



The Ultimate Guide for Promoting Events


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Table of Contents




Why Event Promotion?	03
What is the Difference between Marketing and Promotion?	04
Target Audiences	05
Marketing Personas	06
Event Positioning Statements	07
Marketing Objectives	08
Promotional Tactics	09
Advertising	10
Public relations	13
Sales promotion	15
Direct marketing	16
Personal selling	18
Promotional Timeline	20



Why Event Promotion?


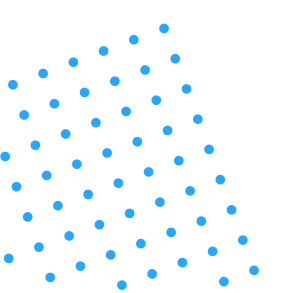
The age old question about a tree falling in a forest comes to mind when we think about promoting our events. If we host an event but no one is there to witness it, did it even happen? That's too deep a question for this e-book so let's focus on making sure we never have to answer that question!



The key to a successful event is not just flawless execution. It's also in how the event is marketed and promoted. Strategic event marketing starts at the concepting stage of event planning and continues all the way through and after event day. Think of it as a cycle. It's a circular process that never really ends, it just keeps moving.

The best way to keep up with the cycle is to develop a very deliberate event promotion plan for each event. If you build and execute a plan that is targeted and timed to strategic event goals, the workload will seem less daunting and the results will drive future planning.






This e-book will outline how to develop a strategic event promotional plan from start to finish. Once you've built the framework for this plan, it's easily adaptable to any event or timeline with just a few messaging adjustments. First some basics.



What is the Difference between Marketing and Promotion?

Marketing is the process of recognizing and fulfilling client or customer needs in order to grow revenue and organizational brand value. It is the case you build to connect your event to your targeted audience. Promotion refers to any specific type of marketing tactic used to increase awareness, generate ticket sales, or create loyalty among target audiences.

Promotion is just one element of the traditional marketing mix. The other elements are Price, Product, and Place. Promotion is a critical element and one that should not be ignored nor done without a strategic plan. There are five types of promotion:


				
Advertising	Public Relations	Sales Promotion	Direct Marketing	Personal Selling

Before developing a promotional plan around these five elements, it's important to review your event goals and messaging strategy. This may seem like a lot of work but it is important. A fully developed promotional plan is based on strategic messaging crafted to meet your long-term marketing goals.

As you develop your promotional plan, there will be examples along the way for illustrative purposes and templates to guide you.




Target Audiences



It's important to identify your target audiences when building your promotional messaging strategy. In doing so, you will be able to better communicate your event differentiators to the people who will use this information as purchase decision drivers. It's the difference between threading a needle and throwing spaghetti at a wall to see what sticks. It's also the difference between making a positive return on your marketing dollar and throwing that dollar away.

Be as specific as possible when identifying potential audiences. Think about pertinent demographic information including location, income levels, age and gender (if appropriate). Identify appropriate business experience or rank, potential industry interests and/or trade or networking association membership. Choose what is important to your event brand when developing the ideal participant profile.

You may have more than one target audience segment. Look at your past attendee list to start. Who are they? Review any surveys you may have done for past events. Review your competitors to see who they promote their events to. Also, think about your list of opportunities from the SWOT analysis. Is there a new group of people who may not know about your event that you could tap? They would be a separate segment since your messaging would need to be different than the messaging to your past attendees.



Target Audience Marketing Personas

It's helpful to create personas for each targeted audience. A persona is a profile of the typical person in that audience. The personal profile includes demographic information, their personal needs and wants that are to the content of your event, the problem your event is solving for them, and the marketing channels and messaging they would respond to. It's important to know what motivates each persona to attend your event.

Sample Persona Template for your Event

Name	
Age	
Gender	
Location	
Occupation	
Income	
Hobbies	
Motivations	
Offline Influences	
Online Influences	
Pain points for attending your event	
Favorite parts of attending your event	
Other notes	

Event Positioning Statements

There are several things to think about when identifying your event messaging strategy for each target audience. Pull out each marketing persona you've created and think about what it is they need to hear from you to make the decision to attend your event. To convince them, you need a positioning statement.

Event Positioning Statement


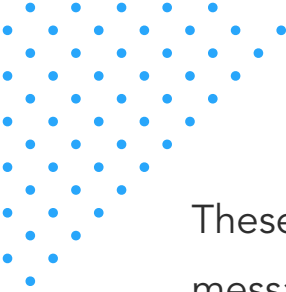
A positioning statement describes why each event attendee persona should attend your event, highlighting the benefits you outlined in the value proposition. Each positioning statement should include the persona's wants, needs, pain points, and most importantly how your event will address those pain points.

For example, a positioning statement for a music festival attendee could be: "XYZ Country Music Festival attendees will discover new country music artists and enjoy music from more established country music artists on two consecutive stages over a 24 hour period for one low ticket price."

Event Positioning Statements

Persona	
Positioning Statement	

Persona	
Positioning Statement	



These positioning statements become the central theme of your messaging strategy. Don't be too wordy. A good positioning statement is a short sentence that states just one event benefit and addresses that target market's most prevalent problem. It should be unique, believable, and adaptable enough to be useful in any marketing strategy. You now have the basic framework for all copywriting activities that will take place in the tactical section of your promotional plan.

Marketing Objectives

An objective is a measurable step taken to achieve a strategy based on your goals. Your marketing objectives will provide measurements for your strategies. It could be a desired achievement or it could be something to avoid. Every objective should be written using the SMART paradigm.






For example, if one of your If one of your event goals is to build repeat event attendee revenue and your promotional strategy is to use targeted benefit messaging to past attendees, your marketing objective tied to this strategy could be to increase repeat attendance by 10% by offering an exclusive benefit for past

Marketing Objective	Write Your Smart Objective Here	Write your Promotional Tactic here (S)	Write your KPI here (M)	Write your Tool to Measure your KPI here (A)	Write your Benchmark here (R)	Write your Time Period here(T)
Example	Improve brand reputation by increasing positive share of voice 25% year over year with Instagram ads	Establishing an Instagram account and posting once per day	SOV	Social media listening tool	+25%	YOY

Promotional Tactics

Now we are ready to get into the meat of the plan. Your promotional tactics are the very deliberate actions you take to achieve your marketing objectives. Tactics are tangible and include immediate and smaller steps. They involve best practices, specific plans, resources, etc. A good tactic has a clear purpose that aids your strategy. It has a finite timeline during which specific activities will be completed and their impacts measured.

Just a reminder, there are five different types of promotional tactics:

				
Advertising	Public Relations	Sales Promotion	Direct Marketing	Personal Selling

Advertising

There are an infinite number of channels that could be used to advertise an event, both offline and online. It's not feasible or ideal to use all of them. Be strategic about the channels you choose. Don't just do what your competitors are doing or what you've always done in the past. Review each channel again when creating your current promotional plan and make choices that are applicable for that event. Choose channels that your target audiences are on and that make sense for the tone and content of the current event. Use channels that have delivered a strong ROI in the past and stop using channels that do not. As always, be very prudent with your budget.

Let's look at some of the pros and cons of advertising channels for event promotion.

Advertising Channels	Pros	Cons
Digital Search Engine Marketing (Google, Bing, Yahoo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pay per click > Easy to cap budget > Relatively inexpensive > Measurable results > Easy to test, adapt and change campaigns quickly > Targets a specific audience or location > Customizable to brand and messaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Time consuming to maintain > Highly competitive > Search engine algorithms are constantly changing > Not visual or eye-catching/mostly text > Not viral or sharable

Digital Display Advertising (banner ads, retargeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pay per impression and/or click > Easy to cap budget > Measurable results > Easy to test, adapt and change campaigns quickly > Target a specific audience or location > Target a specific behavior (visit a website, shop a product) > Customizable to brand and messaging > Visual medium > Can use video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive to achieve high engagement rates > Highly competitive > Not viral or sharable > Little control over bidding or inventory
Affiliate ads on affiliate networks, partner websites or blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pay a commission per click, lead or sale > Easy to cap budget > Measurable results > Easy to test, adapt and change campaigns quickly > Targets a specific audience > Promotes valuable partnerships that can be leveraged in other channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive to achieve high engagement rates > Highly competitive > Little control over bidding or inventory > Little control over branding > Not viral or sharable
Paid social media ads or promoted posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pay per click > Easy to cap budget > Highly targeted to audience or location > Measurable results > Visual medium > Can use video > Can be viral or sharable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Time consuming to maintain > Highly competitive > Feed algorithms are constantly changing
Print Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Variable sizes and prices to fit many budgets > Targets a specific audience or location > Can be visual and eye-catching > Lends credibility especially industry-related publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive > Fewer consumers are reading print publications > Not easy to test and adapt > Not always measurable
Radio Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Great for storytelling/setting the stage for an experience > Easy to create > Wide reach > Variable schedule and time slot availability to fit many budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive > Not targeted > Fewer consumers are listening to the radio > Not easy to test and adapt > Not always measurable > Not visual

OOO Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > High impression count > Visual and eye-catching > Little room for messaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive > Not targeted > Not easy to test and adapt > Not always measurable
Television Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Wide reach > Visual and eye-catching > Great for storytelling/setting the stage for an experience > Variable schedule and time slot availability to fit many budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be expensive > Not targeted > Not easy to test and adapt > Not easy to create > Not always measurable


Now that you've reviewed your options, it's time to build your advertising plan. Keeping your goals and audience in mind, choose the channels and tactics you think will work best for your event.

For maximum exposure, try to be present on as many relevant channels as you can for as long as you can. As in all marketing, consistent repetition is very important to staying top of mind within your target audience.

Advertising Plan	Write your advertising channel here	Write Your Budget Here	Write Your Advertising Tactic Here	Write Your Audience Here	Write Your Timeline Here
Example	Facebook	\$1,000	Boosted Posts	Cleveland area women, 25-45, interested in country music, country artists, arts and crafts, pets and environmental issues	Weekly starting 6 months from event date



Public Relations


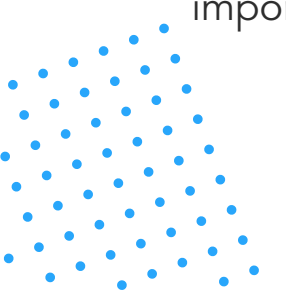



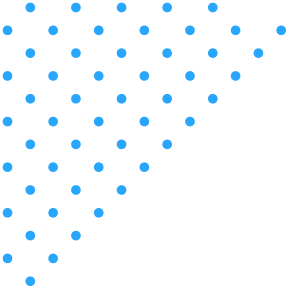
Public relations can be a blessing or a curse. You're almost always working at a disadvantage because getting coverage is never a sure thing. And it's difficult (actually next to impossible) to control the tone of a message in news stories or blog posts. However, an impactful story from a well-read and respected news source can mean the difference between filling half the seats and selling out. The best earned media (which is another term for public relations) can also extend the life of your event when you invite reporters to attend the event and write about it afterwards.

Timing is important when planning a PR strategy. In general, printed monthly publications, industry publications, blogs and influencers need 3-6 month notice to research, write and print a story while broadcast outlets need 2-4 weeks or less. It's better to pitch long lead publications and industry outlets as early as possible.

The traditional press release has evolved into something less standard. Savvy event planners are sending press contacts hand delivered engraved invitations, videos via YouTube, voicemail or text media alerts, or customized emails with a personal plea for coverage. The sky is the limit but the intention is the same.

HEADLINE: Please cover my event! One thing has not changed. Having a compelling and reader-worthy hook is still the most important part of a media pitch.





In crafting your hook, consider the Venn diagram of your expected event audience and the media outlet's audience. The place where these two groups meet is the group of people you need to appeal to. What is the most important question you can address that will gain their attention? Provide an answer to that question and you've got your PR hook.

70% of marketers say that the most common metric to judge the ROI of an event is the amount of media exposure generated. With the proliferation of online media sources as well as better methods to report on the traditional sources, measuring the impressions, reach, and engagement of your media stories is relatively simple to do and usually pretty accurate.


A good event planner develops and implements a comprehensive public relations strategy that integrates with the rest of your promotional strategy and pushes out interesting story angles that grab attention and induces action. Don't forget to create story hooks that will drive your marketing objectives and goals.

Eventzilla offers a very comprehensive [PR Planning Checklist](#) to get you started. Download it today.



Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is the process of persuading a potential customer to buy a product. Sales promotion is a short-term tactic to boost sales. It's not an effective method to build long-term customer loyalty. But it is important to your overall promotional plan.



Sales promotion is specifically used to inspire some sort of action, most likely register or buy tickets for an event. It could also be to download extra content, buy event merchandise, follow you on social media, or buy sponsors' and vendors' products. These other actions may not be your ultimate goal but they do move prospective attendees through the sales funnel which hopefully ends with conversion.

Strategize the number and types of promotions you are comfortable using along every point of the funnel. Keep in mind you may have different promotions for different targeted audiences. Also determine which marketing channel you will use to communicate the promotions.

Examples of event promotions to consider are:

- > Gated content
- > Early bird ticket sales
- > Returning attendee discount
- > Flash sales

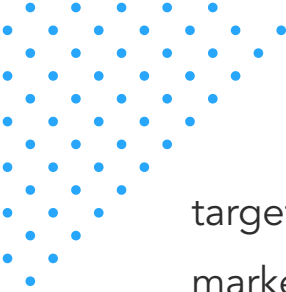
- > Sponsorship
- > Swag/branded gifts
- > VIP access at events
- > Online influencer endorsements
- > Free app download
- > Contest/raffle entry
- > Partnership discounts

The Eventzilla blog has quite a few resources and articles available to discover more sales promotion ideas. Here's just [one](#). Keeping your goals and audience in mind, use this template to plan the promotional sales tactics you think will work best for your event.

Sales Promotion Plan	Write Your Sales Promotion Here	Write Your Budget Here	Write Your CTA here	Write Your Message Here	Write Your Tactic Here	Write Your Timeline Here
Example	Early Bird Ticket Sale	n/a	Purchase Early Bird tickets	This is huge! Don't miss out!	50% off full ticket price	1/1/19-6/1/19


Direct Marketing

The dictionary defines direct marketing as “the business of selling products or services directly to the public, e.g. by mail order or telephone selling, rather than through retailers.” What this definition doesn't explicitly say, but should, is that direct marketing is very




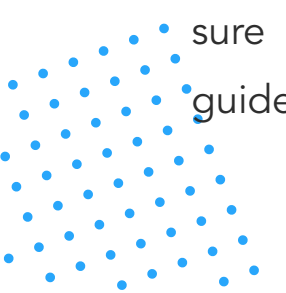
targeted. Instead of mass marketing where brands send a general marketing message to the masses, direct marketing sends targeted marketing messages to a specific audience.

In the event world, direct marketing could include:

- 
- › Direct mail
 - › E-mail
 - › SMS (texting)
 - › App push notifications
 - › Telemarketing
 - › Online event calendars
 - › The actual event

According to Statista, email marketing is the most effective marketing channel for promoting events. 33% of event marketers choose email over social media, direct mail, and print or online advertising. Eventzilla offers an interesting [blog](#) on email subject lines that can help drive impactful conversions with your first email send. In all cases, an impactful message and a strong call-to-action are critical to success.

Online event calendars can offer free or low cost publicity for your event and target event attendees based on interest and/or location. Look for calendars that align with your event brand and appeal to your targeted audiences. Once you find relevant calendars, make sure you understand and follow their posting timeline and guidelines.



Keeping your goals and audience in mind, use this template to plan the more strategic direct marketing tactics for your event.

Direct Marketing Plan	Write Your Direct Marketing Tactic Here	Write Your Budget Here	Write Your Audience Here	Write Your CTA Here	Write Your Message Here	Write Your Timeline Here
Example	Email Drip Campaign	\$5,000	Past event attendees	Purchase Early Bird tickets	Book your early-bird tickets before they are gone	First send 1/15/19 Second send 2/1/19


Personal Selling

Personal selling is face-to-face selling. A salesperson uses his or her interpersonal skills to persuade a customer to buy a particular product. Most events do not employ a dedicated sales team to sell event tickets. If you do, lucky you! If not, there are still opportunities to deploy this promotional tactic. You just need to be creative.

According to Forrester research, 22% of all partner marketing campaigns are for live events. The right partner can help an event have a significantly larger impact on a community or a target audience than if your event was promoted without a partner. A successful partnership to share new research and knowledge, increase brand awareness, and build relationships within a community or an industry. They can also drive attendance for your event. These partners sell tickets for you.


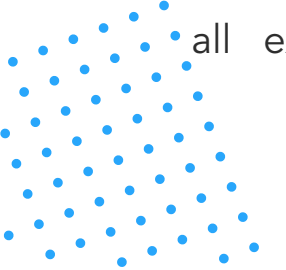


Influencer marketing has become big business. A brand makes about \$6.50 for every \$1 spent on influencer marketing, according to a poll of marketing professionals. Today, about 56% of companies use influencers to drive sales. Savvy event planners are starting to brainstorm how influencers can help sell tickets to events. Are you on board? Eventzilla published a [blog](#) to get your started.



Customer reviews are also a powerful personal selling tool. According to recent research, 91% of consumers read online reviews and 84% trust reviews as much as a personal endorsement. Savvy event planners also use reviews strategically as a promotional tactic. There are very few messages more impactful than word of mouth marketing. A positive review can convert a sale easier and more cost-effectively than any advertising campaign or PR stunt. For more information, there is a useful [article](#) on the Eventzilla blog.

In this section of your plan, outline your strategic marketing partnerships for your event. This could include partnerships with industry or community organizations, speakers, customers, or influencers. Highlight how the partner will help promote your event and make sure their efforts are integrated into the overall promotional plan. Note any plans for the partner to attend and/or present at your event and any expectations of contacting attendees after the event. Also note how you have agreed to support the partner in return for their promotional help. Make sure all expectations are clear and concise.



Personal Selling Plan	Write your partner and selling tactic here	Write Your Budget Here	Write Your Audience Here	Write Your CTA Here	Write Your Message Here	Write Your Timeline Here
Example	Country music artist/influencer campaign	\$25,000	Country music lovers and fans	Purchase music festival tickets	Come see me and win a backstage VIP pass	1/1/19 through event day

Promotional Timeline

As you build out your promotional plan, create a calendar to track efforts and analyze results. Strategically plan to launch your campaigns at the most optimal time based on the goal for each tactic. Start tracking results as soon as each promotion launches so that you can course correct if something goes awry or does exceptionally well.

As we said many times, plan each promotional campaign based on the targeted audience's needs and wants and make sure to keep your audience sales journey in mind.

Your basic calendar should include:

- > Pre-event
- > Tickets sales time period
- > Event month
- > Event day
- > Post event

Promotional Campaign Timeline	Campaign	Dates	Channel	Target KPIs	Actual KPI
Example	Email Drip Campaign First Send	1/15/19	Email	20% CTR \$1,000 ticket sales	15% CTR \$500 ticket sales

Putting it all together

Now that you've created your promotional plan, it's time to get started! All of the elements you need are laid out for you in this plan. Gather your team, review your timeline, resources and content needs and go for it! If you follow your plan and keep your ultimate goals in mind, success is within reach.

Congrats. You're now a best-in-class marketer.

Now, take it away.

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To learn more about the power of
the Eventzilla's Event Management
& Registration Platform, get in
touch with us [here](#).

Thank You

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