

## See Your Sales Surge with Display Contests



**Ever feel like you just need a shot of adrenaline in your produce department?**

Display contests can create excitement, prompt shoppers to venture beyond their normal shopping lists, increase the longer-term sales potential for items and categories, and create opportunities for produce department personnel to push themselves.

Jeff Cady, director of produce and floral at Tops Markets, said his stores run display contests and sales contests frequently. "Over the past 10 years we have increased the frequency tenfold," Cady said. **"Once we saw the results and our vendor partners saw the results, it became part of our overall sales strategy and culture."** "I remember when I was a produce manager and won a contest – I won my fair share," Cady said. "I don't remember the prizes, but I do remember the pride I felt. Bragging rights among my peers was the best prize I won!" Mike Tipton, vice president of produce and floral for Schnuck Markets, also noted how contests are helpful in developing produce department personnel. "Display contests allow our produce managers to show off their creative side and they also demonstrate the power merchandising has to drive sales," Tipton said.

**While sales growth the week of the display often impresses, what really makes the extra work worthwhile are the longer-term results.** "Another benefit is raising the baseline sales of the items or category for weeks after the contest," Cady said. "Promotions and contests are opportunities for us to not only excite and educate customers, but also to minimize the price barrier that potentially stops them from purchasing during a normal week," Cady said. "Hopefully they try it, like it and add it to their shopping lists."



# DISPLAY CONTEST BEST PRACTICES

*for produce managers*

Scott Bennett, produce and sales merchandising manager for Jewel-Osco, said his stores participate in a number of different types of contests. **Some involve incentives for the company's produce operations specialists, who each oversee a group of stores.** Some contests reward both those district leaders and the stores in their regions that perform best. Other contests go straight to store level, and others target consumers – one recent Bennett makes a point to always switch up the prizes and incentives. He noted as an example a recent example involved giving away a contest around Pinata apples, with the new incentive of a trip to Chevrolet Camaro Hollywood, FL, for the produce operations specialists who hit the benchmark given. “They went absolutely crazy over this trip,” Bennett said. **“They built beautiful displays, they took a picture of every store, sent me a PowerPoint by district, so I had a picture of every store in the entire company, of what they did...and they blew away all the sales for all the other years.”**

That wasn't the end of the story, though. “This is why we do contests – because the next week they actually beat sales for the contest week,” Bennett said. **“They hooked the customers in, they tried it, they bought it, they loved it, they came back and bought it next week. So that's what the contest is really about – return customers,”** Bennett said. **“It's not about a one-time buy, it's about building that item, building the category, whatever it is, so they come back every week, and that definitely happened with Pinata apples.”**

Sacramento, Calif.-based wholesaler General Produce Co. has a team of produce merchandisers that will build displays or assist produce managers in building them. “The contest displays add excitement and create a ‘something is different’ factor for consumers,” said Linda Luka, director of marketing and communications. “We do see a lift in whatever the product is, whether it's California pluots, Chilean fruits or Idaho potatoes.”



Ephrata, Penn.-based wholesaler Four Seasons Produce started running display contests among the stores it services about a year and a half ago. **“It's to the point now where vendors are coming to us every month trying to do these promotions and contests,”** said Brian Dey, senior merchandiser and natural stores coordinator. “We are in some cases having to either push them off or turn them down because there's too much going on. “It's kind of taken on a life of its own to where we actually have a calendar now for this year of what month we're doing what display contests,” Dey said.



Four Seasons ran a sweet potato contest in January, and **as retailers built big displays and sold more product, the company saw its sales of the product jump 30% from the same time the previous year.** Similarly, a contest around Equal Exchange avocados resulted in a spike of 155%. “If (you had told me that) we would sell 155% more avocados, which we did this year in January, leading up to the Super Bowl, in a heavy avocado month to begin with, I would have told you (that) you were crazy,” Dey said. “Our team made it happen because the teams at store level – the produce managers, the clerks, the supervisors – they made it happen on those displays,” Dey said.



Display Contest Slideshow:

<https://www.produceretailer.com/article/videos-article/see-your-sales-surge-display-contests>







### Display Contest Best Practices —Produce Manager Edition

How do you execute a great display contest in store? We collected some advice on best practices from industry experts. Contributing to this list: Scott Bennett, produce sales and merchandising manager for Jewel-Osco; Jeff Cady, director of produce and floral for Tops Markets; Mike Tipton, director of produce and floral for Schnuck Markets; Brian Dey, senior merchandiser and natural stores coordinator for Four Seasons Produce; and Linda Luka, director of marketing and communications for General Produce. For more, check out this list of display contest best practices for produce managers.

## Display contest best practices PRODUCE MANAGERS



**1 DO GET BUY-IN** from all departments and the store manager. Store real estate is at a premium, particularly lobby space.



**2 DO FOCUS** on the main item you're promoting. Don't get caught up in too many tie-ins.



**3 DO BE STRATEGIC** about how much product you need for your display. You could project based on data from the previous year or go with your gut.



**4 DO PRE-ORDER** any available industry POS, purchase décor or create other marketing materials like grower profiles, recipes, product storage and selection ideas, etc.



**5 DO MAKE SURE** the point-of-sale materials are there days before.



**6 DO GO BIG** ... but not too big. You want the display to be large enough that shoppers will definitely see it, but you don't want the display to be hard to shop or hard to navigate around.



**7 DO USE** all the tools at your disposal. Highlight the product in the ad and make in-store radio announcements about it.



**8 DON'T OVEREXTEND** the time frame of the promotion because it will lose its punch.



**9 DO GET CREATIVE** It could be cash, event tickets or even a trip to a well-located tradeshow.





## Display Contest Best Practices — Executive Edition

How do you plan a great display contest for the stores in your chain? We collected some advice on best practices from industry experts.

Contributing to this list: Scott Bennett, produce sales and merchandising manager for Jewel-Osco; Jeff Cady, director of produce and floral for Tops Markets; Mike Tipton, director of produce and floral for Schnuck Markets; Brian Dey, senior merchandiser and natural stores coordinator for Four Seasons Produce; and Linda Luka, director of marketing and communications for General Produce.

For more, check out this list of display contest best practices for executives.

# Display contest best practices

## THE EXECUTIVE EDITION



1

**DO PICK ITEMS STRATEGICALLY.** Select based on seasonality, what needs a sales boost, or what has opportunity for new growth.



2

**DO GIVE** stores enough notice to plan.



3

**DO WORK** with your vendor partners for point-of-sale support.



4

**DON'T FORGET** the store teams. Usually more than the produce managers will be involved.



5

**DO SET** sales targets on a store-by-store basis rather than setting generic benchmarks.



6

**DON'T BE** too pointed on your display expectations or locations. This will stifle creativity.



7

**DO REACH OUT** to associations, as many have point-of-sale material they're happy to share.



8

**DON'T SKIMP** on the prizes. It has to be worth the additional effort.



9

**DO GET CREATIVE** It could be cash, event tickets or even a trip to a well-located tradeshow.