

# Facebook Promotions: What You Need to Know

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Are you thinking of running a contest or promotion on Facebook? Have the rules imposed by Facebook confused you?

Look no further. This article will provide an in-depth look at Facebook's promotional rules.

## The Tricky Rules

Running a contest on Facebook is a powerful way to generate buzz, increase engagement, boost your fan count and build your email list.

But **Facebook** has rigorous rules governing what campaigns you can and cannot administer and promote on their platform.

For several years, the contest rules were fairly loose and Facebook users and page admins could pretty much administer whatever campaigns they wished within the confines of Facebook's general terms (now called [Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](#)).

However, in **2009**, Facebook severely tightened up their [promotion guidelines](#), causing a **great deal of confusion** even two years later. To quote [Susan Getgood](#) on her [post](#) about Facebook contests:

*Bottom line, Facebook doesn't want any explicit involvement in ANY of your contests. It's all about liability, and the Facebook promo guidelines are designed to distance the social network from whatever companies and bloggers do with their contests.*

Every day, vast numbers of page admins—from small businesses to major brands—administer promotions that violate Facebook's rules. They are running the risk of having their pages disabled completely. I strongly recommend all Facebook page admins **become very familiar with how to safely run contests within the rules**.

This post will tell you what you need to know.

## What does Facebook mean by a “promotion”?

To quote Facebook:

These [Promotions Guidelines](#) govern your communication about or administration of any sweepstakes, contest, competition or other similar offering (each, a “promotion”) on Facebook.

A “sweepstakes” is a promotion that includes a prize and a winner selected on the basis of chance.

A “contest” or “competition” is a promotion that includes a prize and a winner determined on the basis of skill (i.e., through judging based on specific criteria).

So, **anytime you run a campaign on Facebook where you wish to select a winner**, that would fall into the terms of Facebook's [Promotions Guidelines](#).

Facebook also says:

You will not administer a promotion through Facebook, except through an application on the Facebook Platform. Administration includes operation of any element of the promotion, such as **collecting entries, conducting a drawing, judging entries, or notifying winners.**

Simply said: **You can't use Facebook's features for your promotions!**

A promotion where you select winners is **not to be confused with you simply promoting and marketing your business**—that's exactly the reason Facebook (fan) [pages](#) were designed!

## What are Facebook's contest rules in plain English?

On November 6, 2009, Facebook [changed](#) their Promotions Guidelines significantly. Prior to this date, it was pretty much a free-for-all. With the changed rules, Facebook basically went from one extreme to the other.

In order to administer any kind of contest, you had to (1) get written approval from Facebook at least seven days prior to running your campaign, (2) have an account rep at Facebook and meet the minimum ad spend of \$10,000 per month and (3) use a third-party app on the Facebook platform.

Then, **on November 29, 2010, Facebook loosened up a bit and [changed](#) rules.** So, the good news is:

1. You no longer need written permission from Facebook in order to run a contest.
2. You no longer need an account rep at Facebook, nor do you need to meet the minimum monthly ad spend.
3. **BUT you still must administer ALL contests on Facebook via a third-party app ON the Facebook platform.**

That's right! ***You MUST use an app to conduct a contest or risk having Facebook come down on you.*** Unless of course you're a big time advertiser with Facebook.

## What apps are best for running contests?

One of the most widely used apps is [Wildfire app](#). Their interface is fairly easy to use and their fees are competitive.

Wildfire app

You can **choose among 10 different types of promotions**, including photo, video, quiz, trivia and more:

Wildfire app promotion choices

Wildfire app promotion choices

See Wildfire's [FAQ](#) to decide among running a sweepstakes, contest or coupon/giveaway campaign.

## Build Social Media Marketing Campaigns

With Wildfire companies & agencies can easily build & launch social media marketing campaigns within minutes. Campaign formats include quizzes,

## Reach Users Across Multiple Platforms

Wildfire enables you to simultaneously publish your social media marketing campaign on Facebook Fan Pages, Twitter and your Website with

## Award Winning Applications

Facebook, Accel partners & the Founders Fund invested in our company via the fbFund and recognized us with top awards. Awards



## Build Fans, Followers & Subscribers



### Sweepstakes

How it works: Consumers enter a sweepstakes. Winners are randomly selected.



### Signup Form

How it works: Consumers complete a signup form or survey & you can collect their info.

## Drive Sales



### Group Deal

How it works: Consumers buy your Product or Service at a Discount if X other Consumers buy too.



### Coupons

How it works: Coupon, voucher or giveaway that consumers can print or redeem electronically.

## Engage Consumers



### Photo/Design Contest

How it works: Contest whereby winner(s) are selected based on judging and/or voting.



### Video Contest

How it works: Contest whereby winner(s) are selected based on judging and/or voting.



### Essay-based Contest

How it works: Contest whereby winner(s) are selected based on judging and/or voting.



### Quiz

How it works: Quiz enabling consumers to share their personality with friends.



### Trivia

How it works: Multiple choice question trivia where consumers can measure their knowledge.



### Favorite Picks

How it works: Promotions enabling consumers to share their favorite items with friends.

A wide variety of third-party apps offer promotion services that meet Facebook's rules. Check out any of the following:

See also this related post: [Top 75 Apps for Enhancing Your Facebook Page](#). Plus, see Facebook's list of preferred developers [here](#).

**Can I select a fan at random to give away a prize?**

**No.** This constitutes a drawing where winners get selected. You're effectively using Facebook to "collect entries." Plus, **you cannot contact winners inside Facebook at all—via email, chat or posting on their wall—nor can you post winners on your page wall.**

What you can do, for example, is **select a fan at random and feature him or her in your page photo.** Or possibly feature chosen fan(s) on a custom

tab (link). As long as you don't have other fans vote or submit nominations, etc.



Toys R Us Featured Fan!

Toys "R" Us currently runs a fun [Featured Fan promotion](#). Keep in mind the submission and voting is, of course, part of an official sanctioned promotion being run on a third-party app.

Toys "R" Us Featured Photo Facebook contest. Note the link to terms and conditions.

**Can I have my fans enter a contest by uploading photos?**

Not if you ask fans to upload photos directly to Facebook. Photos, or any content, submitted for entry into a contest can only be done via a third-party app on the Facebook platform. **The**



Add to My Page's Favorites

Up  
Toys

## Facebook app doesn't count.

From the Promotions Guidelines:

**You cannot:** Condition entry in the promotion upon a user providing content on Facebook, such as posting on a wall of a page, uploading a photo, or posting a status update.

**You can:** Use a third-party application to condition entry to the promotion upon a user providing content to the application. For example, you may administer a photo contest whereby a user uploads a photo to a third-party application to enter the contest.

I searched extensively for a [Flickr](#) Facebook app, for example, that might be a good workaround for running a contest, but came up blank.

If you do a [Google](#) search for "Facebook photo contest," unfortunately, you'll see **there are scores of Facebook pages running photo contests that do not adhere to Facebook's terms.**

Here's a fun example of a photo contest—that does **comply with Facebook's Promotions Guidelines**—by the [United States Potato Board](#):

Twice Baked, Twice as Smart recipe photo contest

## Can I give away a prize to anyone who likes my page?

You CAN restrict your promotion only to entrants who have first liked your page, **as long as the promotion is administered through a third-party app on a separate canvas page** (now a link, formerly a tab).

Plus, good news! You CAN **provide a giveaway and even collect names and emails from fans and visitors to your**

Toys "R" Us

Wall Info Poll Events **Featured Fan** YouTube >>

**Disney Pixar TOY STORY 3 NOW Available!** [Shop now >](#)

**Toys R Us FeaTured FaN!**

Do you want to be the next Toys"R"Us Featured Fan?

Upload photos of yourself or your children for a chance to be the next Toys"R"Us Featured Fan. Every Monday, the photo with the most votes will be featured as our profile picture!

**Congratulations to this week's winner!**

Toys"R"Us  
Ryan  
Submitted by:  
Sharon

[submit a photo](#) [vote on photos](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

**Potatoes, Taters and Spuds** Like

Wall Info Photo Contest Recipe Spot... E-Newsletter YouTube

Find Promotions | Start your own promotion now!

**Twice Baked, Twice As Smart**  
Recipe Photo Contest

Details Enter Contest View Entries Invite Friends

About Official Rules Privacy

### Twice Baked Twice as Smart Photo Contest

page. I highly recommend you **add a custom contact form to your page**. Use the sign-up box code from your own email management system, or create your own form code using something like JotForm, reviewed [here](#).

You can use a piece of "fan only" [reveal code](#) to **give away a coupon code or special gift to everyone who likes your page**. Check out [Guy Kawasaki's Facebook page](#) for his forthcoming book, [Enchantment](#), where he gives away a free ebook just for liking his page.

Guy Kawasaki—  
Enchantment Facebook page

See the Facebook page of [1-800-Flowers](#) for a discount code, only revealed to users who like their page.

**How can I tell if a contest on Facebook adheres to the guidelines?**

Promotions on Facebook **need to have clearly set-out terms that are visible right on the canvas page**. For example, here's the [Twice Baked, Twice as Smart photo contest](#) rules:

Contest rules for Twice Baked, Twice as Smart

**Can I promote a contest on my Facebook page that I run on my blog?**

facebook 183 99 Search

**Enchantment** Like  
Product/Service

**Guy Kawasaki** Share  
**Enchantment**  
The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions

Enchantment Blurbs Excerpts Order

If you want to change the world — or even part of the world, this book is for you.

**Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions** is Guy Kawasaki's tenth book. Read it to learn that while persuasion is good, enchantment is even more powerful.

You'll learn how to influence what people do while you maintain the highest standards of ethics.

The book explains when and why enchantment is necessary, and describes the three pillars of enchantment:

**The 4-Hour Body**

Like this page to download the first two chapters of Tim Ferriss's new book!

**The Macintosh Way**

Like this page to download Guy's first book!

Ships in March, 2011

Wall Info Enchantment GREAT Goodies Discussions More -

**14,631** people like this

Likes



#### Prize Details

The Grand Prize winner will receive a \$500 VISA gift card and a signed copy of The Nutrition Twins book *The Secret to Skinny*.

#### Contest Instructions

Potatoes are a good choice this winter because they're "twice" as smart - just like our friends the Nutrition Twins! That's why we've partnered with registered dietitians and personal trainers Lyssie and Tammy Lakatos this season to remind potato lovers everywhere that potatoes are packed with both vitamin C and potassium and to judge this easy-to-enter recipe photo contest. Simply submit a photo of your best, most mouth-watering, original twice baked potato creation for a chance to win a \$500 VISA gift card. It's that easy! Including the twice baked recipe is optional, but do let us know what makes your creation so delicious by describing it in your photo caption. Need some inspiration to get started? Check out our five new Twice Baked Potato recipes online here.

#### Prize Eligibility

Only persons residing in United States who are at least 18 years of age can enter.

#### Contest Starts

February 01, 2011 @ 09:00 am (PST)

#### Contest Ends

March 07, 2011 @ 09:11 am (PST)

#### Need more Details?

[Read the Official Rules](#)

Links to a customized  
page created by  
Facebook app, Wildfire.

**Yes. As long as there's no requirement to do *anything* on Facebook;** e.g., like your page, comment, upload content, etc. You can simply post a link on your page to the contest. And, to be fully safe, I would also include this disclosure, *"This promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook."*

**Is it worth the risk to run a contest without a third-party app?**

**No, the risks are far too great,** in my opinion. Yes, Facebook does not have the resources to monitor every single promotion on the platform. But, you never know when you might catch the attention of their legal department.

This promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook. You understand that you are providing your information to Fleishman-Hillard and not to Facebook. The information you provide will only be used for N/A.

In addition to our other remedies, we may remove any materials relating to the promotion or disable your page, application or account if we determine in our sole discretion that you violate any of our policies.

Facebook is serious about taking action if they discover a violation. My friend, [Jonathan Rivera](#), had an experience with his [real estate referral Facebook page](#) where there was an inadvertent use of a trademark. Despite Rivera's becoming compliant, Facebook shut down the very popular page with tens of thousands of fans. Fortunately, the issue got [resolved](#) in a fairly timely manner and Jonathan got his page back intact... under a new name.

So, just take note that **any violation of Facebook's terms is obviously a risk.** (Along with directly administering contests and promotions on your Facebook page, two other common violations are setting up more than one personal profile and/or setting up a personal profile in the name of a business.)

Hopefully the fog around contests on Facebook has lifted for you now! All you need to remember is **anytime you wish to run any kind of promotion where you select a winner, you'll have to use a third-party application on the Facebook platform.** I'll be writing a follow-up post covering the specifics of what makes a successful contest. Stay tuned!

In the meantime, **what questions do you have about contests? Have you run any successful promotions yourself?** We'd love to hear from you in the comments below.

