

Sweeps Win Big in Digital

Five key ways marketers are leveraging digital tech for sweepstakes and contests

Harry & David recently ran a social sweepstakes to celebrate spring. It was an egg hunt of sorts that sent players clicking around the Web in search of clues that would lead them to seven hidden eggs. The hunt sent the players to Harry & David's social sites, including Facebook and Twitter, and was a fun way for the brand to get consumers to participate in its social communities and learn more about the brand itself and its products. Each egg found awarded the players an entry into a sweepstakes for a chance to win a \$500 Harry & David gift card.

The digital world has opened up new opportunities for sweepstakes marketers. Digital provides more precise targeting, better quality leads and, through viral share, can send sweeps' promotions spanning the globe with little effort on the marketer's part.

Let's take a look at five significant ways digital has upended what's old to make it new again to improve the ROI of sweepstakes and contests.

1. OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION

Optical Character Recognition, or OCR, is the identification of printed characters using photoelectric devices and computer software.

OCR is a technique consumer packaged goods companies in particular are testing and finding value in. To convert the above definition to a hypothetical example, a consumer walks into Dick's Sporting Goods and comes across a promotional display that alerts him or her to a sweepstakes. The rules call for the

consumer to purchase a pair of Merrell hiking boots and to digitally submit the receipt to show proof-of-purchase for a chance to win a trip to Alaska. Of course, an alternate non-purchase form of entry is also available. But in this scenario, the consumer buys the boots, takes a photo of the receipt with his or

her cell phone and uploads it to the promotion site where they register to play. The OCR technology scans and authenticates the receipt. The consumer is then notified through text or email depending on how they registered.

"The system will generally read the receipt in a matter of hours and if there is an issue a human will review it and determine its legitimacy," says Chris McGuire, vice president, general manager, at promotion agency SLANT.

"It's about 80% accurate."

This technology is gaining in appeal for marketers as word gets out and they see other brands testing it. It is particularly enticing to CPGs because retailers don't provide brands the rich base of data about customers that purchase their products. By using OCR

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"RETAILERS ALMOST NEVER SHARE THEIR CUSTOMER INFORMATION WITH PACKAGED GOODS COMPANIES, AND THIS IS ONE WAY TO GET THE INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM THE CONSUMER." — CHRIS MCGUIRE, SLANT

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that important consumer data about *who* purchased the Merrill hiking boots, when and where, is captured through OCR via the receipt. Additional data such as contact information is gathered through the registration process for remarketing or other marketing purposes.

Beyond sweepstakes, OCR has a number of applications including instant-win games. It can be used as part of a promotion to market any product from macaroni & cheese to a dining room table through multiple retailers. Often a typical share component supports the promotion that offers the player rewards, such as extra entries.

"It's an old technology with a new application," McGuire says. "I wouldn't say you would find hundreds of these promotions out there, but it's something that's becoming more appealing to brands as word gets out and they're interested in trying it. Retailers almost never share their customer information with packaged goods companies, and this is one way to get the information directly from the consumer."

2. USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-generated content (UGC) is back on the sweeps and contest circuit in a big way. The shift comes as the sought-after Millennial market is spending at least five hours a day engaged with UGC. This group also trusts and remembers UGC content more than they do traditional media, according to research from Ipsos MediaCT.

"Unlike previous generations that consumed professionally created content in magazines and on television, Millennials spend 30% of their media time on content created by their peers or the trusted sources

they follow on social networks," the study said.

The prominence of video also plays a large role in the resurgence of UGC for sweeps and contests. When a brand calls on consumers to create brand-in videos in exchange for a sweepstakes entry or skill contest, that brand gains a number of valuable benefits. The content is highly sharable to reach new markets around the globe. Brand-in content turns into brand experiences that convert to marketing messages supplying the brand with a stream of new and fresh content to post on content-hungry social feeds. And, UGC content delivers trust and deep engagement among consumers. Another benefit? Marketers get the unique opportunity to listen carefully as consumers talk about their brand.

"It's no longer about uploading a photo of a smiling baby or a pet to earn an entry," says Lisa Manhart, executive vice president, CMO, at sweepstakes administrator Ventura Associates International LLC. "Brands are taking advantage of the popularity of UGC video to encourage consumers to enter sweepstakes or real contests of skill that are judged. Brands need the content to keep their social platforms interesting and fresh for their consumers to come back to. They're getting the content from consumers rather than paying for it themselves."

Of course, UGC contests that involve submitting photos, essays and recipes can still drive impressive results.

Oreo ran a UGC contest last year with Albertsons, and other grocers, offering the chance to win a Polaroid CUBE camera for those who shared recipes using Oreo cookies.

The promotion site drew 6,000 unique visits and by the time all was said and done, Oreo sales were up and category growth at Albertsons was up 20%, said Kendal Callender, director of shopper marketing at Albertsons.

"It's a great way to engage your customer. People want to share their lives and this allows them to do it," she noted.

The methods to promote the contest included email to subscribers, P-O-P, banner ads, social media—heavy on visual-heavy Pinterest—and instant-redeemable coupons.

"The method to get the word out was to pull as many of the different marketing levers that we could to encourage people to share recipes," said Callen-



DO'S & DON'TS

- **Do keep it simple.** If entrants can't figure out how to enter, they won't. Make it convenient and seamless to enter by offering multiple platforms.
- **Do offer enticing prizes.** You don't have to spend a lot of money to have a compelling prize. We've seen prizes that have no market value generate more entries than expected.
- **Don't cut and paste official rules from the web.** Either hire an administrator expert in this space or have an attorney review and/or draft the rules for you.
- **Don't forget to check the social platform's guidelines.** If you are using a social media method of entering, it's important to check that platform's tips on running a sweepstakes, contest or game. — *Lisa Manhart, executive vice president, CMO, Ventura Associates International LLC*

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der. “We reignited the passion for Oreos and ultimately we reinvigorated the category.”

Retargeting was the “biggest piece of this” to keep the momentum going by reminding those who

EXCLUSIVE SWEEPSTAKES HELPS FATHEAD CONNECT WITH MILITARY FAMILIES

Molly McLeod, marketing project manager at graphic wall decal marketer Fathead, shares how her brand created a successful targeted discount campaign to the military community that increased engagement with this segment by 700%.

The military community is a very important segment for Fathead. It’s a growing, evergreen market that fits well with our product and we wanted to offer a sweepstakes and exclusive discount to members of the U.S. military and their families.

Fathead launched the monthly “Salute to Service Sweepstakes,” inviting active military members and their families to sign up for the chance to win one of five custom decals. This raised awareness about Fathead’s commitment to military members, which we built upon by debuting an everyday 20% military discount that was later increased to 25%.

Of course, Fathead had the same concerns as other companies about offering exclusive discounts. We wanted the entire military community to hear about the discount and the sweepstakes, but we didn’t want the offer to go truly viral, for fear of non-military customers who didn’t qualify trying to claim the discount. This would devalue the discount because we truly wanted to do something special for those who have served.

The company partnered with SheerID to use their document review process and verify whether a customer qualified for the military discount. This allowed Fathead to ask for secondary information to prove affiliation for military spouses and anyone else who cannot be verified instantly. We’ve found that people who are indeed eligible are willing to provide necessary information to qualify for the discount.

The everyday discount has resulted in a 700% increase in military engagement for Fathead: 70% of verified military members are customers. We also saw a 60% increase in unique visitors to our military landing page.

Once we felt confident that the military community was responding to the discount and the SheerID technology was preventing fraudulent use, we added a link from our homepage to the military landing page. When we gave added exposure to the offer, unique visitors to the military landing page increased up to 140%.



had interacted with the contest to join in,” said Steve McGowan, director of shopper marketing at Mondelez International, the marketer of Oreos.

3. MOBILE APPS

Mobile can be tricky. Mobile app sweepstakes are appropriate for longer-term initiatives versus a four-to-12 week program. Apps can be expensive to develop and can put people off when they have to go through the process of downloading an app just to do an activity.

“Mobile apps create a barrier to entering sweepstakes especially for mobile sweeps,” SLANT’s McGuire says. “Anytime you have an extra step you’re creating an extra reason for consumers not to enter. People are often not interested in putting another app on their phone unless they have a really good reason to have it.”

However, mobile sweeps apps do make sense for some brands like Starbucks or Dunkin’ Donuts who have lots of brand-app loyalty and very active members. They key is to make it easy and engaging.

“So many consumers these days are on the go so you want them to have a good user experience on their phones,” says Julie Link, co-founder at sweeps and contest agency Sync Marketing.

4. SOCIAL

Social has helped the marketing and execution of sweepstakes and contests literally explode across the globe. Let’s take a look at a few tactics that have taken hold.

The hashtag: Social media has handed sweepstakes marketers a gift in the hashtag.

For example, in the Harry & David sweepstakes using the #Eggciting-Hunt allowed players to easily find, follow and contribute to the conversation around the sweepstakes. Harry & David used the hashtag to tweet out clues like this one: Clue for Egg #3: “We like to hang out together, but we’re a handful,” paired with this photo. Players posted back when they found the eggs helping to keep the excitement and conversation going.



Entrants were invited to submit the names and email addresses of up to three friends and in return received three additional entries into the sweepstakes.

“We wanted to bring the traditional egg hunt to life in a digital format giving our fans a way to test their

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MAKING THE CASE: COSTA RX SUNGLASSES PROMOTION

One of the great things about sweepstakes and games is that they can be used to compliment any or all of the tactics identified as drivers of brand activation, and the same sweepstakes can function effectively across several disciplines. Here's a great example of a promotion by Costa Sunglasses that has done just that:

Promotion Costa Sunglasses—WAYPOINT Eye Care Professional Promotion

Objective Encourage training on the benefits of Costa Rx Sunglasses and increase purchases

Mechanics & Details Each time an Eye Care Professional ordered a pair of Costa prescription sunglasses, they received a sweepstakes entry and an instant-win game card. To see if they've won, the eye care professional simply matched the location revealed on their card to a provided in-store poster. Also, when a professional completed training on the Costa training module, hosted a consumer event or trunk show or posted on Twitter or Instagram with a promotion specific hash tag, they received an additional instant-win game card for each action. As an added incentive for professionals to promote Costa to their patients, there was a consumer sweepstakes overlay.

Prizes The random drawing grand prize as an eight-day/ seven night trip for the winner and guest to Tahiti for both one trade and one consumer winner. There were also more than 9,000 instant-win prizes many sponsors logoed and tied to product usage.

Brand Activation Drivers:

Content Marketing In store poster, sweeps and game materials, Costa training module, logoed/product usage related prizes

Promotion Marketing Trade matching instant-winner game and sweepstakes, consumer sweepstakes

Relationship Marketing Build repeat purchase/loyalty
Retailer Marketing Program evolves to include learning from previous promotions

Influencer Marketing Twitter and Instagram

Experiential Marketing Trunk Show

This promotion with some variations has been a winner for Costa Sunglasses for several years running. They have successfully utilized all of the drivers of brand activation woven together around sweepstakes and games. —Bruce Hollander, executive vice president/CMO, Don Jagoda Associates.

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skills with the clues we shared through the sweepstakes and learn more about our brands," says Lisa Bankston, director digital marketing, Harry & David. "It's a fun way to share the many exciting products we carry for special holidays and all year round."

Instagram: 2015 was the year brands got on board with Instagram. A visual platform with no algorithm, Instagram is a smart way for brands to get their message in front of several generations, including Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z.

"They are easy and fairly inexpensive, with Instagram gaining in the number of active users (300 million monthly active users) it's a more attractive platform to run promotions than Facebook," SLANT's McGuire says. "Since Facebook stopped its 'like gate,' the appeal for running promotions on Facebook has declined significantly."

Facebook: As of Nov. 5, 2014, Facebook said it would no longer allow pages to require a user to "Like" a page to gain access to content, contests, apps or rewards.

However, there are new ways to make some hay with sweepstakes on Facebook and get greater organic reach. One way is to get the promotion posted on a brand's Facebook page so it reaches that users most engaged friends, and as they interact it gets sent to more friends and on and on.

"It's all going into Facebook's algorithm," McGuire says. "If someone shares your post you're going to get a lot more exposure. A brand can sponsor a post, but then you're spending money, the best way is to get as much organic reach as you can."

He suggests running a promotion where, for example, consumers are encouraged to post a picture or write something on a brand's Facebook page in exchange for a sweepstakes entry. The site is programmed to auto-respond to that post with a link to open the microsite to register.

"By posting on that page you are engaging with and flagging that brand page as a popular brand that you're interested in; what they're doing and what they have to say" he says. "This activity registers high with Facebook's algorithm which provides more organic reach for the brand's future posts."

5. INFLUENCER MARKETING

Outside of viral share, there isn't a better way to expand the reach of a sweepstakes or contest than by putting the promotion under the influence of an influencer.

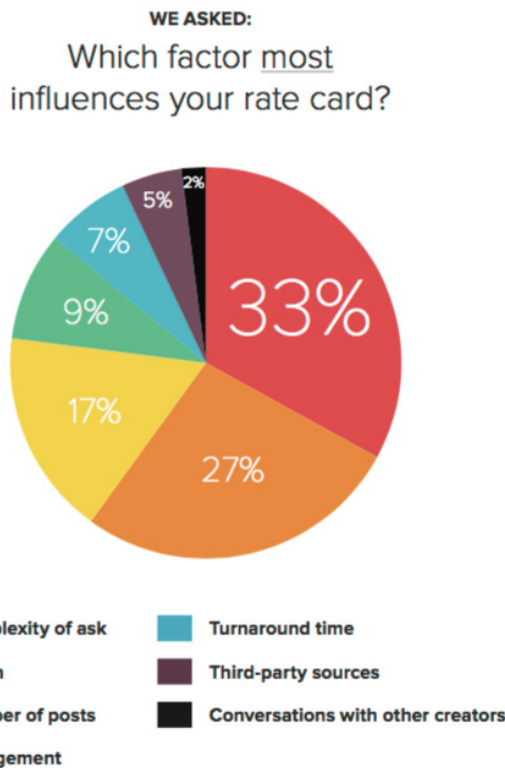
Some 75% of marketers are using influencers to connect with targeted, relevant audiences at scale. And on the flip side, a sizeable share of influencers—44%— said the number one motivator for working with a brand is if the opportunity is relevant to their

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audience, according to Crowdtap.

"There is a lot of interest in using influencers to promote contests and sweepstakes to get their fans to enter. If influencers talk about a particular product or service by extension their fans love the product or service," Crowdtap says.



Source: Crowdtap, The State of Influencer Marketing 2015

The Crowdtap research found that peer influencers and high-reach subject matter experts alike have roles in today's marketing landscape. For example, peer influencers—everyday consumers who create and share content as part of their daily routines—can be effective at seeding authentic ratings and reviews or generating content to produce buzz around a particular campaign or activation. Expert creators, on the other hand, should be utilized as trusted subject matter experts, providing not only reach to brands, but engagement, Crowdtap says.

Marketers can send influencers a "promo in a box" providing them with all the tools they need to run a sweepstakes through their own sites as well as on Instagram, Twitter, Websites and other appropriate channels. It's happening all across the web.

Influencer marketing drills down to the exact audience brands want to reach—Hispanics, African Americans, even Millennial moms who are interested in beauty products.

In one scenario, entrants can take a photo of them-

selves with a particular product and post it to the sweeps site to be entered for a chance to win a prize. The brand pulls the entries and the influencer reaches out to the winner creating excitement for the influencer and his or her fans and further exposure for the brand.

"This allows the influencer to engage with fans in a different way. Instead of just having an article about the brand the followers are now engaging with the brand," McGuire says.

Influencers also bring authenticity to the brand and promotion so it's important for the brand to allow the influencer to speak in his or her own voice.

"This year, brands really started to loosen control of the message and let influencers speak to their audience in their own language. Everyone—particularly marketers—talks about Millennials, but Millennials only believe messages that are authentic. Millennials don't want to read or see pre-packaged, contrived content, so the most successful brands let go of some control," Stephanie McCratic, CEO of influencer company Acorn, says.

THE DISH ON DIGITAL

Digital has changed the marketing and execution of sweepstakes and contests in dramatic ways. Chief Marketer spoke with Marla Altberg, CEO, at sweepstakes administration company Ventura Associates International LLC to get an update.

CHIEF MARKETER: What are your thoughts on how digital has changed sweepstakes and contest marketing?

MARLA ALTBERG: The online opportunities in our current environment have allowed marketers to exponentially increase their promotions' reach. This applies to all the social media opportunities available for nearly limitless and free viral marketing via all the sharing buttons and links, not to mention voting aspects, bloggers covering promotions in their own edit content, etc.

CM: Is there an international component?

ALTBERG: Digital has also permitted expansion of geographic reach. Recently we have experienced a growing number of our clients adding selected foreign countries to their entry eligibility profiles, thereby turning a "local" sweeps or contest into an international one. The convenience of email, Skype, etc., has allowed us to clear these promotions internationally seamlessly and quickly.

CM: Where are you seeing some important impacts for brands?

ALTBERG: Some of the most popular commercials over the past several years have included or were completely based upon user-generated content. Such consumer involvement at this scale in time and effort,

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in support of a favorite brand—for an opportunity to win a prize or simply for bragging rights—is staggering when you look back over the years, all thanks to digital developments.

CM: What are the benefits of using digital when measuring or determining the ROI of sweepstakes/contests?

ALTBERG: Between Google Analytics and all the programming capabilities, marketers can now more granularly and rapidly measure expanded indicators of where their markets lie, opportunities to expand sales, repeated contact—within compliance guidelines, of course—to interested consumers, and so much more. As a result, they can quickly make adjustments to their marketing plans as necessary.

CM: As a sweepstakes/contest administrator, what has changed over the last few years and how have brand marketers been impacted?

ALTBERG: Considering consumers' new abilities to try to circumvent the rules—for example, using multiple email addresses to navigate around daily entry limits—the need for an experienced agency or lawyer to carefully craft the official rules and an independent party to conduct the drawing is crucial these days. This is especially true when offering extra entry opportunities for tweeting or other means of sharing. Social media compliance and privacy guidelines are moving targets, as are international laws. Marketers need to play it safe to protect their brand equity. !



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