Designing Shipt's
In-app Notification Center.

From fragmented channels to a unified, member-first system

The current communication experience with Shipt is **unreliable** for delivering time-sensitive order updates leading to users being dissatisfied with their orders, **missed opportunities for app engagement.**

Specifically...

Current notifications are 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?

Current notifications are 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

Automated Comms

Preference Center

In-app Notification Center

Prioritization

Order mods

Live activities

In-app Chat

In-App Notification Center

Preference Center

+

Automated Comms

Ease fof use features

Second layer of the foundation

Foundational, most important

Automated Comms

Shopper chat   **Member SMS**

Member message   Transcript - Keyboard Expanded
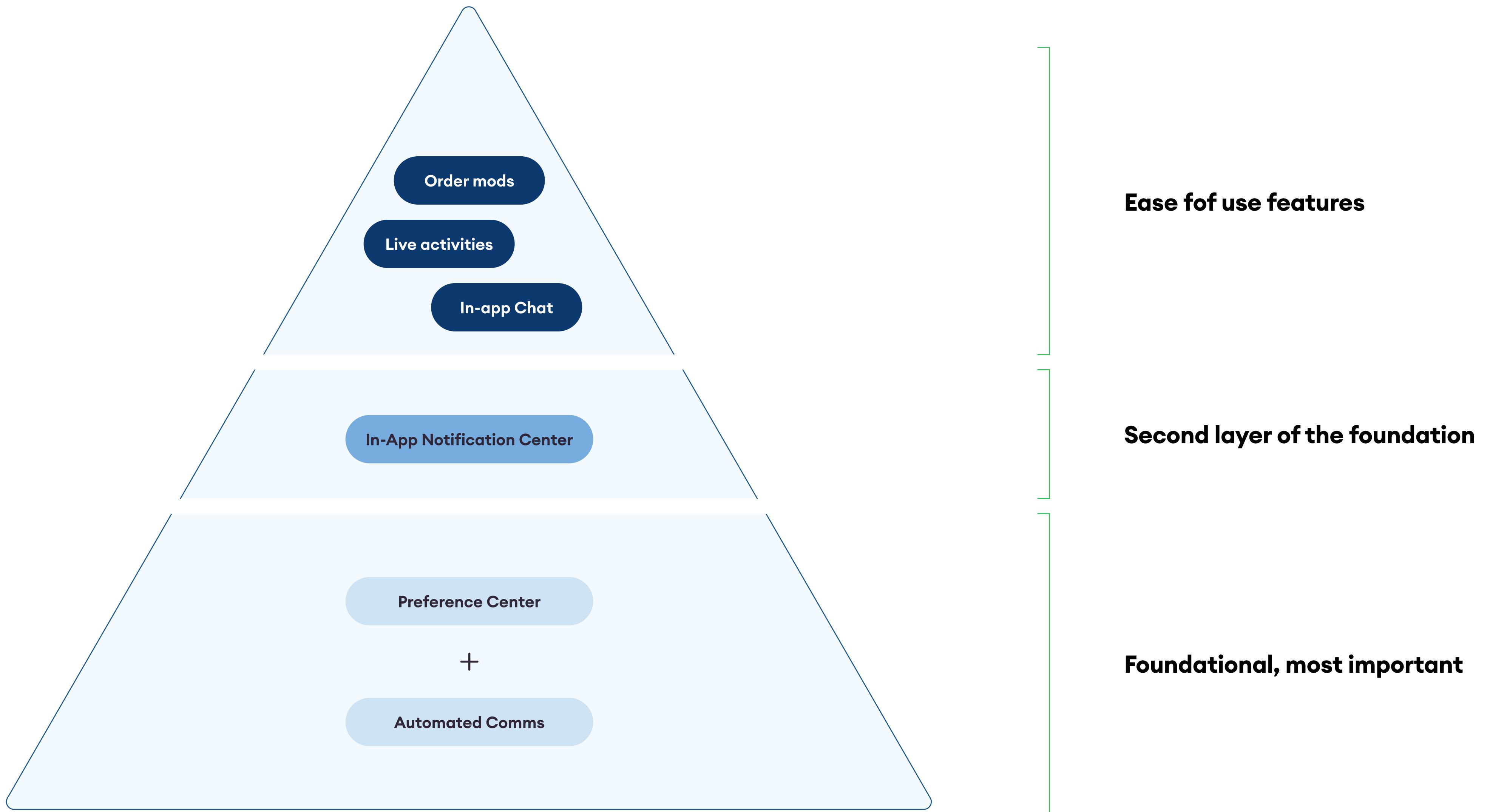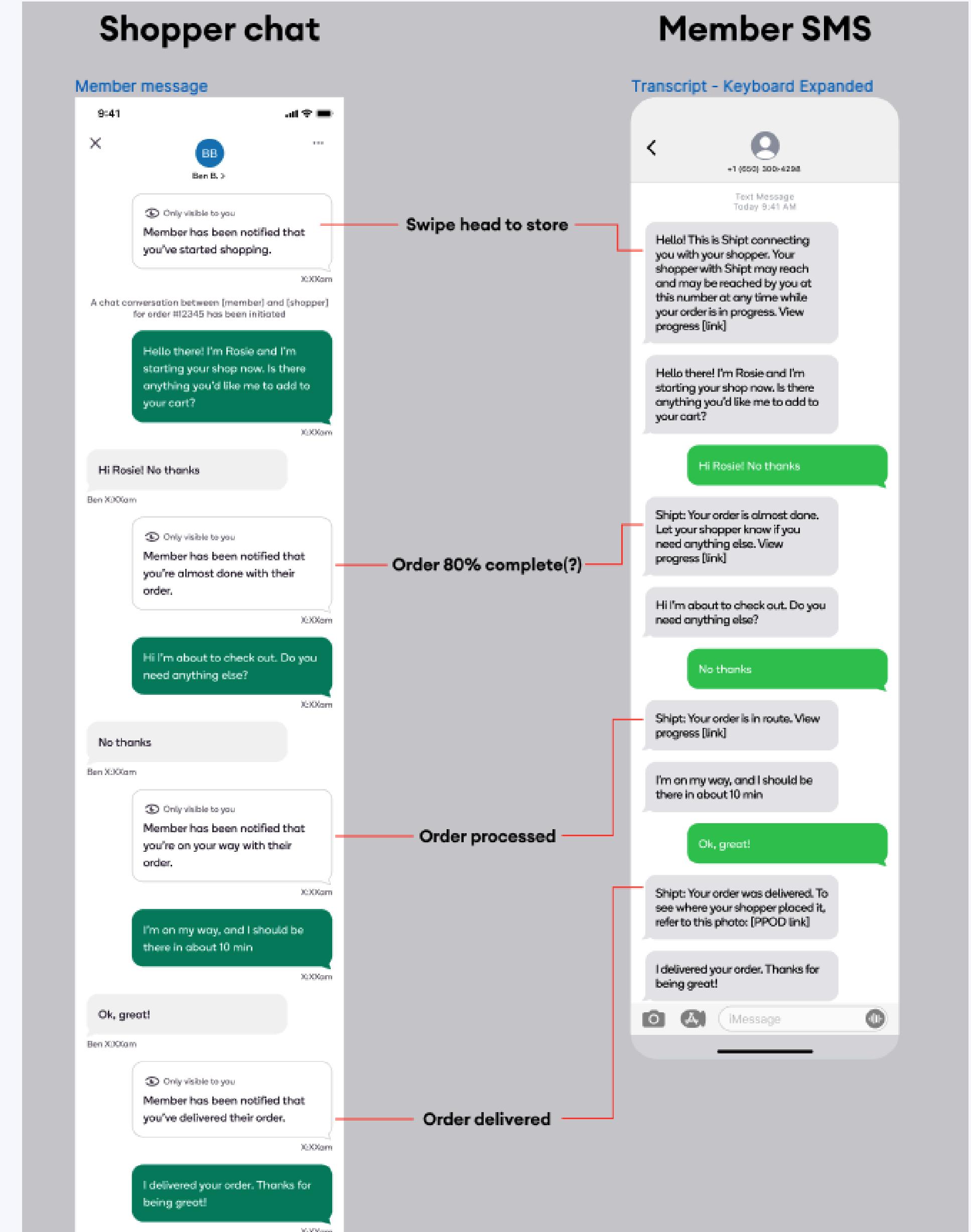
- Swipe head to store
- Order 80% complete(?)
- Order processed
- Order delivered

Notification Preference Center
## drove meaningful engagement.

My role: Lead designer

+71%

increase in e-mail click through rate

+106.19%

increase in Push Open rate

SMS messages
Receive text messages (SMS) to your phone number.

Emails
Receive emails to your Shipt account email address.

Got it

9:41

←

Notifications

Choose the types of notifications you'd like to receive from Shipt. Learn more

Order updates

Order progress
Push: On, SMS: On ›

Reminders

Backup items
Push: On ›

Auto-Add to Cart
Push: On ›

Marketing

Promotions and news
Push: On, SMS: Off, Email: Off ›

Promotions and news

Get notified about the latest promotions, special offers, features, and announcements.

Push notifications ⬤

Emails ⬤

SMS messages ⬤

(123) 456-7890   Edit

Marketing content preferences

You'll receive notifications for selected categories and general Shipt promotions. To opt out of a category, unselect it.

☑ Baby

☑ Pets

☑ Mother's Day

☑ Father's Day

☑ Alcohol

9:41

←

Order progress

Get live updates about order status, out-of-stocks, substitutions, and added items.

Push notifications ⬤

SMS messages ○

In-App Notification Center

What was the Problem?

- 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.

Bucket 1	
Bucket 2	
Bucket 3	
Bucket 4	

Highest priority: Bucket 4
Bucket 2
Bucket 1
Lowest priority: Bucket 3

Bucket 4	Notification headline · 3h
	Notification body
	CTA #1 CTA #2
Bucket 2	Notification headline · 3h
	Notification body
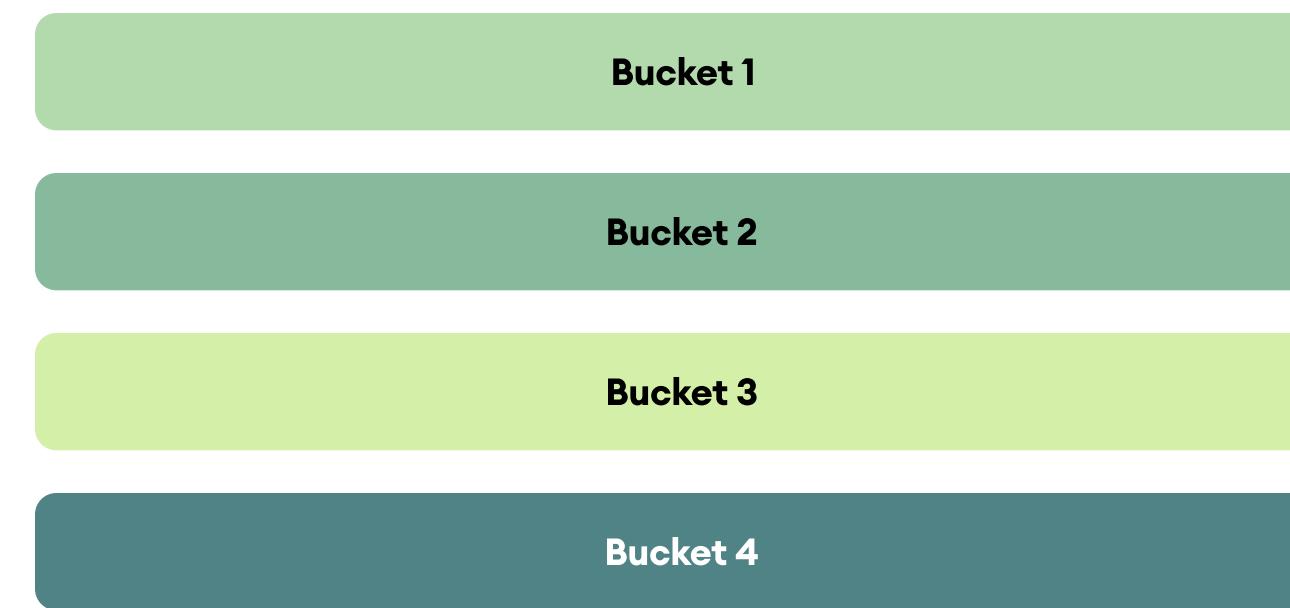
Step 1: Listing use cases and organizing them in buckets

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.
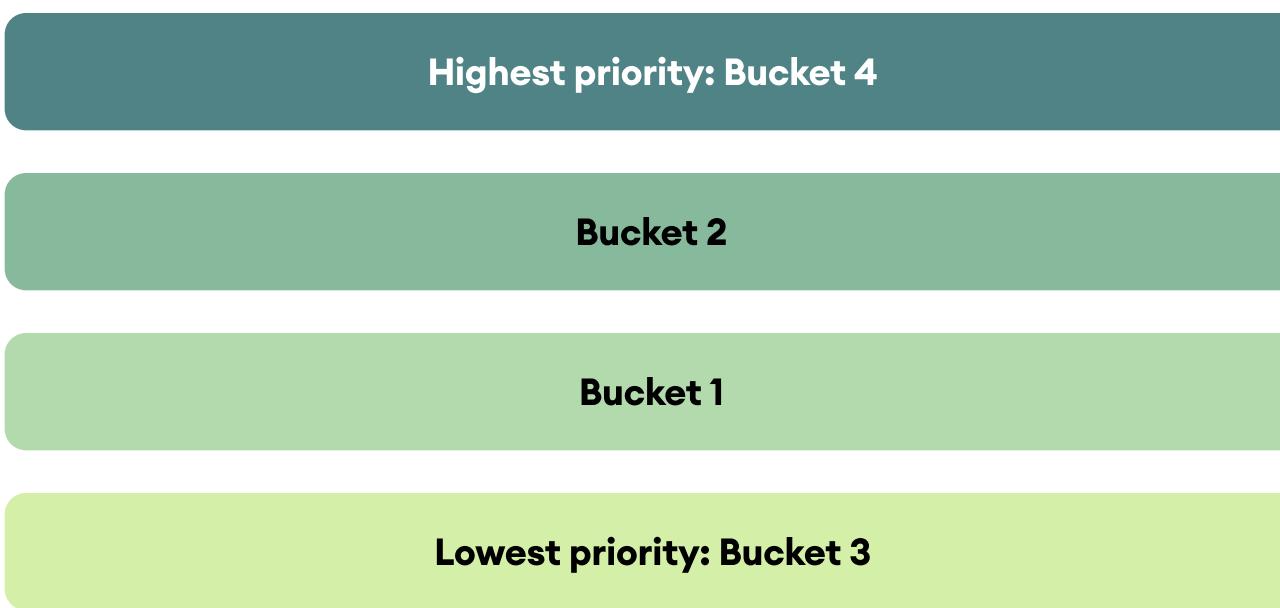
Step 2: Ranking the Buckets

We then organized these notifications into different buckets, which we arranged from most to least important.
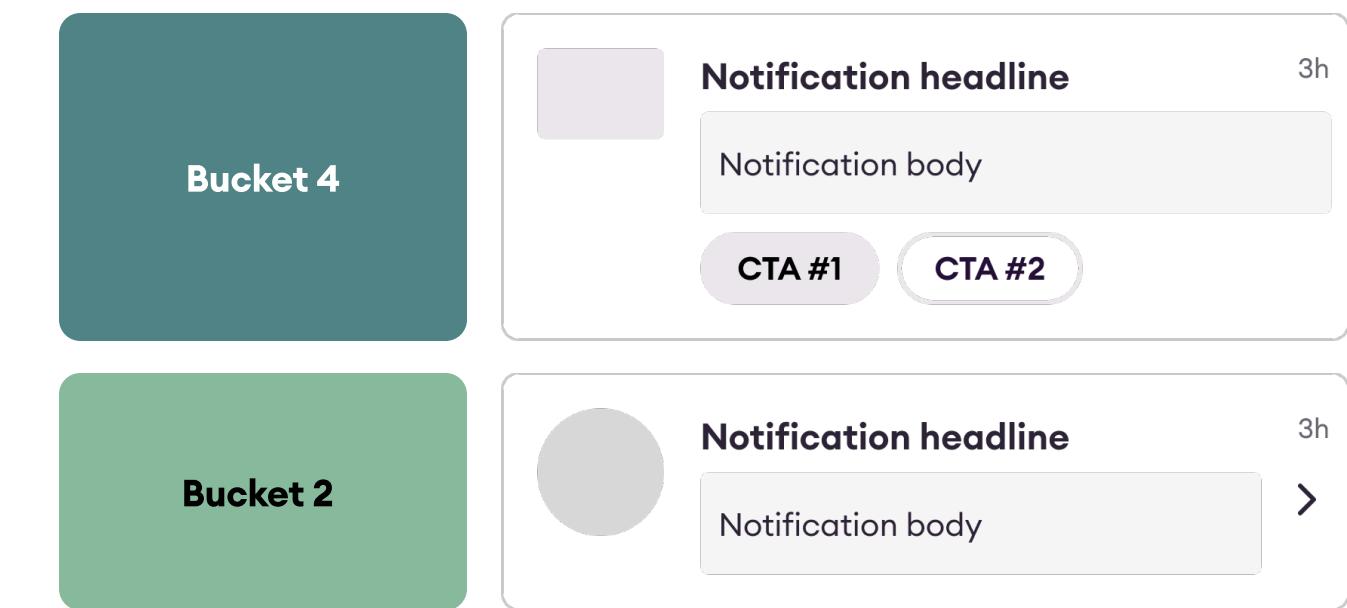
Step 3 (WIP): Creating templates
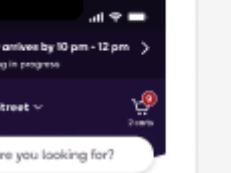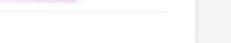
The goal is to build a consistent notification component whose functionality changes based on the type of notification itself. So in the future, when any team wants to add a notification in this space, they figure out which bucket it falls into, and follow the established design template.

Notification Audit

I led a cross-functional brainstorm and data gathering session between Marketing, Product, Research & Design.

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 OHP 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 Nudge (all retailers)	Triggered for qualifying audience	2 weeks	Kind of	Yes	Email/Push	
Abandon 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 - Itearble						
New feature announcements	Quarterly product newsletter, ad hoc app modals	2 weeks	No	No	Emails 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 Nudger - 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 this every week and it may only be five 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 it opens every time they open the app until they complete)	No	No	In App experience/Push	
In-App (Modals and Banners)						
C360 On-boarding 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					
Preferred Shopper	When you rate your shopper 5 stars	one and done	Yes	Yes	Landing page in Shipt prompt after rating
Tip your shopper	If pre-tip not done	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	Comms preference center
Turn on Device Notifications	When device notifs are off	2 weeks or until they turn on their notifications, then display every 90 days	Yes	No	OHP
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 like or where it's located				
"Special Moments" - birthdays (purchased, 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 insisghts

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).
  - Use purchase history & behavioral data to personalize promos and recommendations.

2.

Filter nomenclature & Categories

- Users' mental model strongly ties to the order lifecycle (current → past orders).
- 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.

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.

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.
  - Group informational updates (e.g., new retailers) for clarity; keep promos individually visible for impact.

5.

Placement & Access

- Top right corner of the homepage is the dominant expectation (aligned with common app patterns).
- Some users suggested contextual banners on the homepage for ongoing orders, above "Stores near you."

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

Tier 3 - 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 4 - 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

Tier 5 - 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

Design explorations

An entry point on the Shipt homepage

An entry point on the top right of the homepage aligned with both user expectations, and industry standards.
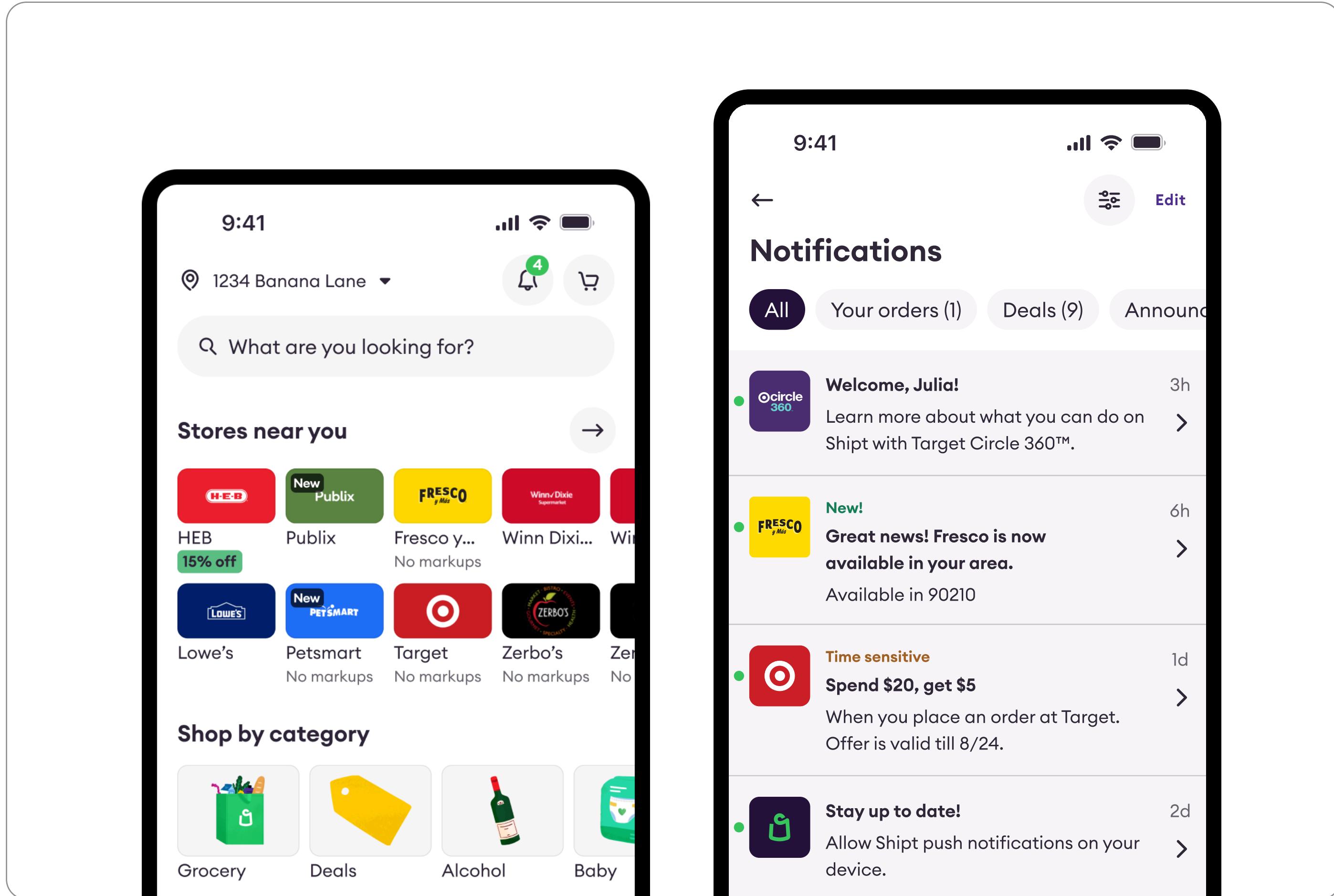
Designing the Notification

Reducing Cognitive Load in a High-Volume Feed

9:41

← Notifications

All | Your orders (1) | Deals (9) | Announc

Recommended 3h
Welcome, Julia!
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.

New! 6h
Great news! Fresco is now available in your area.
Available in 90210

Time sensitive 1d
Spend $20, get $5
When you place an order at Target. Offer is valid till 8/24.

Stay up to date! 2d
Allow Shipt push notifications on your

Notification image
Notification tag
Notification time

Recommended 3h
Welcome, Julia!
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.

Action

Unread Notification indicator

Notification headline

Notification body

Notification Card specs

Notification Layout Exploration

The notifications themselves are the most foundational aspect of this feature.

Iteration #1
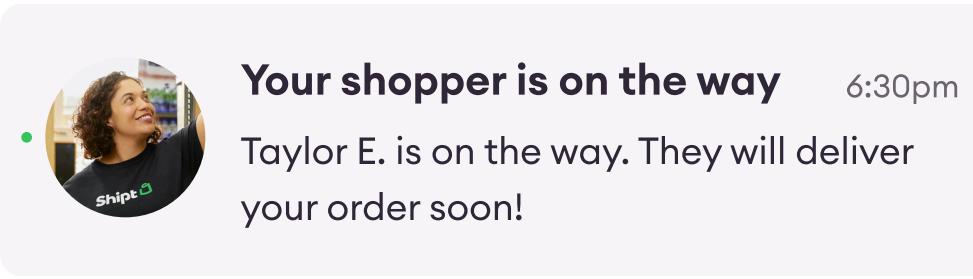
Your shopper is on the way   6:30pm
Taylor E. is on the way. They will deliver your order soon!

Your shopper is on the way   6:30pm
Taylor E. is on the way. They will deliver your order soon!
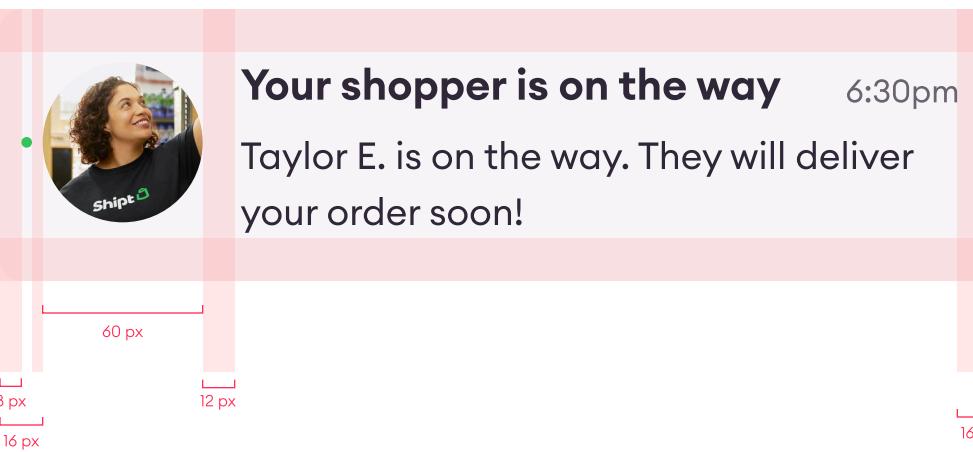
16 px
16 px
60 px
8 px
16 px
12 px
16 px

✅ Big, clear image   ❌ Unread indicator too small
❌ Notification does not look actionable   ❌ Follows prior DS patterns
❌ Not enough room for content

Iteration #2

SEPHORA **Buy 5, get $2.00 off**   1 wk ago
When you buy any Pepsi cola beverages. Offer is valid till 8/24.
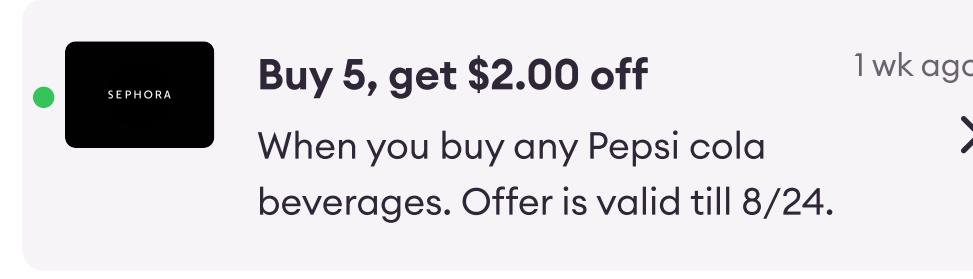
SEPHORA **Buy 5, get $2.00 off**   1 wk ago
When you buy any Pepsi cola beverages. Offer is valid till 8/24.
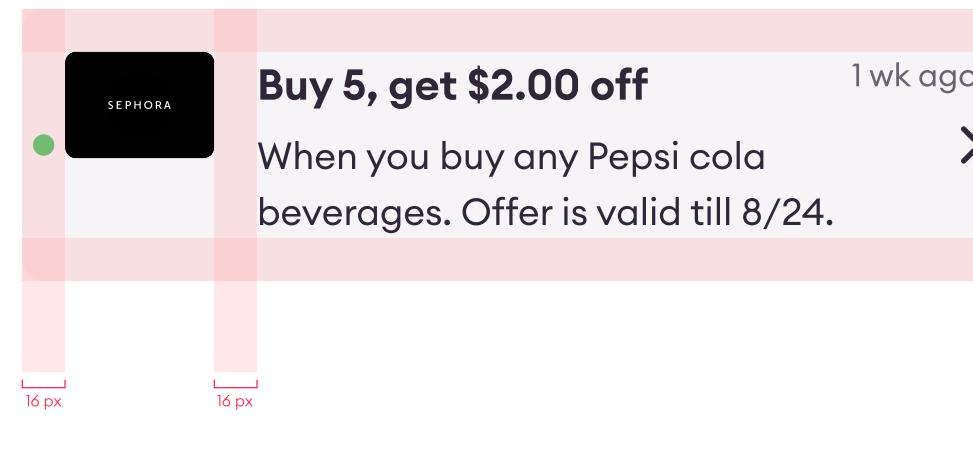
16 px
16 px
16 px
16 px
16 px
16 px

✅ Follows new DS patterns   ❌ Timestamp takes too much space
❌ Lesser space for headline   ✅ Looks actionable
❌ Not enough room for content

Iteration #3

circle 360 **Welcome, Julia!**   3h
Learn more about what you can do on Shift with Target Circle 360™.
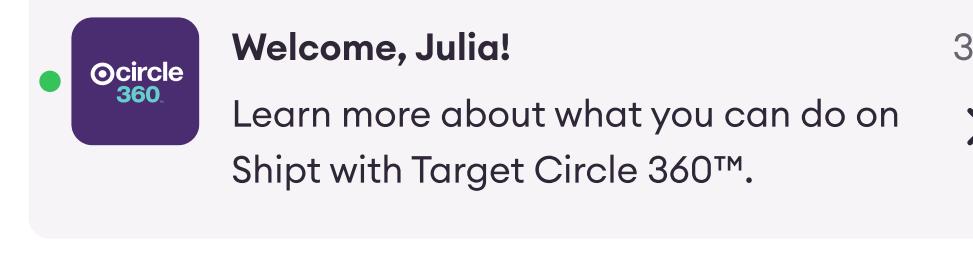
circle 360 **Welcome, Julia!**   3h
Learn more about what you can do on Shift with Target Circle 360™.
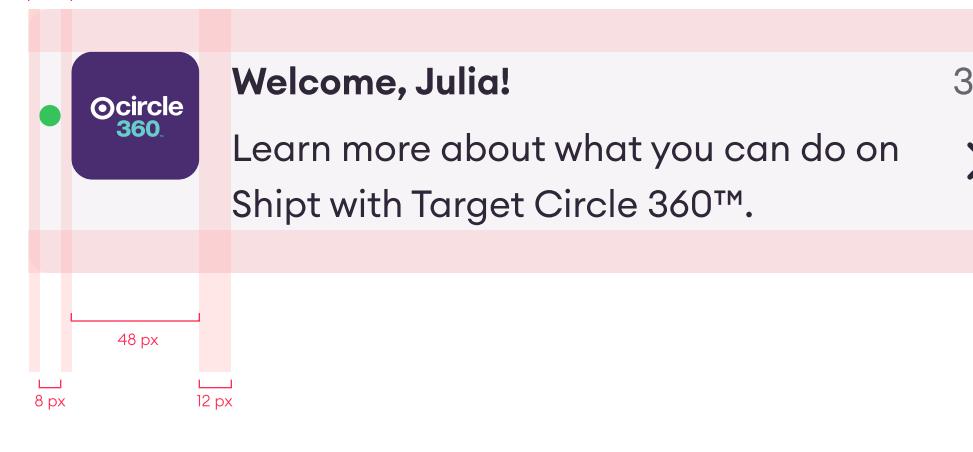
16 px
16 px
16 px
48 px
8 px
12 px
8 px

✅ Follows new DS patterns   ✅ Looks actionable
✅ Small timestamp leaves room for headline
✅ Most room for content

❌   ❌   ✔️

How did we create visual hierarchy?

Users noted that they wanted to be shown which notifications are more urgent than others, while maintaining consistent patterns.

Tags for visual hierarchy

9:41

←   ⚙️ Edit

Notifications

All | Your orders (1) | Deals (9) | Announc

○ circle 360 — **Recommended**   3h
Welcome, Julia!
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.   >

FRESCO — **Great news! Fresco is now available in your area.**   6h
Available in 90210   >

◎ — **Time sensitive**   1d
Spend $20, get $5
When you place an order at Target. Offer is valid till 8/24.   >

✅ To create a visual hierarchy or to denote urgency, I added tags in notifications.

Why tags?

Users mentioned wanting to differentiate urgency through visual styling (icons, highlights, urgency cues), while at the same time expected consistent spacing to improve scannability and reduce cognitive load.

What are the different Tags?

Recommended   **For you**

Time-sensitive

Limited Offer

What notifications get Tags?

- C360 on-boarding   **Recommended**
- Credit expiring   **Time-sensitive**
- Global Promo [$10 off $75 order]   **Limited Offer**
- Retailer / Merch Promo   **Limited Offer**
- Buy Again on sale   **For you**

Why these colors?

I aligned the tag color treatments to our existing Design System semantics, ensuring each color consistently mapped to its intended meaning (e.g., success, warning, informational) and reinforced established visual language across the product.

⊗ **Header** Added context ✕   Neutral

⊗ **Header** Added context ✕   Brand

⚠ **Header** Added context ✕ Button   Alert

⚠ **Header** Added context ✕ Button   Negative

ⓘ **Header** Added context ✕ Button   Informational

✓ **Header** Added context ✕ Button   Positive
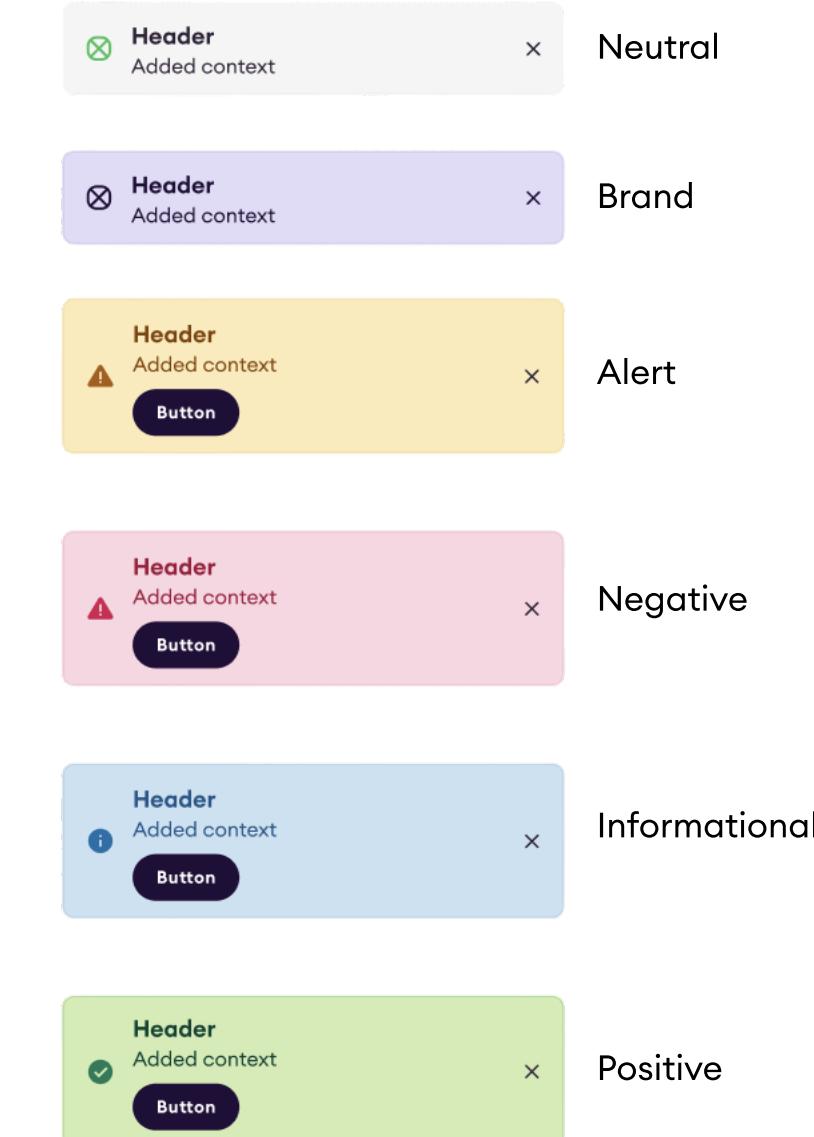
How did we create visual hierarchy?

Some other options I considered, but did not go ahead with.

Tags for visual hierarchy

✓ To create a visual hierarchy or to denote urgency, I added tags in notifications.
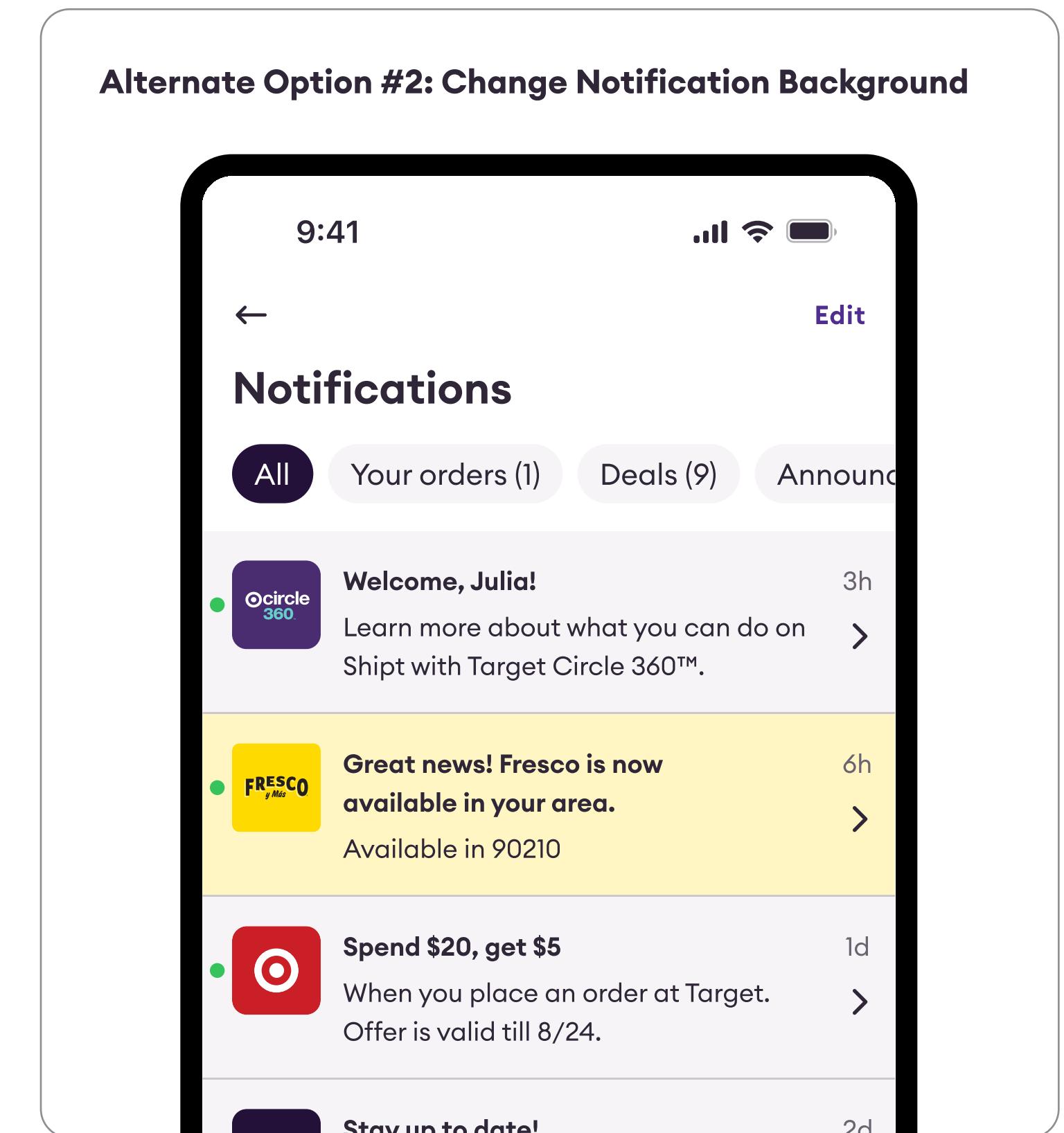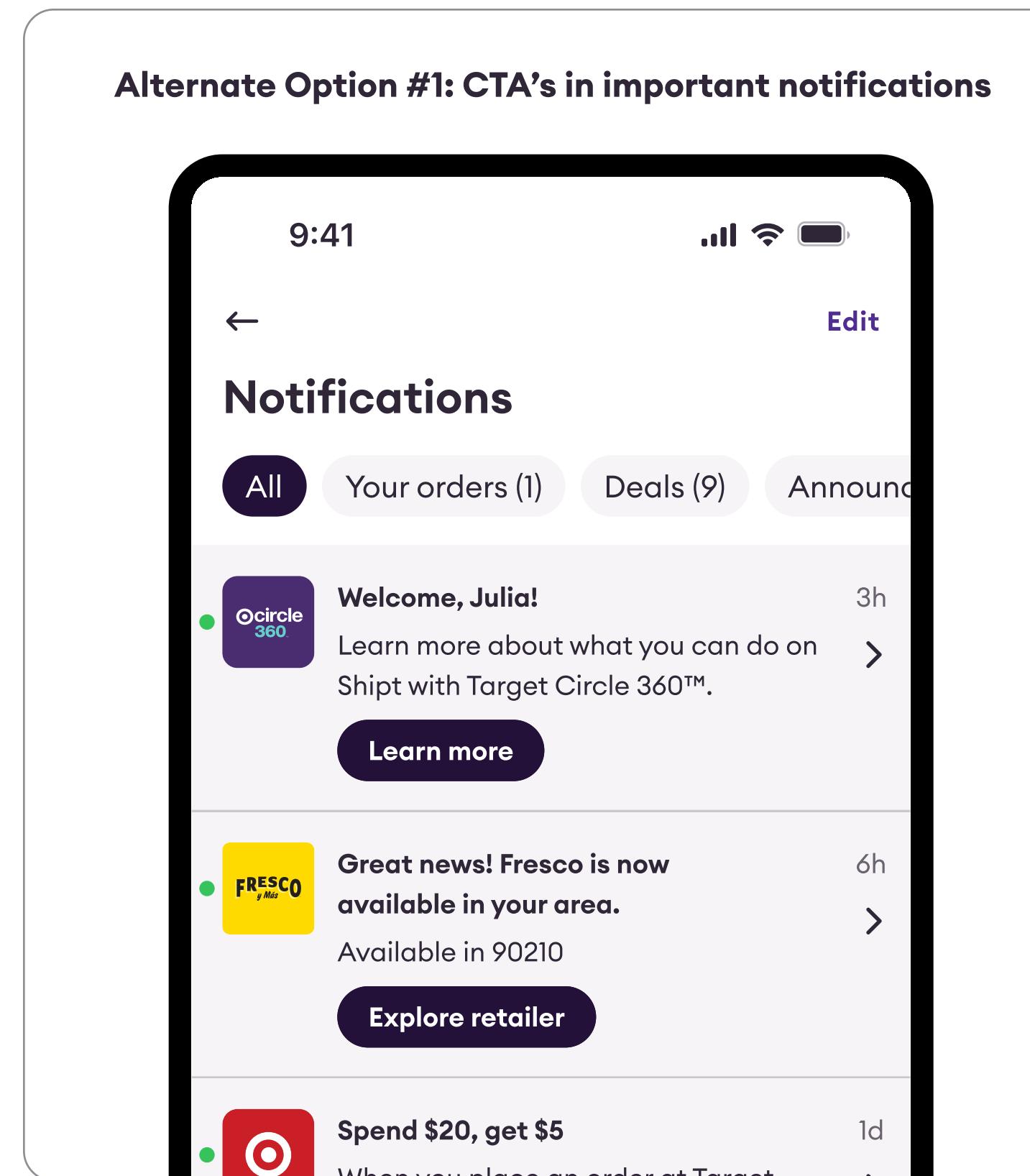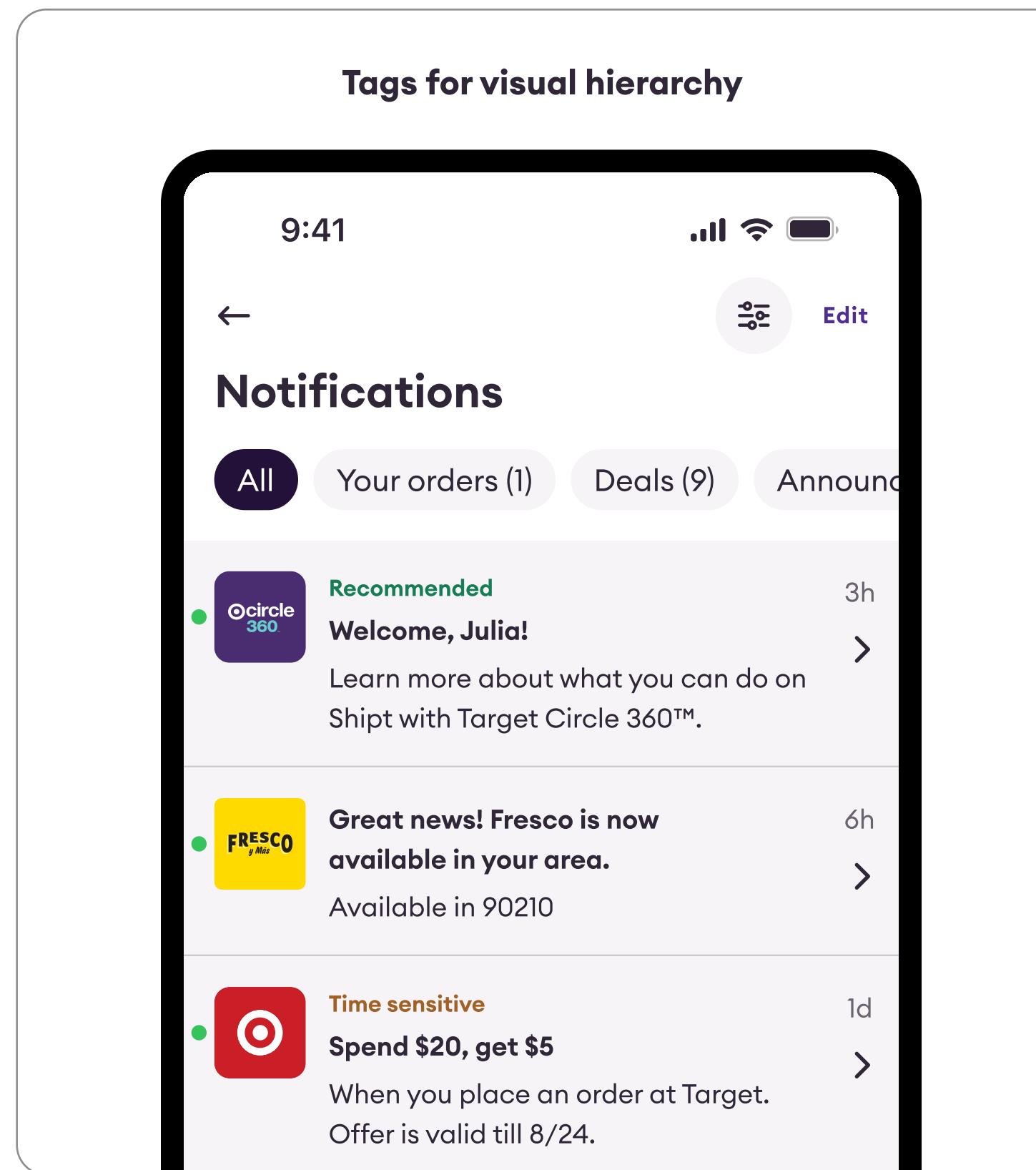
Alternate Option #1: CTA's in important notifications

✕ Large CTAs disrupt scroll scanning
✕ These took too much vertical space
✕ These buttons stood out more than the content of notifications

Alternate Option #2: Change Notification Background

✕ Not feasible, too many different BGs would be needed
✕ Cognitively heavy

Managing the feed.

Inbox controls, delivered.
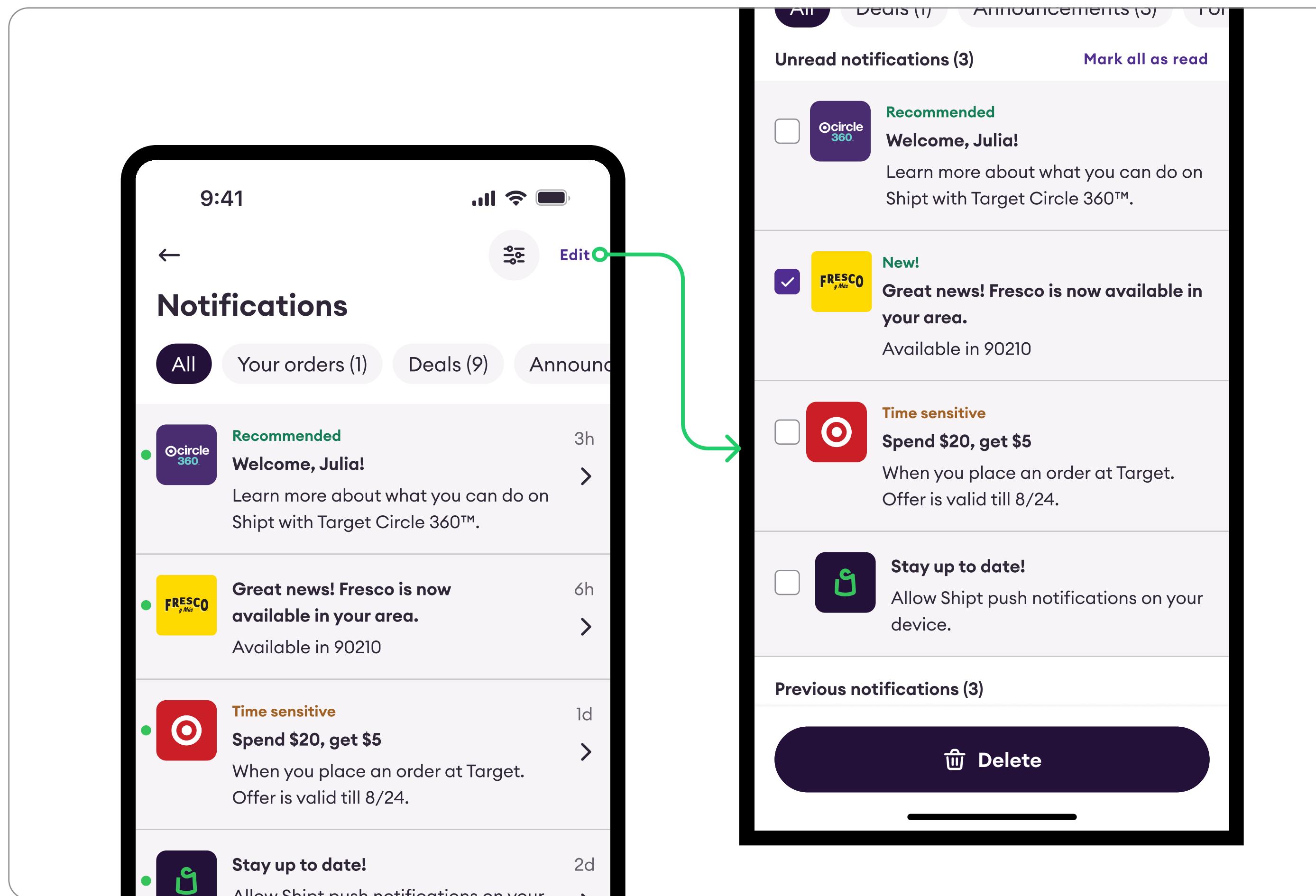
Hitting the 'Edit' button on the header, reveals controls to help members manage their inbox - Mark all as read, & Delete.

Managing the feed.

Alternate options considered.

Swipe to reveal more options
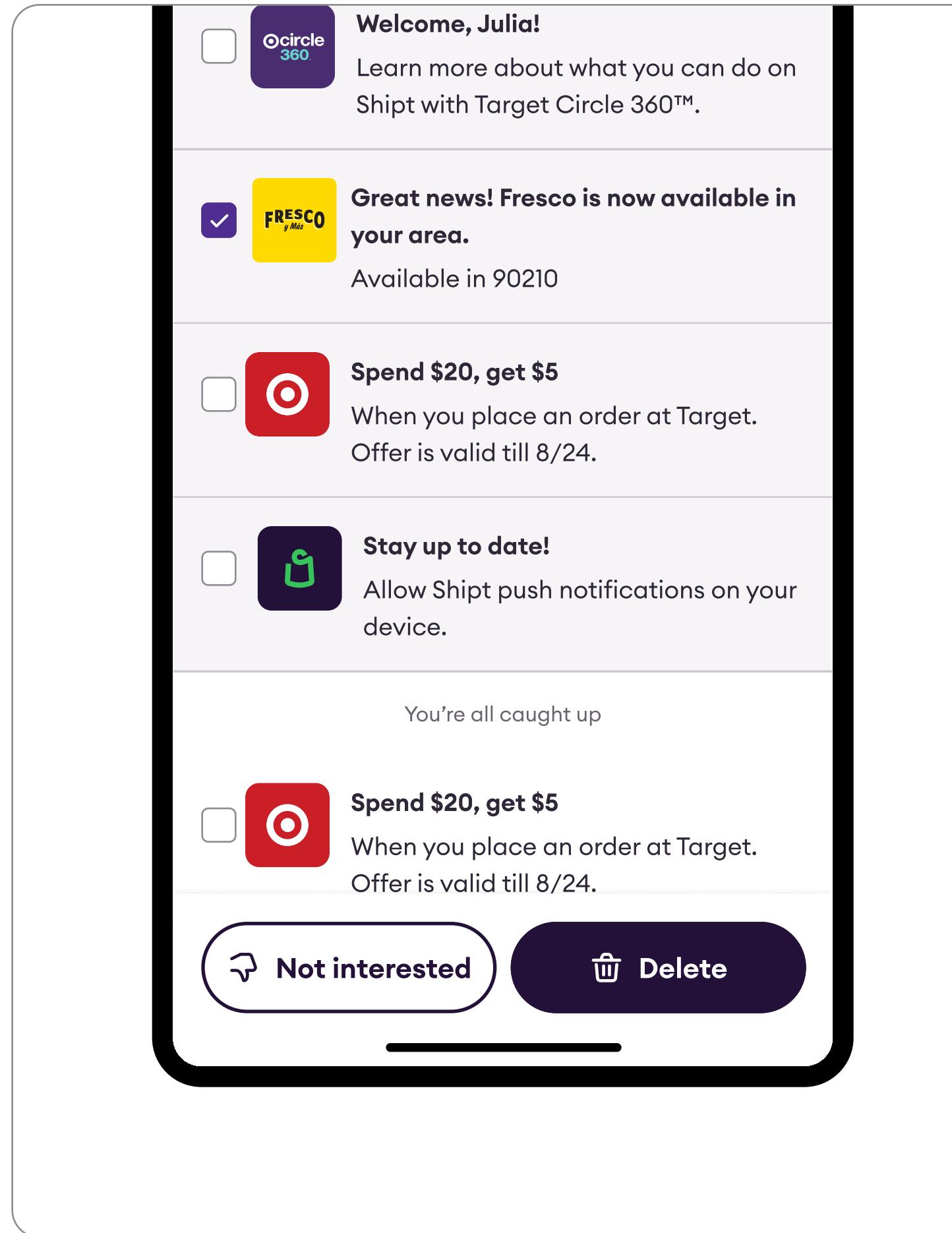
I removed controls like "Not interested" and "Show less" because they were ambiguous and led to inconsistent member expectations around what would actually change.
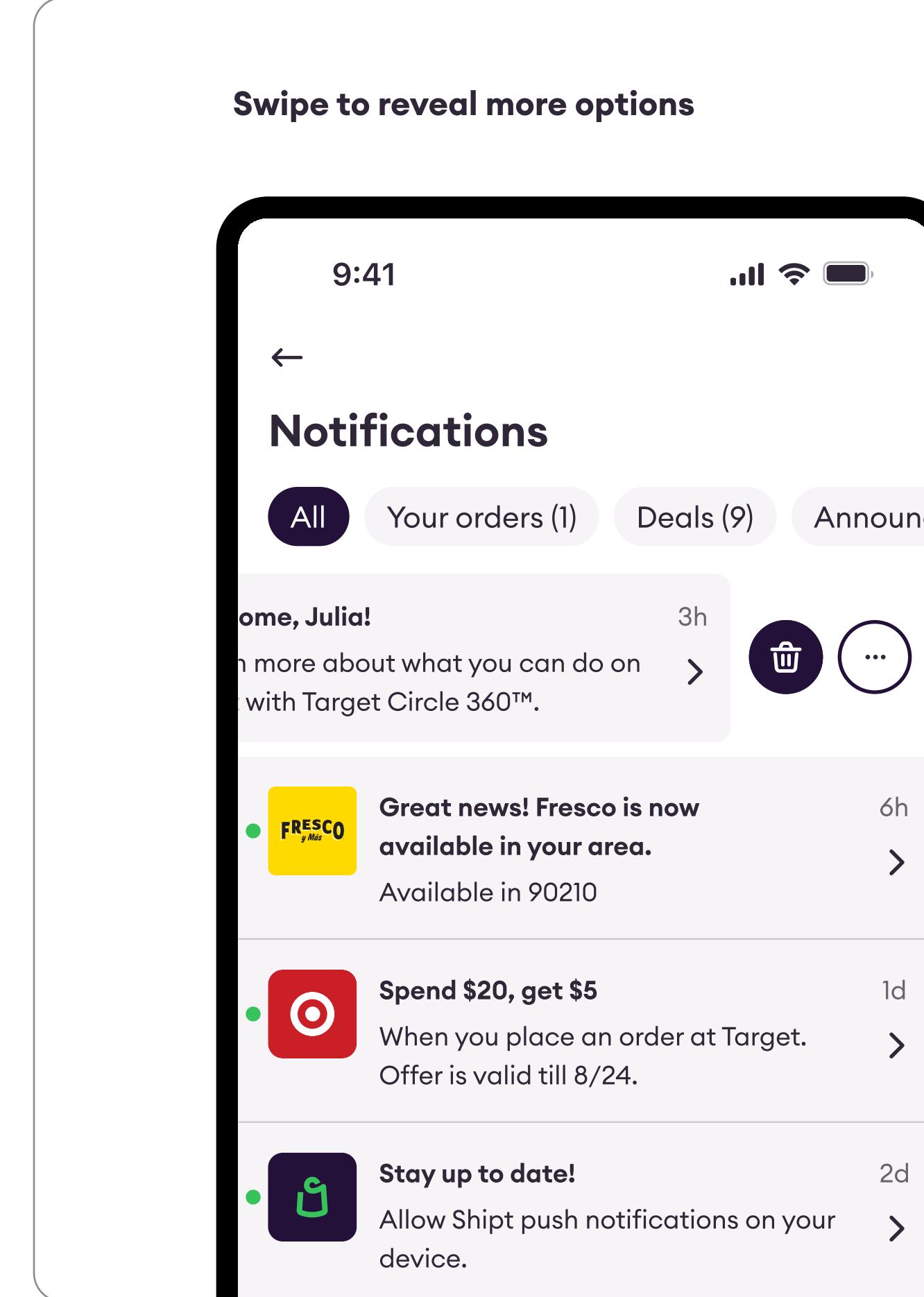
I avoided a swipe-to-reveal interaction because it may not be discoverable for older or less digitally fluent users.
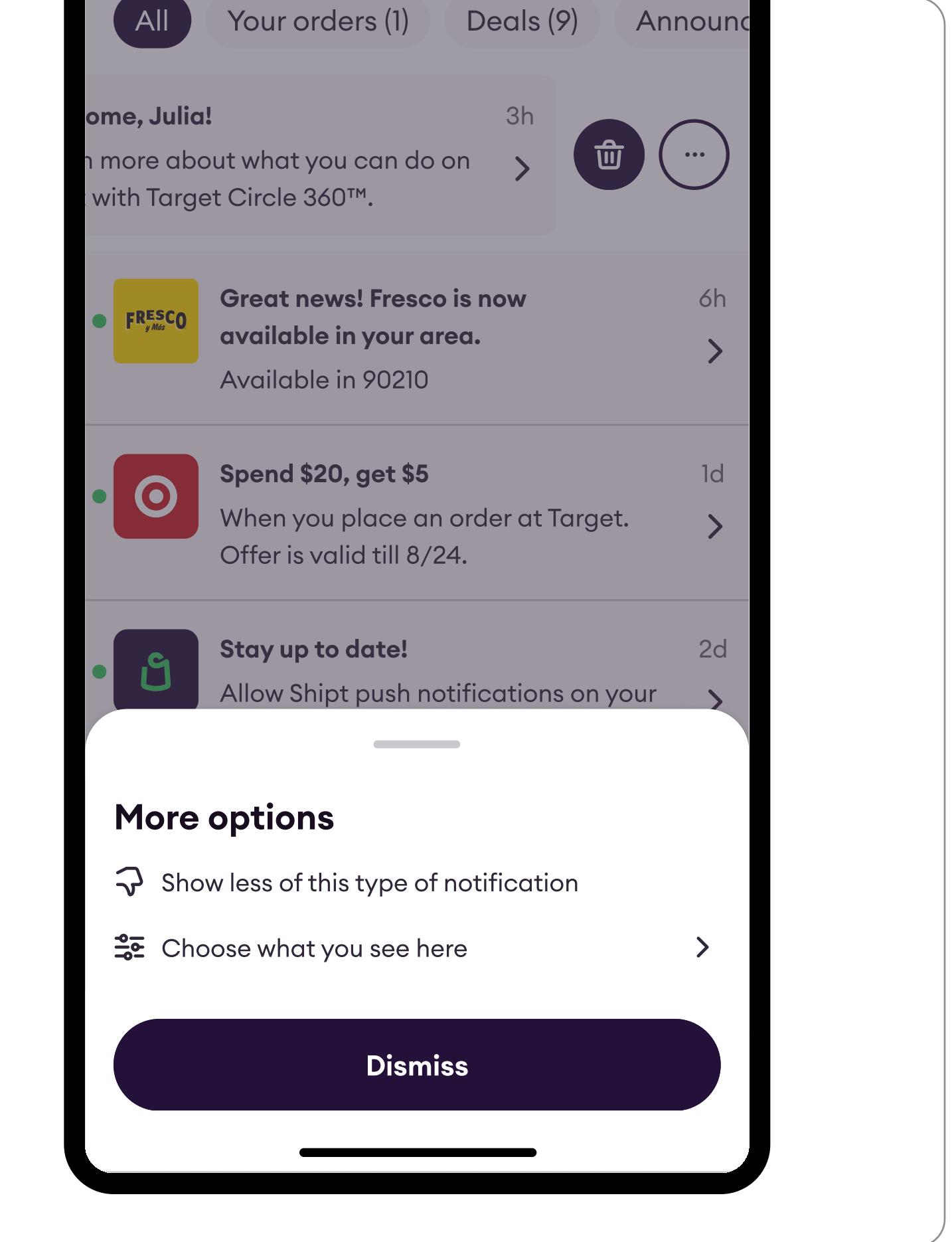
Helping members make their feed, their own.

Members expressed wanting to be able to control what notifications they see in this space.
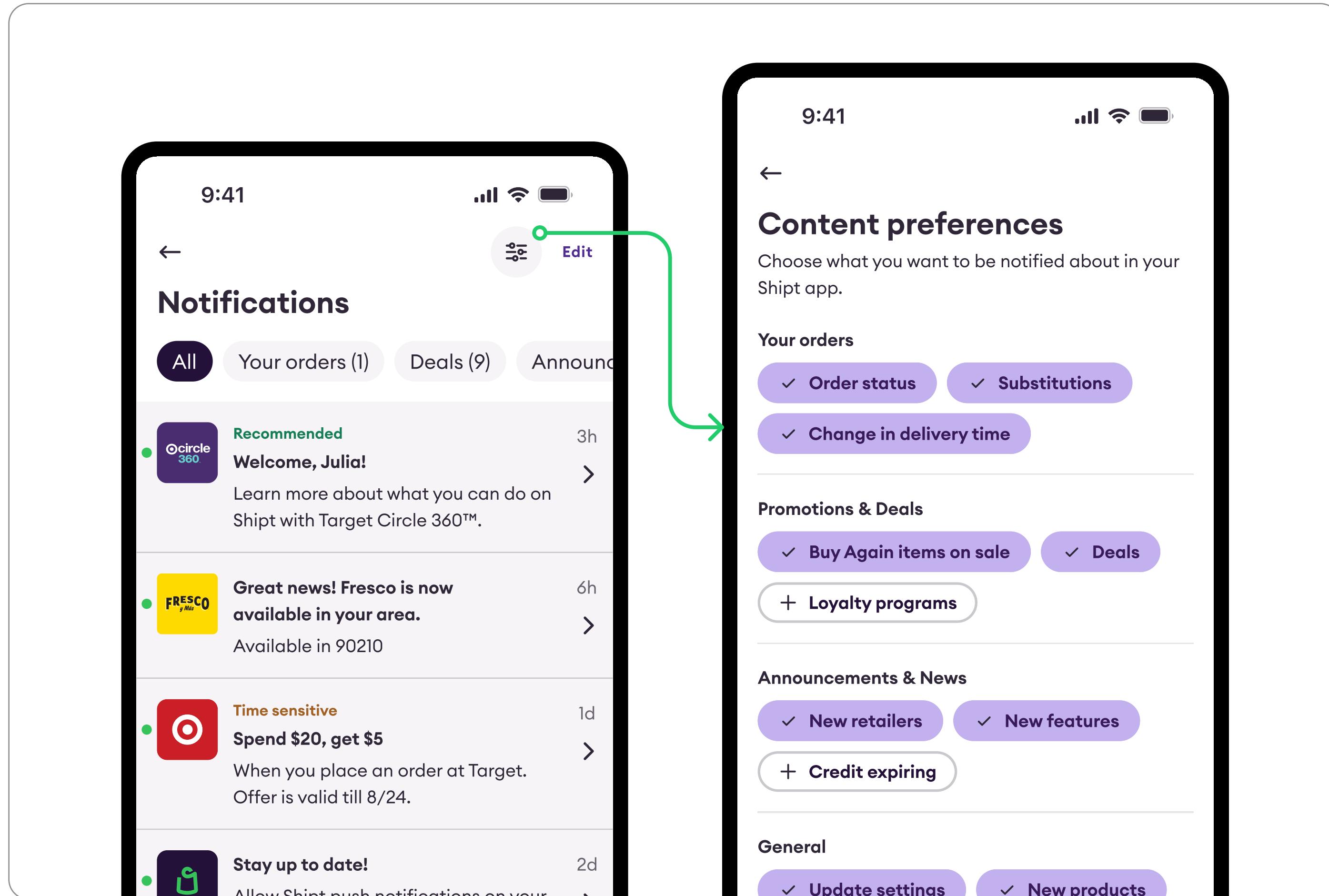
Members can control the content they see by opting in or out of categories, using the familiar chip selection pattern already established across the product.

Active Order updates.

I designed a dynamic order status notification that lives at the top of the feed while an order is active.

Active Order Notification

Live shopping progress

Shopping in progress
3 of 24 items shopped

Substitution approval alert

Shopping in progress
1 substitution approval required

Rate your shopper

Delivered at your door, 7:47 PM.
Rate your shopper.
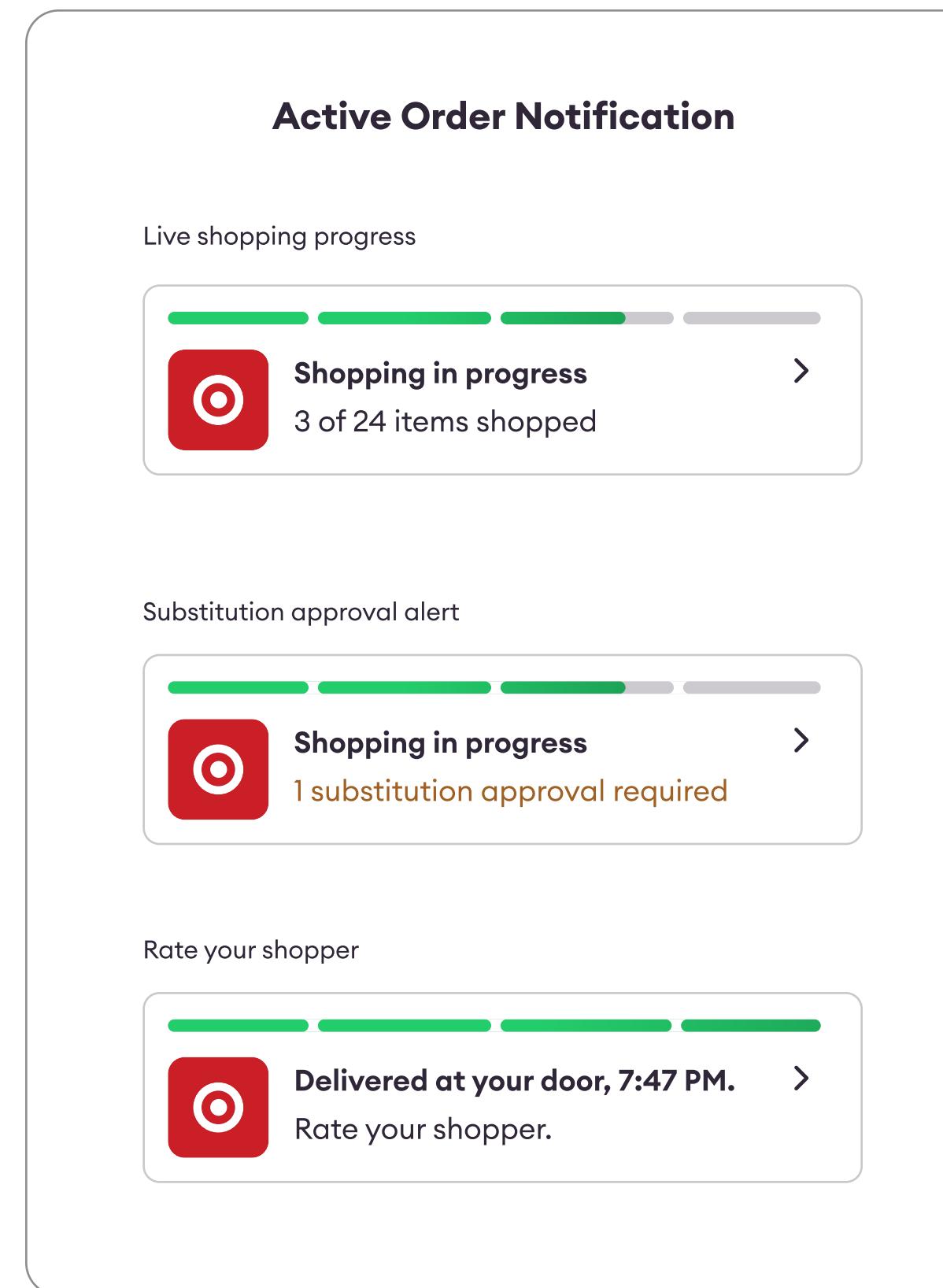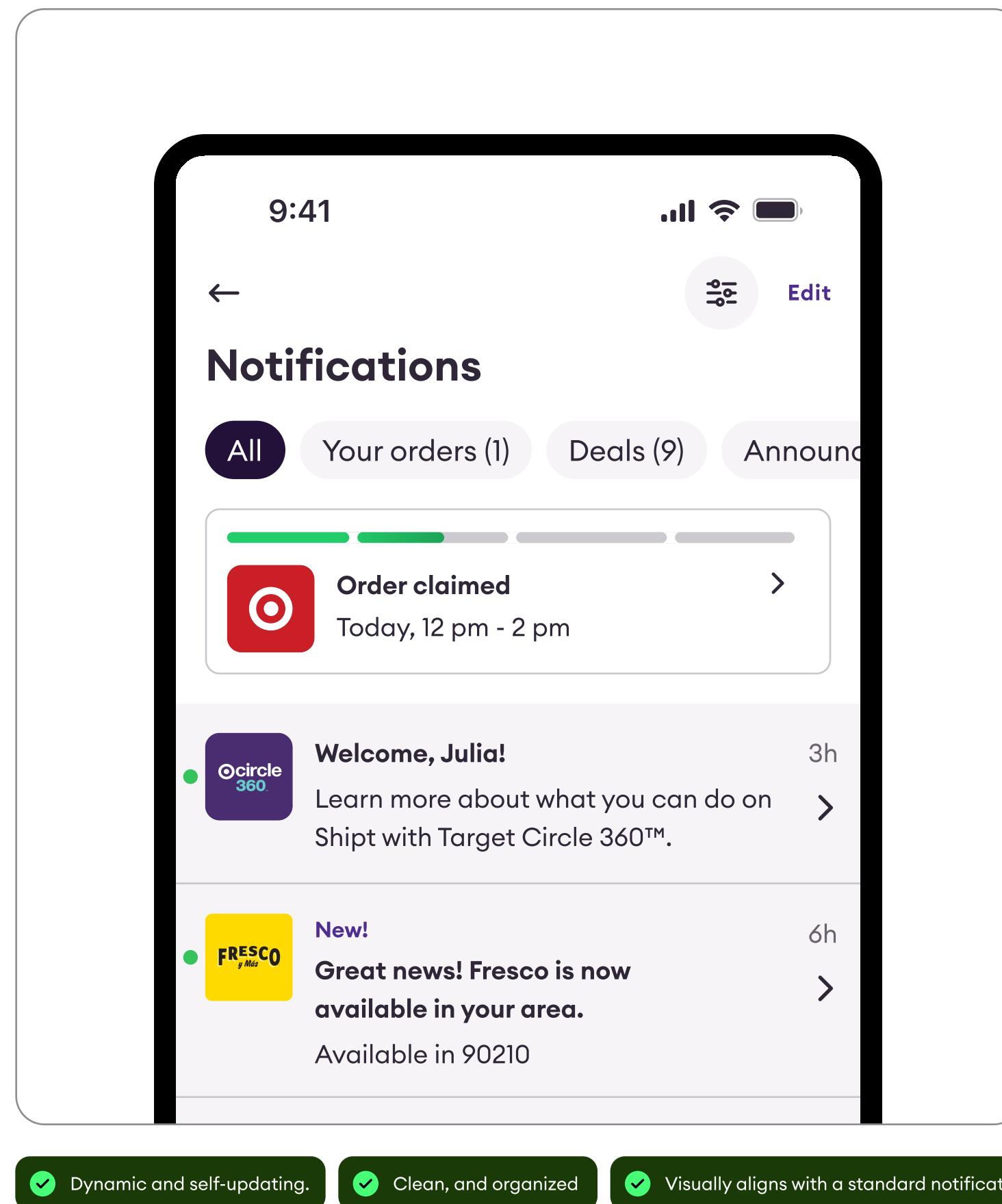
I designed a dynamic order status module that appears at the top of the feed while an order is active, ensuring real-time updates are prominently surfaced without disrupting the overall feed structure.

✓ Dynamic and self-updating. ✓ Clean, and organized ✓ Visually aligns with a standard notification

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Phone screen content:

9:41

Notifications

All | Your orders (1) | Deals (9) | Announ...

Order claimed
Today, 12 pm - 2 pm

Welcome, Julia! — 3h
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.

New! — 6h
Great news! Fresco is now available in your area.
Available in 90210

Active Order updates

Other options I considered.

Individual Order status Updates

9:41

← Notification center

All | Order status | Deals

1 item is out of stock >
Your shopper couldn't find Strawberries. Tap to approve a backup.

Shopping in Progress... >
Taylor E. has begun shopping your order.

Buy 1, Get 1 free! >
You do not want to miss out on this offer! Offer is valid till 8/24.
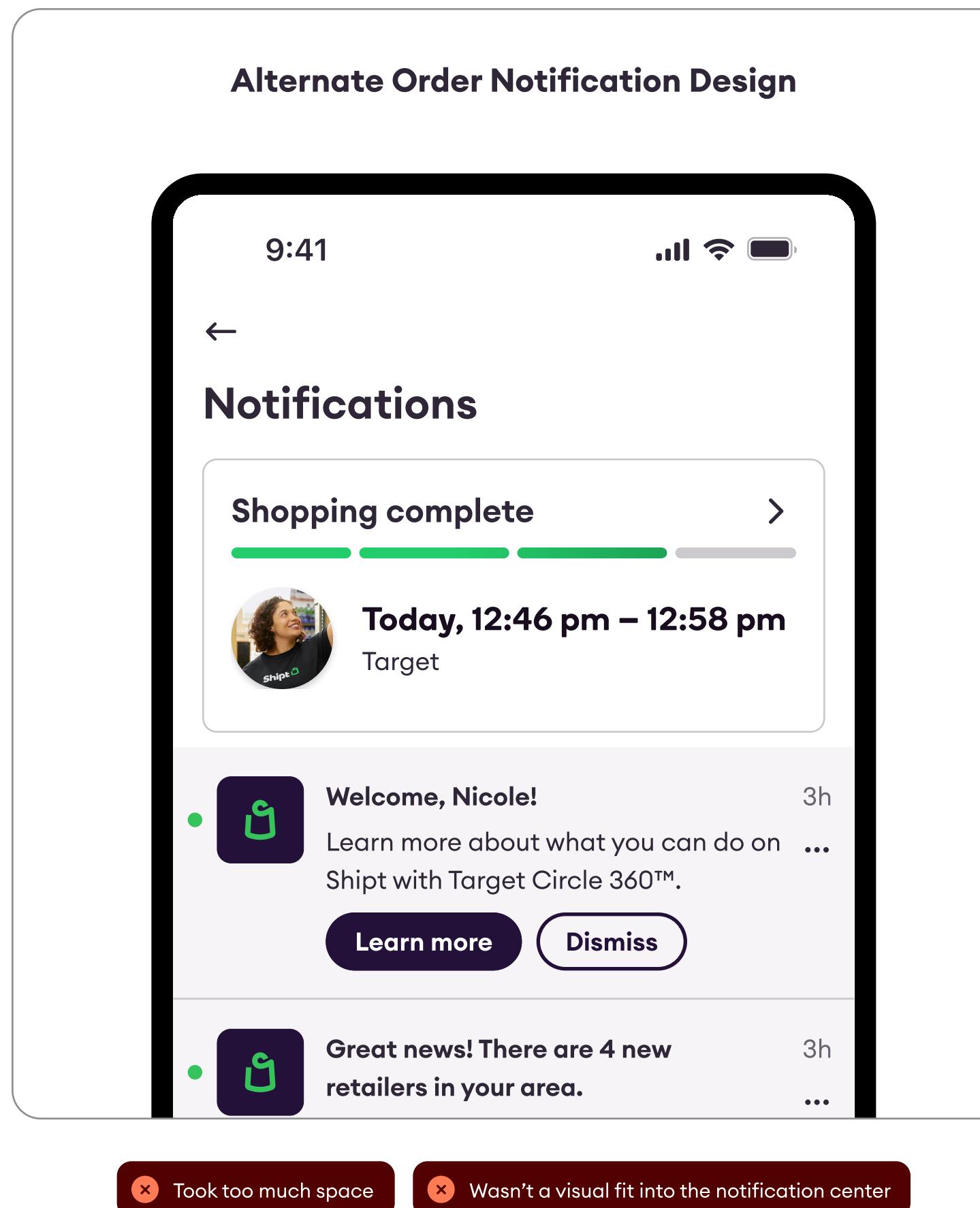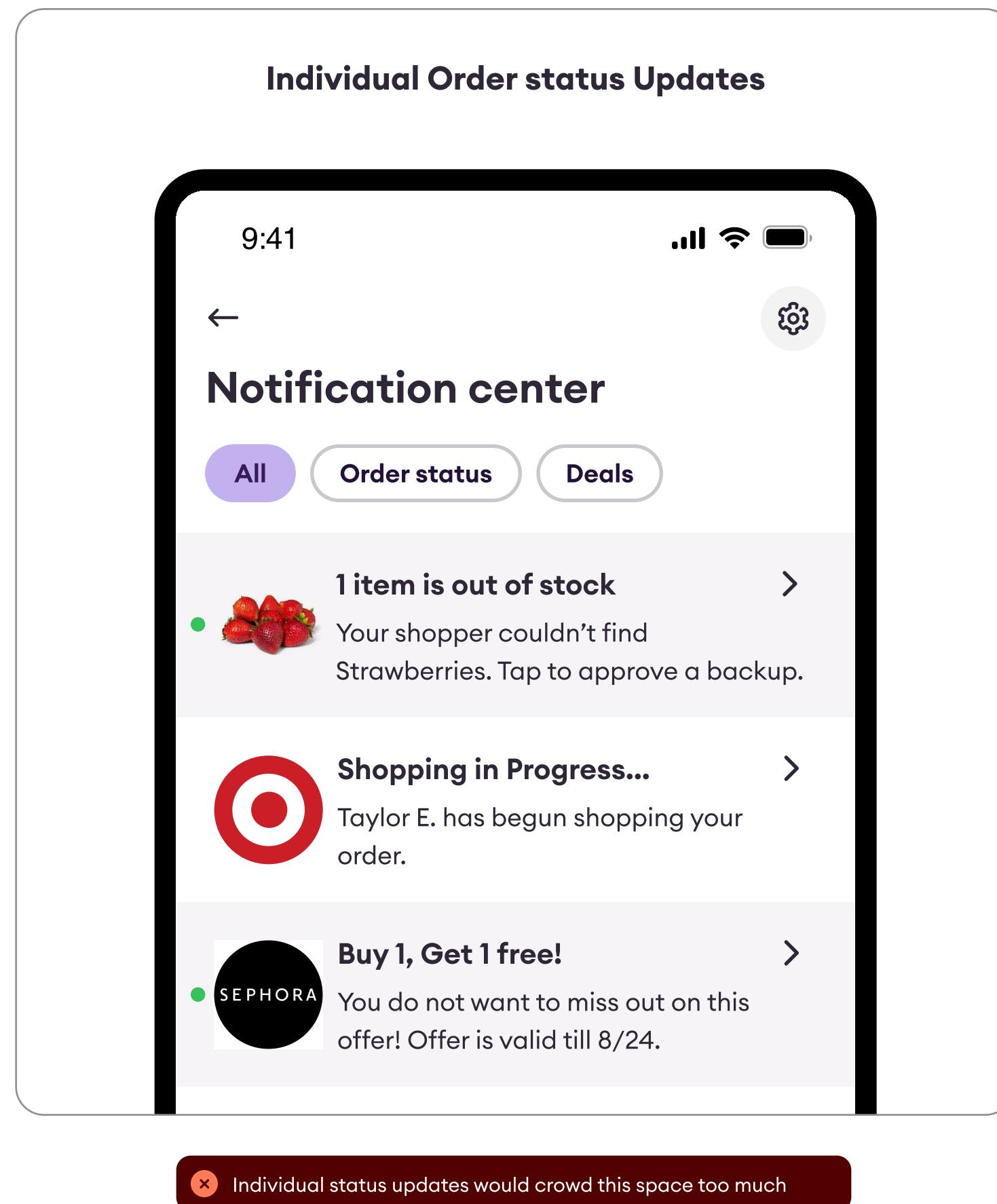
⊗ Individual status updates would crowd this space too much

Alternate Order Notification Design

9:41

← Notifications

Shopping complete >
Today, 12:46 pm – 12:58 pm
Target

Welcome, Nicole! 3h
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.
Learn more Dismiss ...

Great news! There are 4 new retailers in your area. 3h ...

⊗ Took too much space   ⊗ Wasn't a visual fit into the notification center

✓ Matched existing Order Card designs

In-App Notification Center

Notifications

All | Your orders (1) | Deals (9) | Announ...

Shopping in progress
3 of 24 items shopped

Recommended — 3h
Welcome, Julia!
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.

New! — 6h
Great news! Fresco is now available in your area.
Available in 90210

Time sensitive — 1d
Spend $20, get $5
When you place an order at Target. Offer is valid till 8/24.

Stay up to date! — 2d
Allow Shipt push notifications on your device.

You're all caught up

All | Deals (1) | Announcements (3) | For...

Unread notifications (3)   Mark all as read

Recommended
Welcome, Julia!
Learn more about what you can do on Shipt with Target Circle 360™.

New!
Great news! Fresco is now available in your area.
Available in 90210

Time sensitive
Spend $20, get $5
When you place an order at Target. Offer is valid till 8/24.

Stay up to date!
Allow Shipt push notifications on your device.

Previous notifications (3)

[Delete]

1234 Banana Lane

What are you looking for?

Stores near you

HEB — 15% off
Publix — New
Fresco y... — No markups
Winn Dixi... — No markups
Wi...

Lowe's
Petsmart — New — No markups
Target — No markups
Zerbo's — No markups
Ze... — No...

Shop by category

Grocery | Deals | Alcohol | Baby

Healthy weekday dinners

Content preferences

Choose what you want to be notified about in your Shipt app.

Your orders

✓ Order status   ✓ Substitutions
✓ Change in delivery time

Promotions

✓ Buy Again items on sale   ✓ Deals
+ Loyalty programs

Announcements & News

✓ New retailers   ✓ New features
+ Credit expiring

General

✓ Update settings   ✓ New products

[Save]

Thank you!