SUMMARY

The retention rate of new users has been declining over time. We needed to find new ways to engage them and encourage them to continue using the app, as acquiring new customers is expensive. If a significant number of new users churn quickly, it can be a waste of resources. We invest time, money, and effort into acquiring new users, so retaining them is vital to ensure sustained growth and profitability.

PROBLEM

The existing New User Welcome email program was very basic and lacked a clear strategy. As a result, it was ineffective in converting new users and bringing them back into the app.

SOLUTION

To address this challenge, we needed to build a program across multiple channels that would deliver a series of personalized and targeted marketing campaigns. We believed that by delivering relevant and timely messages to users in their preferred channels, we could encourage them to engage with the app and find more value in it.

STAKEHOLDERS

Internal

Project Lead:

Marketing Lead

Team:

- Marketing Designer
- Marketing Analyst
- CRM Manager

Cross-functional

Business Intelligence

Product

Engineering

External

Email Coding Agency

RESPONSIBILITIES

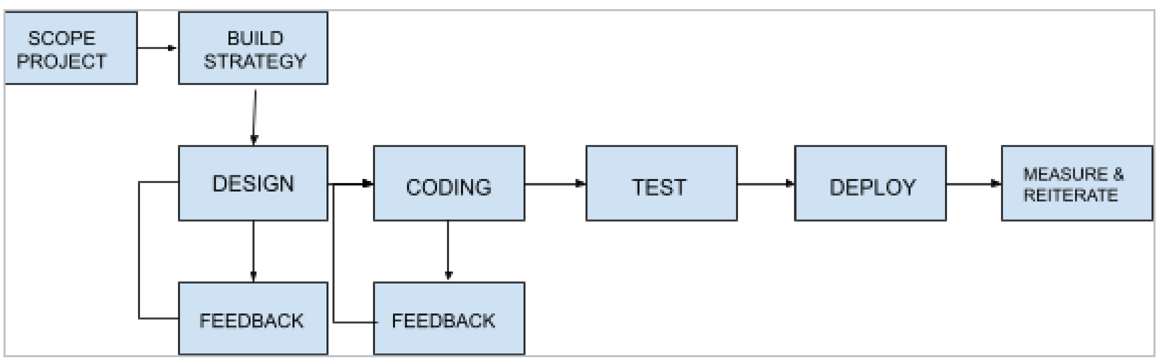
As the team leader, my responsibilities included:

- Overseeing and managing the project from start to finish

- Coordinating all aspects of the project, including building the strategy, writing the creative briefs, providing feedback on the designs
- Team management
- Monitoring and analyzing results, ensuring that the project is completed on time and it delivers the expected results.

Team Member	**Responsibilities**
Marketing Designer	Design the templates for all the creatives
Email Agency	Code the templates provided by the design team
CRM Manager	Execute the campaign
Marketing Analyst	Track conversions and compile campaign results

PROCESS OVERVIEW



STEPS

Step 1: Define the goal

First, I focused on defining the success parameters by tracking the existing churn rate over a specific period of time to have a baseline to measure success against. Once the baseline was identified, I proceeded to build a forecast based on the following:

1. *Historical data:* To ensure that the target is achievable based on past performance.
2. *Data trends and industry benchmarks* for churn rates: To ensure we set a realistic target based on the average churn rate in our industry.
3. *Our service offering*: Given our complex offering with various subscription plans, our product has a relatively high learning curve making it more difficult to retain new users, which could affect the target churn rate.

4. *Customer feedback:* Analyzing the feedback received from customers to understand their experience with our service and identify pain points that could contribute to churn to ensure we set a realistic and achievable target that addresses customer needs.

Based on all these factors, the goal I identified was a **10% decrease in new user churn.**

Step 2: Identify the success criteria

To be able to measure success, we needed to set specific success criteria to help us track progress toward achieving this goal.

As a next step, working with different cross-functional partners including Business Intelligence, UX, and Customer Support we researched qualitative and quantitative data from analytics tools, surveys, user feedback, and looked at how successfully retained users behaved earlier in the journey to identify correlations or trends that can help ascertain the key user action that has the highest correlation with long-term retention.

Based on this data, we were able to discover the key retention-driver action, as well as the timeframe, and the conclusion was that **users who performed this specific action once within their first 24 hours post-app install** had higher retention rates than those who performed other actions/sets of actions, or users who performed the same action within a longer timeframe.

Next, with support from the Business Intelligence team we identified the **success criteria: 50% of new users have to perform the key retention-driver action 1x, within 24 hours post-install in order to impact the overall churn rate.**

Step 3: Build alignment with cross-functional partners

With this knowledge in hand, we rallied cross-functional partner teams including Product, Engineering and UX, to collaborate on ideation and align on the optimal course of action to guide new users through a new onboarding journey focused on influencing users to perform the key retention action.

As a result of our brainstorming sessions, we identified several solutions. We prioritized them by considering the feasibility of each initiative using a scoring system that would look at: costs, effort required, timeline for implementation, and impact on the goal.

To manage communication throughout the project, we set up regular status meetings. We used project management tools to track progress and assign tasks and leveraged shared documentation that defined the project scope, objectives, and success metrics. We also set up regular check-ins to identify any roadblocks and work together towards eliminating them.

RISKS

Prompting new users immediately post-install to use an app feature that they have no interest in may frustrate or annoy them, resulting in a negative user experience and ultimately leading to higher churn rates.

To mitigate this risk, we opted for a more prudent approach. Instead of assuming that all users want to use this specific app feature, we would provide clear and easy-to-understand information about it and ask if they would like to learn more.

TIMELINE

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the goals and the success criteria were identified, I built the program strategy, including the channels involved (email, push notification, in-app and web banners, app inbox, and SMS), messaging cadence and frequency, reporting needs, audience segmentation. Working with my team we created the content for each channel, wrote the creative briefs for all the assets required across all channels, as well as the experimentation agenda, ensuring that the campaigns were personalized and targeted to the specific needs of each user segment while staying aligned with the overall campaign strategy. Each team member played a critical role in executing the project successfully.

EXECUTION

Once the campaigns were developed and reviewed, we launched them across all channels according to the following schedule:

1. Initial rollout to 10% of the audience to mitigate risks
2. Ramped up to 50% for a month for measurement
3. Ramped up to 100% after incrementality was measured and understood, launching a new experiment every two weeks.

RESULTS

The impact of the project was significant. Our campaigns generated a 25% increase in new user engagement and a 15% decrease in churn rates among the at-risk segment we identified vs the holdout audience (users who did not receive the campaign).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In the retrospective of the project, we identified several issues:

- Not enough time was allocated for campaign development and testing, especially considering that we relied on an external agency for some project deliverables. As a result of the external partner not delivering on time, there were delays in execution compared to the original timeline.
- These delays impacted the overall project timeline and pressured the team to execute campaigns within a shorter timeframe than originally planned.

LEARNINGS

In reflecting on our project's journey and the valuable lessons we've learned, there are several key areas for improvement:

1. **Allocate more time and resources to the planning phase** to anticipate potential obstacles and devise robust contingency plans.
2. Place a stronger emphasis on effective communication and collaboration within the team. Although we had regular team meetings and communication channels in place, there were instances where miscommunication occurred, leading to delays and misunderstandings. To mitigate this, we need to **implement more structured communication protocols**, encourage proactive sharing of information, and foster an environment where team members feel comfortable expressing concerns and seeking clarification.
3. **Prioritize stakeholder engagement and feedback** throughout the project's lifecycle and establish mechanisms for regular feedback loops, seeking input from stakeholders at key milestones and incorporating their perspectives into our decision-making processes. This

approach would enhance project alignment with stakeholder expectations and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.

4. Adopt a more **rigorous evaluation and monitoring framework** for measuring project progress and success and implement regular progress assessments, performance indicators, and mechanisms for course correction, ensuring we stay on track and promptly address any deviations from the project's objectives. While we had monitoring mechanisms in place, they could have been more robust and adaptable to changing circumstances.