The Essential Guide to Web Push Notifications

xtremepush

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1. What is Web Push?

Web Push Notifications are clickable notifications that are sent by a website directly to the browser of their subscribers. They are similar to mobile app push notifications except that they work on websites and can be accessed on all devices (desktop, mobile & tablet).
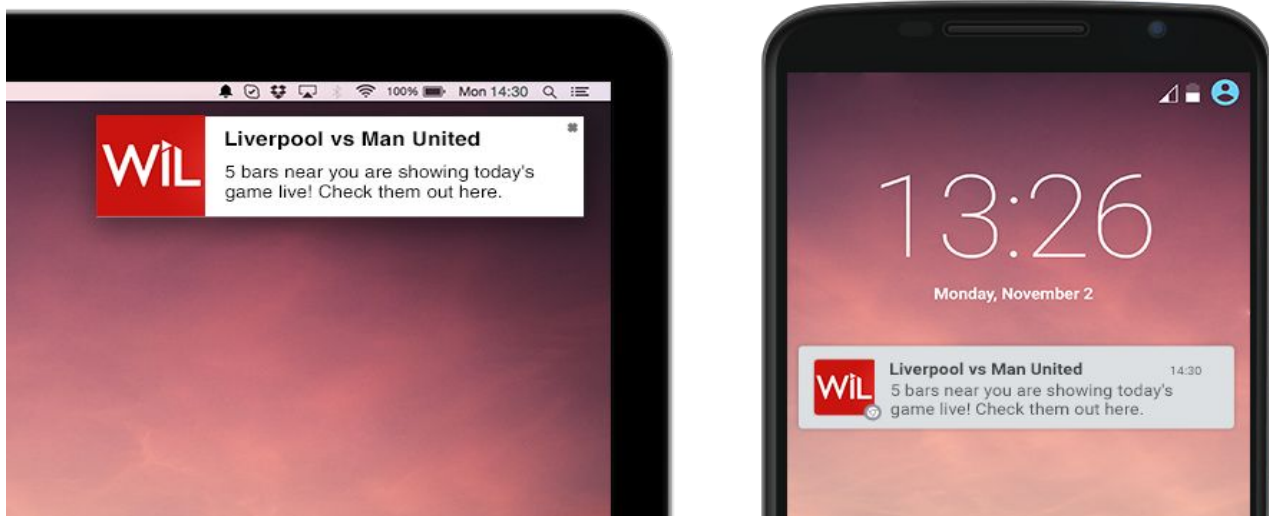
Up until now, it's been difficult for brands to build a meaningful relationship with their web visitors since websites lack the engaging capabilities of mobile apps, such as push notifications and home screen icons. In a recent Forrester study, 91% of marketers surveyed state they are prioritising the improvement of customer experience through personalisation over the next year.

Web Push Notifications now provide marketers with the opportunity to deliver a uniquely individualised experience to their users directly on their desktop and mobile browser using targeted messaging.

Notifications can even be delivered when the user has left your website and is browsing elsewhere, allowing brands to extend the reach of their website beyond the browser.

Using web push, a targeted message can now be sent directly to the browser of a user, for example, who has failed to complete a purchase. Considering that only 2% of website visitors convert on the first visit, web push provides the perfect way to re-engage with the other 98% of your website visitors to drive conversions.

In this guide, we will take a look at how Web Push is your new marketing weapon and how it can help you achieve remarkable results in your remarketing and engagement efforts with your customers.

2. Why use Web Push Notifications?

Brands currently employ a number of ways to reach and engage with their website users. The most commonly used channels include email and display advertising for remarketing, and social media and SMS for communication and engagement. Let us take a brief look at each of these channels and try to understand where they prove useful.

Email Marketing

Email Marketing is one of the cornerstones of digital marketing and it can be particularly useful for re-engaging with users who have failed to convert. The main advantage of email is its reach, A recent study completed by The Radicati Group reveals that there are currently 2.6 billion email users. This means that more than 1 out of 3 people have an email account. Email is also accessible anytime, unlike social media messages and notifications which can be harder to trace.

Where email marketing misses out is in the ability to deliver time-sensitive information. The average time for email recipients to view and email message is 6.5 hours. It's therefore not an effective communication channel for delivering time-bound or important actionable information.

Display Advertising

Display advertising allows marketers to retarget their users with personalised ads and messaging on thousands of networks. It comes in many forms including rich media, banner ads and more. The strength of display advertising is that it builds awareness quickly, since people are more likely to remember what they see rather than read and hear.

The drawbacks of display advertising are the low click-through rates, audience distraction, less transparency into inventory costs, and having no easy access to ad inventory.

SMS

SMS can be effective if you want your user to read your message quickly – 90% of SMS messages are read within the first 3 minutes. This makes it useful for communicating short and timely messages, such as 'Your taxi will arrive in 5 minutes' or 'Your phone bill is due in 2 days'.

The disadvantage of SMS messages is that they can be costly - the average cost of a bulk SMS messaging service is 5.4c per message.. Another disadvantage of SMS messages is that the message may not be individually tailored or provide relevant content to your customers.

Social Media

Social Media Networks (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram) are a more effective channel than SMS marketing for communicating limited-time offers and budget deals, for example, since people spend more time on social media websites than on any other online activity. The main issue is engagement – only 0.07% of your Facebook audience will interact with your posts and the figure is 0.03% for Twitter. In this instance, social media is best used for building brand awareness and maintaining customer relationships.

3. Where do Web Push Notifications fit into the picture?

Web Push notifications fit into a very unique spot in the omni-channel marketing ecosystem. The power of Web Push primarily lies in browser-based retargeting and real-time communication.

The fact that web push notifications can be delivered to both Mobile and Desktop web users, both onsite and offsite, positions this marketing tactic as an intelligent cost-effective retargeting technique.

According to data from a comScore study conducted between February 2013 and April, 2015, mobile activity is accelerating at a fast rate, but time spent searching the internet from a desktop has not decreased as a result. In fact, during this period, the time users spent searching the internet from a desktop or laptop computer did not change.

Mobile devices are "unlocking" new Web time in the morning and the evening, but desktop traffic remains dominant during weekdays. It's crucial therefore for brands to consider what channels are best to invest in to effectively target web users as they move across devices.
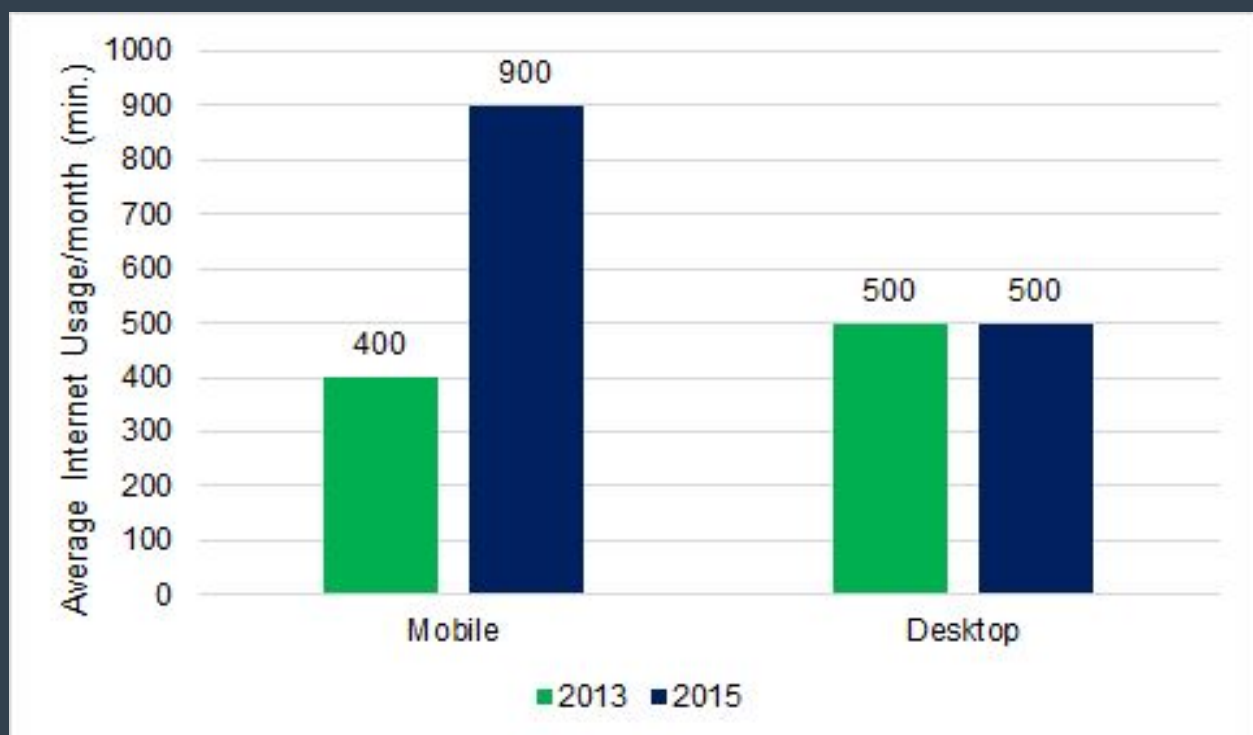
Mobile vs. Desktop web usage

Reference: ComScore

In terms of the quality of real-time engagement, contextually relevant notifications can be created based on key target segments. This ensures that you are reaching out to your individual customer at exactly the right time with the right message, instead of guessing mass engagement times, as you do with SMS and social media marketing.

Web Push notifications can fit seamlessly into the marketing strategy of a brand who currently have a mobile app. By inserting a deeplink into a mobile web push notification, brands can directly target lapsed users to re-engage with their mobile app and drive conversions.

For brands who do not currently have a mobile app, web push provides a new frictionless way to engage and communicate with website users on both mobile and desktop.

Web Push notifications work on Chrome (PCs and mobile devices), Firefox and Safari (PCs) – collectively both browsers account for 77% of global market web share (data gathered in November 2015, W3Counter).

Chrome (Android & Desktop)
Firefox and Safari (Desktop)

account for

77%

0%   100%

of global web browser market share

4. How do Web Push Notifications work?

Whenever you install a mobile app, you automatically choose to opt-in to receive push notifications on your device. Everybody is familiar with this process. Similarly, websites have to explicitly take permission from their users to send them web push messages. This is how website push notifications work on Safari (Desktop) and Chrome (Desktop and Android).

1. The first step is getting an opt-in from your website visitors. As soon as someone arrives on a website, an opt-in box is triggered. If the visitor clicks on "Allow", he/she is added to your subscriber list.

2. As soon as a 'visitor' becomes a 'subscriber', you can send them push notifications from your website, even while they are browsing elsewhere. The title message and the text message are customizable within certain character limits and a URL has to be specified.

3. These notifications will arrive in real-time even if the browser is not open at that point of time. Clicking on the notification will take the subscriber to the URL specified.
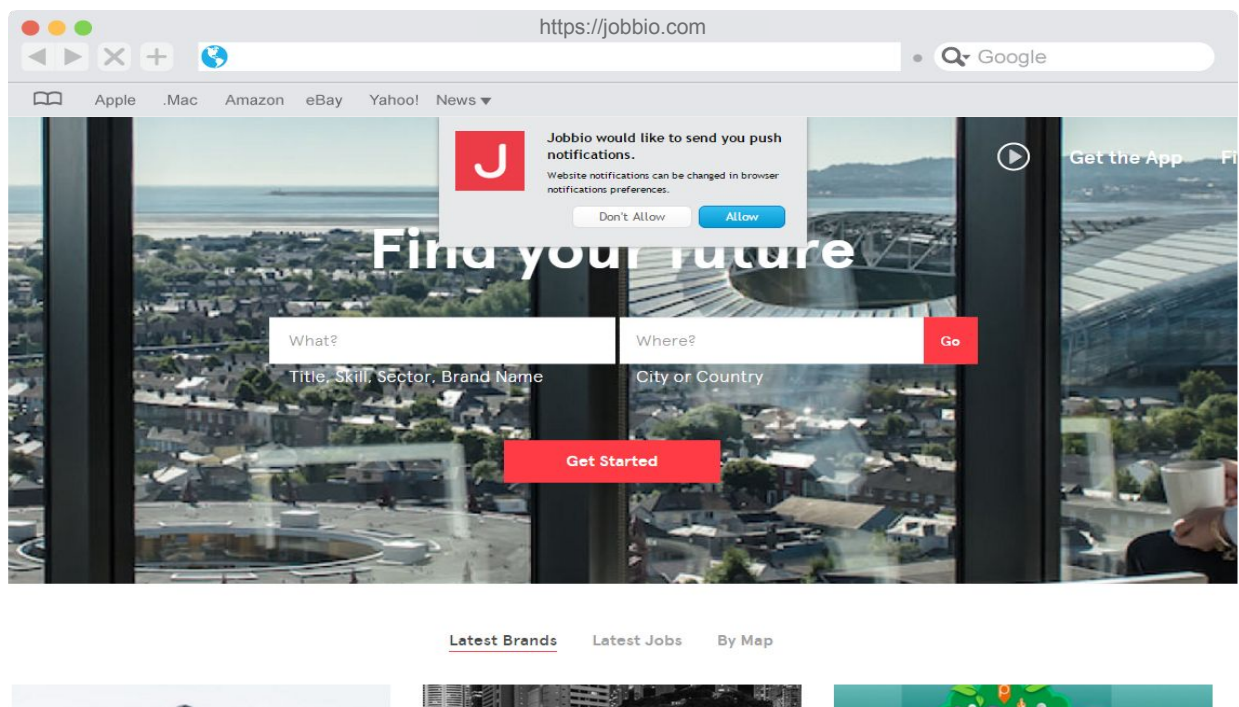
Onsite Notification Center

The notification center is an essential part of the Web Push experience. Having an onpage notification center allows your entire website audience to discover your most important recent content.

This will appear to both customers who have opted in for Web Push notifications and those that have not.

For Web Push subscribers, it allows them to retrieve recent alerts they may have missed exactly like they can on their mobile device. For website customers who haven't opted in, the notification centre enables marketers to deliver targeted promotions and increase brand engagement with all of their visitors.

The fact that the center includes an easy opt-in/opt-out option means that you have more opportunities to win more web push subscribers after the initial opt-in prompt.
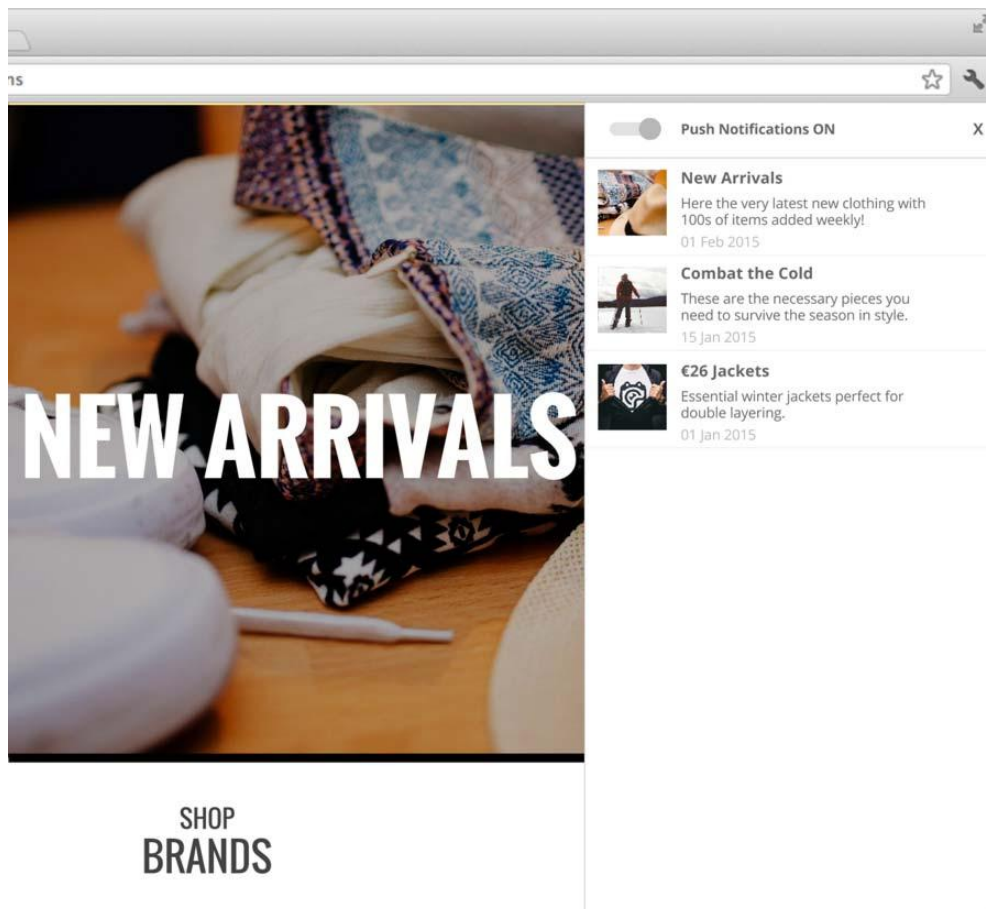
5. Getting Started on Web Push

Optimising for success

Successful data-driven marketing is based on a people-centred approach to insights and analytics. Using data gathered from web analytics, marketers already employ tried-and-tested strategies, such as online advertising, social media and email marketing, to retarget their users and boost brand awareness.

In the era of ad-blocking and content overload, however, users now expect instant gratification in their online experience: They want to find the content they are seeking now. Keep in mind that 74% of online consumers get frustrated with content that they consider irrelevant.

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You may not be able to personalise your homepage to suit each unique visitor's needs yet but web push notifications are the next best thing. Think about it: in the case of a digital news publisher, they can now send send an avid sports and business reader live news updates relating to the content they are most interested in. Even while the user is browsing another website. In this manner, a media publisher can always be top-of-mind as the leading source of breaking news.

To secure the opt-in from your visitors, it's critical to convey to your audience how web push notifications can be of benefit, whether it's the latest promotions, top news stories or personalised job alerts. The messaging from your website should provide value and enhance the user experience at each step of their journey.

Now let's look at how you can deliver targeted campaigns to your audience , based on user segmentation and real-time behaviour.

Triggered Web Push campaigns - Events & Segmentation

Web Push is all about communicating with your website visitors in a compelling and contextually relevant manner. This is achieved by tapping into your core customer segments and identifying what drives and motivates your customers. It also involves taking a strategic approach to targeted campaign delivery.

If you sign up to a Web Push provider that offers Google Analytics integration, you can easily leverage your existing website customer insights to deliver high-performing campaigns that resonate strongly with your audience. It's as simple as selecting your target GA segment from your existing list of GA custom and set customer segments during Web Push campaign set-up.

The next important layer of data to consider is real-time triggers. You need to set the right event criteria to activate Web Push messages at the optimum time for your target segment. Notifications are triggered by events (or user's actions) that you specify. This could be an abandoned shopping cart, in the case of an ecommerce site, for example.

Finally, it's crucial to consider the exact timing of your message. You can choose to automate a message immediately after an event is completed or specify an exact time lapse before the message is sent.

Why would you consider adding a delay to your message delivery? Good question. Well, in the case of an abandoned shopping cart, for example, a 5 minute delay in sending off-site message can make a huge difference to the click-through rate of your message and the end conversion rate.

Providing relevant content in your notifications to your target customer at the right time will measurably drive engagement and website conversions.

With this in mind, let's take a look at Web Push in action across a number of different verticals.
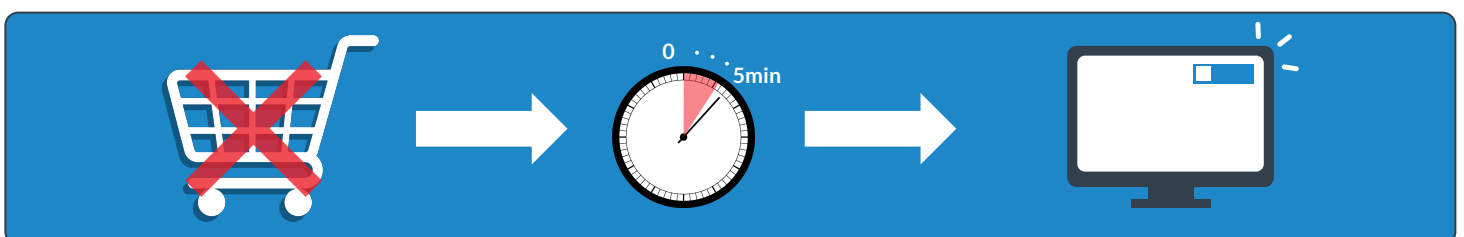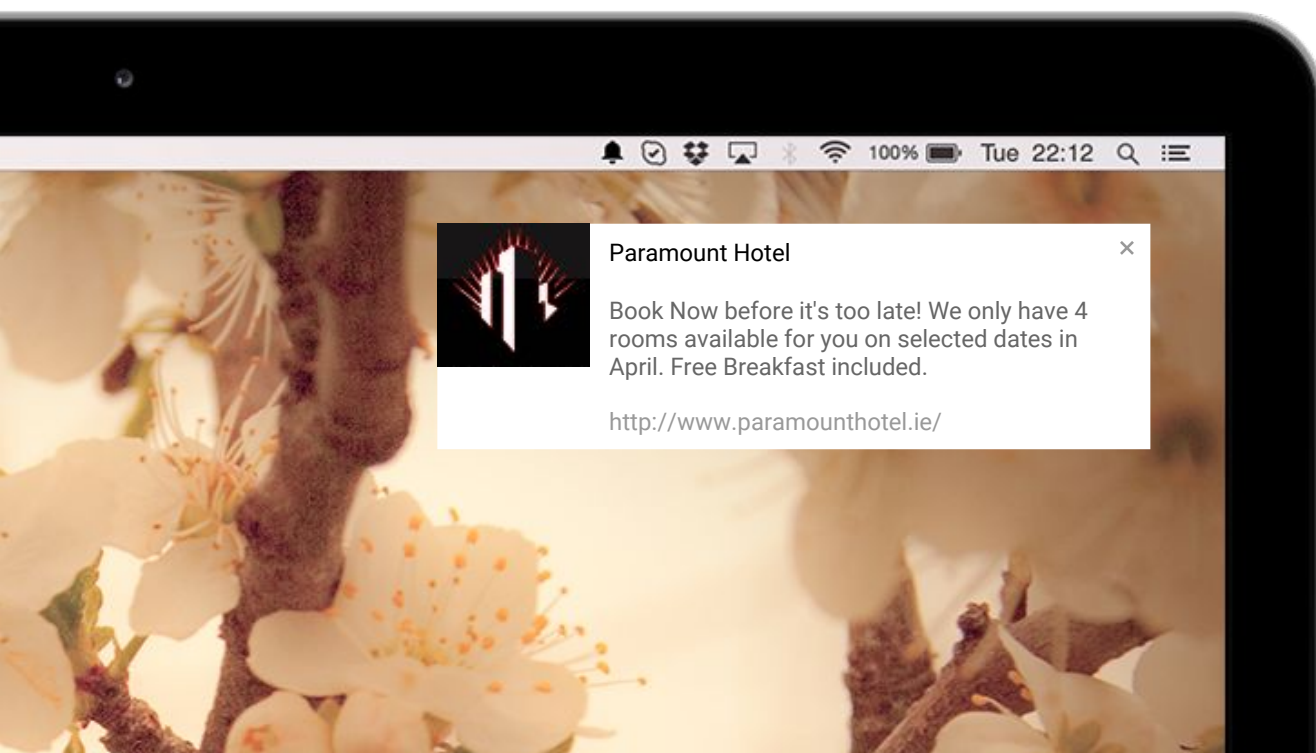
6. Web Push in Action

Travel - Hotels

In the ultra-competitive travel industry, hotels must work hard to compete for their website users' attention, particularly when faced with the marketing might of online travel agencies, such as Expedia and Booking.com. By using web push notifications, hotels can reach and re-engage mobile and desktop web users who have shown clear buyer intent and deliver messages that create demand.

Use Case

In the case of a New York hotel website, for example, a customer has searched for 'Hotels near Times Square' and clicked on the hotel's PPC ad. They then chose to allow notifications and subsequently exit the site. Their 2nd subsequent visit is a referral from booking.com. The user selected the dates 15th - 17th April 2016. Using this customer data, the hotel can now deliver personalised messaging to this customer that creates urgency. This can be scheduled to arrive at specified times: 5 minutes, 24 hours, 48 hours after the user has left the website.

Paramount Hotel ×

Book Now before it's too late! We only have 4 rooms available for you on selected dates in April. Free Breakfast included.
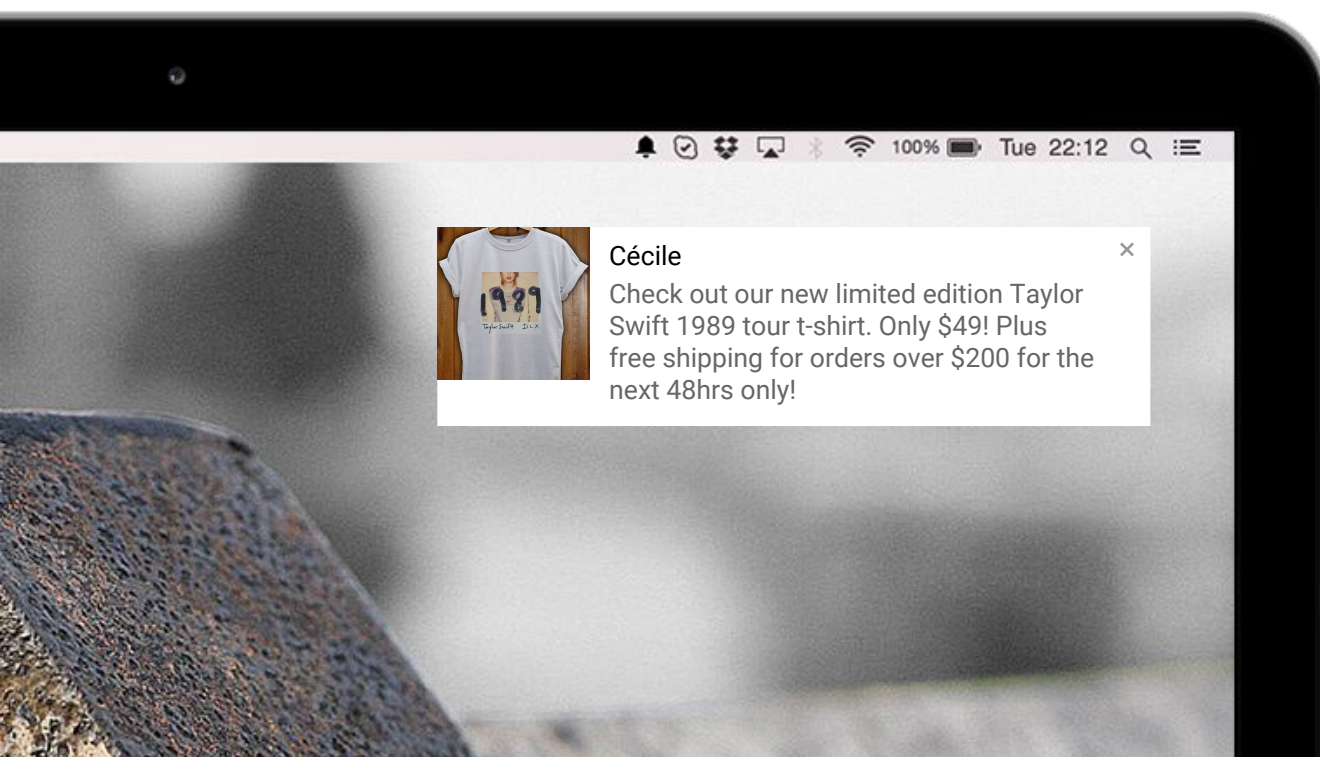
http://www.paramounthotel.ie/

eCommerce

Cart abandonment is an all-too-common issue that e-commerce brands are faced with. Trying to gently persuade your web customers to complete purchases can be expensive and time-consuming. Being smart with your web push notifications, through the use of personalisation and time-sensitive offers, can actively entice your customers to complete purchases and provide you with an opportunity to cross-sell.

Use Case

A registered ecommerce website user is browsing on a Taylor Swift fan page and clicks on a Facebook Ad promoting jeans. She is brought to the ecommerce website. She adds two items of clothing, worth $140, to her cart and exits the website without reaching the Purchase page. There is clear buyer intent here. Based on this insight, the ecommerce brand can deliver a very targeted web push notification to this user 24 hours later promoting a Taylor Swift related item of clothing to bring her back to the website.

Moreover, by offering free shipping on a set amount for 24 hours, we can create a sense of demand and use this opportunity to cross-sell additional items to the customer.

Cécile
Check out our new limited edition Taylor Swift 1989 tour t-shirt. Only $49! Plus free shipping for orders over $200 for the next 48hrs only!

Financial Services

Real-time communication can allow brands to actively engage with their website users to nudge them further down the funnel. This can be particularly effective in cases where the funnel is a longer and more complex decision-making process than other verticals, such as banking and insurance.

Banking - Online Mortgage Application

A customer has reviewed information on mortgages online twice in the past month - through the bank's mobile website. The day after his second visit, the customer is served with a mobile display re-targeting ad on Google after 6pm. He clicks on the notification and is brought to the loan application page. He starts to complete the application but falls off after step 3 (Occupation and Income). The bank can now send him a web push notification at the optimal time with a link back to the website application page and offer additional customer service assistance. As the customer is on mobile, the web push will appear on his homescreen, exactly like a mobile app push message.
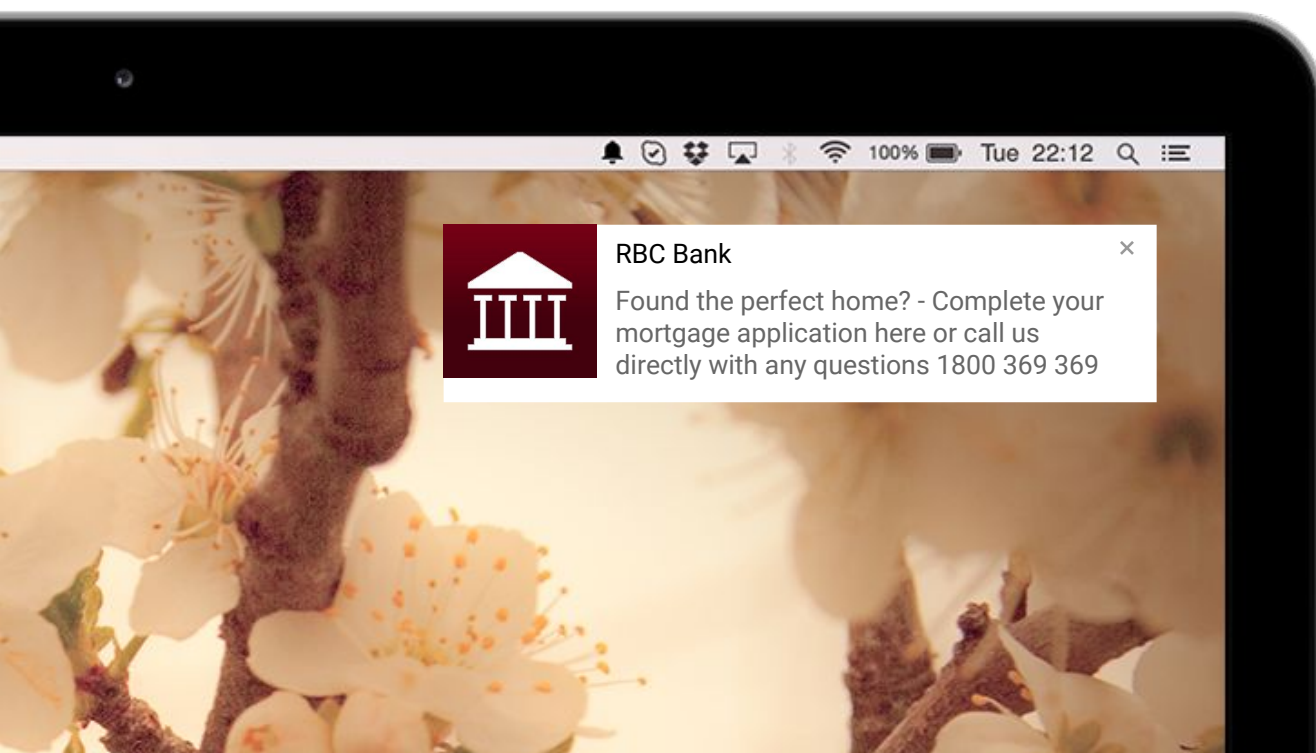
Software as a Service (SaaS) Platform

Web Push Notifications are not just the preserve of B2C companies, personalised messaging can also be used as a compelling lead generation tactic for B2B companies. This can be particularly effective at targeting users further down the sales funnel, for instance leads who have signed up for a free trial, as outlined in the below example.

Use Case

In the case of an inbound marketing software platform, for example, a user clicked on the company's most recent whitepaper post on Twitter and subsequently signed up for a 30 day free trial. Since then, the customer has not answered a sales call or opened either of the two follow-up emails. Using web push notifications, you can message the customer directly at the optimal time or even when they are using the software to offer a personalised demo or provide a link to a useful how-to guide. This will help convince and convert this customer from a warm lead to a fully paid up client.
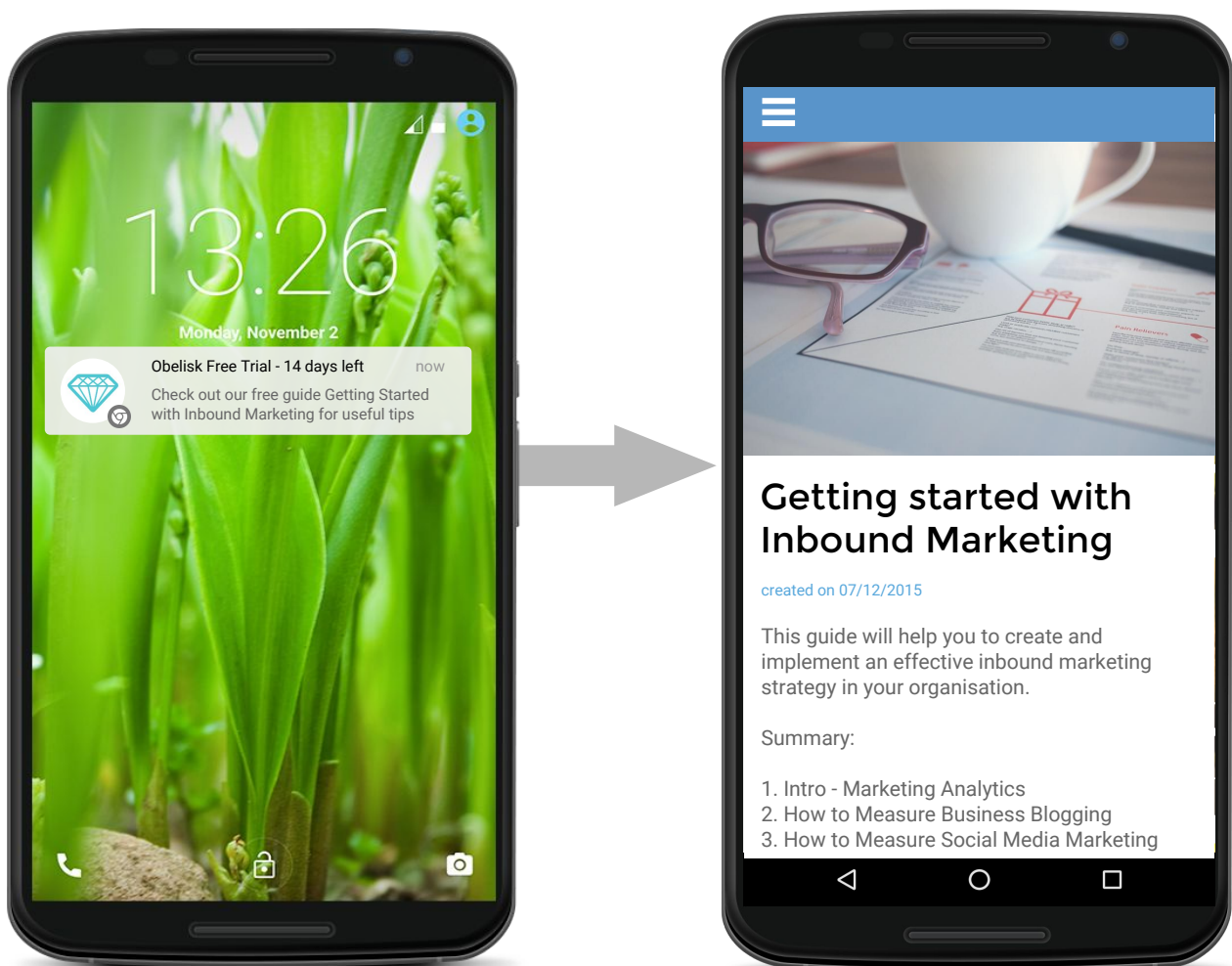
7. Conclusion

Marketers are faced with the daily task of negotiating a fragmented and complex digital marketing landscape in order to reach and engage their website visitors. Using Web Push notifications, brands can now deliver targeted and personalised messaging to efficiently convert casual browsers into loyal buyers.

By leveraging the insights already at their disposal in web analytics, marketers can tap into customer segments and deliver tailored notifications at the right time to the right customer. With cross-device campaigns, brands can reach users as they move seamlessly across the web on different devices, even while their browser is minimised. Web Push essentially provides the engagement potential of an in-app experience directly from your Mobile and Desktop website.

We hope this guide provided an insight into how Web Push can be incorporated into your digital marketing strategy, and how it can help you greatly boost your marketing and communication efforts.

Xtremepush is the world's most powerful Multi-Channel Analytics & Engagement platform. Using our cloud-based marketing automation solution, brands can understand and engage with their customers in a contextually relevant manner.

We provide brands with all the tools they need to drive engagement, boost retention and maximise revenue in their Mobile and Web channels. Our people-centred approach to analytics allows you to connect and communicate with your users on a one-to-one level, delivering maximum return for your brand.

xtremepush is trusted by some of the world's largest and most successful brands, across numerous sectors including banking, media, retail, sports and gaming.

If you would like to join them, simply email us at sales@xtremepush.com.

Features:

✔ Targeted In-App campaigns - deliver the right message at the right time

✔ Push Notifications - reach and engage your users even outside of the app

✔ Location-Targeting - enhance the real-time customer experience, in-store or at live events

✔ Web Push Notifications - deliver personalised messaging through your website

✔ Mobile Attribution - accurately identify your best performing campaigns

✔ Real-Time Optimisation & Retargeting

✔ A/B Testing - Identify and automate the campaign with the most impact.

✔ All the Analytics & Segmentation you need to create powerful and effective campaigns