

Event Marketing on Social Media

By Ashley Satterfield



Fourth Street Live! Hot Country Nights series, Justin Moore concert May 4, 2018. Louisville, KY

SOCIAL MEDIA users

Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Snapchat
2.19	800	336	158
Billion Monthly Active Users	Million Monthly Active Users	Million Monthly Active Users	Million Monthly Active Users

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As event directors, we “get” to hear everyone’s ideas for what events, concerts, and festivals we “should” be having. As we know, bringing an event idea to reality can be extremely difficult and there is much to consider.

Half the battle of organizing an event is marketing it.

Luckily, today we live in a world of advanced technology in which our potential customers are constantly connected to their devices. We no longer need to study traffic patterns to determine the best placement for a billboard or analyze demographics to identify the best magazine in which to place an ad. These days, potential customers hold multiple marketing platforms in the palm of their hands every single day. Not only is it extremely easy to deliver our message to our specific target audience, it is cheap! Best of all, event marketing on social media is not as time consuming as you might expect.

I am often asked why I am so passionate about my career and why I continue to work in the crazy world of events; the long hours, late nights, angry guests, and struggle of constantly juggling multiple tasks and events. The easy answer is, well, because I LOVE IT! But beyond that, so do my guests. I love seeing people react to and interact with my events; what better feeling is there than walking into your event

and seeing it jam-packed with people? Social media can help you get there.

Social media is a powerful tool that enables you to gain exposure, advance ticket sales, and perhaps most valuably, DATA! Social media is not only great for sharing information before the event, but it is also perfect for sharing during and after the event.

Let's talk about all the ways we can use social media to market your event.

1. Create (and sell tickets through) Your Facebook Event

I really hope that you already create Facebook Events, but if you are missing this, here is your reminder and wakeup call! Most people log into Facebook multiple times a day. Your event page is a great place for you and your customers to engage prior to the event. Be sure to tag your partners as co-hosts so that the event appears on their Facebook page too. Take it a step further and monetize it – you can boost your Facebook event listing (you set the rate and duration) to reach a broader audience beyond your and your co-hosts' followers.

2. Launch Paid Social Media Ads

On average, only 2%–6% of your followers will actually see your posts. If you want to get your content in front of your target audience, use a paid social

media advertisement. Using Facebook Ads Manager, you can create paid social media campaigns for Facebook and Instagram.

3. Run a Social Media Contest

Contests are the perfect way to get event-goers to help you spread the word. Create contests organically and ask users to like or follow you, tag a friend in the comments, and share the post to 'enter to win.' You can take it a step further and create paid contests using Facebook's lead generation. With these contests, you can require that guests email to enter the contest, allowing you to gather data from potential customers. Once the contest is over, you can upload the leads to Facebook create a custom audience and then use that audience to generate a lookalike audience (people who are similar to the custom audience).

4. Give Them a Reason to Buy Their Tickets in Advance

Create early bird deadlines or advance ticket sale discounts. Motivate potential attendees by using urgency to drive ticket purchases. Not only is this a great way to collect data, but it makes it much easier to gauge your likely event attendance based on the number of presales.

5. Use Facebook Ads to Remarket to Prospects

Facebook custom audiences allow you to send your ads to people who have visited your website, a process that is also called remarketing/retargeting. Remarketing can be an effective strategy because people on average view an offer 3–7 times before they make a purchase. You can also use that custom audience to generate a lookalike audience to target customers with similar profiles. Be sure to exclude Facebook users who have already purchased a ticket. You can do this by creating a custom audience from your ticketing platform and excluding those users.

6. Promote your Event with a Video

Video captures the energy and excitement of your event and creates engagement opportunities as the video is shared – center it around the story, not on the sale. Keep it short and sweet; 1/5 of viewers will click away anyway within 10 seconds or less.

7. Use Data from Similar Events or Prior Years to Target Potential Attendees

Create custom audiences using a list of attendees from previous years or from

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similar events. These are people who are already engaged with your brand/event and would likely return, so you should use paid social campaigns to target them.

8. Empower Fans with Shareable Assets

Make it easy to share your event and capitalize on your fans' excitement. Make sure your ticketing software gives purchasers the option to share that they are attending your event after they buy their tickets. No one wants FOMO.

9. Utilize Your Talent's Followers

Have a famous guest, featured speaker, or national talent? Draft a post tagging your social media page and linking to your ticketing platform and ask their social media manager to post it on their social media page. Once the post is up, ask them for access to the page and then boost their post. This allows you to get in front of their fans, people you know will want to attend your event. Depending on the person they may have thousands, if not millions, of potential ticket purchasers following them.

10. Share Behind-the-Scenes Content

We know that there is a lot of work that goes into pulling off an event and sometimes we forget to take advantage of all the cool things that we get to do—like meeting Gavin Rossdale or taking a selfie with Cash Cash—that we could use to promote our events. Share this exciting content with your fans and give them a glimpse of event prep with photos and videos (Instagram Stories and Snapchat are ideal for this). This is a neat way to create buzz and boost engagement.

11. Add Your Event to Your Email Signature

Add a graphic in your signature line and link it to your ticket purchase page.

12. Post a Recap Video

While it is still fresh in your guests' minds, it is important to share a video and photos from your event. This creates an opportunity for engagement after the event and encourages people to come back next year.

13. Choose a Good Hashtag

If you do not have one yet, create a hashtag to brand your event. This enables users to mention you and you to track photos and content relating to your event. Be sure to share user-generated content too. Why do all the hard work creating amazing photographs, when most of the time your customers will do it for you?

14. Work with Influencers

Build relationships with key people in your industry who can help promote your event and help influence prospects to purchase tickets. Be sure to research and develop a strategy.

15. Instagram Stories

Luckily, when you run paid social media ads through Facebook, you not only have the option to run it on your Instagram feed, but also your Instagram Story. Because Stories are more authentic than posts, users are more interested in watching them. Use Stories before your event to drive ticket sales and during your event to share behind-the-scenes prep and live content.

16. Create Social Walls

Use a social media display, like Tagboard, to display your guests' content on a giant projection screen, TV, or jumbotron at your event when they use your event hashtag. Other guests see people's photos on display when they use your hashtag and they do not want to miss out on the fun! You can also link it to your website and share it directly on your homepage.

These are just some of the tactics that I have used to market events on social media. You should try various tactics and study the insights to determine what works best with your audience.

How to share on social media before the event:

- Anticipation
- FOMO
- Ticket promotion
- Event preparation
- Announcement
- Ticket purchase
- Lead generation contest

How to share on social media during the event:

- Social media display
- Photo booth
- Live video (Facebook Live, Instagram Stories)
- Behind-the-scenes backstage pictures and video
- Snapchat geofilter

How to share on social media after the event:

- Celebrate your press mentions
- Share event photos and recap video
- Social media contest

If done right, social media is an incredibly effective tool to promote your event. I hope this has encouraged you to consider using social media to promote your next event. It is much cheaper than traditional marketing, and you can decide the spend. The best part about social media marketing is that you can directly measure your ROI. Social media provides endless ways to promote and measure the success of your event before, during, and after.

Ashley Satterfield, CFEA is the Director of Marketing for the Fourth Street Live! Entertainment District in Louisville, KY. Ashley is a unicorn employee who prides herself as being a mover and shaker in the hospitality industry. Growing up with a theme park in her backyard, Ashley embraced the hospitality/theme park industry at a very young age and started working in the theme park world (yes, it is its own world) at 14. She eventually realized that not only was she really interested in events and marketing, but that she was really good at it. Since then, she has spent her time working in Kentucky's largest independent hotel and Kentucky's most visited tourist attraction, spearheading all their events. You will usually find her creating chalk art on the street, talking on her phone to a local executive, booking a concert, coordinating a Guinness World Record attempt, confirming a radio buy, oh, or sharing that sponsored post on Facebook!

She is always learning and is driven by the need to constantly help. Her educational background includes a Bachelor's in Interior Architecture Design with a minor in Marketing. She is a Certified Festival and Event Associate (CFEA) and is currently working towards her CFEE. Ashley can be reached at phone: 502-649-5638 or email: asatterfield@4thstlive.com.