PUSHWOOSH
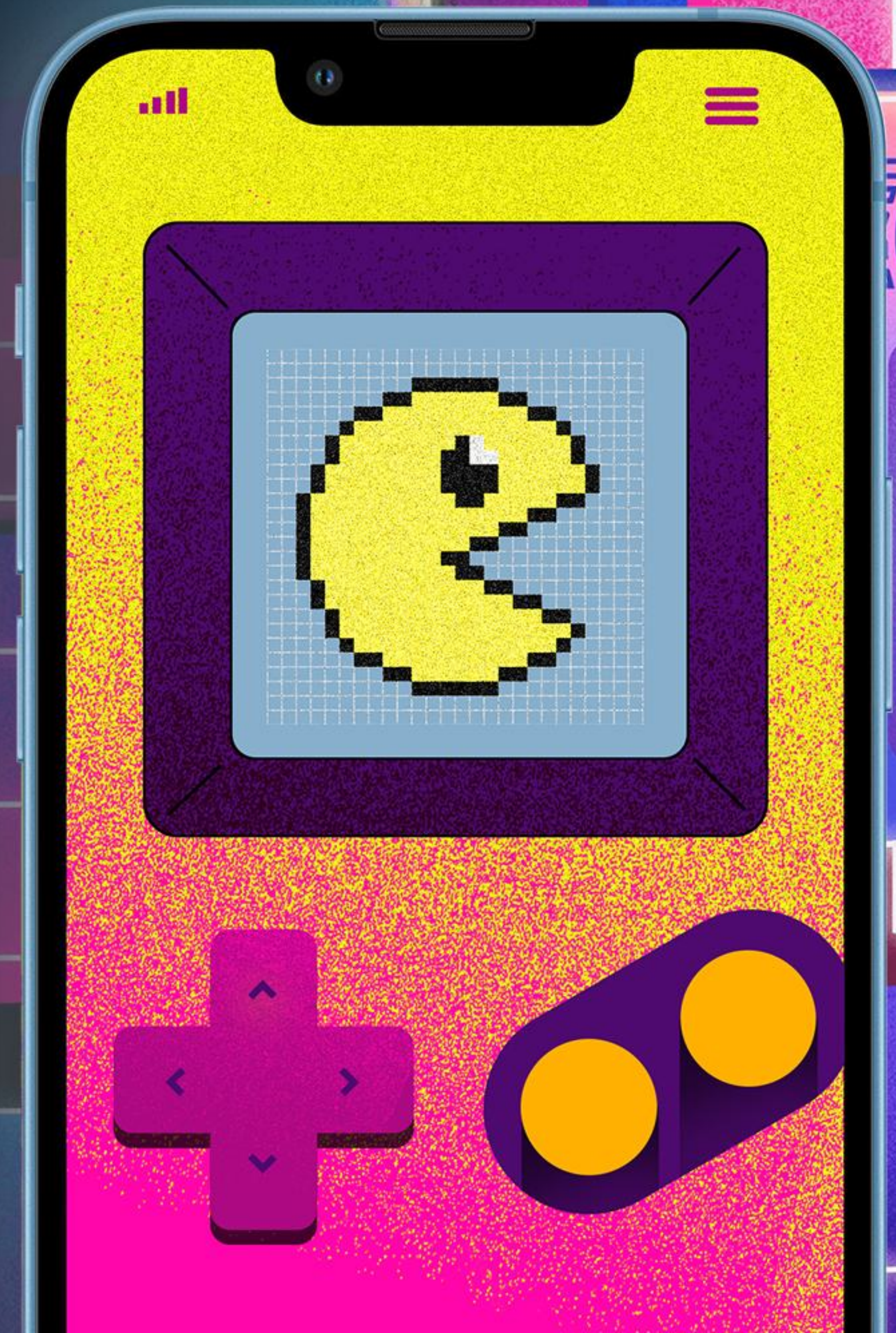
UP YOUR GAME: GROWTH GUIDE FOR GAMING APPS

- Growth trends
- Strategies
- Best practices
- Tips & Examples

Challenge accepted: engage game app users — uncage game app marketers

Playing mobile games is fun — marketing them should be fun too. However, in the 10 years of working with customers from the gaming industry, we've met too many app marketers drained from trying to achieve a decent level of user engagement. These have been indisputable experts in their field, and oftentimes they did succeed in getting the desired results, but at what price?

To put an end to the unnecessary struggles of game app marketers, Pushwoosh Team has taken a data-driven approach and gathered best practices that proved to be effective for our customers. The result is the ebook you're reading right now.

Enjoy and grow!

MAX KUZAKOV

Senior Customer Success Manager, Pushwoosh

A lot of game apps miss out on the opportunity

to grow their community and, most importantly, profitability through engaging their audience

As a game app marketer, you must have faced one inescapable issue: a large part of the costly-acquired game app audience stops opening the application after the first few visits.

Pushwoosh data confirms that a great part of mobile players is not even subscribed to their game's push notifications — the most effective and cost-efficient channel for customer engagement.

Push notification opt-in rate (median for game apps)

iOS

30.74%

Android

77.22%

These are the lowest push notification opt-in rates Pushwoosh has stated for any industry.

For benchmarks for other app categories, please refer to this post on Pushwoosh Blog.

Many of your competitors fail to engage their users

Game apps have the lowest median push notification CTR across the industries. The shares of DAU and MAU are also low.

Push notification CTR

DAU

MAU

iOS
0.54%

Android
0.86%

iOS
0.43%

Android
1.78%

iOS
0.98%

Android
4.03%

At the same time, user engagement with the game app messaging has **a direct effect on their actual activity in the app**: Pushwoosh data reveals the linear relationship between CTRs / User CTRs and number of DAU / MAU in game apps.
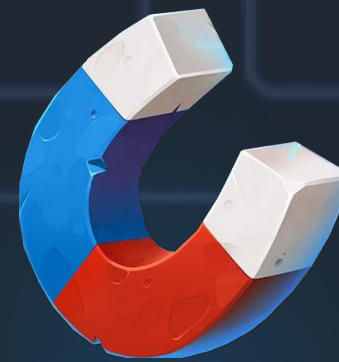
Pushwoosh has a field-proven marketing strategy for game apps, tried and tested in the course of Pushwoosh's 10 years in the industry

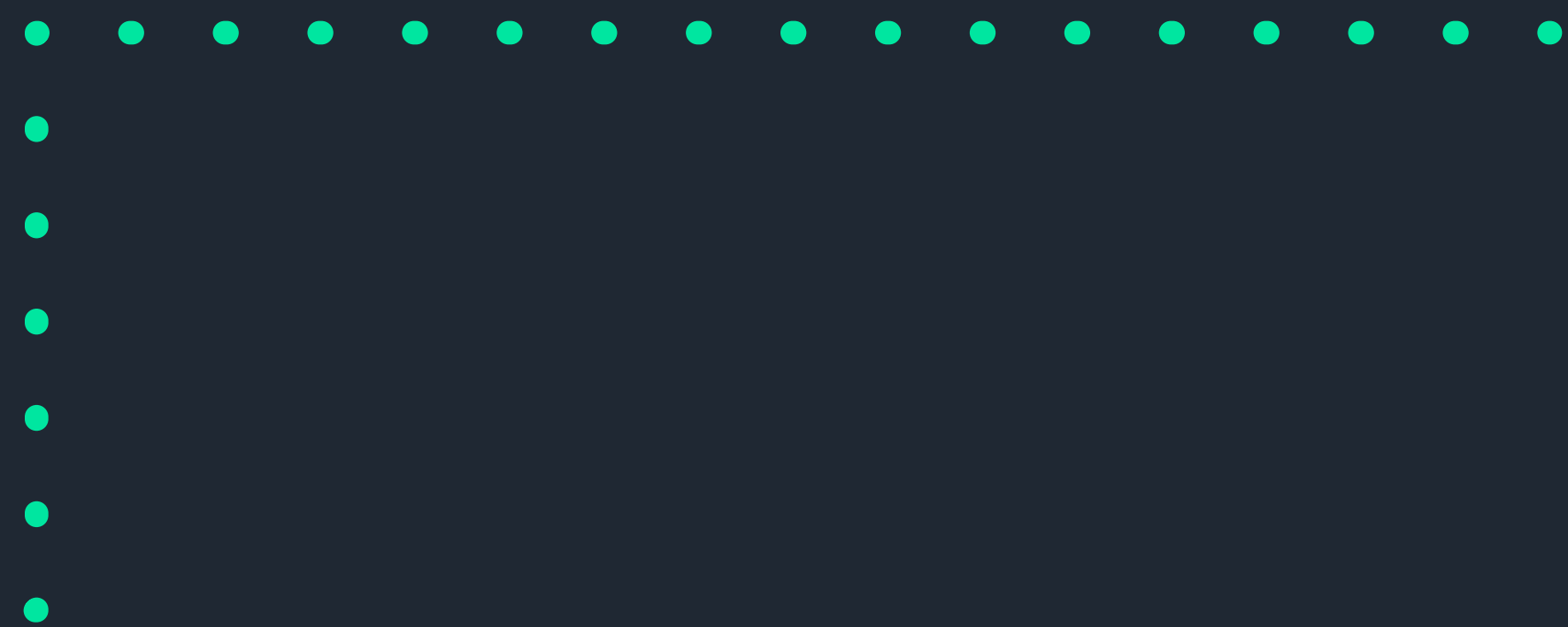PUSHWOOSH

GROW
ENGAGEMENT

FOSTER
RETENTION

DRIVE
REVENUE

GROW ENGAGEMENT

2 x Opt-in rate

3 x CTR

2 x DAU

2 x MAU

PUSHWOOSH

Game app user engagement: there is (little) time for play

We at Pushwoosh are staunch advocates of the vision that effective user engagement should be accessible to **any size of company**. By focusing on the engagement stage of the customer lifecycle, many businesses can tap into the source of growth which is independent of their current budget capacity.

According to our data, high app engagement metrics (DAU, MAU, and stickiness rate) correlate with high messaging performance (opt-in rates, CTRs, and User CTRs), as well as with high App Growth rates. This emphasizes the importance of user activity and the positive impact that elaborate communications have on it.
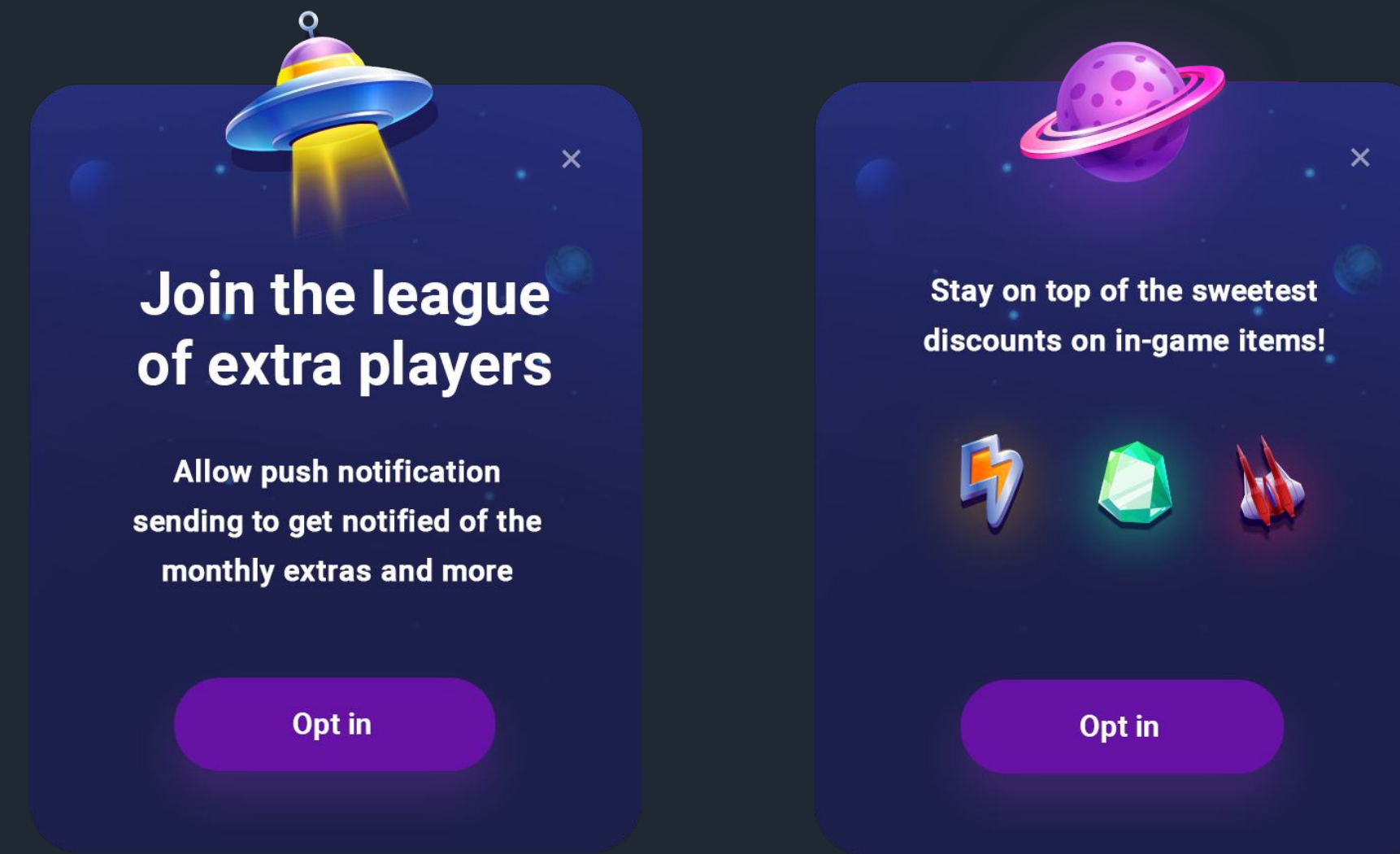
With the right approach, the growth of interim engagement metrics (% of the opted-in subscribers and push notification CTRs) is followed by the growth of business-significant KPIs.

Best practices

Prove the value of your notifications to keep the opted-in players

At the first app launch, display a welcome in-app message telling your new users of the benefits exclusively reserved for push notifications subscribers. And include the CTA to opt in, of course!

2. Deliver (the extras) on your promise

Thank the players who have agreed to opt in for push notifications — provide them with those promised extras. There shouldn't even be too many of these offers: you may limit this type of notifications to a couple of times a month. The rest will stay for you to use in the daily engagement purposes.

3. Keep all your notifications useful

In our sample, **the game apps with the highest opt-in rates are the ones that have high CTRs and User CTRs too**. We may confidently say that players who like the content of the push notifications (and show it by clicking on the pushes) stay subscribed to them. And this is how the app's opt-in rate remains high.

You've got permission to send push notifications... now send them at the right moments

Mobile games have a salient feature — most of them launch in the full-screen or even landscape mode, absorbing the player in its context.

Push notifications that arrive during the game may be seen as too intrusive and destructive to the gaming experience. They may annoy users up to the point that players will choose to opt out.

It is vital to send **meaningful** pushes at the exactly **right moments** — when the game is still loading, or between the levels, or when the app has been minimized.

You can conform to any event in the game app user behavior with **Pushwoosh Customer Journey Builder**

MAX KUZAKOV

Senior Customer Success Manager, Pushwoosh

Best practices

How to boost engagement with your gaming app push notifications

1. Make limited-time offers

By creating a sense of urgency, you can motivate those hesitating players to seize the opportunity — while they still can.

HOMICIDE SQUAD LOS ANGELES   now
⏳Limited-time offer! 🎁Check out the amazing FREE gift that is awaiting you!

JEWELS OF ROME: MATCH 3   now
🌈Make sure to take advantage of our exclusive limited-time chest deal. Tap here!🎁

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2. Have irresistible calls-to-action

A playful or even teasing copy is what game app users expect to see in a push notification. Keep entertaining your audience, and you will be rewarded.

DESIGN HOME   now
Earn 2500 cash!
Complete the daily challenge now for cash!

NONSTOP CHUCK NORRIS   now
Chuck Norris has encountered a boss fight and needs your help! Tap to save him!

3. Excite curiosity

The entire push notification copy can serve as a lure to get gamers into your app. You can't go wrong if you offer something new: levels, equipment, promo codes, challenges or bonuses.

And, as Pushwoosh customers' experience proves, such push notifications can successfully drive conversions and revenue!

AVAKIN LIFE   now
✨Just dropped: New items, new looks, new everything - available now

👉 More tips to boost your push notification CTRs **in a dedicated Pushwoosh guide**

4. Do tests

Just as a great score is a matter of minutes (or even seconds), great CTRs are a matter of details you'll only learn through experiment.

What exact time are your players free to pay attention to your push notification? What copy works best for them? Is single-channel messaging enough or should you go omnichannel with your audience? A/B testing will give you answers to these and many more questions.
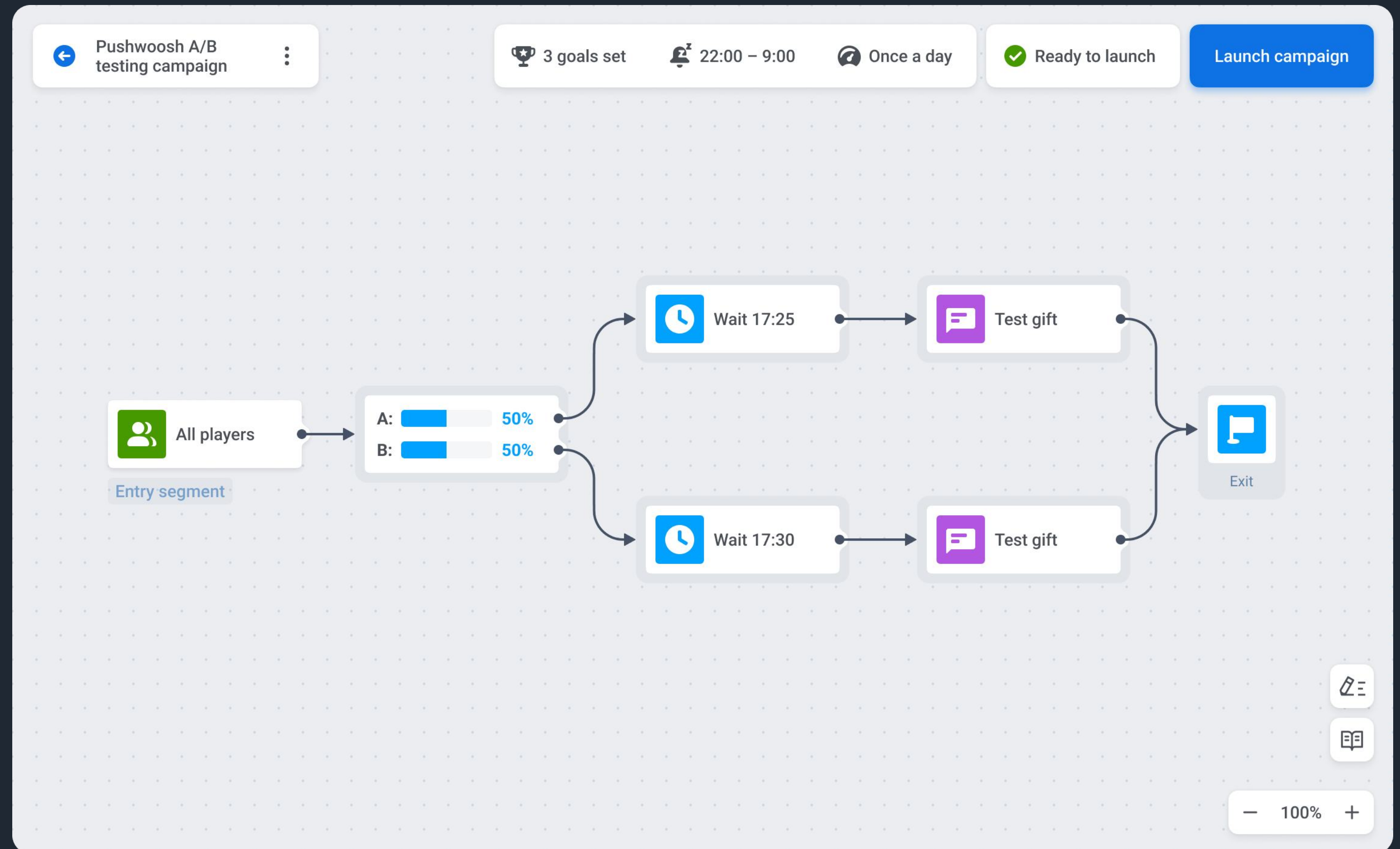
👉 Conduct any kind of (safe) experiments and see what else is possible with Pushwoosh Customer Journey Builder: **create your free account**

⚡ **LEVEL UP**

Produce highly-engaging content at scale

Like many game app marketers, you may be in charge of several mobile games, each demanding your attention and new content daily. Creative ideas don't just always come to you, but app visitors should, right?

At Pushwoosh, we offer two lifehacks to our customers:

1. If required, our Customer Success Team helps Pushwoosh users to **carry out experiments on one test account** and then scale successful ideas to all the others.

2. We encourage our customers to **use Dynamic Content** — a time-saving feature that partly automates content creation. It allows multiple-game marketers to make engaging pushes quickly and easily without losing the personal touch. And some creative energy is saved for smarter experiments!

MAX KUZAKOV

Senior Customer Success Manager, Pushwoosh

JEWELS OF ROME: MATCH 3
now
Have you played Jewels of Rome lately? Don't miss a limited time, FREE in-game gift! Check it out now!

SUPERMARKET MANIA: MATCH 3
now
Have you played Supermarket Mania - Match 3: Shopping Adventure Frenzy lately? Don't miss a limited time, FREE in-game gift! Check it out now!

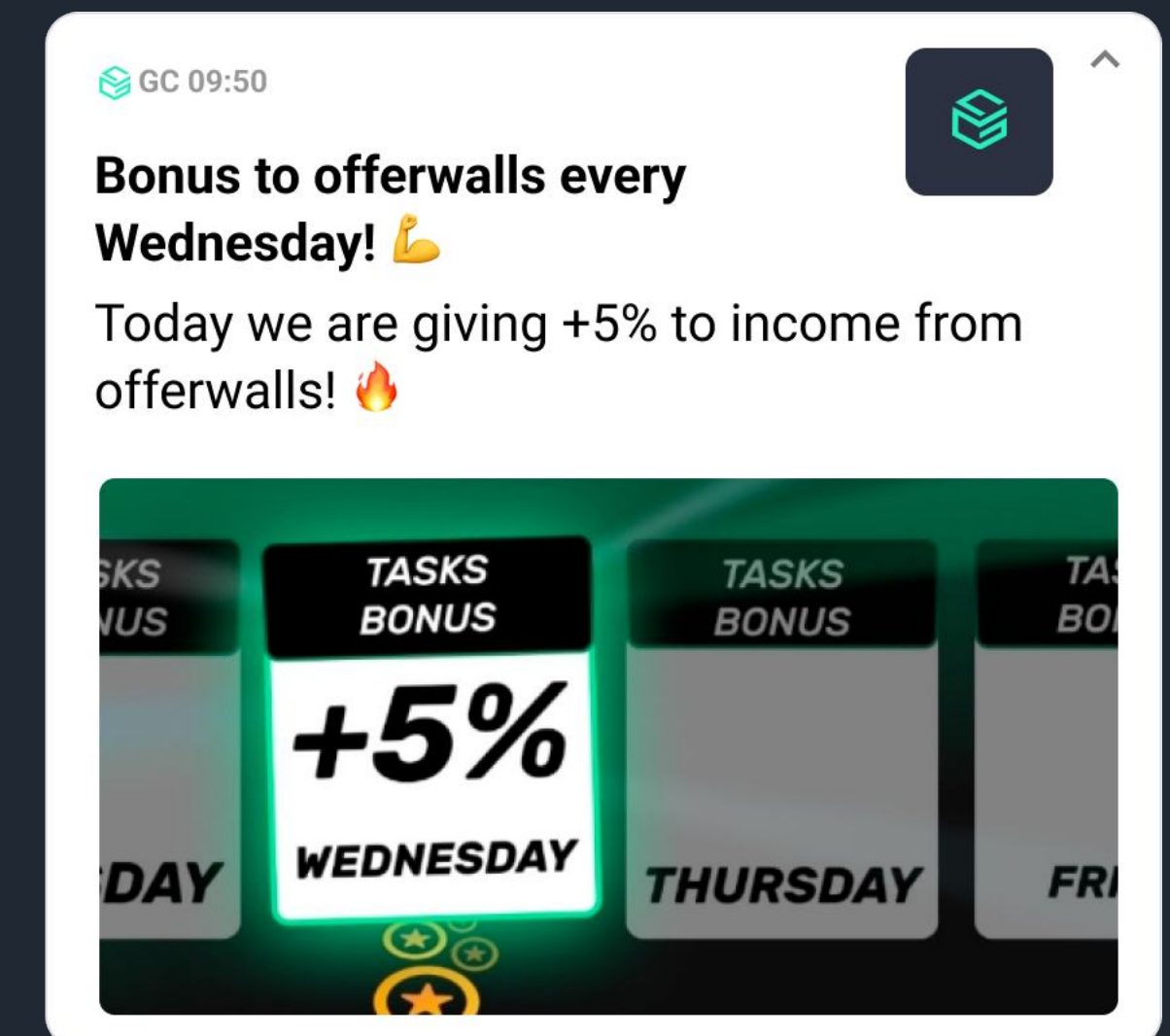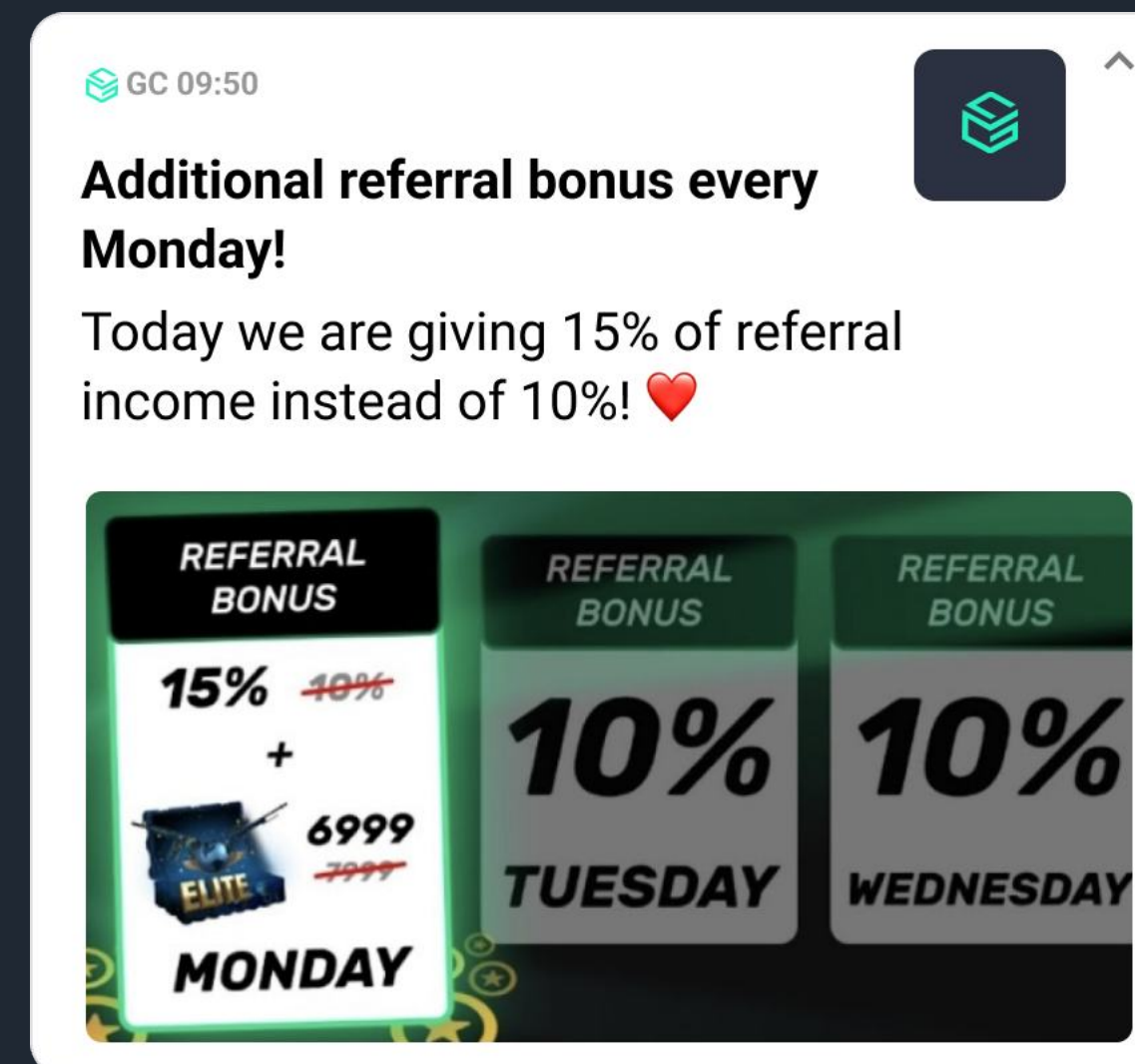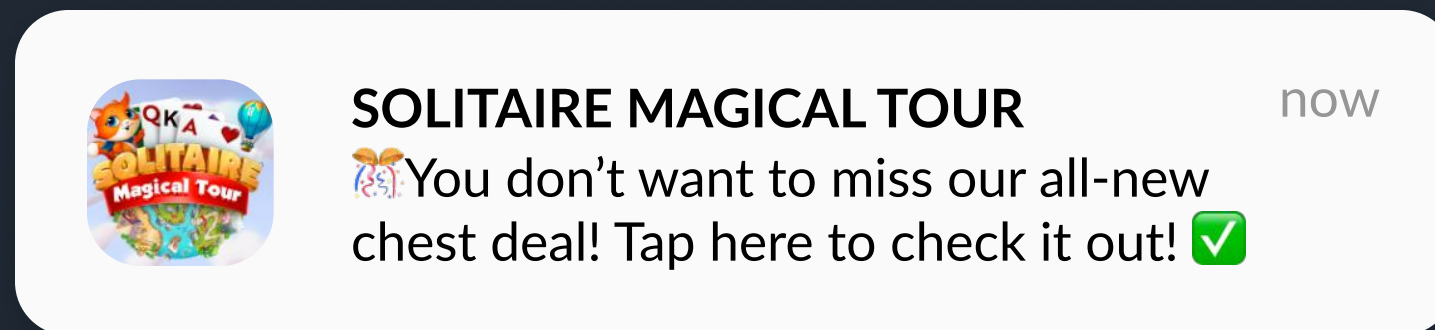**Best practices**

How to grow DAU, MAU, and stickiness in your game app

1. Promote daily offers

You can actually repeat them weekly, monthly, or at any cadence you can think of. You can easily automate them with Scheduled Launch in Pushwoosh Customer Journey Builder. By doing so, **Bladestorm has achieved a 16.62% increase** in the numbers of DAU and MAU. And you can up your game too!

2. Must do: use Deep Linking with Custom Data

SOLITAIRE MAGICAL TOUR   now
🎰You don't want to miss our all-new chest deal! Tap here to check it out! ✅

When a user clicks on your push notification, you prefer they open a very particular screen, not just the home screen, don't you? To make this possible, you need to embed a special link containing Custom Data. Don't worry: it's a lot easier than it may appear. Make use of the unique Pushwoosh Custom Data Builder that allows any non-developer to easily configure the data they send in a push notification. Change user attributes, award players with extra bonuses, promo codes, and grant them access to new levels.

👉 Learn more on **Pushwoosh blog**

3. Grow your push notification clickability

As you now know, your game app engagement metrics depend directly on how engaging your push notifications are. So focus on trying to make all of your pushes clickable. Best practices from other industries may help — here is an extremely inspiring **case of Bantoa**, an e-commerce app.

BANTOA   now
Outfit per scuola e università 🎒🎓
Scopri la selezione Bantoa!

CTR
91.9%
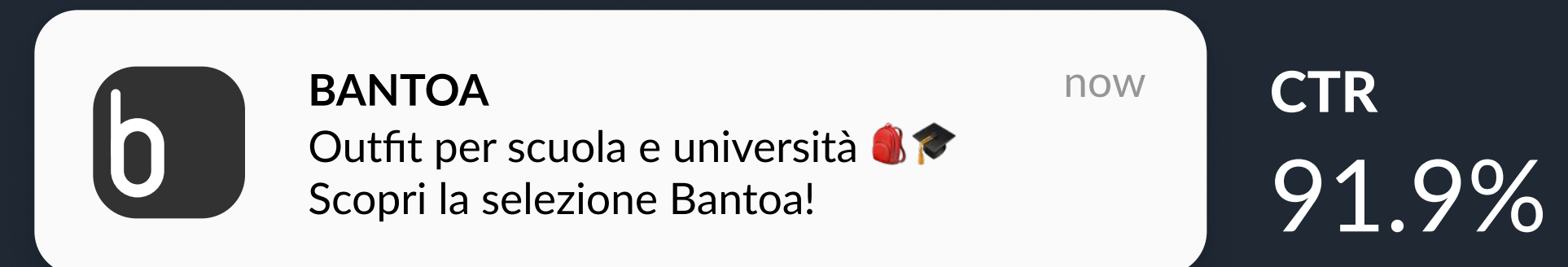
Success story:

Bladestorm has engaged, grown, and monetized its GC.SKINS game app audience

👉 Learn the top tactics from the **Bladestorm**
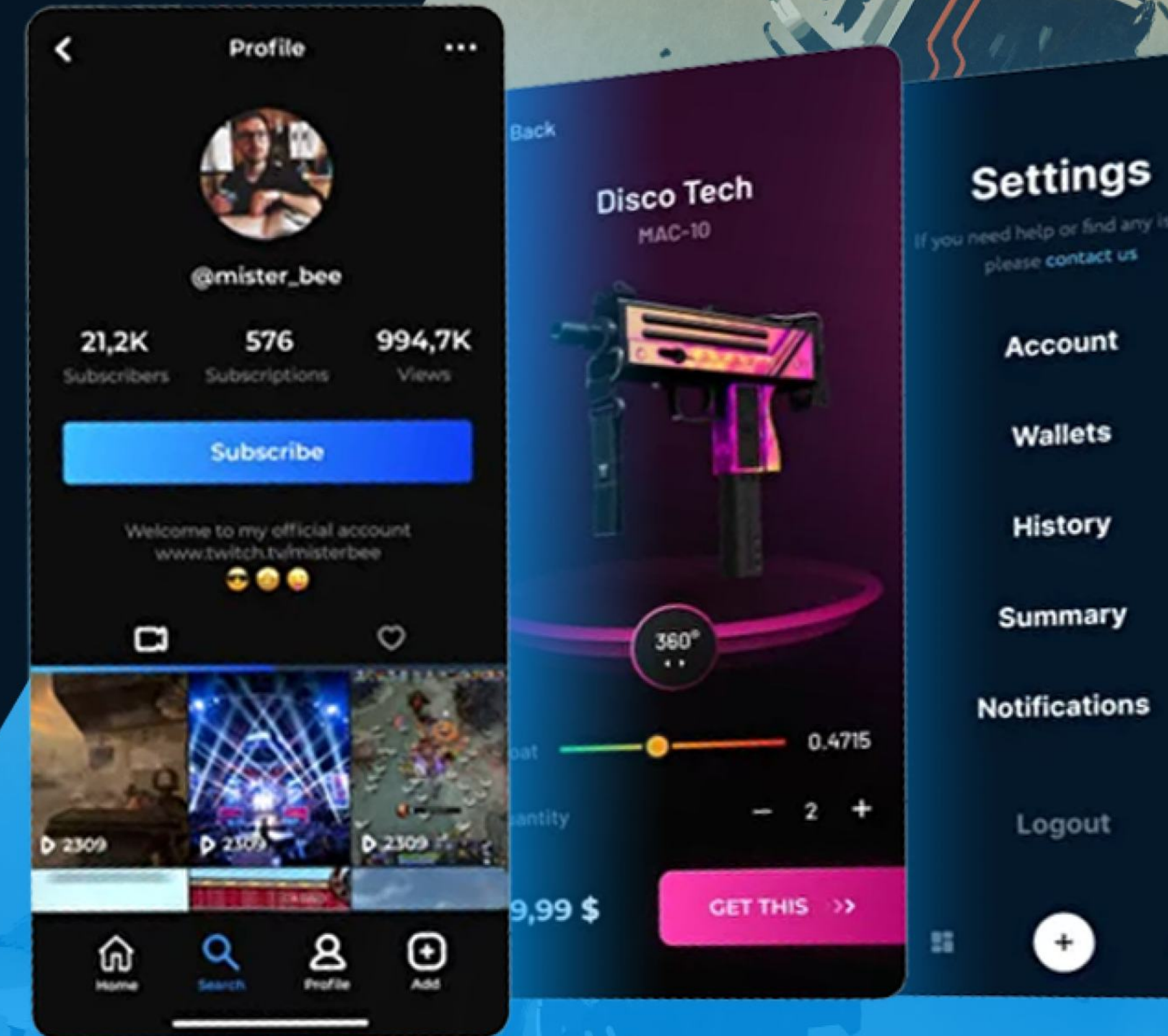
success story

+16.62%
MAU

+4.58%
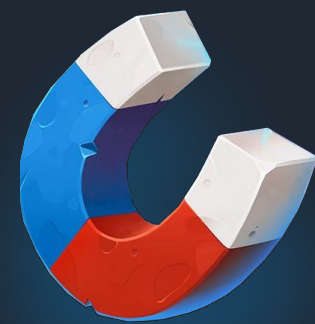Revenue from push notifications

97.9%
Opt-in rate on iOS

28.21%
Max push notification CTR

PUSHWOOSH

FOSTER
# RETENTION

1 x D1
1 x D7
1 x D30

PUSHWOOSH

D1 Retention:
Your first feat in the mission for long-term retention

If you aim at retaining you game app audience in the long-term, improving D1 Retention should be your priority goal: our data states a very pronounced linear dependency between User CTRs and D1, D7, and even D30 Retention rates in game apps.

So, every push you send to your game app users is your chance to **impress → engage → retain** them.
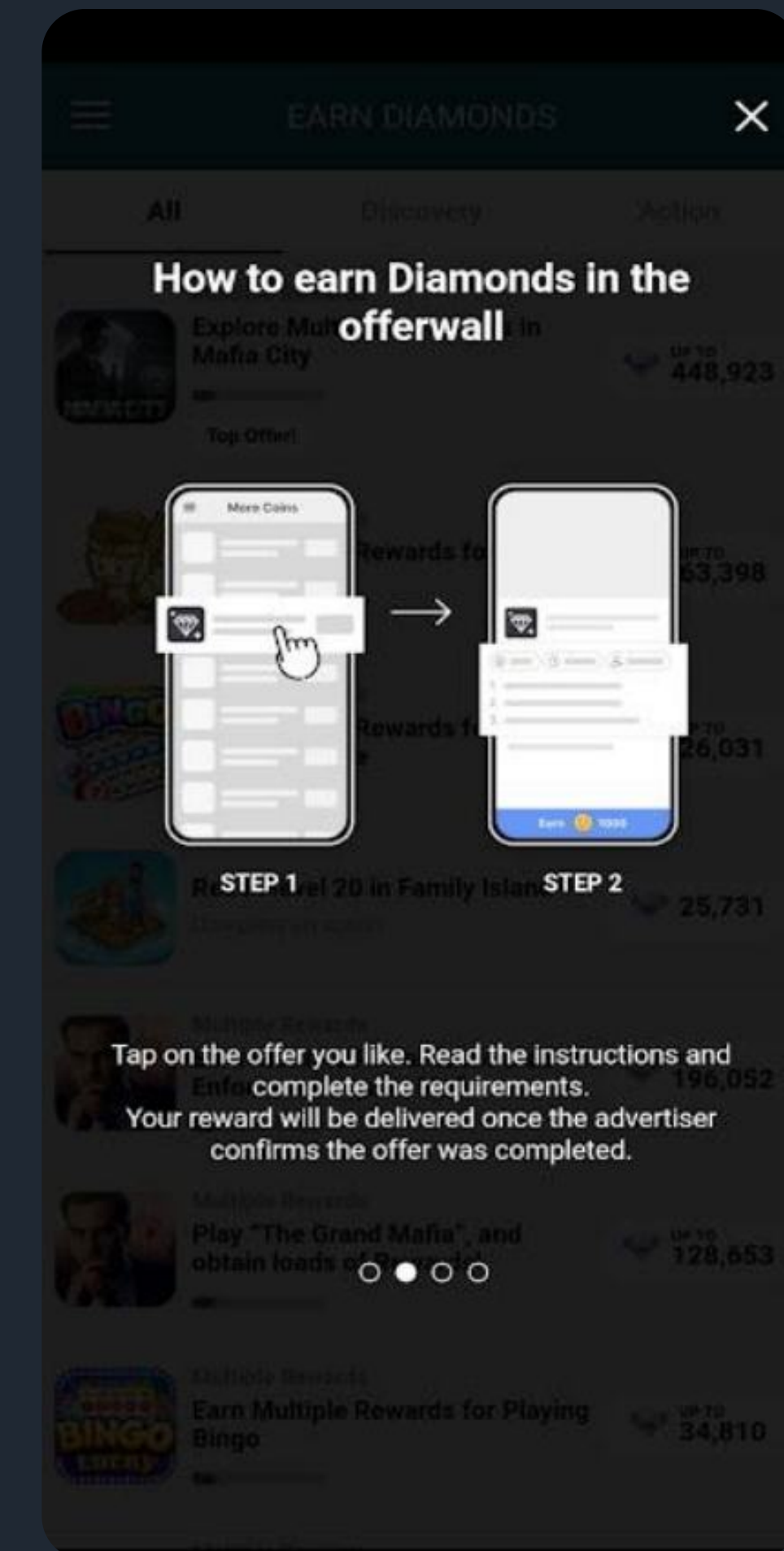
Best practices

How to grow D1 Retention: enrich onboarding experience
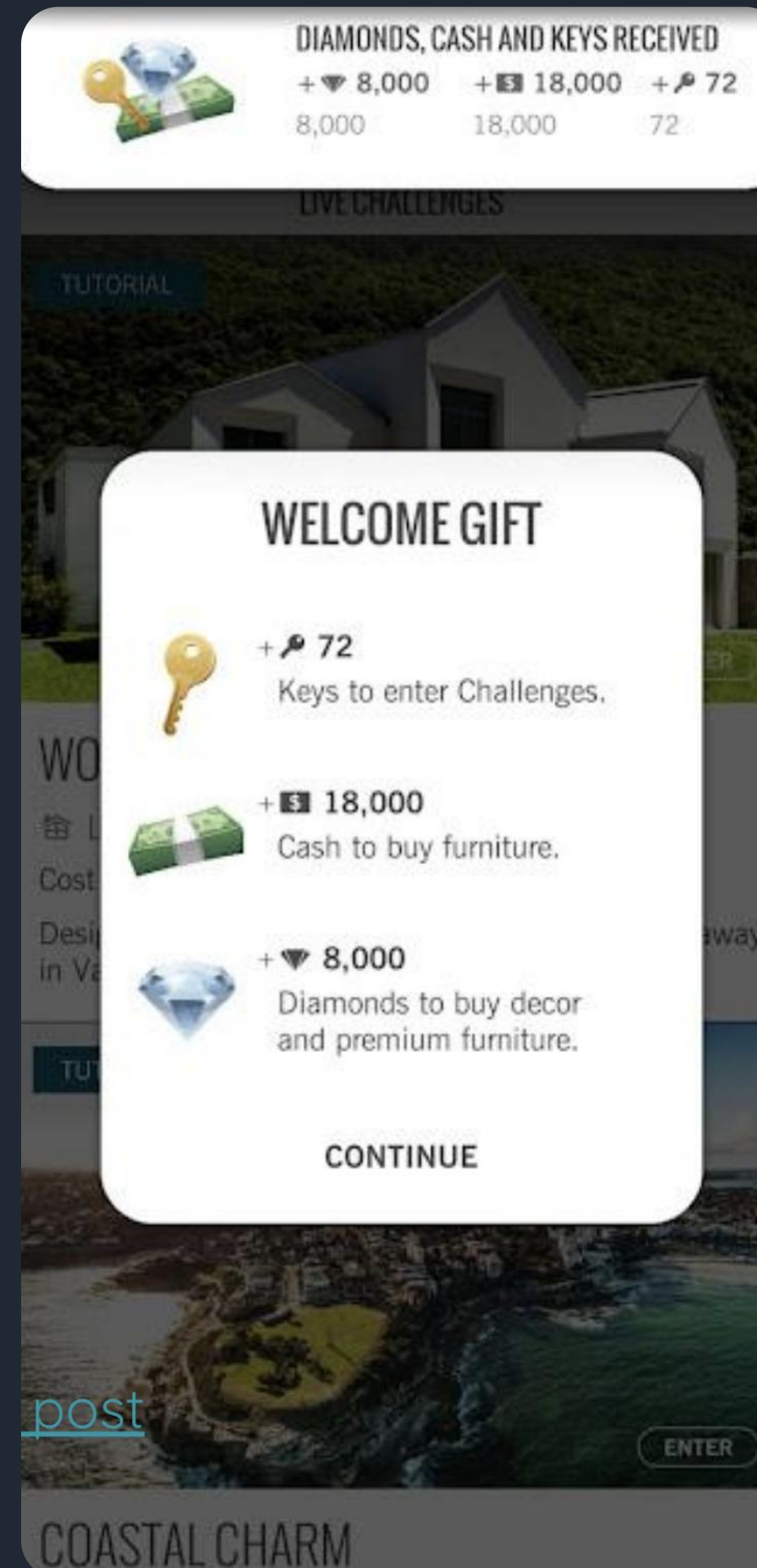
For example, Design Home offers a number of useful rewards as a welcome gift. The gesture makes it easier to start playing and allows to enjoy the game more. As the gift is presented in an in-app message, the app marketers can vary its contents: the kind and the amount of rewards they offer for free.
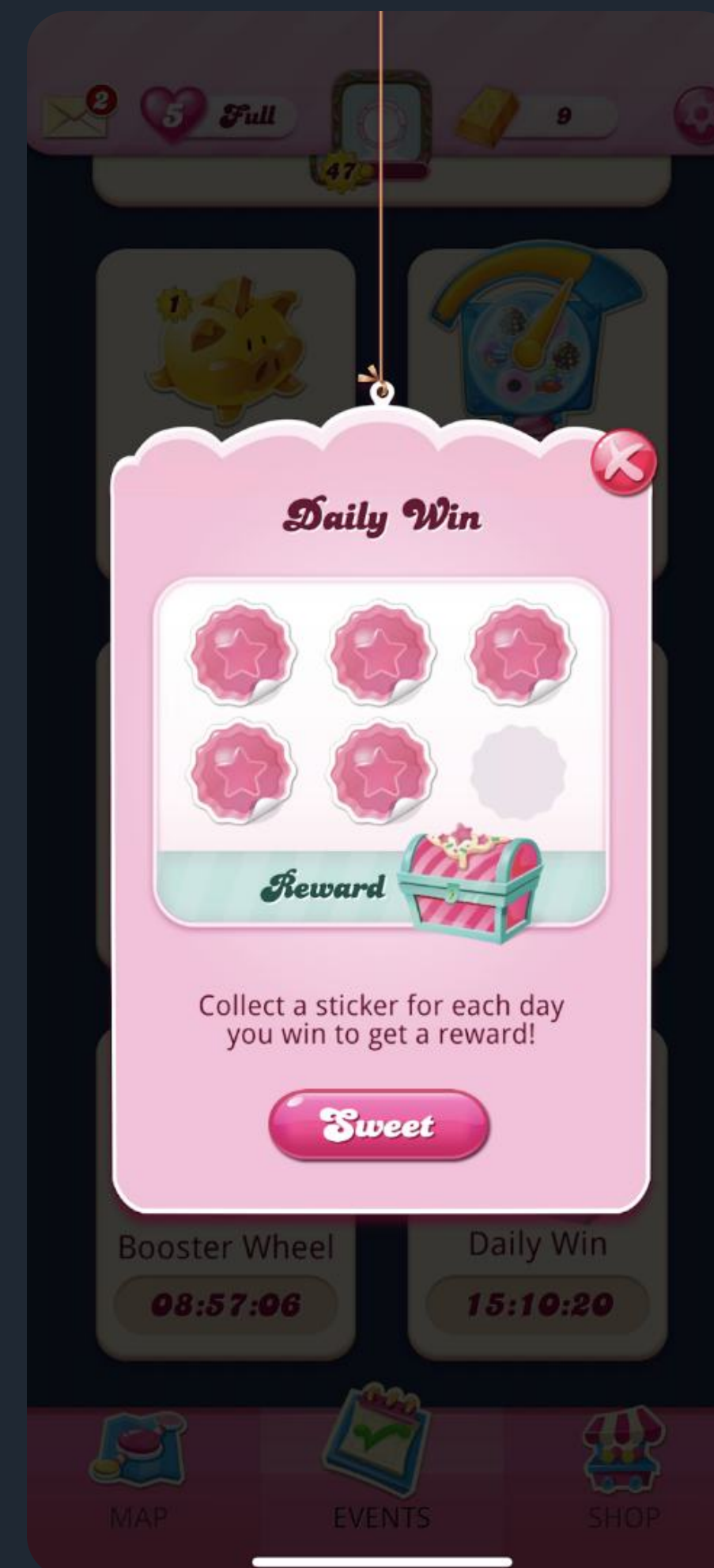
Design Home also targets its just-onboarded users with partners' offers. App advertisers promote some extra challenges, all aligned with the main plot of the game. In reward, players are offered extra diamonds.

👉 More tips and examples of great onboarding flows in our **blog post (with checklist!)**

Best practices

How to grow D7 Retention: encourage user activity

Unless your game is hyper-casual, getting users back to your app day after day must be your priority. A colorful in-app message with a small reward for another App Open will do the job perfectly.

When using this tactic, you can be straightforward like Candy Crush: in this game, players collect stickers for every new day when they open the app.

Criminal Case turns the tactic into an engaging experience: a user has to spin the wheel to receive as many reward points as fortune gives today.
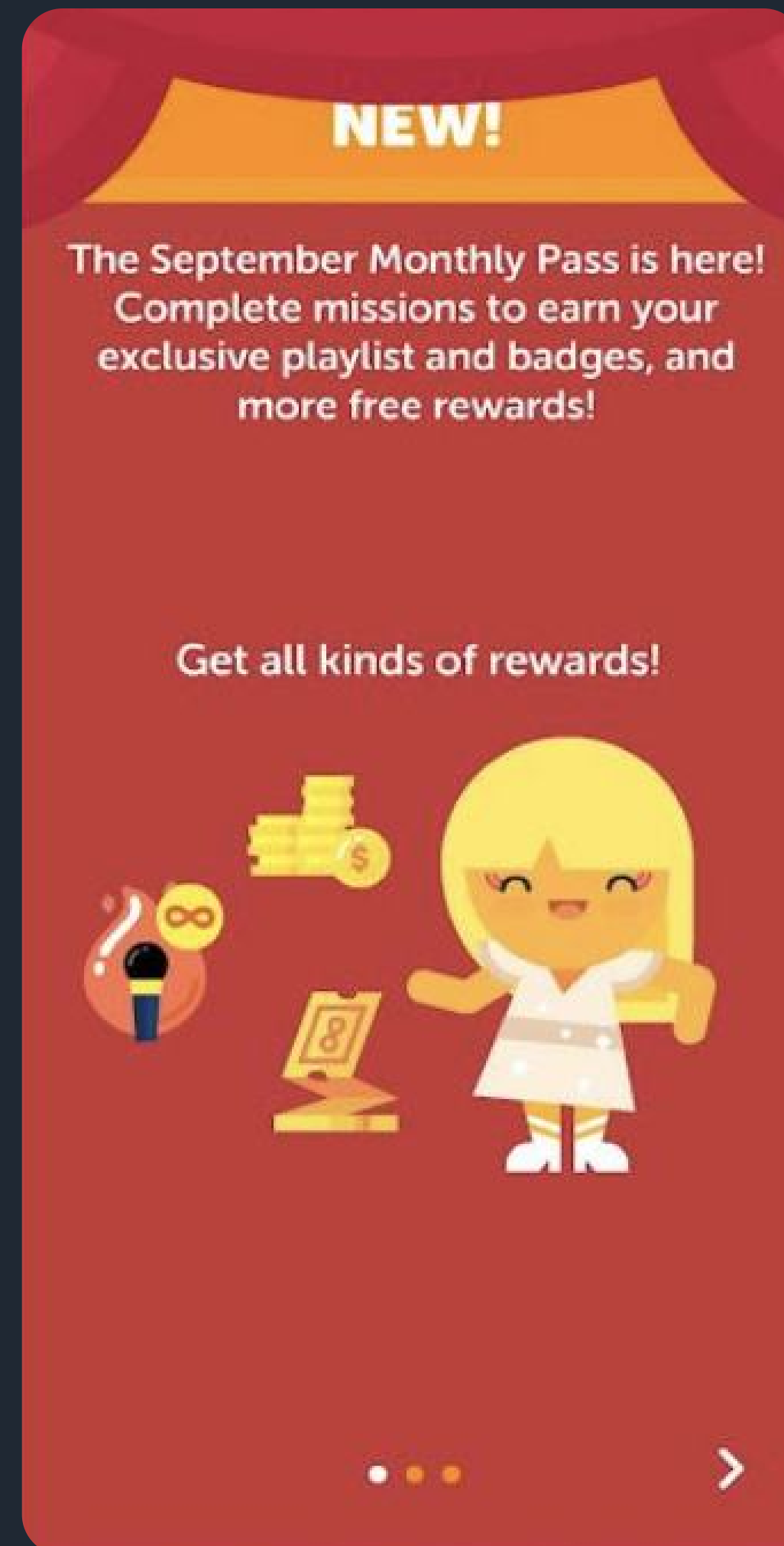

👉 Implement any of these interactive formats with the
Pushwoosh no-code in-app messaging solution

Best practices

How to grow D30 Retention

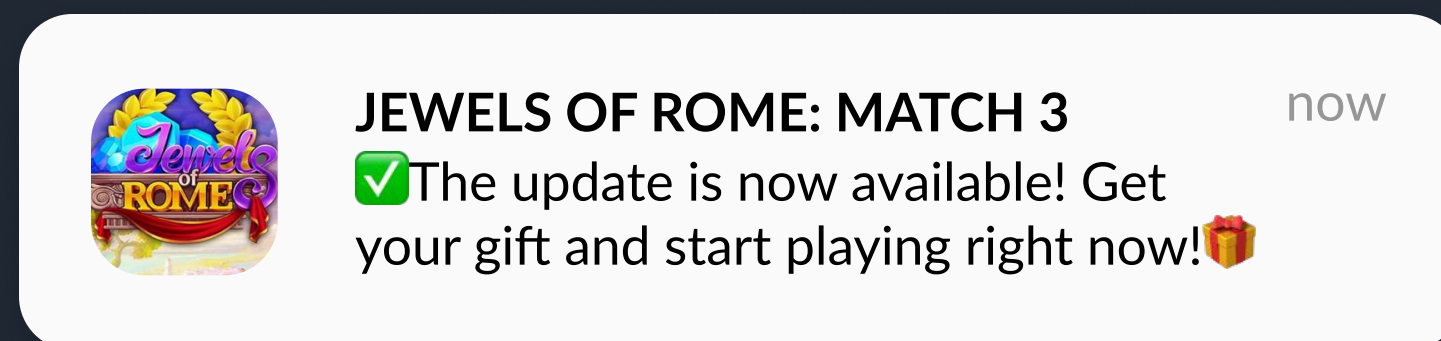## 1. Animate your players with new opportunities

So that players don't get bored by the end of the first month, come up with a new challenge, contest or thematic campaign.

You may want to announce it as loudly as you can, leveraging all the connected channels.

SongPop, for example, promotes its monthly engaging activity this way. In a series of in-app messages, the game announces an opportunity to unlock some extra features and gain extra rewards by completing a number of challenges.

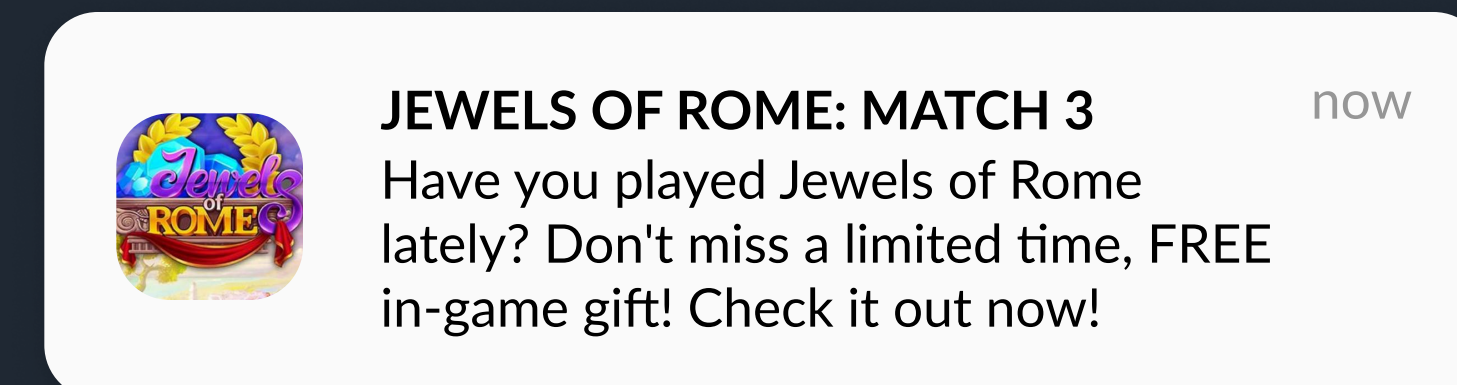## 2. Ensure users are having the most fun in the latest version of your app

Initiate your game up update with a push notification with Custom Data:

JEWELS OF ROME: MATCH 3   now
✅The update is now available! Get your gift and start playing right now!🎁

3. Reconnect with the users that have been less active lately

You don't want to wait until these players lose interest completely!

Create a behavior-based segment and suggest these users come to play again:
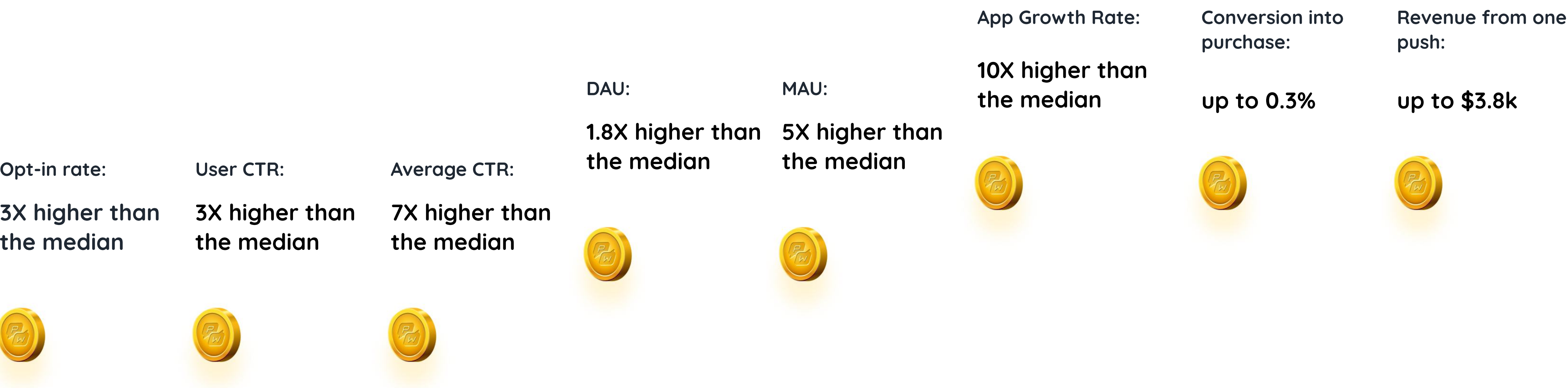
JEWELS OF ROME: MATCH 3   now
Have you played Jewels of Rome lately? Don't miss a limited time, FREE in-game gift! Check it out now!

DRIVE REVENUE

PUSHWOOSH

A million-dollar journey starts with an opt-in

One of the Pushwoosh customers from the gaming industry has proved it all: with all the engagement and growth metrics exceeding the median values for the entire sample and their size of app too, the mobile game enjoys high conversion rates and gains sizeable revenue from every push.

App Growth Rate:

10X higher than
the median

Conversion into
purchase:

up to 0.3%

Revenue from one
push:

up to $3.8k

DAU:

MAU:

1.8X higher than
the median

5X higher than
the median

Opt-in rate:

User CTR:

Average CTR:

3X higher than
the median

3X higher than
the median

7X higher than
the median

Best practices

# How to drive conversions & revenue in a game app

1. For starters, ascertain accurate tracking

You won't get far in optimization unless you know where you're starting from. Pushwoosh users can leverage conversion tracking right in the Customer Journey Builder interface and stay informed of the effectiveness of their campaigns in real time.

This way, game app marketers can always stay on top of their users' conversion paths, whatever custom event they've set up as the goal.
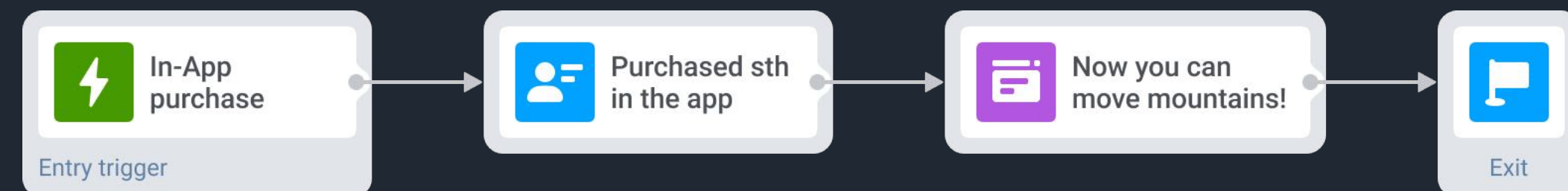
2. Promote paid in-game items through push notifications and in-app messages
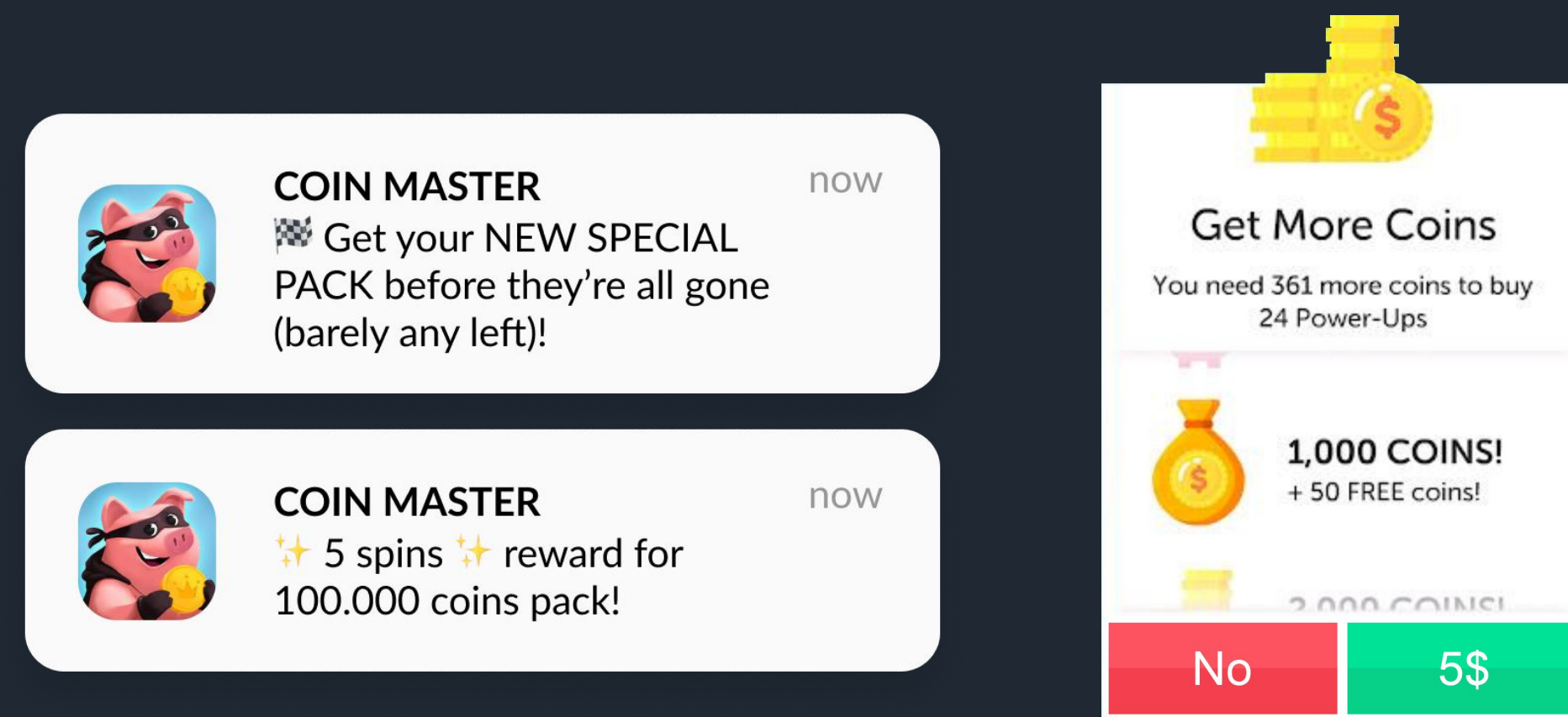

Help your players advance in the game — recommend purchasing the most handy in-game items.

To make the offer even more enticing, provide an additional bonus or a discount on those items.

3. Test what converts better: regular paid in-game items vs seasonal offers

Limited-edition in-app items may excite an extra interest among your players — or turn out to be no more than just a shiny new thing that doesn't bring you any higher ROI. Experiment to find out what your game audience prefers.

Here we have two examples of pushes — will you guess which one has gained +2% more conversions?

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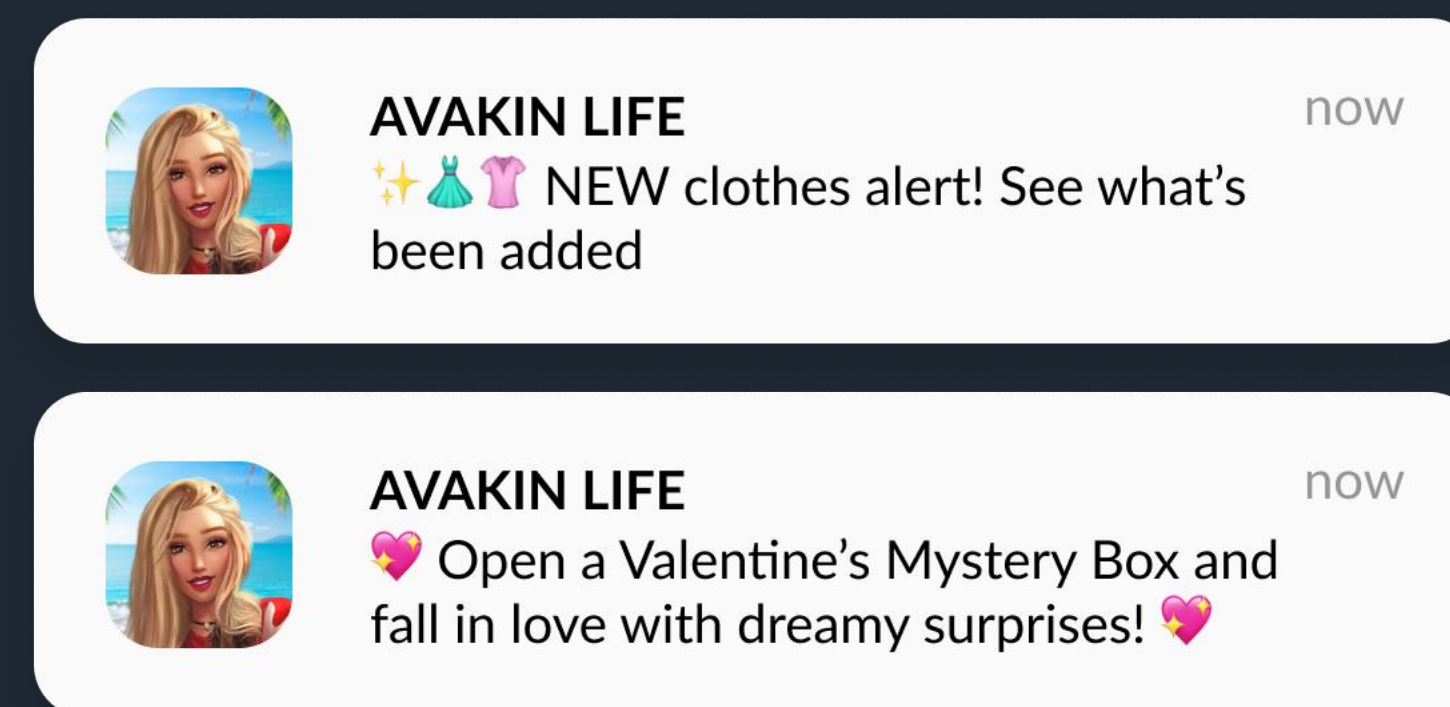
4. Enhance your app traffic monetization

If you monetize your game app through advertising, like our stellar customer, **Bladestorm**, does, strengthen the incoming traffic flow. Get your users open and use the app daily to stay active, encourage them to view advertising banners and gain more revenue as a result.
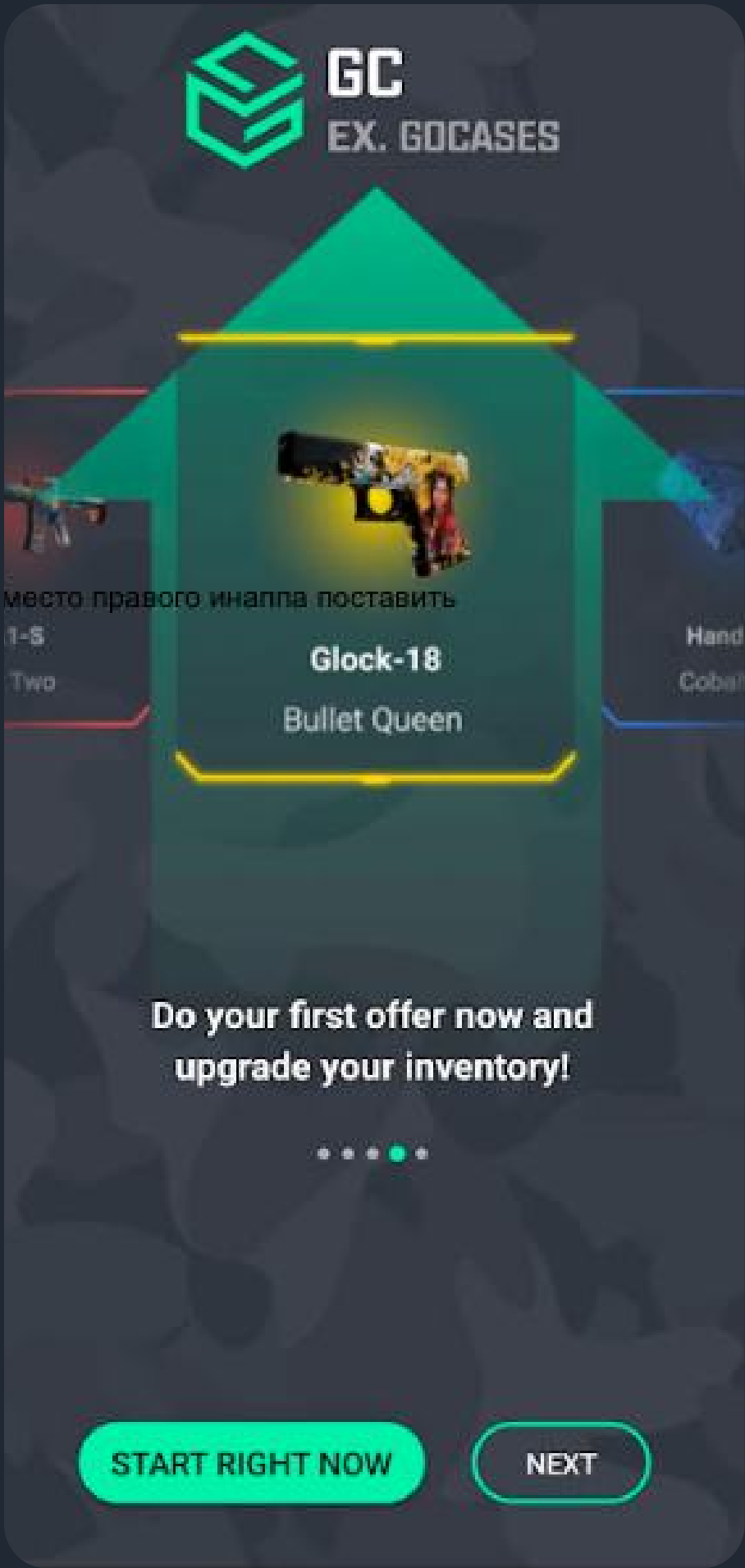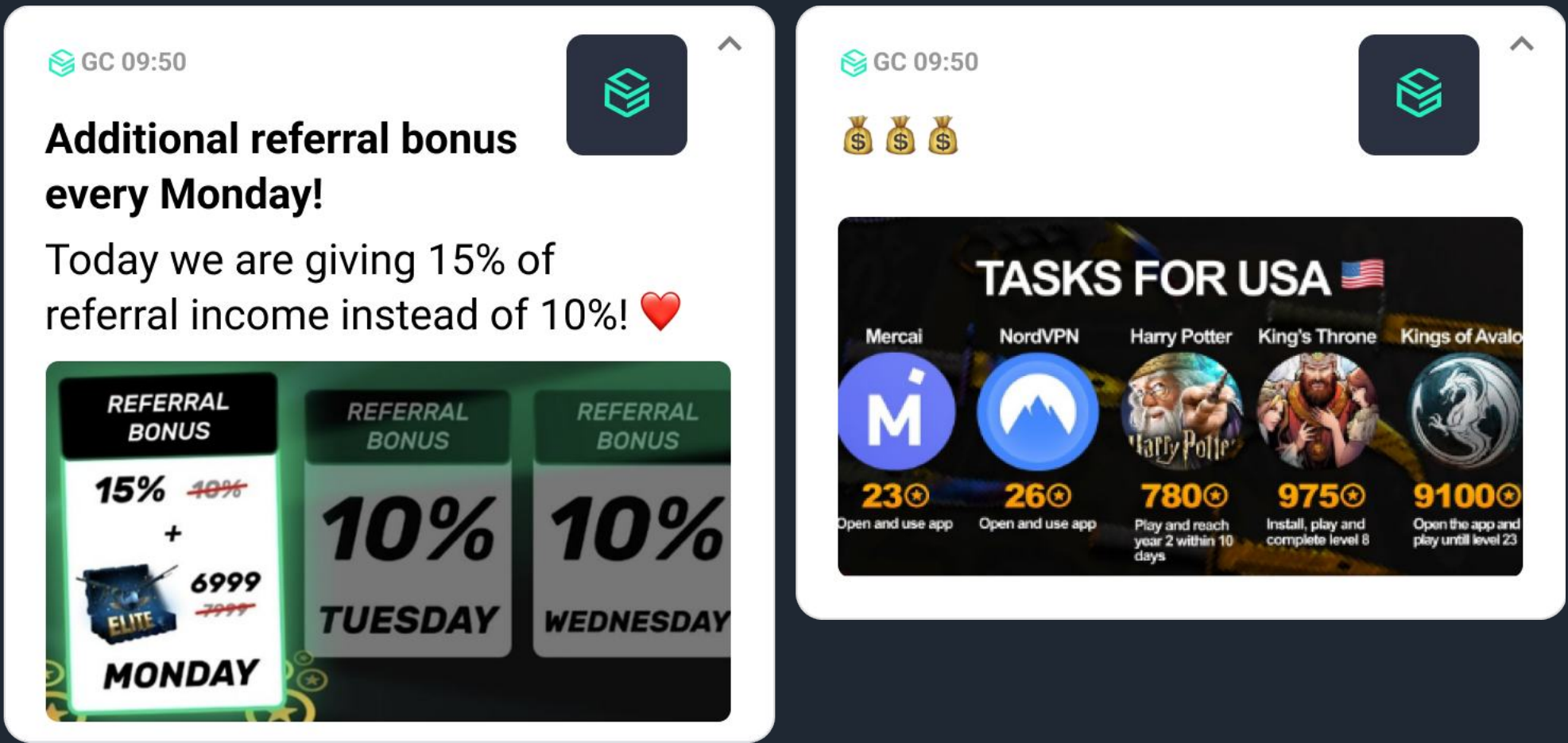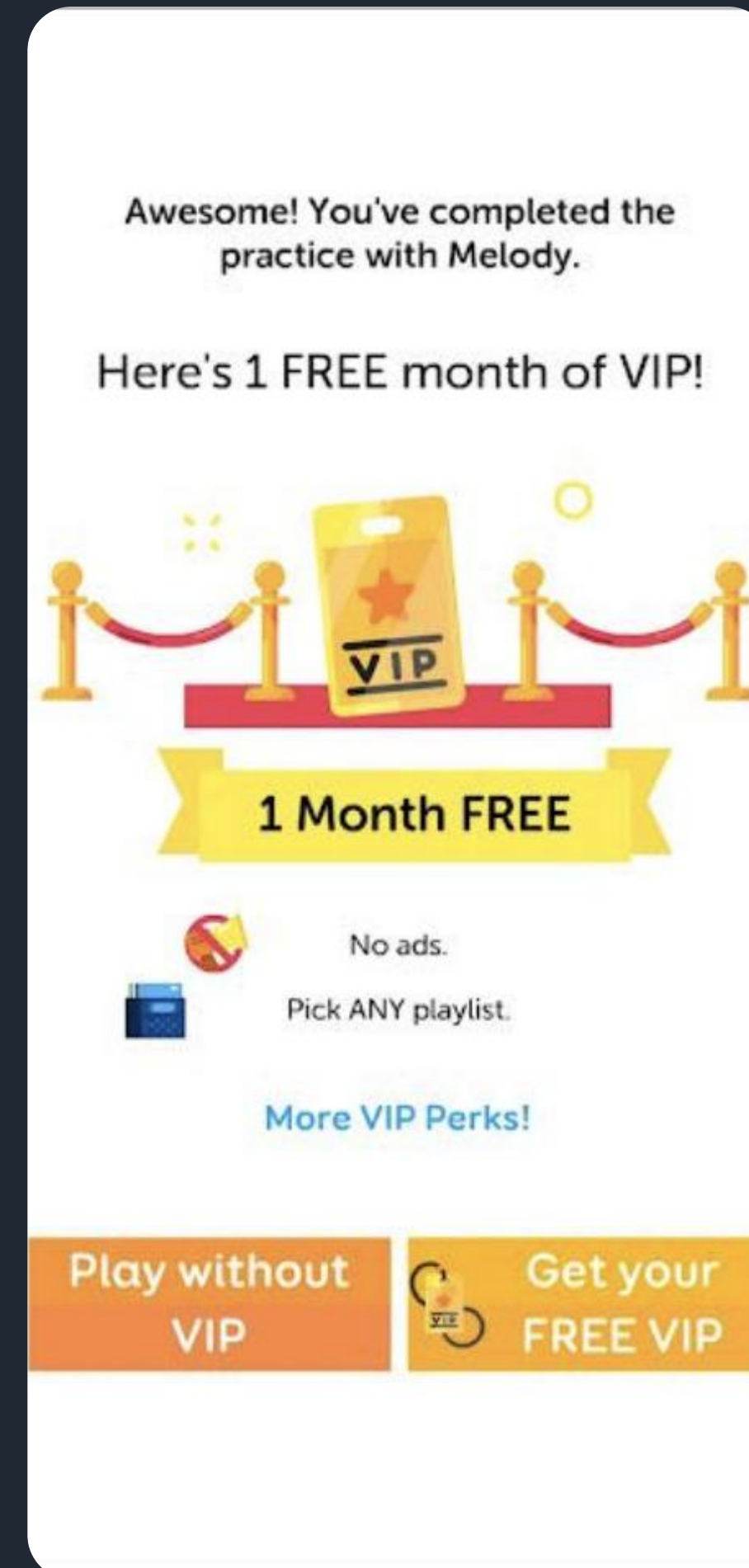
5. Target your offers based on user behavior

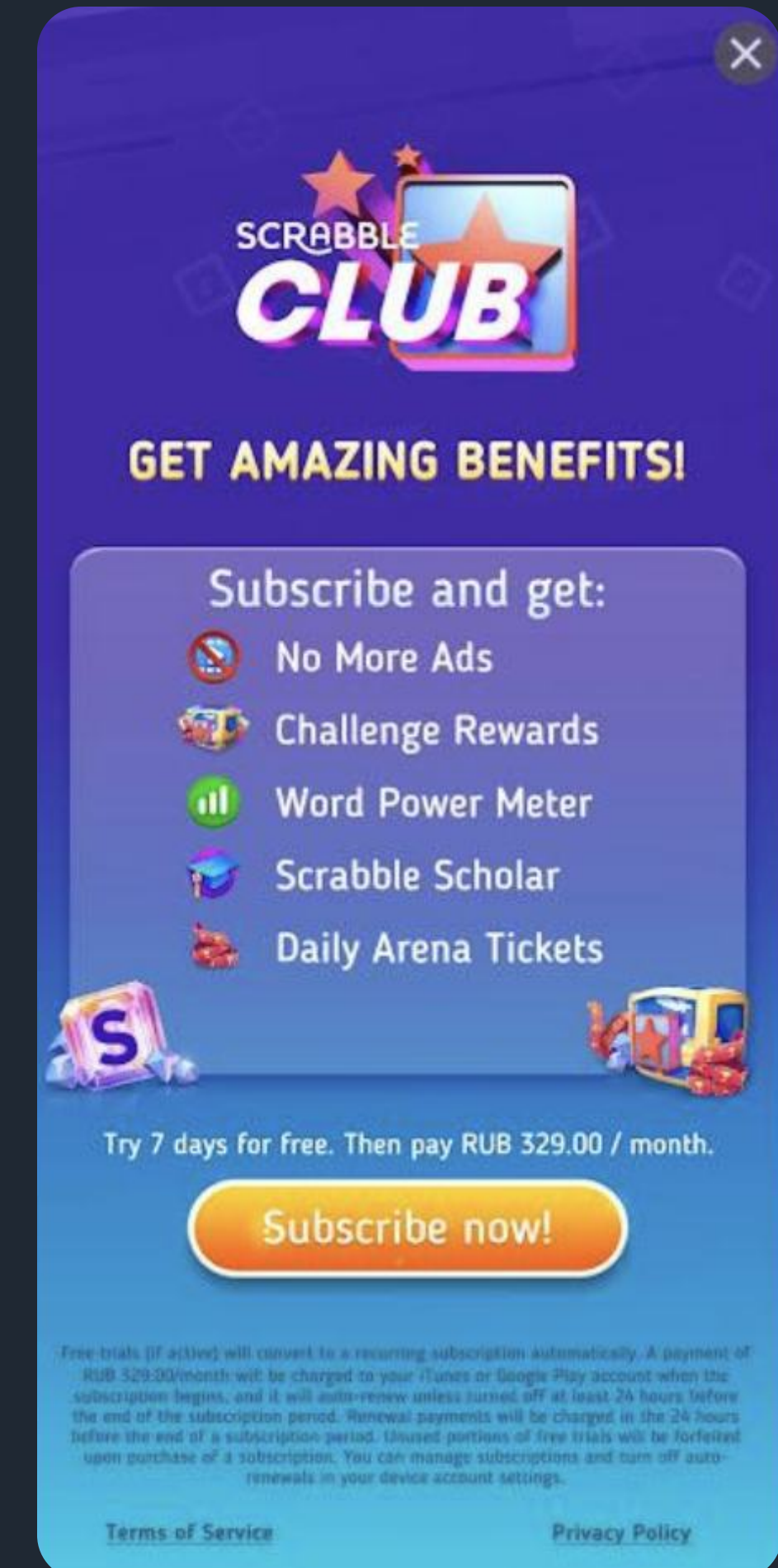Choose the right moment to show your special offers:

Suggest the users who have completed a free practice round try one month of VIP games for free

Reach out to your paying users whose subscription is about to expire

Target those users who have purchased some in-game items in the past
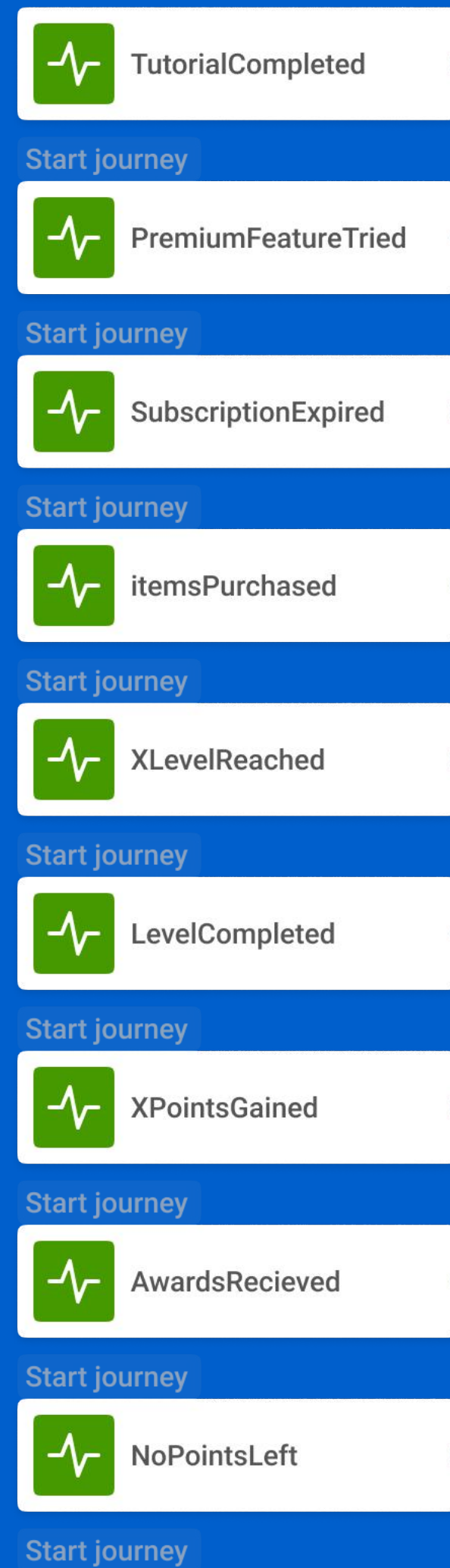
Example: SongPop

Example: ScrabbleGO

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LEVEL UP

Achieve 🚀 25X higher conversion 🚀 into target action with Pushwoosh behavior-based communications

〰 TutorialCompleted	●

Start journey

〰 PremiumFeatureTried	●

Start journey

〰 SubscriptionExpired	●

Start journey

〰 itemsPurchased	●

Start journey

〰 XLevelReached	●

Start journey

〰 LevelCompleted	●

Start journey

〰 XPointsGained	●

Start journey

〰 AwardsRecieved	●

Start journey

〰 NoPointsLeft	●

Start journey

No exaggeration: this is the documented improvement that Pushwoosh customers see when they move from broadcast messaging to behavior-based communications. Does it sound exciting? We think so!

To make the transition to behavior-based messaging smoother and faster for you, we're giving you some relevant event triggers here — use them to achieve higher conversion rates in your campaigns and gain more revenue.
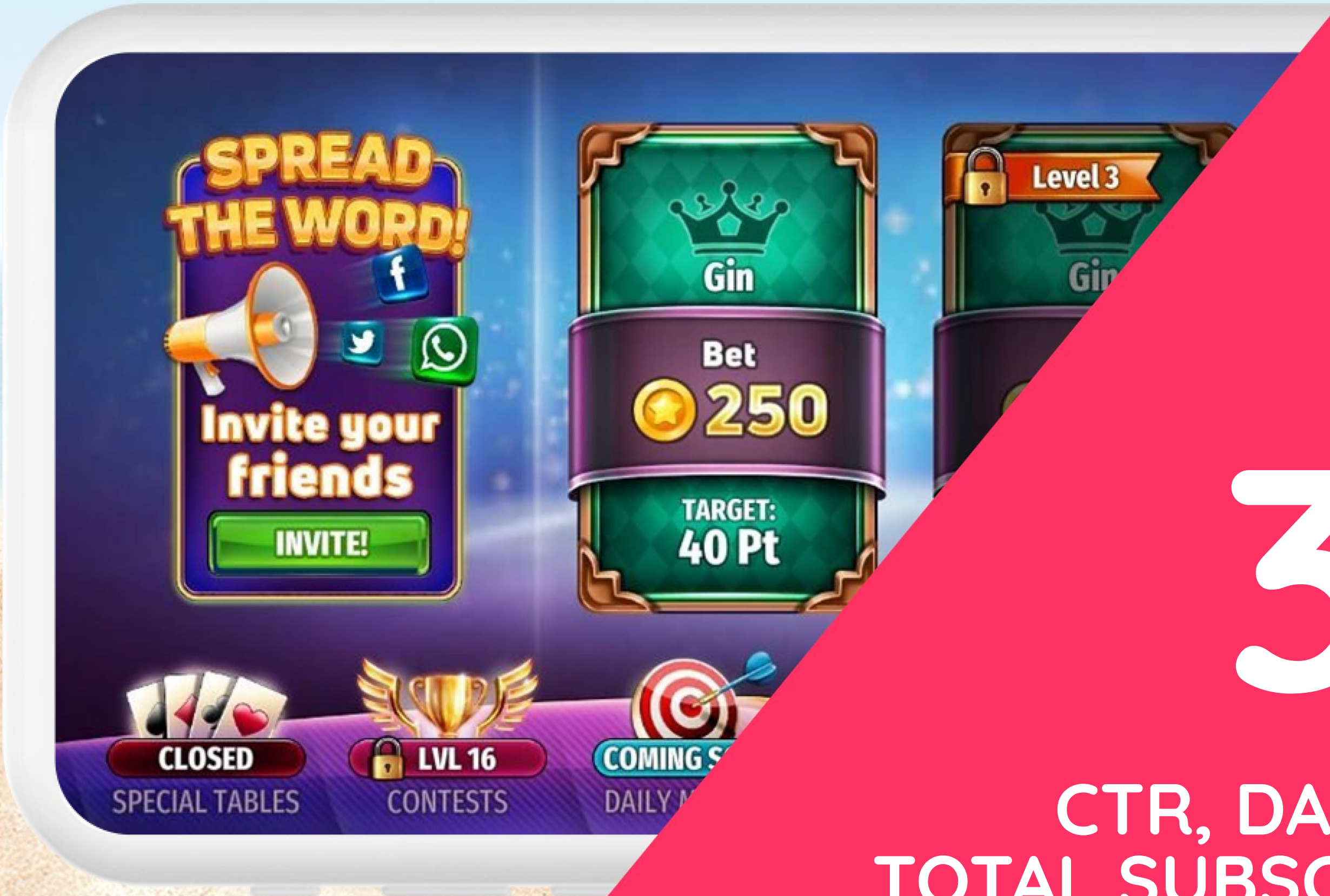
👉 Discover the **Pushwoosh solution for gaming**

Success story: **BeachBum**

Beach Bum implemented our strategy and reported remarkable progress on all indicators

👉 Learn details of the Beach Bum winning strategy on **Pushwoosh blog**

PW PUSHWOOSH

SPREAD THE WORD!

Invite your friends

INVITE!

Gin

Bet
🪙 250

TARGET:
40 Pt

Level 3
Gin

CLOSED
SPECIAL TABLES

🔒 LVL 16
CONTESTS

COMING S
DAILY

3X

CTR, DAU, MAU, TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS

You're holding all the cards now. Play them well!

When one-off playing turns into a habit, an occasional gamer converts into a paying customer. At Pushwoosh, we've gained this insight from practice — from studying first-hand data, listening to our customers and working together on their goals.

If there are only three words I can repeat before you close this ebook, let them be:

ENGAGE → RETAIN → EARN

This is the strategy that has worked for our game app clients, and I hope it will help you achieve the results you thrive for.

May there be more time for play!

MAX KUZAKOV

Senior Customer Success
Manager, Pushwoosh

PUSHWOOSH

HIGH SCORE!

Wanna go to the next level with your game app?
We can share a playthrough.

Get started with Pushwoosh for free

Talk to the team