

Designing Shipt's In-app Notification Center.

From fragmented channels to a unified, member-first system

When I took on the Communications space...

Our notifications were unreliable for sending Order Status updates

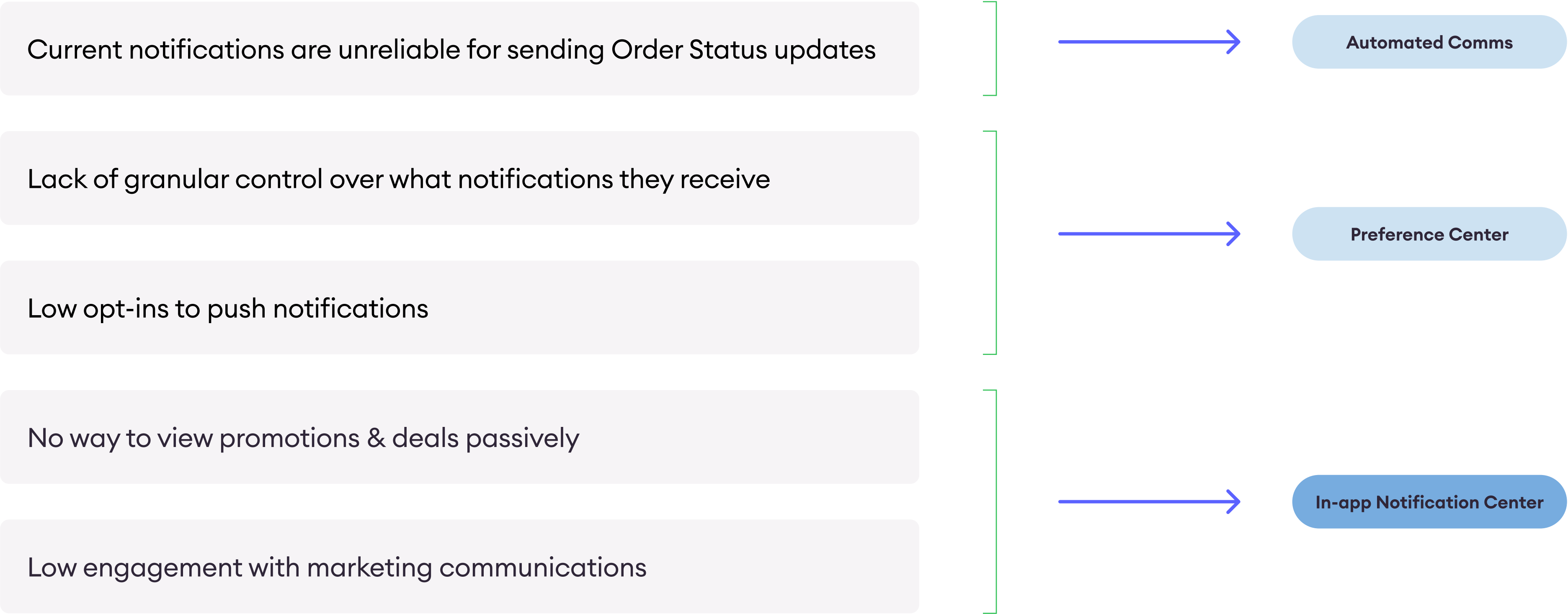
Lack of granular control over what notifications they receive

Low opt-ins to push notifications

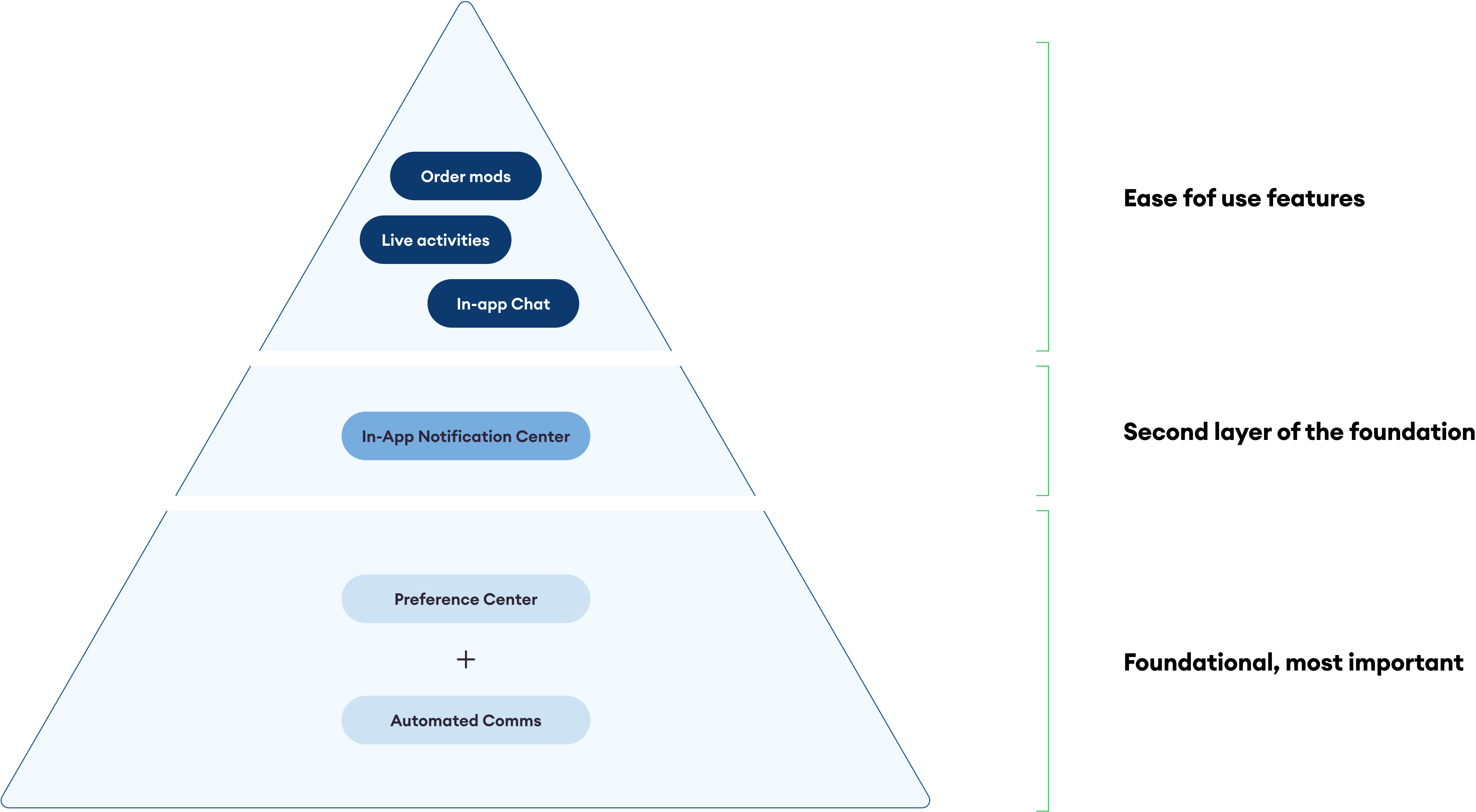
No way to view promotions & deals passively

Low engagement with marketing communications

What was the solution?

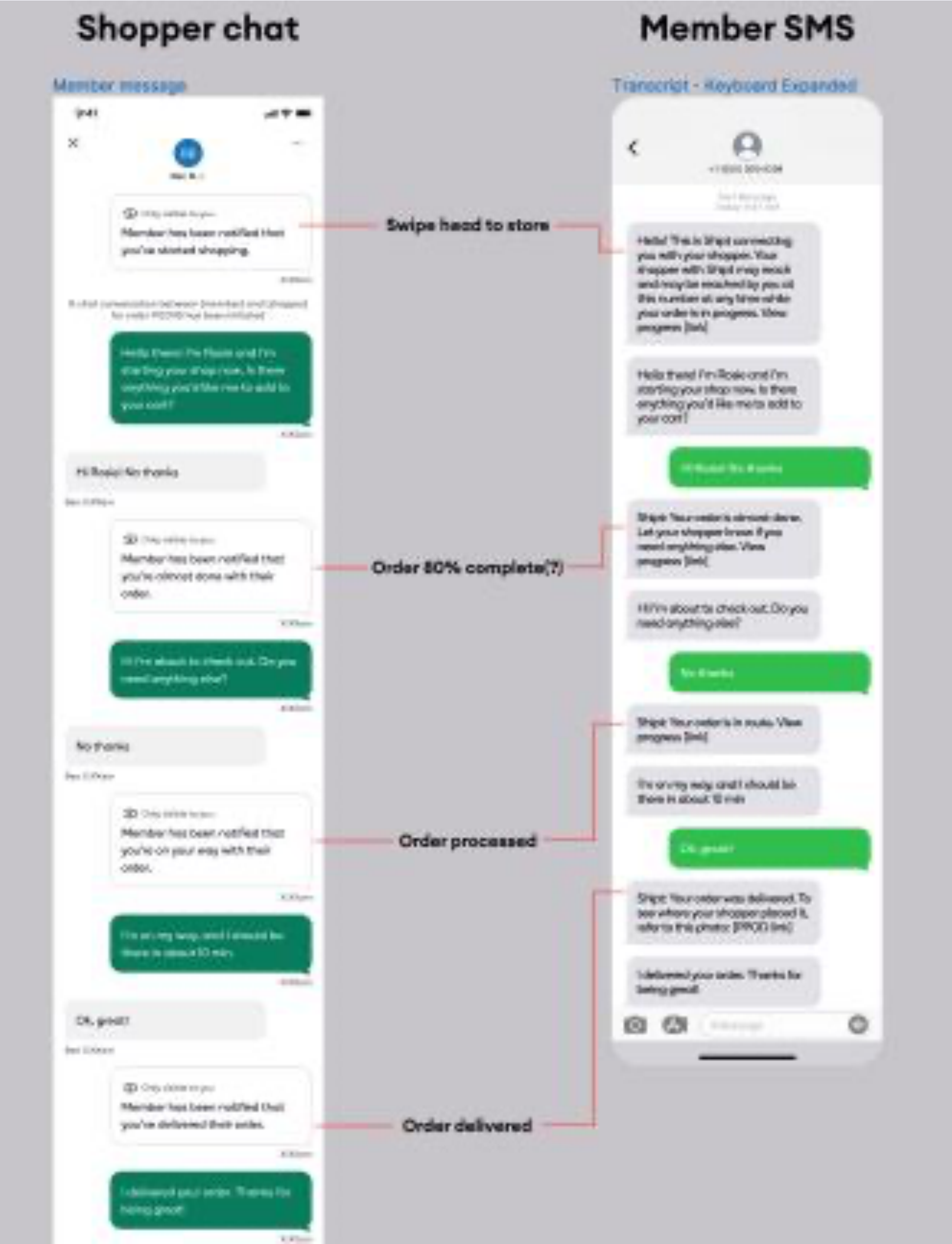


Prioritization



GETTTING UP TO SPEED

Automated Comms



GETTTING UP TO SPEED

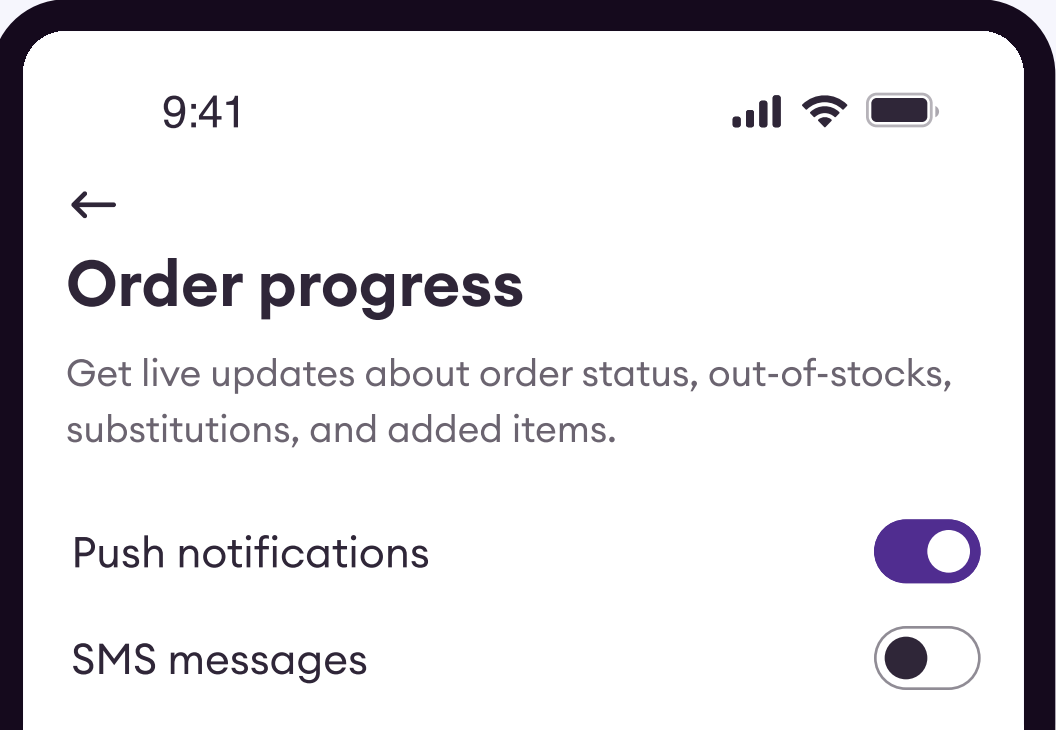
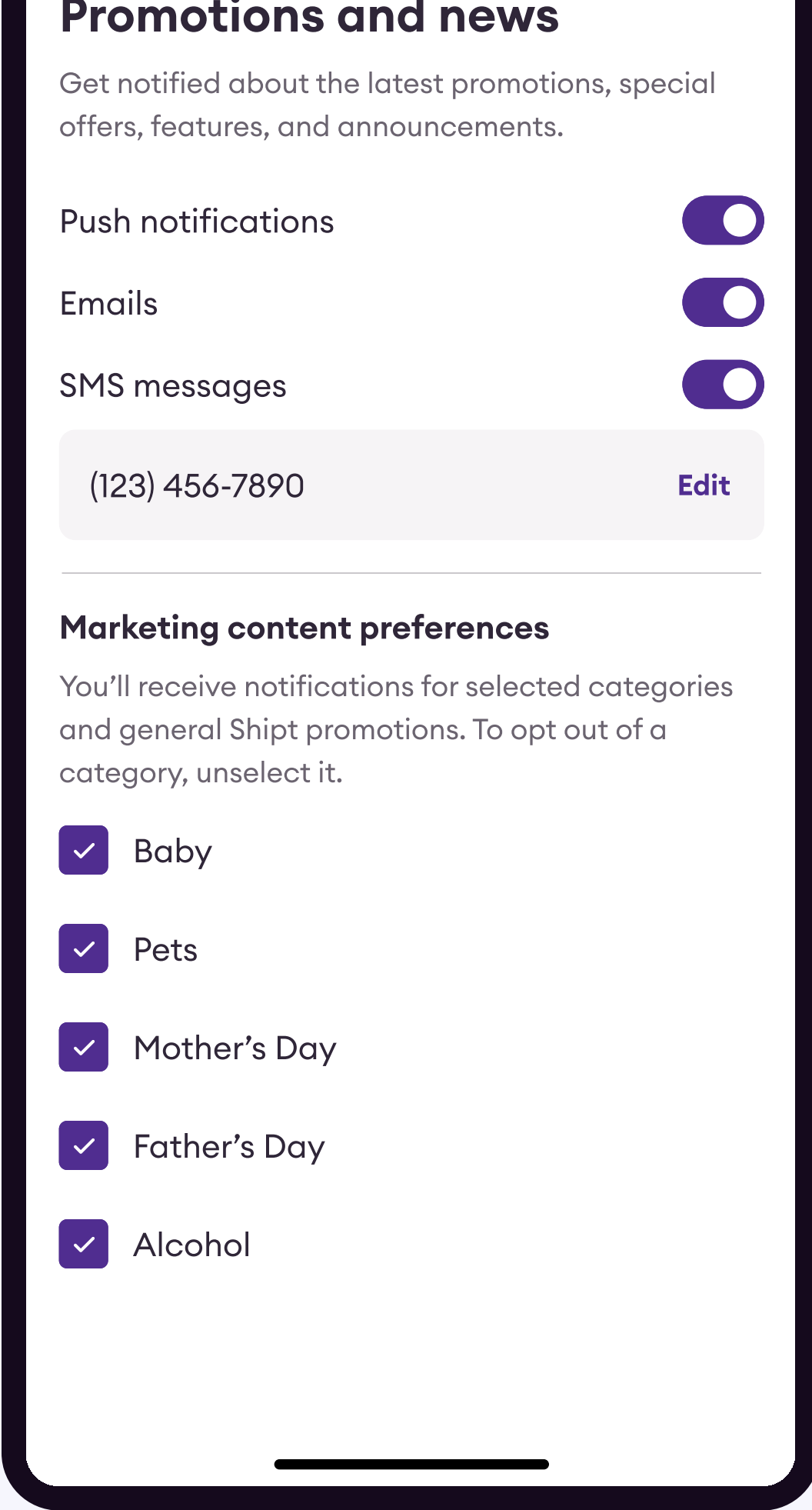
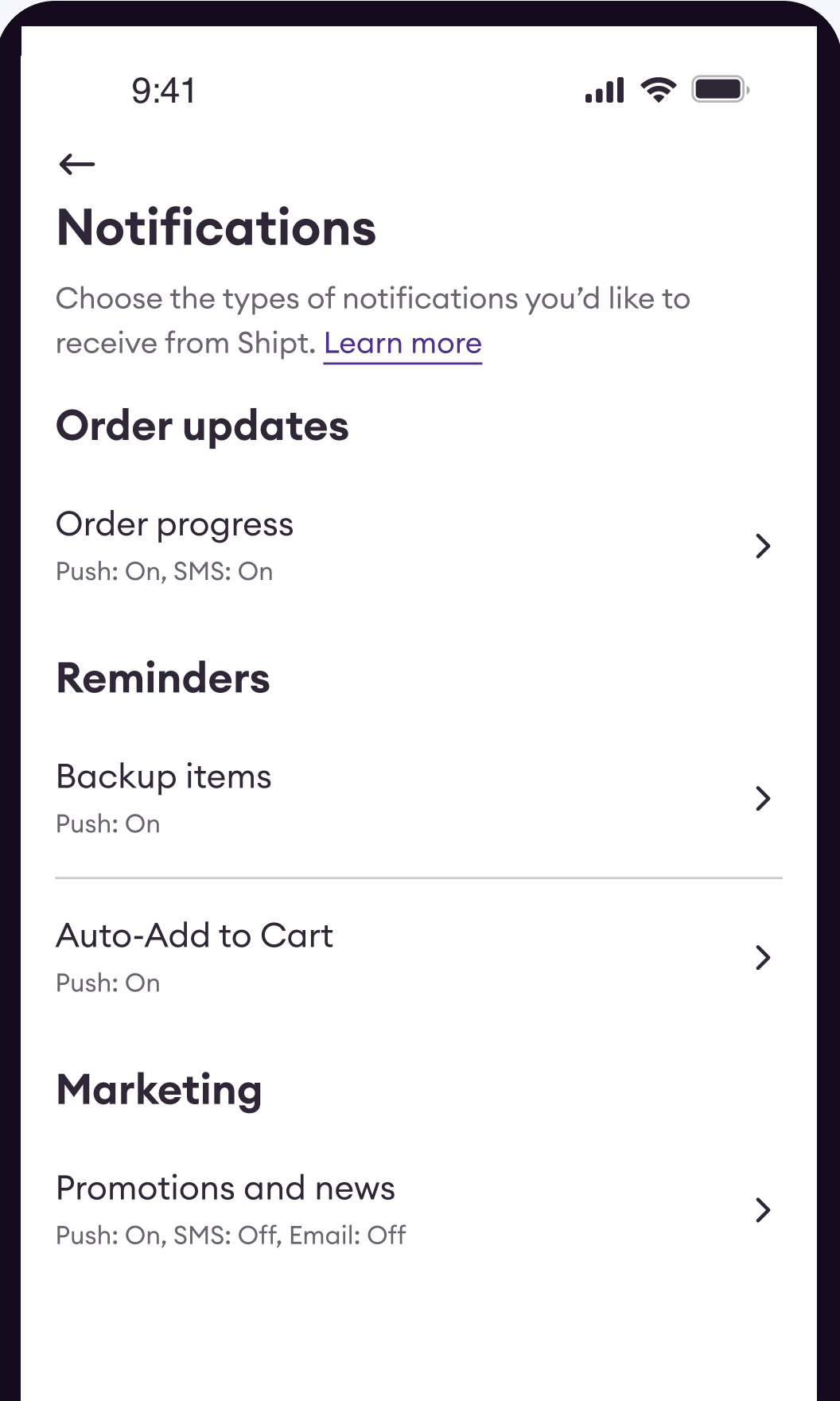
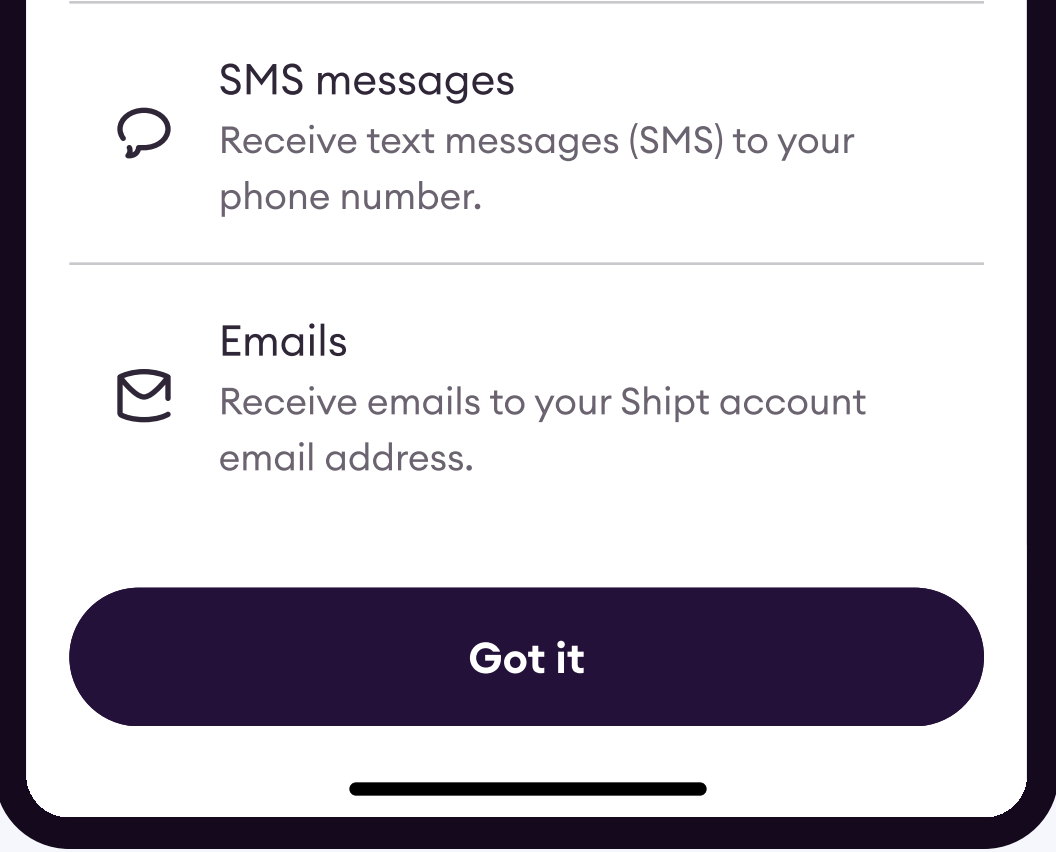
Notification Preference Center drove meaningful engagement

+71%

increase in e-mail CTR

+106.19%

increase in Push Open Rate.



In-App Notification Center

Why did we need this new channel? What was wrong with the existing channels?

- Low opt-ins to marketing related push notification
- **Inbox saturation:** too many e-mails go unnoticed in user's inbox due to over saturation. Additionally e-mail engagement is also low
- Shipt Internal Marketing Email Metrics:
 - Sent = 239.3 MM
 - Delivery rate = 99.30%
 - **Open rate = 55.3%**
 - **CTR = 1.10%**
- **SMS fatigue:** SMS is intrusive. At Shipt, we already use SMS for shopper comms, so sending more notifications via SMS can feel like a lot for our users. SMS also has limited reach, and need explicit opt-ins. Finally, it is also costly to send SMS.
- **No standard way / centralized location** to inform members of new features, retailers, news, announcements, etc.

In-App Notification Center

What is it?

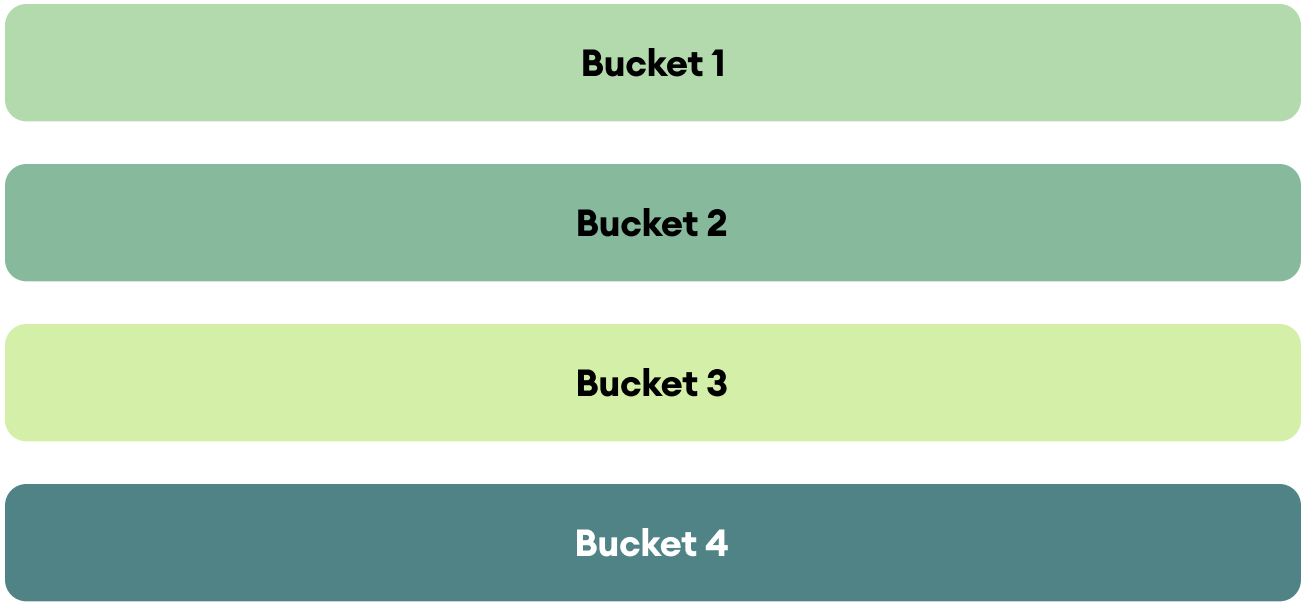
An In-App Notification center is a non-intrusive way to communicate with users without the challenges posed by emails, push notifications, or SMS messages.

Benefits of a Notification Center

- **Maximized reach** with no dependency on opt-ins or subscribes, can view from app and web
- **Non-intrusive updates** provides the user with a level of control and reduces annoyance of constant notifications
- **Long term engagement** by providing users will have a historical, organized feed of information to refer back to that is filled with Shipt specific updates
- **Contextualization** linking seamlessly within the app that other channels can't provide
- **Cost-effective** operational savings

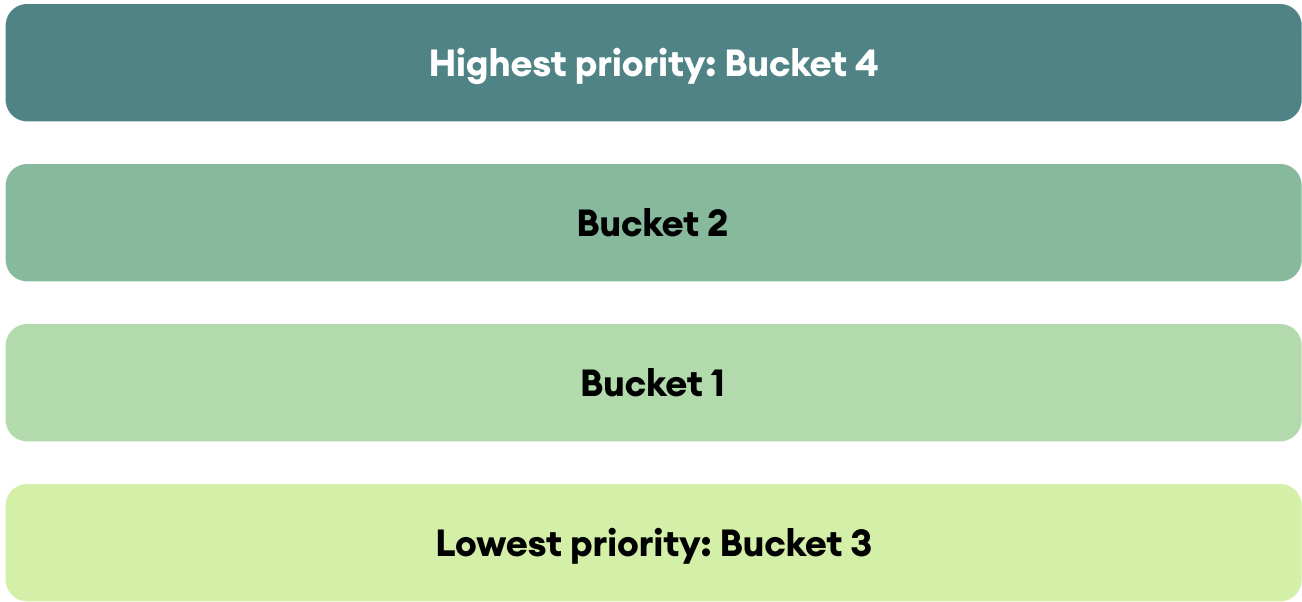
The Design Approach

This wasn’t just about creating a feed. We needed a framework: one that defines what belongs here, how it’s prioritized, and how it looks so any team can plug in consistently.



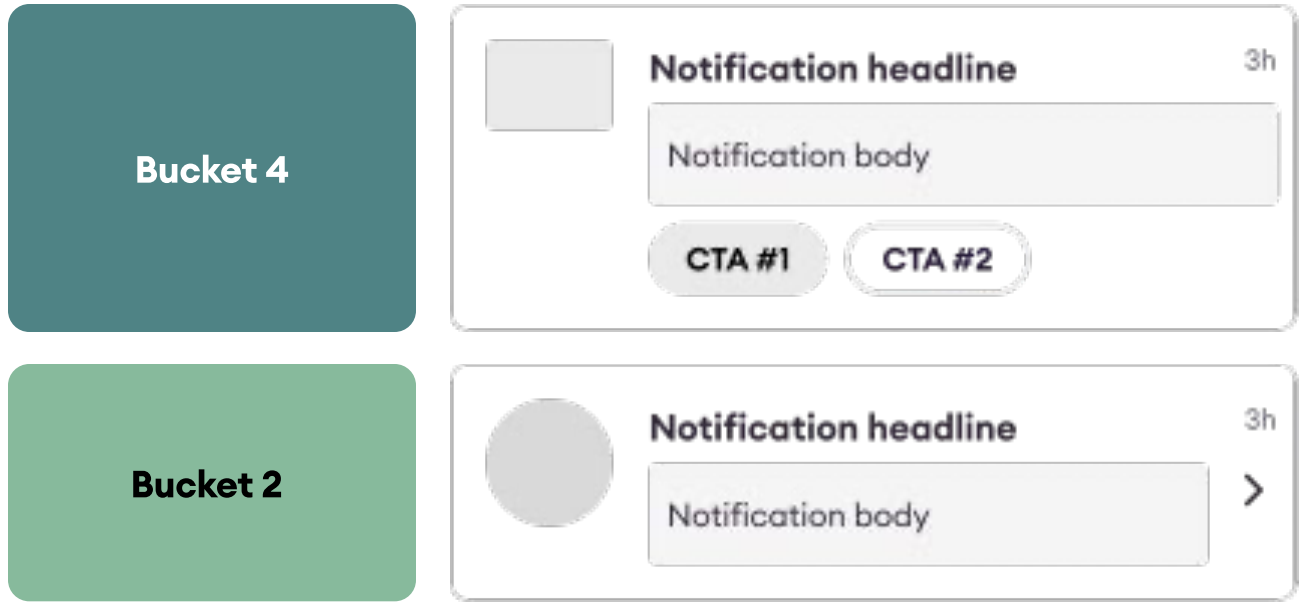
Step 1: Listing use cases and organizing them in buckets

We started with listing out all types of notifications we could have in this space. We did this by setting up a brainstorm session with Product & Marketing. We then grouped these notifications into buckets.



Step 2: Ranking the Buckets

We then organized these notifications into different buckets, which we arranged from most to least important.



Step 3 (WIP): Creating templates

The goal is to build a consistent notification component whose functionality changes based on the type of notification itself. So in the future, when any team wants to add a notification in this space, they figure out which bucket it falls into, and follow the established design template.

Notification Audit

Existing notifications (through other channels that fit well within the notification center)

Exisiting notifications and their sources/owned teams

| Notification | Frequency (how often do we send these today?) | Proposed Duration in Notification Center | Is it time sensitive? | Is it personal? | Existing channel | Example |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---------|
| Delivery Tracker | | | | | | |
| Delivery tracker would persist on the top of the D2M if there's an active order and would update with the status accordingly and link to the order page | available for all users who have an active order | While order is active | Yes | Yes | In-App experience & links to web map view | |
| Lifecycle - Iterable (triggered) | | | | | | |
| Credit about to expire | Triggered for qualifying audience | 7 days (push notification 7 days before expiration) could send another on the last day | Yes | Yes | Email, Push | |
| Post First Order Follow-up | Triggered for qualifying audience | 2 weeks | No | Yes | Email, Push | |
| Retailer Hodge (all retailers) | Triggered for qualifying audience | 2 weeks | Kind of | Yes | Email, Push | |
| Abandoned Cart | Triggered for qualifying audience | 2 weeks or until the user places the order. If they add another item to cart and still do not purchase, 2 weeks starts over again | Yes | Yes | Email, Push | |
| Ad-hoc - Iterable | | | | | | |
| New Feature announcements | Quarterly product newsletter, ad hoc app modals | 2 weeks | No | No | Email and sometimes in app modals | |
| Promos / campaigns (ad hoc) | Ad hoc | duration of promo | Yes (can be) | Yes (can be) | Email, SMS, push | |
| Upcoming/Current Order - Push Notification Sender Service (eng) | | | | | | |
| Back Up Hodge - Select substitutions | Every order | Every order where applicable prior to the shopper the order then disappear once the order is no longer active | Yes | Yes | Push | |
| Weekly delivery - Auto ATC | Weekly | since you would get a notification for the every week and I only only fire for a day, does this make sense to even be in here? | Yes | Yes | Push, email | |
| Post-order - Aviator? | | | | | | |
| Rate your delivery / shopper | Every order | 2 weeks or until member rates their delivery, shopper users are forced into this experience today and I quote every time they open the app until they complete | No | No | In-App experience/Push | |
| In-App (Modals and Banners) | | | | | | |
| C360 On-branding notification Highlighting Shipt's Value | Once | 2 weeks | Business critical | Yes | Email/Banner | |
| New Retailer Announcement | Once | 2 weeks | Business critical | No | Banner | |
| Operational: Inclement Weather & store hours | Once | 2 weeks | Yes | No | Banner | |

New notifications (that fit well within the notification center)

new notifications

| Notification | Frequency (how often do we send these?) | Duration | Is it time sensitive? | Is it personal? | Existing channel |
|--|---|---|------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Currently Prompted via In-App Experience but no notification exists | | | | | |
| Personal Shopper | When you rate your shopper 5 stars | one and done | Yes | Yes | Landing page within Shipt prompt after rating |
| Tip your shopper | If you don't rate | 2 weeks or until the user tips their shopper | No (should it be yes?) | No | Post order in app experience and confirmation email |
| Confirm / review personal details | When we know details are incorrect | 2 weeks or if the user updates/reviews their personal information | No | Yes | Current preference center |
| Turn on Device Notifications | When device notifications are off | 2 weeks or until they turn on their notifications, then display every 10 days | No | | DM |
| No Current In-App Prompt or Notification | | | | | |
| Product Reviews | | | | | |
| Item notification approval flow (TBD if this is the right place since we will be sending automated updates and shopper will reach out not sure where approval flow looks best or where it's located) | | | | | |
| "Special Moments" - Birthdays (purchase party supplies, is it someone's birthday?, Shipt anniversary) | | | | | |

The bucketing exercise

Tier 1 - All things Orders

Time-sensitive, tied to a current order or require immediate user action. These should appear at the top of the inbox and/or be pinned until resolved.

- Active Order
- Choosing a sub for upcoming order/s
- Previous order actions: rate Shopper/ Shipt, tip shopper
- Item Notification Approval flow (new notification)
- Operational update: Inclement weather

Notes
These impact core member experiences and should be prioritized above all else

Tier 2 - Business critical/ Actionable

Requiring the user to take action soon prompting to place a new order or ladders up to a enterprise KPI/initiative (C360, order volume & cross shop)

- Credit expiring
- C360 onboarding
- New retailer announcement
- Abandon Cart

Notes

Tier 3 - High Value/Time-Sensitive Promotional

Limited time offers or incentives to drive conversion or order volume. Still time sensitive but not related to an active/recent order

- Global promo - \$10 off a \$75 order (all retailers)
- Retailer promo/merch promo ex - \$5 off target snacks
- Buy again on sale

Notes
Ad hoc notifications that are promotional based at any level but campaigns are passive prompting discovery so in Tier 5

Tier 4 - Informational / Passive Updates/ Non urgent actionable

General announcements to increase engagement with new updates

- Turn on notifications for real time updates
- Auto ATC
- Product feature announcements
- Review contact details
- Operational update: Store hours

Notes

Tier 5 - Product & retailer discovery

Helpful nudges based on past user behavior

- Retailer nudge (not new retailers but others in your area)
- New products within a retailer
- Product recommendations based on past purchased
- Marketing campaigns prompting discovery - special moments
- Post First order nudge
- Product reviews

Notes

Goals of Research

- 1. Raw research** using moderated interviews with the following objectives:
 - a. Identify user expectations around in-app notifications center - functionality, design, entry points.
 - b. Assess usability and clarity of the proposed design.
 - c. Understand how the proposed design compares to competitors.
 - d. Understand customization and control preferences for notification delivery.
- 2.** Validate the priority we identified with our users - does their mental model of what notifications are important align with ours? This was done via a **MaxDiff** study.
- 3.** If we were to have filters in the notification center, what groupings would make sense to our users? Specifically, through a **card sort** exercise, we wanted to:
 - a. Identify how members group various notification content
 - b. Identify how members define and name different notification categories

Research insights

1.

Content & Prioritization

- Most valuable content: Ongoing order updates, financial incentives & urgent /very relevant notifications.
- Lowest value: Passive, generic engagement (not time sensitive).
- Recommendations:
 - Prioritize order-critical updates and financial incentives at the top of the feed.
 - Differentiate urgency through visual styling (icons, highlights, urgency cues).

4.

Features & Controls

- Users want control to reduce clutter and tailor relevance.
- Desired actions: delete/dismiss, adjust preferences, see more/less of a type, occasional “remind me later.”
- Allow filtering or muting by category.

2.

Filter nomenclature & Categories

- Eight categories emerged, but with overlap (e.g., reminders that are also deals).
- Recommendations:
 - Main filters - Orders, Promotions, For You, Other.
 - Merge weaker/overlapping categories (Account, General, Reminders, Updates) into a single “Other/Activity” tab.

5.

Placement & Access

- Top right corner of the homepage is the dominant expectation (aligned with common app patterns).

3.

Design & Layout

- Users want feeds to feel simple, scannable, and uncluttered.
- Design principles:
 - Bold headers + concise text for clarity.
 - Icons/subtle imagery for quick recognition.
 - Consistent spacing to improve scannability and reduce cognitive load.
 - Visual differentiation for urgency and importance.

Pivot after research

These insights made us rethink our initial 5-bucket model

- First, ignoring chronology would have broken user expectations – members are used to feeds that balance recency with importance.
- Second, having separate templates per bucket would have created clutter and inconsistency. Research told us users want some hierarchy, but in a way that feels simple and consistent.
- So we pivoted: simplifying down to 3 broader buckets, balancing priority with recency, and unifying the design system so the Notification Center feels cohesive and easy to scan.



The Updated Buckets

Tier 1 - Upcoming, Current or Past Order

Description:

Time-sensitive, tied to a current order or require immediate user action. These should appear at the top of the inbox and/or be pinned until resolved.

Always at the top - Updates to the delivery tracker
(dynamic banner that updates as the shop progresses)

Choosing a sub for upcoming order/s

Previous order actions: rate Shopper/Shipt, tip shopper (new notification), rate an item (new notification)

Item Notification Approval flow (new notification)

Operational update: Inclement weather

Tier 2 Business critical/Actionable

Description:

Requiring the user to take action soon prompting to place a new order or ladders up to a enterprise KPI/initiative (C360 order volume & cross shop)

Credit expiring

Abandon Cart

C360 onboarding

New retailer announcement

High Value/Time-Sensitive Promotional

Description:

Limited time offers or incentives to drive conversion or order volume. Still time sensitive but not related to an active/recent order

Global promo - \$10 off a \$75 order (all retailers)

Retailer promo/merch promo ex - \$5 off target snacks

Buy again on sale

Tier 3 Informational / Passive Updates/ Non urgent actionable

Description

General announcements to increase engagement with new updates

Turn on notifications for real time updates

Auto ATC

Product feature announcements

Review contact details

Operational update: Store hours

Product & retailer discovery

Description

Helpful nudges based on past user behavior

Retailer nudge (not new retailers but others in your area)

New products within a retailer

Product recommendations based on past purchased

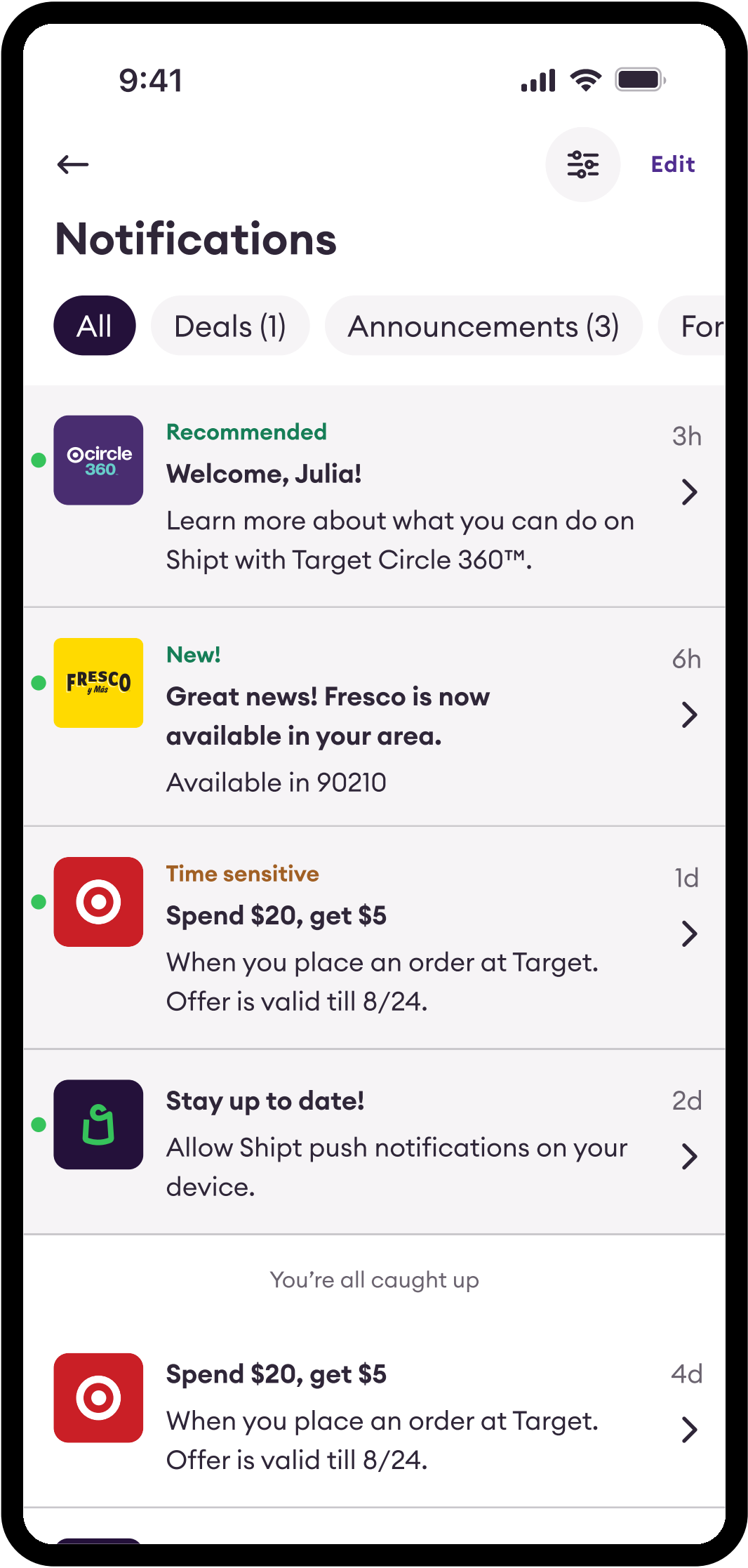
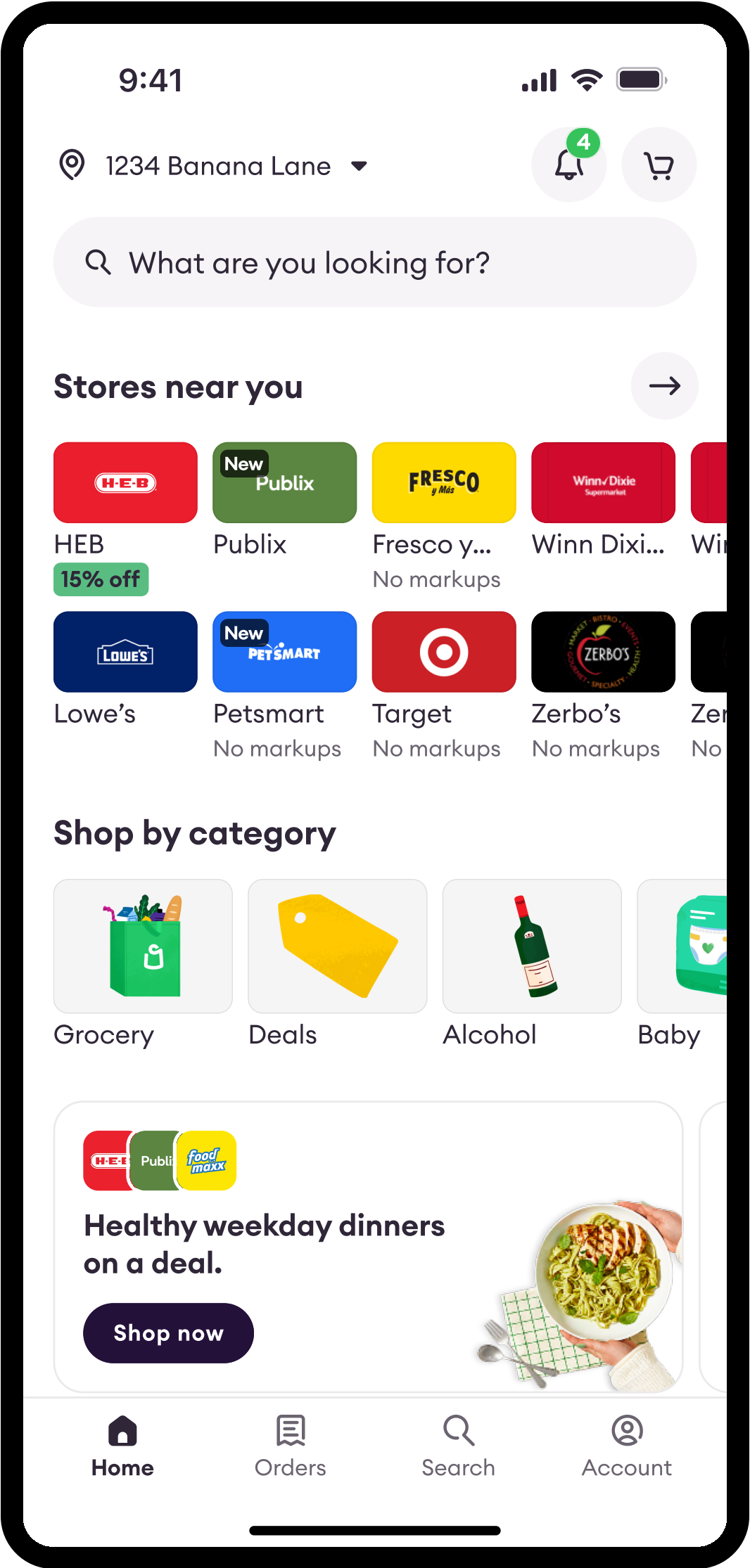
Marketing campaigns prompting discovery

Post First order nudge

Designs

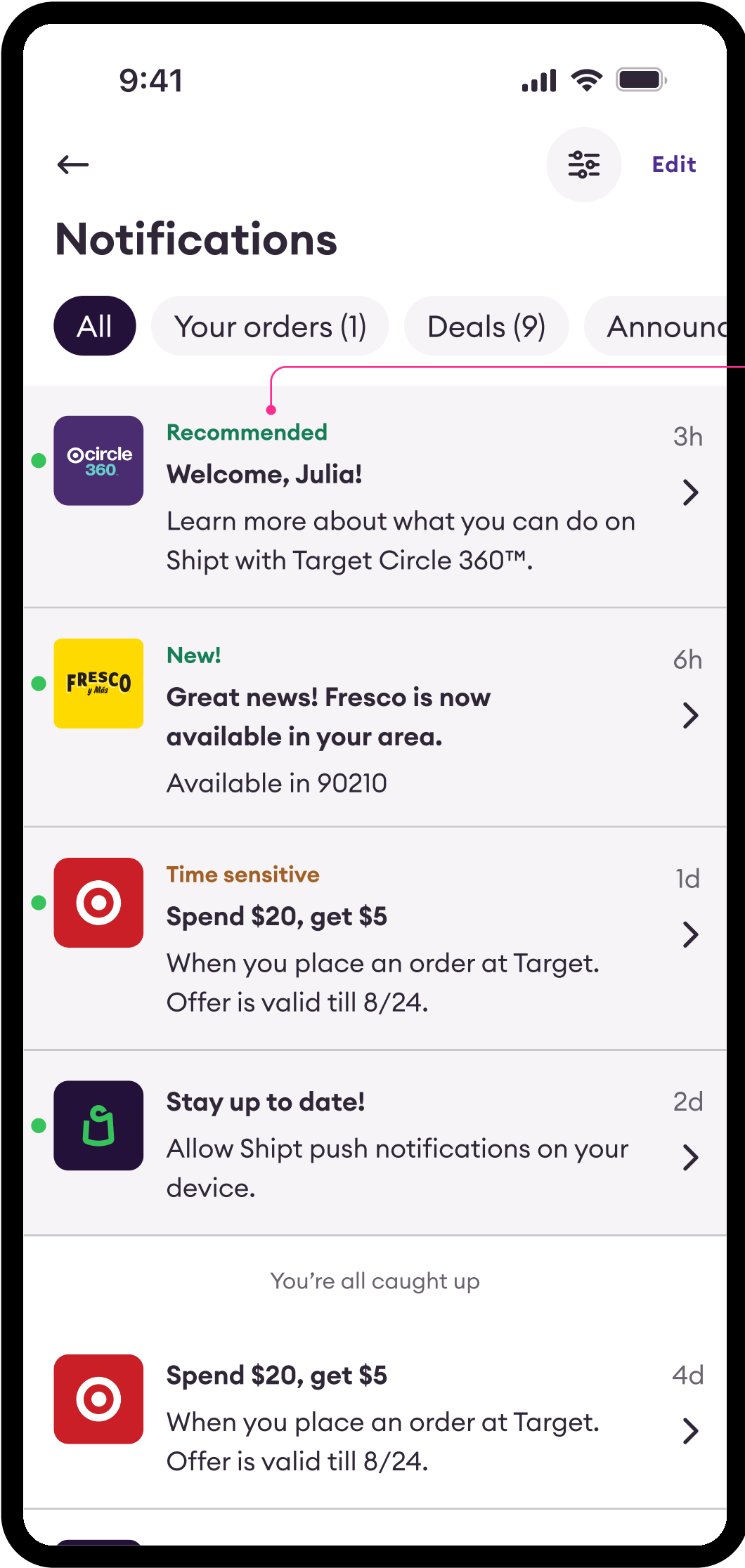
A new entry point

In-line with user expectations, we placed an entry point in the homepage of the Shipt app.



Creating a visual hierarchy

We afforded notifications within this space to be tagged based on how important notifications were. We aligned the colors of these tags to system wide patterns for consistency.



Tags to create visual hierarchy

Active orders

For when the member has an active order, we designed a dynamic notification that shows members their order status in real-time.

