
CAPITAL ONE AND CHASE ENJOY MARKETING SUCCESS ON FACEBOOK

Unusual entrees make both companies' Facebook pages eminently "likable";

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Throughout the month of September and into October, major credit card issuers have experienced a dramatic shift in followership on Facebook, coinciding with major marketing campaigns. While most brands have seen a sustained increase in the growth of fans, Chase Freedom and Capital One are standout brands.

Not only have Chase Freedom and Capital One successfully achieved windfall gains in their followership, but more importantly, they have also surpassed their close competitors. Chase Freedom's Facebook fan page doubled its followers to pass rivals MasterCard and Citibank US, while Capital One overtook American Express, a longtime industry leader.

Chase Freedom

The impetus for this catch-up growth came from social media-focused marketing campaigns.

On Oct. 2, 2011, Chase Freedom announced a sweepstakes to win \$1 million. In order to participate, users were required to "like" Chase Freedom's Facebook fan page. After two days of promotion on Facebook alone, Chase Freedom's fans grew from 84,000 to 104,000.

The largest surge in growth, however, came on Oct. 5, 2011, when Chase Freedom sent out an email to its current customer base advertising the sweepstakes.

The fan count nearly doubled, growing from 104,000 to over 200,000 in only one day.

The number of fans on the Chase Freedom page continued to grow to over 254,000, although this figure appears to finally be leveling off.

The sweepstakes was released in tandem with a new spokesperson campaign. Chase Freedom introduced Ben Grant on Sept. 27, 2011 with the following post:

“Hi, I’m Ben Grant and I’m taking over the Chase Freedom Facebook page. I’m a guy on a mission to help you get what you deserve: more cash back!”

Grant was prominently featured on the Facebook page and the aforementioned marketing email (see below) sent to Chase customers. While Ben Grant marks a new direction for Chase Freedom’s marketing, the \$1 million incentive is likely to be the driving force behind the dramatic increase in fans.

Capital One

Capital One also saw a recent shift in followers on Sept. 20, 2011 when it partnered with the gaming company Zynga.

For a limited time, fans of the Capital One page could receive exclusive rewards for the popular games FarmVille, CityVille, and Pioneer Trail. The exclusive “Capital One Goat” was featured as a prized incentive. Capital One branding also began to appear within the games.

This new partnership sparked a substantial increase in fans: from around 1.5 million on Sept. 19, to 2.2 million fans only three days later. After five days of the campaign, Capital One successfully overtook American Express in total Fans with nearly 2.3 million fans.

Interestingly enough, American Express also has a working relationship with Zynga, allowing its customers to use Membership Rewards Points toward Zynga games on Facebook.

Substantive growth

Chase Freedom and Capital One have both been wildly successful in acquiring new fans with their recent marketing campaigns. More importantly, they have caught up to and surpassed their major competitors.

However, some questions linger about the long-term success of these strategies.

Chase Freedom and Capital One, along with their competitors, face the challenge of keeping an engaged subscriber base--no easy task. Looking forward, firms will have to find ways to keep their fans loyal and excited about a brand, while simultaneously attracting interest from potential customers.