



Cross-Promotion Makes Sense for Ohio Carwash and Lube

by Jim Wahl • NOLN Contributing Writer

Moo Moo Car Wash in the Columbus, Ohio, area offers customers a variety of express tunnel carwash options, from the "Fat Free" basic wash, to the mid "Low Fat" version, to the "Whole" wash with all of the available options. In addition, the company provides basic auto services including oil changes, lubrication, coolant flushes and tire rotations. To help cross-sell these services to carwash customers, anyone purchasing an Express Lube oil change, for instance, receives a free carwash. While this sounds promising, in reality it proved challenging, until the company purchased durable, metal carwash tokens.

Cross-promotion of related automotive services can be a great way to build business and loyalty among customers, but if the cross-promotional effort is difficult for the businesses or the customer, then it may have an adverse effect. Moo Moo found this out in its initial attempts to promote its carwash services to auto service customers.

Originally the company tried using paper tokens, Moolah as it was called in this very cow-centric environment, but the fragility of the paper proved challenging.

"We would give Moolah out to customers, but we ran into problems" said Moo Moo Car Wash Operations manager Michael Kolb. "Customers were not using them right away, so they did not recycle fast enough. If they were folded, the magnetic strip across the Moolah was damaged, making it nearly impossible for the bill validators at the carwash kiosks to read them."

When that happened, an attendant would have to provide assistance, slowing the process down.

Moo Moo also tried other methods, including punching a hole through the lube receipt when it was presented to an attendant for payment of a carwash. The punched receipt served as an indicator that the carwash had been redeemed, while scanning a bar code accounted for the transaction. This covered the accountability aspects of the program, but it was difficult to administer.

"This was a pain because it required someone at the kiosk at all times," Kolb said. "If someone came into the store to purchase a wash pass, then it would hold up the person waiting at the kiosk. It worked, but it wasn't ideal."

So Kolb suggested the idea of using tokens. When customers purchase a conventional oil change, they get a token that can be redeemed for a "Fat Free" carwash, the basic wash valued at \$5, or they re-



Moo Moo Car Wash and Lube had difficulty first incorporating cross-promotion between the express lube and carwash. Today, customers receive a token with an oil change that they can deposit in a kiosk to receive a free carwash. The system is working great.



ceive a \$10 "Whole" wash token with the high-mileage, gold or platinum oil changes.

The "Fat Free" can be upgraded to either a "Low-Fat" wash, valued at \$8 — which includes a spot-free rinse, triple-foam bath, wheel blaster, underbody spray and a clear coat protectant — or a \$10 "Whole" wash — adding tire shine and Simoniz Double Bond polish to the services — by paying the difference with either cash or credit card, or by using an additional "Fat Free" token that they have saved from a prior visit.

"This system works great because it allows customers to be self-sufficient without having to wait for a staff member," Kolb said. "And unlike the paper Moolah, which

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would last through a couple of cycles, the durable metal tokens can be re-used wash after wash.

"The tokens read perfectly each time, and because we went with a high-security coin, there is no crossplay, meaning nobody else's tokens are accepted, so we're not giving away washes."

To ensure security and simplify administration of the program, Moo Moo opted for two different tokens to cover each end of the wash spectrum. A smaller (0.901-inch), gold-looking metal alloy token is used for the "Fat Free" wash, while the "Whole" wash is a bigger (0.985-inch) bi-metal token that offers even greater security to correspond with its higher wash value.

Both have a unique metal signature because of their respective compositions, which were tested through the coin acceptor, along with an optical inspection of the coin face and diameter read, ensuring that standard brass or arcade tokens will not work in their place.

The tokens are minted by Van Brook of Lexington, Inc., with the Moo Moo name and logo, so they serve as mini billboards each time they are seen with pocket change,

in a cup holder or wherever they are stored prior to their usage.

Keep in mind that customers always have the option of upselling themselves, selecting a "Whole" wash, for example by inserting a "Fat Free" token and then paying the difference in cash or by credit card, or by inserting a pair of the "Fat Free" tokens.

Kolb purchased 5,000 each of the "Fat Free" and "Whole" tokens, which are working their way into circulation at the company's six locations. Approximately 30-60 tokens are given away daily to auto service customers, most of which eventually make their way back to the carwash kiosk. While their primary usage is to incent lube customers to use the carwash, managers also use them as promotional tools.

"I usually have tokens in my pocket at all times," Kolb said. "If I'm talking to a customer that says, 'Oh, I just love the Moo Moo!' or 'I've seen those but I've never been to one,' then I'll give them a token. We use some for promotional uses, too."

In addition to the self-serve aspect of the tokens, which allows customers to be self-sufficient in their wash selection and payment, Kolb also likes the economy of the

tokens.

"They cost about the same as paper tokens, but paper Moolah only lasts two or three times, while tokens last forever," Kolb said.

The ability to re-use them repeatedly makes their per-use cost essentially zero.

Simplicity and economy are key factors to the success of any cross-promotional effort. In this case, the durability of the tokens aids with both the simplicity and economy, and provides a marketing/branding effort each time they are viewed. Tokens are helping Moo Moo Car Wash to build volume on both its auto services as well as its carwashes. You might say that providing a "token" of appreciation for auto service customers is helping "moove" them along to the carwash. ♡