

## Planning Winter Promotions That Actually Work at Video Gaming Locations

Winter can be one of the most challenging seasons for video gaming locations. Colder weather, post-holiday spending fatigue, and fewer spontaneous outings often lead to lighter foot traffic and shorter visits. However, winter also presents an opportunity: locations that plan intentionally and lean into seasonal moments can maintain engagement, drive repeat visits, and build stronger guest relationships.

The key isn't doing *more* promotions—it's doing the *right* ones.

Below are proven strategies for planning and running winter promotions that resonate with guests and can be repeated year after year.

### Understand Winter Guest Behavior

Before planning promotions, it's important to understand how guest behavior typically shifts during the winter months:

- Guests are more **value-driven** after the holidays
- Visits may be **less frequent**, but loyalty still matters
- Comfort, familiarity, and routine become more important
- Seasonal events influence when and why guests visit

Successful winter promotions acknowledge these realities. Instead of large, one-day giveaways, winter is often better suited for promotions that reward consistency, encourage return visits, and feel attainable.

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### Plan Early and Build a Promotion Calendar

Winter promotions work best when they're planned in advance and tied to a clear schedule. Even simple promotions feel more impactful when they're communicated early and run consistently.

A strong winter promotion calendar might include:

- One **long-running promotion** (January–February)
- One **emotion-driven or social promotion** (Valentine’s Day)
- One **event-based promotion** (St. Patrick’s Day)

Planning early allows locations to:

- Promote effectively in-house and on social media
- Set clear earning periods
- Avoid last-minute or rushed ideas
- Repeat the same framework year after year with small tweaks

Consistency builds familiarity—and familiarity builds participation.

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## Leverage Valentine’s Day for Emotional Connection

Valentine’s Day isn’t just about couples—it’s about appreciation, indulgence, and small moments of enjoyment. For video gaming locations, this makes it a great opportunity to focus on loyalty and player recognition.

Valentine’s Day promotions work best when they feel:

- Personal
- Welcoming
- Inclusive

Examples of effective Valentine’s-themed promotions:

- Drawings that reward multiple winners instead of one large prize
- Heart-themed or appreciation-focused messaging

This is a great time to remind guests that your location values them—not just their visits.

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## Use St. Patrick's Day as a Late-Winter Engagement Boost

St. Patrick's Day is a natural fit for video gaming promotions and often arrives at a point in winter when guests are ready for something new. It's a familiar, lighthearted holiday that encourages social activity without requiring heavy spending or planning from guests.

Effective St. Patrick's Day promotion strategies often focus on:

- Earning periods leading up to March 17, rather than just the day itself
- Themed drawings or prizes that feel festive and timely
- Multiple winners, reinforcing accessibility and participation

Because St. Patrick's Day is widely recognized but low-pressure, it's an ideal opportunity to re-engage guests who may have been less active earlier in the winter. Promotions tied to this holiday work best when they feel fun, simple, and easy to participate in.

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## Focus on Length Over Flash

Winter is not always the time for one-day blowout promotions. Longer promotions tend to perform better because they:

- Encourage repeat visits
- Create anticipation
- Allow more guests to participate

Examples of longer-form winter promotions:

- Multi-week earning periods
- Weekly drawings with a final grand prize
- Tiered prizes that grow over time

These structures help maintain steady traffic throughout slower months rather than creating a single spike followed by a drop-off.

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## **Keep Promotions Simple and Clear**

One of the most common winter promotion pitfalls is overcomplication. If guests don't immediately understand how to participate or what they're earning toward, engagement drops.

Strong winter promotions:

- Have clear start and end dates
- Are easy to explain in one or two sentences
- Use consistent signage and messaging

When it's cold outside, guests are less patient. Simplicity matters.

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## **Promote Comfort and Experience**

Winter guests are often looking for warmth, routine, and comfort. Promotions that align with that mindset tend to resonate more than flashy, high-pressure events.

Consider how promotions can:

- Encourage longer stays
- Feel relaxed and enjoyable
- Fit naturally into a guest's regular visit

This might mean spacing drawings throughout the day or running promotions during predictable timeframes guests already visit.

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## **Evaluate and Repeat What Works**

The most successful winter promotions aren't reinvented every year—they're refined. After each winter season, take note of:

- What drove consistent participation
- Which promotions were easiest to explain and run
- What guests responded to most positively

Those insights become the foundation for next year's winter plan. Small improvements year over year lead to stronger results and less planning stress.

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## Final Thoughts

Winter doesn't have to be a slow season for your location. With thoughtful planning, simple structures, and promotions tied to familiar seasonal moments like Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, locations can maintain engagement and strengthen guest loyalty.

The most effective winter promotions aren't about bigger prizes—they're about smarter timing, clearer communication, and creating reasons for guests to keep coming back, even when the weather says otherwise.

## Prairie State Gaming

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