

Vinyl Fence

Tip

Practical and Proven Ways to Sell More Vinyl Fences

From your friends at National Vinyl Products

How to do a successful contest—and why they work



With tempting taglines like “Win the Ultimate Shopping Spree” or “Win the Vacation of Your Dreams,” they can be hard to ignore in your inbox. Even in your snail mail, their envelopes can stick out from the rest with bold colors and lots of exclamation points.

Or perhaps they catch your eye on a flyer, a store receipt, or a well-placed entry box at the check-out stand. Contests and sweepstakes seem to be everywhere you look.

But what is the purpose of these promotions, and how can your fencing company run a successful contest? This article will answer these questions and more.

What is a promotional contest?

Contests and sweepstakes are tools businesses can use to attract attention to their company or product. A contest requires participants to complete some sort of challenge—such as answering a trivia question, submitting a photo, or demonstrating a skill. On the other hand, winners of a sweepstakes are selected at random from the entries. No challenge or skill is needed.

The purpose of both campaigns is to drive brand awareness and audience engagement in a fun, interactive way. Both offer a way to “sell” your company without using a lot of “sales-y” talk.

Even more importantly, contests provide you with names and contact details for people who may be in the market for a new fence. They also can help you re-engage previous customers who may be in need of a new fence for a new home or business.

Set goals

Define some clear goals for your contest. What are you hoping to achieve?

Here are some objectives to consider:

- **Brand awareness**—getting more people interested in vinyl fencing in general and your business in particular
- **New customers**—obtaining a list of potential new customers and their contact information
- **Product promotion**—introducing a new fence style or color
- **Social media boost** —increasing social media followers
- **Defining your audience**—learning what marketing methods best reach your potential customers

Your primary goal for a contest is to gain measurable results. These results could be in the form of new social media followers, a new list of email subscribers, or the names and phone numbers of potential customers

Keep it legal

Familiarize yourself with any contest regulations in your area. Each state has its own rules for what you can and cannot require of entrants.

Some of the typical legal requirements include:

- Stating that no purchase is necessary
- Providing alternate means of entry
- Listing the official rules for the contest
- Including eligibility requirements
- Having a privacy policy
- Registering and bonding the prizes
- Setting an entry start and end date



- Announcing how and when winners will be contacted
- Stating how prizes will be awarded or distributed
- Providing a list of winners at the end of the contest

In addition to state and local regulations for contests, social media companies have their own rules regarding these promotions. For example, you will need to make sure you are following any data privacy laws to the letter.

Make it irresistible

After you have checked out the rules that apply to your promotion, your next step is to determine what type of event you want to launch. People love free stuff, and just the thrill of winning even a small prize can motivate people to enter a contest or sweepstakes.

Think about prizes. While an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii may attract a lot of attention, the cost of such a prize may not be at all feasible. Smaller awards still attract entries, and you can be creative with what you offer.

For example, perhaps you can work out a trade with another local business. The other company might offer a free appliance for your promotion, and you could provide an equitably-priced fence for their contest. Here are some other ideas for smaller prizes that won't break the bank but will still attract attention:

- Dinner for two at a local restaurant
- Concert or theater tickets
- Electronics (anything from a smart TV to earbuds will get noticed)
- Overnight stay at a local hotel or resort
- Sports equipment
- Gift certificates to local stores and supermarkets
- Cash prizes
- Health club membership

Another idea is to align your prize with what you sell. You can offer fencing or fence installation as a contest prize. The main thing is to think like your ideal customer and deliver those items or services as contest prizes.

Invite entries

How will you announce the contest?

You can run your contest entirely online through your social media channels. Another idea is to send out an email blast announcing the competition and include a link to an online registration form on your website.

You could go the traditional route with an in-store contest that grabs folks who visit you in person to look at your fencing products.

Or, you can do a combination of all of the above. Keep in mind that the easier it is for customers to enter a contest, the better the chances they will submit an entry.

Follow up

After you launch your contest, follow up with entrants as soon as possible. For instance, you can send them an email thanking them for their entry and letting them know how the contest is progressing. With this communication, you also could let them know of a time-sensitive fencing offer that is only available to contest entrants.

After your contest is over and you have awarded the prizes to the lucky winners, take the time to assess its success. Did you meet your goals? What changes would you make in another contest?

Contests can be a fun way to engage new and old customers and get them talking about your fence products. When run efficiently, they are a low-cost yet effective marketing tool. And that makes this strategy a win for the individuals who get the prizes—and for you.



If you have questions about this newsletter or marketing in general, e-mail NVP's marketing expert: marketing@nvpfence.com.



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