

Your Questions Answered 2010

Send me any sweeping or contesting questions you would like answered. questions@contestqueen.com

Hi Carolyn

There seems to be a lot of contests lately that require you to make a purchase in order to get the PIN to enter the contest. I use the "no purchase necessary" option and mail in an entry. My question is, when the rules say hand written entries only, does that mean just the actual entry that goes in the envelope or does that also include the envelope itself? What I usually do is print off the envelope, it's neater and faster and just hand write the entry. I always worry that the envelope must also be hand written and they won't accept my entry. What do you think? Or do you actually know from the sponsors what they want.

**Thanks,
Maddie**

Hi Maddie,

No, I don't always know what the sponsors want either. Read the rules. Some specify hand writing the envelope along with the entry. Some don't. If they don't, I hand write, just in case. They don't care about the return address so you can use a label. If they specify nothing I use a mailing label too. I do not worry if it accepted or not. I feel if I read the rules and I do my best, then my entry is in. Always assume the best.

GOOD LUCK,
Carolyn

Hi Carolyn,

What should you do if someone refers you to a contest and you win that contest? Should the winner share the prize with the person who referred them to the contest? Should the winner send a thank you message to the person who referred them? What is the proper protocol?

**Thanks,
Anonymous**

Hi,

It's up to you if you wish to share. You are not obligated to. Many sweepers post links to sweepstakes on groups and forums since we like to share the fun. We also like to hear when a contest buddy wins, so yes, a thank you post, note or email is proper etiquette.

GOOD LUCK!
Carolyn

Good Morning Carolyn:

Here's a question I have been meaning to ask an expert for a long time.

How does one avoid entering contests with RoboForm when the latter is prohibited? It seems to me, one would need to page through the entry form and rules and regulations of every contest to find out

if there is a security number or other means of prohibiting automatic entries. If one is going to do that, you may as well forget RoboForm (or similar software) and do everything manually. What am I missing here?

**Regards,
Dirk
Sherwood Park, AB**

Hi Dirk,

I am assuming this question was raised because of Jay Sloofman's quote in the [March 25th article on sweepstakes and winning](#) in The Wall Street Journal.

"To get a leg up on the competition, some sweepers use form-filling software such as RoboForm to automatically enter multiple Web-based contests on their behalf, though some game rules prohibit such aides. "It gives an unfair advantage," says Jay Sloofman, president of Marketing Visions Inc., a firm that ran about 100 sweepstakes contests in 2009, about 50% more than five years ago."

I disagree with Jay. I do not believe it is an unfair advantage. When working on a home renovation, would you hammer in all the nails manually or would you rather use an airgun? You use the proper tool for the job and when it comes to sweepstakes, [RoboForm](#) is the right tool.

Companies cannot tell if you use RoboForm or type your data in manually. The only way they can possibly tell is to put a timer on the entry log. If it takes an incredibly short amount of time from entry of the webpage to hitting submit, they can surmise a form-filler was used. They are not counting keystrokes.

I have interviewed many of the contest and sweepstakes management companies in Canada and the U.S. Even they are divided on the subject. My opinion is if companies do not want you to use RoboForm, they should just create the entry form in Flash. Then everyone must enter manually. John Findlay, President of [Launchfire Interactive](#) agrees with me. His company creates promotions that require you to register and then login daily to gain entries. It makes the issue of using any type of robotic entry null and void.

Also, you may notice many sweepstakes now require verification codes, are multi-part entry forms, have games, offer referrals, etc. so, fewer and fewer promotions use a plain old entry forms. As for those that do, the companies are generally smaller and it is not in their budget to pay the extra to have the timer on the entry log added.

I have used RoboForm daily since 2003 and I will continue to do so. It's up to you to decide what to do.
GOOD LUCK,
Carolyn

Good Morning, Carolyn!

Re: ROBOFORM

The companies who deter us from using RoboForm leaves me with a sour taste in my mouth, so much that I had to fire you off an e-mail. I spoke up about this at your convention in Toronto a few years ago and here I am again, trying to SPEAK OUT!

YES, I use ROBOFORM and for many years. My right index finger has been amputated and my left finger is damaged so much that it cannot close and just sticks out! This is all due to psoriatic arthritis. I could not contest if I did not have ROBOFORM. It is hard enough to deal with crippling arthritis let alone companies who get so upset about US using ROBOFORM!

Even if a person is healthy and has all of her/his fingers, ROBOFORM saves a lot of time typing all of the contest entry forms. I realize that these companies want us to browse throughout their site and I must admit that I do and sometimes I don't. It all depends if I am interested in what they are trying to sell us. I feel that these companies are threatened by ROBOFORM but alas it is here to stay. So, I say to these companies, "Don't fight it; just go with the flow"!

**Regards,
Dorothy
Brockville, ON**

Hi

I am a former contester...I stopped contesting in 2004, after winning a huge 10,000 via rail coke contest with over 100 mail in entries in different coloured envelopes, etc. I knew all the tricks from my mum who had been snail mail contesting since 1980. Although I have tried with net ones, even entering daily faithfully, I have yet to win anything beyond a tee-shirt. Are snail mail contests truly gone? The ones I do see out there always have a website entry form too so I figure no point in snail mailing that! Are there any left that are snail mail only? How is it even possible to have any edge to winning online?

**Cheers,
Gillian**

Hi Gillian,

It is less expensive for companies to run online promotions vs. mail-in ones, so yes, they are disappearing. If the trend in Canada is any indication, I have not seen a OEB since 2006. It is only a matter of time before the U.S. follows suit. It is possible to have a winning edge online. The secret is to be organized to enter the maximum number of sweepstakes in the shortest amount of time. You should read my book and/or attend my webinar to learn the many tips and tricks to find, organize, enter and win online contests and sweepstakes. I also give away many FREE tips and tricks on my website, in my newsletter, on my radio show and on my blog.

Be sure to check out all those resources, and those on other sweepstakes websites.

Remember, I lose 99% of what I enter and I win 5-15+ prizes (mainly from online promotions) so I enter A LOT!

That said, always think, *it only takes WON to win!*

Enter, enter, enter, and you will win.

GOOD LUCK,

Carolyn

Hi Carolyn:

I just wanted to respond to the letter submitted by Gillian about winning with snail mail in [the May issue of The Winning EDGE](#). I recently entered a contest that had the option of dropping by their store to fill out an entry form (they have five stores in Toronto) or print out the entry form and mail it in. I didn't have time to personally drop off an entry. I was getting ready to leave on a trip to Mexico I had won, so I mailed my entry and forgot about it. A week after returning from Mexico I had a phone call that I had won \$10,000 in jewellery from that store. So, in answer to your query Gillian, yes, you can still win with snail mail.

I prefer to look for the one time only contests because everyone has an equal chance. I also just noticed on my manifestation board I had created about four years ago there was a picture of a woman being kissed by a dolphin. The caption read, "kiss your dreams hello". Well guess what I did when I was in Mexico?!

Katherine

Toronto, ON

Carolyn,

I have already read the free e-book I received from subscribing to your newsletter and sent an email to my local contest club and just waiting for a reply from them. I was curious about one thing. If five people all using this system enter the same contest, how does one increase the chance of winning?

Thank you in advance for your reply.

Josh

San Diego, CA

Hi Josh,

It would sound counter intuitive, but sharing actually increases your odds of winning. It's based on two laws: the law of karma and the law of giving (read Deepak Chopra's [The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#)).

Also, the more companies see their promotions being successful, the more they will run. Companies in the US spent \$2 billion last year running contests and sweepstakes. There are lots of prizes for everyone!!

GOOD LUCK!

Carolyn

HiCarolynn, I just have a question for the Contest Queen.

> When there is a contest that asks you to email a contest they usually say to use a certain phrase in the subject line. After you do that, what should you put in the body of the email message?

I have another question too. I have just begun to enter Facebook contests. Actually, I've only entered one. The one that I entered was a contest in which I had to take part in a live chat (for Lise Watier cosmetics) anyway; I never did see any rules. I also have no idea when and how they contact the winners. Is this typical of Facebook contests?

Susan

from the Yukon

Hi Susan,

I have a standard contest entry signature:

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

I have a secondary one with the addition of my BIRTHDATE in case the entry asks for it. Remember, read the contest rules. You may need to supply a STQ in the body of the email also.

As for the Facebook contests, as per the new rules, they are suppose to be run by a third party. You will find those contests and sweepstakes ask you to fill in an entry form, so similar to other online promotions, you will either get an email, a phone call or a letter. If they are not asking you to fill in a proper entry form, you will get a Facebook message.

GOOD LUCK!

Carolyn

Hi Carolyn,

If a contest says, "There is a limit of one (1) Entry per eligible person per specific UPC Code per week during the Contest Period. In addition, no eligible person is permitted to use more than one (1) email account to enter the Contest.", can I enter several UPC's during each week? Thanks! Glad to see you are emailing again. I love getting them.

Sherry

Newmarket, ON

Hi Sherry,

If the company has 10 different UPCs, you can enter up to 10x per week garnering you extra entries.

GOOD LUCK!

Carolyn