In-App Promotions, Introductory Offers & Promotions

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Promoting Subscriptions with Offers

Mobile app developers have access to many tools today to grow their businesses. Introductory and promotional offers are two methods that can be used in conjunction with auto-renewable subscriptions.

Companies can offer discounted prices to existing subscribers or to subscribers who have previously purchased a subscription.

These offers help a business create unique promotions for their marketing strategy, increase demand, and retain their customers. A business can increase its customer base by using these offers to win back subscribers who left because of high prices.

Companies can set the duration of promotional offers and the subscription auto-renews at the standard price after the promotional period expires.

Introductory Offers in an App

An introductory offer is a free trial or discounted price offered to customers for a limited period prior to paying the actual subscription price.

Apps with auto-renewable subscriptions can offer a discounted price or a free trial to eligible subscribers, enabling end-users to use your app with all the paid features before paying the full price for a subscription.

Customers are only eligible for one introductory price within a subscription group. For example, introductory offers are only available to those customers who haven't previously claimed an introductory offer for the given product or any products in the same subscription group.

Businesses can set up and create introductory offers in App Store Connect. In the iOS app, developers need to determine a customer's eligibility to receive an introductory offer.

It is the developer's responsibility to display the introductory price for all the available products if the user is eligible for that offer.

Key Points:

Introductory offers are mainly used to acquire new customers by offering discounts for limited periods. Salient features of introductory offers are:

- Customers are eligible for one introductory offer per subscription group

- Only one current and one future introductory offer can be set up per territory

- Through App Store Connect, businesses can manage start and end dates and territory availability

- If an in-app purchase is promoted in App Store Connect, then it will be displayed on the App Store product page

- Introductory offers are available to customers running iOS 10, tvOS 10, and macOS 10.12.6 and later

Promotional Offers in the App

Promotional offers are mainly used to promote in-app subscriptions with new offers at a discounted price. Discounted prices for a specific duration can be offered to existing or previously subscribed customers for the apps with auto-renewable subscriptions. Businesses can also offer a discount on an upgrade to another subscription.

Businesses can set the duration of promotional offers, and the subscription auto-renews at the standard price after the promotional period expires.

Key Points:

Salient features of promotional offers are:

- You determine when to present the offers through StoreKit APIs

- Customers that have completed an introductory offer are still eligible to get a promotional offer

- A subscription key in Users and Access must be generated to validate the offers

- Customers can claim a maximum of 10 active offers per subscription, so it is the responsibility of the business to determine the best offers for the targeted customers

- Offers don't display on the App Store product page

- Offers are only available to customers who are using iOS 12.2, macOS 10.14.4, tvOS 12.2 or later

Types of Introductory and Promotional Offers

Free trial

Subscribers can access the paid subscription features in the app for free for a specified duration under a free trial. For example, a subscription with a standard renewal price of Rs1000/month can be offered as an initial free trial for a month or two, etc.

During the free trial period, the customer won't be billed but can access the full benefits of the subscription immediately.

This offer allows customers to try out an app's features for free.

Pay As You Go

Subscribers pay a discounted price for each billing period for a specific duration under Pay As You Go.

For example, Rs200/month for three months for a subscription, with a standard renewal price of Rs1000/month.

Under Pay As You Go, a customer's subscription begins immediately and they can access all the app features at a discounted rate for a selected duration. Once the Pay As You Go offer expires, customers will be charged the standard renewal price.

Price-conscious customers are attracted to recurring discounts because they can subscribe multiple times. Businesses will benefit because these subscription discounts are only for a specific period.

Pay Up Front

Subscribers pay a one-time discounted price for a specific duration under Pay Up Front. For example, Rs2000/month for the first six months of a subscription, with a standard renewal price of Rs8000/year.

Under Pay Up Front, a customer's subscription begins immediately and they can access all the app features at a discounted rate.

Once the Pay Up Front offer has expired, customers will be charged the standard renewal price.

Customers are attracted to initial discounts because they can subscribe without hesitation and try out a full subscription. Businesses benefit because this discount is only applicable once for a subscription and for a specific period of time.

Duration for Introductory and Promotional offers

There are various duration options available for auto-renewals for both promotional and introductory offers, which are set through App Store Connect.

Below is the list of duration options available for different types of offers:

Pay As You Go

- 1 week subscription – 1 to 12 weeks with 1-12 renewals

- 1 month subscription – 1 to 12 months with 1-12 renewals

- 2 month subscription – 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 months with 1-6 renewals

- 3 month subscription – 3, 6, 9 and 12 months with 1-4 renewals

- 6 month subscription – 6 and 12 months with 1-2 renewals

- 1 year subscription – 1 year with 1 renewal

Pay Up Front

- 1 month
- 2 months
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 1 year

Free

- 3 days
- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 1 year

*A one-month trial can vary between 28 days and 31 days

The availability and length of the offer duration depend on the standard duration of the subscription.

The availability and length of the offer duration depend on the standard duration of the subscription. The table below shows possible introductory offer durations.

Table 1: Offer Duration

Standard Subscription Duration	Pay As You Go	Pay Up Front	Free Trial
1 week	1 to 12 weeks # of renewals: 1-12	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 days, 1 or 2 weeks, 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.
1 month	1 to 12 months # of renewals: 1-12	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 days, 1 or 2 weeks, 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.
2 months	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 months # of renewals: 1-6	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 days, 1 or 2 weeks, 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.
3 months	3, 6, 9, or 12 months # of renewals: 1-4	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 Days, 1 or 2 weeks, 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.
6 months	6 or 12 months # of renewals: 1-2	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 Days, 1 or 2 weeks, 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.
1 year	1 year # of renewals: 1	1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.	3 days, 1 or 2 weeks. 1, 2, 3, or 6 months. 1 year.

Comparing Promotional Offers with Introductory Offers

Table 2 : Introductory vs. Promotional Offers

	Promotional Offers	Introductory Offers
Primary Use	Subscriber retention and re-acquisition	Gaining new subscribers
Customer Eligibility	Existing or previous subscribers in the app. The offer is not applicable to customers who have not subscribed in the app.	New subscribers or previous customers who have not claimed it yet
Customer Redemption Limits	Businesses will decide which offers a customer is eligible to redeem	One offer per subscription group
App Store Connect Limits	10 active offers per subscriptio	One offer per subscription, per territory
Offer Configuration	Businesses can control when and in what territories each offer is available, and can use Storekit to present the offers to customers	Businesses can control the start and end date and territory through App Store Connect
Displays on the App Store	No	Yes, when promoted
Compatibility	iOS 12.2, macOS 10.14.4, tvOS 12.2 and later	iOS 10, macOS 10.12.6, tvOS 10 and later

Test In-App Purchases

Testers can test in-app purchases without creating actual transactions. They can test the functionality using Sandbox, which is a test environment provided by Apple that uses the same production-like infrastructure of the App Store but doesn't make actual payments.

Businesses can add as many Sandbox testers as they wish in the App Store Connect portal.

Testing Auto-renewable Subscriptions

The test duration of auto-renewable subscriptions is reduced when using Sandbox. Also, test subscriptions can only be auto-renewed six times at most.

Table 3: Subscription duration for Testing

Actual Duration	Test Duration
1 week	3 minutes
1 month	5 minutes
2 months	10 minutes
3 months	15 minutes
6 months	30 minutes
1 year	1 hour

About the Author

Apoorv Garg has ~12 years of total experience working with mobile technology specialized in iOS application development. He also has experience in Android, AWS Cloud and CI/CD tools, and led multiple teams which have built innovative apps with a fast time-to-market. He holds domain knowledge in a variety of industries, including publishing, retail and travel.

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App Store Connect Help

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Implementing Introductory Offers in Your App

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