Five tips to help your brand thrive despite Google’s notification changes

The browser Google Chrome (v80) is following in the footsteps of Mozilla Firefox (v72) and Apple Safari (v12.1) for notifications—websites that ask for opt-in immediately will now be only able to use quiet notification prompts.

These prompts are far less visible than the standard prompts that show up below the address bar. What’s more, in Chrome, users can now receive all opt-in requests quietly if they choose.

Many brands—retailers and publishers, in particular—have experienced tremendous success with web notifications. For instance, Asda’s George.com gets an astonishing 40% conversion rate with notifications on abandoned carts and a 27% clickthrough rate on segmented alerts.

While web browsers give users more control, brands must adapt. Here are five ways of dealing with these changes:

1. Be clear about the benefits of opting-in

What value does your website messaging offer? Will subscribers get exclusive content or offers or get alerts when their product shipped? It’s key to highlight such value in a soft-prompt before triggering the browser’s actual notification prompt.

2. Provide granular preferences

Offer visitors a preference center for them to customize settings to receive only notifications they truly want. For instance, a merchant may offer notifications for daily flash sales, weekly specials, new product arrivals and/or transaction updates. More control over notifications equals more customer happiness.

3. Don’t rush the “ask”

Like needy people, needy brands are a turn-off. Therefore, consider waiting until they’ve taken an action that signals interest before asking them to opt-in. Have they looked at a promotion, watched a video or searched for a specific product? Pinpoint the moment when asking for the opt-in will streamline the customer journey instead of stalling it.

4. Test various flows

Web opt-ins are often the largest addressable audiences for brands, hence marketers don’t want to wait too long before making the ask. You should continuously A/B test your opt-in prompts, including timing, language, and offers. While browsers will judge your site by opt-in rate, brands should be focused on better long-term engagement, more conversions, higher frequency, and greater lifetime value.

5. Reward opens

Last but not least, notifications have become central to the customer experience for both apps and mobile platforms, which explains why the opt-in rate for apps exceeds 50%. Website marketers should reward customers for notification engagement. For example, they can offer double loyalty point days, early access to the biggest deals or notifications when wish list

items go on sale.

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