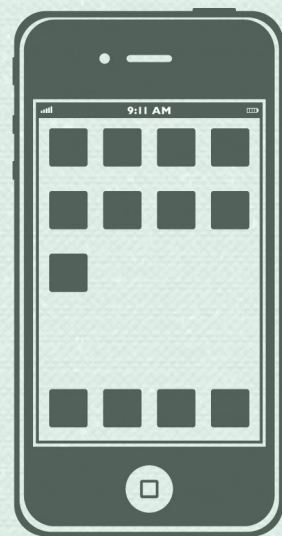


E V E N T
MARKETING
IN THE
DIGITAL AGE



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THE GUIDE TO EVENT MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Event marketing is a very effective way to promote a business or organization. Do it right and it can improve your [online branding](#), reach new audiences and build a solid public reputation. On the other hand, actually planning and pulling off a successful event can be a bit of a challenge. A marketer who fails to pay attention to detail could end up with a poor turnout and wasted efforts. The potential for disaster is what keeps some would-be promoters away from the event promotion scene.

Technological innovation has allowed us to take event marketing beyond traditional tactics such as passing out flyers to methods that are more creative and far more effective. From industry conferences and trade shows to [webinars](#) and other virtual happenings, we now have the luxury of promoting our gatherings in ways that were not available to the businesses and organizations of yesteryear. The ever evolving digital channel has opened up a world of new possibilities, and the key to success is knowing which areas to work and how to work them.

In this guide you will discover how email can be used in conjunction with other tools and channels to accelerate your event marketing efforts.

► If You Market It, They Will Come

Even some of the most experienced event marketing experts will probably agree that this isn't the easiest field to specialize in. It gets even harder when your ideal attendees are in the B2B crowd – professional men and women who want their time and presence to be justified before even considering making an appearance. So how do you get people to show up? Well, a lot of it has to do with the type of event you're hosting. But though there are several methods of cross-promotion, no matter what you have in store, [email marketing](#) can be instrumental in helping make it a success.

When it comes to taking your event marketing efforts online, email is hands down one of the best tools to lean on. In comparison to traditional methods, it is significantly cheaper and has much greater reach. Use this tool correctly and it can be effective in promoting your event from the moment you give the initial word all the way up to the day it takes place. Following are some more specific ways email marketing can aid in event promotions:



- **Custom Designs** – A custom [email template](#) can help set the tone, look, and feel for your event marketing campaign. What type of design works best? That depends on the event. For example, if music and dancing will be involved, maybe your design should portray a lively, fun atmosphere. If it is a Memorial Day initiative, perhaps a theme that reflects the season would be ideal. If the intent of your event is to raise funds, the best custom design would likely be one that puts emphasis on the cause.
- **Provide Direction** – Email simplifies many aspects traditionally associated with event marketing, providing an easy way to fill potential guests in on everything they need to know. In addition to details regarding the event, you

can send links that direct subscribers where to register, buy tickets, or learn more information. You could also include directions to the venue directly in your message. Whatever your audience needs to know, email can get it to them one way or another.

- **Educate and Engage** – Email can inform and engage in a variety of ways. You are not limited to text, as images and even video can be used to highlight the importance of attending. Want to incentivize registration? Create a special offer or discount that sweetens the deal and entices them to register. Email marketing provides an opportunity to engage far beyond the when and where of your event; tell them how to participate, tell them why it's important that they attend. Set up [autoresponders](#) for members of your subscriber list to build excitement every step of the way and keep your event at the front of their minds.

While email has a leg up on most old school tactics, it is actually the most effective at event marketing when blended with traditional methods. If you have been using direct mail to promote your events, don't abandon it. Mix it with email marketing to bolster your overall efforts. There is a bit more work involved, but integrating your event marketing strategy can help to ensure an excellent turnout.



► Building Awareness around Your Event

A lot of good things can come from bringing together a group of people with common interests and goals. It is the type of unity that can drum up support for a political candidate, drive awareness for a non-profit cause, or get people involved in a community. Hosting an event is a great way to create awareness and garner the positive publicity that helps your organization's image tremendously. All it takes is careful planning and sound execution.

► Leverage Your Web Presence

When it comes to event marketing, some steps are optional, others are absolutely mandatory. In order to connect an audience to an important event, be it in the real or virtual world, having a website of some sort is a must. If you have a website or blog for your business or organization, then it should be set up to explain what your event is all about, when and where it is taking place, and why your audience should attend.

People need to know all the pertinent details, so you must use your web properties to make the intangible tangible. Optimize your website or blog in a way that allows people to easily pass the information along to others (you can use RSS or [social sharing buttons](#)). The reach and influence of the internet means simply having a website could work wonders for building awareness around your event.

► Craft an Event Landing Page

If you are using email marketing or other online advertising techniques to drive potential guests to a destination that contains more information regarding your event, it is highly advisable to set up a custom [landing page](#) that focuses on nothing but the affair at hand. You essentially have two options here: you could create a page that resides on a subdomain of your primary domain (e.g. [youreventpage.yourwebsite.com](#)), or set up a separate page within your main website.



Either option could work but the more important task is making yourself familiar with the best practices of customizing a landing page for your event:

Create a Seamless Transition – Whether it's from an email or advertisement, the content that leads a user to learn more about your event should transition smoothly into your landing page. This means everything needs to match up. For example, if you are offering a 15% off discount to the event in your message, your

landing page must reflect the exact same cost savings. People are already suspicious enough, and failing to completely meet their expectations will only raise them.

Eliminate Distractions - One of the main reasons event marketers choose to set up a landing page on a subdomain is to eliminate distractions, which can be easily done since it is like having a separate website. By creating a page within your existing site, you run the risk of users being distracted by existing navigational elements that could potentially cause them to view other content without registering for your event. If creating a subdomain is not an option, make sure your landing page is designed with minimal distractions and keeps the user focused on the event.

Stay above the Fold – In many ways, a good landing page is similar to a good email message. You must give readers the important details as quickly as possible and this cannot happen if your main call to action is at the bottom of the page. For this reason it is best to keep your registration form and other important elements above the fold, meaning they fit within the top of the browser window and can be viewed without having to scroll.

► Market Your Event through the Social Web

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networks can help promote awareness for your event in various ways. With Facebook you have the ability to market events through a fan page, status updates, and [Facebook apps](#). Twitter gives you the opportunity to publish posts with links to your website or blog that are retweeted by influencers and shared with an even larger audience. LinkedIn allows you to advertise events on the network and lets users see which of their connections are attending.



[Social media](#) can play a huge role in making your event a success, but caution must be exercised when working this channel. People do not like to be sold to, and this is more evident than ever in the social arena. You don't want to appear as overly aggressive or too self-promotional, so highlight how your event is a part of a worthy cause and how guests will benefit from attending. While people tend to frown on pushy salesman, they often appreciate those who are sharing solid information and value with them.

► Create an Incentive Program

Offering free gifts and other incentives has become a common practice in the email marketing community. Marketers dangle these rewards to encourage new subscriptions, drive traffic, and even increase sales. Whether it's signing up for something, making a purchase, or showing up, history has taught us time and again that people are far more likely to take the actions we want them to take when immediate benefits are on the line. The offering of rewards is a way to show them that those actions are worth their time and effort.

A well designed incentive program can not only help you boost attendance for upcoming events, it also generates buzz during a get together as well. One way to do this is by dedicating a special segment of the event to those in your incentive program – the people who [clicked-through](#) to redeem the coupon codes, discounts, and exclusive offers that sealed the deal and ultimately led them to attend. This is an effective way to show appreciation to your audience and create an atmosphere that builds excitement for the next show.

► Marketing Post-Event

Although the affair is technically over once the crowd leaves and the doors close, your job as an event marketer isn't done quite yet. In fact, as soon as one event is in the books, you should be focused on putting the next one together. Here are some things you can start doing immediately:

- **Follow Up** – After months of planning and preparation, your event has come and gone. Now what? Follow up and get in touch with your guests. If you took the initiative to collect names and email addresses, make sure your followup procedure consists of getting those guests to subscribe to a [double opt-in list](#). This is the best way to keep the complaints down and ensure that you are focusing your marketing efforts in the right direction.
- **Gather Feedback** – What did attendees think of your event? Did they feel as if it was time well spent or leave feeling like something was missing? This is knowledge that only your audience has and the best way to get them to share it is to simply come out and ask. A simple [online survey](#) or poll could be all you need to find out what guests thought about the event and what they would like to see moving forward.
- **Share Your Success** – Was your event a big hit? If so, why not highlight its success in your post marketing efforts? Your monthly newsletter, website, or blog would make perfect tools for the job as they provide a way to share the photos, videos, and stories that illustrate your success. The more exciting and engaging you make this content, the better chance you will have at getting the conversation going and building momentum that carries you to the next event.

► Start Early

When promoting any event, the key to maximizing your potential for success is getting an early start. This is important for both giving potential guests enough time to prepare, and giving yourself enough time to take the efforts necessary to build awareness and increase attendance.

One of the biggest mistakes made by event marketers is failing to ramp up their promotional efforts in a timely manner. Keep yourself, your team, and your subscribers on track with regular email marketing newsletters and updates. Don't tire your audience out before the big event but find a frequency and design method that your readers will react to. Make every update count and never send to a contact unless the content will enhance their enjoyment of the event to come.



► About Benchmark Email

Take powerful features by the dozen, sophisticated list management, hundreds of email templates, ultra-precise reports and dazzling email and video email. Now, package all that together for an extremely affordable price. Sound appealing? That's us.

There's a reason – or 100 – that more than 73,000 users trust us with their email marketing campaigns. With a second-to-none feature set, headache-free tools that make every campaign a snap and extremely reasonable price plans, we're the email marketing service for businesses of all shapes and sizes. At Benchmark, we're more than email marketing experts, we're innovators. Our main aim is to perfect our email marketing service, but we also follow social networking, search engine optimization (SEO) and Web 2.0 just so our 100% Web-based software is completely compatible with the ever-changing Internet world.

No other service gives you this robust, standard range of features for just \$9.95 a month to start. Find out for yourself by enrolling in our free, 30 day trial www.benchmarkemail.com/register.

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► Contact Benchmark

We welcome your feedback and would love to talk with you about your event marketing needs. Please contact us at the addresses below.

Website: <http://www.benchmarkemail.com/>

Call: 800.430.4095

Email: sales@benchmarkemail.com