

## Chapter 13

# Hosting Your Own Facebook Contest

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Engaging with your fans
  - ▶ Promoting brand awareness
  - ▶ Driving traffic to your Web site
  - ▶ Building community around your Page
  - ▶ Getting started with your own contest
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**S**o, you've taken the time to create a Facebook Page to promote your company (see Chapter 4). But once you build it, will they come?

You need to give people a reason to visit your Page. But what can you do to cut through the clutter and attract a Facebook fan base? Increasingly, marketers are turning to contests for the answer.

Companies that host contests and giveaways have been able to attract hundreds-of-thousands of entries and fans, as we'll show you. This chapter discusses how you can use contests to motivate and grow your audience by promoting brand awareness and building community. We then show you how you can host your own Facebook contest.

## *Everyone Loves a Contest*

Contests and giveaways have traditionally played a vital role in consumer marketing. From cereal companies to fashion retailers, automobile dealers to cosmetic companies, the promise of winning something of value for free is a tremendous lure. Whether backed by a media campaign, promoted on a product's packaging, or announced at an employee sales meeting, contests have the power to motivate, incentivize, and drive engagement.

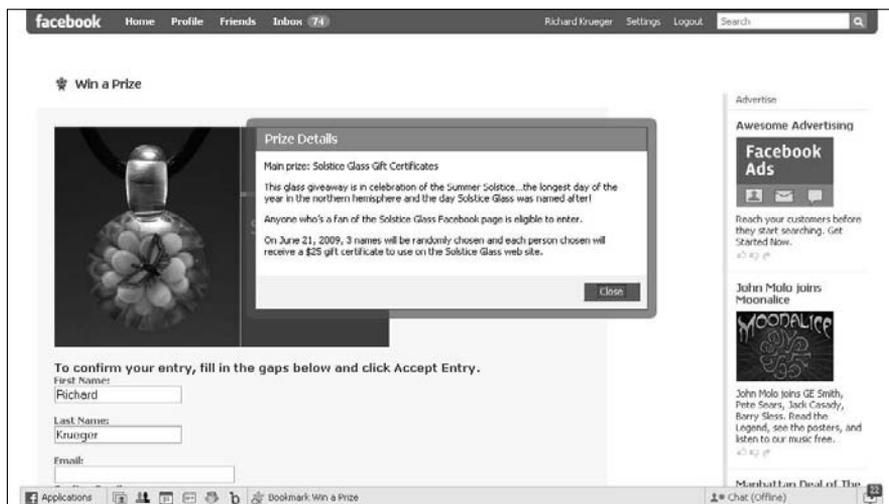
And, the same incentives that have served marketers BFB (Before Facebook) still apply on Facebook. Contests with high-value prizes tend to be more active. Celebrity appeal and limited edition offerings always help, too. But for marketers who don't have access to costly prizes, you can still offer an appropriate reward. I have been known to fill out a form for the chance to win a tee shirt, but it was a really cool tee shirt.

The best part about marketing on Facebook is that you don't have to be a major brand to host a successful contest (although it doesn't hurt). And, you don't have to have a boatload of money to pull off a successful contest (although that doesn't hurt, either). Anyone with a Facebook Page can create and promote a contest. While Facebook does not offer a contest application, you can easily improvise and promote your contest on your Wall. Or, check out some of the third-party contest applications (apps) to find a solution that works best for your promotion.



Win a Prize by Wildfire Interactive, Inc. is a free Facebook contest app that provides a direct solution for marketers looking to offer a contest or giveaway on their Facebook Page. Win a Prize provides everything you need to create and host a contest on your Facebook Page (see Figure 13-1). From your bottom navigation bar, choose Applications → Browse More Applications, and type Win a Prize in the Facebook Search box to find and install the app.

**Figure 13-1:** Win a Prize offers a build-it-yourself approach to contests and giveaways.



## *Using contests to promote your brand*

When you offer a good incentive, word travels. On Facebook, when you offer a good incentive, word reverberates off friends. When members interact with the contest by uploading videos or images, answering questions, or becoming a fan of your Page, it generates News Feed stories, amplifying the word-of-mouth effect. A contest or giveaway promotion can be a very viral vehicle to ignite fan engagement with your Facebook Page.

When Neutrogena launched their Facebook Page in April 2009, they created a contest to build brand awareness and drive the key female, teen audience to their Page. The Fresh Faces contest, which was held in conjunction with Teen Vogue magazine, helped the brand attract more than 700 fans to its Facebook Page (see Figure 13-2). The winner earned a chance to be a contributing beauty editor for a Neutrogena advertorial on TeenVogue.com.

**Figure 13-2:** Neutrogena teamed with Teen Vogue to launch the Fresh Faces contest.



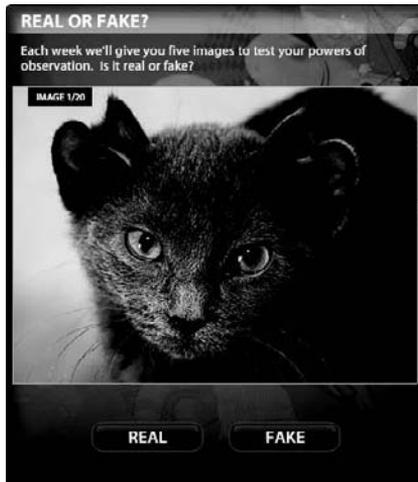
## *Using contests to appeal to everyone's competitive streak*

Everyone loves being a winner. And, the best thing about winning is the bragging rights that go along with it. Contests generate word-of-mouth buzz because folks like to one-up their friends. This basic human trait is the motivating force behind some of the most popular Facebook contests.

Contests and giveaways can leverage the competitive nature of man (and woman) to drive engagement. Contests often employ a gaming element in which being the high scorer is the incentive to motivate someone.

Take Adobe, who wanted to reach the elusive college student market with its Adobe Student Editions, so they provided steep discounts of up to 80 percent on popular Adobe software for students. With the help of the interactive agency, Traction, the company developed a game app called Real or Fake (see Figure 13-3) in which users had to determine whether a photo was fake or real, underscoring the quality of its Adobe Photoshop imaging software. The application was featured on the Adobe Facebook Page.

Adobe engaged in a targeted ad campaign to reach interested college students. The game caught on because it was a fun and easy-to-play casual gaming experience. Of those that played, 6 percent clicked the Buy Now link at the end of the game. It also incorporated a simple Share button, in which 6 percent of players sent an invite to their friends, adding an additional point of interaction to encourage viral sharing. By the end of the competition, the Adobe Facebook Page welcomed more than 6,000 new fans.



**Figure 13-3:**  
The Adobe Real or Fake Facebook interactive game gained the company 6,000 new fans.

## *Using contests to drive traffic to your Web site*

Smart marketers leverage their Facebook contests to drive traffic to their Web site or other special landing pages outside of Facebook. Taking a hub-and-spoke approach, many companies are building communities across a

number of social media hubs — from Facebook to Twitter to YouTube to Flickr — and leveraging each network to build a groundswell of interested consumers. Figure 13-4 shows you the Victoria's Secret promotion of a Free Limited Edition Bling Panty.

**Figure 13-4:**  
The  
Victoria's  
Secret  
Limited  
Edition Bling  
Panty  
giveaway.



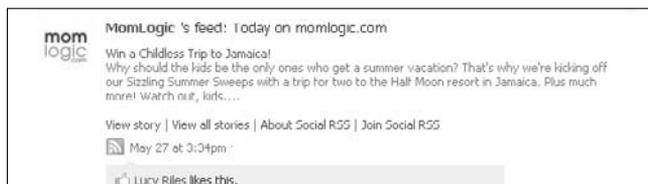
## Using contests to build community

Contests are ideal for attracting and engaging a community of like-minded people around your Page. They can serve as crucial building blocks in your Facebook brand strategy. Therefore, you need to consider a long-term approach rather than a one-off promotion in which you may see a short-lived spike in traffic but little overall affect on brand engagement. (See Chapter 5 to develop a marketing plan.)



MomLogic, a community-driven Web service, features contests front-and-center on its Facebook Page with prizes specially chosen to attract an audience of young mothers (see Figure 13-5). The Page even integrates a WIN IT! tab summarizing the current contests.

**Figure 13-5:**  
MomLogic  
builds a  
community  
of young  
mothers.



## Hosting Your Own Facebook Contest

Facebook offers a compelling environment from which to host a contest or giveaway on your Page. You can use your Page as a starting point with a link to your Web site for contest entry details, or have the entire contest contained within the Facebook community.

Contests can be very creative and challenging, or simply require a single yes or no answer. They can incentivize users to upload a video, or simply complete a contact form. Some contests require a panel of esteemed judges to determine the winner; others select winners randomly. Still, other contests allow the users themselves to vote for the outcome.

Although contests are as unique as the companies that host them, we can offer you some tips that can improve your chances of success. Following are some best practices for creating Facebook contests and giveaways:

- ✔ **Offer an attractive prize.** The more attractive the prize, the more response you get. A box of Cracker Jacks isn't going to garner much interest. For a prize to be attractive, though, it doesn't necessarily have to cost a lot. The best prizes tend to be those that money can't buy — such as a chance to meet a celebrity, to participate in a TV commercial, or to attend a product's pre-release party.
- ✔ **Use your existing customers and contacts to start the ball rolling.** Getting those initial entries has always been the toughest part of running a Facebook contest. This is when you need to reach into your network of family and friends. Reach out to your mailing list of customers with a friendly invitation. Promote it to your Twitter followers via LinkedIn and MySpace. Wherever you have contacts, use whatever social network, e-mail exchange, or instant messenger you have to get them to participate.
- ✔ **Cross-promote via your Web site.** Facebook contests need to be promoted across all of your channels to gain maximum participation. That includes your Web site. Adding a promotional banner with a link to your Facebook Page is a good start. But, you can do so much more to promote your contest! Promote your contest on your packaging. Issue a press release via one of the many news wire services. Add a message to your phone answering system. The possibilities are endless.
- ✔ **Keep it simple.** This goes for all aspects of a contest. Don't overcomplicate the rules. The fewer the questions on a form, the higher the rate of completion. Keep first prize a single, prized item and several smaller second place prizes. And remember, the fewer the clicks to enter the contest, the better.
- ✔ **Don't set the bar too high.** If you're asking the participants for an original creation, keep the requirements to a minimum. For example, don't place a minimum word count on an essay contest. Or, don't require a video for the first round of submissions because videos are perceived as a lot of work.

- ✔ **Run promotions for at least one month.** Your contest should run for at least a month. Word-of-mouth marketing requires time. The more time you promote the contest, the more potential entries you get.
- ✔ **Integrate with media campaign.** Facebook ads are an ideal complement to any contest. By combining a Facebook ad campaign with a contest, you'll maximize the viral effect and amplify the number of engagements.
- ✔ **Make it fun, interesting, and uniquely you.** The main thing to keep in mind when planning a Facebook contest is that members want to be entertained. Contests should offer an outlet to self-expression, engage members and encourage them to share with friends, and communicate something unique about your brand.



## Facebook hosts contest to reward best application developers

To fuel the Facebook developer community, Facebook sponsored a contest to find and cash incentivize the best Facebook developers. The contest, held in conjunction with the fbFund (a venture-backed investment fund providing grants of \$25K to \$100K to Facebook entrepreneurs), attracted more than 600 developers who submitted entries, which was narrowed down to the top 25, who were then invited to submit videos for a public vote.

The entry requirements included a one-minute video, three to five screenshots, some basic information about the company, and a link to the working app. The public vote received nearly 200,000 votes. Almost 100,000 people installed finalists' apps. Thousands of people contributed their opinions on the entries.

To promote the competition, Facebook undertook a public relations campaign. There was no advertising to support the contest. There was also a powerful driving force behind the word-of-mouth campaign, which relied on the entrants themselves to use their networks to encourage their users, contacts, and friends to vote for them.

Ironically, the development firm, Wildfire Interactive, Inc., was among the winners for their Win a Prize Facebook contest-building app, which Facebook used to set up the very contest. Wildfire offers a

do-it-yourself contest maker solution that allows users to create a Facebook contest and post it to their Facebook Page (see Chapter 4) in a matter of minutes.

Wildfire Interactive has come a long way since its Win a Prize contest app was first unveiled. The service now enables companies to integrate a Become a Fan link right into their contest entry form. You can also offer prizes that can be shared among groups of friends (for example, a trip to Vegas for you and four friends or concert tickets for you and five friends), so that entrants have a reason to invite their friends and to encourage their friends to sign up for the promotion. The system automatically notifies entrants (via Facebook notifications) when their friends accept their invitation and sends a reminder if they don't have enough friends signed up.

Wildfire also offers the ability to distribute coupons/giveaway vouchers in addition to sweepstakes and user contests and the ability to simultaneously run promotions across their Web site using a micro site that's automatically integrated with Facebook Connect (see Chapter 15) and a Facebook Page, as well as other social networks, including MySpace and Hi-5, for a truly integrated contest across a company's multiple Web-based points-of-presence.