

Marketing Awards for Excellence

Category: Social Media Marketing

Campaign: ASOS Summer Sale

Executive Summary:

To publicise its Summer Sale and reward its social media base, ASOS created the digital equivalent of people camping outside a shop before its sale starts. Everyone in the digital queue got early access to the ASOS Sale, and in the process sent nearly three quarters of a million invitations to friends to join them.

The campaign increased the size of ASOS' Facebook base by 33% with over 211,000 new Likes, and created the biggest revenue day for ASOS ever recorded at that point.

Other brands had created digital queues before, but in an original twist, the ASOS mechanic involved a series of games which allowed users to get points and digitally elbow their way to the head of the queue. This engagement not only kept users coming back into the Facebook app, three of the four games involved an element of social sharing to bring new users to the campaign, through incentivised invitations and "Confessions of a Queue Jumper" which saw thousands of users declare to their friends what they would do to get to the front of the ASOS Sale queue. Although there was a small media send around the activity, analysis shows that it was this user-initiated, organic activity which drove the scale of participation in the campaign.

The campaign ROI was over 2000%.

The campaign in detail:

The end of season sale is a crucial moment for retailers. With general retailing conditions at the time challenging for many, most competitors went into sale early and other key competitors (including New Look, TopShop and Zara) due to launch their sale in the same week, ASOS faced a challenge of cutting through the noise and creating interest in its sale and driving traffic to the site during this period. The principal objective was therefore to hype the ASOS Sale and create anticipation amongst shoppers in advance of the start of the sale. It was important that this was done in a way which didn't simply make shoppers defer purchasing items now because they could see that a specific discount on particular items was coming with the launch of sale. Put simply, we needed a mechanic which wasn't based on featuring actual merchandise.

A secondary objective was to continue the process of getting existing ASOS customers to 'Like' the brand's Facebook page, recruiting them into an additional CRM channel to help engage and drive repeat purchases, and to leverage ASOS' social base to recruit new customers into the brand.

The campaign strategy was to create anticipation by promoting the possibility of early access to the sale. In effect, we set out to create the same sense of hype and excitement you get with the very biggest high street sales by creating the digital equivalent of people camping outside a store waiting for the doors to open. We decided to offer early access to the sale for the brand's fans on Facebook, but to phase this access, with the earliest slots reserved for those who 'digitally elbow' their way to the front by amassing the most points in a series of games.

The game mechanics achieved a number of things: 1. Making the early access seem worthwhile as it had to be earned (this got around the problem of not being able to preview the discounts available in the

sale). 2. It made the promotion fun for the users. 3. The mechanics rewarded social spread which formed a key part of the recruitment into the promotion. The games included:

Confessions of a Queue Jumper: users were rewarded for Tweeting or posting on Facebook what they would do to jump the ASOS queue. Contributions included: “I'd say ASOS after every word I spoke for a day!! I ASOS love Asos!” and “I'd topple stiletto-wearing fashionistas like dominoes to get to the front of the @ASOS Sale queue”. Every confession included the url asos.to/TheSale and the hashtag #ASOSale

Friends = Benefits: Users were incentivised to invite their friends to join the queue, with points awarded when the friends joined the app.

Ooh What a Lovely Pair: A quick fire memory game where users were rewarded for how quickly they could uncover a matching pair of pictures of items featured in the sale. This provided an all-important quick way to earn points, so everyone could feel like they were advancing in the queue, and therefore would stay engaged.

Sale Shout Out: Rewards for tweeting about the ASOS Sale.

Confessions and Shout-Outs were limited to one play per day, to avoid users spamming their friends (and prevent “unliking” of the ASOS Facebook page). Lovely Pair Matching could be played multiple times per day and Friends = Benefits only allowed you to invite a friend once, and only if they hadn't already been invited or joined the queue.

The app was available in French, German and English, reflecting the three language versions of the ASOS main site.

The app was launched on a Thursday, to create hype across the weekend. The games were closed on Monday morning, and access times allocated. The ‘queue’ was divided into eight groups, who were granted access to the sale in half-hour intervals from 5.30pm until 9.30pm that evening, before general access was granted to the public on the following morning.

An additional mechanic assigned coloured tickets to everyone in the queue, offering additional discounts and offers for limited time periods during the sale itself. This gave a reason for people to continue to sign up to the promotion even after the early access period had finished.

Throughout the sale period there was a content posting strategy on Facebook to support the activity. This consisted of galleries of items which were to be featured in the sale (without revealing the discount), highlighting the best “Confessions” entries and explaining the game mechanics. The promotion was also supported by Facebook ads, YouTube promoted videos, promoted tweets, paid search, newsletters and on site however it was the organic spread generated by the users of the Sale app that drove the vast majority of awareness and interactions (99.7% of new Facebook page Likes came from organic sources).

Results after one week:

Over 100k people joined the queue prior to the early access period, with 426,305 plays of the games/activities in 96 hours. An additional 73,922 people joined after the early access period to get a coloured Sale ticket.

715,745 invitations were sent, with an organic acceptance rate of 5% - which is significantly higher than the average.

8,625 Confessions were publicly posted. 32,419 Tweets were sent.

ASOS Facebook Page likes increased by +33% (211,322 to 852,342 in just one week – 99.7% of new likes coming from organic sources (not paid media). This saw the page's likes more than double in New Zealand, and increase by more than 90% in France, Australia and Singapore, and increase by more than 50% in the US.

Sale revenue from Facebook saw a year on year increase of +333.5%, resulting in a campaign ROI of 2,042% (based on increase in directly trackable revenue originating from Facebook)

For the second day of sale, the promotion also generated the most revenue ever recorded at ASOS in a single day at that time.