

# Using Online Contests to Drive Traffic to Your Website

By Bob Bishop

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Internet Traffic Tips <http://www.internettraffictips.com>

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This weekend I went to Costco and signed up to "win" a dozen eggs. Just for giving them my name, address and email address. Now I know exactly what they're going to do with this information. So did everyone else in line. These must have been some REALLY GOOD eggs! Oh, by the way, by the time I got home from shopping there was already an email in my box telling me about a special they had going on next week! It's a pretty good special so I guess I'll be going to Costco again next week.

Online contests can create a frenzy of visitors to your site, if done properly.

First of all you'll need to offer a substantial prize for the top winner. And smaller prizes for the runners up. Also make sure you've come up with a set of rules and explain exactly how the winner will be chosen.

To get the best exposure for this, you should do everything you can to get the word out, forums, search engines, newsletters, display ads, banners ads, in any and all offline advertisements. The key here is to get as many people to sign up for your contest as possible. And don't forget to get their email addresses.

There are several websites that target people who are looking to enter contests. Just do a search in Google, or your favorite search engine for "contests". Then look for a link on each site that will tell you how to submit a contest. Some will ask for a fee some are free. You'll probably want to start with the free ones first since, after all, you're on a tight budget.

What do you get out of a contest?

First of all you should be getting an email address from everyone that signs up. As you get more experience at marketing your website you'll learn that all those email addresses you've been collecting are worth their weight in gold!

Sure you're going to give away a prize. And don't fudge on this! Always give away the prize! The first time that you do not give it away will be the time that someone notices and spreads the word about your bogus contest. This is not good. Word spreads quickly on the internet.

But what about all those email addresses? Ok, you've given away the first prize. Now what?

How about offering the second, third and fourth place winners a substantial discount on your product or service? And for everyone else that signed up why not offer them a discount as well? Once they buy from you once, if they like your product or service, they will be much more eager to buy from you again and again, and again...

The email that you send them could read as follows...

Dear (name),

Thanks for entering our contest. The winner was (name) and boy were they excited! However, we don't want anyone to walk away a loser so we're going to offer you the same (product/ service) for a substantial discount just for entering our contest. When you call our toll free number (or whatever way you take orders) and order, make sure you mention your special contest code. You'll automatically be given a 50% discount! (or whatever the discount may be).....

Now, your situation may vary and you'll have to change it accordingly but you get the idea. If you're going to use their email for any purpose other than the contest make sure you let them know in advance.

You may want to include a line in the rules stating that "we may use your email address in the future for the purposes of informing you of future products we may offer (many times at a substantial discount)"...

But never, and I mean NEVER sell or rent or give away these email addresses to anyone! Those addresses are your most valuable asset. Once you do, you lose all credibility.

Contests can be a valuable weapon in your arsenal of marketing tools. Be sure to do them right and always follow through. Make sure even the losers become winners. If they like your product they will be your customers for life!

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go make an egg sandwich!

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