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Building Brand Promotions That Perform in This Year's *Value-First Economy*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Designing Promotions For Maximum Volume

Four Keys to Driving Results

Shopper Focus, Defined Objectives, Promo Placement and Offer Design

Coupons. Digital offers. Rebates. Sweepstakes. Retail media–enabled promotions that connect online inspiration to in-store action.

These and other promotional tools are some of the most dependable ways to drive volume—especially in grocery, where we see 60% of shoppers using loyalty or digital coupons, often while planning their trip[1].

As the year opens with consumer sentiment remaining at historically low levels and inflation a stubborn drag on many households, shoppers are likely to prioritize budgeting, stocking up, price comparison, and a growing willingness to choose private label products, which continue to gain credibility and market share[2]. Research indicates that many now view store brands as equal to—or even better than—national brands[3], making it harder for branded products to rely solely on equity.

In this value-first environment, promotions will play a meaningful role in how shoppers decide what to buy, where to shop, and which brands earn repeat consideration. They are an essential lever for reinforcing value and nudging choice, provided they're thoughtfully planned and well-executed.

When we consider how to apply the powerful influence of promotional devices, we can think about this work the same way we'd think about planning the elements of a successful event: setting a clear intent or theme, inviting our guests, choosing the right setting, and identifying how our guests will leave with a good impression.

The Guest List: Who You Invite

The Occasion: What You Want to Accomplish

The Venue: Where the Promotion Shows Up

What Guests Take Home: Offer Value

The Guest List:
Who You Invite

1

Get the Guest List Right:
Target for Relevance

Every strong promotion starts with a clear focus on the shopper. What matters more than maximum reach is the promotion's relevance to the brand's priority consumer.

That might mean targeting a busy parent who plans weekly shopping around retailer coupons. Or it might mean a Gen Z shopper who discovers new products through social and mobile—92% of whom use a mobile device while shopping in-store[1].

These shoppers enter the experience with different expectations and behaviors. Programs designed around those differences tend to perform better across both engagement and conversion.

Knowing who you're inviting shapes every other decision that follows.

The Occasion:
What You Want to Accomplish

2

Know Your Why:
Crystallize Objectives

Before choosing the promotional mechanism, carefully consider your objectives. Launching a new item, increasing household penetration, or driving unit velocity each call for a different strategy.

For new items within an established brand, existing products can provide reassurance and context. For entirely new brands, awareness-driving promotions—supported by consistent messaging across digital content and in-store touch points—help build the familiarity you need along the path to purchase.

Penetration goals often benefit from audience-targeted digital coupons that reach new or lapsed buyers. Velocity-focused programs may emphasize multi-unit messaging or retargeting tactics that encourage more frequent purchases while accounting for how those mechanics affect future buying behavior. Target those stock-up shoppers with solutions that simplify their lives and incorporate products across multiple categories, like a meal kit.

The occasion defines the approach.

The Venue:

Where the Promotion Appears

3

Context Matters:
Meet the Customer Moment

Placement plays a significant role in performance. Some promotions are designed to influence list-building before the trip, like a mobile banner ad. Others are meant to interrupt decision-making in the aisle, like a shelf blade.

Category dynamics matter here. Alcohol, for example, is subject to state-specific regulations that determine whether rebates or instant savings are viable. Purchase cadence matters, too—weekly staples behave differently than items shoppers replenish monthly or less frequently.

Understanding competitor activity also helps determine whether a promotion should align with category norms or stand apart from them.

The proper venue ensures the offer meets the shopper at the moment it can be most effective.

What Guests Take Home:
Offer Value

4

Make It Worthwhile:
Deliver Intentional Value

In a market where 68% of consumers actively seek promotions[5], offer value carries real weight—but structure and intent also matter.

Richer offers can reduce friction for trial during new item launches. Penetration strategies may benefit from differentiated offers for brand switchers versus loyal buyers. Deal mechanics also influence behavior: a BOGO and a multi-price offer can deliver similar economics while driving different purchase patterns.

It's also important to consider what happens after the promotion ends. Multi-unit offers may extend purchase cycles, which can be helpful—or disruptive—depending on the brand's broader goals.

Thoughtful offer design balances short-term lift with long-term performance.

When each element is planned with intention—the priority shopper, objective, placement, and value—promotions do more than drive transactions. They create moments that feel relevant, useful, and worth repeating for a cautious consumer facing another year of volatility.

Ready to Plan Your Next Promotion *with Full-Volume Impact?*

Connect with the AMP Promotions Center of Excellence.

Sources

[1] *SMART Market Research – ADV 2025 Shopper Study, April 2025*

[2] *Index of Consumer Sentiment, University of Michigan, December 2025*

[3] *Nielsen IQ, Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2026*

[4] *Kantar Retail IQ / Google Think, 2025*

[5] *Nielsen IQ, Smarter Pricing Strategy in Uncertain Market Conditions, 2025*

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GET IN TOUCH

Let's talk.

Contact AMP to explore how we can collaborate to put these insights into action.
Reach out to katie.giuditta@ampagency.comd say hi.

ABOUT AMP

AMP is a full-service agency built to connect brand love with buyer behavior across every stage of the customer journey. With expertise spanning Strategy & Intelligence, Creative & Content, Retail & Commerce, Media & Measurement, Digital & Social, and Activation & Amplification, AMP delivers solutions that blend creativity, commerce, and data into one seamless experience. By unifying brand storytelling with shopper conversion, AMP helps clients resonate emotionally and drive measurable business growth. Follow along at ampagency.com.

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