

The Promotion Locomotion

The art of persuasion is certainly one of the cornerstones of great marketing, and the effectiveness of a campaign designed to create interest is greatly enhanced when the interest is converted into a “gotta have” situation. Sometimes the best way to encourage conversion is through incentive. Herein lies the driving motivation behind the promotion. Promos help increase visibility and sometimes can enhance your credibility or image. Most of all, promotions can drive sales. And that’s the primary reason to consider incorporating them as a core element in your overall marketing strategy.

Tudog likes promotions because they can be used on a rotating basis, renewing consumer awareness and interest in your company by giving them another (new) reason to pay attention to you and what you offer. Promos can also serve to create an immediacy that drives consumers to respond to an offer that will be here and gone if they don’t act quickly enough. These attributes combine to make the use of promotions practically essential, even though so many companies that know they should be using them shy away because of perceived cost or operational issues. To make it easier (and take away excuses) Tudog presents 7 promotions you can implement at low cost and will sufficient fanfare to attract and engage your customers. The first four are for companies in the products sector, and the last 3 are for service companies. They are:

1. Contests – contests are a great way of getting people to pay attention to you. Everyone likes to test their luck, and as long as your contest does not have too high a cost of entry (Tudog likes NO cost of entry), people will respond and give your contest a try. The trick to a successful contest (beyond making sure everything is handled in accordance with the laws and regulations governing contests) is to make sure your company and/or product plays a central role in either the enrollment or fulfillment side and that the give-away is attractive enough to generate excitement and involvement. A good example of the use of contests are the soft drink companies (Coca Cola & Pepsi) who run contests (usually in the summer months) that require multiple purchases and have high rates of prize redemption.

2. Bonuses – the ability to add on value is a tremendous asset that should be utilized in a calculated manner. By adding on something that would otherwise have additional costs you can create incentive, demonstrate appreciation, and attract new customers. The bonuses need to be consistent with the initial purchase, which allows the consumer to measure (and therefore appreciate) the bonus. If you give away something that is unrelated, it is likely to be unappreciated, which will, of course undermine your entire purpose in offering the bonus. Many supermarkets, often in conjunction with food manufacturers, offer bonuses in their buy one-get one programs that provide consumers with immediate benefit with an item they clearly have an interest in.

3. Samples – samples remove the element of risk for the customer by allowing them to test the product and see for themselves that the claims you are making are accurate. By providing a sample (or test period) you also give the consumer the chance to appreciate your product, meaning that if the appreciation is sufficient, they will purchase the product. The best example of sampling in use is The Sharper Image, which allows customers to enjoy a relaxing massage in one of their massage chairs, in the hope that they will get enough pleasure from it to want one of their own at home.

4. Give-Aways – give-aways, or premiums, are a small gift that can be used to either promote a related product or advertise your company. The use of a premium is often seen as being limited to special events, but can (and should) be extended to more common applications. While many companies give away premiums like pens and key chains on a somewhat regular basis, few follow the example set by the perfume and high end cosmetic companies, where they give away trials of one product with the purchase of another. Sometimes the give away is also something with more practical use, like a small cosmetic bag. In both instances, the give away is both a sign of appreciation and an incentive for consumers to buy.

5. Newsletters – newsletters serve a number of critical purposes simultaneously. They provide benefit to your audience by communicating to them information they will find important and useful. You are also demonstrating your expertise, so that they can see that you are well versed in your area of operation. You are also communicating with them on a regular basis so that they are always in front of you and can contact you as the need for your services arise. Many service companies offer newsletters and they are an inexpensive way to serve your clients while you promote your company.

6. Seminars & Lectures - seminars and lectures are a good channel for both demonstrating expertise and delivering benefit to your clients. It is also a great way to attract new clients. The trick with seminars is that they need to contain of sufficiently compelling subject matter so as to attract and maintain an audience. You should also make certain that your scheduling maximizes your attendance potential by having the timing and duration match the needs of your audience. Most importantly, the majority of seminars today are used as direct sales mechanisms, meaning that they are merely live “infomercials” that try to cut a sale to attendees at the end of the show. Tudog does not encourage this sort of seminar, for while they may lead to some direct sales, they also serve to alienate others. Those who will buy on the spot will consider buying afterward, as will others who will ponder the expertise you shared and want to seek out more. Your seminars should be promoting your company and your knowledge. Let the sales happen, but don’t make the seminar the direct conduit.

7. Articles – writing articles for a trade journal or other business publication is also an excellent way to promote your company by disseminating valuable know-how and positioning yourself as an expert. Your articles also offer you a chance to expand your reputation beyond your consumer base by reaching out to the publication’s entire subscription base.

In addition to all these promotional hints, the most effective promotional tool you have is your service and the way you treat the people you are most dependent on – your customers. Make sure you are sufficiently expressive in your commitment to them and your appreciation of them.

Business is like a train. The flow can be delightful to watch as things progress full steam ahead. Yet, every now and then, something brings us off track and if we don’t anticipate and understand the dangers ahead of time, we can face disaster. One way to stay on track is to board the promotion locomotion. Keep your customers happy and so too shall you be.