

Managing the Complexity of Tie-In Promotions

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Tie-in promotions can be an effective means of driving incremental sales and increasing brand awareness and affinity. Different manufacturers, though, have individual needs that complicate the process of assembling a market list and even the promotion itself, for a joint effort FSI. Avoiding problem areas and ensuring a good fit with the partners will go a long way to maximizing the value of these kinds of promotional programs.

The Benefits of Working Together

Tie-in promotions generally develop as a result of common promotional goals, and are increasingly used by savvy brands to escape the market clutter. That's going to be most effective when there's a natural or logical connection between the brands. With that kind of connection, the promotion can present a valuable usage message to consumers; for example, showing the products being used together in recipes or as part of a meal solution.

Co-promotion can also leverage the brand equity of all participating brands to create new opportunities. Together, the brands may create attractive appeals to new users and consumer demographics that might not be available should they go it alone. For example, a regional brand looking for a broader market presence might combine forces with a national brand. The result could be wider appeal for the local brand while bringing something new to users of the established brand. For smaller brands, a tie-in program may actually enable larger and more creative promotions. The economics of tie-ins (usually shared cost) could make them attractive to budget-strapped marketers.

Different Goals, Different Needs

But the benefits of tie-ins don't come without cost. Much of the complexity is introduced by the divergent tactical needs of the participants. Three main factors or needs require careful consideration in order to pull off a successful promotion.

- **Circulation Needs.** A clear tactical difference in many campaigns is the circulation needs of the participating brands. Aligned goals will make a successful partnership, but minor points of difference may still exist. Determining the specific markets to cover – even the papers to be covered – and resolving those differences, is essential to proper planning. Versioning may be required if one or more of the brands want to run solo in specific markets or to simply not run as a tie-in in others.

- Different FSI Publishers. Another potential disruption in planning occurs if the partners use different FSI publishers. Proper alignment of the publisher lists ensures an accurate understanding of where the manufacturers want to run circulation.
- Versioning Needs. In addition to the versioning required by circulation needs, planning complexity can increase if participating brands choose to run more than one value. Just a few different value combinations throughout the entire list can quickly multiply the unique versions required, particularly when both brands utilize multiple values.

Avoiding the Pitfalls

Tie-ins do provide an opportunity to cut through the clutter, to lower the cost of promoting and even to get in front of new users (or existing ones in new ways). But none of that is possible without the primary ingredient for good tie-in promotions: complementary partners. The promotion must make sense to everybody – the brands as well as the consumer.

Having the right partner is hardly the magic bullet though. Significant coordination of needs is still required; but a good partnership can mitigate (if not eliminate) many of the complexities. On the other hand, a poor partnership could actually add to the clutter, create more costs and turn off users, while still being difficult to plan.

Putting a Plan in Place

Managing this complexity may tax your promotional planning resources. Inmar VSI Promotion Consulting can help by leveraging its expertise to create effective lists for the brands involved. And, an established knowledge of the FSI publishers ensures synchronized circulation. In short, Inmar VSI can cut through the complexity, producing lists and unique versioning requirements with accuracy and ease.

Contact us today at (336) 631-2660 to see how we can help with promotional planning needs.