



Notifications in OLX app

[OLX](#) is a big classifieds platform owned by [OLX Group](#). It is extremely popular in European countries like Poland, Portugal, or Ukraine. Millions of users use it each day to sell and buy used goods.



UX Researcher



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Background

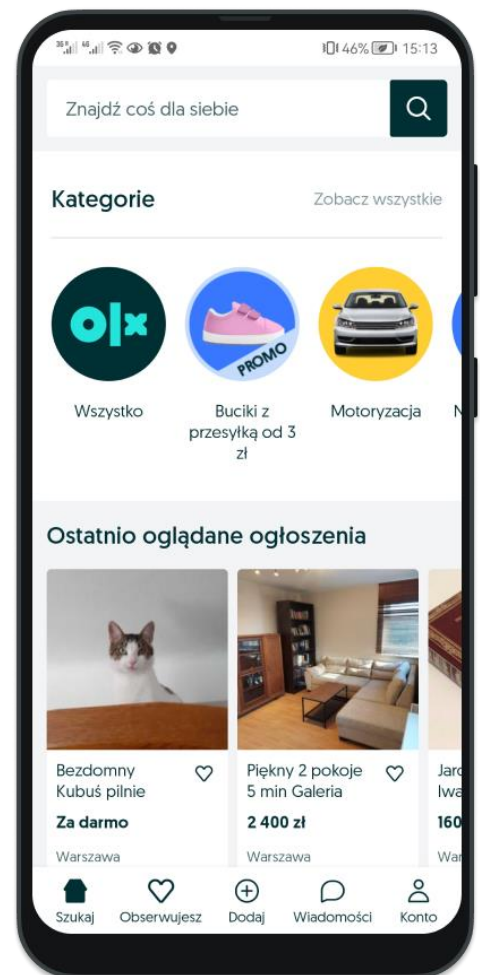
Users do not use notifications so often

From quantitative data from analyst and my desk research, we discovered that notifications' open rate is not so high. We send pushes to users, but they do not have a place in the app to come back to them (see the screen, no bell icon!). This mean that notifications are easy to lose. Users told us that they do not receive some of our notifications.

Let's fix notification problem!

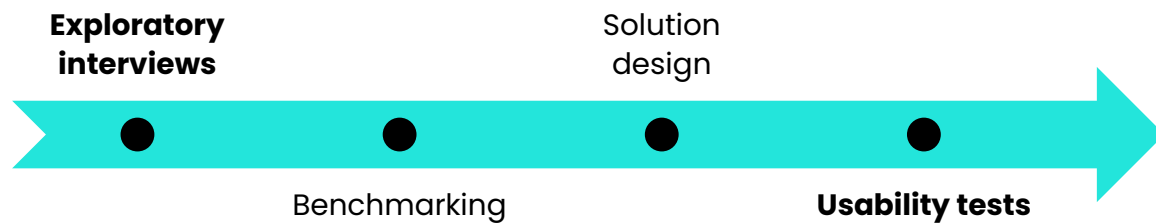
I started with our goals for the research:

- Understand user attitudes towards notifications



- Find moments in user journey when notifications are crucial
- Find what information users want to receive, and which notifications are most important for them
- Verify how users perceive and react on most engaging notifications
- Create notification solution which satisfies users, and it is easy to understand

How are we going to achieve these goals?



In the process I was responsible for conducting IDIs and usability tests.

Exploratory interviews

What do we need to discover?

I always start with research questions to understand what we look for and why we need it. This time list was exceptionally long because we did not have any research about that topic before.

Notifications in general

- How do users perceive notifications in general?
- Why do users need notifications?
- In what way should we do it?
- What should be a time of notification?
- How often should people get messages?
- Do users want to control the notifications? How?

OLX notifications

- How do users perceive current notifications?
- How do they react to current notifications? What do they do with diverse types of messages?
- Is communication relevant to them?

- What type of information should we communicate to users?
- What is annoying? What is disturbing?
- What is useful? What is appealing?
- For how long are the messages relevant to the users? How long should we keep them?
- Are there any differences between markets, segments, age?
- Which segment will receive help from this feature the most and how?

Other platforms

- What types of messages from other platforms do they like and why?
- What types of messages from other platforms do they not like and why?

I already had few hypotheses in my mind

- Pushes are easy to lose, so users need a place to see and manage all the notifications
- Users are more interested in in-app notifications than in emails
- Users prefer to receive different messages via different channels
- Most important for users are notifications about their transactions

I decided to conduct exploratory interviews

12 SESSIONS	
6 Sellers	6 Buyers

I conducted twelve exploratory interviews via UserZoom. I asked external agency to recruit participants. I sent them recruitment criteria, and then scheduled sessions. Finally, I talked with six buyers and six sellers. In each group half of people used notifications and half of them not. I wanted to understand the problem from each perspective.

I divided interviews into three parts:

1. Attitudes toward notifications
2. Current OLX notification evaluation
3. Impressions on first idea of the solution – Notification Center

After sessions, I analyzed answers using Dovetail. I used colorful tags and categorized them into attitudes, needs, behaviors and design elements.

We found out that Notification Center might be relevant to all the users, even if they do not use notifications daily

Transactional messages are most relevant and useful to all users.

Users understood most elements of design solution.

Users who have notifications turned off daily use apps intentionally.

Users expect that important notifications should still come by email.

There are no differences between buyers and sellers and their attitude towards notifications.

Marketing information is attractive to half of users, and they declared that they could use it.

Recommendations

- We should rethink all notification channels and which messages present in the Notification Center
- We must analyze data related to marketing information
- Final solution must include notification settings
- We should think about distinctive style of “unread notifications”

Usability tests

It is time for solution validation

We want to verify if users understand the Notification Center concept and can use it smoothly. We have never had such a functionality before in our app.

What do we want to discover?

- Is the concept of Notification Center understandable?
- Do users know how to filter notifications?
- Do users know how to remove notifications?
- Do users know how to mark notifications as unread?
- Do users know how to mark all notifications as read?
- Do users know how to change notification settings?

I decided to use moderated usability tests

10 SESSIONS	
5 Sellers	5 Buyers

I wanted to deepen tasks with other questions, so I chose moderated usability tests. I used UserZoom tool to lead sessions. Because of NDA, cannot present tested solutions.

Again, I used Dovetail to tag along information gathered during the sessions.

We discovered that most users compared the solution to their email inboxes like Gmail or Outlook.

Users almost never mentioned notifications from other apps. They commented "like I have in my email inbox".	Users do not really see the need of marking notifications as read and making it a bulk action.
Users knew how to perform all actions. Designed flow was amazingly easy.	At once visible context menu or notification swiping seems to be easier to use.

Users easily recognized unread notifications which was not so clear during first interviews.

It was noticeably clear for the users that buttons on notifications stand for shortcut actions.

Filtering concept was easy and understandable. Four users wanted to have the trash filter as well.

Not everyone was convinced to 'mark as unread' need. One third of respondents uses it, but usually in their email inbox.

Recommendations

- In MVP add fewer actions and add them incrementally if there is a need. Eventually, add features but hide them a little for more advanced users.
- Change the way to mark all notifications as read or resign from the feature.
- Work on copy. Confirm message and explanations in settings were confusing for users. Display time using full words, like "hour", "day", "week". It will be more understandable for users.
- Add colors to swipers in settings sections. Green for "on" and "red for "off".

Outcome and impact

During the entire process I was in a close contact with stakeholders. We decided together on the process. After each research, I cooperated with the designer to help with the designs. Designer took part in all usability tests sessions. Based on the conclusions, designer made design adjustments. Soon, we know what quantitative data we should gather, track, and analyze.