



 signalayer

# 10 RULES OF HIGHLY ENGAGING POPUPS

# **PLAYBOOK FOR BUILDING ENGAGING POPUPS**

FOREWORD

# ADS ARE NOT EVIL

We have a love-hate relationship with ads. However, no ad is evil by design. At the core, the job of any ad is to inform consumers about a product or service that will make their life better. And who doesn't want that?

People don't hate ads. If Superbowl is any indication, people love ads. What people hate is irrelevance.

The problem is that your product or service is not the only one seeking consumer's attention. People are overwhelmed with ads.

A great experience when interacting with your ad is a competitive advantage. Engaged consumers are way more likely to convert.

In this guide we discuss techniques to make your marketing campaigns engaging.



# THE PLAYBOOK

10 ways to increase engagement  
with your popup campaigns

One message per screen

Animation

Context, Relevance & Consistency

Headline copy

Personalization

Cascaded information

Gamification

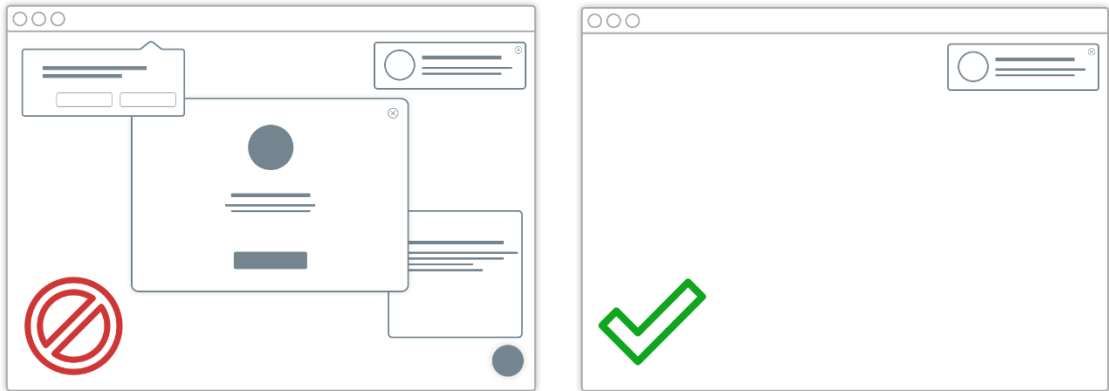
Curiosity

Opinions

Always test

RULE 1

**ONE MESSAGE PER  
SCREEN**



Ads can be intrusive, when they're not expected. Typically, when someone visits your site, they have a specific intention. Your marketing message, especially a center popup, will most likely interrupt that intention.

And if you have several messages competing for user attention, none of them will get read. A visitor will simply close them all. Like chopping weeds away, when walking through the jungle.

The golden rule is to always serve only one message at a time.



RULE 2

**ANIMATION**

You may have heard of banner blindness. It's real.

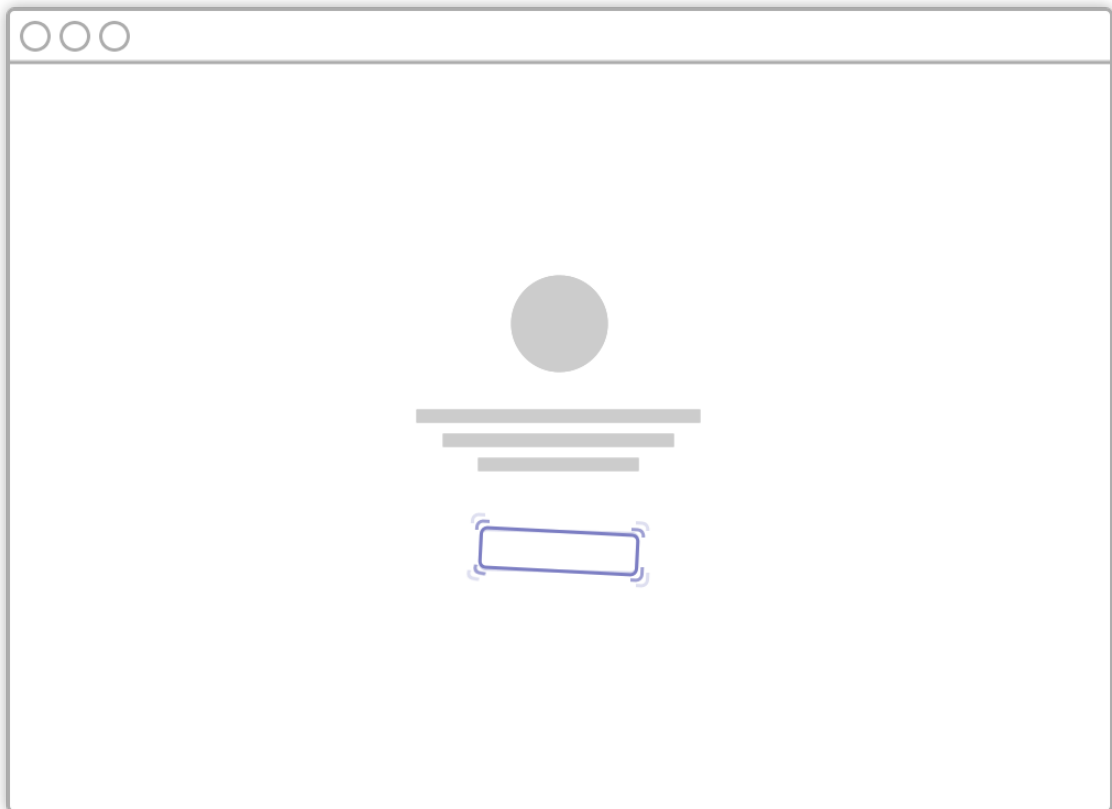
Banner blindness is a phenomenon where visitors to a website consciously or subconsciously ignore banner-like information.

The term "banner blindness" was coined by researchers Benway and Lane, as a result of website usability tests at Rice University.

A majority of the test subjects either consciously or unconsciously ignored information that was presented in banners. The information that was overlooked included both external advertisement banners and internal navigational banners, often called "quick links."

Static elements on the site are easily overlooked. Moving objects draw attention. Especially if they start moving after the page has loaded.

By animating your marketing message, you will definitely grab a visitor's attention. Being noticed is a win in itself, and will greatly increase chances of engagement.



RULE 3

# CONTEXT, RELEVANCE & CONSISTENCY

Great marketing campaigns are tailored to their audience. This requires a magic combination of making them appear for the right person, at the right place and time.

We'll take a closer look at the right person in the next chapters. Here we'll discuss the when, where and what - context, relevance and consistency.

These three often go hand in hand and intertwine. Getting them right will help you deliver a great, engaging marketing experience. This in turn drives conversions.

Present your offer to visitor considering the context of the visit. Is this offer relevant to the content of the page? Is this the very first visit, or second, or third?


You'll want to tailor your offer to fit well into the experience of interacting with the page. It should also fit into the intent.

For example, if a visitor is viewing a particular pair of sneakers for the third time offer them a discount.

OUR BEST SELLING MODEL


Get it today with 15% discount and FREE shipping anywhere in the US

[PLACE ORDER](#)




Jungle Moc Slip-on

\$300.00



Road Runner II

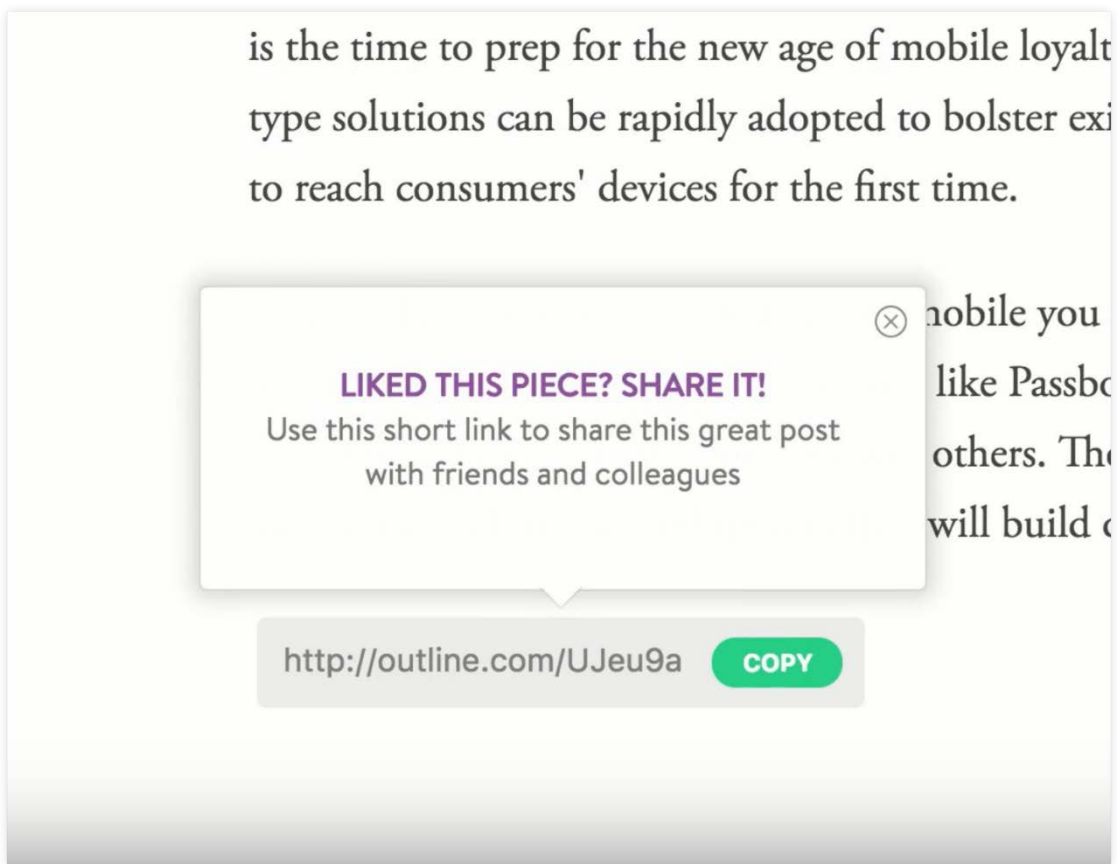
\$250.00



Cloudfoam Race Sneaker

\$120.00

Are they on a check out page? This is a good time to let them know there's free shipping on all items that cost 50\$ or more.



Are they reading an article? Don't bombard them with your popup as soon as they enter the page. Let them read and see that your content is good.

Show an offer to subscribe to your newsletter if they're about to leave, or have read through at least 2/3 of the piece.

Getting this right is about empathy. Think about your consumer and their circumstances; their digital body language as they browse through your site.

This will help craft a campaign that's truly relevant.



RULE 4

**HEADLINE COPY**



*“The headline determines 90% of the success of an ad”*

David Ogilvy

A great headline can out perform an okay one by up to 18 times (although 2 to 3 times is more common). Headline copy writing is an art, but there are a few rules of thumb.

## YOU READ THIS FIRST

**You will read this when skimming**

You will probably not read this on a skim

You will not read this. **unless a phrase is bolded**

### Clear value

Headline is often the only piece visitors read. You need to articulate a clear benefit for them. Use What's In It For Me principle to cater to customer's needs.



**A. Best**



**B. So-so**



**C. Poor**

## Example: Santander Bank

Among these ads variant A was a clear winner. It offers a tangible benefit – you get \$150 when you open a new account.

The other variants are vague. It's not clear what a customer stands to gain from opening a new account.

## Specificity

Be specific about what you're offering. Gun outperforms Weapon by a quarter. You may find 3U approach helpful: Unique, Ultra specific Utility.



**A. Best**



**B. So-so**



**C. Poor**

## Example: e-Commerce site

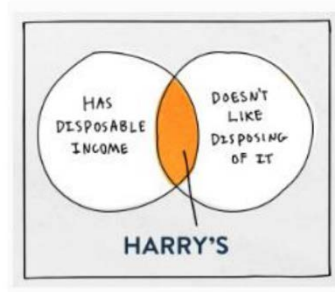
Variant A wins over B with specificity. Both A & B outperform C in terms of copy. It elicits curiosity without being overly "salesy"

## Find an angle

In competitive, saturated markets talking about benefits may not be enough. Adjust your pitch to match market sophistication.



**A. Best**



**B. So-so**



**C. Poor**

## Example: Harry's

Harry's managed to spark curiosity in variant A with a playful approach. Both B & C lose by being too vague.

## Always test

Sometime a headline that violates all rules wins. But you'll never know until you test it. Having said that, by trying to be clever or cute, you'll lose 99 times out of 100.



### A. Best



### B. So-so

## Example: Bud Beer

Variant B should have won here. It offers clear value. But A actually performed way better. Another reminder to always test.

RULE 5

# PERSONALIZATION

Personalization is the name of the game in marketing. You will increase engagement by matching your offer to customer's specific interests and needs.

TRIGGERS

SEGMENTATION

SCHEDULE

GOAL

STYLING

SHOW CAMPAIGN TO

IGNORE IN PREVIEW

ALL USERS

☒ USER SEGMENT

DON'T IGNORE

☒ IGNORE

USER SEGMENTATION

SHOW CAMPAIGN TO USERS WITH ALL OF THESE PROPERTIES:

COOKIE

COOKIE KEY

EQUALS

COOKIE VALUE

AND

LOCATION

IS NOT

COUNTRY

REGION

ALL CITIES

AND

BROWSER LANGUAGE

IS NOT

SELECT LANGUAGE

AND

REFERRING DOMAIN

EQUALS

URL

AND

USER TYPE

IS

RETURNING

ADD PROPERTY

✓ DONE

The point of the exercise is to define an audience - a group of people with a very specific set of traits. For example, men from Springfield.



The more specific your audience is, the more likely your offer will match their interests.

Creating audiences is an art of studying data. It's all about finding patterns in customer traits and behaviors that signal interest. For example, people that recently bought a cell phone are likely to be on the look out for a case.

Once you have an idea of your audience, it's easier to craft the right visuals, copy and call-to-action.

RULE 6

# CASCADED INFORMATION

Amount of information we receive in a day is more than our ancestors received in an entire lifetime. The brain is trying to cope. That's why we're seeing phenomena like Banner blindness (see Chapter 2: Animation).

Human attention span on the Internet is close to a few seconds at most. That's bad news for longer or more complex marketing messages. For examples, in regulated industries like gambling or financial services.

Focusing consumer's attention on one task/thought a time improves conversions. Virgin Atlantic illustrates this concept well with their ticket booking experience.

One decision at a time makes  
it **faster**



Multi-tasking is great. But when you're booking a last minute business trip or planning your next epic vacation, details are key. So, our new simple design lets you focus on one step of the booking per page.

You can apply this in your marketing campaigns by breaking them down into two parts - Bait and Offer.

A Bait is a short initial message that strikes a visitor's interest. It's also strong enough to make them take an action and proceed to an Offer.

## Bait

location! This is a very different experience and has some interesting opportunities for marketers - and clear benefits for consumers around brands they are excited about.

Considering the multi-billion dollar market, even a small percentage of redemption will be transformative. And with the rise of mobile operating systems, boarding passes, stored value, and tickets, boarding passes, stored value, and tickets, most other mobile operating systems are being witnessed by Google's new digital coupon service, [Zavers](#), and its partnership with Scoutmob for [Field Trip](#).

**GET \$100 COUPON WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR ZAVERS**

[LEARN ABOUT ZAVERS](#)

An Offer is the larger marketing message. The one that may need to contain eligibility requirements and hence more attention from the visitor.


Offer

an app to getting an alert through Passbook on their iPhone based on location! This is a very different experience and has some interesting opportunities for marketers - and clear benefits for consumers around brands they are excited about.

Considering the multi-billion dollar paper coupon industry and the less than 1 percent redemption rate, it's clear how solutions like Apple Passbook will be transformative. And passes are not just coupons, but also event tickets, boarding passes, store loyalty cards, and more. It's a very safe bet that most other mobile operating systems will soon offer similar capabilities as witnessed by Google's new digital coupon service, [Zavers](#), and its partnership with Scoutmob for [Field Trip](#).

As mobile advertising continues its evolution to adapt to mobile, and consumers' love affair with mobile apps gets downright hot and heavy, now is the time to prep for the new age of mobile loyalty and rewards. Passbook-type solutions can be rapidly adopted to bolster existing mobile strategies or to reach consumers' devices for the first time.

As a marketer, if you are serious about mobile you must be considering way to integrate push messaging with things like Passbook on the iPhone and emerging solutions on the Android and others. Those who jump on this have a huge advantage and momentum will build quickly.



**Google Launches Zavers - a Digital Coupon Service**

Google have launched a new digital coupon service called Zavers.

The coupon enables retailers and manufacturers to reward customers with coupons relevant to their purchases.

[SIGN UP](#)

[ANOTHER TIME](#)

RULE 7

# GAMIFICATION

Play is natural for us. And if we look at it in the context of our everyday lives, it's also often a pleasant distraction. A break from the mundane. But it also appeals to us on a subconscious level.

The basic formula of interacting with a game follows a well-know Habit loop.

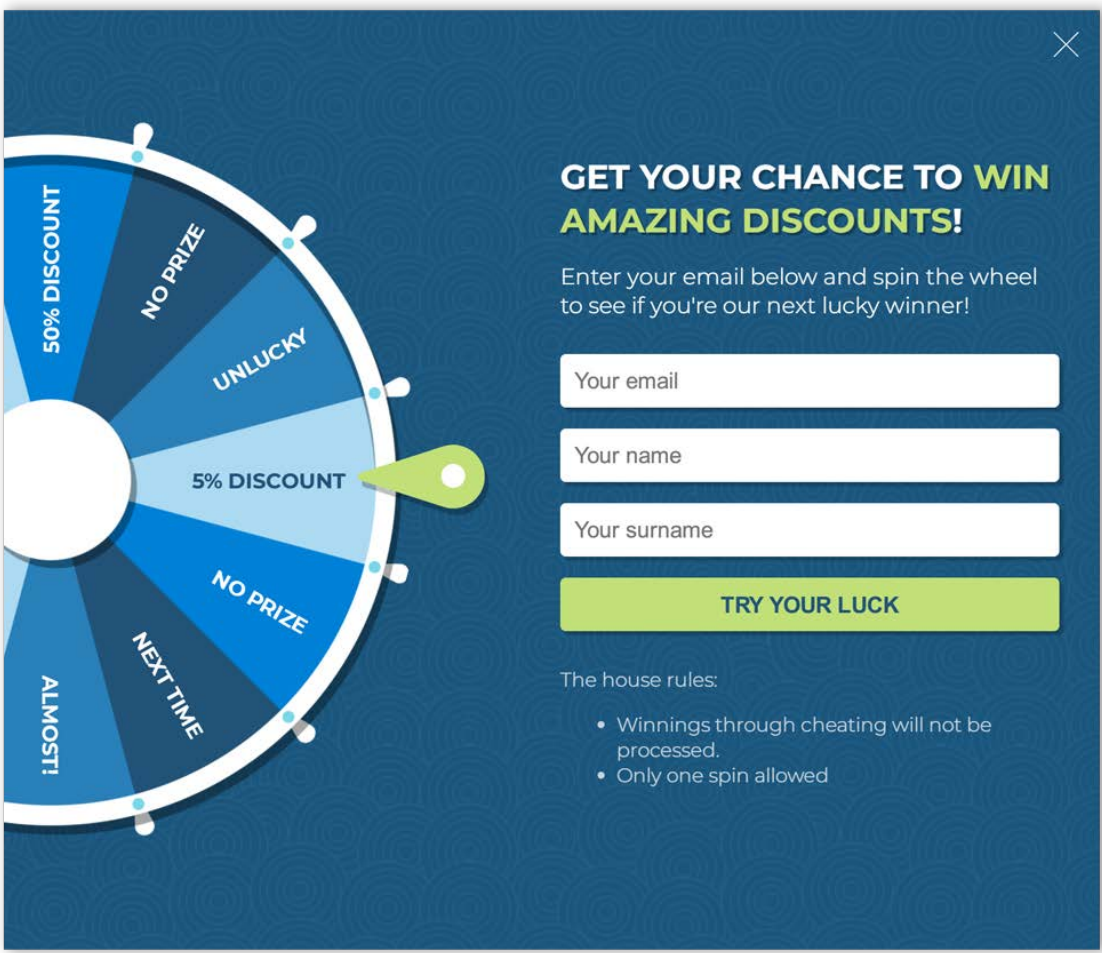




We receive a **Cue** - this can be a push notification, email or a popup. Then we perform a **Routine** - actions required to receive a **Reward** - points, discounts, prizes.

We follow the Habit Loop in so many interactions on a daily basis, that it's become a very familiar pattern.

You can use this simple formula to create simple, gamified marketing experiences.



In a test by Bearded Brothers – energy bar manufacturer – employing a gamified popup increased conversions by 3x.

RULE 8

**CURIOSITY**

Curiosity is a powerful psychological trigger. Humans are curious by nature. If something puzzles us, we're willing to overcome great challenges and fears to find the answer.

**JOHN! CLAIM YOUR GIFT**



Marketers can use this trigger (respectfully and with caution) to attract consumer's attention.

Since this is such a powerful trigger, the offer behind the bait should be pretty sweet. This technique goes hand in hand with Gamification we discussed in the previous chapter. When done right, it can create an habit loop, where consumer discovers a great offer every time they interact with a campaign.

RULE 9

# OPINIONS

People love to share their opinions. As anyone who've taken a cab drive will confirm.

In modern societies, where people are easily lost in the crowd, getting your voice heard is pleasantly refreshing. And everyone has an opinion.



Opinions also go hand in hand with curiosity. After all, everyone wants to know how other people voted.

Marketers can use this technique to attract attention to their campaigns and target consumers.

RULE 10

**ALWAYS TEST**



This one is pretty straight forward. It's here as a reminder.

Marketing campaigns are mostly guesses. They're educated guesses, but still guesses.

Time and time again we see campaigns check all the boxes, but underperform. Yet other campaigns, that seem mediocre do really well.

Another point - we (sometimes) don't know what we don't know. Certain cultural, societal or situational circumstances can strike a wrong key with your campaign.

Always test.

