

How to Create PROMOS THAT WILL ROCK YOUR BIZ



How to Create PROMOS THAT WILL ROCK YOUR BIZ

According to [Kotler](#), sales promotion is a “diverse collection of incentive tools, mostly short term, designed to stimulate quicker and/or greater purchase of particular products/services by consumers or the trade. Where advertising offers a reason to buy, sales promotion offers an incentive to buy.” In other words, promotions are an excellent way of boosting sales over a short amount of time by offering something exceptional to your target audience.

As a small business, we realize you might not have the budget to hire a top ad agency and get millions of impressions, nor is it easy to have your campaign become the latest viral sensation. So here's an easy 8-step plan to launching successful promos that will help you rock your biz and meet your revenue goals.

1 Set Your Goals

As with any marketing campaign it is very important to clarify what you are trying to achieve, not just for accountability, but also to manage expectations and have an endgame in mind. So before you do any further planning, decide exactly what you are looking to accomplish:

Brand Awareness:

Get your company name out there, as potential customers will be more comfortable doing business with you if they've heard of your company beforehand. This campaign will also help reinforce the benefits of using your product/service over your competitors and keep you top of mind with your existing customers, should they be tempted to look elsewhere.

Lead Generation:

Collect names and contact information of potential customers that you can add to your sales funnel and mailing list for follow-up.

Acquisition:

Convince prospects to purchase your product or subscribe to your service and grow your customer base.

Retention:

Cater to your current customers, reward them for their loyalty and give them incentive to continue spending money with you.

Regain Churned Customers:

If your former customers haven't opted out of receiving further information from you, win them back by offering them something special, and remind them of what made your product/service so appealing in the first place.

Regardless of what you are trying to achieve, set [Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#) you want to track (i.e., revenue, new customers, etc.). They need to be relevant to your objectives and allow you to gauge the success of your campaign. Even though you'll want to keep these realistic, don't be afraid to **stretch your goals** somewhat, putting some positive pressure on yourself and your team to exceed expectations.



2 Look Back at Historical Data

Once you have your goals, set benchmarks to have an idea of what to expect from your upcoming promotion. To do so, take a look at your existing data from previous promotions if you have it, or your regular customers' purchase behavior:

What Has Worked:

See which of your past campaigns have done well and analyze what factored into that success (i.e., trends/seasonality, messaging, offer).

What Hasn't Worked:

Take a look at what hasn't performed well, identify the reasons those campaigns haven't been up to par and avoid the same pitfalls.

Surveys:

If you're unsure what kind of offer might spur prospects or customers to do further business with you, what better way than to ask? Sending out a survey to a sample of your potential audience or one with a similar purchase behavior will help tailor your promotion to suit their needs.

Refine Your Goals:

Now that you have your benchmarks, you'll be able to compare them to your plan. See if you set the bar too high or too low and, if need be, adjust accordingly.



3 Pick Your Targets

Depending on the goals you set, you'll want to target your audience based on their status in the sales cycle (prospects, leads, customers, churn). However, there are even more segments that you should take into account:

Industry:

If your product/service is geared towards B2B, make sure the people you intend on sending your promotion to fit within the verticals that typically purchase from you or have a need for what you have to offer.

Size:

Again, if you are targeting companies, take a look at their number of employees, revenue, etc. by using databases such as [infoUSA](#) and decide whether your offering would be a good fit for them.

Demographic:

Your product or service might cater more to the 18-25 crowd, or maybe the female population. Whatever the case, know your consumer beforehand and send your message to the right people.

Geographic:

If your business operates locally, or if your product/service applies more to metropolitan areas for example, you should restrict your net to your optimal zone(s) of influence.

Testing:

As always, perform a test (or multiple) on a sample of your intended audience to see whether your targeting method was correct before proceeding with the full campaign.



4 Craft Enticing Offers

There are typically 3 kinds of sales promotions that you can offer:

Discounts:

This is the most commonly seen type of promotion. According to the [PMA \(Promotion Marketing Association\)](#), over 76% of the population uses coupons or promo codes, but you can also insert discounts under the shape of a loyalty program. The rebate can lower the barrier to entry that may have prevented potential customers from purchasing from you earlier.



Contests:

Setting up an exciting contest is a great way to generate buzz and awareness around your company. However, make sure to keep the prize related to your brand. Indeed, giving away free iPads might get you a high conversion rate at first, but the quality of customers might not be what you were hoping for, (i.e., they may have purchased or signed up just to get their iPad), not necessarily out of interest in your company, producing a high [churn rate](#) in the mid- to long-term.

Sampling:

Giving away free samples may not seem like a cost-effective way to generate profit, but sometimes you need to give some in order to win a lot. When Seth Godin first released his book “The Idea Virus,” he gave it away for free as an e-book. In less than 30 days, 400,000 copies were downloaded, and the buzz created pushed people to buy the hard copy, making it crack the Amazon top 5 best-seller list.

Take Risks: Just as we suggested you stretch your goals a little, don’t be afraid to push the envelope when crafting your offer. Remember, you need to give your audience a stronger incentive than usual in order to generate profit in the short time frame that you set, but the rewards, if handled correctly, might be well worth your while.

5 Messaging

Once you’ve settled on the type of promotion you want to launch, build a message around it that will get people to buy. Here are some criteria your message should meet:

Be Timely:

Base the timing of your message off your research on trends and seasonality, but also which day and time is best to hit your audience. Also, if you’re going with seasonal themes for your creative direction, make sure they actually are seasonal (i.e., don’t send a Christmas-themed promo in the middle of May).

Stay Targeted:

If you’re running a number of campaigns at the same time, send the right one to the right audience (for example, don’t send “we missed you” to a lead instead of a churn customer).

Be Concise:

A recipient should be able to understand, in just a few seconds, the deal you’re offering and what he/she would gain by taking advantage of it. Get straight to the point, state benefits in just a couple of sentences and finish with a strong call to action so your reader will have no doubt what you are asking them to do.

Stay Consistent:

Make sure the messaging in your email, on your Facebook, Twitter, landing page, etc. is consistent. Don’t confuse your audience with mixed messages.

Be Appealing:

You want to make your offer as attractive as possible to incite your targeted consumer to take action. It needs to be enticing enough to lead to a quick conversion, but cost-effective enough for you to generate Return On Investment (ROI).



6 Communicate Across Multiple Channels

There are many ways for you to spread the word about your promotion:

Email:

Probably the most effective and cost-efficient of all (over \$40 ROI for every dollar spent per the [DMA or Direct Marketing Association](#)), email is a simple, targeted and trackable way for you to deliver your carefully crafted message.

Social Media:

Social marketing is a great way to leverage your existing community. It allows customers to generate some buzz on your behalf or even turn some potential customers into new ones. Using tools such as [Roost](#) allows you to schedule your posts in a strategic manner and also share your message across several social channels from one platform.

Direct Mail:

Direct mail is an oldie but a goodie, and some people prefer having a physical object in hand as it's easier for them to remember.

Pay Per Click (PPC)/Banner Ads/Contextual:

If you have a running PPC campaign, all you need to do is switch out the wording of your ads to reflect your promotion, maybe add a few keywords, and you should be all set. The same applies to banner and contextual ads you might be running on different websites.

Landing Pages/Microsites:

These can be launched specifically for your campaign, and can act as a great hub to send your recipients to in order to take advantage of your offer, where it will be easy for you to track them.

Website:

If you have a website, add a banner or links pointing to your campaign's landing page.

Point of Purchase:

If you are selling your product or offering your service at a brick and mortar location, you can run a promotion there as well, by handing out samples or flyers/coupons on the spot.

Tradeshow Booths:

If you're at a tradeshow or conference, offer a promotion at your booth or table, as a show special. Coordinate with the show organizers so they can help you advertise it to the attendees, insert an ad in the show guide, and greet all the people interested at your booth. Don't forget to collect their contact information there too.

Traditional (TV, Radio, Print, Billboards):

If your budget allows for it and your target audience has proven more likely to prefer these means of communication, consider exploring these avenues.

All these touch points are not mutually exclusive and you should definitely look at combining at least a few of them. Remember, the more times you hit your intended consumer, the more your chances of converting them increase.



7 Measure Your Results

Set up Your Measuring Tools Beforehand:

Whether it's spreadsheets, dashboards, analytics tools (Google Analytics or Omniture SiteCatalyst) or all of the above, don't wait until your campaign has already started to get tracking in place. You could miss out on some valuable data from the get-go.

Zero in on the Right Metrics:

As mentioned earlier, focus on the numbers that are most relevant to what you are trying to achieve.

Analyze and Interpret:

Break down your results and see what they really mean, don't just take them at face value. For example, you might have gotten a lot of impressions from your PPC campaign, and while that would be great if your goal was just to generate some brand awareness, it wouldn't be if your goal was mainly to gain new customers and the conversion rate was abysmal.

One thing to keep in mind too, is that even though most promotions increase sales, they also lose money. **Only 17% of a given set of promo campaigns is estimated to be profitable per Kotler.** So don't panic, you'll be reaping the rewards in the long run as you'll have gotten your name out and/or gained new customers.



8 Sit Back and Review

What Worked?

Whether your campaign was successful or not, there are always good things that will come out of it. Take the time to congratulate yourself and your team, and analyze what went right that you could use again in the future.

What Didn't?

Beyond the results, whether good or bad, look back at the hiccups you encountered along the way, either in planning, process or execution.

Survey:

Don't be afraid to reach out to your consumers to see what they thought of your campaign.

Prep Your Next Promo:

Once you've gathered all your findings, you can go ahead and start planning your next venture.

Final Recommendations:

- Use promotions that complement or enhance your brand image and add value.
- Use sales promotions with advertising. Advertising explains why the customer should buy the product, and sales promotion provides the incentive to buy. When used together, ads and promos make a powerful combination.
- Beware of people that buy your product based purely on the discount/sample you offered, and might never come back again. Reach out to them and give them incentive to keep doing business with you on a regular basis.
- Use sales promotions sparingly. Even though they are a great tool to meet your sales quota in a relatively short amount of time, they can devalue your brand in your consumers' minds. This can lead them to wait for the next promotion instead of buying now.

