

# Facebook Functionality Now Fair Game for Promotion Marketers

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On August 27, 2013, Facebook updated its Promotions Guidelines. The biggest change allows marketers to use native Facebook functionality (posts, likes, comments, etc.) to generate entries into Sweepstakes and contests. This is a 180-degree reversal from the prior guidelines. The change opens up whole new forms of promotions for marketers.

## Old Guidelines

Under prior Facebook guidelines, a marketer had to use its own software application to administer any sweepstakes or contest. Use of Facebook features or functionality (such as posting, commenting or liking) was prohibited. The only exception was that a sponsor could require a consumer to “like” a page to access a separate, app-based entry page. No other use of Facebook functionality was allowed.

## What Changed

While sponsors can continue to use their own apps to administer their promotions – and might wish to do so in some cases to provide content-rich environments for certain offerings – they are no longer required to do so. Instead, for example, they may now use the “like” button to count votes in a contest. Or they can allow sweepstakes entries to be based on actions such as commenting on a Page or post, clicking “like,” or messaging a page. And winners now can be notified through Facebook messaging and posts.

## What’s the Same

A sponsor still must include in its promotion rules a liability release for the benefit of Facebook, along with a statement that the promotion is not “sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook.” Facebook also continues to prohibit certain practices, such as: (a) using Facebook features or functionality for a promotion in a personal Timeline; and (b) requesting users to tag themselves in photographs they are not in.

## What It Means for Marketers

Sponsors now have a wider range of choices for administering promotions on Facebook. Before rushing to change formats, however, sponsors should consider several factors. For example, using Facebook functionality may offer faster and easier user interaction with the promotion. It also may help save costs and generate viral sharing through news feeds and other sharing features built into Facebook. But the sponsor will need to figure out how to track and maintain the integrity of the entries it receives from clicks, posts, etc. In contrast, a sponsor using its own app may gain more flexibility for a content-rich user experience, as well as more secure and organized data collection. Ultimately, each sponsor must assess what works best to achieve its particular goals for any given promotion.

Facebook's new promotions guidelines, plus a helpful business guide, are available at these links:

[www.facebook.com/page\\_guidelines.php#promotionsguidelines](http://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php#promotionsguidelines)

[www.facebook.com/facebookforbusiness/news/page-promotions-terms](http://www.facebook.com/facebookforbusiness/news/page-promotions-terms)

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