

# Making Special Offers Work



Discounts, coupons, sales, vouchers, special offers, loyalty schemes, incentives ... everyone loves to get a great deal and that's why so many companies use price based incentives to generate business. However, simply slashing your prices by 50% in the hope of growing your business is a risky move.

At FreeForm Media we've been developing discount incentives for years. Our EnjoyCard program, bespoke campaigns and even TextStart.com all feature special offers effectively. With all those discounts going on we've learned a thing or two about what makes a successful special offer and what doesn't. Here are a few pointers:

1. **Target the right customer** – Different customers use offers in different ways. Your offer, format, value and where and how you promote it will all be affected by who the intended end-user is. Do you want to target existing customers, or find new ones? Would you like to attract the student market, or are OAP's your ideal clientele?

Start by drawing a detailed picture of your intended participant including who they are, where they are, what they read, how they buy your products or services etc.... You can use that profile to educate every aspect of how you run the campaign.

2. **Choose the right offer** – Before you start handing out discounts left, right and centre your first thought should be 'what do I want to achieve?'. You should look at any special offer as an incentive for customers to do something specific. If your offer doesn't create that incentive, don't do it.

That 'something specific' could be to trial your business, become a loyal customer, buy up excess stock, come in at a quiet time, check out a new product or service, tell all their friends about you, in fact, just about anything.

What you want to achieve with the offer will dictate the offer itself. For example, encouraging trial will need an eye-catching offer whereas retaining loyal customers could mean progressive discounts over time. You should consider terms and conditions, the redemption process and how many people you expect to use it.

As a rule of thumb, keep it simple to understand and easy to redeem.

3. **Choose the right format** – Now you know who the offer is for, and what the offer is, you need to decide the physical form in which the offer will be presented.

Cost, your marketing plan and technical points will help you to determine the right format but the best solution will be the one your target market are most likely to use and respond to. A student probably won't clip coupons from the local paper but might show a text message to redeem an offer. If you're targeting a more exclusive clientele that are hesitant to use discounts try a format that's subtler and more personal – like a credit card style 'membership' card.



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Consider the following points before deciding on a format:

How long will it last?  
How exclusive should it be?  
What format best suits my target market?  
How much will it cost?

How can we track redemption?  
Can we gather customer data with it?  
Does the format match my brand image?  
Can we brand it easily?

4. **Promote it** – Too often businesses simply ‘do’ a discount in the hope that ‘if we offer it, they will come’. A special offer gives you a viable proposition over and above your normal terms of business – your job is to turn that proposition into an effective marketing message.

If you don’t market your offer, you’ll just end up giving away discounts to people who would’ve bought from you anyway.

5. **Track it** – Once your offer is out there you need to track the results carefully. Is it bringing in the business? How many people redeem it? Is it increasing their average spend? Is it costing me money?

The questions you’ll need answered will be based on the goals for the campaign you set out at the beginning. Use the data gathered to determine whether or not the offer was a success and make changes for your next incentive-based campaign.

6. **Delivery is key** – However you choose to run your special offer, make sure you deliver every time. You should go out of your way to welcome and encourage people using the offer and ensure your staff does the same. This is your chance to turn motivated buyers into long-term loyal customers and clients. Do it well and your investment in the special offer will pay dividends for years to come.

A well-conceived and well-run special offer can be a great way to both generate short-term interest and develop long-term business. However, a badly executed campaign can devalue your products and services, alienate existing customers and even turn people off your business altogether.

If you’d like FreeForm to help you ensure your special offer gets the right result, simply drop us an email to [info@freeformmedia.co.uk](mailto:info@freeformmedia.co.uk) or give us a call on the number below.



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