

# Making Social Media Work



We all keep hearing about this social media thing and how we need to jump aboard to get our networks sharing our story and helping us to market. “How do I

get this social media thing to really work for me?” is what we keep hearing people say, and I bet you have had the same thought.

A few weeks back, I wrote a blog on doing online contests that help businesses get their names out to the masses. As was discussed, this is becoming an increasingly popular way to build your fan base and engage your audience, while empowering your audience to do your marketing for you. I wanted to add to that conversation by showing a real-world example of how contesting helps make this happen.

One recent contest our company had great success in creating was in conjunction with Graphic Creations – a local company who wanted to give away something to the business community in celebration of their 25th anniversary. The prize? An opportunity for somebody to help promote their own business through a vehicle wrap.

In order to get maximum exposure, owner Jim Caughorn chose to run the contest through social media and asked the Efficiency team, led by Creative Director Tori Rose, to head it up.

“In addition to increasing the sheer number of people who interact with your brand, a contest provides a means to deepen the connection, as well,” said Rose. “A user-generated content (UGC) promotion, such as a photo or video contest, is a great way to do just that. UGC contests tap in to the human drive to compete, and they provide an opportunity for everyone to experience their 15 minutes of fame. Most importantly, when

participants upload their personal content (e.g., a photo or story) to your promotion, they are naturally invested in your brand.”

The Wrap My Ride contest was run through Graphic Creations’ Facebook page, asking participants to submit either a picture or video showing their ride and telling why it needed a wrap. The top three entries with the highest number of votes were judged by Graphic Creations.

“We have received more business because of the campaign,” said Caughorn. “Many of the clients that entered were still interested in a wrap or other services that we offer. It was great exposure for our existing customer as well as new prospective clients.

The entries for Graphic Creations’ contest ranged from simple, to fun and creative. But the contestants all had one thing in common: they were engaged and gave the client useful data on potential customers.

Getting data is crucial to building relationships, and contests are a key way to do that. This data will help a company to learn a lot about potential clients during the interaction, so companies can better understand their customers and how to provide value to them. It is also nice to have clients sharing the story and to help out in the marketing arena. That is what a good contest can do – allow customers to share with others and help foster name recognition.

As for the statistics, in a mere 30 days, the contest resulted in more than 16,500 visits to the contest page and a subsequent 2,000 referrals. In that time, the client also doubled their fan base.

When coordinated with an overall social media marketing plan, a good contest can be a powerful tool. What are you doing to create a contest that people will talk about and share with

others?