

Harvey's Hamburger Day!

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On Sunday, May 27, 2007, between 10:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., **Harvey's** [harveys.ca], a Canadian fast food restaurant that started in 1959, and now having 300 outlets in the country, gave out free hamburgers at participating outlets: the version known as the "original hamburger" (retail value: \$4.09). The promotion was advertised in the local media (i.e., a full one-page ad in the Saturday, May 26, 2007, issue of the Toronto Star newspaper) and on the company's website. One freebie was offered per customer. No purchase was necessary. The hamburger could be for take out or be eaten within the restaurant.

At one of the outlets visited, head office management greeted customers as they entered the restaurant. At another location, staff greeted customers at the door. Both locations had additional staff on duty to serve customers, thereby minimizing the wait, which turned out to be the same as that during a normal visit (i.e., short), if not quicker than usual. In both outlets, it was observed that all personnel with which customers came into contact were very polite and reflected very positive attitudes toward customers, even if the customer only wanted the free hamburger. It was also observed that there were customers ordering other items to go along with the free hamburger or selecting other items from the menu instead (e.g., grilled chicken), forgoing the free offer. Large signs on the windows of the restaurant and posted in the parking lot drew attention to the special offer for the day.

Harvey's, while specializing and having its start in the hamburger, fast food market, now offers a menu that continues to expand in depth and width, just as is the case for many of its competitors (e.g., McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, A&W).

It was not a long weekend in Canada, as it was in the U.S. at the time. The Canadian long weekend, known as Victoria Day, occurred the previous week.

Question:

1. Evaluate this promotional approach used by Harvey's, using the appropriate marketing theories and concepts and by considering the marketing management aspects of the approach. Be specific.