

THE EVENT ORGANISERS' TOOLKIT FOR PROMOTING EVENTS

THIS EVENT PROMOTION PACK IS IDEAL FOR ANYONE KEEN TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THEIR EVENT FAR AND WIDE.



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Whether you're a full-time events manager, a marketing executive or someone looking to promote your own events, this pack will give you the knowledge, skills and resources required to get your event noticed by the right people in the right places.

According to a recent Event Industry Report by Eventbrite, 77% of event organisers in the past year had a dedicated budget for promoting their event, with the average budget increasing year on year by 13% to £4,914. With this much money being spent on event promotion, it's important that you use the most effective strategies to ensure a valuable return on investment.

The report by Eventbrite also revealed that 53% of event organisers use 3 – 4 different marketing channels when promoting their event, with a further 32% using over 5 different marketing channels. It's clear that the more marketing channels you use, the further the reach of your event promotion. We have created several resources to help you hit as many marketing channels as possible as well as providing some expert advice from those within the events industry.





HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

While there are no set rules for promoting your event, there certainly are some best practices which will ensure you are on the right track. The key to success is to be organised well in advance so that you can start promoting your event as early as possible. But event promotion doesn't stop when the day of the event arrives. You want as many people as possible to be talking about your event on the day, and it's just as important to follow up with attendees after the event to maximise your data and ensure future events are even more successful.

PRE-EVENT PROMOTION

If you want a decent turnout to your event then you need to invest time and money into your pre-event promotion. As soon as you have decided you will be hosting an event, it's time to start trickling information to your audience to get them excited. You'll want to assign an official budget to promotion, spend some time researching the best place to target your audience; whether that's online, via print or at their local clubs and think about which channels would best be used to target them.



WEBSITE PROMOTION

If your company, business or organisation has its own website, this is a great place to start your event promotion before the event. If you want to invest in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to encourage attendees to find you through the search engines such as Google, you'll need to start optimising well in advance of your event. This is a great way to get more eyes on your event online. One SEO technique you can use is to publish blogs and other content about your event during the build up to the big day.

Another way to promote your event through your website is to use Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising. This allows you to promote your event at the top of the search engines to people searching for topics relating to your event. You will pay money every time someone clicks through to your website so make sure the page they land on is fully optimised to encourage the user to sign up to your event!



SOCIAL MEDIA

No matter what the nature of your event, social media will be a critical tool for getting your message out there to the masses. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or one of the many other social media sites, your audience will probably be there. Developing a social media strategy will help you to promote your event in a highly responsive environment.

Social media also offers the opportunity for paid advertising with some very specific targeting options. You can advertise to people of specific ages, genders, locations and interests through paid social advertising which can really improve your return on investment.



EMAIL

According to the 2017 Eventbrite Event Industry Report, email is ranked as the most effective marketing channel when promoting an event. For email to really work, you need to have your own database of people to email. These will be your 'warm leads' and should have a personalised email sent to each person (e.g. including their name in the email). Personalisation can be automated with most email software.

To build your database, you will need to implement some sort of data capture strategy within your marketing. This should be an ongoing process and you can use several strategies to capture this data, including competitions, content downloads and of course using the data captured from previous event attendees. There is the option to buy an email list, however these 'cold leads' will be less responsive and they may interoperate your email as spam.



TRADITIONAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES

Of course, there are plenty of traditional marketing techniques which you might decide to use to better reach your audience. Print advertising or sponsored content in magazines and newspapers can be very successful, depending on the audience you are targeting. The success of this type of advertising can be harder to measure than online advertising but it's important to grab your audience's attention at all angles.

There is also the opportunity to promote your event via direct mail. This is quite an old-school approach and you must be careful not to post advertisements to people who have registered their wish not to receive unsolicited material by mail. You can purchase data from The Mailing Preference Service which will identify residents who do not want to receive direct mail. Other than direct mail, you can try leaving flyers at shops, clubs and other places used by the public to get your message out there further.



PARTNERSHIPS

It is likely that you won't be running your event completely alone. You may have guest speakers or entertainment playing at the event. You may be hiring equipment from external businesses or working with other organisations on the content of your event. This gives you a great avenue for promotion if you simply ask them to help with promoting your event, whether that help is via a blog on their website or flyers in their shop.

You can also seek sponsorship for your event, which will not only help lower the overall cost of your event but will mean another organisation will be proactively promoting your event. Sponsorship gives you the opportunity to get your event in front of a whole new audience and is mutually beneficial for you and the sponsor.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

To really spread the message of your event, you might want to consider creating a press release to send out to relevant publications and newspapers in your local area. When sending your press release to newspapers, try to have a newsworthy spin to encourage them to publish a story on your event.

Many online news sites, especially local news sites, will have a section on their website where you can upload an event to their events calendar. This is free to do in most cases and if you invest a small amount of time doing this you will be able to get your event out there to people within the relevant geographical areas.



PROMOTION DURING THE EVENT

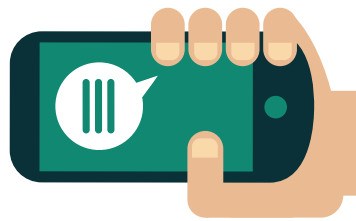
The day of your event is an ideal opportunity to promote your message or future events to attendees. It is also an opportunity to show those who did not attend exactly what they are missing. You will probably be very busy ensuring the event runs smoothly during the day, so make sure you do as much preparation beforehand as possible.



BRANDED MATERIALS

Make sure you have plenty of branded materials such as flyers and banners at your event. If someone takes a photograph at your event, you want your brand to be in the picture! You might want to include goodie bags too with branded pens, information and other useful bits and pieces. This will ensure people remember your brand when they leave.

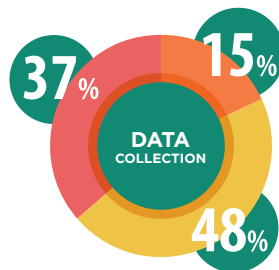
Keep in mind that your brand isn't just your logo, it's everything your company stands for, so make sure you portray your brand's image appropriately. Try to educate attendees about your event/brand and give them useful information such as an events calendar so they can book on to the next one there and then.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media will be immeasurably important on the day of your event. This is where anyone who couldn't attend your event will see just how good it really is and can engage with your brand or event attendees instantaneously. Make sure you are posting photos, videos, quotes from speakers and regular updates on your event throughout the day. You might even want to try using Facebook Live to give anyone on Facebook an insight into your event. It's a good idea to set up your own hashtag too if you want to try and get your event trending on Twitter!

If you don't think you will have much time to post on social media throughout the day, you can use a tool such as Hootsuite to schedule some social posts. Although this isn't as effective as doing it live, it will encourage your attendees to get involved. Try to start a conversation with your audience, ask them questions and really get them engaged to spread your message further.



DATA COLLECTION

Getting information from your event attendees such as email addresses will give you a way to follow up with them after the event and continue promoting your brand. If your attendees didn't need to sign up to your event, you may not have already collected this data, so you'll need to find a way to convince them to hand over their details.

Simple techniques such as competitions or prize draws are very effective, but generally networking with people and taking contact details directly is a much more personal way of doing things. You might also want to try interviewing people to get their opinions on the event. You can use these interviews in any blogs or videos you make after the event and remember to ask for contributors contact details so you can share it with them later.



POST EVENT PROMOTION

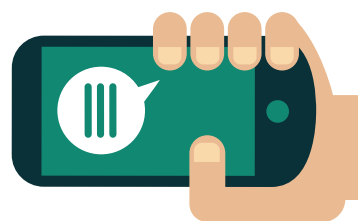
Once the event is over, you don't want people to just forget about it straight away. The promotion work is far from over as you need to remind attendees of what they experienced on the day and get people who didn't attend to kick themselves for missing out!



BLOGGING AND IMAGE GALLERIES

Now is the time to start blogging and telling the story of your event. Don't just send out one blog and leave it at that, create a series of blogs or richer content such as slideshows, videos or infographics detailing different parts of your event. Include mentions of specific attendees and they will be more likely to share your blogs. You can schedule these blogs to be published for weeks to come, ensuring the impact of your event continues long after the event itself.

You might have had a photographer at your event, or perhaps you were taking photos yourself or encouraging attendees to do so and then post them on social media. Gather these images together and create an image gallery on your website. People are keen to engage with this type of rich media and will be eager to see if they are in any of the photos!



SOCIAL MEDIA

Once again, social media is ideal for continuing to promote your event once it's over. You can reach out to individual attendees, engage with anyone who used your events hashtag and push out any relevant information regarding your event (e.g. competition winners). Social media also gives you an opportunity to thank any contributors or attendees publicly.

If you are producing any blog content regarding your event or image galleries, social media is a great place to promote it. Don't be afraid to tag people who you think it might interest and continue using your events' hashtag after the event.



EMAIL

A follow up email to the people who attended your event will allow you to continue contact and provide them with personalised information about the event they attended as well as a reminder for future events. You might have captured more data at your event, so be sure to add these people to your mailing list. Again, if you have created blogs or photo galleries, you should share them via this follow up email.

Email can again be used to contact those who didn't manage to attend your event with a personalised message, letting them know what they missed out on at the event. You want to be careful not to seem like you are spamming people though, so don't overdo it and give people the opportunity to unsubscribe.

THE EVENT PROMOTION TO DO LIST

PRE-EVENT PROMOTION

- **Decide on your promotion budget**
- **Audience research – where/how can you target them?**
- **Create your promotion plan (a Gantt Chart will help you to stay on track)**
- **Get any physical promotional branded materials printed/created**
- **Organise your partnerships/sponsorship and supply them with promotional materials**
- **Book any printed advertising**
- **Create your ‘event page’ on your website and publish it**
- **Write and schedule blogs surrounding your event**
- **Send out your first email invitation to your guest list – include links to your website event page**
- **Announce the details of your event on your Social Media channels**
- **Create a Social Media schedule so you are sending out updates and relevant information on your event often**
- **Set up and schedule paid social advertising**
- **If you are using flyers/posters – send these out to consenting businesses**
- **Prepare and send out your press release to relevant publications**
- **Send out reminder emails to your guest list**

THE EVENT PROMOTION TO DO LIST

PROMOTION DURING THE EVENT

- Lay out your branded materials or be available to hand them out to attendees on arrival
- Start posting live updates on Social Media before guests even arrive
- Implement your methods of data collection and actively encourage participation
- Promote your next event / business to your audience during the event
- Try to get people to sign up to your next event there and then

POST EVENT PROMOTION

- Send your 'thank you for attending' email to attendees and a 'here is what you missed' email to those who didn't make it
- Pull together all your photographs and create an image gallery on site
- Start blogging about your event
- Send another email out to your database linking to your blog and photo gallery
- Post blogs and image galleries on social media
- Perhaps send out another press release post event detailing anything significant from the day (e.g. money raised for charity, records broken, business developments etc.)
- Analyse the success of your paid advertising





EVENT PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATES

Sending out a press release to relevant publications can get your event some valuable publicity. While some newspapers and other publications will allow you to post your event on their site anyway, getting a story published about the event would get it some extra attention. There are three basic rules you should stick to when sending out your press release:



PERSONALISE YOUR PRESS RELEASE

Journalists and editors receive a lot of emails each day from people hoping to get their stories published. If you don't take a personalised approach, you may not capture their attention and will miss your opportunity. Do some research and at least find out the name of the person you are contacting and try to include some reasons why the story is perfect for their publication and relevant to their audience.



HAVE AN ENTICING HOOK

You can't just write about how great you think your event is going to be and expect it to get published. You need a juicy hook that will make your story a more attractive offering to editors. Are you doing anything for charity? Is there a local community angle you can use? Are there any shocking statistics coming out of your event? If you can find that hook, you're more likely to engage the audience and get published.



MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM

Finally, don't expect the editor or journalist to put in any ground work. You want to serve your press release up on a silver platter, ready for them to publish. Attach your press release in a Word Document, PDF and paste it into the body of your email so they have multiple ways to access it. Make sure spelling, grammar and styling are all on point and remember to attach a high-quality image which can be published alongside the article. Leave a note to editors containing any additional information and all your contact details. The easier you make it for them, the more likely they are to run the story.

AS A BONUS TIP, TRY USING MORE THAN ONE FORM OF COMMUNICATION TO GET YOUR STORY IN FRONT OF THE RIGHT EYES. SEND IT BY EMAIL, PICK UP THE PHONE AND DON'T LET YOURSELF BE IGNORED!





EVENT INVITATION TEMPLATES

Formal, printed event invitations still have a place in the modern, digital world of today. They will be particularly valuable if you have an older audience who are less tech savvy. However, don't rule printed invitations out for a younger audience either as nostalgia plays a huge role in engaging younger people.



EVENT EMAIL TEMPLATES

When you send out your event invitation emails, you don't want to overload the recipient with information. Keep it simple and give the essential details such as date, time, location and most importantly, the reason why they would want to attend this event. You can then link to more information on your website or include an area for signing up to the event.

If you are charging for your event, you might want to include 'early bird' prices to encourage faster sign ups to the event. Send these emails out to your existing database of clients, customers or contacts. You can also buy marketing data lists; however, the response rate will be much lower than that of your own, personal list of contacts.



SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Social Media is such a valuable tool when it comes to event promotion and should be used throughout each stage of the event. But you shouldn't just blindly start posting whatever you want, whenever you want, wherever you want. You need to know where your audience are, what time they will be active and what type of content will get them engaging.



FACEBOOK

Target audience:

Facebook is better used for B2C (business to consumer) as it is the place people go to for social interaction, research and fun.

Timings:

Studies suggest that the best time to post on Facebook is between 12pm and 3pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The best time to post on a Saturday or Sunday is between 12pm and 1pm.

What to post:

Video content is extremely popular on Facebook, as well as more fun content such as Memes. Try to keep your posts visual with minimal written content if possible.

Advertising:

Facebook has very specific advertising targeting. You can target people based on age, gender, location, interests and more.



TWITTER

Target audience:

Twitter is ideal for both B2C (business to consumer) and B2B (business to business) and is the platform where businesses really get to show their personality.

Timings:

Studies suggest that the best time to post on Twitter is between 12pm and 3pm on Monday to Friday (consumers will be checking social platforms at lunch and as the day ends and businesses will be looking to get active on social as part of their marketing strategy).

What to post:

Again, visual posts work well with Twitter but you also have the option to include polls and other forms of engagement on Twitter. Try to start a conversation, ask questions and mention specific people and business in your posts. And of course, don't forget to hashtag!

Advertising:

Twitter also has vast targeting capabilities as well built in tools to analyse your ads performance.



LINKEDIN

Target audience:

LinkedIn is the perfect platform if your event is B2B (business to business). People use LinkedIn to network and discover updates/events relative to their industry.

Timings:

The best time to post on LinkedIn is in the morning (8am - 10am) and late afternoon (3pm - 5pm) on weekdays.

What to post:

LinkedIn is a great place to post your articles or opinion pieces relating to your event. The type of content may depend on the day of the week though, with informative, inspiring content working better on a Monday and the fun stuff working better on a Friday.

Advertising:

LinkedIn also has some great audience targeting options included in their advertising. Target by job position, industry and more.

OF COURSE, THERE ARE MANY OTHER SOCIAL PLATFORMS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENT ON, INCLUDING THE MORE VISUAL PLATFORMS SUCH AS INSTAGRAM AND PINTEREST. IT'S IMPORTANT TO DECIDE WHICH PLATFORMS WILL BE MOST RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE AND THEN PUSH THE RIGHT CONTENT OUT ON EACH ONE.



ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

We spoke to several event industry experts to discover what they feel is needed for effective event promotion. Here are a few of their top tips and industry secrets revealed to help you with your own event promotion.

WHICH MARKETING CHANNELS DO YOU USE TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS AND WHY?

“It is valuable to work with the media and generate interest in the event. A personality or industry professional commenting or offering a testimonial about your event is of great value. If you can engage with bloggers who are relevant to the event, this will increase your outreach to potential attendees. It might be an idea to create a strap line or hashtag that people can use when talking about the event, this will generate traction and reach previously unknown prospects. The data you generate will be invaluable for future events.

There is also huge value in the more traditional form of marketing - that is picking up the phone and speaking to prospects. This really gives you an understanding of what your potential visitors are looking for and allows you to build strong relationships.”

Georgina Coleman - Managing Director - Established Events

“If you want to get the word out about your event, the most effective channel is often social media. If you get it right on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, you can get your event in front of thousands of potential attendees for a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising.

A simple way to get your event noticed by the right people is to make it easy for those that sign up to drum up interest among their own friends and followers. You can do this by including social buttons on the order confirmation page that allow them to spread the word with a single click. You can add fuel to the fire by entering everyone who shares your event on social media into a raffle — this simple promotion can give a huge return on investment.”

Victoria Brunton - Managing Director - EventStop

DO YOU HAVE ANY EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION TACTICS WITH EVIDENCE?

“Pre-booked sales/attendees are the key to making sure your event is a success. If you can confirm your attendees before the event takes place, rather than waiting for them to walk through the door, you are guaranteed better success. I would never advise promoting an event and just see who walks in. From my experience, if you are sending out a message or invitation to prospects, you are likely to get a pick-up rate of 20-30%. So, bear that in mind when looking at the capacity of your event. You need to communicate by offering benefits or incentives. This may be in the form of reduced rates for early booking, or it may be an incentive for attending the event.

You need to be creative when thinking about what this may be. An experience that “money can’t buy” is always a winner. This may be in a prize draw format, that allows any of your attendees the opportunity to win.”

Georgina Coleman - Managing Director - Established Events

“It’s also important you send the traffic you generate from your social media activity to the right place. Creating a specific page for your event [on your website] featuring your branding and all the relevant information will give off a professional impression and help convince people to put their money down to attend. Before you start promoting your event, it’s important you get this page set up so your efforts are effective as possible”.

Victoria Brunton - Managing Director - EventStop

WHICH MARKETING CHANNELS DO YOU USE TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS AND WHY?

“This very much depends on the event and its size. Do you have your database ready and know who you are reaching out to? If not, I would suggest creating a following, again via social media. You need to create a genuine interested in your event and why it is taking place. Engage with the community you are targeting. This may be in the form of attending other similar events, joining forums and networking groups.

From an operational prospective, you need to find your venue first. This is the most important element of you event. Does the venue have the right capability to deliver a success? Location and accessibility are both very important Also, make sure that you have insurance in place should anything unexpected happen.

The next step is to get the invitation out if you are confident that you are entrenched in the community you are targeting.

Don’t think you should only contact someone once about your event. Of course, you don’t want to annoy someone who is not interested, so give them the option to unsubscribe or leave your database. There is no point having them there if they are uninterested. You want to focus on those who have a genuine interest.

I would always suggest that you put together a social media strategy and plan before you start contacting people. Know what you want to say and when you want to send the message, rather than just engaging as and when.

Monitor the result you get and utilise your analytics. This information is invaluable for the event you are working on and for future events.

The most important advice I can ever give is believe in what you are doing, if something isn't working, change it. Your passion and energy are the keys to your success".

Georgina Coleman - Managing Director - Established Events



ONLINE TOOLS WHICH CAN HELP

When it comes to promoting your event, you want to ensure you have every angle possible covered. There are various tools online which can be used for research, promotion and increasing the visibility of your event. All of these tools are free so it's worth taking a look to see how they can help you.



YOUNGOV PROFILES

YouGov Profiles is a great place to do a bit of swotting up on your audience.

This tool allows you to search for a brand, product or particular interest (which is related to your brand) and will then show you audience information based on 250,000 YouGov panel members. For example, if your event is a car show, you might want to try searching the Top Gear audience and you will be given information on demographics, interests, media habits and much more!

While this data might be quite generic, it can certainly be inspiring!



LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Most local newspapers will have an events section where you can upload your own event to the public. Wikipedia has a full list of newspapers in the UK, so try to add your event to as many relevant ones as possible. Remember to really sell your event and give all the details such as time, date, location, dress codes, cost etc. as well as your own contact details.



EVENT WEBSITES

There are plenty of websites online which will list your event, such as Eventbrite, The List, Yelp, Evvnt and Timeout. The key here is to find event websites which are relevant to the area you operate in. A simple Google search for 'what's on in (your area here)' will most likely come up with an events website for your local area. Add your event details and then move on to the next website.



GOOGLE ANALYTICS

If you have a website, then Google Analytics will be great for measuring how your event affects your onsite engagement. If you have set up a competition page, a game, an information page or have a particular product or service you are promoting at your event, Google Analytics can tell you exactly how engaged your audience are.

Google Analytics allows you to analyse specific pages on your website and can show you how long people spent on the page, how many pages they viewed on site, whether they converted or not etc. All of this data is highly valuable and can be used to measure the success of specific goals relating to your event.



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