# 10 Must have OTT features to increase customer engagement and loyalty

In the fiercely competitive OTT industry, streaming brands attempt to set themselves apart by providing captivating content. But beyond content, there is another way to attract and retain audiences and foster customer loyalty-crafting emotionally engaging experiences. To achieve this, we put together the top ten features that are crucial for enhancing customer engagement.
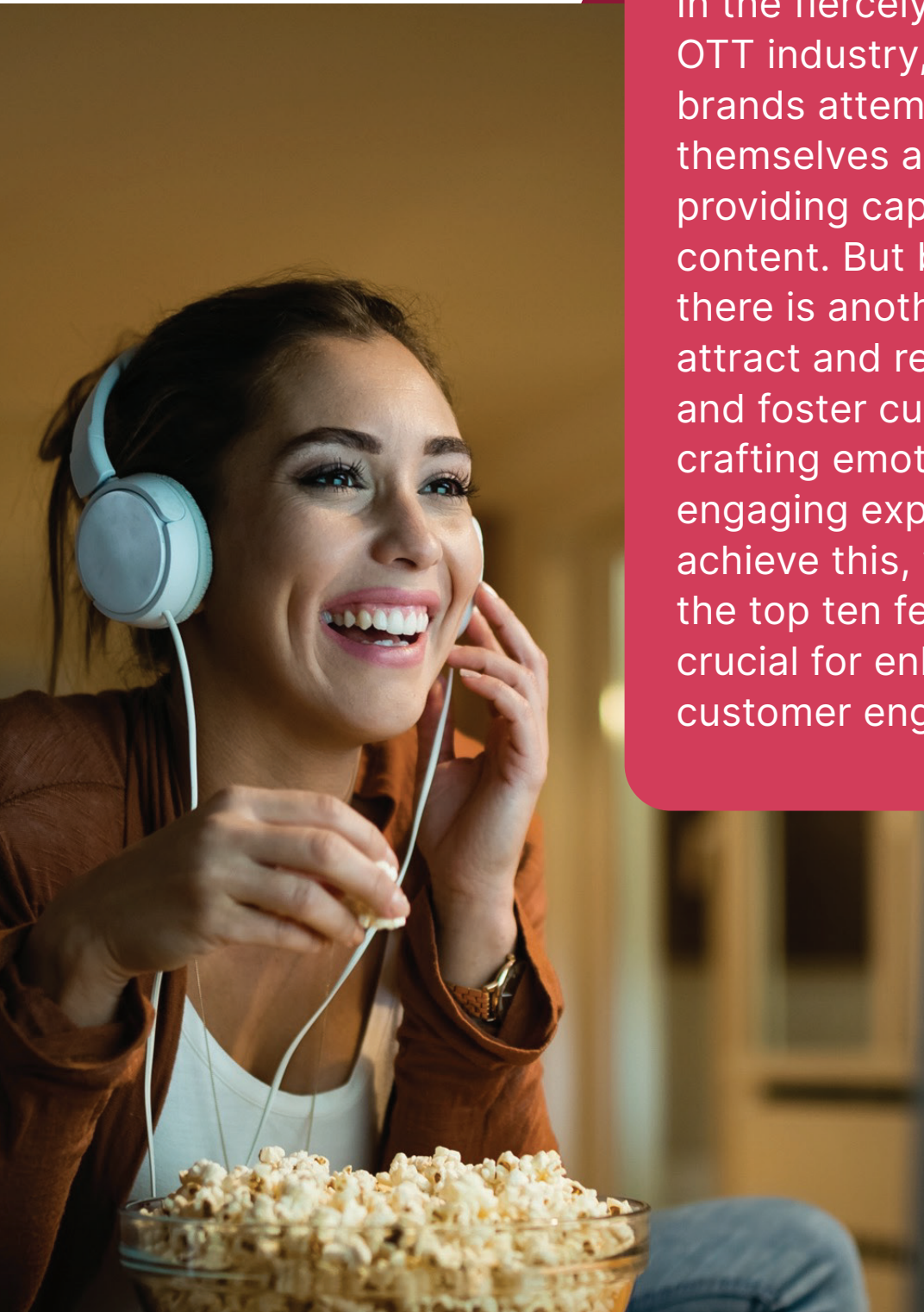
01 Gamification

Gamification in OTT means adding game elements to the app for a rewarding and engaging customer experience by letting users participate and interact.

Disney+ Hotstar lets users actively participate in the streaming of a popular cricket league to earn credits and compete with friends and family.

User gets freedom of choice to take the movie forward

Black Mirror movie displays interactive button to drive the movie progression
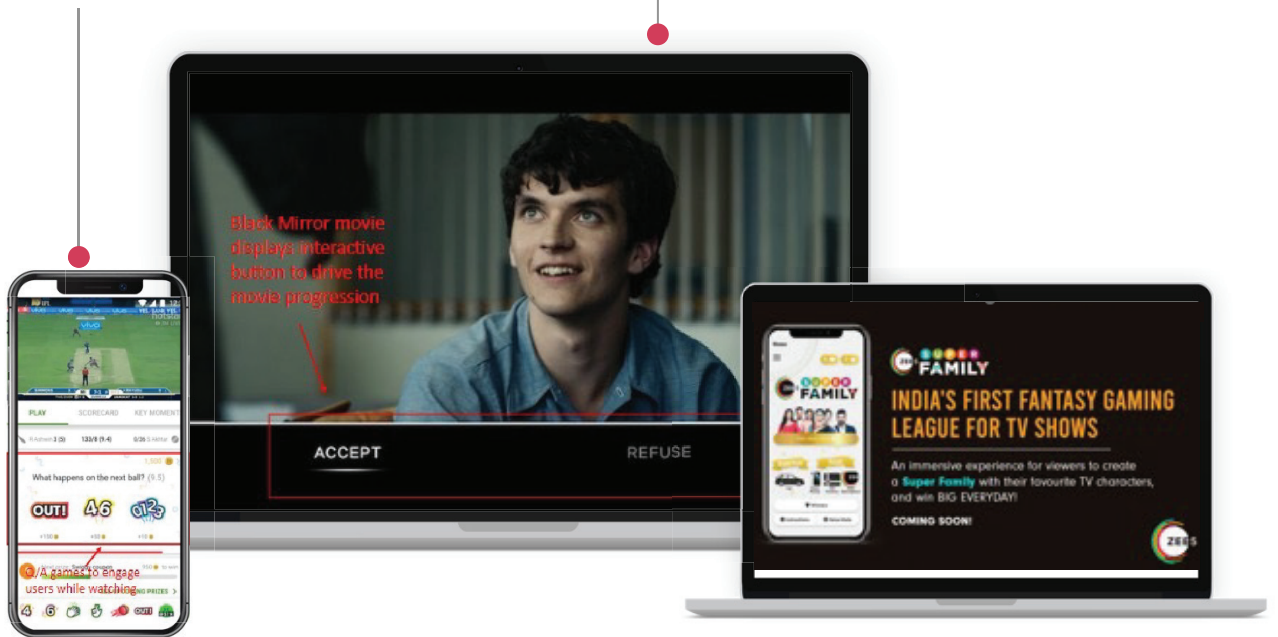
Enhanced user experience by providing viewers the authority and control to drive the movie/show.

e.g., Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, which introduced a unique viewer's choice driven storyline.

Engage users' competitive nature by introducing online games and leaderboards for competing against friends and family.

This feature encourages users to spend more time on the app, extending their engagement beyond passive video consumption.

Enable real-time engagement with TV shows, rewarding users for correctly predicting storyline developments and character actions.

This approach significantly enhances conversions, engagement, and customer loyalty.

Research shows that **gamification strategies increase engagement** by 47%, and boost brand loyalty by 22%.

*Source: MarketSplash

02 Hyper-personalized Recommendations

Hyper-personalization goes beyond traditional personalization techniques by leveraging advanced algorithms, machine learning, and user data to create an individualized entertainment experience.

It depends on various factors such as viewing history, preferences, demographics, behavior patterns, and contextual data to curate content recommendations that are highly relevant and engaging for each user.

Location based recommendation on Amazon Prime
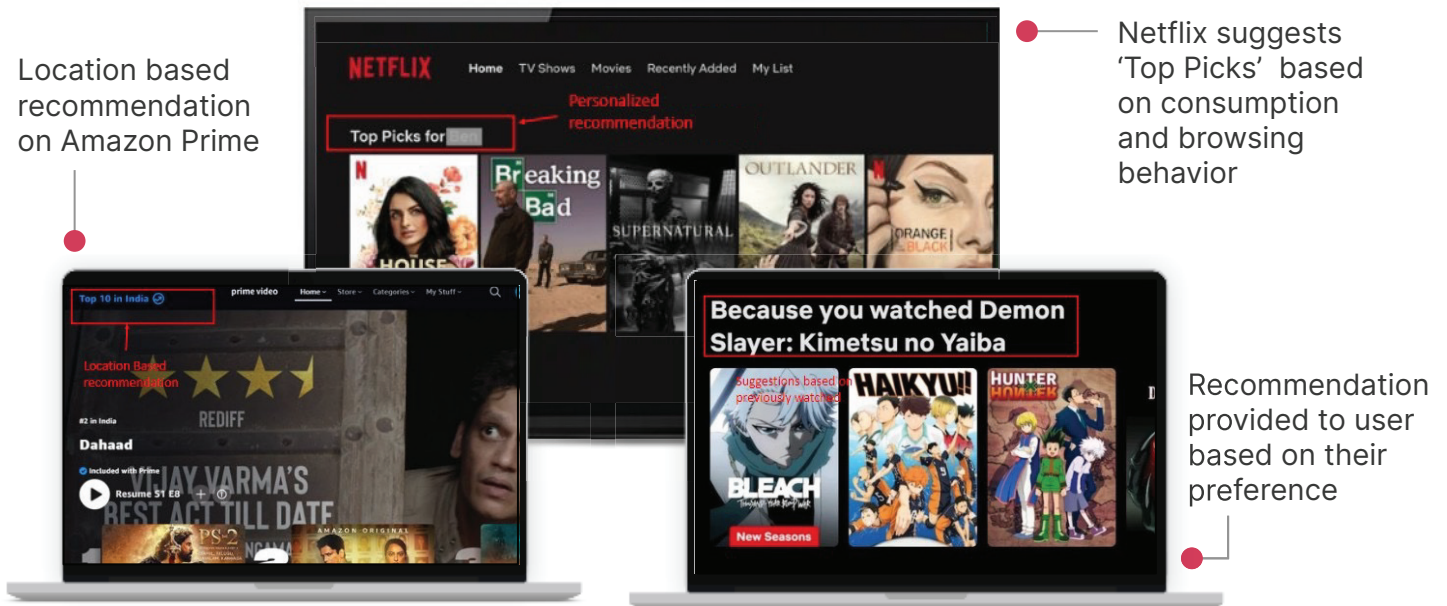
Netflix suggests 'Top Picks' based on consumption and browsing behavior

Recommendation provided to user based on their preference

Hyper-personalization helps in faster and efficient content discovery as users are presented with content that aligns with their specific interests and preferences.

Users easily discover new shows, movies, or genres they are likely to enjoy the most.

It improves decision making of users as the home page suggests intriguing films based on their preferences making the choice easier.

Personalized recommendations on the homepage have a possibility of boosting CTRs by 80-90%.

Source: Better Software Group

Recommendation engine **helps in offering time-based choices** and promoting weekend binge-watching to foster loyalty.

The targeted approach increases the chances of users finding content of their preference by saving their lot of time in browsing, **leading to more engagement and prolonged viewing sessions.**
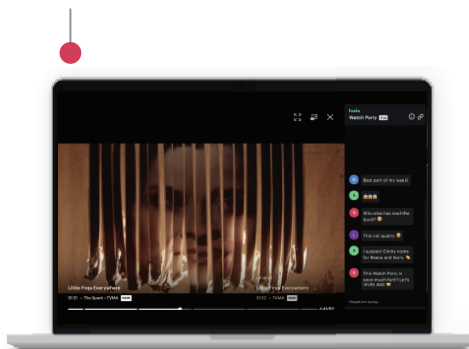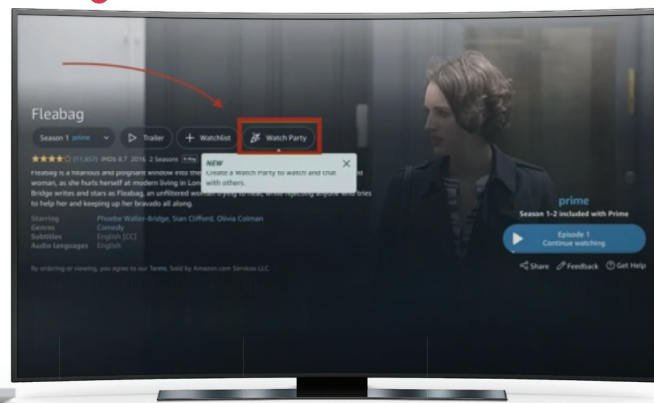
03 Watch Party

Watch Party feature allows multiple users to watch the same video together in a synchronized viewing experience, even if they are not in the same location.

Some streaming services have a "Watch Party"(Prime Video) or "Group Watch"(Hulu) feature built-in, while others require you to use a third-party extension.

Hulu has the Watch Party as feature in-built for OTT providers

Prime Video Watch Party allows you to chat and watch eligible titles/content with friends and family virtually

Watch Parties are a great example of real-time engagement as they integrate **live interactive voice, video, and messaging** directly into the co-watching experience.

Hulu and Sling TV have already integrated a native Watch Party feature.

Watch Party facilitates a **shared viewing experience** among friends and family by letting them chat, comment, and discuss the content in real-time. It creates a **sense of community and enhances engagement.**

By creating an interactive experience, it encourages users to spend more time on the OTT platform, fostering a sense of belonging and attachment.

The integration of analytical tools to the Watch Party to analyze and monitor user's interaction, comments, and preferences **can help recommend hyper-personalized content to users.**
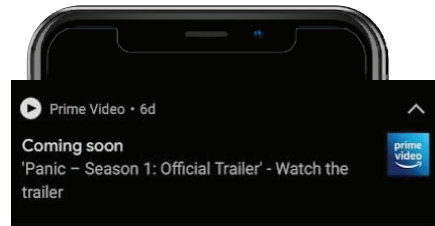
04 Push Notifications

Push notifications are pop-up messages that appear on a viewer's device screen, notifying them about new shows, offers, status updates, and more.

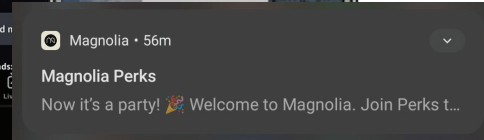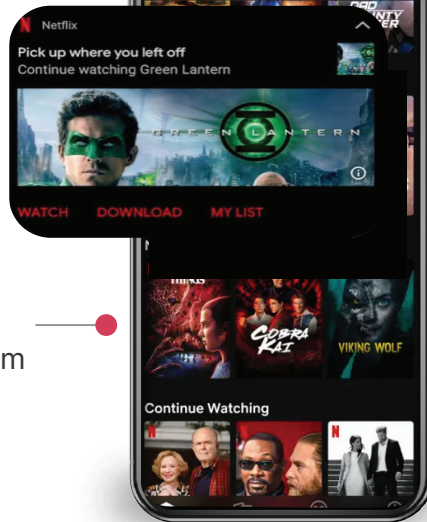They are crucial for bringing users back to the OTT platform or app.

Amazon Prime Video nudges users to watch the new season of their favorite show through a push notification

Magnolia sends push notifications to new users as a welcome message to engage the users on their platform

Netflix sends push notifications to let the user pick up from where they left off

Notifications **provide real-time updates on new content,** forthcoming episodes, live events, and personalized recommendations, **creating a sense of urgency** that encourages users to engage.

They also **help re-engage and retain inactive users** by delivering targeted notifications about exclusive offers or personalized recommendations.

Timely content reminders about new episodes, season premieres, or personalized recommendations could be sent to the user's devices with an actionable call-to-action.

Sending targeted push notification enables retention rate of 39% and basic personalization improves open rates by 9%.

Source: Business of Apps

05 In-app Messaging

In app messages are contextual, targeted messages that are displayed within the app when the user interacts with the app. The most common formats of in-app messages are alert box, banner and interstitial.

Disney Plus Hotstar reminds user of the new updates and Netflix provides guidance to users about the features of the app
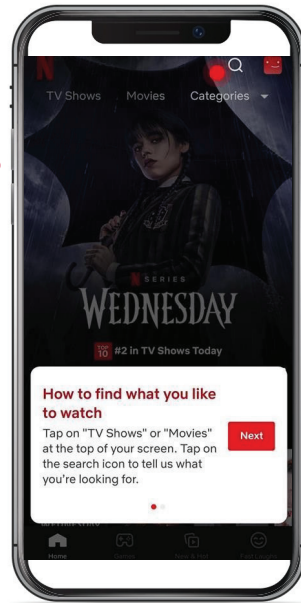
Netflix displays conversion in app-messages showcasing the benefits of upgrading to the premium version of Netflix
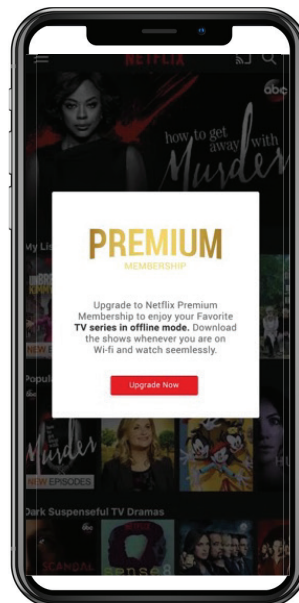
In-app messaging will **increase app's stickiness by providing personalized in-app** messages and deliver them at the exact moment a customer is most likely to convert.

For example, Netflix sends timely in-app messages to convert freemium users into paying users by showing them the limitations of the current plan.

It helps to get seen more often since there's no opt-in (or opt-out) process for in-app messages.

It **must be ensured that the messages are concise, clear with a compelling call-to-action,** so that it will drive the user to engage with the relevant promotional message.

It allows the seamless communication between the OTT providers and users about the new feature release, update reminders, payment reminders or provide feedback.

This fosters a **sense of accessibility and responsiveness,** leading to enhanced customer engagement.

For the first time users, **OTT apps provide tooltips or by walking customers through important actions** right in the app.

This increases the chances of users engaging with different features of the app.

06 Cross-platform Experience

Users prefer to watch content anywhere, anytime, without any interruption. Cross-platform support enables a seamless switch for users to continue watching OTT content on multiple devices, such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and smart TVs.
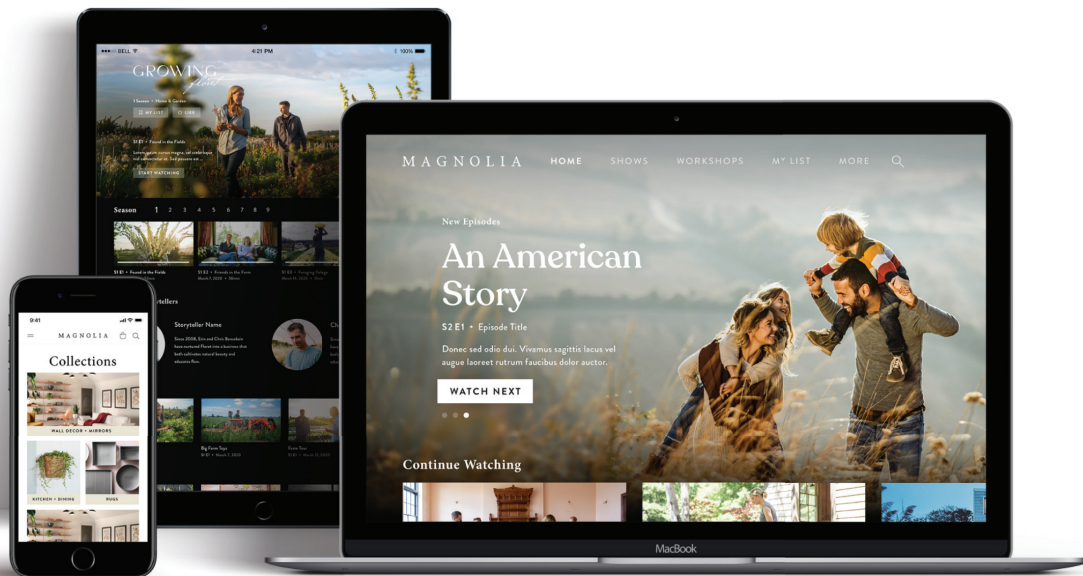
OTT platforms can **expand reach and availability to users** regardless of time, place, and convenience by enabling cross-platform viewing.

As a result, content will have a maximum exposure to the targeted audience.

A continuous viewing experience minimizes interruption, increases consistent user engagement and satisfaction.

For example, a user may start watching a TV series on their smart TV at home and then switch to their smartphone while commuting.

Netflix, Prime video, Discovery Plus and similar OTT players offer an omnichannel experience with quality management and dynamically adapting content across all streaming devices.

Data from Statista shows that in 2022, smartphone was the top choice for content viewing with 37%, followed by Television with a usage of 33%, indicating that **flexibility in watching contents from all the devices keeps the user engaged with the app.**
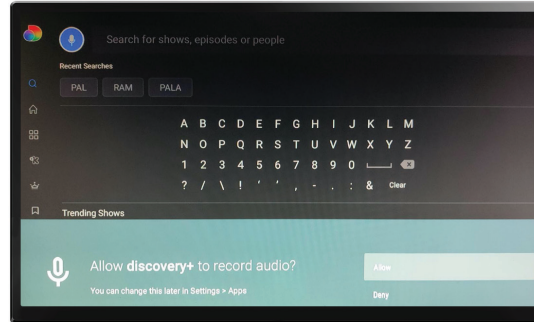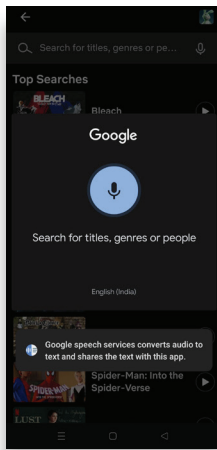
Source: Statista

07 Smart Search

Smart Search using voice allows people to find queries using voice commands over the browser, smart speaker, or another device or application.

Compatible devices include smartphones, smart TV, smart speakers, and virtual assistants such as Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa.

Discovery plus has enabled voice search, which gives individuals the ability to use their voice to search the content

The **convenience of hands-free and ease of use encourages users to engage with content** or apps even in situations where manual interaction is not feasible during eating, exercising, etc.
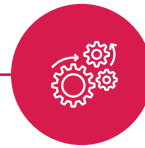
Smart search helps in fast and easy content discoverability with a quick speech-to-text ratio, outperforming manual searching on CTVs using a remote.

Faster search results and content discovery process increases user satisfaction and engagement.

Voice search enabled technology is more inclusive and shows empathy of the brand towards its users.

Voice search enables natural language and conversational tone usage through **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** technology.

This user-friendly and engaging interaction eliminates barriers and provides regional content on the app.

08 Localization

Localization support refers to the ability of OTT video to provide content in multiple languages. The widespread acceptance of subtitled content and audio description has made it easier for platforms to deliver more localized material.

Netflix and Disney are some of the most popular examples known for multi-lingual content.
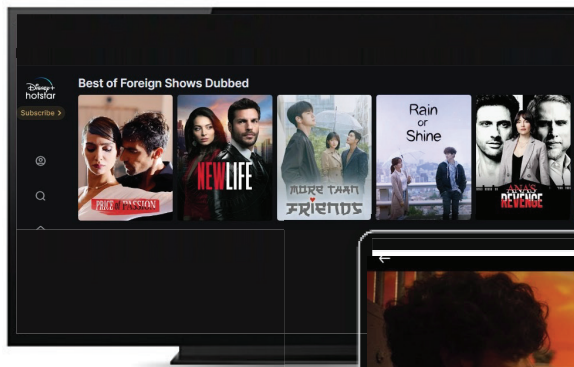
Disney Plus Hotstar suggests foreign movies dubbed in local languages, expanding its reach to wider audience
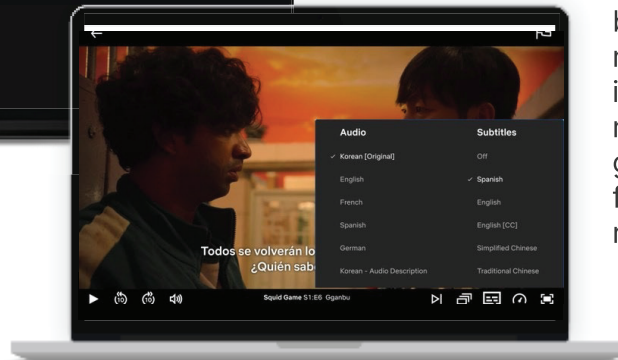
Squid Game was released in Korean language but because of its multi-lingual support, it became one of the most watched shows globally within just a few weeks after its release

It must be ensured that language barriers do not hinder users from accessing and understanding the content provided by OTT Players.

Multi-lingual supports all users with native language proficiency and the users who face hearing difficulties.

Localization support with native subtitle feature allows brands to engage a **wider and more diverse audience.**

Businesses cater to these customers with local content, support, and services by addressing their native language preferences.

OTT players can engage users deeply by offering **culturally appropriate and relevant content** to diverse customer segments.

This demonstrates the company's understanding of users' needs, preferences, values, and fosters their engagement.

According to Netflix, 95% of the users who watched Squid Games on Netflix were from outside Korea.

Users love to watch good content irrespective of the language. So, including more localized content on the platform is important.

09 Offline Viewing

A download option enables the users to view their favorite videos offline when they are unable to connect to the internet or when they do not wish to use their mobile data plan.

Consumers value the convenience of watching their favorite content whenever they want, wherever they want.
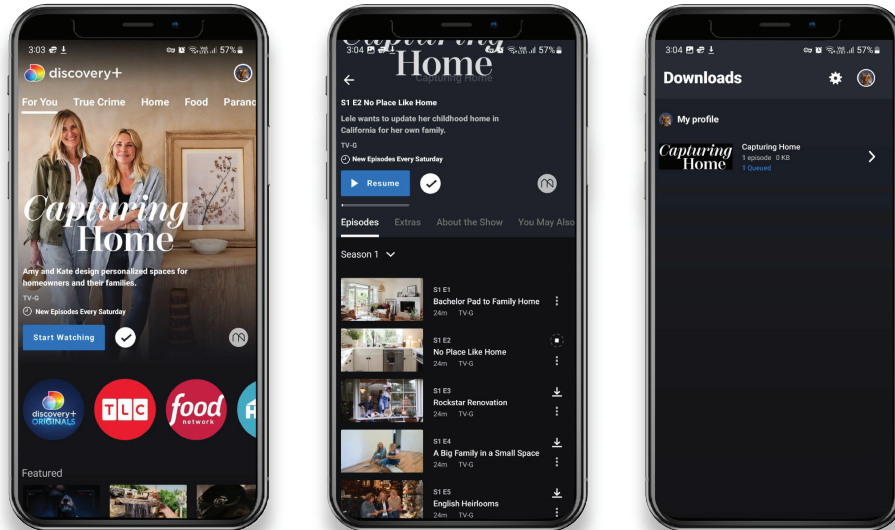
Users can conveniently download movies, TV shows, to their devices and watch them offline, such as during travel, in areas with limited or no internet access

By offering offline access, platforms encourage users to stay subscribed and continue using the service.

The viewers may enjoy the uninterrupted viewing experience which might happen due to a lot of ads or poor internet connectivity.

No additional data cost as **users can watch the video multiple times in the same downloaded video qualit**y until the video expires from the download section.

Netflix's **smart downloads feature automatically deletes watched episodes then downloads the next episode,** if a reliable network is available.

It enables convenient user connection with the content, improving satisfaction and increasing engagement for avid binge-watchers.

10 Live Streaming

OTT live streaming is a broadcasting method used to deliver live video content over the internet. Viewers can watch live streaming of videos on a variety of devices, including smartphones, TV, tablets, and computers.
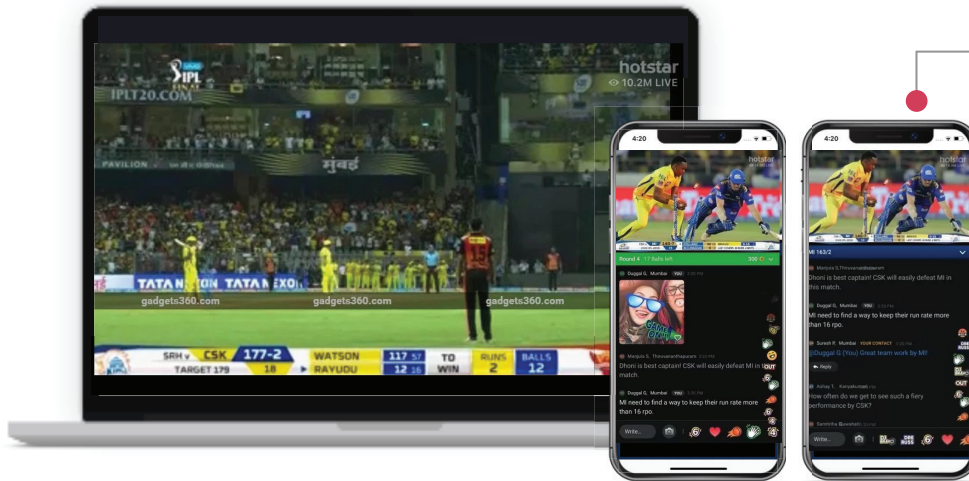
When sports or other events are live-streamed, users get engaged by having a platform to discuss and react to the comments

Live streaming allows people to **attend events remotely** on the platform, overcoming venue capacity constraints.

Disney+ Hotstar and JioCinema engage millions of users streaming live sports in real time with the popular Indian Premier League cricket tournament. It achieved a world record of 10.3 million concurrent viewers on any live event.

Incorporating interactive elements like **polls, Q&A sessions, and gamification** enhances user engagement and immersion. It fosters a **deeper connection between users and the content,** making the experience more engaging and immersive.

Many platforms such as Prime Video and Hulu have started leveraging the ever-growing sports streaming sector to attract new viewers and retain the existing ones.

The psychological drive to **access exclusive and time-sensitive content during live** streaming fuels user engagement.

Users with a Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) mentality actively engage in live-streaming events to stay updated and be part of the shared experience.

The implications:
impact on customer engagement and loyalty

1 Gamification hooks users to the competitive excitement

2 Personalized experience keeps users coming back for more.

3 Watch Party facilitates a shared viewing experience among groups with similar interests.

4 Push notifications help brand stay connected with current and lapsed users

5 In-app messaging keeps users updated and engaged

6 Cross-platform experience gives control to viewers for seamless viewing across devices.

7 Smart search using voice helps in easy content discovery.

8 Localization support helps brands can break barriers and reach a global audience.

9 Offline viewing offers convenience of an anytime, anywhere viewing.

10 Live streaming helps create a sense of immediacy and community.

About
Robosoft Technologies

Robosoft Technologies is a full-service digital experience company, with a mission to Simplify Lives. We offer end-to-end solutions in product advisory, design, engineering, and analytics. The delightful, intuitive digital experience we craft help enterprises offer great customer experiences and drive brand preference. We have partnered with several prestigious brands in various industries and crafted over 2000 digital experiences with our apps garnering over a billion downloads.

Select clients for whom we have designed and built engaging, multi-platform OTT experiences enjoyed by millions across the world:

discovery+   food K   MAGNOLIA NETWORK   CANELA MEDIA

GCN GLOBAL CYCLING NETWORK   WILLOW   VIACOM 18   ESPN