

Complete Event Marketing Roadmap

If you have been in the event planning industry, you know that marketing your event and getting attendees to sign-up can be challenging at best. You already know that online advertising, email funnels, and social media campaigns are the driving force of ticket sales, but what would a good time-line/roadmap look like to give you the greatest possibility for success? Bottom line you need a plan... And a plan that can be followed every time you plan an event. Here is my exact marketing roadmap you can implement into your own business.

The first step in this roadmap to marketing success is creating a promotional calendar.

Promotional calendars help to make sure you are sending out the right message at the right time through the right marketing channels. Your promotional calendar will be your guide and will keep your marketing projects on task.

An easy way to start is to download a blank calendar. (this is exactly how I start each time) You will need to print your calendar for 16 weeks.

It will be well worth your time to fill out the calendar. Make sure to mark your benchmark weeks. Fill in all marketing pieces on the day that they should be distributed.

16 weeks before your event-

Long before the marketing of the event begins, there are many things that are happening. Goals and objectives are set, key stakeholders are defined, contracts are signed and venues are booked. It is important, while this stuff is happening, you are building excitement and creating buzz around your event.

On your social media outlets, post some details about your event such as location, date when the tickets will go on sale, or when registration will begin. *Another thing I utilize is any list of attendees that have been at my previous events* I call these list my “hot lists” and it is well worth your time to send an opt-in email to them so they can continue to receive updates on future events.

Behind the scenes you should be laying the groundwork for your launch. You should be making sure your speakers, sponsors and other partners are being prepped for a cross promotion strategy for your launch. Make sure your expectations are clearly stated and defined in the speaker and sponsor contracts for cross promotion strategy.

At 16 weeks the first thing you should be pushing will be an early bird discount awareness.

14 weeks before your event-

At 14 weeks your website should be live and your event now on sale. This is a good point to send out email invites to those attendees that have previously attended your event and then to any other lists that are related to people who should attend your event. *this is your data base if you have built one*****

Proceed quickly to promoting on your social media outlets and blog. Make sure to create some urgency by letting your audience know that the early bird pricing will only be available for a limited amount of time. *I don't give a date that the early bird will be ending at this point* Run this advertising for about two weeks watching and tracking the performance. You can analyze this through the amount of tickets sold, engagement on your website and other analytics if they are available to you.

Make sure you have clear and concise communication with your speakers, sponsors and partners. Let them know the tickets are on sale so they can let their audiences know as well. *In my speaker and sponsor contracts I have this well defined for them. This is where they agree to do xx amount of promos in return for some sort of feature or advertising on my end*****

10 weeks before your event-

By this point it is time to end your early bird pricing. *I do this whether the early bird tickets are sold out or not. The reason for this is, you will devalue the event if the early bird does not cut off when you say it is going to. Keep in mind you can do flash sales later down the road, they just can't be priced at the early bird price.

To demonstrate value I highlight each of my speakers and sponsors. This can feel a little tedious because it can require a lot of content building. One way to make this really effective is to get a highlight reel of each speaker (if they have them). *this is a small video usually put to music showing clips of them speaking and the audiences reaction* These are well worth getting if you can.

At 10 weeks I segment my list so I can start to target my attendees with more personalized emails. High performing segmented emails account for 58% of online business. This means that it is time well spent to analyze what campaigns are performing well with specific targeted segments.

6 weeks before your event-

With your event just around the corner, this is where you start to create urgency. Make sure your message, ads, blog post, and social media marketing let the attendees that are on the fence know time is running out and space is limited.

This is the point where retargeting is vital. *You will want to re-target the people who have started the registration process but never finished it* These people will be the most apt to attend given they have already had high interest in attending.

2 weeks before your event-

You have now entered crunch time... Usually 2 weeks is about the latest that someone can make arrangements to attend. There is a small window of a few days to do a “last call” email. Final social media and blog post should be pushed and written with an urgent call to action.

Every event is different but this is the roadmap that I use and adjust accordingly. A well plan out and thought out marketing plan can make or break your attendance at your event.