

Sweepstakes are for the lucky, not every customer

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Many methods and strategies can be used to promote sales in addition to simply lowering price. One strategy, the "lucky draw," entitles all buyers to be entered in a drawing for some valued commodity. Using a test that probed consumers' beliefs in luck, Gerard Prendergast and Edmund Thompson investigated the question of who the best prospects are for "lucky draw" in their article appearing in the journal *Psychology & Marketing*.

In general, the researchers found that a belief in luck was not sufficient to entice consumers to a lucky draw over other sales strategies. Lucky draws did appeal to consumers who personally felt lucky.

This finding is consistent with an "illusion of control" phenomenon psychologists have observed among people who habitually engage in superstitious behavior (such as wearing "lucky" things, carrying a "rabbit's foot," or following astrological dictates). Perhaps not surprisingly, the perceived utility of the prize in the "lucky draw" may also be a factor in consumers' participation.

An implication from this research for marketers has to do with the extent to which they may want their targeted consumers to "get lucky" with their products. It may be that promotional strategies that foster a sense of luck (such as by offering a disproportionately high number of prizes) will foster greater participation, especially among consumers who themselves, for whatever reason, feel lucky. Lucky draws may be a particularly potent marketing tool in some international markets, such as

China, where certain beliefs related to luck are more of a cultural staple.

Source: Wiley

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