Something that I see quite often is people making a simple but important mistake. They reward the behaviours that lead to quantity rather than quality.

Let me explain.

When you build a gamified campaign or activity, you need to consider what quality participation looks like. If for instance you want to create some buzz around a new product and you decide to create a simple Twitter competition, are you looking for the number of people who tweet or are you looking for the number of people whom the message will reach?

If it is reach you are looking for, how do you reward behaviours that lead to better reach? What on Twitter leads to better reach? The mistake I see is setting up a very simple system where each tweet of the message is rewarded, most points win a nice prize. In our example, we shall give each tweet 10 points.

If an individual with 50 followers tweets your message they get 10 points and reach 50 people. If they have 10,000 followers, they still get 10 points but reach 10,000 followers. In reality, the second scenario is preferable because there is a greater opportunity for your message to be seen by more people, yet they are perceived to be given the same value.

Now, we add an extra dimension, we reward reach rather than just number of tweets. For starters, we reward retweets as well as tweets. As a tweet is retweeted, the value of that original user begins to be amplified. Whilst they may only reach 50 people, one of those 50 may be highly engaged and have 5,000 of their own followers who will see the message. The retweet is actually of greater value than the original tweet – so should have a higher reward, say 20 points.

Our system so far
Tweet=10 points
Retweet=20 points

There is a second value to this, it is harder to game. If we just reward quantity of tweets, then the person who wants the prize the most will just tweet and tweet and tweet and keep earning those 10 points. One way to handle this is to limit the number of tweets that count per day, put the focus on retweets and other measures of engagement and reach.

Our system is now
Tweet=10 with a maximum of 30 points per day

Retweet=20 points with no limit

We are beginning to reward quality over quantity, but there is still an issue. Let's go back to our user with 50 followers. If we limit their ability to earn lots of points with just tweets and we also know they will struggle to get the level of retweets that someone with 10,000 followers will likely get – how do we make it fair on them and show them that they have just as much chance to win as others. Really you want everyone involved – because you never know who the "important" users are. If one of those 50 followers is a potential purchaser, they are more important than 10,000 non-potential purchasers!

What we have so far is probably fine for most small scale usage. Reward the quality, not the quantity. Don't reward spammers basically!

For a larger scale campaign, we want to take this a step further. If we want everyone to feel that their contribution is valued, we need to create some kind of algorithm that produces a more balanced score.

One suggestion would be to create a ratio of retweets to number of followers. The idea being that the number of retweets that you get if you have 50 followers giving you a couple of retweets, is comparable to a user with 10,000 followers getting dozens of retweets.

This gives us
Tweet triggers your entry into the "game".
Score = (Number of retweets/number of followers)

We can expand on this quite a lot by looking at number of favourites and number of comments tweets get as well. I stumbled across a formula from Unmetric that does just this

$$\frac{(\text{No. of Favourites} + (5 \times \text{No. of Replies}) + (10 \times \text{No. of Retweets})) \times 10000}{\text{No. of Followers} * 0.8}$$

You can find the full explanation of this formula here https://unmetric.com/engagement/
You need to take into account those who have very few tweets and retweets – as their ratio may be quite high. It is all a balancing act – and it really isn't easy!
The upshot of all of this is that you need to stop rewarding the wrong activities. If you make the reward greater for the simple low-quality actions, you will encourage quantity over quality and that is very rarely what you want.

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