Free Giveaways

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Key takeaways

- Use a grand prize (full scholarship/sweepstakes-style prize) to drive strong interest and lead volume.
- Offer a “participation trophy” (partial scholarship/promotional offer) to everyone who qualifies but doesn’t win to convert leads into paying customers.
- Make the grand prize the thing you actually want people to buy and assign it a clear monetary value to serve as a price anchor.
- Collect contact info and rich qualifying information during entry; entrants will often provide extensive detail if they want to win.
- Require eligibility criteria and optional actions (join group, share, bring a friend, leave review) to improve lead quality and organic promotion.
- Use firm deadlines/urgency for entry and for claiming participation prizes to drive action at each step.
- Announce and actually deliver the grand prize publicly; then contact other qualifiers with the promotional offer.
- Promotional offers can be discounts on the grand prize, truncated versions, shorter timeframes, or other reduced forms—bigger discounts are more compelling.
- Advertise the giveaway for 3–7 days or until you reach the number of entrants you can reasonably contact.
- Book appointments with participation winners and apply their credit toward the grand prize; give limited time to claim.
- Have a lower-priced backup product (half to one-third price) as a downsell if someone refuses the participation offer.
- Be careful with legality: giveaways/sweepstakes are regulated; charging for entry can be an illegal lottery.
- Cash giveaways are broadly appealing but less original and don’t exploit the cost-vs-retail-value arbitrage you can get by giving away your own high-value service.

Checklist

1. Pick a grand prize
    - Choose your main high-value offering as the grand prize (e.g., your year-long flagship program).
    - Why: A sexy, high-value grand prize draws entrants who already want what you sell and establishes the anchor value for later promotional offers.
2. Assign a monetary value to the grand prize

- Advertise the retail/value amount prominently (e.g., “$5,000 value”).
- Why: Serves as a price anchor for the promotional offer and makes the participation trophy’s discount feel like a real win.

3. Design the promotional (participation trophy) offer
   - Decide a discount, truncated version, or shortened timeframe of the grand prize to offer to qualifiers who don’t win.
   - Why: Converts entrants who already expressed interest by offering a compelling, limited-time reason to buy now.
4. Create eligibility criteria and qualifying questions
   - Require contact information and ask qualifying questions about business, pain points, aspirations, why they should win, and actions taken.
   - Why: Ensures entrants are a fit for your core services and provides rich data to tailor the follow-up offer and improve conversion.
5. Add promotional/viral qualifying actions (optional)
   - Require or incentivize actions like sharing the post, joining a group, bringing a friend, leaving a review, or inviting referrals.
   - Why: amplifies promotion and helps identify higher-quality leads; balance friction vs. conversion—compelling prizes will motivate entrants to take extra steps.
6. Set firm deadlines for entry and for claiming participation prizes
   - Put a clear deadline on the entry period and on how long non-winners have to claim their promotional offer.
   - Why: Urgency drives action at each step; without deadlines people delay and do not claim offers.
7. Advertise the giveaway for 3–7 days (or until you can manage outreach)
   - Run ads/announcements until you hit the number of people you can reasonably contact in the claim period.
   - Why: Short, intense promotion keeps momentum and ensures you can follow up live/quickly with entrants.
8. Run the grand prize announcement event
   - Hold a live webinar/event to announce the winner, present how great the prize is, and increase audience engagement.
   - Why: When people expect a winner to be picked, they are more engaged and receptive to the offer; the live reveal builds goodwill and trust.
9. Announce and deliver the grand prize publicly
   - Publicly pick and deliver the grand prize to the winner.
   - Why: Credibility—if you advertise you must actually give the prize; public delivery reinforces trust and social proof.
10. Contact all qualifying non-winners with the participation offer
    - Email/call/text qualifiers with a congratulatory message and the promotional offer (e.g., “partial scholarship” for X% off or Y value credit).

    - Why: They already applied and expressed interest; offering them a discount on the thing they wanted converts many into paying customers.
11. Book appointments and credit wins toward purchases
    - Schedule calls/appointments for participation winners and apply their promotional credit toward the grand prize purchase.
    - Why: Personal contact helps close sales and ensures the promotional credit is applied as promised.
12. Put expiration/claim windows on all prize redemptions
    - Make promotional offers time-limited and require claiming by a set date.
    - Why: Prevents inaction and forces a decision, improving conversion rates.
13. Prepare a downsell lower-priced product
    - If someone rejects the participation offer, have a product at roughly half to one-third the price to offer immediately (keep the same percentage discount feel).
    - Why: Gives an alternative that may suit them better and preserves the "I won something" feeling while salvaging the sale.
14. Price and cashflow strategy for purchases
    - Collect as much cash up front as possible; if they will pay upfront, do it; if you must offer payment plans, extend them over longer periods—but avoid delayed billing that begins months later.
    - Why: Upfront cash reduces churn and prevents problems from deferred billing; it's better for cashflow and conversion integrity.
15. Avoid charging for entry
    - Do not charge entrants to enter the giveaway.
    - Why: Charging for entry can turn the campaign into an illegal lottery; giveaways/sweepstakes are legally regulated.
16. Replicate the framework across niches
    - Use the grand prize + participation trophy structure for other offers or for clients (e.g., fitness trainers running year-long transformations).
    - Why: It's a repeatable framework that generates leads, engagement, and goodwill across markets.

Examples:

- Scholarship giveaway for a year-long flagship program (grand prize) with partial scholarships for other qualifiers.
- Sweepstakes/contest labeled as "enter for a chance to win" with a voucher or gift card as the participation prize.
- Fitness trainers running a one-year transformation grand prize, then offering discounted enrollment to non-winners.
- Advertising a $5,000 value service as the grand prize and offering a partial scholarship/discount to all qualifying entrants.

Notes:

- These offers are very powerful and generate lots of leads and goodwill, but are legally regulated—don’t charge for entry and make sure you deliver the prizes you advertise.