DMA Talent Marketing Challenge 2023
– Why agencies & brands use competitions

We chatted to DMRi to find out why the agencies and brands they work with run competitions.

The questions and answers below provide a great insight into who DMRi are, and why competitions are such a great thing for businesses to include in their marketing mix.

If you have any questions about the challenge, please email them to us on dmatalent@dma.org.uk.

Q. Please tell us about DMRi, and how the organisation has evolved to specialise in competitions

We started as an internet company in 1995 selling cars and insurance online.
I became interested in the high volume of data and the accuracy of insurance data and what could be derived from it.

We then looked for other industries that collected accurate information across a wide demographic. This lead us down several routes, one of which was competitions.

We ran competitions for a number of publishers and brands, which led us to building The Entry Platform.

Q. Why are competitions used so widely by agencies and brands?

Brands use competitions to get positive press, gain new customers/subscribers, or to engage with existing customers. The motivation can be to drive sales, drive email signups, promote/launch a new product, celebrate an anniversary, and many other reasons.

A competition:
➢ Gives a reason for people to share/engage with the brand and share their details.
➢ Means they provide accurate information as they want to receive the prize.
➢ Gives an opportunity to ask questions and get into conversation with the person entering.
➢ Provides a place to direct people to when doing other marketing activity like social media.

For each brand, the reason for running a competition is different.

They could be used to:
➢ Attract more customers that are the same demographic as existing ones.

- Open the brand to new potential audiences.
- Re-engage lost customers.
- Thank existing customers.

There are also competitions for people who do a set task. For example, if you purchase from shop x, you gain a competition entry. This activity has the added value of telling the brand who is engaging with a set promotion.

Q. What makes competitions so successful and used so widely by agencies and brands?

The biggest testimony to the power of competitions is that they work, and that once an agency or brand uses competitions as part of the marketing mix, they tend to continue to do so.

If they're using competitions for data acquisition, when you compare the costs with CPC, it nearly always works out to be a better ROI.

When promoting a brand and doing any type of promotion, adding "sign up here" and "enter a competition to win" adds minimal additional cost and significantly increases audience take up.

What works well with brands who are launching new products is if they have an established product that everyone loves and are offering that and the new product. It introduces the new product alongside a well-known / loved product.

Q. Why are competitions important to use as part of the marketing mix?

They're simple, adaptable, effective, in most cases give accurate data, and provide good tracking and profiling.

The copy and the image used both play a part. An exciting "money can't buy prizes" line always grab people's attention, attracting more people to enter. An image which shows both the brand and the prize is recommended to get best results.

When it comes to entries, it's key to consider who the audience is. You must make the prize attractive to the segment you want to attract.

An example of not targeting the right audience would be a company selling a retirement home, giving away concert tickets to see Stormzy. They'd receive lots of entries, but not many of them would be interested in the retirement home.

Q. Not sure if a competition will attract the right audience?

The easiest way to attract a niche audience is to source a prize which the participants could not purchase, like a meet and greet or an exclusive design. These sorts of competitions will attract people who don't normally enter competitions.

Q. What is the most commonly asked question from new clients?

We don't just want compers! (people who enter competitions as a hobby)

Some clients are concerned that people just enter because they like competitions. This is a valid point as some people enter any competitions they find. We typically find this makes up somewhere between 5-30% percent of entries.

However, this does not really cause a problem because firstly, some of those compers will engage with the brand as well as entering the competition. They have normal buying habits.

This is why we always recommend that if you're running a competition to collect data, you ask an extra question at the point of entry to see if the person entering wants to receive more information. This then means the data collection is done in a way which follows best practice and means the communications and follow up will be much more successful.

Q. How many entries do competitions get?

This will depend very much on the marketing and promotion, and the target audience.

Q. Will the data generated by the competition be good quality?

When entering competitions, the data is accurate as people want to be able to be contacted if they win.

Q. What is the silver bullet you're looking for the students to deliver in their proposal & video presentation?

An advert / banner ad / email etc, which will tell the business audience what the entry platform does, and that they should use it.

Information on what the entry platform is, and why competitions are a good marketing tool.

A clearly articulated segment and a developed creative idea.

A clear plan of what success looks like and how it is monitored.

Q. Why is this brief such a fantastic fit for someone who'll be starting a career in the marketing industry soon?

It's a realistic example of what many graduates will find themselves doing either in an agency or at brand level. Promoting something people have not heard of adds an extra level of challenge because you've got to get the buy-in of not only the brand, but also the concept.

So, in this case:
- ➢ Why you should run competitions.
- ➢ Why you should use the entry platform to build them.
- ➢ As well as explaining what the entry platform is.

Q. Do you have any advice on pitching for the finalists?

Make it clear you understand the business audience and how it differs from a consumer product, who you'll be targeting, and what measurables you'll deliver if your plan is implemented properly.

Q. And finally, any last snippets of insights you can give the students?

Don't just think about what is being done currently, think about what can be done.