

Play to Win Consumer Mindshare

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In an age where consumers are thrifty with their attention, it can be tough to get them to interact with your brand. The desire to capture their interest has resulted in an array of tactics designed to make them stop in their tracks and pay attention. Provocative taglines, impressive photography and clever tweets are part of the game.

But perhaps there's a better approach. If you want consumers to take notice, engage and advocate for your brand, you have to answer an important question - what's in it for them? Don't ask too much of consumers right away. Start by making an effort to break the ice. Try having a little fun.

Here are a few tips to get you started.

TIP #1: Meet them where they are.

Mobile is a requirement. Consumers simply won't jump through hoops. You need to make it easy for them to interact with your brand by catering to the devices they use most. Don't view this as a restriction or an added hurdle to cross. Embrace mobile for all of its strengths: immediacy, flexibility, high levels of personalization, geo-targeting and the added fun of built-in cameras and emojis.

Take action: Create an app that has thoughtful features. Go beyond a store locator by offering lifestyle content, convenience-based features, gamified marketing and special offers. Package it all together in a social media-friendly interface so it easily integrates into users' mobile experience.

TIP #2: Get to know them.

People like to believe they are unique and appreciate when brands understand and account for their personal needs and preferences. That's why it is important to customize whenever possible. Give the Golden Rule a twist: treat your customers the way **they** want to be treated. To do this, you'll need to go beyond just delivering what they ask for. You'll need to anticipate what they might want and deliver in a way that's convenient, not intrusive.

Take action: Consider an app that allows your customers to receive personalized alerts based on their interests, past behaviors and relative location to a store. They'll learn about special offers on their favorite products that they might have otherwise missed.

TIP #3: Give them an advantage.

Whether they realize it or not, customers tend to have a stronger investment in a brand when they have a head start to receiving a special reward or offer. Maximize your first impression by providing an immediate benefit to your customers. Not only will this fuel a positive brand impression but it also motivates customers to commit.

Take action: Whether you are revamping your loyalty program or simply want to refresh engagement, give your customers a boost by depositing bonus points into their account. They'll feel like they've got some skin in the game and will be more likely to believe it is worth their time and loyalty.



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TIP #4: Entice them with chance.

The element of chance tends to be highly motivating. There's excitement in the idea of what might be...especially in the context of instant gratification. It explains why slot machines are so popular. Even when customers don't fare as well, there's always the promise of next time. For those who do win, there is a sense that they've received something of value that would be a shame to waste.

Take action: Try using a gamified approach such as sending out a digital scratch off that reveals special offers. Customers will love the element of chance packaged in a playful format. They'll also be more motivated to re-engage with your brand by redeeming their offer.

TIP #5: Make it brag-worthy.

The widespread use of social media is proof that people like to share their fun with others. Having the ability to join a conversation gives consumers a chance to show off and give their perspective. It also helps them place more value on engagement with your brand and takes the interaction from being transactional to personal.

Take action: Utilize competitions to get people talking. The excitement of a contest drives ongoing participation and creates a rewarding experience for your customers. Amp up the conversation by incorporating visual scoreboards, tiers, rankings or prizes.

TIP #6: Create a sense of urgency.

There's something about the idea of a limited supply that gets hearts pounding. It's basic human instinct to worry about whether we're going to miss out. (If something is in demand, it **MUST** be good.) Most times, we aren't in life or death situations but consumers still love to know they are among a select few who received something special.

Take action: Test the idea of surprise and delight. Inspire the thrill of exclusivity through the use of a limited time or quantity offer. Even "first come, first served" offers can be uniquely enticing. Your customers will feel lucky and will be more likely to stay close for future limited time deals. Keeping up the frequency of these offers will help you retain engaged customers.

Consumers are more empowered than ever to get what they want on their own terms. If you want to reach your goals, you've got to help them meet theirs first.

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