

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.

Part 1 of 4

By Dan Rose



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 RELATION

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.



In Part 2 of this article, due out in the October 2017 issue of "ie" magazine, we will learn more about promoting events during and after the event, in addition to reviewing the Event Promotion To-Do List.



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