

# RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

By Alexis Jarossy



On-premise contests and giveaways are a great way to keep your patrons involved in your bar, and offer incentives to keep them coming back.

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On-premise contests and giveaways are great incentives for customers to spend time and money in your bar. For the owner/operator, incentivized programs can help retain customer attention, ensure repeat visits, and garner publicity for your establishment. Plus, in a world dominated by mobile communications, you can also use these promotions to develop an online database to successfully market future promotions.

Through the summer, Heineken is running its 'Plug Into Summer' campaign, offering consumers exciting opportunities and experiences at the bar, while at the same time providing on-premise operators the resources they need to increase sales of Heineken and Heineken Light.

The 'Plug Into Summer' program challenges bar patrons to test their music knowledge while inviting them to order a Heineken. When they do, they are asked to choose a card from a special deck, which includes a message detailing a service enhancement they will receive courtesy of the brand. Prizes range from music downloads, merchandise like beer koozies, t-shirts, branded Fender Guitars, or a grand prize invitation to some of the most anticipated music events of the season.

Heineken Light 3-D table-tent technology will allow the patron to scan or text-in the code on their card for instant access to an iPod application in order to retrieve their prizes.

"Summer is the season when consumers spend more time out with friends at their favorite local haunts," said Belen Pamukoff, Channel Marketing Manager, Heineken USA. "Our blowout 'Plug Into Summer' program has the elements to inspire consumers to seize the moment by participating with Heineken through unique in-bar applications."

By getting involved with an on-premise promotion like Heineken's 'Plug Into Summer', you can encourage your patrons to order a premium product by letting them know there's something in it for them, as well. However, if you are looking to host a contest or giveaway program independently of a big name brand, there are options available to suit the needs

of your type of establishment and your type of customer.

Odds On Promotions and parent company Hole In One International, of Reno, Nevada, specialize in helping the on-premise owner/operator host prize contests and giveaways in their establishments by insuring their promotion for up to a million dollars. Popular games they run include bracketed championship challenges, dice rolls and Frisbee tosses, pool tournaments, or even video scratch 'n' wins. However, Amy Fanter, Marketing Writer for the company, says Odds On Promotions can insure just about any type of prize—just let them know what you want to do and they will work with you to customize your promotion.

"You can choose from over 100 existing contests and pro-

To the left, Odds On Promotions Prize Vault gives patrons a chance to win what is inside by cracking the code. Below, Heineken's 'Plug Into Summer' promotion invites patrons to use these interactive 3-D table tents for a chance to win a prize.



motions, or create one of your own," she says. "For example, a western-themed bar may want to do a horseshoe toss as opposed to an olive toss into martini glasses. If you can dream it up, we can probably find a way to insure it."

The process of working with Odds On Promotions is pretty straightforward. Owners need to first decide what it is they'd like to give away, essentially choosing a prize that will appeal to their patrons and draw in new ones. Next, after speaking with a risk manager, the company will decide how much it will cost the bar owner to insure the prize based on certain factors including the total cost of the prize, the probability of the event occurring (a win), and the number of attempts that will be made to win the prize (is it a weekly drawing, or a one-time contest?).

Similar to the way car insurance works, the cost to the bar owner is a fraction of the total insured amount. "You can run a season-long \$10,000 kick-return contest—if the opening or second half kickoff is returned for a touchdown, a randomly selected patron wins the cash—for about \$1,700, or about \$125 a week," says Zak Woodhead, Risk Manager at Odds On.

Odds On provides its clients with registration and point-of-sale material to help run the contest (including those oversized checks!). However, Fanter advises owners running prize promotions to advertise the event and get as many customers involved as possible. "Promote the daylight out of it," she says. "Really get out there and give folks a chance to win the prize."

"Also, be prepared if you do have a winner," she continues. "Have a press release ready to send out, so you can capitalize immediately and get the publicity from having a winner."

Aside from a grand prize, Fanter also suggests having a consolation prize—a logo T-shirt or free round of drinks—for those customers that participated. This, she says, is a way of showing your appreciation of their time and money, and further increases the chances that these patrons will return and sign up for your next contest. "We have repeat customers that come back year after year to insure contests," she says. "It's what the bar owner



This bar's "64 Days of Summer" cross-promotion with MGD 64 gave patrons a chance to win \$64,000 through a summer-long dice roll contest, insured by Odds On Promotions.

makes of it—even if they don't have a winner, they enjoy it. They come back because it helps drive traffic into their businesses."

Odds On is also able to help bar owners set up online and text-to-win promotions where the bar owner is able to create a contact database to better communicate with and market to their customers via text, email or social networking.

According to Rick Enrico, CEO and President of Screen Works Media, San Diego, California, mobile engagement is a highly effective way to get your patrons involved in your promotions. Specializing in in-store, mobile and social marketing applications, the company's patent-pending WAFFIL™ display frame has been successful at the on-premise level in actively engaging consumers in online contests while they are at the bar.

"Our WAFFIL products work collectively in an interactive engagement communications platform," says Enrico. "We put up low-cost, customizable print displays on the front of LCD or



The WAFFIL display frame can be customized to suit your concept. Here, a sports bar has basketball backboards cross-promoting Coors Light and the text-to-win contest.

is important to remember that the long-term benefits for your bar come in the experiences these exciting contests and giveaways provide for your customers. And re-

appropriating your marketing or advertising budget to reach those customers through online media will encourage them to return to your establishment to participate in future events.

"There is a shift in this industry to push social and mobile media," says Enrico. "The ROIs that we're receiving are five-to-one on revenue versus advertising spend. Typically it's three-to-one. The ways that we get out to market is generating more revenue for these bar owners, which is more profit." ☺

## Using a Consultant to Market Your Promotion

Outsourcing a consultancy to bring your concept to fruition is another option for the on-premise owner looking to successfully market an upcoming or on-going promotion. Alchemy Marketing is a complete marketing, advertising, and consulting company that brings new, creative ways to drive business for the hospitality industry. Whether finding an effective promotional strategy or working with a new venue to meet their maximum potential, Alchemy can help the on-premise owner reach his or her promotional goals.

### One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

No two promotions are ever the same, no matter how similar they may appear. The slightest variation in crowd, weather, or location can drastically alter an evening. If you have a slow night, there's a reason why. You need to identify what the weakness is, create a plan, and execute it.

Are your specials and promos appealing? Are you targeting the appropriate crowd? These are all things to consider when hosting events and improving sales.

Sometimes it's difficult to take a step back and identify improvements that should be made. Alchemy Marketing provides a fresh set of eyes to help identify what can be improved to boost your sales, and will work with you to implement a plan to reach your goals.

### Coordination

Every great event consists of three parts: the concept, the venue, and the sponsors. Too often these pieces are disconnected, but each is vital to have a truly successful event. When companies combine their efforts and share the cost of promoting, advertising, and branding, the outcome is exponentially better. This joint effort pulls together pre-existing audiences from each company and introduces them to the other active participants. Alchemy Marketing links concept, venue, and sponsor, defines how each part's efforts are best spent, and allows the event to reach its ultimate potential.

For more information on Alchemy Marketing, visit [www.alchemymarketing.com](http://www.alchemymarketing.com).

plasma TVs with a hook, such as "Vote for Your Favorite Hooters Girl" or "Join Our VIP List" or "Text Here to Win Tickets." By default, the eyes are focused on the TVs already, especially in a lot of sports bars, and at some point during the night or while watching the game, the patron engages with the apparatus.

"We combine social media on the backend, so some of the response messaging can say "Join our Facebook fan page." We're trying to engage the consumer as well as push the brand message back out into the social media world along with mobile," he says.

These days, people spend an extraordinary amount of time on their phones, especially their smart phones; Blackberry's, Droids, and iPhones all demand user attention and function as the sole communication platform and a great source of entertainment and access to multimedia. Using the WAFFIL products, bar owners can easily and cost-effectively reach their customer base to promote specials, events and contests using mobile applications. "The goal is for the bar owners to build their mobile database, and that's something they've been unable to do," says Enrico. "Pre-WAFFIL, they put up table tents, but there wasn't anywhere you could showcase a campaign for 'text or vote for this product'. From an on-premise perspective they can increase their mobile databases, repurpose it, and market back out those customers."

Enrico stipulates that the costs involved in setting up a WAFFIL program in your bar varies depending on what is involved; there is a monthly fee for the owner who is hosting and managing the social media and mobile applications. However, some of his clients have used the opportunity to share the costs with their suppliers in a cross-promotional venture, which alleviates costs for the owner, and also provides an opportunity to source outside vendors for prize incentives.

"We deployed a March Madness campaign where the WAFFILs looked like basketball backboards in twelve Minnesota bars through a distributor of Coors Light and local Sun Country Airlines," says Enrico, who notes that the success has prompted an expansion of the promotion to more bars. "The airline saw an opportunity to engage specific patrons within Western Minnesota, and donated a free flight to Las Vegas. Coors Light placed the WAFFIL frames in a noticeable area throughout the bars, and we had over 1,000 entrants into the contest. The bar owners loved it because it was growing their individual mobile databases to which they could re-market."

With all of these on-premise promotional options available, it

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