



The Mobile Copywriting Pocket Guide

**How to Write Effective
Mobile Marketing Campaigns**



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Why Read This Pocket Guide?


So you're in charge of writing a bunch of marketing materials to promote your mobile app and you're not technically a copywriter. Don't worry!

We've put together our combined marketing wisdom and a collection of best practices gleaned from the successes of our clients to give you this valuable resource that should help you write effective copy for mobile marketing campaigns.

In this pocket guide you will learn:

 **General tips for marketing writing on mobile**

 **Best practices for drafting copy that persuades users to take action**

 **Recommended length for emails, push notifications, SMS, and more**



I. General Mobile Copywriting Best Practices

Whatever marketing channel you use, these best practices will serve you well.

Remember: Users are Distracted

More than any other marketing channel, mobile users are predisposed to ignoring your message.



**They're busy
and on the move**



**They're seeing
your message on
a small screen**



**They're distracted
by a million alerts
and emails**

So how do you rise above the noise?

A. Attention! Attention!



Your primary job in writing marketing messaging is to get readers to pay attention. This is why every headline and email subject line should pique their curiosity, or scream of urgency.

1. Use Odd Numbers:

First off, headlines with numbers can generate 73% more social shares.* But don't use round, even numbers. Odd numbers have a 20% higher CTR!* Numbers in headlines get 327% more clicks than other types of headlines.*

2. Use Emotional Power Words:

There are power words that evoke feelings (e.g., escape, indulge, special, free). Know them and use them! Try CoSchedule's Headline Analyzer* (Requires an account). And use CleverTap's own [emotion detector tool](#) to identify the emotions present in your marketing copy.

3. Use FOMO:

Fear Of Missing Out is a real tactic you can use to pressure users to quickly convert or else, they miss their chance! (e.g., “Last day for your 45% off coupon!”)

Read: [4 ways to use FOMO to drive app engagement.](#)

Don't Resort to Clickbait:

Yes, it's tempting. But if you pair a jaw-dropping headline with poor/irrelevant content, you're destroying your brand's reputation.



B. Be Brief

There's no space on mobile screens for essays. And users have short attention spans. Get to your point across ASAP so users can quickly decide if they need to take action.

EMAILS



**Total
Character Limit**

None, technically

**Recommended
Limit**

As short as possible

PUSH NOTIFICATIONS



**Viewable
Limit**

Android:
Title: 65 characters,
Description: 240 characters
iOS: 178 characters

**Recommended
Limit**

20-90 characters yield
the highest click-through
rate (CTR)

IN-APP NOTIFICATIONS



Character Limit

None

Recommended Limit

20 - 90 characters

SMS



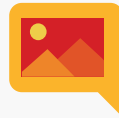
Character Limit

160 characters

Note

Text only

MMS



Character Limit

1600 characters

Note

Add images, videos, audio files, browser previews, etc.

C. Context is Crucial

Your copy must answer the reader's question "What's in it for me?" if you want them to read.

1. Benefits, Not Features:

Don't talk about new app features, talk about how awesome their life will be with your app.

To do this, you need to know what their pain points are. Why are they using your app?

2. Them, Not You:

Don't talk about your brand, talk about the user and how your app will improve their life.

3. Speak as They Do:

Your tone matters. Speak as your target audience speaks. Don't resort to acronyms (unless your readers use them).

DON'T ✘

- We just launched a bookmark feature.Yay!
- We just won the most trusted banking app award.
- **OMG!** You can haz 25 new filters!

DO ✔

- **NEW!** Bookmark your favorite items in 1 click
- Industry agrees: your banking data is secure with us
- Grab 25 new selfie filters. #YOLO

D. Direct Them to the CTA

The entire point of the marketing message is to get the user to convert. This means getting them to click on the call-to-action (CTA) button. So, how do you persuade them to do it?

1. Tell Them What to Do:

Use clear and simple action words. Don't make it difficult to understand what you want them to do.

DON'T ✘	DO ✔
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check us out.• Examine.• Go get 'em, tiger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subscribe• See more!• Buy!

2. Tell Them Why the CTA is Good for Them:

Your users want to be told why something is good for them. If you can show them the value in your CTA, this is called a “Call to Value.”

Call to action

“Today only: sale on designer denim! **Shop now”**

Call to value

“Strut your stuff in style with our designer denim collection”

3. Inform Them What the CTA Does:

Inspire their trust by telling them what happens when they click the CTA. Will they be subscribed to your mailing list? Will it bring them to the shopping cart?

DON'T ✘

Grab the PDF now!

DO ✔

Click to get the PDF in your inbox.

II. Mobile Copywriting for Push Notifications

Push notifications are crucial for getting users back into your app. But the copy needs to be short enough to display properly on mobile devices.

PUSH NOTIFICATIONS



Viewable Limit

Android:
Title: 65 characters,
Description: 240 characters
iOS: 178 characters

Recommended Limit

20-90 characters yield the highest click-through rate (CTR)

iOS: 170 characters

the highest click-through rate (CTR)

Two Types of Push Notification

How do you write a push so it's engaging? Well, it depends on the type of push you're sending.

1. Transactional

- **Deliver time-sensitive content:** boarding announcements, delivery status messages, etc.
- May be low on open rates, but still aid in retention
- **Writing tip:** Get to the point.



Transactional push from Amazon. Relevant and useful.

2. Engagement

- Designed to encourage more interaction with your app
- Should be focused on the user — not your brand!
- **Writing tip:** Make it relevant, timely, and actionable.



Engagement push from Lyft. Enticing people to use the app.

Principles for Writing Engagement Push Notifications

1. Every Push Must Be Relevant

Behavior + Location + Usefulness

=

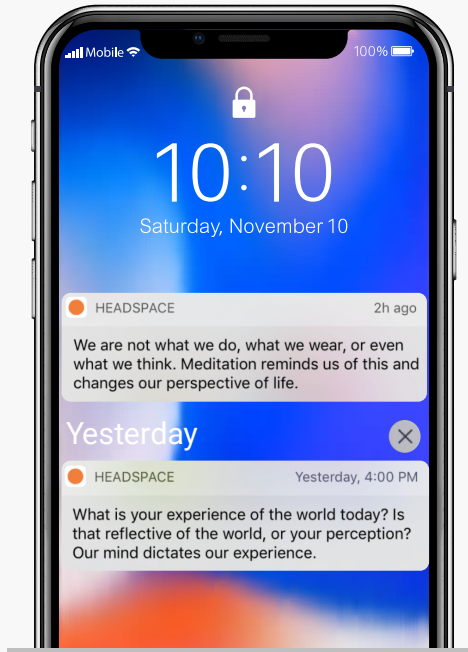
Relevance

Every push should be relevant to:

- Who your user is (user data)
- What your user has done or not done (in-app actions)
- Where they are (location)
- What the user finds useful or valuable (context)

But wait, how can push notifications be useful?

- Teach them something new
- Give them tips and tricks on using the app
- Make users feel good about themselves



Example of a push from Headspace that is useful, yet doesn't have a CTA.

2. Every Push Must Be Timely

Don't delay urgent notices that users need. E.g.: shipping updates, delivery notices, boarding gate changes, etc. If your push arrives late, it will frustrate your users.

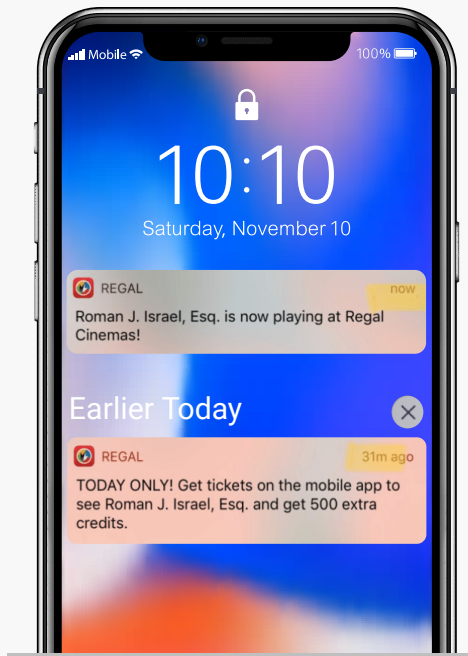
**Send [Push X] [Y Hours or Days]
after User takes [Y Action]**

Warning: Don't Send Too Many Push Notifications!

46% of users will disable notifications if you send 2-5 messages in a week. 32% will stop using your app if you send 6-10 notifications in a week.

Tips:

- Set a frequency cap (e.g., not more than 5 in 7 days)
- Define cool-down periods where no push will be sent
- Use algorithms to prioritize some pushes over others (e.g., food delivery notification is more important than a 10% off coupon)



Users will complain about too frequent push notifications.

3. (Almost) Every Push Should Be Actionable

Usually, the point is to get users to do something. Sure, you could be informing or educating users without asking them to take action, but the vast majority of push notifications are geared toward engagement.

But first:

- Know WHY users should do the action. What benefit will they get from this?
- Then clearly tell users what to do (i.e., the CTA).

Use Push Notification Power Words by Industry



A. General apps: New, Save, Limited, Exclusive, Urgent, Reminder



B. Retail & ecommerce apps: For you, Giveaway, Bonus, Don't miss out, Limited time, Free



C. Travel & booking apps: Escape, Indulge, Special, Dream, Reward, Sale, Trip, Offers



D. Media & publishing apps: Secret, Breaking, Controversial, Deadline, Invite only, Unlock



E. Utility & delivery apps: Effortless, Get, Minutes, No sweat, Order, Quick, Save



F. Social media apps: Connect, Mentioned, Message, Liked, New, Followed

Check out our blog for a complete listing of [250+ push notification power words](#), broken down by industry.

4. Every Push Should Stand Out!

To stand out from the other 90 apps the user has installed, your push needs to DELIGHT and INTRIGUE.

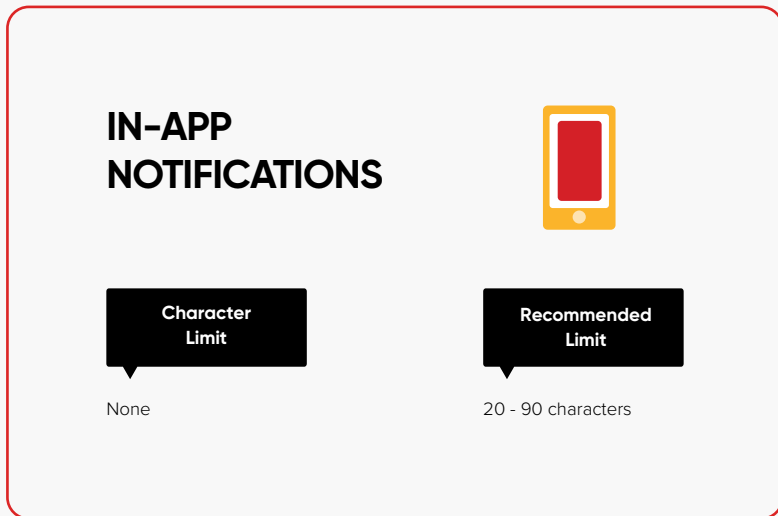
Some examples:

- Begin a story... where the user can only read the ending if they open your app.
- Use intriguing numbers in your lists (e.g., 17 ways to save on Christmas decor).
- Personalize it and show some effort!
- Use rich media for a fuller experience.



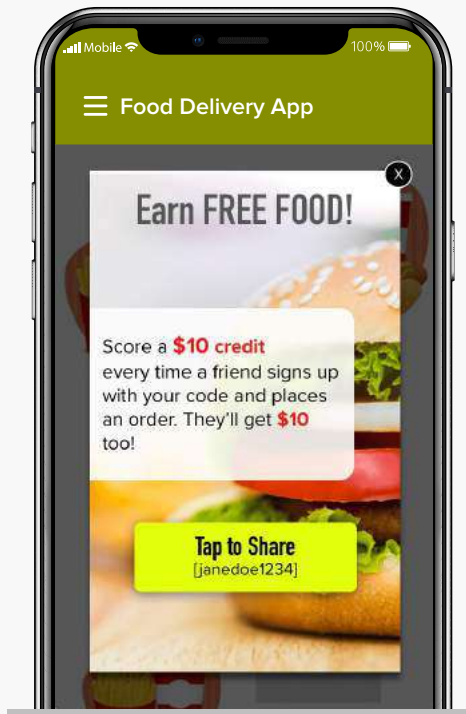
III. Mobile Copywriting for In-app Notifications

In-app messages are native content that appear within your app as a popup or full screen UI overlay. No need for opt in. As long as the user is in the app, they'll get this notification.



Benefits of In-App Messages

- They're a natural part of the in-app experience, not marketing. So users are more receptive to your message.
- They prolong session length because they tend to be personalized and content-rich.
- They improve the user experience because they address a user's immediate needs.
- All of the above help increase engagement and retention.



Ways to Use In-App Messaging

So how exactly do you use in-app notifications? Here are 5 ways:

1. Successfully onboard new users:

Welcome them, train them how to use it, register them, activate them, set them up for success.

2. Encourage more frequent app launches:

Send content personalized to users' likes and actions, entice them with newly added content, help stuck users complete key actions.

3. Convert active users into paying customers:

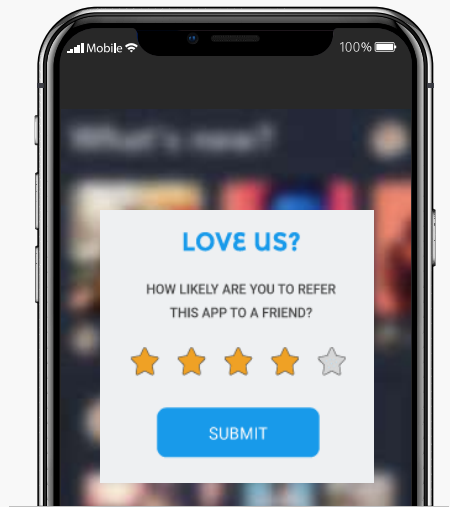
Send them promotions, subscription reminders, upsells and cross-sells, and always use deep links to get them deeper into your app.

4. Improve retention rates:

Let users know about app upgrades and new features, share social proof, celebrate user milestones, get them into loyalty programs, gather user feedback.

5. Make user acquisition easy:

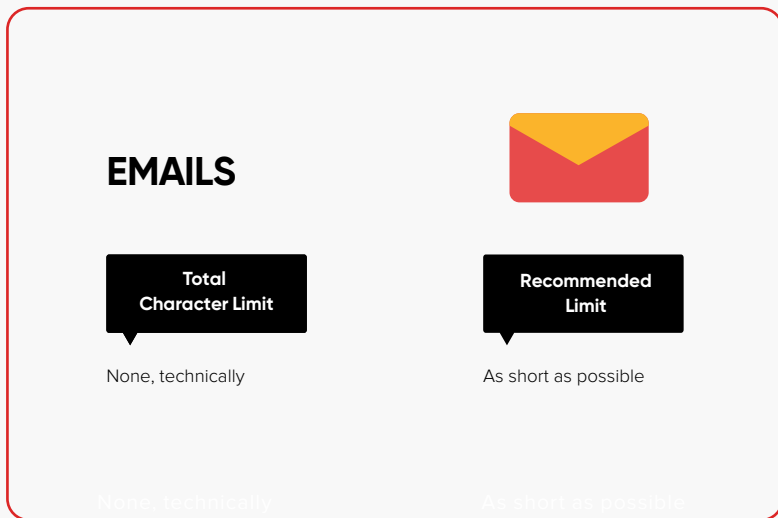
Persuade power users to leave ratings and reviews, encourage referrals, incentivize social media shares.



IV. Mobile Copywriting for Emails

And of course, who can escape the marketing email? It's a tried-and-true channel because it works so well. For example, open rates for welcome emails stand at an amazing 91.43% and have a 26.9% CTR.*

One way to stand out from the rest of the emails your users are receiving is to delight them by giving them valuable content each and every time. Some best practices below.



7 Secrets for Effective Email Copywriting

1. Make each part flow to the next:

The subject line (and preview text) should get them to open the email. The body text should lead them to the CTA. The CTA text should get them to see the value of your offer.

2. Maximize the preview text/snippet:

This is the area of the email that appears right after the subject line in most email clients. You can typically fit in 30 to 140 characters so don't waste it with useless stuff. Instead, convince the reader to open the email!

3. Use verbs:

It's all about taking action, so use action words to tell them what to do.

4. Be clear instead of clever:

Your users need to understand what you're communicating. Don't be clever and witty at the expense of being clear.

5. Write conversationally:

Write in the second person (i.e., you, we) and make it a practice to read your emails aloud before sending them. If it doesn't read smoothly, it's not conversational.

6. One main idea per paragraph:

Reader sees a huge block of text? It goes straight to the trash folder. Break it up into digestible chunks.

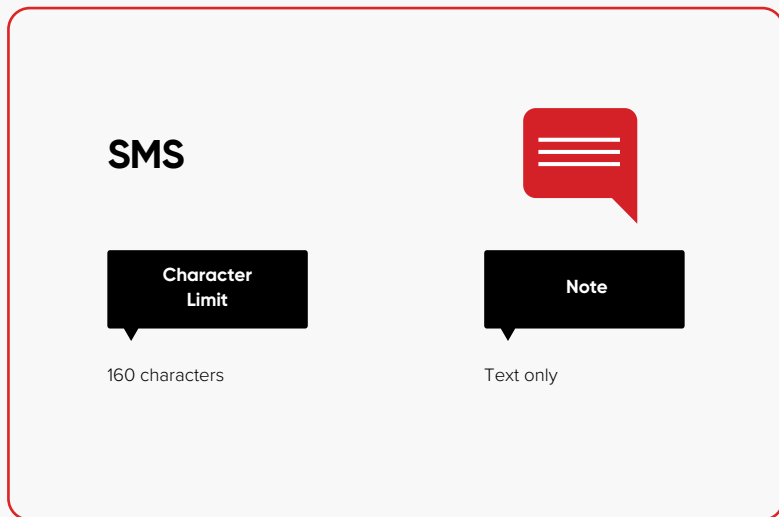
7. Have only one main CTA:

Unless you're sending out a digest or roundup, try to limit your emails to just one CTA so you don't confuse the reader. The less external links, the less option paralysis.

V. Mobile Copywriting for SMS and MMS

In this day and age of digital everything, we sometimes forget that the simplest technologies are still more effective than the latest trends. SMS and MMS have been around since the start of mobile, and aren't going anywhere because:

- SMS open rates exceed 99%.*
- 90% of SMS marketing messages are read within 3 minutes.*



MMS



Character Limit

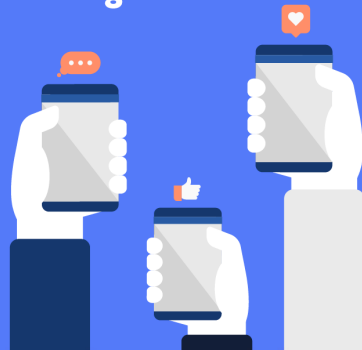
1600 characters

Note

Add images, videos, audio files, browser previews, etc.

Advantages of SMS Marketing

- **Highest engagement** of any marketing channel.
- **Opportunity for a personal connection** between the company and the customer.
- **Perfect for location-based** and time-sensitive messaging.



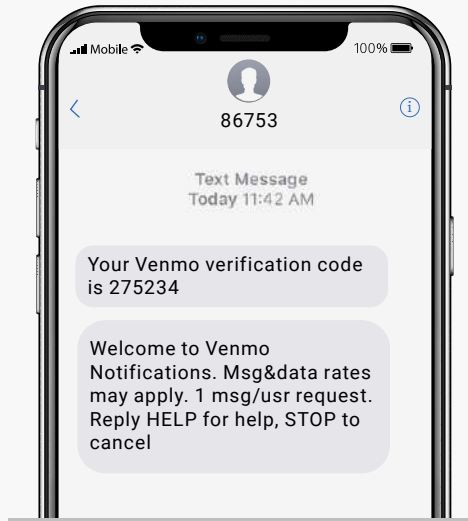
Best Practices for SMS/MMS

1. Get the Opt-in!

No opt-in? No permission to send messages. Create promo campaigns to get them to send a keyword to your [SMS short code](#).

2. Know the Rules

In the US, SMS marketers are required to include “msg & data rates apply” to all auto-reply messages. This affects the number of characters you can add to a message. Knowing these rules will help you work within limitations.



3. Be Fun, But Be Careful of Text Speak

SMS and MMS are supposed to be an informal, yet highly personalized marketing channel. You're communicating directly with a customer or prospect so you can be fun (depending on your brand, of course)! Just don't go overboard with text speak or you risk alienating some users.



4. Stick to Unicode Characters

Some carriers only support unicode characters, so don't get too fancy with special characters.

5. Use CAPS to Emphasize

There isn't any formatting available to plain text, so use capitalized letters as a way to bring focus on specific words.

VI. Mobile Copywriting for Mobile App Landing Pages

Unlike regular website landing pages, mobile app landing pages are designed for mobile screens.

So think small and brief - so you can leave space for a user's thumb to take action!



Parts of a Mobile App Landing Page

1. **Headline:**

Communicate the value of your app, ASAP.

2. **Body copy:**

Show the benefits of using your app.

3. **Social proof:**

Prove that your app is trustworthy. Showcase glowing user reviews or testimonials, your app's awards and recognitions, or simply number of downloads and users.

4. **Rich media:**

Include attractive images with text callouts highlighting salient features. Use dynamic videos showing off your app in action.

Read: More tips on [designing the perfect mobile app landing page](#).

Conclusion

So how does one actually write better copy for push or in-app notifications, mobile landing pages, SMS/MMS, and emails? By following the advice in this pocket guide.

It's more than just cranking out text to put into your marketing emails and push notifications. It's about knowing how to engage your users. It's about using the data you already have to converse with your users and connect with them.

Resources

General Copywriting

[Mobile Copywriting Secrets for Killer Response Rates](#)

For Push Notifications

[The Ultimate Guide to Writing Retention-Boosting Push Notifications](#)

[250+ Push Notification Power Words](#)

[Push Notification Best Practices](#)

For In-App Notifications

[In-App Messaging Campaigns Your Users Actually Want to See](#)

For Emails

[Onboarding Emails: Best Practices for Increasing Initial App Retention](#)

[How to Get Started with Data-Driven Email Marketing](#)

For Landing Pages

[Mobile App Landing Page: Designed to Drive Downloads](#)



CleverTap is the leading customer engagement and retention platform that helps brands maximize user lifetime value. Consumer brands around the world representing over 10,000 apps — including Vodafone, Sony, MercedesBenz.io, Carousel, and Gojek - trust CleverTap to help them improve user engagement and retention thereby growing long term revenue.

Trusted by Leading Brands Globally



Transform Your Customer Engagement With CleverTap

10,000+

Mobile apps powered

2.6Bn

Messages sent daily

1.5Bn

Devices reached

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