

Promotions - a simple way to get more sales!

By Peter Simmons

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Peter Simmons
peter@dynamiq.co.uk

DYNAMIQ.CO.UK <http://www.dynamiq.co.uk>

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Everybody loves a bargain or special offer, especially at Christmas time when they'll be spending lots of money on other people. Traditionally the Christmas season has always had a big impact on businesses, some relying on it more than others, it can provide 20-80% of their annual income. So with the biggest event of the year rapidly approaching, what are you doing to benefit from this spending frenzy? Don't worry if you're not doing anything yet, we'll give you some ideas and tips to get you well on your way.

What exactly do I mean by promotions? Well, some advertisement, event or offer designed to get you a given result. Common examples of promotions: free or discounted product/service, buy x get x, limited editions, promotional items, specials, etc. Where words like offer, discount, only, special, sale, bargain, reduced, free, and my favourite word combination 'special offer', introduce a certain magical spark.

By now you'll no doubt be thinking, and rightly so, What's in it for me? Well, just about everything you could wish for! More sales, higher visibility, educate about your products/services, increase mailing lists, profits, growth, income, etc.

What results do these promotions get? Done well, they can achieve significant results: more sales, increase visibility of company name and products, add subscribers to mailing lists, etc. Ever been walking in your local shopping area or reading online and BANG! an offer jumps out at you, or you just cant stop thinking about something you've just seen? The impact on the viewer can be high indeed and will make YOU stand out above everyone else, ultimately making the difference between getting the sale and not getting the sale.

One of the benefits of a promotion is that you can choose the scale depending on your resources and desired results. In its simplest form it can be a simple price discount with a couple of lines of text on your website or emails. Or it could be a big production event being promoted widely on and

offline by a whole organization. Whatever scale it is, effectiveness is the key to success.

What makes an effective promotion? Easily understood, good offers with clearly defined objectives.

Online promotions have a clear advantage over traditional offline promotions. They can be updated/tailored instantly, anytime, anywhere with Internet access and at low cost. Use this advantage.

What type of promotion should you do? Well, something related to the business you are in or your customers needs. Offer something more interesting, better, cheaper, useful, etc.? For ideas see what your competitors are doing and better or improve it in some way.

What in it for your prospect/customer? A discounted or free product/service, more features, useful information or tools, more status or facilities, promotional items, etc.

When will you run the promotion? Leading up to an annual event, particular month, permanently, every week on your quietest sales day, etc. Consider starting and promoting it long before the event so people have a good opportunity to take up the promotion offered.

Where will you promote the promotion? Online, offline, both, webpages, email, pop-up ads, traditional mail, advertising, newspapers, magazines, mailshots, etc.

What resources will you need to run the promotion? people, online facilities, offline facilities, time, overall cost, physical space, computer software/hardware, literature design, instore space, materials, printing, events, event staff, etc.

Are there any other elements you should consider? Yes, particularly the element of time. Depending on the promotion you do it may be beneficial to introduce the element of time to lever the potential customer into buying now. It stands to reason that if the offer is only available for a limited time it makes it more special and urgent. e.g. Offer valid until given date, buy today and get x, today only, etc.

Don't be afraid to experiment with the descriptions and tone of voice you use. Study promotions elsewhere, particularly suppliers who tend to use a more direct approach, to see what effect they have on you and if you should adopt their approach.

And finally, if the promotion doesn't get you the desired results, figure out why and change it. The more you experiment to find what offers work, the more you will understand your market, their needs and desires. Armed with this valuable information everything you do in the future will be targeted more effectively.

Some tips:

You can run a promotion at any time.

Try to design the promotion to get maximum results for minimum effort and resources.

It can be as simple as you want it to be. See our website for a simple example.

Consider how much ongoing time you will need to allocate to the promotion. Will it increase at times, etc.?

Can you measure and monitor the results accurately?

Will it be easy to update and tailor the offer quickly.

Good luck!

If you found this article useful, feel free to forward it to friends, family and associates!

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