



How To Use Social Marketing To Pack Out Your Event In Advance

Your Website

The most important part of your online presence is your own website – it gives your promotions company a personality, a chance to list all your events and everything you're planning, and is likely to be the first place people look for information or tickets to your events. As such it's really important to make sure you have the right links up there for people to be able to act on.

When you list your event with your ticketing agency you should expect to receive an automatic on-sale email, which contains the event-specific URL for your event. It is important to update your website regularly and include these links, so that your customers are able to find out about the event from your site and go directly to the advance ticketing company to make their ticket purchase.

If you don't want to use the link itself on its own and would prefer to use a banner or button, you can find a range of these for each of your events in your admin area. One example, for WeGotTickets, you would simply click on 'current events' and then the 'event specific banner' icon to find these.

If you are not able to update your website each time you add an event, most ticketing companies can set you up with a 'promoter link'. You can add this link to your website, and you will find that it displays all of your events, taking place at any venue, on the one page.

Whichever link you are using, it is important to remember that it needs to be easily visible on your website, social networking sites (see below), and any other promotional materials. This is a 'call to action' for your potential customers and means they can buy their tickets at the point they hear about the event – meaning bad weather, bad moods or a change of heart on the night don't keep them away!

Social Networking

A phrase that strikes fear into the heart of many, 'social networking' isn't nearly as frightening as some people would have you believe – in fact, it's a great way of building interest in your events and gathering a database of like-minded people.

There are countless social networking sites and while it's important to keep abreast of all new sites, we're going to talk about the two most popular ones; Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook (www.facebook.com)

Facebook is the biggest social networking site in the world, with the awesome and terrifying statistic of having over 500 million users worldwide – over 50% of whom log in to the site every single day, with 150 million people accessing the site from their mobile phones.

With that kind of information in mind, it's easy to see why it's so important to use Facebook to market your events – remember, all kinds of people use the site and there's definitely a market there for any type of event you might be planning.

A relatively simple site to use, Facebook has plenty of functionality in place to help you promote your organisation and any events you're putting on.

Once you're registered as a user yourself, it's advisable to set up a 'Page' for your promotions company. Customers will be able to search for this Page, and they can 'like' (or follow) it. You will be able to broadcast your information to the people who choose to connect with you and can post links to your events on your Page, update your followers with new content, promotions and more.

You can also set up a 'Group' using the name that you promote your events under. Edit your Group page to include plenty of information about the events you run – you want to make it as interesting as possible in order to appeal to potential Group members. Once you have set this up, you can start inviting members. Invite all of your friends on Facebook to join the Group, and ask the other people who are involved with your events (including friends and family members) to invite their friends, too. The idea of “six degrees of separation” claims that everyone in the world is at most six steps away from any other person, so you'll have plenty of interested people interacting with you in no time.

In order for you to list an event on your Group page, you can use the 'create related event' option on the page. Be sure to list important information such as the venue, performers information, programme, date, along with the event-specific link to your tickets, so that your customers can click through and purchase their tickets directly. You can invite all of the members of your Group to the event.

Encourage your customers to use the Group page – ask them to leave comments or discuss the events you are putting on. When the Group page is updated, the content will be made visible in your customers' News Feeds, making it easy for them to stay up-to-date with all of the Group-related information.

Twitter (www.twitter.com)

Twitter is the best real-time tool in social media that you can use to market your event. Sending 'tweets' out to your followers is a popular way to keep everyone updated on what's happening prior to and on the day of the event itself. It's a great way of connecting like-minded individuals to your event – and with a character limit of just 140 per tweet you'll get plenty of practice at being succinct and interesting.

The first step is to create your Twitter identity, i.e. the name of your promotions company. You'll then need to connect with your customers by 'following' them. Each time you follow someone they will receive notice of this - you're alerting your customers to your presence on the site. From there, you can start to inform your network about the event by posting updates, including announcements about the performers appearing and event details etc.

You are also able to further the visibility of your event beyond your immediate network by using 'Twitter Search'. You're able to locate other people who are talking about things that are relevant to your event, such as the venue or the performers themselves. This means that if you were to find someone who was tweeting about one of the acts you are promoting you can send them a direct response and suggest that they follow you for updates. This, in turn, will alert the people who are following them to your presence.

Conveniently, you are able to link your Facebook and Twitter pages, meaning that anything you post on your Facebook page is also tweeted on your Twitter site. Easy!

Mailing list

Building up and maintaining your email mailing list is an important aspect of online marketing, and can be a great way of giving personality to your organisation and building a rapport with your existing customer base.

There are a few things to keep in mind when developing your database and sending out your mailshots.

Firstly, make sure your customers know how they can sign up to your list. This can be as simple as having a sentence on your website and social networking sites, which includes the email address that they need to contact in order to register.

The ticket companies you work with might be able to pass on some of the customer data that they have acquired for you, however they are bound by Data Protection laws and are only able to pass on the details for customers who have opted to share their data with you. It's worth contacting them to discuss this.

Once you've got your mailing list set up, one of the most important things to remember is not to 'spam' your customers. Keep a record of how many mailshots you have already sent to advertise your event and be sure not to send too many messages to the same people – they might love what you're doing but nobody wants to feel hassled, so getting the balance right is very important.

Keep your mailshot simple and to the point, remembering to list important details such as the venue, date and performer information. A couple of short paragraphs is all the text you need – it's been proven that people read differently online than they do in print, and anything over 200 or 300 words will put people off. Keep it short and sweet, and if you're including images then ensure that they are appropriately sized and relate to the text.

Legally, your customers need to have a clear way of unsubscribing, or 'opting-out', from your list. Make sure that you list a contact email address on your mailshots in order for them to be able to do this. In addition to your own mailing lists, you can look to use a ticketing agency's database where appropriate. With WeGotTickets, each event you list will benefit from inclusion in the listings section of our national mailshot, which currently goes out to around 350,000 people a week. WeGotTickets can contact all of your previous customers on your behalf, and can consider focused mailshots for events on a regional or genre specific basis.

Listings sites

It may seem obvious but advertising and listing your events in as many places as possible is only going to benefit you, both in terms of raising the profile of your event and, hopefully, in ticket sales.

The internet is full of listings sites, such as Time Out, AllGigs, and Ents24 (the biggest listings site in the UK). There are hundreds of them, both nationally and regionally, read by many thousands of people all the time, and getting your event on as many as you can ensures you have a broad reach, with the potential to be spotted by customers from different areas and backgrounds who use these sites.

To save you work listing your event on each of these sites, most ticketing agencies can help you list events. A lot of ticketing agencies have affiliations with many of the full listing and classified sites, using WeGotTickets, for example, you'll benefit from an automatic listing on around 50 affiliate sites - including all the ones mentioned earlier and many more. Each of these sites takes a 'feed' of events directly from ticketing agencies, and will include 'buy' links directly back to the ticketing company, making sure their readers can buy your tickets quickly and easily. Simple, right?

Advance Ticketing

You can now ticket any event through ticketing agencies, no matter how big, small or quirky the event may be; there are huge benefits in doing so and it couldn't be simpler to set up. The ticket agency will be as keen as you to sell your tickets and will be able to help with the

marketing effort through their national or local databases of customers and affiliations with listings sites around the UK.

WeGotTickets

WeGotTickets is the leading ticketing agency in the UK for small to medium sized venues and promoters. Working with over 4000 venues and promoters to sell over 500,000 tickets a year, the company's 10% maximum ticket commission rate has helped to lower fees across the ticketing industry.