

The Mobile PM’s Experimentation Guide: Increase Engagement, Retention and Conversion

As a mobile product manager, you have so much to keep your eye on that it sometimes feels impossible to keep up. You’re responsible for boosting metrics like retention, conversion and engagements, but also for creating a personalized experience for customers and collecting feedback from them.

There shouldn’t have to be a tradeoff between customers and products as you decide where to spend your time. The way to combat this dilemma is with experimentation. Running hands-off tests to find out what delights your customers helps you collect candid user feedback without consuming too much of your time.

We’re here to walk you through the world of mobile experimentation and how it could make a world of a difference in your app. In this guide, we’ll explore:

- *Why experimentation?*
- *Where and what to test in your app*
- *Examples from industry leaders*
- *How to create an experimentation culture*



Why Experimentation?

The downfall of companies with traditional mindsets and business models like Blockbuster and Sears serve as a wakeup call to remind us all that stagnation has never been the key to success. Customers are unforgiving to companies that are afraid to push beyond their comfort zone and ignore the value of experimentation. This is especially true as mobile becomes such an important part of modern business and customer experiences.

It’s hard to predict the future, especially with customer behavior changing so rapidly. This is where adopting experimentation comes into play. Experimentation allows companies to *listen* to their consumers in real time and iterate accordingly. To drive engagement, ROI, retention and any other metric, you need to create with empathy and let your customers show you what they want!

Why An Experimentation Culture Is Valuable

- You're more likely to discover **small, effective product changes**.
- **Hierarchy doesn't dictate product decision-making.** Ideas aren't prioritized by position — instead, the validity of everyone's ideas is fairly measured through test results.
- **Your team members feel motivated.** According to a [Forbes study](#), employees are more likely to be engaged in their jobs when they are more involved in projects.

Where and what to test in your app

For each of your key metrics, there are several levers in your app you can experiment with to find out what moves the needle. Find out what areas you're doing well in and where you can make improvements to increase retention, engagement and conversion.

1 Retention

Retention is the amount of users who return the app within a certain timeframe - most apps use 3 months (90 days) as the benchmark. Being able to keep users coming back to your app and using it more than once can be difficult - studies show that 21% of users abandon an app after only one use.¹

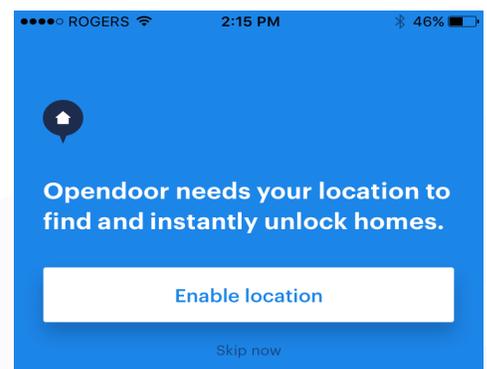
Onboarding

The best time to create active users is during onboarding; effective onboarding has been proven to [increase user lifetime value by up to 500%](#).² However, your users will only stick around if they are able to find value in your product during their first experience. This is why it's imperative to focus on improving your user onboarding and continuously experiment with new ways to bring your users that value quickly.

Try experimenting with:

- Options for quick registration with social sign in
- Product tours that highlight your unique value-add features
- Notification opt-in screens and messaging

*Getting opt in for notifications and, depending on your app, location services, is crucial to retention and re-engagement. Try **providing specific context of what value they will receive** when you ask them to opt in or the option to opt in later like **Opendoor** does.*



Push Notifications

If they've opted into push notifications, [users open an app 88% more](#) than users who are not opted in.³ If they aren't reminded of what value your app provides, they won't be engaged and are more likely to churn.

There are many ways that you can experiment with the use of push to increase app launches:

- What time you send notifications
- Sending images in notifications
- Messaging and personalization



*Hopper sends travellers pushes that are personalized according to in-app activity. This not only creates value for the user, but **retention and engagement increase** by pulling them back in to look at flight options.*



[Read the guide to sending push notifications that boost app engagement and retention](#)

Create Incentives

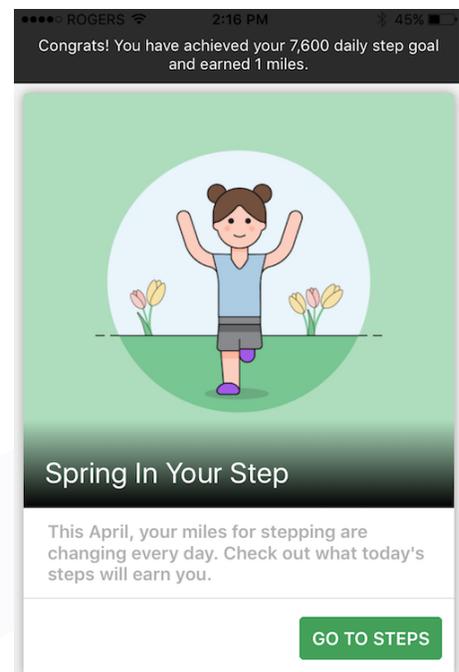
Use offers and incentives to bring users back into your app and keep them visiting. Companies often give up on users who aren't visiting anymore, but don't! [Of the mobile users who stop using an app, 30 percent would use it again if offered a discount, and 24 percent would use it again if offered exclusive or bonus content.](#)⁴

Such incentives could include:

- Unlocking new features
- Earning loyalty points or discounts
- Flash sales or offers

Carrot lets users connect loyalty programs like Aeroplan and SCENE, which are attributed when the user completes personal fitness challenges and goal progression.

*They **release new challenges every few days** (via push!) to bring users back into the app. The user is incentivized by more free points that are useful and easy to earn by completing challenges.*

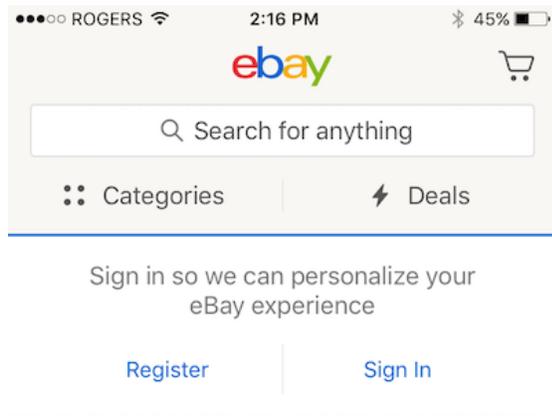


1 Engagement

Engagement is the amount of time that your users spend inside your app. You want to create a connection with your user so that they will become loyal. The sooner you can get them hooked and making a habit out of your product, the better off you will be.

Onboarding

Onboarding is mentioned again because of its importance in developing loyal, engaged users. It's specifically important to engagement because you need to find the balance between engaging them quickly and gathering enough user information.



Try experimenting with:

- Providing the option to skip registration
- Optional product tours
- Immediate challenges or incentives

Engagement can be increased by **immediately allowing users to browse without having to create an account, like Ebay** does. Only once they've found what they're looking for does the user have to create an account.

Personalization

Personalized messages increase conversions by 27% compared to generic messages.⁵ It keeps them more interested and spending more time engaging with content because it appeals to their interests and preferences.

Some ways to experiment with personalization in your app:

- Push notifications and communications sent via email
- Homepage or marketplace layout
- Autofill settings or obsolescence of form fields

By asking users to pick their favourite teams when they sign up, **Bleacher Report creates an engaging feed that is customized** to news, updates and standings that are interesting to the user. This will create higher engagement, since the user is more likely to find content they want to consume.

Segmentation

One way that experimentation can uniquely help you create hyper-personalized experiences is through segmentation. Experiments can be segmented to be sent to any custom groups of users you like to discover how different types of users react differently.

Want to know how users onboarded in last month react differently to a retention push than old users? Or how different deals appeal to shoppers under the age of 25? You can handpick what criteria qualifies a user to receive your experiment to find out!

Some segmentation ideas:

- User demographics - age, gender, location, time zone
- Length of Membership - How recently did they join?
- Levels of engagement - sort by the last time they visited your app, or frequency of visit

3 Conversion

You want as many people to get to your app's 'aha!' moment as possible. Whatever it is that completes their user journey (and defines your success!) can look completely different depending what kind of company you are - making a purchase, clicking that CTA button, signing up, etc. Experiment with some different techniques that will get more people to cross your finish line.

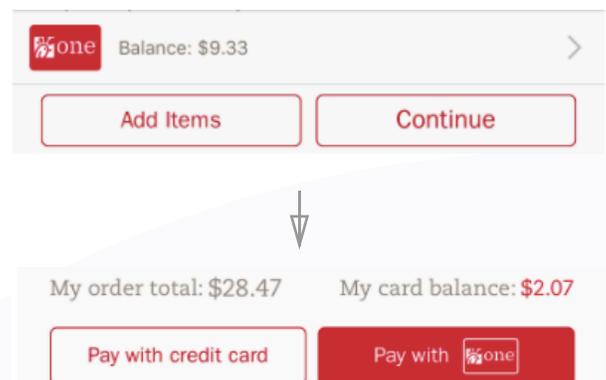
Check out Flows

Cart abandonment rates in apps can be as high as 82%.⁷ Find out what it is that has your users abandoning ship at the last minute by running tests on the checkout flow.

Try experimenting with:

- Number of steps or screens
- Methods of payments & autofill or autopay options
- CTA button copy

Chick-fil-A was noticing that a lot of customers were confused in their checkout flow, which caused them to abandon their carts. By just changing button copy, they **increased purchases by 6.9%**



Pricing and upgrade pages

For some apps, a key moment is the conversion of a freemium user to a paying one. Experiment with the ask and the way that the information is strategically presented. Remember: it's all about them, so make sure you express the value they'll get from the upgrade!

Try experimenting with:

- Timing of the ask - Is it a requirement once a certain level is reached? Is it a pop up?
- Layout of the pricing and plan options
- Messaging and value proposition

On *Babbel's* pricing page, they highlight the 3 month option to catch your eye. Additionally, they highlight in orange the cost/month to *incentivize the purchase of a longer plan*.

ROGERS 2:11 PM 47%

Please select a subscription

Choose a payment plan to get access to all courses and features for the selected language.

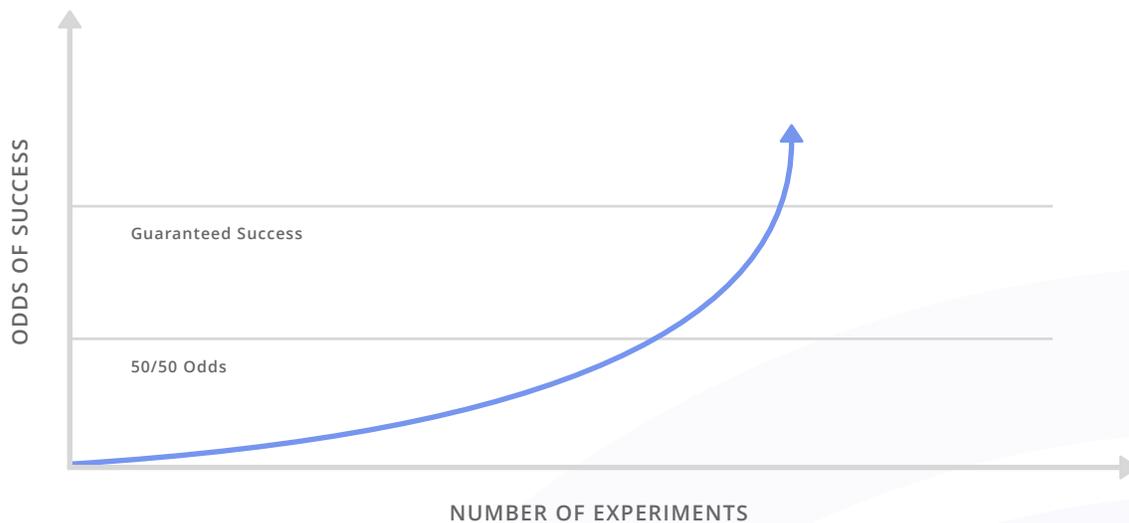
1 month \$24.99 per month \$24.99 charged every month	Select
3 months \$15.00 per month \$44.99 charged every 3 months	Select
6 months \$11.66 per month \$69.99 charged every 6 months	Select
12 months \$10.42 per month \$124.99 charged every 12 months	Select

Rule Of Thumb



[How to Experiment like Facebook and Netflix By Adopting the "10,000 Experiment Rule"](#)

Simmons' 10,000 experiment rule simply states that **"deliberate experimentation is more important than deliberate practice in a rapidly changing world."** Avoid making large, massive bets on one or two big projects. Instead, build the habit of running smaller experiments at a faster cadence.



Based on [Michael Simmons' graph](#)

The World's Favourite Apps are Always A/B Testing

A/B Testing With Netflix

Netflix researchers estimate that if a typical user doesn't find something to watch in the app within [60-90 seconds](#), they run the risk of getting bored and moving onto something else.

By following an empirical approach, we ensure that product changes are not driven by the most opinionated and vocal Netflix employees, but instead by actual data, allowing our members themselves to guide us toward the experiences they love.

For example, the data team at Netflix found that users [look at the artwork first](#) before deciding whether to click for more details around it:

- First, they experimented with a simple A/B test to see if they could **increase engagement** by changing up the artwork by measuring click through rates, play duration etc.
- Next, they wanted to see if changing the artwork would contribute to **increasing total streaming hours** across the product. They tested to find the best artwork for each title over a period of days, then served that artwork to future watchers to see if that would result in a higher number of hours streamed.



How To Build An Experimentation Culture

1 Step 1: Start Small

To map out these tiny steps, move backwards from your major goal. Identify:

- *Your high-level goal*
- *What needs to happen to achieve this goal*
- *An A/B test you can implement to meet your goal*

2 Step 2: Practice Good Experiment Hygiene

Having an established testing protocol keeps your team's test results accurate and meaningful, regardless of who's controlling the experiment.

- ***Test one thing at a time.*** *With more than one variable, your test results aren't meaningful because you can't pinpoint which factor is affecting your tests.*
- ***Know how to measure your results before the experiment begins.*** *Your tests are useless if you're unable to collect your experiment results.*
- ***Establish a time frame.*** *Think about the requirements of your experiment, and set a time frame long enough to collect enough information to form insights.*

3 Step 3: Communicate Results Back To Your Team

By sharing experiment results, your team's testing becomes sustainable. Constantly learning from each others' feedback, your colleagues have plenty of insights for building and improving new tests in the future.

About Taplytics

Taplytics is a customer experience company. We've created billions of user experiences and work with forward-thinking businesses around the world to bring digital moments to life. We believe that building magical experiences into each customer interaction is what makes today's brands successful.

Taplytics is proud to work with some of the world's largest and most well renowned brands like Chick-fil-A, Dollar Shave Club and Ticketmaster in creating the most delightful customer experiences.

Sources

- 1 - <http://info.localytics.com/blog/21-percent-of-users-abandon-apps-after-one-use>
- 2- <https://www.kahuna.com/blog/stop-spamming-your-users/>
- 3- <http://info.localytics.com/blog/push-messaging-drives-88-more-app-launches-for-users-who-opt-in>
- 4- <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/mobile-app-marketing-insights/5->
- 5- <http://www.apteligent.com/2016/11/4-ways-keep-customers-loyal-app-crash/>
- 6- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/457078/category-cart-abandonment-rate-worldwide/>