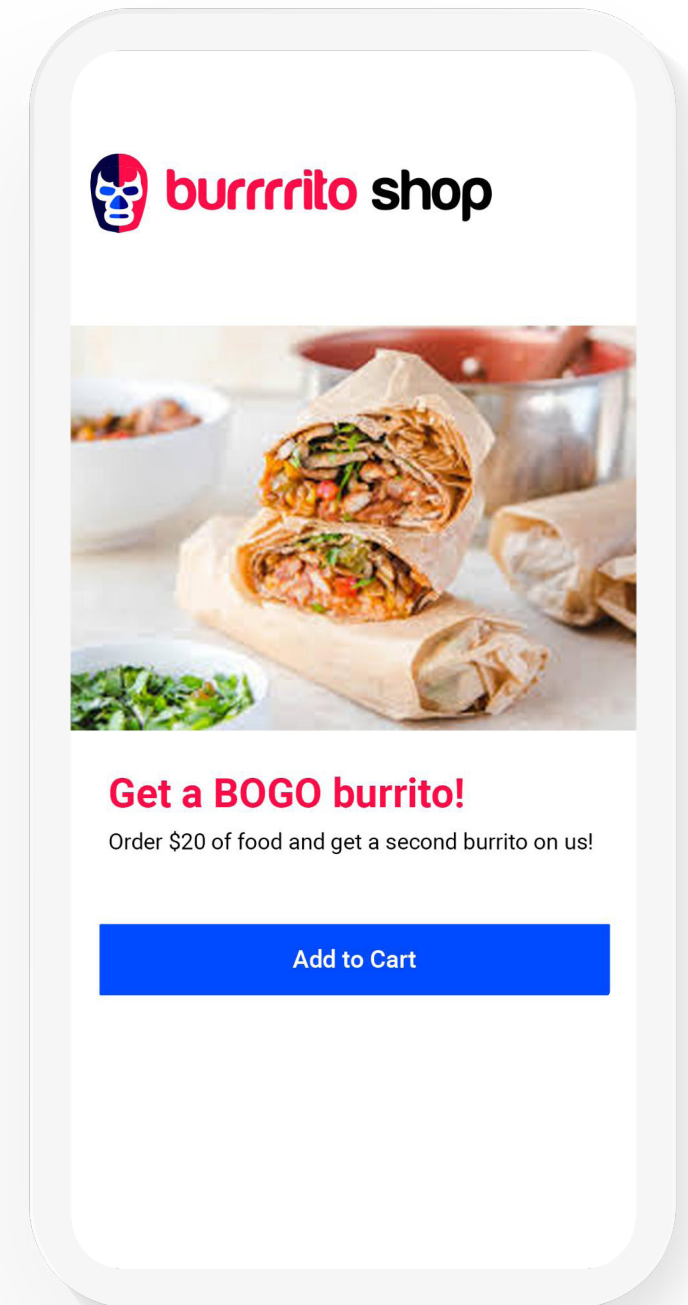
Quickly learn which promotions drive the highest conversions and revenue by A/B testing.

- New Offers
- Sales
- Discounts

Variant A

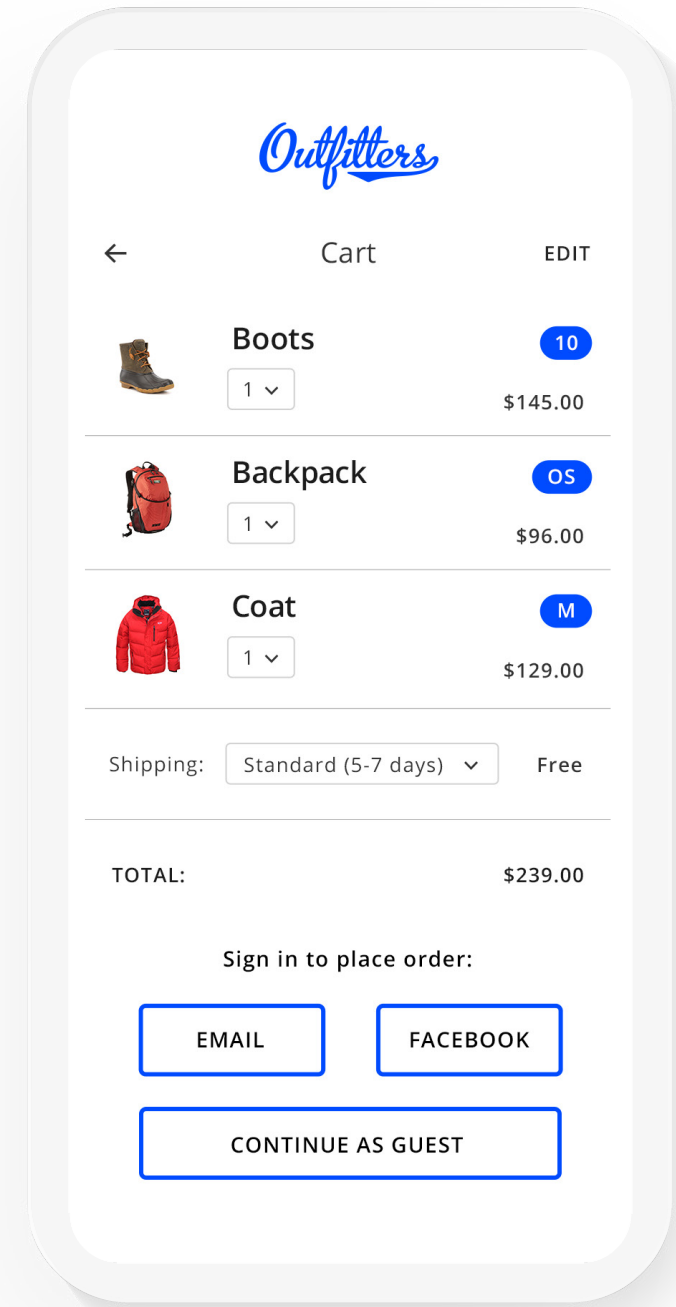


Variant B



Simplify Checkout

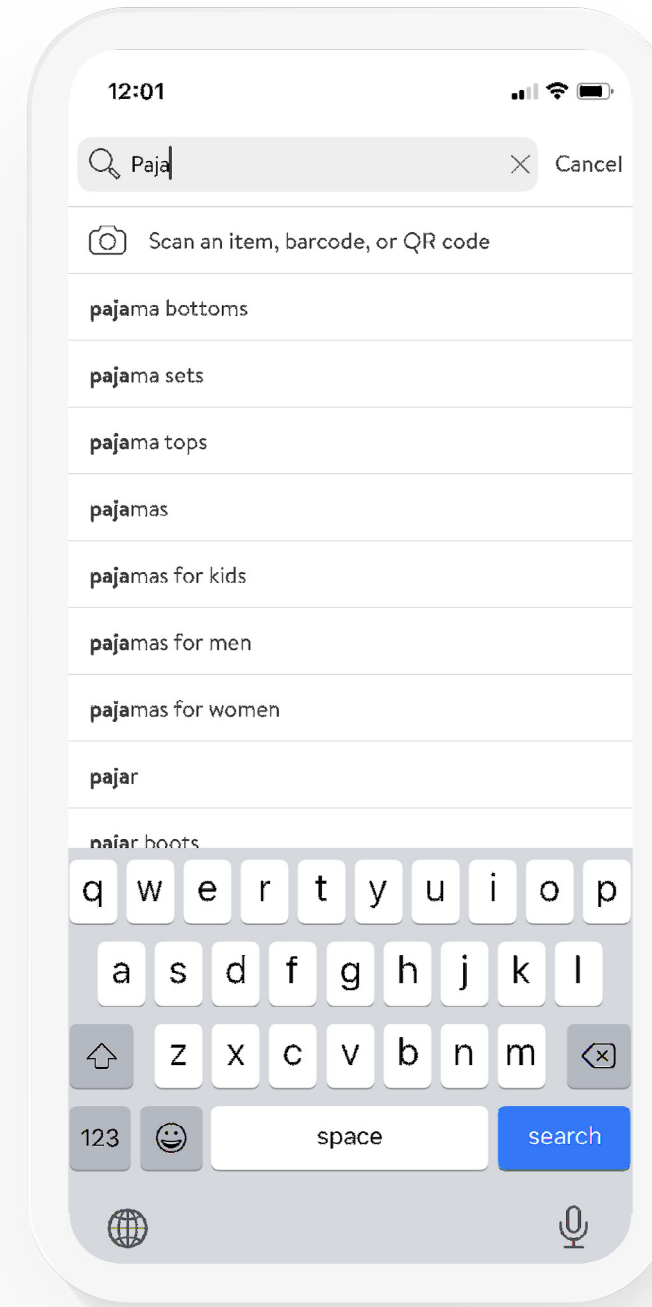
Improve UX with autofill forms and guest checkout options, making it easier for customers to checkout and complete key actions within the app.



Enhance Search

Optimize search for users by testing your search functionality.

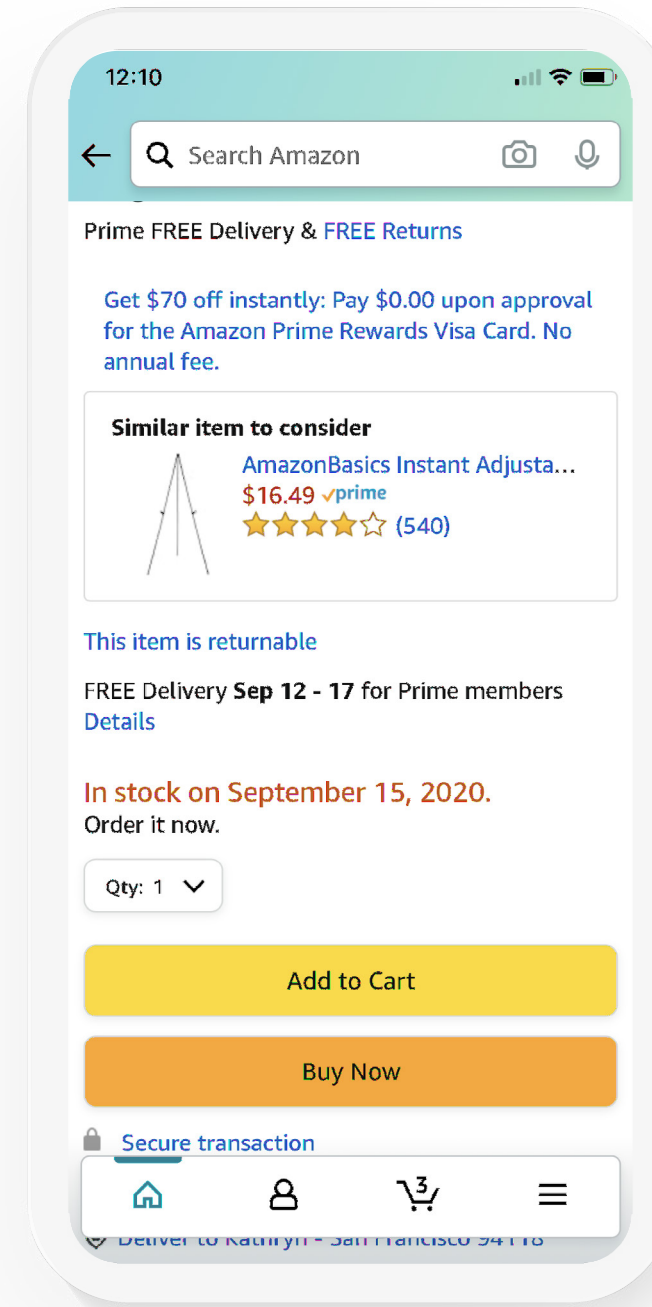
- Autofill Options
- Categories
- Personalization



Make Conversion Easier

Add “buy now” options to make life easier for your customers by decreasing the steps in a checkout flow.

- Placement
- Copy
- Flow



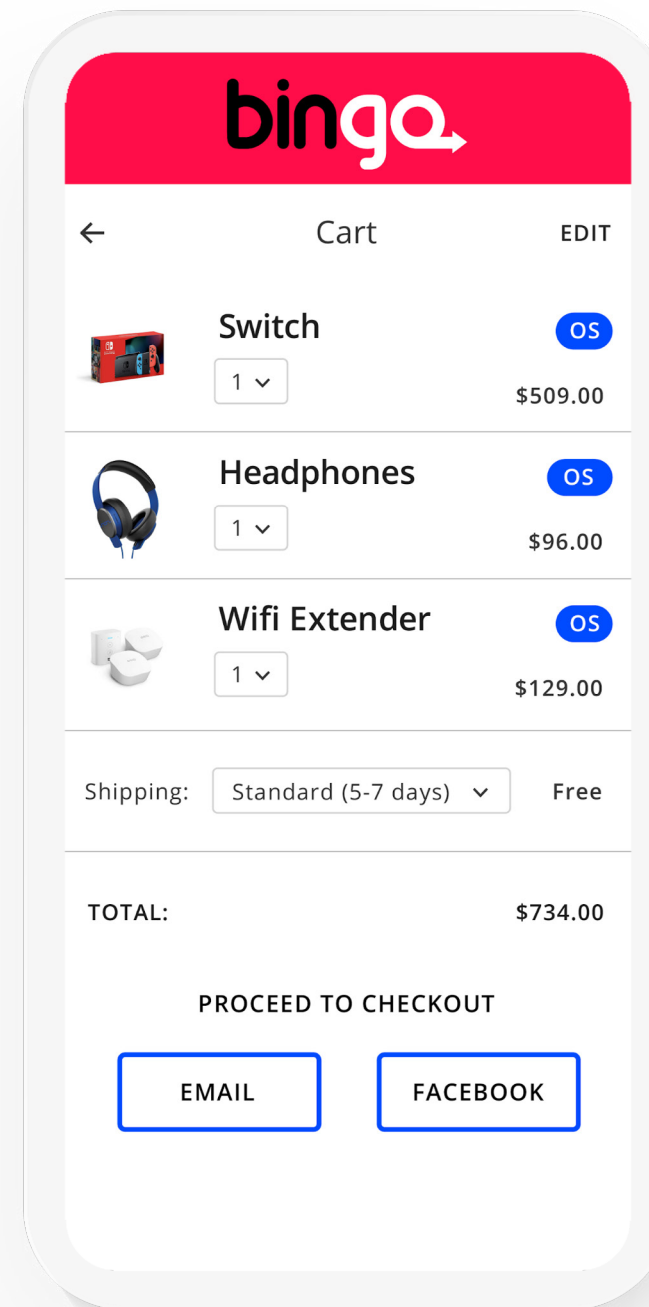
Offer Flexible Payment

Drive more conversions with flexible payment options.

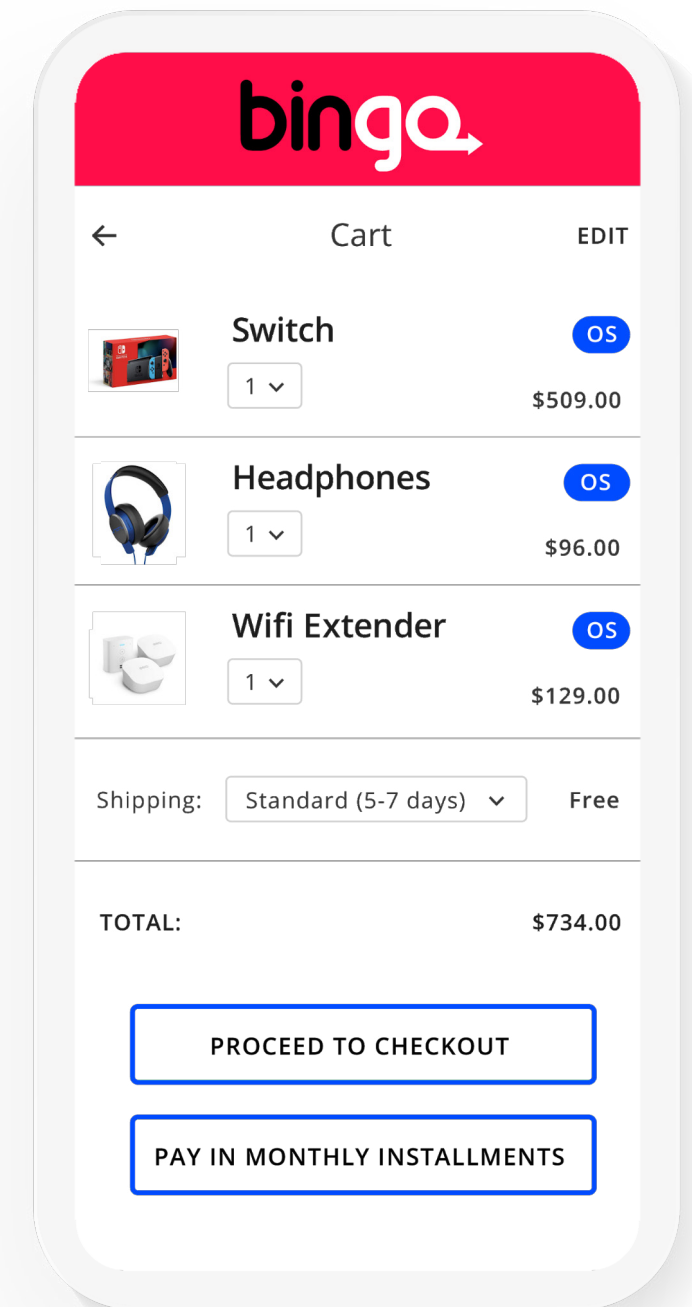
- Online Payment Apps
- Buy-Now-Pay-Later
- POS Installment Loans
- Social Media Payment

35% Of consumers say they are more likely to buy if you offer monthly installments.¹

Variant A



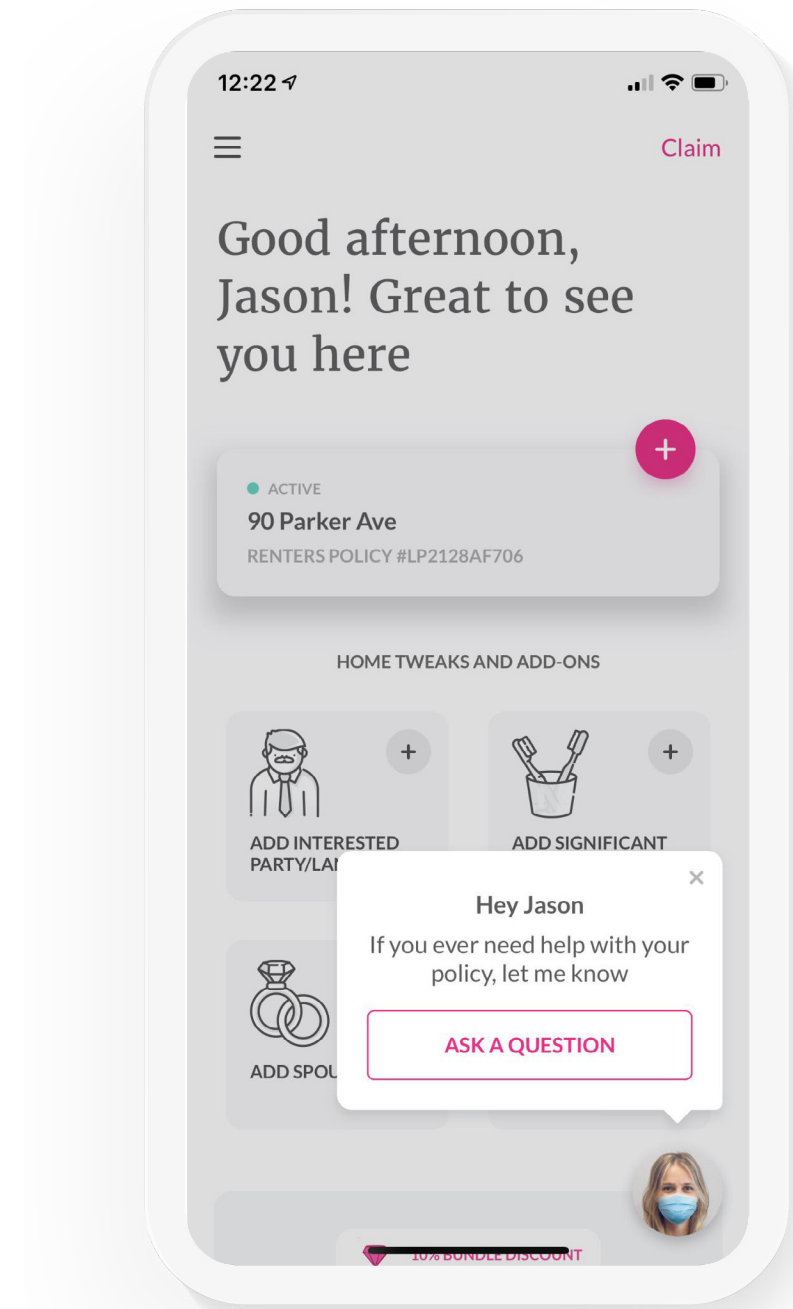
Variant B



Promote Self-Service

Add a chatbot or improve in-app messaging to increase self-service and decrease costs.

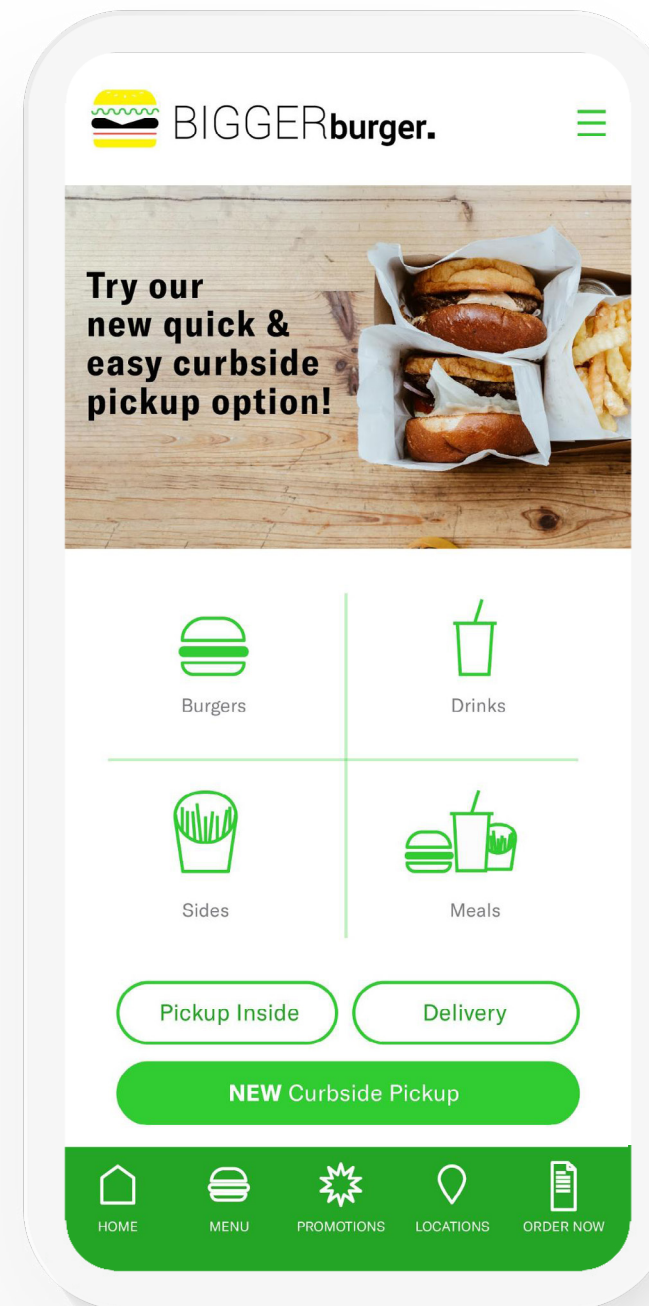
69% Of consumers prefer chatbots for quick communication with brands.¹



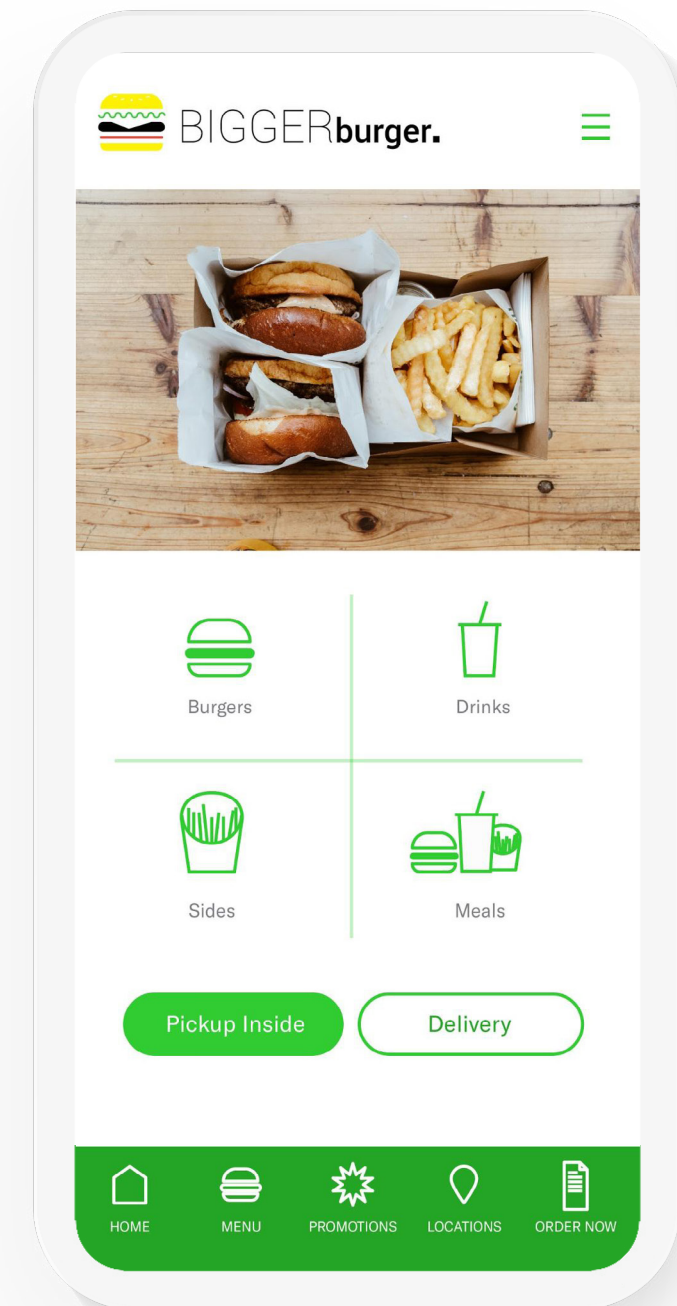
Fly Your Feature Flags

Use feature flags to accelerate growth and mitigate risk by testing new features before rolling them out to your entire app audience.

Variant A



Variant B

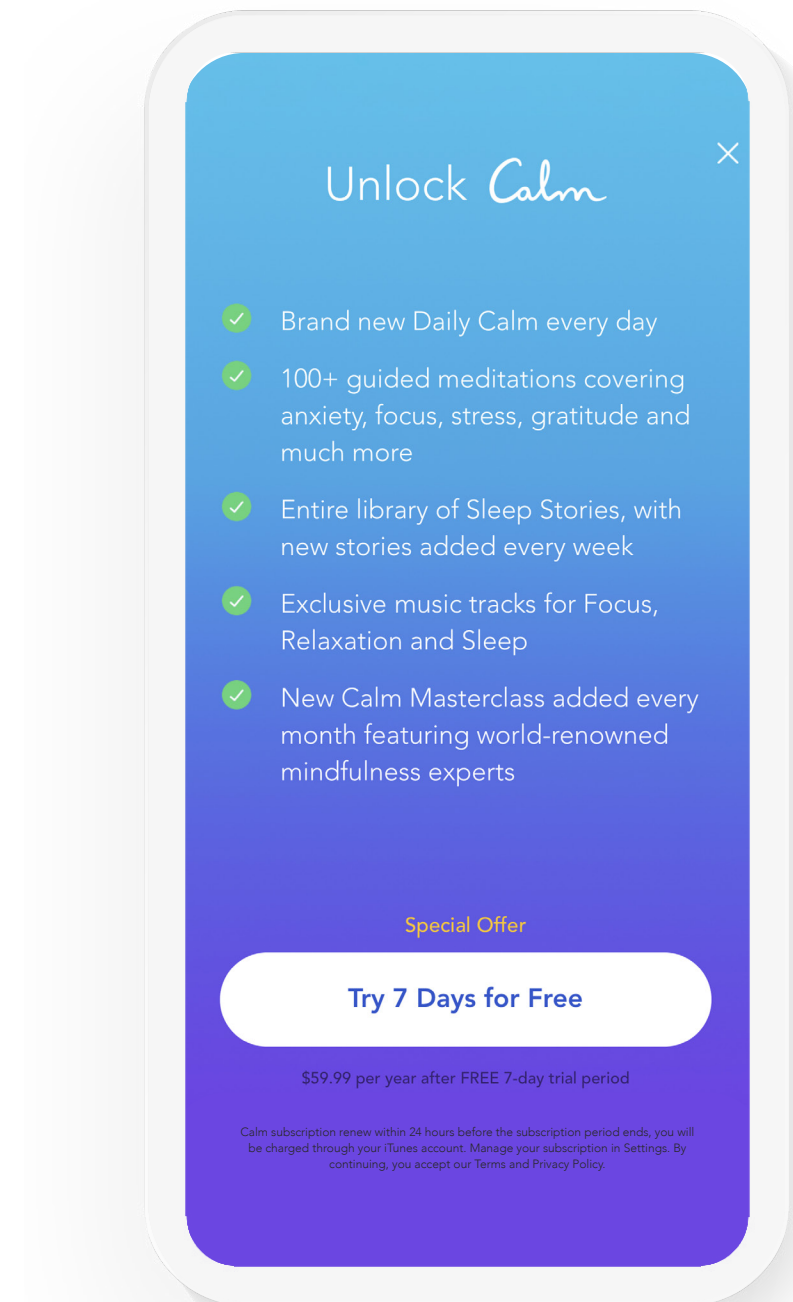


Test Your CTA Copy

For subscription-based apps, give customers flexibility by offering free trials, monthly and annual subscription options.

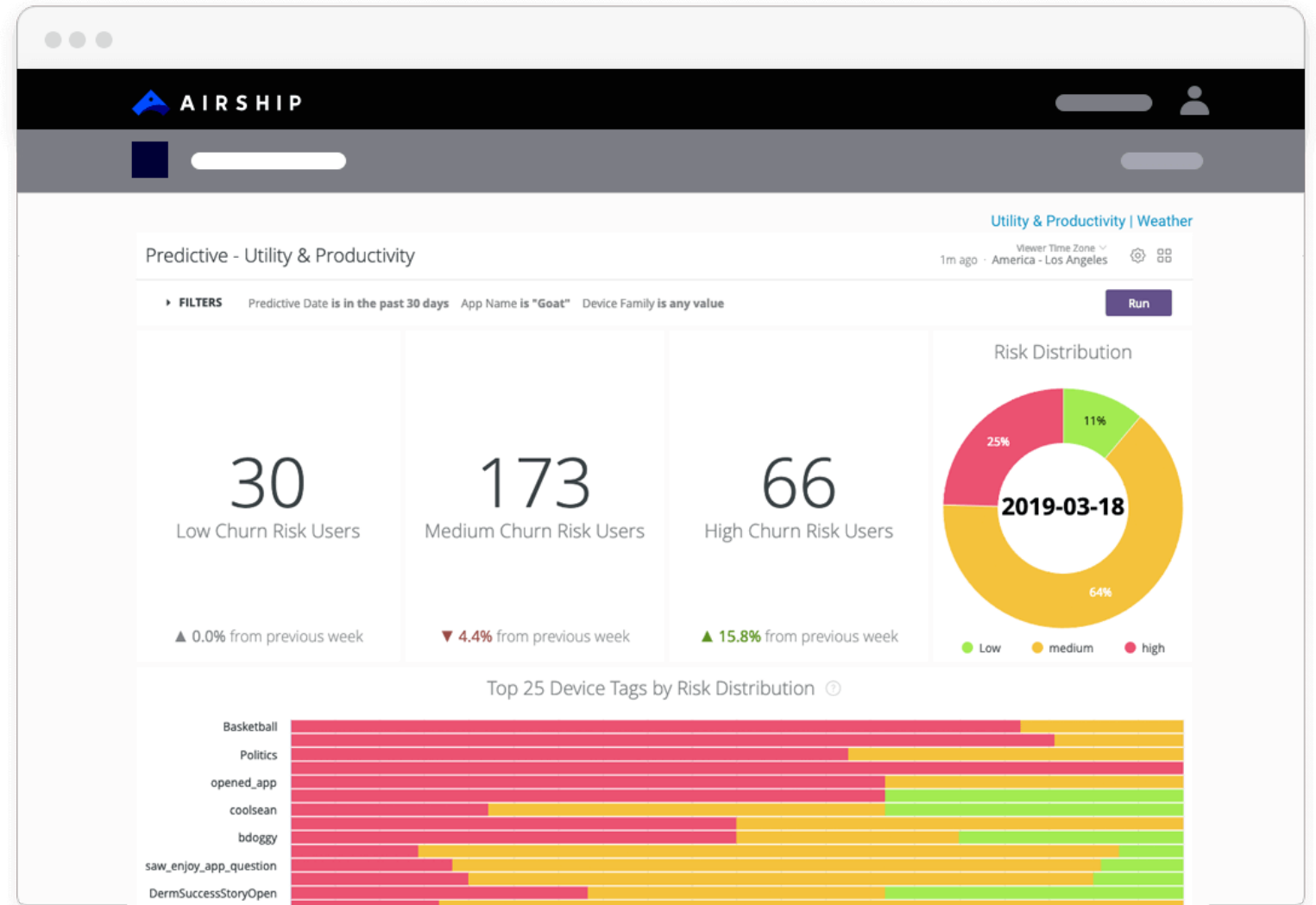
CASE STUDY:

5.5% Increase in premium transactions resulting from an experiment testing quarterly vs. yearly subscriptions for one sports app.



Amp Up Your Analytics

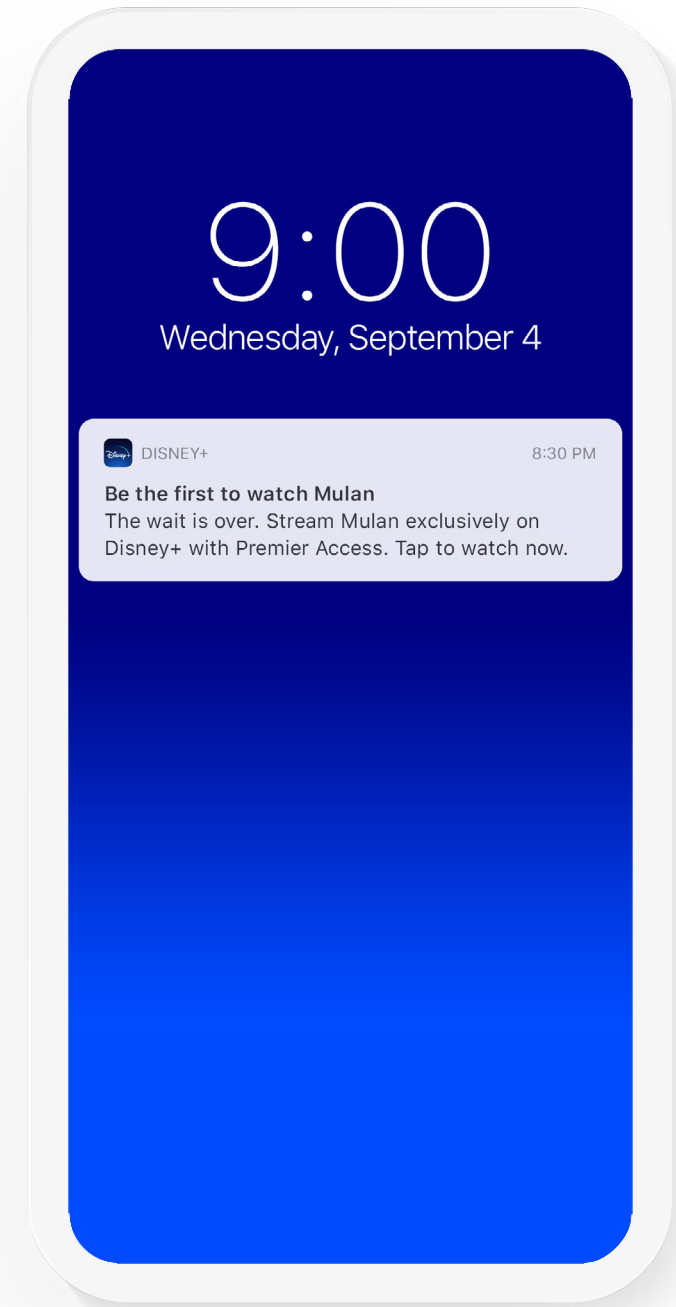
Use BI tools, like Airship Performance Analytics, to monitor and analyze app performance and identify areas for improvement.



Amplify the Urgency

Create urgency through your app with limited time offers, exclusive deals and quantity-limited sales.

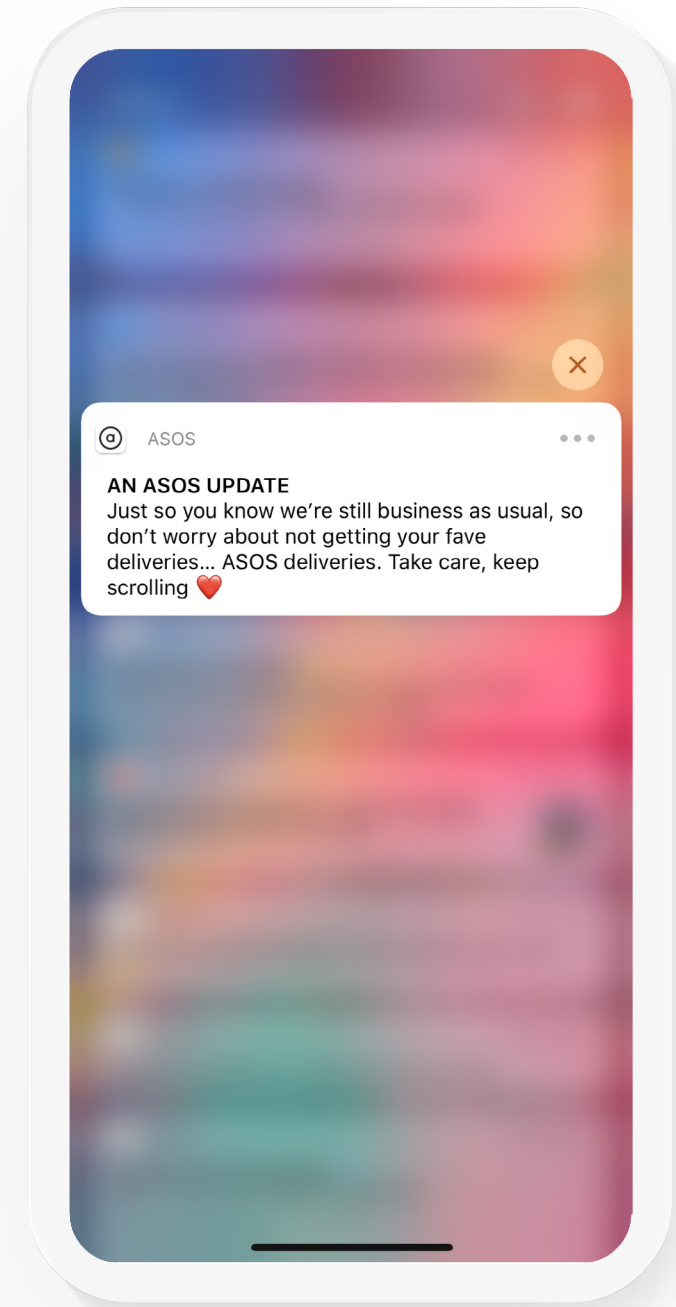
65% Of shoppers use mobile e-commerce apps primarily to get deals and offers exclusive to the app.¹



Have a Conversation

Speak directly to customers with contextual and personalized messages.

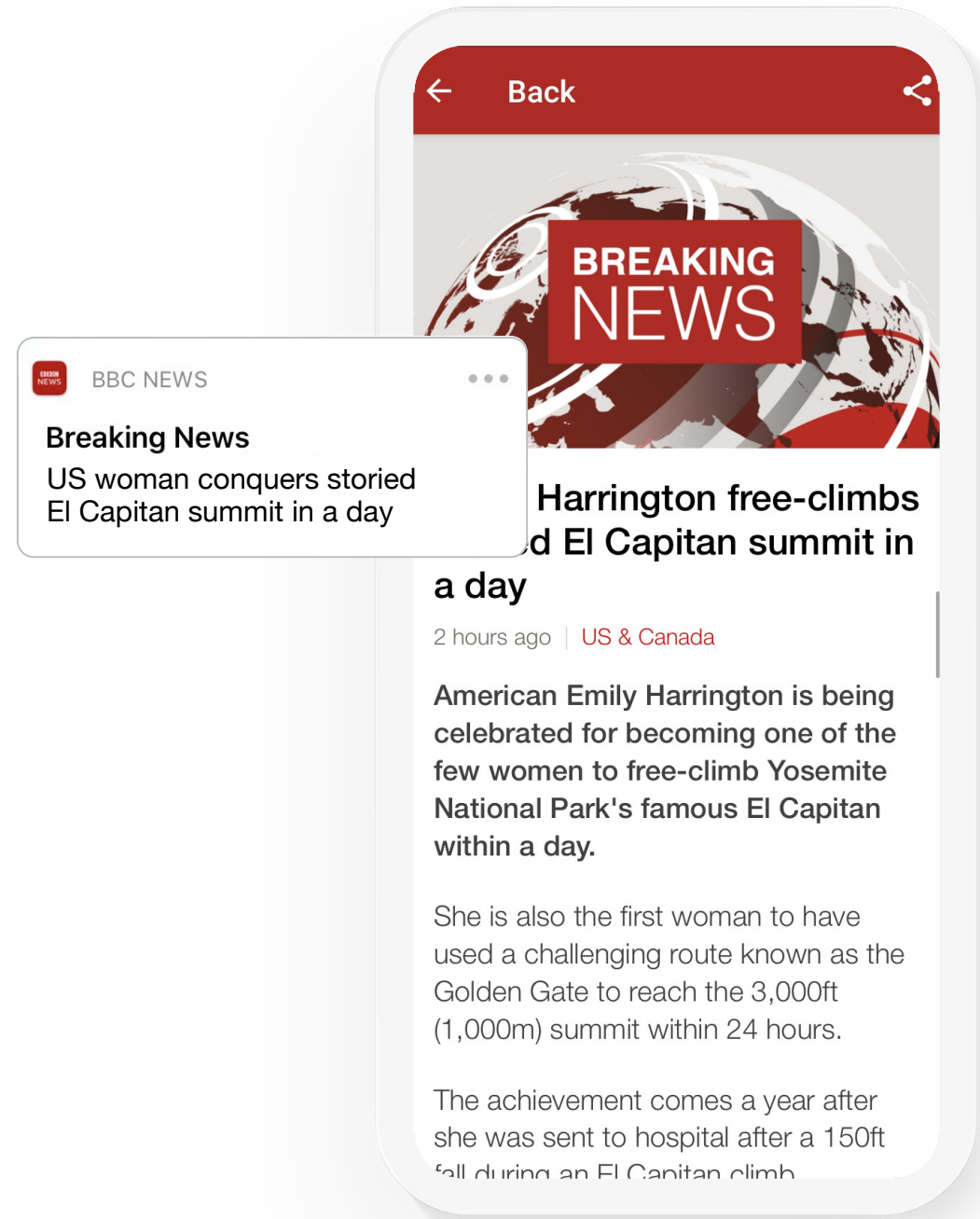
- Current Events
- Shipping Issues
- Common Concerns
- User Specific Tips



Message With Facts

Show your value to
customers with timely,
fact-based messaging.

- Breaking News
- Informational Content
- Weather Alerts



Additional Resources



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

With these 50+ ideas, you're ready to take the next steps toward building incredible value, loyalty and engagement through your mobile app. Not only will a continuous optimization strategy help your app stand apart in the crowd, you'll create stronger and more valuable connections with your customers.

Want to learn more? Check out the following Airship resources:

Blog Posts:

[20 Push Notification Strategies for Customer Retention](#)

[Innovate Faster and Mitigate Risk with Apptimize's Free Feature Flags Solution](#)

Webinars:

[50+ Ideas to Optimize Your Mobile App](#)

[Creating Extraordinary Customer Journeys with a Culture of Experimentation](#)

Other Resources:

[eBook: 9 Strategies to Build, Grow and Retain Your Audience with Airship Journeys](#)

[Report: The Life-Changing Magic Of Simplifying Your Mobile App](#)

About Airship

Marketing and digital experience teams at thousands of the world's most admired companies rely on Airship's Customer Engagement Platform to create deeper connections with customers by delivering incredibly relevant, orchestrated messages on any channel.

Founded in 2009 as a pioneer in push notifications, Airship now gives brands the user-level data, engagement channels, AI orchestration and services they need to deliver push notifications, emails, SMS, in-app messages, mobile wallet cards and more to exactly the right person in exactly the right moment — building trust, boosting engagement, driving action and growing value.

For more information, visit airship.com, read our [blog](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



We're Here to Help

Whether you want to build a culture of experimentation at your workplace or need help creating an A/B testing strategy, we want to help! [Contact us](#) or [request a free demo](#).





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