



Making a brand statement in the dark market

When a splashy advertising campaign is not an option, how do you promote a dark market brand? The solution for this multi-national FMCG company was creating brand ambassadors at the grassroots level in their independent retail channel.

The challenge

The client's objectives were to build loyal relationships with 3 000 small shop owners in their independent retail channel, teach them big brand merchandising skills and demonstrate the benefits of maintaining big brand standards of excellence.

Our involvement

Achievement Awards Group developed a Channel Excellence Program that would establish a suitable retail platform for the client, while supporting the business needs of small shop owners. The objective was to build mutually beneficial relationships that would create a basis for long-term loyalty and market growth.

- Retailers were rated monthly on how well they were marketing the brand according to 5 primary business measures:
 1. Product range
 2. Stock availability
 3. Recommended retail pricing
 4. Brand visibility
 5. Promotional activity participation
- Retailers earned *AwardPoints*[™] (program reward currency) based on monthly ratings. Targets varied according to the size and reach of each shop, making rewards accessible to all.
- *AwardPoints*[™] could be redeemed for any of the 10 000 general merchandise travel and experiences awards featured in the Online Catalogue of Awards, plus retail-related items such as point-of-sale systems, fax machines and computers.

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Results

- The client ranked the program as the most successful retail relationship initiative in the FMCG category in South Africa and a benchmark for dark market brand promotion.
- The program expanded fourfold in seven years.
- Market share has showed steady growth despite the entry of new competitors.

Vital statistics

Product category:
Channel Excellence
Program



Number of participants:
1 000 - 10 000

The Science and Art of Business and People Performance

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- Top performers were invited to exclusive workshops and networking events where they could learn more about the retail trade from industry experts.
- The client hosted monthly dinners with local community retailers to stay in touch with needs on the ground and reinforce strong working relationships.
- Communication was key to the success of this initiative. Achievement Awards Group's contact centre continually updated retailer details, organised events and supported the incentives component of the program.
- Regular communication also gave the client a current, accurate record of product movement in the independent retailer chain.

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