CASE STUDY

PetFlow uses web push notifications to boost declining email engagement, drive in-store traffic

About PetFlow

PetFlow, a leading retail brand of specialty pet food and supplies offers 10,000 products including food, treats, toys, bedding, accessories and health supplies. All with convenient auto-ship options.

Declining email engagement

PetFlow's data driven culture has pet lovers flocking to PetFlow for personalized advice. However, that same data driven focus on company metrics, gave Director of Marketing, Andrea Barsk, pause near the end of 2016.

Throughout 2016 Andrea saw an alarming trend. "We saw a consistent decline in the amount of engagement our customers and prospects had with email. That's a big concern for our most powerful channel - especially when the cost to acquire new customers is on the rise and retaining existing customers is a necessary activity."

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Andrea Barsk, Director of Marketing, Petflow

Andrea echoes what her colleagues have also shared. Email is a powerful tool and absolutely needed, but it's not going to scale beyond a certain point. Simply sending out more promotional emails to get more sales only works for so long, and can wreak havoc on not only your deliverability, but also your bottom line.

The solution - web push notifications

Recognizing that relying solely on email as an engagement channel wasn't sustainable, Andrea and team turned to an emerging new channel - web push notifications. Web push (also called browser push) notifications are being adopted by media brands who use it to push out breaking news alerts. Andrea recognized few online retailers were leveraging it.

"The ability to deliver a notification right to the desktop of a user without them having to be on our site, or to their mobile device and without the need for an app was intriguing." Andrea notes. "Also, the idea that we can create an additional net new channel for communicating outside of email has huge upside."

"We get a lot of anonymous traffic but only about 5% converts. That means we're paying to get users there, and then getting them back by paying more for retargeting and Facebook ads if we didn't capture their e-mail address. We asked ourselves: What's a more personalized way in communicating with leads and customers? We didn't see many retailers trying it so we jumped in."

Fast Setup Time

PetFlow chose to work with MoEngage to set up and deliver web push notifications to desktop and mobile devices based on a user's on-site behavior.

"Setting up MoEngage was straightforward" said Garroch Neil, Director of Product Management at PetFlow. It took us about 3 hours to get live on the site. We starting seeing web push subscribers immediately."

Browse and Cart Abandonment
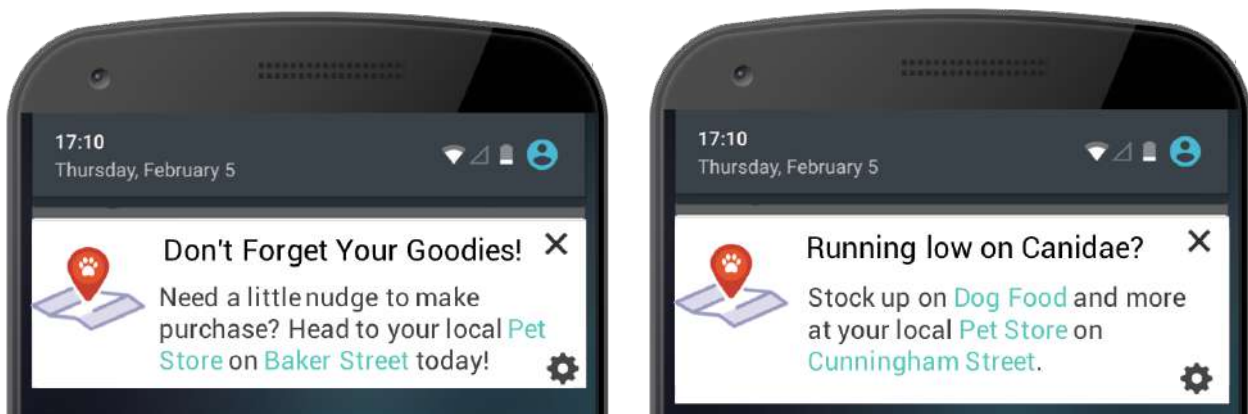
MoEngage worked with the PetFlow marketing team to create a series of behavioral driven campaigns which take an individual's behavior on the site and automatically creates messaging to drive action. Utilizing MoEngage's machine learning tool, Sherpa, notifications are automatically delivered within a time window at the optimum time for response.

PetFlow setup two key automated campaigns. Browse Abandonment notifications and Shopping Cart abandonment notifications.

For Browse Abandonment, users who view a product or series of products but don't add anything to the cart within 15 minutes automatically get a notification.

For Shopping Cart abandonment, users who add items to the cart but don't checkout in 15 minutes automatically get a notification. The notification is personalized to include the brand of the product they added to the cart.

Results

"The results we're seeing are very encouraging" said Andrea. "Especially given things just run automatically and my team can focus on building the framework while MoEngage automates it."

Driving In-store traffic

Recently, PetFlow was acquired by a pet food distributor who needed help driving foot traffic to the stores it serves. PetFlow started personalizing browse and cart abandonment notifications to include the address of the closest store based on an individual's IP address.
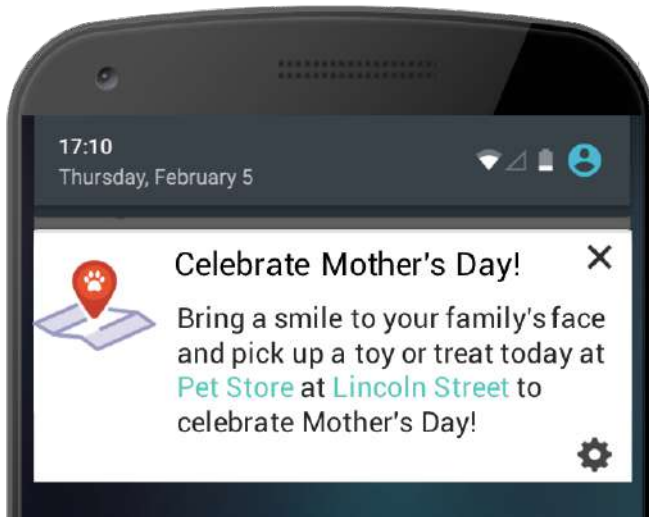
In addition, Andrea notes they run a weekly recurring campaign to drive store traffic.

"We have a weekly store push notification that targets all users with last browsed brand on Mondays at 4:30pm. It states "Head to 'Pet store name' at 'Pet store address' to get 'Last viewed brand'". When people click they go to a dynamically generated Google map so they can instantly see where the store is located or get directions. Our goal is to grab people at their desk just before they head home from work. This campaign gets **10%** CTR."

Even promotions get strong attention. A recent one-time Saturday campaign for Earth Day encouraging users to visit their local store for eco friendly products drove a **5.5%** CTR. Once again, PetFlow included the address of the nearest store for each individual. If no store was close by, the message defaulted to a more generic "come back to the site" message, where they could use the store locator tool.
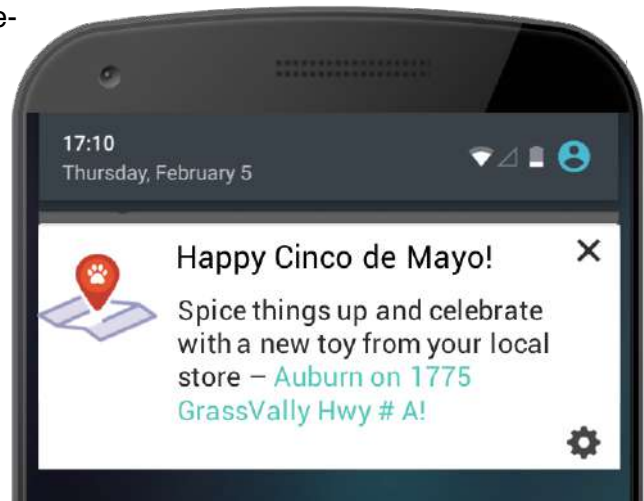
Conclusion

"It's still early and a bit difficult to measure the impact of store traffic and revenue, but it's a great example of leveraging digital channels to support brick and mortar with existing customers and prospects." shared Andrea.

"In my opinion, bigger brands need to be looking at more ways to be strategic about engagement and retention. As a nimble retailer, we can't spend millions towards customer acquisition, but rather we've looked for new techniques which enable us to build a one to one relationship and create loyalty. I feel many cash-rich retailers are missing the boat when it comes to the LTV ROI realized from investing in retention marketing strategies."

About MoEngage

MoEngage enables mobile apps and websites to deliver individual-level personalized interactions via push notifications, in-app recommendations, email, web-push and other retargeting channels to help drive engagement and customer lifetime value.

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