Ag Decision Maker

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In-Store Demonstrations

Demonstrations, sometimes referred to as product samplings, are an effective and inexpensive means to promote a new or existing product.

Types of Demonstrations

There are three types of in-store demonstrations:

1. **Live Demonstrations** include a staffed area with activity, such as simple preparation. They are best with a new product that requires information or answers to questions, or for a product that requires special preparation. One advantage of a live demonstration is that you can encourage the customer to purchase the product
2. **Mobile Demonstrations** are a form of live demonstration that occurs when a demonstrator walks through a store offering samples. The demonstrator usually has a base operation near the product sales display. Not all stores allow for this type of demonstration.
3. **Static Displays** include an area displaying the product and offering unattended samples. One advantage of a static display is that they are cost effective. One disadvantage is that there is no control on how much sample is used or on the purchasing decision. This type of demonstration requires consumer familiarity with the product.

Steps in Planning Demonstrations

Below are fourteen steps to help you plan your in-store demonstration.

1. Determine what type of demonstration you are going to use.
2. Decide which stores you are going to target.
3. Choose a store that stocks your product.
4. Find out the store policy on setting up in-store demonstrations. Every store has different policies.
5. Decide if you wish to hire a demonstration company or if you will do it yourself. Consider time, energy, ease of demonstration and budget when making this decision.
6. Talk to the store managers. The better the relationship you have with them and the better they know your product, the more cooperative they will be. Talk to them about two weeks prior to the demonstrations, so they will have the product on hand and on the shelves.
7. Be prepared to work the whole weekend, not just peak hours. The normal run of a demonstration is during store hours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
8. The store may want incentives from you, such as discounts on the product. If possible, get the store to offer special treatment for your product during the demonstration. Be prepared to pay for this opportunity.
9. Try to place the demonstration area where the product is stocked.
10. During the demonstration, hand out simple information on the product and any coupons.
11. Be unique. Try new ideas, as you must stand out from the competition.
12. Know the competition, but do not downgrade them during the demonstration.
13. Discuss liability issues with the store manager and be prepared to show your proof of liability to the store manager.
14. Demonstrations normally do not provide access to a very wide market and, consequently, are only used as one segment of a marketing and promotional package.

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