

How to run a mobile marketing competition

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The thought of running a mobile marketing competition can be daunting to many as they scramble through the what, how, where, when questions that first come to mind. However, I can proudly say that all you need is to fulfill a simple and easy mobile competition shopping list.

Like running any other competition, when running a mobile competition there are certain steps that need to be followed:

First and foremost is to plan the mechanics around your competition. This involves defining your goals, like asking yourself why you are running this competition? Is it to build a database, profile your customers or to drive sales only? Part of planning the competition is ensuring it will comply with legislation. Once these mechanics have been planned they need to be implemented allowing enough time for thorough testing.

A major success factor of a mobile competition is in the promotion or advertising: if you do not allocate enough budget to this, or use the wrong medium to carry your call to action, you can have the best campaign ever - but nobody is going to know about it! Another key success factor is to continually drive your campaign whilst it is running by keeping it top of mind, in a valuable way, through messaging. This is not just about saying "the more you enter the more you can win" because that is not valuable either to the brand or the consumer. This way you are setting the expectation that you are building a relationship with the brand and will continue to talk to them when you have something of value to tell them. The last and probably one of the most important steps of this plan involves measuring the competition, keeping an eye out on responses. This is not only to see whether the campaign objectives were achieved at the end of the campaign, but to be able to tweak the campaign to maximise what is working better and minimise what's not. Generally speaking mobile marketing is flexible enough to do this.

Plan it!

The most crucial aspects to consider in this phase are what the aim of your competition is as well as who you are targeting? What's their age? Income level? Are they predominantly in rural or urban areas? Answers to the above questions make the selecting of an entry mechanism much easier. However when deciding on an entry mechanism there are various factors to consider such as cost to participant, ease of use of the mechanism, familiarity of use with target market, amount of information you want to gather etc. With that being said there are various entry mechanisms that can be used for mobile competitions namely SMS Short Code, USSD, Mobile Web Form, FMS (Free Messaging Service) and social media like Facebook. (Case Studies that explain some of these entry mechanics are available for in-depth reading in the Case Studies section of the magazine.)

Many people are often very confused and unsure about one of these entry mechanisms - USSD - and thus ask the following questions:

What is USSD?

USSD can be seen as a text based IVR that can capture information and give answers to the caller.

Why use it?

Firstly USSD is cheaper for the consumer than a SMS Short Code: 20 cents per 20 seconds. Furthermore it requires no software to be downloaded and works across all phones thus facilitating the exchange of information and data capture.

When to use it?

USSD is usually used when the competition is aimed at those of lower income levels as it is well understood by this target

market as a result of their usage of "Please Call Me" and "Air-time Purchase".

The big question now is when to use what entry mechanism? Well, the answer to that depends on your answers to the questions above as well as to how much information you would like to gather from your participant. Some tools have high reach but are only able to capture the cell number, like the FMS option, whereas a Mobile app interaction can provide you with really rich information but from a niche audience.



Most importantly before implementing your competition you need to ensure that it complies with the current and upcoming legislation: The Consumer Protection Act (CPA), Protection of Personal Information (POPI), WASPA Advertising Guidelines and Code of Conduct and the Lotteries Act.

When you receive the participant's competition entry, it is important to reply to them so that they know their entry was at least received and did not go into cyberspace! This entry confirmation should include a thank you for entering, where terms and conditions can be found, draw dates and prizes.

Prizes are also an important consideration when planning your competition: Are you going to offer guaranteed prizes, instant gratification prizes such as ring tones and airtime, cash, gift cards or the latest gadget. How are you going to validate the winner? How will you deliver the prize to them? Careful consideration of the prizes are crucial to the success of your competition. An unhappy winner can cause a lot of anxiety... so work through the logistics upfront.

Drive it!

The two important questions to be asked is WHERE and HOW do you promote the competition. In doing this you would need to consider the entry mechanism you have chosen in conjunction with where it is going to be advertised: print? radio? television? outdoor? mobile advertising? social media?

Additionally when promoting your competition it is crucial that the instructions on how to enter are clearly stated. According to the CPA, the following should be communicated on your advertisement: what the person has to do to enter, how the winners will be decided, the competition closing date, medium where the winners will be announced and where the terms and conditions can be found.

Learn from it!

So with all this exciting information about mobile competitions and the mechanics that can be utilized, it is important to remember it is not about the technology but rather how you use that technology and as marketers it is our job to open up all the channels of communication possible to our customers and let them choose how they want to communicate with us at that point in time.

Wishing you good luck as you enter your next Mobile Competition! If you need a helping hand, please feel free to call your international, award winning, personal mobile marketing consultants, Mobitainment!

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