How to run a competition or giveaway on social media

Competitions and giveaways can take your social media game to the next level, providing you have an online presence and the brand-building basics already in place. Follower incentives are key to boosting audience engagement and involvement, as willingness to participate soon spikes when rewards and other benefits are up for grabs.

Running a successful social media competition requires creativity, careful planning and scheduling, and consistent communication. Your promotions can't afford to lose momentum at any point, and it's vital you follow your content calendar closely as a way of building suspense and delivering on deadlines. Remember that your followers will be waiting for updates from you, so use their interest as leverage to keep interactions high and thriving throughout the event.

Let's look at the process of organising a social competition, and how you can tailor it for National Pet Shop Day;

- **Set clear goals:** First and foremost, you need to decide on the objectives you want to achieve by hosting the competition – it might be to increase your social media following, appear more involved in local events and causes, or to drive in-store sales of pet products. These goals are the blueprint of your competition, so it's important to take your time with this step.

- **Choose exciting rewards:** Followers will be casting their eyes to the end prize as a way of deciding their participation. The more relevant and appealing the reward is to your audience, the more sign-ups you're likely to get. This comes within reason, as the prize also needs to reflect your brand values and event messaging in the most enticing way. A gift voucher to spend in your pet shop, or a free grooming session for one lucky pooch are realistic prize examples that would benefit the winner.

- **Confirm competition type:** To help make the decision of what type of competition is right for you, think back to your early beginnings of goal setting. It's important the competition structure aligns with your objectives - for example, if your aim is to demonstrate your involvement in community events, a simple "like, comment and repost to enter" is an appropriate competition type. Alternatively, if your objective is to collect user-generated content, then a photo contest where followers are required to send in pictures of their pet will provide better results.

- **Outline terms and conditions:** Essentially a glamourised set of instructions, your competition needs to be clear and fair. As long as you remain transparent about: entry requirements, start and end date, eligibility, how you plan to select and notify the winner, and any other disclaimers, misunderstandings should be prevented and the process should run smoothly.

- **Create engaging visuals and messaging:** The success of your competition depends on how thorough your promotions are – well-written copy, visually appealing graphics and video are what will enhance the backing and celebration of the event. Key messaging should outline the competition process, highlight the benefits of entering, and include a call to action to encourage consumers to act immediately. You can dress up your social posts with animal-themed emojis, trending hashtags and insightful links to spark engagement and make content more personable.

- **Leverage all marketing channels:** Opening your competition to multiple online and in person platforms will maximise participation. A hybrid approach of social media, email marketing, in-store displays and influencer collaborations will amplify visibility and spread the word far and wide. If you want to outshine last year's stats, take advantage of new marketing tools and use your voice as much as possible.

- **Switch post notifications on:** The bell symbol should be switched on in your social platforms, or at least frequently visited, to ensure you are notified whenever someone engages with the competition. This way, you can return the favour to your entries by liking, commenting and sharing their interactions, whilst showing genuine excitement and appreciation towards their involvement. Many businesses underestimate the value of recognising their supporters, yet it remains one of the strongest contributors to customer loyalty and goodwill.

- **Announce the winner:** Entries will have been waiting for the grand reveal since the first mention of the competition, so the winning announcement needs to be a big deal. Credit the winner through a series of posts or stories and contact them directly to organise the delivery or collection of the prize. Remember to express gratitude to everyone who took part – this will professionally close the competition and leave a lasting, positive impression on your brand.

- **Conduct a result analysis:** Assessing campaign performance will allow you to identify the areas that were executed well, and what needs extra attention next time round. Insightful analytics such as follower count, engagement rates, number of participants and impact on sales or website traffic, evidence areas of success and insufficiency which you can refer back to for future campaigns.

Providing opportunities for your audience to physically join in on is a sure-fire way to bump up participation rates and maintain intrigue, using healthy competition to unite pet owners across the UK. But National Pet Shop Day social competitions are much more than just about winning pet prizes. They're a representation of your business' efforts to recognise and appreciate the role of pet shops and pet stores in local communities, and help open the eyes of pet owners that the advice and knowledge within these wellbeing hubs can be trusted.

If you need more support planning your giveaway, we have plenty of resources and food for thought at nationalpetshopday.com.