



2018 National Grocers Association Official Best Bagger Contest Training Manual



The 2018 NGA Show
February 11 – 14, 2018
The Mirage Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

Thank you to our sponsor, PepsiCo!



PEPSICO



If you have any questions regarding implementing a new Best Bagger Program
or running your current contest, please contact:



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The Great American Sport of Bagging

It all began in 1987 when the National Grocers Association held the first ever Best Bagger Championship in Dallas, Texas. Since then, NGA has been bringing the country's finest baggers together to determine the best of the best – to find out who has what it takes to be NGA's National Best Bagger Champion!

Bagging has been an important step for many supermarket employees who have pursued long and rewarding careers in the grocery industry. Like so many “gateway jobs,” bagger positions often face high turnover. The **Best Bagger contest** highlights the rewards of this position, and seeks to retain those employees while demonstrating the value of baggers to customer service.

Bagging groceries is a crucial skill often overlooked that contributes to every supermarket's success. The National Grocers Association, in cooperation with state associations, wholesalers, and retailers, is proud to honor employees who recognize this important customer service skill by hosting an annual Best Bagger Competition.

Why should you host a Best Bagger Competition?

If you're tuned into your workplace, you can tell when employees exhibit the subtle and not-so-subtle symptoms of low morale: eye rolls, high turnover rates, fewer employee conversations, decreased collaboration, and diluted performances. Is this going on in your store? If so, the best approach to tackling low morale is to embrace positive changes before low morale takes hold, offsetting boredom and frustration with meaningful benefits, individuals' acknowledgements, and opportunities to grow.

Since this is the grocery industry we are talking about, where there are many duties on which the team works together, we found a way to take one skill – bagging – and turn it into a contest! Bagging groceries is something most, if not all, entry-level employees are trained in and is one of the most visible and imperative positions held in your store. Your cashier or bagger can make a lasting impression on your shopper - that either convinces the shopper to come back or to try a new store. Not only is it important that the shoppers' groceries make it home intact, but that they have a great experience as a whole, from competing prices to friendly and helpful service.

Questions about Best Bagger State Championships and National Championship?

Contact:



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2017-2018 Best Bagger State Championships - FAQs

All around the country this year states are holding State Best Bagger Championships hosted through their grocery retailers, wholesalers, and state associations! NGA needs YOUR organization to participate! Winning baggers get more than just their state title and a cash prize – they advance to the National Best Bagger Championship in Las Vegas for a chance for the National Best Bagger Championship title!

If there is more than one Best Bagger contest per state, a “Bag Off” must be held at state level to determine the winner for the National Best Bagger Championship. Contestants must be given the opportunity to compete locally and state-wide when there are multiple contests. NGA takes only one contestant from each state to compete in the National Best Bagger Championship.

State championship winners take home a cash prize from NGA of \$250.00! Your sponsoring organization may choose to award additional prize money or other prizes.

State associations often sponsor a State Best Bagger Championship, but contests are also sponsored by a grocery retailer or wholesaler! The host **MUST** open the contest to baggers from the entire state. Retailers or wholesalers with stores in multiple states may enter a bagger from any state where their organization has store locations. Baggers do not have to hold residency within the state they are representing at the national contest.

State contest sponsors: Please provide NGA with date, location, and registration information 3 months prior to the competition. If you miss this deadline please let us know as soon as possible – we’ll support your contest!

NGA encourages states, if possible, to alternate contest locations from year to year to give everyone a chance to compete state-wide.

NGA helps to publicize and communicate state contest locations, dates, and participation instructions (see attached 2018 contest entry form) – just let us know!

2018 National Best Bagger Championship Rules & Information

CASH PRIZES!:

Prize money is sponsored by our generous sponsor PepsiCo!

Cash prizes for the National Best Bagger Championship winners are awarded on-site at the National Best Bagger Championship!

NATIONAL CHAMPION: \$10,000.00
FIRST RUNNER UP: \$5,000.00
SECOND RUNNER UP: \$1,000.00
THIRD RUNNER UP: \$1,000.00
FOURTH RUNNER UP: \$1,000.00

WHO CAN ENTER?:

One Best Bagger State Champion from all (50) states, the District of Columbia, and US Territories

- No age restrictions
- Must spend more than 25% of the time at work bagging groceries
- Not eligible: Previous National Best Bagger Champions (1st place winners)

WHEN IS THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP?:

The preliminary and final rounds are held consecutively during the NGA Show, FEBRUARY 11 – 14, 2018. All state winners will compete in the preliminary rounds. The final round will feature the top five contestants from the preliminary rounds. The exact date and time of the Championship will be available on the NGA Show website: www.ngashow.com, closer to the Show.

WHERE IS THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP?:

The full National Championship will be held February 11 - 14, 2018 in Las Vegas, Nevada, at The Mirage Hotel during the 2018 NGA Show.

BAGGING IS SCORED ON:

- Speed
- Proper bag building technique
- Distribution of weight between bags
- Style, attitude and appearance

HOW TO ENTER:

When your State Championship has its winner, enter your State Champion into the National Best Bagger Championship by completing an entry form and returning it to NGA (scan to tdrzewicki@nationalgrocers.org or fax to: 703-516-0115).



Recruiting Sponsorship

WHY RECRUIT SPONSORSHIP?

It's a great idea to recruit sponsors to help with contest expenses. There are many resources in your community to help your organization provide and put on your State Best Bagger Championship. For other possible expenses – listed below – reach out for help to your community. The sponsor will be invested in your community event and you'll have the financial support you need.

RECRUITING YOUR SPONSORSHIP

- Reach out to your local State Association or NGA for sponsorship ideas and contacts
- Include photos, newspaper clips, merch from past contests to sponsors to show event hype
- Contact sponsors early and follow up as needed
- Sponsors can reach out to NGA with questions or concerns – NGA is here to help!

COSTS FOR SPONSORSHIPS (these are just a few ideas!)

- Airfare to the National Best Bagger Contest (often sponsored by the state association)
- Contest T-shirts, Aprons or Other Bagger Merch!
- Staff Time
- Grocery Product Used in the Competition
- Winner Trophies
- Cash Prizes (in addition to NGA's \$250 cash prize)
- Signs
- Staging/Location Rental Fees

What Does Hosting a Contest Entail?

WHERE?

Choose a location for your contest where there is plenty of space for the equipment, contestants, timers, judges and observers. The contest should be easily visible to an audience - family, friends, and store customers!

WHEN?

Use our sample event planning time schedule:

2-3 MONTHS AHEAD

- ANNOUNCE the competition: Include
 - Rules
 - Judging Criteria
 - Entry Form (for internal competitions)
- NOTIFY: Contest coordinator must notify NGA, provide participation link or form for participation
- RECRUIT: Baggers, Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support
 - An excellent way to get more people involved is by asking your Member of Congress to be a guest MC or Judge! Interested in this option? Let Taylor know asap and she can help you place your request!

6 WEEKS AHEAD

- MARKET to the press! Post on social media, and contact local print news, radio and broadcast TV stations, and community bulletin boards
 - Need help? Let us know! We are more than happy to assist you with this.
- RECRUIT: Baggers, Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support

1 MONTH AHEAD

- ANNOUNCE in your store(s) to alert customers and employees
- PUSH MARKETING: with press and other social media/print/ of the event
- HAVE SELECTED: Baggers, Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support
- TRAIN: Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support

1- 2 WEEKS AHEAD

- ANNOUNCE in your store(s) to alert customers and employees
- PUSH MARKETING: with press and other social media/print/ of the event
- HAVE SELECTED: Baggers, Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support
- TRAIN: Judges, MC, Timers, Scorekeepers, Set Up Crew, Tech Support
- SEND rules and judging instructions to judges
- BRIEF judges on judging rules
- BRIEF timers on timing rules
- BRIEF Set Up Crew: PROVIDE Set Up Crew pre-printed LABELS with each grocery product name for each table/check stand; and a SCHEMATIC of grocery product set-up

DAY OF EVENT

TWO HOURS AHEAD

- REVIEW PROCEDURES with Best Bagger Championship Team (Baggers, Judges, MC, Scorekeepers, Re-setters, Timers, Tech Support)
- TECH SUPPORT: Check all equipment (scales, clock, stop watches, calculators, PA system)
- REVIEW with Re-setters and Timers: PROVIDE pre-printed LABELS with each grocery product name for each table/check stand; and a SCHEMATIC of grocery product set-up

ONE HOUR AHEAD

- HUDDLE CONTESTANTS: and REVIEW contest procedures – make procedures simple and concise and get excited!
- REMIND the contestants that they will be bagging in heats, and that they are going for the highest individual score to qualify for the finals
- REMIND the contestants: they will be called to a specific check stand to bag in the heat
- REVIEW the contestants of the words used at the start of the heat: “Ready-Set-Bag” – start as soon as they hear “Bag”
- REVIEW with the contestants: When they raise their hands completely over their heads, their heat is over, the timer stops the stop watch
- SHOW the contestants the check stand format ahead of time so they know where to stand and the location of bags
- REVIEW with the contestants that they are **disqualified** if they bring the bags up or out of placement before they hear the start word “Go” or “Whistle”
- REVIEW Judgment Criteria

BEST BAGGER CONTEST TEAM

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — Someone who thrives speaking in front of a group! An ideal candidate might be a senior official in the organization or someone involved in the community.

Duties:

- Explain the purpose of the contest
- Review the judging criteria; Introduce the contestants
- Give a running commentary during the contest
- Interview each contestant after each heat
- Provide entertainment between the heats
- Start each heat with a verbal “Ready! Set! BAG!”

IMPORTANT: Start each heat exactly the same, (you must ask, look and hear from each timer and contestant that they are ready before starting each heat).

JUDGES — Two to Three judges per contest. Judges must be fair, consistent and impartial. Ideally, the judges should have bagging experience! The person in charge of the Best Bagger contest should train and give each judge a sample judging criteria sheet (Best Bagger Individual Score Sheet found in this manual) one month prior to the competition. **Do not have a judge for each check stand** – this keeps the contest fair, consistent and impartial.

The judges should start at check stand #1 and complete the bagging technique section on the score sheet. Then, the judge weighs each bag on the scale provided, writes down the weight of each bag in the weight section of the score sheet, and hands the completed score sheet to the scorekeepers. The judge moves on to the next check stand and repeats the process till all bags are completed.

TIMERS — One timer needed for each contestant in a heat. Timers time each heat, AND re-set the groceries on the check stands. Timers should start the stop watch on the word “BAG!” and stop the watch when the contestant has raised their hands above their heads. When the heat is completed, the timer writes down the time off the stop watch in the “speed time section” of the score sheet, with a permanent marker write the number of the check stand on the side of each bag used, and put the score sheet on top of one of the bags. **Do not move or touch the bags (judges move the bags).**

SCOREKEEPERS – Two scorekeepers for the entire contest. Scorekeepers make sure that there is a score sheet for each contestant filled out with their name and check stand number before start of the heat. Before each heat the scorekeeper makes sure that the score sheet is placed at the check stand prior to the heat starting. After receiving the score sheet from the judges, the scorekeepers add up the sections and total the points, then check scores with the other scorekeeper. Repeat this process for all score sheets. At the end of the heats, the scorekeepers present the 4-5 highest scores so they can be announced to bag off in the final heat.

Re-setter — You will need one person to assist the judges with removing the already weighed bags to the holding area to be used for re-setting groceries for other heats. This person also might need to help with re-setting groceries, exchanging damaged groceries to the check stand for the next heat and assist the people that tally scores if any questions and/or issues arise.

****Most Important*** — *Encourage sponsors for each contestant to bring along CHEERLEADERS! Family members and friends of all ages really help bring out the fun in this event!*

STAGING

The contest can be as simple or sophisticated as you want it to be. The only absolute rule is that **WHATEVER YOU DO MUST BE THE SAME FOR ALL CONTESTANTS.** We encourage you to be creative and spirited!

CONTEST AREA:

- TABLES OR CHECK STANDS for each contestant in a heat
- MICROPHONE AND SOUND SYSTEM for MC and for playing music
- SIGNS acknowledging sponsors
- WAITING AREA: A designated area for contestants to gather and wait their turn, as well as an area for the audience to observe (Keep the crowd several feet away from the check stands)
- RACKS to hold bags open

JUDGING AREA:

- TWO DRAPED TABLES and CHAIRS for scorekeepers
- ONE SCORING SHEET at each check stand with name and check stand # for each heat (for timers to write down time)
- ELECTRONIC SCALE for weighing groceries (keep a back-up scale)
- CALCULATOR for scoring
- STOPWATCHES for each contestant and timer (keep one extra watch on hand)
- SHARPIE MARKERS for timers to mark the side of the bags with contestants' names, check stand # and times
- SCORE SHEETS placed into one of the bags so judges already have sheets available to clip to clipboard and judge the bags right away at the check stand

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

- WHISTLE to begin each heat
- NAMES FROM A HAT – if a random drawing will help to keep impartiality in your contest, draw names from a hat and contestants will compete in order of drawing
- UNIFORMS -- Contestants should dress appropriately to represent their stores. Optional - hand out contest shirts, aprons or some other identifying apparel to contestants! Do this after the heats have taken place — proper dress is part of the judging criteria. Ask other members of contest – timers, scorekeepers, judges, MC, bagger of all trades, to dress consistently — a uniform look helps identify)
- DECORATIONS – get in the spirit! The contest should be as hyped as your budget will allow. Signs, balloons, music, and other decorations all help to get the cheering section and audience in the spirit of the event!

PRIZES

Awards for preliminary and state competitions are very flexible. The winner gets a certificate from NGA and a cash prize – awarded at the 2018 NGA Show – but you may choose to award additional prizes. You may award prizes to just the 1st place champion or include runners-up.

Prizes can include:

- Cash
- Best Bagger T-shirts
- Ribbons
- Trophies

Ideally, the winner should have the opportunity to advance to another competition like the state or national competition, or next year's competition at your company. The most important prize the contestants can receive will be the recognition and respect of their team, leaders, and industry.

AFTER THE EVENT

Be sure to contact local media with press release information thanking the many companies and individuals for their involvement. Also, don't forget to send thank-you letters to the sponsors, MC, judges, timers and all helpers.

Please do not forget to send NGA the form with the winners' information!

SAMPLE GROCERY LIST

The contestants participating in the NGA National Best Bagger Championship will be ranked for individual style, their ability to arrange items properly (and use the correct number of bags), even distribution of weight between bags and the speed with which they bag.

Each contestant will bag identical grocery orders consisting of about 30 to 38 commonly purchased items. Feel free to use this list or make up your own. **NO ADVANCE GROCERY LIST WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE 2018 NATIONAL BEST BAGGER CHAMPIONSHIP.** Contestants will be required to bag in the national contest just like an everyday store situation.

- 213 oz. glass jar of Jelly/Jam
- 116 oz. glass jar of Pickles
- 16 oz. box of Crunch'n Munch
- 117.4 oz. box of Popcorn
- 17.3 oz. box of Instant Hot Cocoa
- 111.7 oz. box of Crackers
- 120 oz. box of Cereal
- 16 oz. can of Cooking Spray
- 215 oz. cans of Chef Boyardee Beefaroni
- 26 oz. cans of Tomato Paste
- 215 oz. cans of Soup
- 228 oz. cans of Corn/Peas
- 114.5 oz. can of Chef Boyardee Spaghetti & Meatballs
- 112 oz. plastic container of Mustard
- 17 oz. can of Reddi Whip
- 1loaf of Bread
- 18 oz. bag of Pretzels
- 111.3 oz. can of Coffee
- 196 oz. mini 8 pack of Soda
- 116 oz. bag of Chips
- 1Dozen Large Eggs
- 116.3 oz. plastic bottle of Wesson Oil
- 16.41 oz. container of Pringles
- 21.62 oz. packet of seasoning
- 16 oz. bag of Sunflower Seeds
- 1Slim Jim Beef Stick
- 1single-roll of Paper Towels
- 118 oz. package of Cookies
- 2.....boxes of Jell-O pudding
- 1.....2.46 oz container of oatmeal

SAMPLE ITEM ARRANGEMENT FOR BEST BAGGER CONTEST

(Using sample list on previous page)

As an example - place the label with the name of each item on top of the table or check stand so you can place the actual item on the table/check stand exactly the same each and every time:

Cereal	Eggs	Chips	Beefaroni	Pringles	Oil
Seasoning	Reddi Whip	Jelly	Crunch n' Munch	Corn	Mustard
Coffee	Popcorn	Soup	Paper Towel	Crackers	Pickles
Bread	Peas	Pretzels	Cooking Spray	Hot Cocoa	Tomato Paste
Beefaroni	Beef Stick	Tomato Paste	Cookies	Jam	Seasoning
Jell-O	Sunflower Seeds	Soda	Soup	Meatballs	Oatmeal

Judging Criteria for Choosing a Best Bagger

Speed ----- 10 Points

Contestants should bag orders significantly more quickly than the average bagger.

Time	Points
53:00 - 57:00 seconds or less	10
57:01 - 61:00 seconds	9
61:01 - 65:00 seconds	8
65.01 - 69.00 seconds	7
69.01 - 73.00 seconds	6
73.01 - 77.00 seconds	5
77.01 - 81.00 seconds	4
81.01 - 85.00 seconds	3
85.01 - 89.00 seconds	2
More than 89.01 seconds	1



Proper Bag Building Technique ----- 10 Points

1. Cans and jars on the bottom of the bags (no cans on top of cans, jars on top of cans or other jars)
2. Boxes on the sides or walls of bags (cannot be lying flat)
3. Placed crushable items, such as bread, eggs, and bags of chips on top of the bag
4. "Filler" items in spaces between items (e.g., bag of sunflower seeds, seasoning package, Jell-O boxes)
5. No glass bottles next to each other (filler item separating them)
6. Bottles and other glass-encased items are in the center of the bag

Distribution of Weight Between Bags ----- 5 Points

When bagging with reusable bags, the ideal order **will fill all three bags**. Contestants should know how to distribute groceries among bags so that all bags in an order are approximately equal in weight. To calculate the score, weigh each bag and record the weight. Take the heaviest bag weight, minus the lightest bag weight and subtract the difference from the total possible points.

Example: The heaviest bag weighs 13.15 pounds and the lightest bag weighs 12.05 pounds. The weight difference between the two bags is 1.1 pounds. Subtract this difference from the total possible points ($5.00 - 1.1 = 3.9$). The total points to be awarded is 3.9.

Style, Attitude and Appearance ----- 5 Points

All contestants should present a neat appearance, be polite, and convey a customer-oriented attitude. Contestants will be judged in part on their composure and self-confidence.