

Giveaways That Gratify You, Too

By Marcia Yudkin

Giveaways That Gratify You, Too

Marcia Yudkin
marcia@yudkin.com

Creative Ways <http://www.yudkin.com/marketing.htm>

"Yours free!" It's a rare head that doesn't turn at that news. By offering freebies that zero in on the interests and desires of your target market, you can take advantage of this powerful psychological appeal to grow your business. And by choosing giveaways with news value for your audience, you can easily enlist the aid of the media in spreading the word about your offering to prospective customers. Here's how.

Great giveaway strategy begins with a wise choice of your free item. You'll be tempted to give away what you sell for a limited time, but according to veteran online publicist Steve O'Keefe, this is a huge mistake, undercutting the perceived value of the giveaway product. People won't buy what they see being given away or what they know was given away in the past.

Instead, the best giveaway, both for its appeal to your target market and for its newsworthiness to magazines in your industry, is something that people can get only by satisfying the conditions of your giveaway. They can't buy it from you and they can't get it from another supplier, either. This could be an industry directory with a novel twist, a cleverly worded T-shirt, a set of third-party product reviews or some sort of corporate toy. Along with maintaining the exclusivity of the giveaway, make sure the item is something wanted mainly by your prospective customers rather than the general public.

Similarly, be careful how you publicize the free offer, because you could find yourself with an enormous number of inappropriate requests if some "best things in life are free" operator passes along news of your freebie to junior high students, retirees who like to collect things or missionaries without any income of their own to do business with you. You might even qualify those asking for your

giveaway item by requiring a request faxed on company stationery or an online form filled out. To protect yourself from an endless obligation to fulfill the offer, set an expiration date for the giveaway.

Giveaways can work very well as lead generators. When I gave away thousands of copies of a free booklet called "Six Steps to Free Publicity," it was safe to assume that anyone requesting it was a potential candidate for publicity-related products and services. The mailing list from that giveaway helped build my business.

You can also offer giveaways as a bonus for a certain number or dollar value of sales. For instance, the Talisman Billiards Accessories Company in Thailand offers a free golf shirt for every offer over \$70. "I do see a lot of people increasing their order to get the free bonus," says Tony Jones, Talisman's general manager. The golf shirt would need a humorous imprint or some hard-to-find design relevant to the audience to be considered newsworthy, so you'll need creativity if media coverage is among your aims. Put on your thinking cap for a giveaway with pull power!

Marcia Yudkin marcia@yudkin.com is the author of the classic guide to comprehensive PR, "6 Steps to Free Publicity," now for sale in an updated edition at Amazon.com and in bookstores everywhere. She also spills the secrets on advanced tactics for today's publicity seekers in "Powerful, Painless Online Publicity," available from www.yudkin.com/powerpr.htm .

Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)