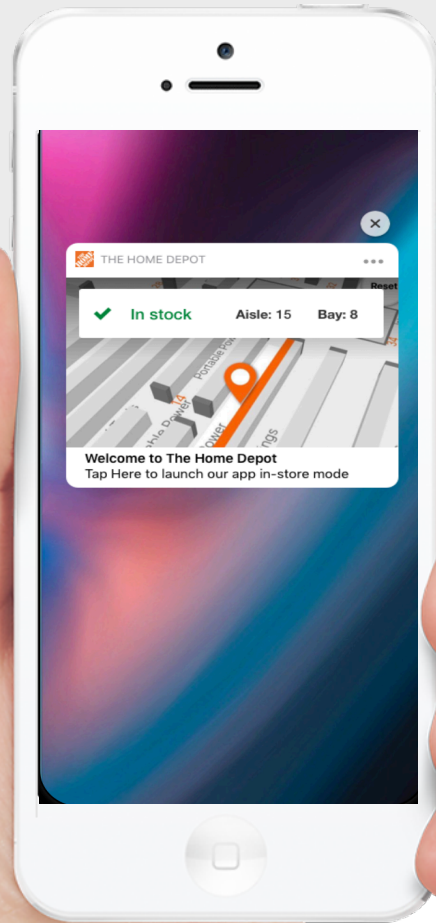


# App Notifications

## Geofenced Notifications

June 2019



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UX Researcher



# Customer Profile

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- 11 customers who were Home Depot app users and frequently used retail apps.



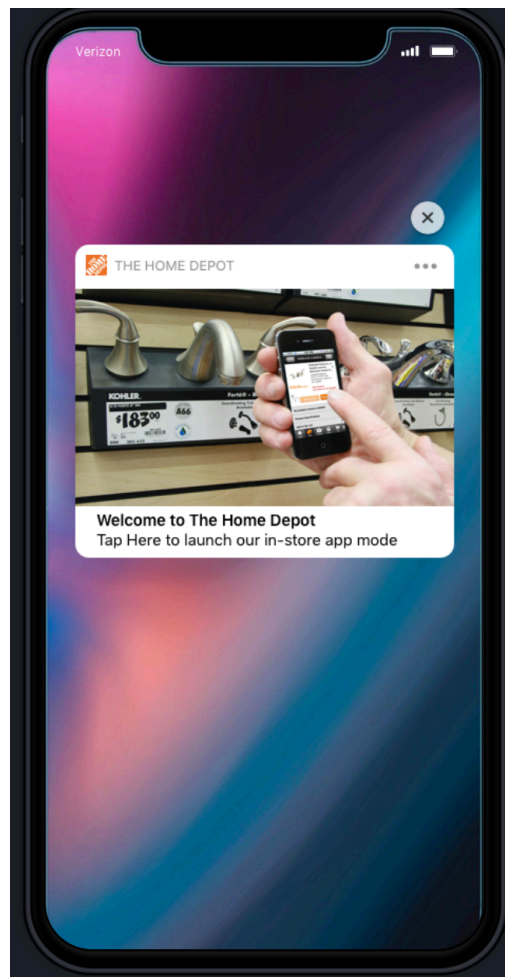
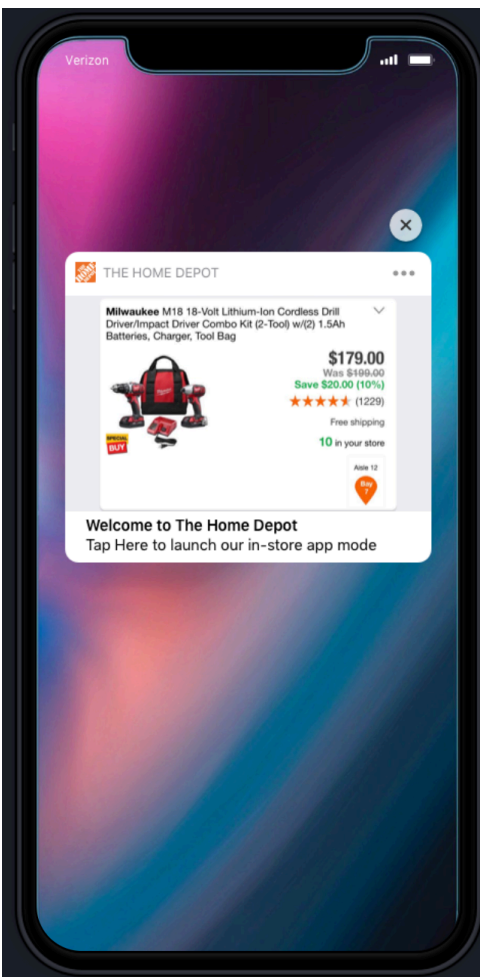
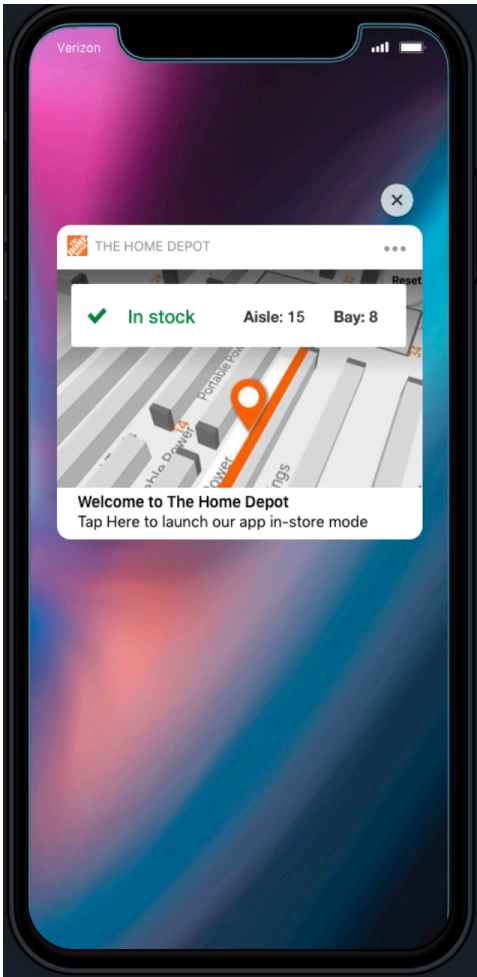
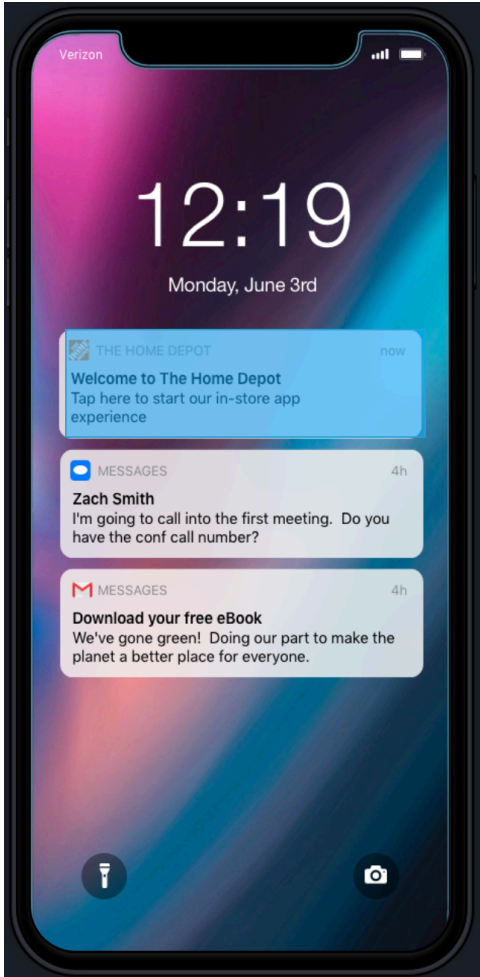
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- Customers were asked to talk about their experiences with notifications and gave feedback on a few prototypes of lock screen notifications.

# Screens Tested



# Key Findings





Every customer we talked to was ok with getting a push notification about in-store features once **every time** they were in a Home Depot Store



“You forget it’s an option, so it’s helpful to have a reminder. But it should be a few minutes after you get into the store, so you aren’t getting pinged every time you drive by.”

# If an app sends too many notifications, rather than change notification settings, customers will delete that app.

“Some apps, if they get too bothersome I take them off. Dollar General was spamming and overtaking my phone.”

“Sears is a good example, which is why I deleted it. I kept getting bombarded with deals. I know I can turn it off, but I just got rid of it completely.”



# Customers like notifications if they:

Feel personalized  
(through actions  
taken in the app and  
lists)

Are actionable rather  
than just informational

Good  
Notifications

Are timely (in-store  
was universally ok)

The customer feels in  
control of frequency  
and content



# Notifications should be actionable

- No matter what type of app (retail or social media), notifications that can be clicked and lead to an action are much better received than purely informational notifications.
- Types of retail notifications desired were:
  - Knowing when an item they wanted came back into stock (opted in by customers).
  - Knowing when an item they were searching for or was on their list was on sale (even a small discount).
  - Reminder of items they were searching for or was on their list when they are in store so they can go look at them.
  - Reminder about app features at a time they are in the store or already acting with the app.



# Notifications should happen at a time they fit on the customers' happy path

- Customers were universally ok with receiving 1 notification while they were in the store because it fit with what they were doing.
- This was talked about in a similar way to how they talked about calendar notifications. Something that would help them remember to do something they wanted to do but might forget otherwise (use the app features, remember an item they might want to check out).



# Customers should be in control

Of the content and frequency of notifications

- But the default frequency should be fairly low (up to twice a week). Many users reported deleting whole apps (not changing settings) if they were receiving too many notifications
- Possibilities with how to engage customers to opt into notifications they'd find useful
- Android users liked how Google would make automatic setting suggestions for them based on what notifications they clicked on/deleted.



# Customers actually want personalized notifications

- When customers viewed the prototype screens they made the assumption that the content was based on either their recent searches or their wish list.
- This likely contributed to how warmly received these notifications were.



In fact, notifications feeling like they aren't personalized lead to them being perceived negatively. Customers need to feel alerts are tailored to them AND they have control of when they stop.

“I don't wanna get notifications for lumber if I am not looking for lumber.”

“It would be nice if apps asked me: are you still interested in an item like this? Because a lot of times it is irrelevant to me because I already bought the item.”



# Notification Best Practices



# Adobe's Notification Best Practices

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- Give the user control
  - And don't abuse the trust the users put in your app by agreeing to receive notifications
  - "The more control over notifications I have, the more I will use them. Some notifications are very important, I want total control over notifications."
- Actionable notifications/Knowing when to stop
  - Notifications should be actionable as they should alert a user to something they need to do or pay attention to
  - Stop sending the notifications if users are not taking action on them
  - "I like it when apps ask me if notifications are useful or not."
- Customize the content
  - Use data to make the notifications relevant to users
  - This can be connected to timing or content
  - "Obviously if I am sleeping in my room and get a notification about a deal going on, I'd be pretty upset about that."



# Material Design (Google) Best Practices

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- The two most effective type of notifications are:
  - Communication from other users
  - Well-timed and informative task reminders
  - “I don’t think its that big of a bother to pop up every time you are in the store. But just a little bit of a reminder: I am here but you don’t have to use this.”
  - “You forget it’s an option, so it’s helpful to have a reminder. But it should be a few minutes after you get into the store, so you aren’t getting pinged every time you drive by.”
- When not to use notifications
  - Requests to rate an app
  - Messages that encourage the user to return to an app but provide no direct value
  - Operations not requiring user involvement (including errors that may recover without interaction)
  - Cross-promotion advertising
  - Notifications for an app the user has never opened
  - “Facebook has been sending me some weird notifications lately about friends birthdays and posts... I guess they are trying to lure me back in.”
- Be cognizant that the content of lock screen notifications may be seen by anyone because they are visible without unlocking a phone.



# Material Design (Google) Best Practices Continued

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- Users may interact with a notification
  - To navigate to a destination
  - To see an expanded view
  - To dismiss it
  - To control similar notifications in the future
- Transactional Notifications can help users
  - Enable human-to-human interaction
  - Function better in daily life
  - Monitor, control or resolve temporary device states



# Nielsen Norman Best Practices

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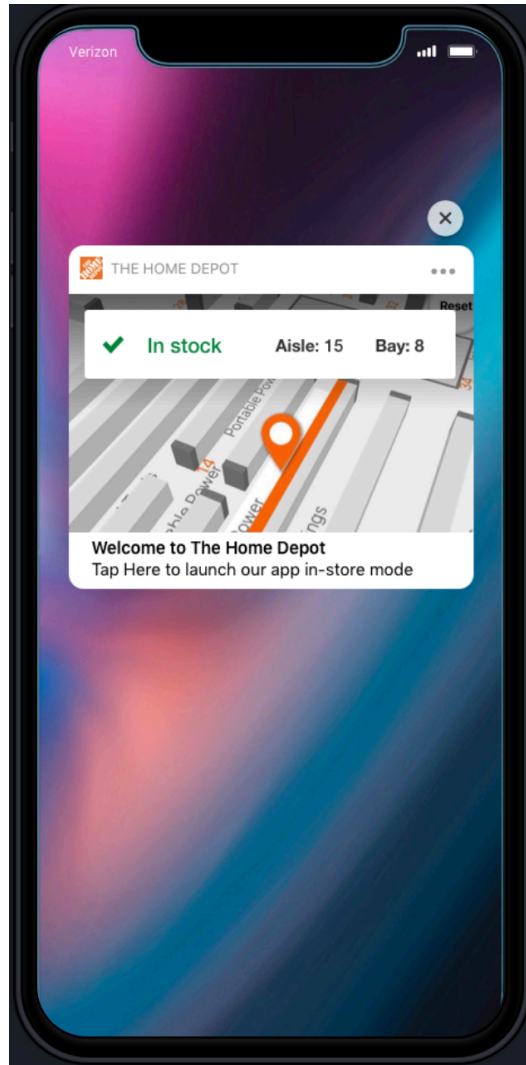
- Letting customers know what notifications will be about increases opt in rates
- “If I want to know about deals, I should be able to opt into that, otherwise an app should only send me things that have to do with me. I don’t want to be notified when its all... hey just wanted to let you know... I only want to be notified if it has something to do with my decision. Like order cancelled, refunded on way...”
- Send fewer notifications in a meaningful way
- “Some apps if they get too bothersome I take them off. Dollar General was spamming and overtaking the phone.”
- Provide relevant content aimed to inform and engage
- “I get a lot of targeted notifications that are completely irrelevant because I already bought the item.”
- Users should have control over frequency and relevance of notifications (but most users don’t customize their settings so the default should be agreeable and the system should learn what notifications that user likes and doesn’t)
- “I like notifications as long as I have control over it.”
- Allow users to edit notification preferences in the app
- “Seeing if it is in stock would only be helpful if I chose to get it. If it did it on it’s own I’d just be annoyed and ignore it.”



What did customers say about the screens?



# The map notification



- Customers were thrown off by not knowing what item this was the location for.
- A few customers thought this view behaved like Google Maps and would help them navigate to the item from the lock screen.
- “Is this like a smaller Google Maps? I’d like to be able to get directions like this so it isn’t taking up the whole screen and I can do something else.”
- In general, customers found the 2D version of the map much easier to use.
- “The flat map makes more sense to me.”



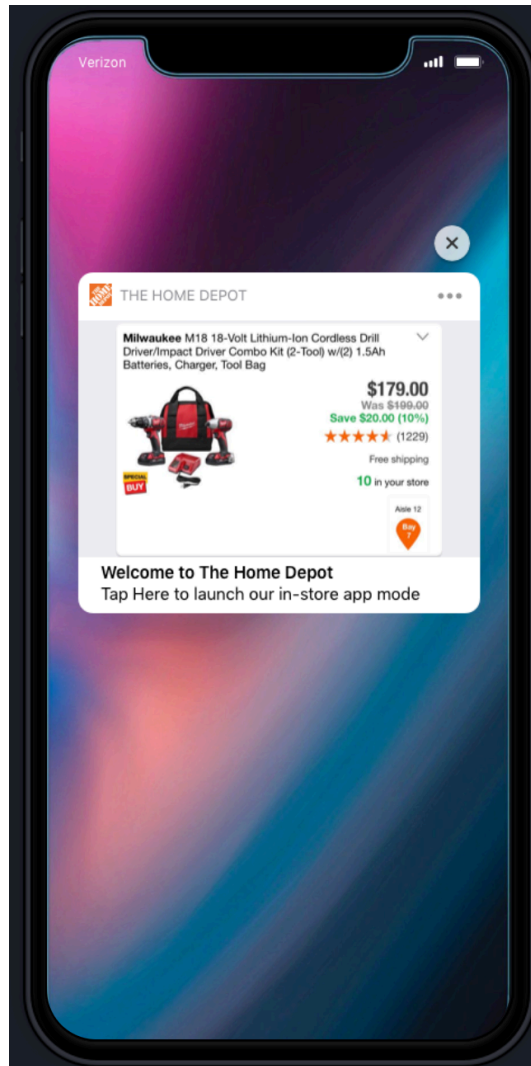
# Animated 3D map notification

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- Customers liked the animated version of the map less than the map itself, they felt like the animation was superfluous.
- “It’s zooming in too much to show me the overall view, I prefer the photo.”
- “The animation doesn’t really do anything for me.”
- “There is not really anything different from this screen as the other one we looked at.”
- “This is if you were to open the notification and go to the actual website. Its good but I don’t know what's in stock.”

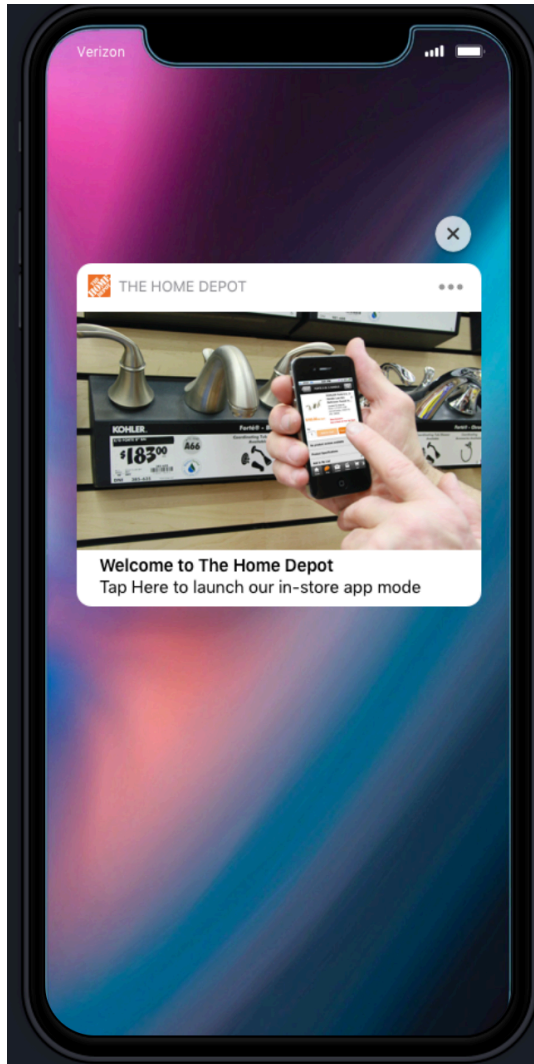
# The product notification



- This was the most well received content by customers IF it was personalized to them.
- “If I had this drill on my wish list, this would be the most useful notification to me.”
- “If they show something on my favorites list... that means I am in the market for it.”
- If not personalized: “This is kind of meaningless, it just looks like they are desperate for a sale.”
- They liked the idea the app would remember things they were looking at or had on their list and would help remind them to go look at it while they were at the store.
- “I want to be notified whenever something I look at goes on sale, especially if I saved it to my list. Even if it was only 5 or 10%.”
- Customers liked the fact the ratings were included
- “I love that the ratings are right there. It shows it’s a good product.”
- Customers liked how the aisle and bay were listed but they weren’t always seen right away. Make more prominent?
- “The other stores I might prefer a map because they aren’t labeled well, but with Home Depot I’d rather see the aisle and bay because they are labeled well.”



# The scanning feature notification



- Most customers weren't certain what message this was sending across.
- "Huh, is this a scanner? I am not quite sure what I am looking at here."
- "This looks like a product you have to ask the sales associate for... I'm guessing from how it looks they have a service where they go grab things for you."
- Some customers thought this looked like an advertisement.
- "I thought this was an advertisement at first, but it seems to just be showing me a feature of the app."
- Other customers thought this was telling them they could do self checkout from the app like at Sam's Club.



What kind of notifications did customers request?



# Out of stock item is back in stock

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- “If I am looking for something and it is out of stock, there should be an option to notify me when it is available.”
- “I’d like to see notifications when I go into the store that help me figure out if something I had wanted that was out of stock before was back in, or if something that was too expensive before went down in price.”
- “I’d want a notification if it had been out of stock and I had requested to have the info when it was back in stock.”



# Sale on item on list – no matter how small

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- “Any amount of sale is helpful, especially if its something I will buy anyways. Even 5% off is helpful.”
- “I’d like to see notifications of items I had been looking at going on sale.”
- “I like having alerts set up for sales when I know I am going to be having to buy a lot.”
- “The sale part of it... if it is tracking things on my list. If I am grabbing something else, if I found out something on my list is on sale... that would be super useful. That kind of info I don’t mind popping up every time. ”



# When an item ships and when it's delivered

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- “I wish I got more push notifications with package tracking. When I had a Playstation delivered recently I was at work but I wanted to be home when it got there because of the expense. So I had to go through USPS to text me updates.”
- “I like notifications about when my package is going to be delivered, so I don't have to dig up the confirmation email.”
- “I like the status of package notifications. There are a couple of steps I find unnecessary – like when the package arrives at the warehouse. I just want to know when it ships and when it is here.”





**Questions?**

