



# Microsoft® Tag for Promotions

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*Adding interactive mobile elements to promotional activities*

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# Introduction

Most consumers never leave home without their smartphones. Now, savvy marketers are finding ways to leverage smartphones to create promotional activities that help build brands, increase customer satisfaction, and drive sales.

People love to win stuff, and smartphones make entering contests and giveaways easier than ever. With the mobile marketing recognition technologies available from Microsoft Tag solutions – including Tag barcodes, QR Codes, and NFC touchpoints – you can create a new style of play that lets people interact more closely with your brand, leading to repeat traffic and brand loyalty. Hold a contest. Deliver clues to a sweepstakes prize. Sponsor a giveaway with new entries every day to keep folks coming back. It's all easily done thanks to Tag Manager's ability to update content without changing the Tag barcode, QR Code, or NFC URL. The more you engage people with your publication or product, the more you build your brand and audience.

This resource guide presents information to help you provide a high-quality user experience. The information discussed here is intended for developers and designers of mobile web content, marketing agencies, and other mobile-media providers who are interested in engaging the broad base of smartphone users in original and innovative ways. This document is part of a series of guides that supplements the information available on the Microsoft Tag website. It will be updated and expanded as the technology evolves.

The illustrations in this and other Microsoft Tag guides use functional Tag barcodes to help you understand what you can do with this exciting new technology. To view the examples in action, visit <http://gettag.mobi> on your smartphone, download the free Microsoft Tag app, and then scan the enlarged Tags that accompany the illustrations.

# Using Microsoft Tag in Promotional Activities

The Microsoft Tag mobile marketing solution provides a new and exciting way for consumers to interact with you, your brand, and your products. The technology helps provide a live link to mobile media, including web content, videos, music, reviews, maps, social networks, promotions, and more. Using Tag barcodes, QR Codes, or NFC touchpoints in promotional activities can help widen your promotional campaign's reach, streamline processes for user entry and fulfillment, and reduce or eliminate some printing costs.

Tag barcodes and other recognition technologies make it easy for people to access and enjoy mobile content anytime, anywhere. When customers scan one of your Tags, for example, on their smartphones, the Tag links them to the digital experience you have designed.

An end-to-end solution, Microsoft Tag includes the following components:

- *Colorful 2D barcodes, called Tags, that you can put on just about anything.*
- *QR Codes, another widely used 2D barcode format, which can now be created in the Microsoft Tag Manager and scanned by the Microsoft Tag app. QR Codes created in Tag Manager offer much of the same functionality of Microsoft Tags, although they cannot be visually customized the way Tag barcodes can.*
- *The free Tag app, the software that can be downloaded to Internet-capable smartphones that have cameras, running platforms including Windows Phone 7, iPhone, Android, Windows Mobile, BlackBerry, Symbian, and J2ME.*
- *The Tag Manager website, where you can create any of Tag's recognition technologies and use reporting and analytics capabilities that enable you to monitor and improve the effectiveness of your Tag campaigns.*
- *You can easily create and manage any of Tag's recognition technologies online, and generate reports to track the scan rates for each.*

## USING MICROSOFT TAG IN CONTESTS

Clever promoters will find many ways to use the Microsoft Tag solution to add interactive mobile elements to contests. The ever-popular “passport” games played at many in-person events, for example, encourage people to compete for prizes in contests that demonstrate a skill for finding and collecting a set number of items faster than other players. These contests can be very popular at trade shows and conventions, and Microsoft Tag can provide a great way to build interest and encourage participation.

For instance, to participate in a passport contest at a large convention, consumers could use their smartphone cameras to scan Tag barcodes or QR Codes or tap NFC touchpoints displayed at the convention exhibitors’ booths. When they scan the Tag barcodes, for example, they’d go to a mobile site where additional information could be presented about the exhibitors’ offerings. Exhibitors could scan their own Tags to show participants how many “stamps” or “tokens” they’ve collected and how many they still need to collect to win the contest.

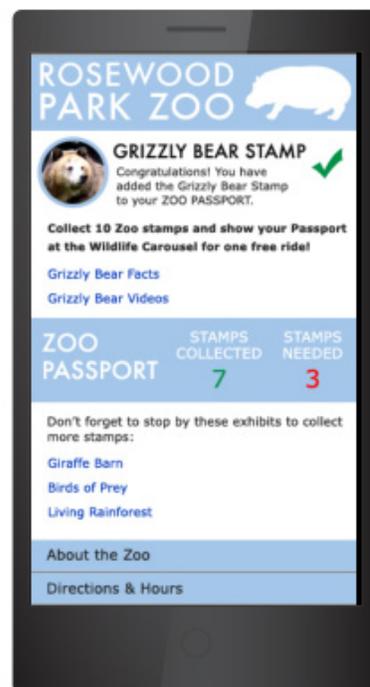
Because the technology enables Tag barcodes and other recognition technologies to be distributed in a wide variety of media and locations, Microsoft Tag is especially suitable for passport contests and other promotions that involve some type of hunt. You can display Tags almost anywhere, including walls, clothing, signs, posts, and electronic displays. Participants can search for and scan Tags with their smartphones in almost any environment.



*On the left, a sign with a Tag barcode informs zoo visitors how to take part in a “passport” contest. When players scan the Tag, a mobile site (shown on the right) delivers information about the contest to their smartphones.*



Scan the Tag



The progress of each player can be tracked to provide additional information about which items players still need or how they stand compared to other contest participants. Prizes can then be awarded to the contestants who discover all or the greatest number of 2D barcodes or NFC touchpoints. For more information, see the section “Two Methods of Identification in Microsoft Tag Promotions” later in this document. Two variants on this kind of contest are scavenger hunts and treasure hunts.

## SCAVENGER HUNTS

Individuals or teams compete to collect either the greatest number or a specific number of items within a specified period of time. For example, in a scavenger hunt, each Tag player’s scan might represent a point. Tag barcodes – which can be clearly visible or “hidden” – can be collected to reach the highest number of points. The same approach could easily be adapted to work with QR Codes or NFC touchpoints.

## TREASURE HUNTS

Treasure hunts are a type of contest in which participants must solve a mystery to win. Because most treasure hunts require participants to work in a sequential manner, scanning the first Tag barcode in this type of contest might open the player’s mobile web browser to a page that provides an enigmatic clue or puzzle that leads to the location of the next Tag and clue.

Clues lead to additional clues, and the goal is to be the first to solve a puzzle or reach the end of a list of requirements. For example, Tag barcodes might yield clues through text phrases, phone numbers that call answering machines with secret phrases, or URL redirects to object images that scavenger hunt players can collect and store on their smartphones.

The Tags in a treasure hunt could be anywhere: a Tag barcode on a poster could lead to a Tag in a magazine advertisement, and then to a Tag on a product package. The winner is the first person or team to work through all the clues successfully. To enliven a treasure hunt, you might use the methods of identification built into Microsoft Tag to support creating progress reports or to enable timed events by collecting information about the smartphones participating in your promotions. For more information, see the “Two Methods of Identification in Microsoft Tag Promotions” section later in this document.

As in the scavenger hunt described above, you could also use QR Codes or NFC touchpoints in similar ways.

## USING MICROSOFT TAG IN SWEEPSTAKES

Because Microsoft Tag technology can be configured to help you collect information that identifies your customers, it can help make entering sweepstakes quick and easy. Players can scan the entry Tag barcode to enter.



*A Tag barcode in a magazine ad can link consumers to an online form where they can easily register for your sweepstakes (ranging from once-in-lifetime to once-a-day) and learn more about your product and brand.*

To help manage sweepstakes entries, information about each smartphone could be stored by the company holding the promotion. The mobile webpage associated with a Tag could be configured, so that repeated scans of the Tag by the same smartphone would prompt a redirect to a page informing the player the device has already been used to enter the promotion.

## USING MICROSOFT TAG FOR FREE GIFTS AND INCENTIVES

Microsoft Tag can also be used in promotions that involve free gifts and incentives. For example, a dog food company might promote a new brand of kibble by giving away free bags of its product to the first thousand people to respond to the offer. To make it quick, easy, and fun for people to respond, the promoters might include a Tag barcode or QR Code in their advertisement. Consumers could scan the 2D

barcode to see whether they had qualified for a free gift. When the supply of free items has been awarded, the mobile landing page that the 2D barcode links to could easily be updated with a notice that the free gift offer has ended. Moreover, other promotions, such as a coupon or discount offer, can be added at any time.

## Two Methods of Identification in Microsoft Tag Promotions

When you use Microsoft Tag technology in promotional activities, the initial design consideration includes whether, how, and when the promotion participants will be uniquely identified. Whether you're creating Tag barcodes, QR Codes, or NFC URLs in the Tag Manager, Microsoft Tag provides access to the Device ID information, which is unique to the smartphone. In addition, you can configure your target destination site to collect participant's personally identifiable information (PII). Depending on the kind of promotion, you can configure your recognition technologies to collect both, one, or none of these components.

Note that in order for QR Codes and NFC URLs to return a Device ID, they must be created in Tag Manager and scanned using the Tag app.

### USING THE MICROSOFT TAG DEVICE ID

By design, the Tag app – the free scanner application that works with smartphones with cameras – can include a uniquely encoded Device ID. This ID can be included in the data stream when a Tag barcode, QR Code, or NFC touchpoint is converted to a

URL so that promoters can identify the specific smartphones that are participating in specific promotions.

**Note:** Each encoded Device ID is specific to each smartphone and to the Tag creator's account. There is no unique Device ID that remains constant across separate Tag creator accounts. This design consideration helps ensure user privacy between different businesses and organizations that use Microsoft Tag technology. In order to retrieve Device ID information, the Microsoft Tag app must be used for scanning or tapping recognition technologies that were created in Tag Manager; third-party reader applications will not retrieve this data.

To collect the Device ID, a URL Tag, QR Code, or NFC URL must be designed by creating the URL for the mobile web page in the following form:

**`http://www.my-contest.com/entry.aspx?device={!Deviceid}`**

This would be replaced during the scan or tap with:

**`http://www.my-contest.com/entry.aspx?device=AUniqueEncodedDeviceID`**

In this manner, recognition technologies can be designed to redirect to a web service that collects Device IDs and then enter them into a database or redirect the player to a web-based promotional entry form.

To help facilitate fulfillment processes, the target web server for your Tag barcodes, QR Codes, and NFC touchpoints could be configured to collect the unique Device IDs to associate with the entries. Tracking Device IDs could help ensure that participants can only enter a contest one time, if that is your intention. To do this, you can set up a server-side process that will associate the Device ID with the contact information the user provides.

Upon successful submission of the form data, the Device ID and user input are associated and can be saved as a database record or contest log entry.

## PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

Personally identifiable information (PII) for your mobile marketing promotions can be collected by using entry forms. To collect PII, you can create recognition technologies that, when scanned or tapped, direct participants' mobile browser to a mobile web page where they can enter the requested information.

The “entry form” format is useful when you want to collect user input such as contact information. The target web page can be designed to collect the consumer’s full contact information or an email address or telephone number.

**Important:** Always make sure that you protect participants’ PII according to your privacy standards.

## Some Key Benefits of Using Microsoft Tag in Mobile Promotions

By using Microsoft Tag you bridge your physical advertising to your online landing pages through consumers’ smartphones. In promotional campaigns, Tag barcodes and other recognition technologies can add an interactive mobile element to promotions that are delivered by using signage, magazines or newspapers, direct mail, email, and the web.

Microsoft Tag can also help produce cost savings for organizations related to printing and distribution. Because the mobile resources that Tag Manager-generated 2D barcodes and NFC touchpoints link to can be changed at any time, there might be a reduced need to re-print physical materials in order to change offers or related details.

You can also use many different locations to distribute information about your promotional activities, and take advantage of improved options for redemption and offer management, which are discussed in the following sections.

### WIDE VARIETY OF LOCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Because Tag barcodes, QR Codes, and NFC touchpoints can be put almost anywhere – in print, on public transportation, on objects, or in electronic video displays – they provide access to many location opportunities. In addition, Tag promotional

scenarios can use a wide variety of media. Tag-based promotional scenarios can therefore be placed or distributed to help reach multiple target customer segments quickly and inexpensively.

By expanding the number of distribution channels for Microsoft Tag-based promotional scenarios, businesses can potentially reach a much broader audience of existing and new customers. This approach also provides an incentive for increased consumer engagement by leveraging a fresh, innovative technology that enables active participation by consumers.

## OPTIONS FOR REDEMPTION AND OFFER MANAGEMENT

Microsoft Tag promotional scenarios introduce a convenient, organized, and entertaining method of running contests, sweepstakes, and gift offers. The Tag app is easy to download and install on smartphones. Your audience can see a Tag barcode, QR Code, or NFC touchpoint for the first time, follow the optional instructions adjacent to them to obtain the Tag app, and enter in your contest or sweepstakes in a matter of seconds.

Microsoft Tag technology includes easy-to-use design, development, reporting, and analytics tools to help deliver and manage promotional campaigns. Official rules and other information can be stored on the server that your campaign materials link to when scanned or tapped. Organizations and individuals can easily create and manage Microsoft Tag campaigns and generate several online reports to track the scan rates for each Tag barcode, QR Code, or NFC touchpoint. Therefore, you can easily change the marketing text or update the mobile display as soon as the offer has ended without having to change Tag barcodes and recognition technologies already in circulation. For more information, see the [Microsoft Tag Implementation Guide](#).

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Tag Manager interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Microsoft Tag logo and tabs for 'WHAT IS TAG?', 'TAG IN ACTION', and 'COMM'. Below this, the 'Tag Manager' section has sub-tabs for 'TAGS', 'CATEGORIES', and 'REPORTS'. The main content area features a 'Microsoft Tag Dashboard' section with a description and a 'DOWNLOAD THE DASHBOARD EXCEL' button. A prominent bar chart displays 'DAILY SCANS' over time, with a significant peak in early November 2009. Below the chart, there are sections for 'Track the performance' with sub-sections: 'Heat Map' (representing scan locations), 'Daily Scans' (number of scans per day), and 'Scan Totals' (total scans per tag in a category).

*Because the information associated with each Tag barcode, QR Code, and NFC URL can be changed at any time, Tag-based promotional campaigns enable capabilities such as timely updating, A/B testing, dynamic offers, and dynamic promotional codes, which can be altered as needed without the need to change the 2D barcode or NFC touchpoint itself.*

# Enliven Your Promotional Activities with Microsoft Tag

There are many possibilities for using Microsoft Tag in promotional activities. Because Microsoft Tag can help you create a multifaceted mobile experience, it can bring excitement and mystery to your contests, sweepstakes, free gifts, and incentives.

Get started with Microsoft Tag today, and make your promotional activities more effective, more measurable, more engaging, and more fun.

For more information about using Microsoft Tag, visit <http://tag.microsoft.com> and the Microsoft Tag Implementation Guide.

For more information about Promotions, visit the Tag in Action: IdeaBook – Contests and Sweepstakes page.