

Contest Requirements, Guidelines and Suggestions

Now that you've decided to promote your business using Online-Access' community engagement system, here is some information to help you get started. We've designed this model with contractors in mind, so here we offer some tips and guidelines to help you get the most out of it:

- "The rules" according to how the contest is set up in our system;
- Helpful suggestions for making key decisions before executing the campaign;
- Guidelines for charitable organizations.

1. Pick three LOCAL charities.

The objective of this promotional tool is community involvement, so you'll want to select local causes specific to your community. Think about what is popular in your community. Consider charities with different fan bases in order spread the campaign to the broadest audience possible. We strongly suggest you limit the contest to three charities to give each one a good amount of exposure and a large enough prize to make it worthwhile.

When choosing organizations, consider how evenly matched they are in terms of size and the level of support or focus they receive. Keep in mind, the more even the competition, the more fun and the more compelling the competition will be. And remember, they'll need at least a Facebook page and, ideally, a website to link back to your contest page.

Make your contest a team effort by getting staff involved in the process. Find out what they care about, what affects them. They're out in the community every day with unique opportunities to invite customers to participate and share with friends. Engage their passions wherever possible.

Finally, give your contest a name; for example, "Gives Back", "Charities of Choice", or other similar title that sounds good with your company name.

2. Decide how much money to offer in total prizes.

Determine the amount of money for which your business will have the charities compete. You'll definitely want to choose an amount that will generate a buzz. Consider finding other businesses that will match what you're giving and participate, too. The more participants, the wider the reach.

We suggest a prize model of at least the following amounts:

- a. 1st Place—\$1,000
- b. 2nd Place—\$500
- c. 3rd Place—\$250

You can also offer an incentive for voters in the form of a coupon or discount for your services, like \$20 off a future service. Online-Access will make this available to voters contained in the email sent when confirming their address, or as a promo code contained in their text confirmation if using their cell number to vote.

3. Send invitations and PR kits to your charitable organizations.

Of course, you'll probably reach out to your chosen charities, but it's always helpful to send a formal invitation. We will give you a letter template to help you explain what your plan is, how much prize money you're offering, letting them know how much their cause means to you, and how you would love the opportunity to support and promote them through this contest. Explain how, by working together through linking, social media, and local functions, you will be working to promote their cause to your customer base and they, in turn, will energize their own following to visit your website and vote.

We'll also provide a PR kit your charities can use to promote themselves and the contest. This will include:

- a. Guidelines for promoting themselves
- b. A charity badge for their website
- c. Facebook post templates and when to post
- d. Content for newsletters, email blasts, and broadcast advertisements

4. Buy a "Big Check"!

Yes, you read that right. Buy yourself a giant novelty check to present to the winner of the contest. You'll take a photo with the winner that both of you can share in promotional materials. Leave the check with them to display in their workplace for the next three months. Big checks are available with a dry-erase surface so you can re-use your big check again and again for photos of future winners or donations.

Other Helpful Suggestions

1. Social media

Take advantage of social media's added reach in your area, especially Facebook. If you're one of our Social Marketing clients then we're already creating and scheduling your contest-related posts. If you manage your own Facebook account, use the charity guidelines as a benchmark for how to effectively promote the contest. Encourage your team to share the posts from your page to reach more people.

2. Family and friends

Your family and friends probably care about you and your business. If they live in your community, they also probably care about the organizations that serve it. Asking them to help tell others about your contest is something most would be happy to do. Their participation can help generate some momentum with a personal touch.

3. Customers

You've already done the hard work of earning your customers' business. Now you can reach out to them again with a timely email or phone call to let them know they can be part of this community effort. Let them know to search online using your contest's name as a keyword. Just getting in touch again may be a helpful reminder to them to schedule annual maintenance or purchase a needed product. And remember, if they vote, they'll receive a thank-you coupon or promo code that helps keep you front-of-mind when those needs crop up.