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PUSHBULLET: CASE STUDY



Case Study on Pushbullet app

Background: Pushbullet is an app launched in 2013 by a startup. It was one of the pioneer apps that let users to link their phones, tablets and computers together enabling easy transfer of files, links, messages etc., It had a steady growth with an active user base until 2016.

Problem: Since then, Pushbullet has lost a number of its users. This case study aims to identify why that's the case and what could be done to revive the platform.

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What is Pushbullet?

Increases Convenience

How many times have you seen your phone vibrate while it is charging, and you have felt lazy to see what the notification is?

Pushbullet app allows you to mirror your phone's notifications on to your laptop and tablet. It also lets you take actions for each of these notifications

Improves Productivity

When you are in middle of something using your laptop, how many times have you felt annoyed to do multiple clicks to open a link that your friend has sent?

Push bullet has an extension for all major browsers in windows/Mac allowing you to open links instantaneously, with just a click

Enhances Flexibility

Have you ever felt the need to look at the contents of your phone in a big screen, without going through the hassles of logging into other accounts?

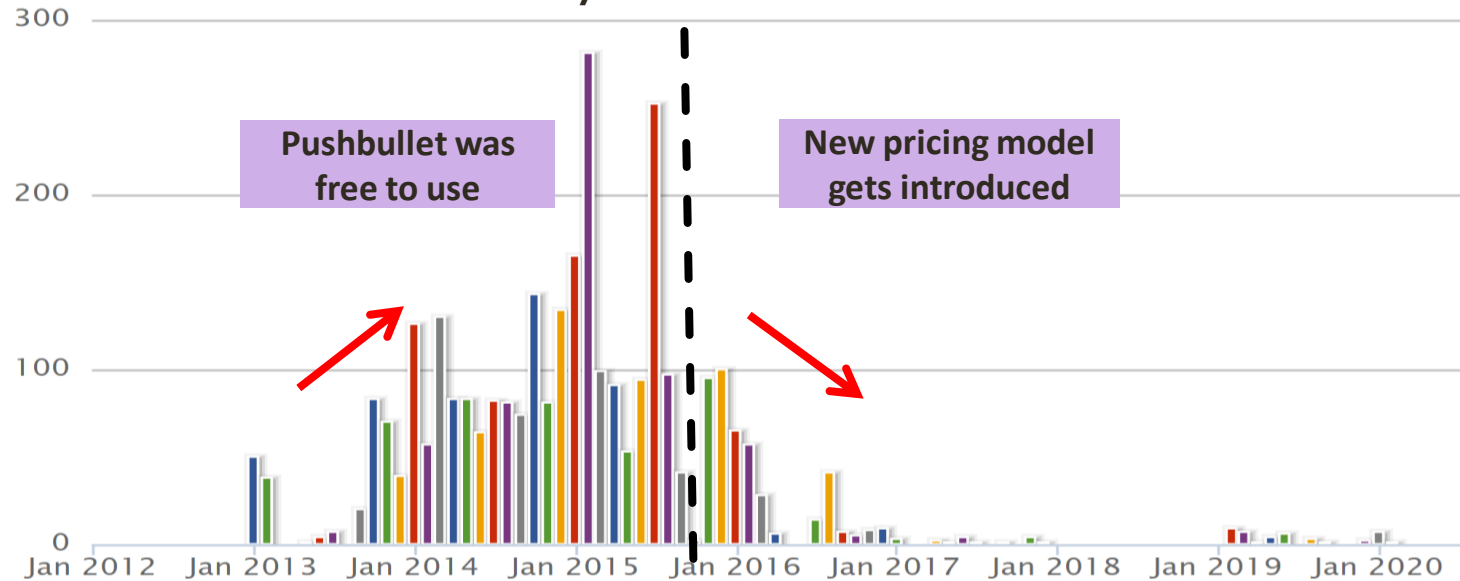
Push bullet allows you to send documents/ link bidirectionally between your phone and your browser straightaway



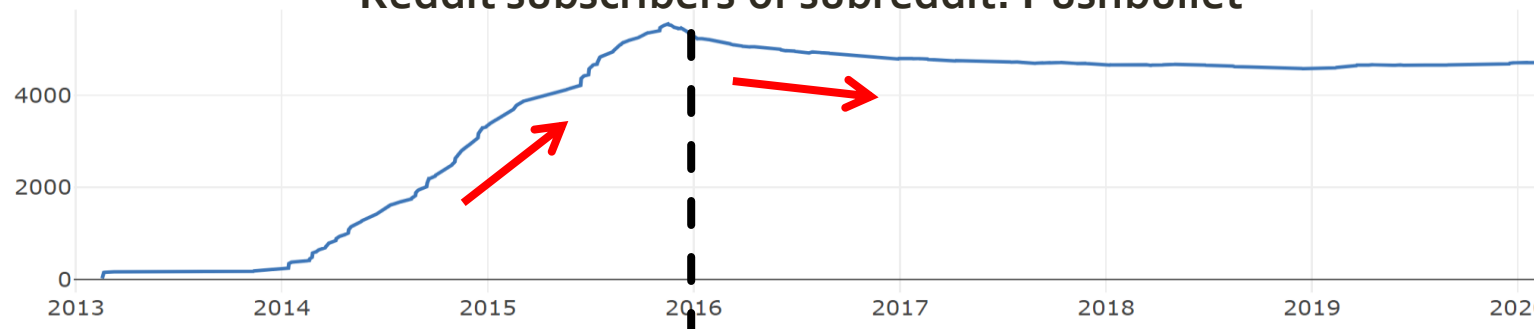
The User Story

Rise and drop of Pushbullet users

Twitter activity in the account: Pushbullet



Reddit subscribers of subreddit: Pushbullet



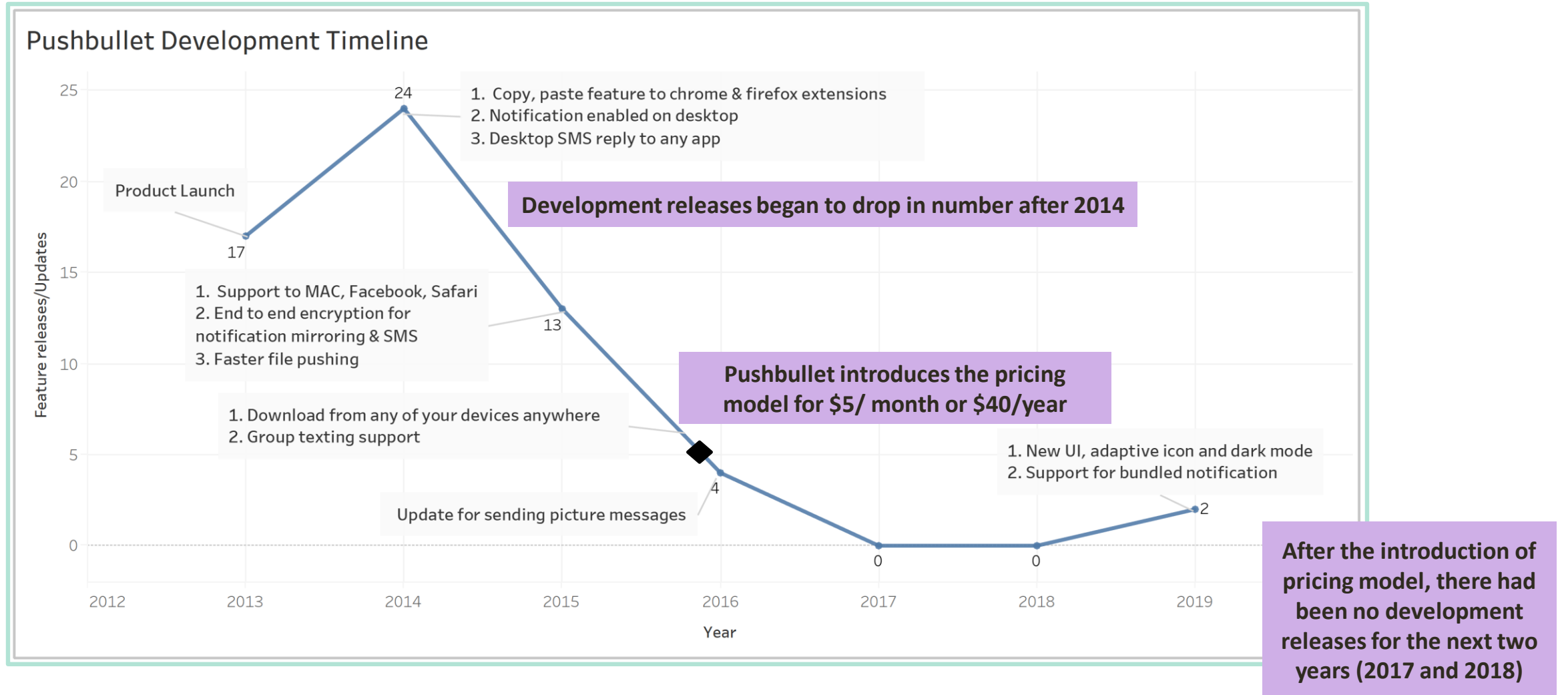
Active user data of Pushbullet was not available as it is a privately owned startup. Therefore, user engagements from social media apps is taken as a reference metric.

Both twitter and subreddit statistics indicate that :

1. User interest in Pushbullet peaked in 2015
2. It reduced drastically after the introduction of their pricing model in early 2016 and did not regain back

Pushbullet – The Inside Story

Rise and drop of Pushbullet new feature developments



Research and Analysis

Pushbullet's storyline and its flaws

Further research and Reddit AMA (Ask Me Anything) held by Pushbullet stakeholders, indicates the following:

- This startup was backed by angel investors and was offered as a free app from the beginning of its launch
- Pushbullet introduced a lot of features and functionalities to increase its user base
- It must be noted, the company never sold user data and never had ads in the platform
- Eventually, the startup might have lost its angel investors, probably after 2014 and hence was pushed to introduce subscription pricing model
- However, offering features while being a free app and later forcing users to pay for the same features backfired

Poor existing Solution

- Pushbullet and its stakeholders reasoned they had to introduce the pricing model to keep the startup surviving
- They even offered a free tier but with very limited options
- They also promised constant updates and new features for its paid users – however, they couldn't keep up their word because of lack of income(as churn rate increased tremendously after introduction of pricing model)
- After two years of inactivity, a couple of minor updates were released in 2019
- Pro users are not satisfied with the existing customer support
- The service is still running as Pushbullet's development in the past was unparalleled by other competitors

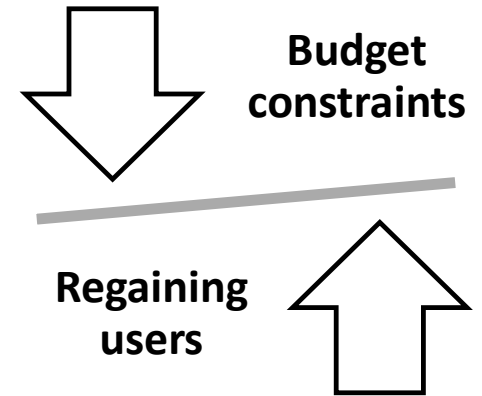
Yet the user interest was not the same after this debacle

Challenges

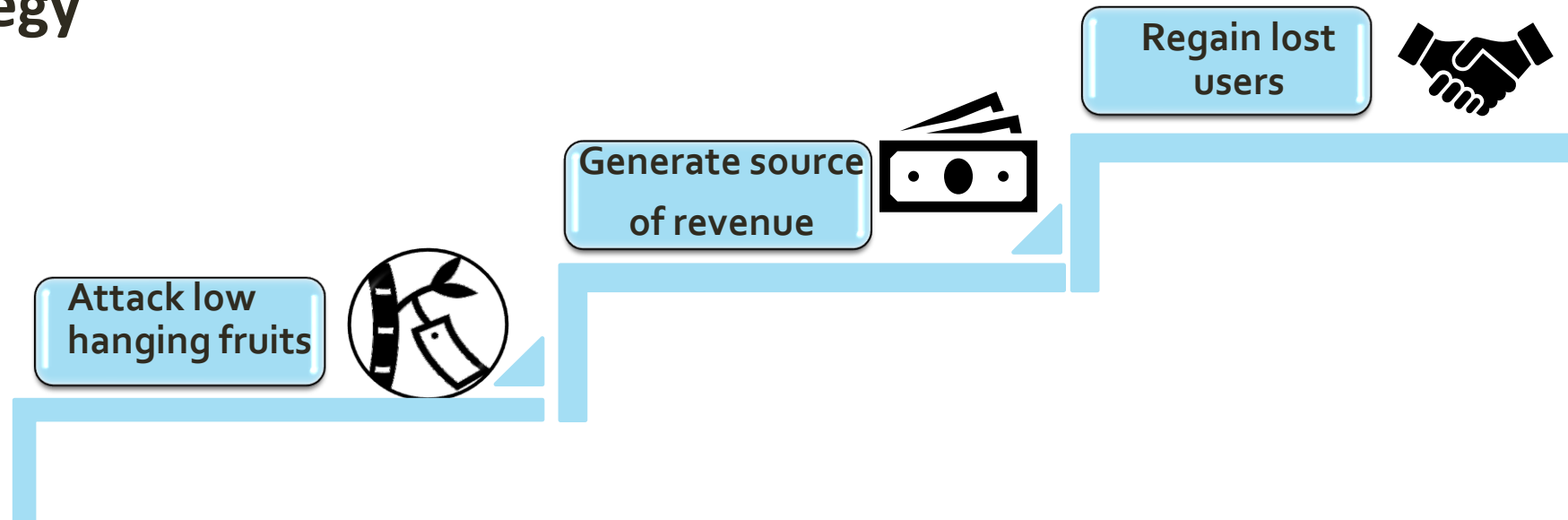
Pushbullet is a great product and is a day-to-day essential to its users, as there are not much alternatives available for cross-platform integration.

- Gaining back the lost users and to expand userbase is the primary challenge
- At the same time, generation of income to fund development is critical to avoid losing to competitors

These indicate the need for new strategy and solutions

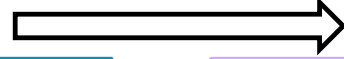


Strategy

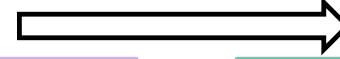


Recommendations

Reduces the severity of the issue and acts as a springboard to leap further



By pivoting to enterprise sales, company's revenue should increase multi-fold



Low Hanging Fruit

- Enhancing customer service, to retain existing users
- Collect feedback and functionality requests from users to restore their faith in management
- Re-initiate Reddit AMAs to indicate liveliness and to revive relationship with users

Revenue Generation

- Expand Pushbullet to include corporate accounts in-addition to their current focus on personal users
- Use Pushbullet to enhance home automation capabilities by integrating it with existing assistants like Google and Alexa
- Utilize Pushbullet's notification capabilities to manufacturing plants by connecting it to ERP/MES/IoT platforms thus getting alerts to all stakeholders across all devices

Regain lost users

- Using the revenue generated from corporate accounts, prices can be lowered to personal account users, while still not selling data to ads
- This will also allow the company to convert some of the premium features to free tier, thus reducing the entry barrier to new users

Extended Use Cases and Scenarios

To enable Revenue Generation

Acquiring Corporate Accounts

- To attract corporate accounts to use Pushbullet:
 - Highlight the possible productivity gains of using Pushbullet during the pitch to corporate enterprises
 - Allow only work apps to integrate with Pushbullet while in office
 - Change from using Google's personal account to Office 365 for logging in and storage of data
 - Add an extension to Office 365 platform to enable deeper integrations

Integrating with Assistants

- Instruct Google assistant from Laptops to:
 - Turn on lights
 - Play music on speakers
 - Lookup who is at front door without picking phone or looking at Amazon Echo Show, etc.
 - Control thermostat even during meetings and phone calls, while working from home such as during COVID-19 situations

Connecting to Manufacturing Systems

- Typically, there are multiple manufacturing systems deployed in a plant. Each of them have their own alert systems. Pushbullet can unify all these alerts and push them to necessary devices used by stakeholders. Like notifying
 - Production Managers about a line breakdown
 - Loaders about an incoming truck
 - Deviation of actual production quantities from scheduled targets



THANK YOU

