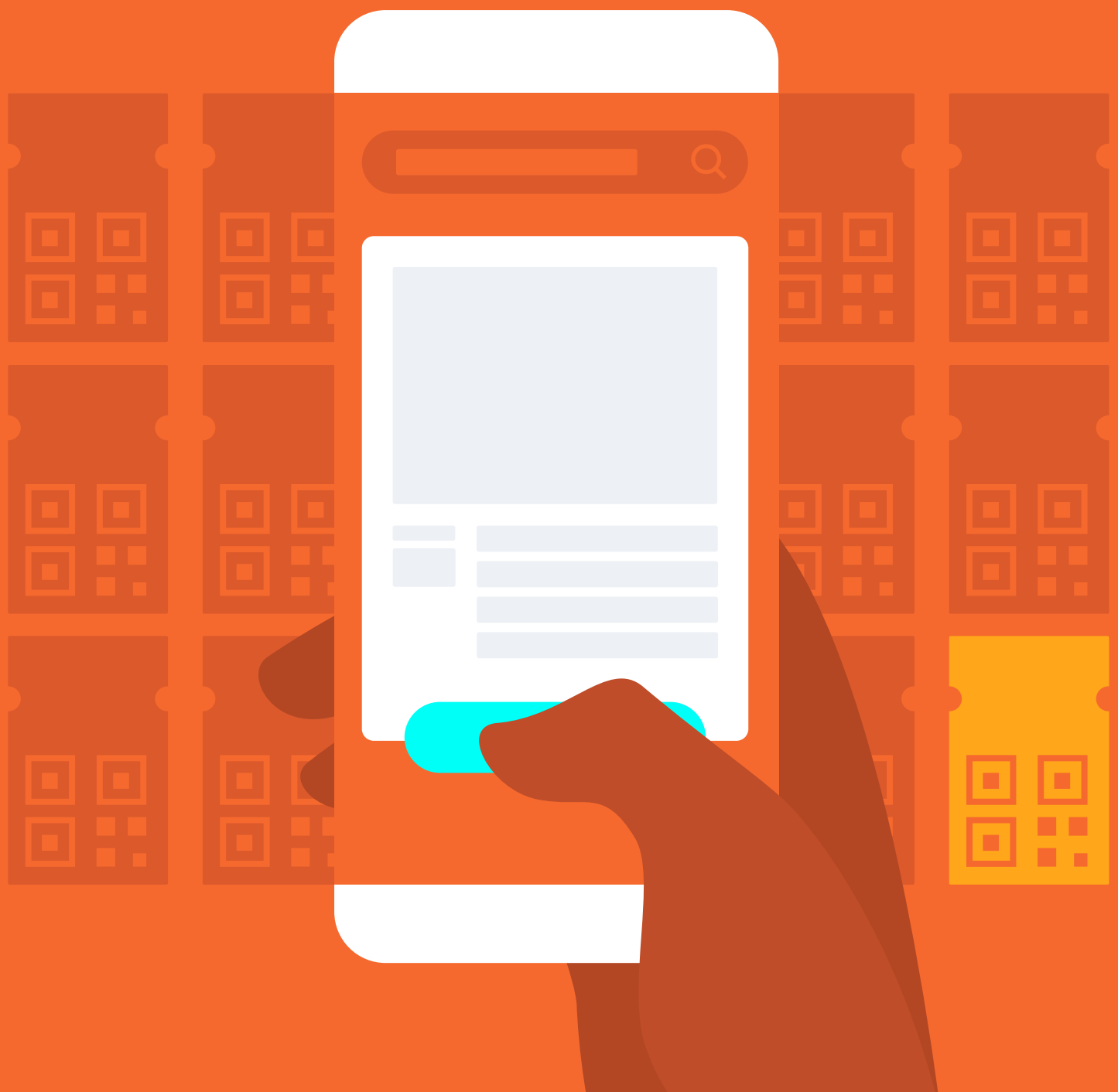


Eventbrite

From On-Sale to Sold Out:
Marketing and Promotion for Events



This guide is for big events that want to grow bigger

Whether you're hosting a conference to recruit new customers or a festival to spread awareness about your cause, people are counting on you to succeed. To alleviate the uncertainty, you need a promotion plan that encourages early interest and maintains momentum until the last ticket or registration is sold.

What you'll learn in this guide

Unlike most guides for marketing and promoting your event, this one provides a comprehensive strategy that engages your current attendees, reaches new ones, and turns interested event-goers into paid ticket holders and registrants.

You'll learn how to:

- Gain momentum early and maintain it throughout your on-sale
- Choose the right social network for your event
- Turn interested web visitors into paid attendees

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Before You Begin

As you go through this guide, keep one thing in mind: there's no such thing as a "silver bullet" marketing strategy. Your event — including your needs and resources — is unique.

Some events will need to utilise all seven of the marketing channels discussed here, yours may only need five. The goal isn't to apply the actionable advice throughout this guide and expect similar results.

In marketing, what works today might not work tomorrow. So instead, we encourage you to use this guide as a springboard. Let it inspire you to experiment and try new things. Because the other truth in marketing is: what doesn't work for someone else might work perfectly for you and your event.

Get to know your marketing channels

Below are the channels we'll discuss, their relative costs, reach, and basic target capabilities.

Marketing Channel	Cost (£-££££)	Reach*	Targeting Capabilities**
Email	££	Medium	Targeted
Paid social media	££ £	High	Targeted
Organic social media	££	Low	Broad
Paid search and display	££ ££	Medium	Targeted
Event discovery sites	£	High	Broad
Retargeting	££ ££	High	Targeted

* Reach: High = Reaches a relatively high % of UK population; Low = Reaches a relatively low % of UK population.

** Targeting Capabilities: Targeted = Channel enables marketers to target precise audiences; Broad = Channel enables marketers to target general audiences only.

6-7x

Aquiring a new attendee can cost six to seven times more than retaining an existing attendee.

On top of the channels you'll utilise to promote your event, it helps to understand that you'll be marketing to two different types of people — those who've attended past events and potentially new event-goers.

You've probably heard that it costs more to acquire a new attendee. You've probably heard that it costs more to acquire a new attendee than to retain an existing one — [about 6-7 times more](#). So when you begin promoting your event, it'll be worth capturing the interest of past attendees.

Your returning attendees aren't just a bargain, either. They enjoyed your last event and can't wait to tell their friends or colleagues. So it's important to reach out to them early and keep them engaged.

But while it's important to retain your most loyal attendees, the only way to grow your event is to help others like them discover your event.

Throughout out this guide, you'll learn how to do these things effortlessly and efficiently. And before you finish, you'll also learn how to reach out to the third type of attendee — the procrastinator.

People procrastinate for reasons beyond your control, so don't feel bad. It takes time for people to rally their friends or colleagues. Besides, you'll learn how to reach out to them with a friendly reminder and finish strong.

Let's begin, shall we?

Email

No matter what you might have heard, email is not dead. In fact, because your attendees likely provided their email address when they purchased a ticket or registered for your event, this marketing channel is perfect for engaging past attendees.

When you decide the date of your on-sale, send an email out to your list to let them know.

But before you email your entire list, you may want to consider sending targeted messages to different segments. [A recent study](#) found that marketers can improve conversion by 355% — and increase revenues by 781% — all by sending more targeted emails.

Segment your past attendees based on geography, interests, demographics, or other factors that will compel them to open your emails.

For instance, there might be a handful of loyal attendees who didn't make it to your last event.

**Targeted
Emails**

355%

Increase in conversion

781%

Increase in revenue

You wouldn't want to send them an email asking them to remember their great experience. Instead, you can send that message to people who actually attended, and send people who missed the last event an email with a subject line that reads: "Sorry we missed you."

On the eve of your on-sale, send a follow-up email to your past attendees to remind them. You might even consider different subject lines for the people who didn't open the first email.

During your on-sale, you'll need to pay close attention to how effective your emails are at sparking early interest and driving attendance. Compare your email marketing data to the benchmarks below and consider the steps provided to improve your campaigns.

How low is low?

26%

Our industry benchmark study found that event-related emails on average have a 26% open rate.

Open rate

Your open rate simply tells you how many people opened your email. A low open rate could tell you that you need to work on more compelling subject lines, or test out different name of senders (for example, sending from your first name versus your event name).

How low is low? Our industry benchmark study found that event-related emails on average have a 26% open rate.

You can improve your open rate by writing subject lines that give your attendees a reason to open. Crafting brief, ultra-specific subject lines that let your attendees know what to expect when they click to open your email. For instance, instead of announcing the on-sale of your German heritage festival with a subject line that just says "Save the Date" won't be as effective as saying "Save the Date for WOMAD UK from July 26-29."

Click-through rates

How low is low?

4.95%

If your click-through rate is above 4.95%, congrats! Your email marketing campaigns are above average.

Your click-through rate tells you if your email is doing a good job of compelling readers to take the requested action after they've opened it. Low click-through rates usually signal that recipients found your emails useless or irrelevant.

How low is low? If your click-through rate is above 4.95%, congrats! Your email marketing campaigns are above average.

If your your click-through rate is below average, make sure to segment your email list. As you learned earlier in this section, segmentation allows you to deliver relevant, customised content to your attendees. So if you're hosting a music festival with an artist whose following is concentrated in Los Angeles, you can shoot attendees in the Greater Los Angeles area to let them know about it.



PRO
TIPS

Millions of companies, businesses, and organisations around the world use email marketing platforms like [MailChimp](#) or [Emma](#) to reach their most valuable customer's inbox.

If your events are on Eventbrite, you can integrate seamlessly with these leading email marketing platforms. Sync your attendee data with these tools and you'll be able to send targeted, relevant messages that inspire your attendees to take action.

Organic Social Media

Ideally, you've already cultivated a following on social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. For good reason, too. Two-thirds of the UK are on social media, making it one of the most powerful marketing channels at your disposal.

As you did through email, let followers on social media know about your upcoming on-sale as soon as possible.

2/3

Two-thirds of the UK are on social media, making it one of the most powerful marketing channels at your disposal.



But before you spend time spreading the news on attendee's News Feeds, take a moment to make sure which social network is worth investing resources into. To do this, ask yourself two questions:

01 — Does this network make sense for the content I'm producing?

Consider the content you'll be producing and sharing. Will you be posting links to longer articles about speakers at your conference? Instagram might not make much sense, given that it's primarily used on mobile where people don't necessarily want to read longer articles (and you can't include clickable links in your captions). But if your promotion strategy is focused on pictures and videos from last year's music festival, Instagram could be the perfect fit.

02 — Do your potential attendees spend time there?

To answer the second question, you need to understand your audience. What is the average age of your attendees? Do they skew to one gender? Based on your ticket or registration price, make an educated guess about their income level.

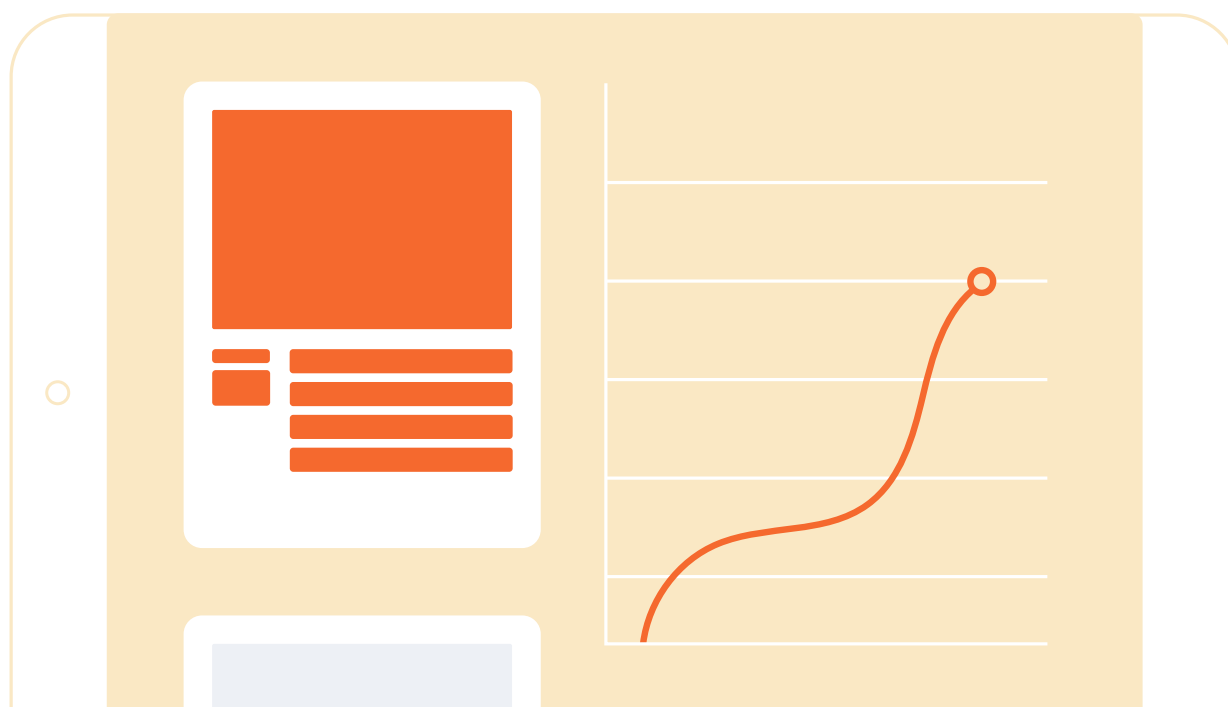
Follow the steps outlined in [this article](#) to find the answer to these questions.

Once you understand your attendees, use the Pew Research Center's analysis of each social network to identify which ones make the most sense for your event.

Social Network	Summary	Usage by gender	Usage by age	Usage by education/income
Facebook	Most widely used across the Internet	77% of women 66% of men	87% of 18-29 year olds 73% of 30-49 year olds 63% of 50-64 year olds 56% of 65+ year olds	No significant distinction
Twitter	High-income millennials, who consider themselves "information junkies"	21% of women 24% of men	37% of 18-29 year olds 25% of 30-49 year olds	30% of college grads 27% of those who make more than \$50K per year
Instagram	Educated millennials and college students	29% of women 22% of men	53% of 18-29 year olds 25% of 30-49 year olds	31% of individuals with some college education
LinkedIn	Unique among the sites as the only professional networking platform. Most popular with educated, slightly older users with a higher income in urban/suburban areas	28% of men 27% of women	23% of 18-29 year olds 31% of 30-49 year olds 30% of 50-64 year olds 21% of 65+ year olds	50% of college grads 44% of individuals who make more than \$75K
Pinterest	80% of Pinterests' users are women. Most popular among well-educated women of all ages with higher incomes; only network that skews toward rural usage.	42% of women 13% of men	34% of 18-29 year olds 28% of 30-49 year olds 27% of 50-64 year olds 17% of 65+ year olds	32% of college grads 30% of some college 34% of individuals making more than \$75K 30% of individuals making more than \$50K
Snapchat	Most popular with 18-24 year old women, often students	70% of users are women	71% of users are under 25	62% of users make less than \$50k per year

After your initial announcement and leading up to your on-sale, you'll want to post frequent reminders to build anticipation.

Throughout your on-sale, keep an eye on your web traffic and look for other social networks to pop up. As buzz builds for your event, you'll may consider allocating some resources to more channels.



**PRO
TIPS**

Managing your social media accounts is much easier with Hootsuite, the world's largest social management tool. And if your events are on Eventbrite, you can schedule posts, respond to followers, and monitor engagement across multiple networks — all from your Eventbrite dashboard.

No more jumping from your Facebook Page to your Twitter and Instagram feeds. Hootsuite offers three subscription tiers, including a free one for three or fewer social profiles, depending on your budget.

Paid Social Media

Paid social media has become necessary for serious businesses — as well as events. [Research from Ogilvy & Mather](#) indicates that even Facebook Pages with 500,000+ likes may only be able to reach 2% of their audience.

But, as you'll soon find out, the power of social media doesn't lie in its reach — but in its ability to reach the right people.

Compared to a TV spot during the X Factor final, social media is extremely precise. How precise, exactly? Instead of paying to promote your event to millions of uninterested people, you can specifically target those most likely to attend your event.

The targeting capabilities available across the major social media networks can differ. Learn about the most common ones in the table below and determine if your high performing social networks support them.

Targeting method	Summary	Supporting Social Networks
Demographics	The most basic way to target people is by their demographic (age, gender, location). If most of your attendees tend to be female, between 25 and 40 years old, and live in the Greater London, this method will show your ad to only those people who match that criteria.	Facebook Twitter Instagram LinkedIn Pinterest

Targeting method	Summary	Supporting Social Networks
Firmographics	This targeting option can be very useful for B2B and business-related events. It allows you to serve ads to people based on their company name, industry size, job title, seniority, skills, degrees, years of experience, and more.	LinkedIn
Behavior & interests	Reach people based on their purchase behaviors, device usage and other activities. You can also target people based on what they're into, like hobbies, favorite entertainment and more.	Facebook Twitter
Custom or tailored audiences	Custom audiences allow you to show hyper-targeted advertising to people whose email addresses you already have. For example, this could be really powerful for promoting your event to past attendees (particularly if they're not very responsive to email marketing). Custom audiences could also be used if you've purchased a list or have access to a partner's data and want to target them.	Facebook Twitter Instagram
Lookalike audiences	Lookalike audiences work in a similar way to custom audiences. You need to provide a list to start with (it could be the same one used for your custom audience), but Facebook then uses an algorithm to find other people who are similar to those in your list.	Twitter Pinterest

Targeting method	Summary	Supporting Social Networks
Keywords	This allows you to target specific hashtags or popular words, so your ads will only show to users talking about topics relevant to your event. Perhaps your last event successfully encouraged attendees to use an event-specific hashtag. You can choose to show an ad to those attendees that invites them to come back for more.	Twitter Pinterest

If you're still unsure which channel or targeting method to start off with, you may want to consider creating look-alike audiences. Most major social networks offer this level of targeting, which analyses the traits and characteristics of your existing attendees or followers and allows you to serve ads to them.

So for example, if you upload a list of existing attendees to Facebook, their ad platform will then help you target those most similar to people who already attend your event, which helps dramatically improve your return on investment (ROI).

As your on-sale continues, your marketing messages should focus on main benefits of attending your event. Who are the headline bands, keynote speakers, or celebrity chefs? With the targeting methods you learned in this section, you can show different ads to event-goers based on their interests.

Marketing Automation and AI

Need a little assistance with your event promotions? Instead of hiring another staff member, you might want to consider letting these tools do the heavy lifting for you.

Boostable By Dandelion

Boostable makes it easier than ever before to run sophisticated Facebook and Instagram ads custom-tailored to your event. Through your campaign dashboard and via weekly e-mail updates, you'll be able to find out how many people saw your ads and visited your event page from the ads.

ToneDen

ToneDen's self-serve platform makes it even easier to target your attendees on Facebook and Instagram.

Add your attendee data to the Audience Creator and let ToneDen's automated, self-serve platform help you and your team build and test different segments of your most valuable attendees. When you're ready, their system will create and manage your advertising campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. Once your campaigns are live, their intelligent technology works night and day optimizing your ads in real time.

Radario

Radario's marketing platform is an analytics and marketing automation extension exclusively for events on Eventbrite. Like ToneDen's Audience Creator, Radario will help you create detailed profiles of your most valuable attendees. Their machine-learning algorithm will also help you identify hidden sales patterns — all you have to do is connect your Eventbrite account and you're good to go.

Search Engine Marketing and Display Advertising

When you want to promote your event anywhere else on the web, Google AdWords is your destination. Google's advertising platform helps the world reach your most valuable customers on YouTube, Google Search, mobile apps, and over two million websites.

But before you spend a single dollar promoting your event on this platform, you should take a moment to understand how they work.

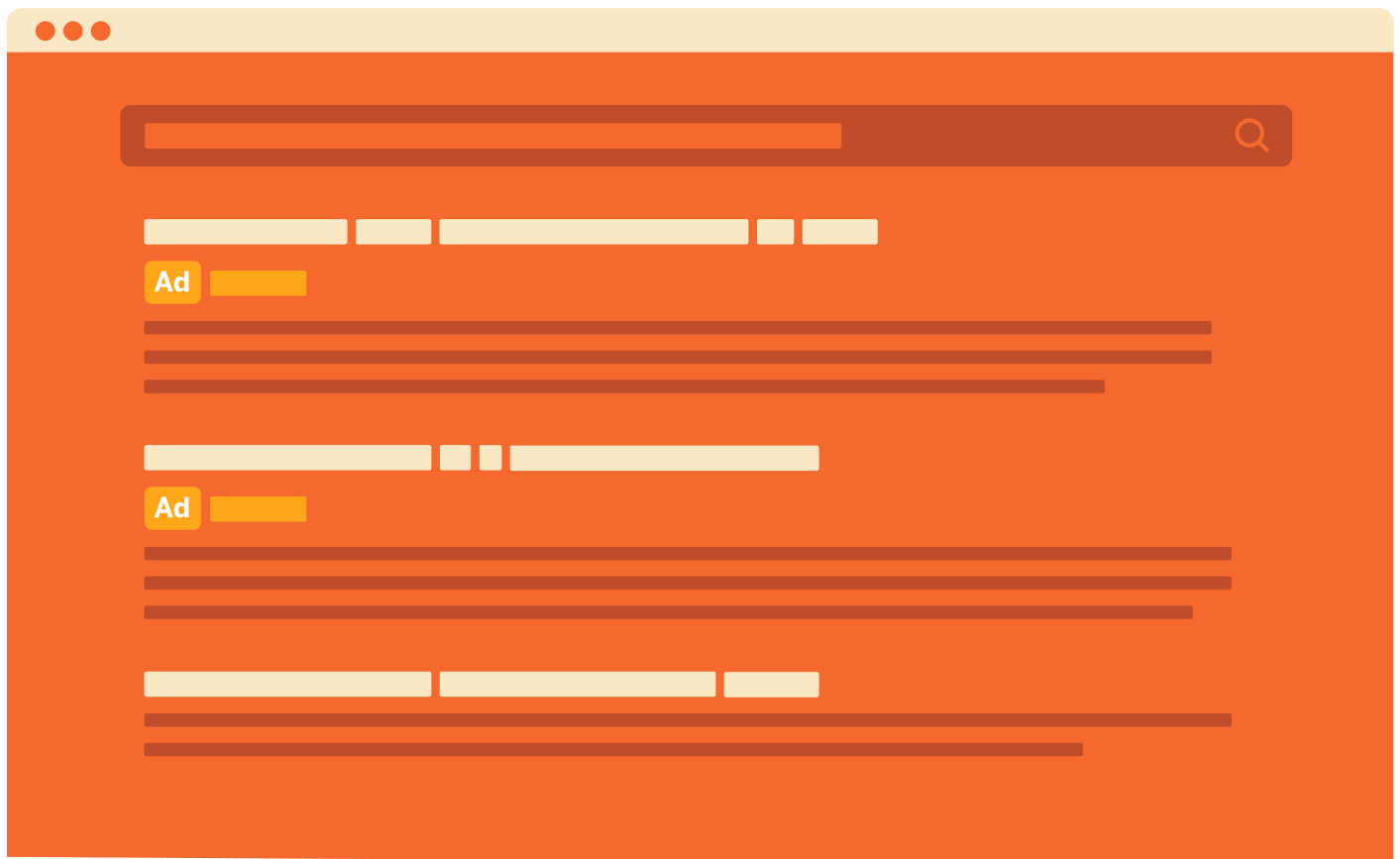
That's because the Google AdWords marketplace works like an auction — meaning you bid on how much you'll pay for clicks or impressions. But the highest bidder isn't always the winner. Instead, Google AdWords considers the quality of your ad and event landing page when deciding which ads to show, and in what order.

If you're wondering whether to run search or display ads, you might want to try both. When used in tandem, research suggests that display advertising can significantly improve your search engine marketing campaigns. [According to Harvard Business Review researchers](#), people are more likely to click on a search ad after seeing a display ad from the same company.

1. Tips for search ads

Choose good keywords: People are more likely to click on an ad that matches the words they'd use to describe your event. For instance, someone searching for “conferences for web developers” will likely click on a search ad for your web developer conference. But if you’re paying for your ad to show up when someone searches for “computer parts,” you’re wasting money.

Test variation: These text-based ads have very limited space. Headlines are limited to about 25 characters and descriptions are capped at 35 characters. That’s why it’s a good idea to write three to four different variations of your ad and test which ones perform the best. In fact, some search engine advertising programs will automatically start showing the ad that performs better.



2. Tips for display ads

Combine targeting methods: AdWords allows you to target ads by specific websites, keywords, topics, or location. Each of these methods can work well on their own, but the real power comes from combining them. Try experimenting with a variety of different combinations.

Make your ad stand out: Your ad will be competing with a lot of other information, so make sure your ad grabs the attendee's attention. Strike a balance between imagery and text. If your ad is cluttered and complex, the message will be lost. Use bold fonts and striking images to make your ad stand out.

During your on-sale, you'll want to look for these metrics in your reports to evaluate their success.

Click-through rate (CTR)

This metric defines the percentage of people who click on your ad after seeing it.

Let's say that, for every 1,000 views (or "impressions") of your ad, you get 10 clicks. That's a one percent click-through rate. [According to benchmarks](#), anything higher than one percent is considered a high CTR, and anything lower should be removed or optimised.

Conversion rate

For example, if 60 out of 1,000 people clicking on your ad became paid registrants, that's a 4% conversion rate — and a pretty good one, too!

A conversion is counted when the customer takes a specific action, such as views your event page for a certain amount of time or becomes a paid attendee.

When applied to search engine marketing, the conversion rate defines how often someone who clicks on your ad takes a specific action, such as registering for your event. For example, if 60 out of 1,000 people clicking on your ad became paid registrants, that's a 6% conversion rate — and a pretty good one, too!

Quality score

As we've already mentioned, having the highest bid doesn't necessarily guarantee your ad will appear in search results. Quality also plays a factor. Ranging from 1 to 10 (with 1 being the lowest), your ad's quality score is an estimate of how relevant your ads, keywords, and landing page are to attendees.

If your Google says your ad has a low quality score (6 or below), you should consider optimising the ad or removing it all together.



**PRO
TIPS**

Ad targeting services like Google AdWords integrate with Eventbrite and reach nearly 100% of the internet population. After setting up your tracking pixel, your ad service knows when someone visits your page and can serve them your ad once they leave. But you only pay if the person clicks on your ad and revisits your listing, so you don't waste any money on meaningless impressions.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

For most events, [search can be expected to drive between 5-10%](#) of ticket purchases or registrations. But these sales aren't automatic — it takes dedicated effort to make your event rank in Google search results.

5-10% event sales to come through search



How does SEO work? Search engine optimisation (SEO) can be a fickle beast. Reaching the top of search engine results is a lot like trying to find a light switch in the dark. Sure, the experts have done the research and run the tests, but no one outside of Google (or any other search engine) really knows what makes up their sophisticated ranking algorithm.

There are plenty of recipes for general SEO success across the web, but event organisers face a unique challenge: Your event happens at a specific time and place. To rank locally for a timely event, you need local SEO.

General SEO focuses on websites with no regional needs, like a global eCommerce company or a site that provides services that can be performed remotely.

On the other hand, local SEO emphasises an immediate neighbourhood, city, or region. For instance, a person looking for a tech conference in Brighton likely won't be interested in similar events happening in Edinburgh. So Google will filter out events happening outside the Brighton area.

To make sure your event gets found on search, consider the following tips:

Title tag

This is the text that appears in the browser tab as well as your listing when people Google you. Make sure to include your event name, a keyword, and the city if you can. For example, “Sidewalk Beats: Outdoor Music Festival in Bristol” hits all the necessary keywords that help Google know what type of event you're hosting, and when and where it will take place.

H1

This is the title that appears on the page itself (also called a headline). If you think of the title tag as the title of the book, the H1 would be the title of a chapter within that book. Make sure you use your event name again and possibly another keyword.

Location information

You should always include the address of your event on your pages, but embedding a Google map of your event location will help Google understand that it's local.



**PRO
TIPS**

When your events are on Eventbrite, your listings are already optimised for search engines. When you publish a public event, your event will inherit some authority from us. Eventbrite is one of Google's top 100 most trusted sites — the only ticketing or registration page with a high enough domain authority to rank alongside sites like The Telegraph.

Event Discovery Sites

64%

of urban event-goers turn to neighborhood guides to find things to do.

Targeted event ads may help you reach more people, but the people most likely to attend your event are already looking for something to do. If you help them discover your event on sites they know and trust, they'll be more comfortable purchasing a ticket or registration.

So how do you make sure they find your event? Most event-goers have go-to event discovery websites they rely on to make plans. [In a survey of 3,000 urban event-goers](#), well over half (64%) said they look to neighborhood guides when searching for things to do.

Event-goers also turn to more targeted sites like [Ents24](#) and [The List](#) to discover events. Posting your event on top discovery sites can drastically increase your reach and sales.

Here's a breakdown of the most popular event discovery websites and why they're important:

facebook

Marketing your event on Facebook is one of the most effective ways to get the word out and drive ticket sales — especially among impulse buyers who decide to join friends for a night out. In fact, Eventbrite organisers sell 10-20% of their tickets on average through social media, primarily driven through Facebook. No surprises there, since 550M people use Facebook Events every month — that's nearly half of all Facebook users.



Spotify's Concerts feature lets listeners know when their favourite artists are coming to town through in-app notifications and email alerts. They also recommend shows based on fans' listening behavior on the Concerts tab and artist pages, so you reach the people most likely to buy tickets to your shows.



If you run a music venue or music festival, you already know that Bandsintown is where more than 30 million registered fans hunt for shows and tickets — especially on their phones. And since Bandsintown makes event recommendations based on a fans' taste in music (imported from Spotify, Apple Music, or Soundcloud), you know your shows will reach the fans most likely to buy tickets. In fact, over 50% of our concert-goers frequently go to see artists they had never heard of before they discovered them on Bandsintown.



Songkick allows music fans to organise and track their favourite bands, get concert alerts, and buy tickets.



Using Eventbrite for your ticketing and registration? Save yourself a step! Integrate or automate your event with event discovery platforms like Facebook Official Events, bandsintown, and many more on [Eventbrite Spectrum](#).

Just look for the Extensions section in the left hand menu of your event dashboard under the Manage tab. From there, you're just a few clicks away from helping more valuable attendees discover — and attend — your event.

Retargeting

What happens when an interested event-goer lands on your event page but never finishes buying a ticket or registering for your event? Maybe they received a phone call or email and , completely forgot about your event. Wouldn't it be nice if you could give them a friendly reminder about your event?



10x

One California music festival event reached 10x ROI on their ad spend.

You can use retargeting to do exactly that: display ads to people who've visited your event page but didn't hit "buy."

With retargeting, you can turn more event page visits into ticket sales — to the tune of 6x average ROI. Advertising to "lookalike" audiences on Facebook and Twitter (users with similar interests, location, and demographics of your followers) also performed well across the board.

Keep in mind that the goal of your ad is to drive visitor back to your site, and get them complete their purchase. The creative direction of your ad should reflect that goal.

You're showing ads to people who already know about your event — they've been to your event page — so there's no need to beat around the bush in your copy or creative. Don't be afraid to create urgency by telling them when sales for tickets or registrations end.

For more on Facebook advertising, download our definitive guide on [How to Master Facebook Advertising and Sell More Tickets](#).

Finish Strong

No matter how amazing your promotion strategy, there's one, often overlooked aspect of the event on-sale: your checkout process.

Removing the barriers to purchase will help a higher percentage of interested visitors become attendees. Making it easy for your attendees to buy is how you work smarter, not harder. Not only will it help you sell more without spending more, it can be more effective than promoting to a larger, less interested audience.

[Some of these hurdles](#) you're already familiar with: additional steps in the checkout process that cause 10% of people to quit; a required login that causes 23% of shoppers not to buy; hidden fees that dissuade customers at the last minute.



0.7%

The average retargeting ad has a 0.7% click-through rate.

If you focus on turning a larger percentage of your visitors into paid attendees, you'll improve your profits.

Let's say you decide to invest in retargeting ads. The average retargeting ad has a 0.7% click-through rate (the percentage of people who see the ad and then click through to your website). Out of those who clicked on your ad, let's say a quarter bought a ticket (an above-average rate). That means that even if you paid to surface your ad to 20,000 people, you'd only sell an extra 35 tickets.

Instead of spending the time and money to design and display the ad, consider what could have happened had you focused instead on converting your existing visitors. By making it easier to buy tickets on your site, let's say you could increase the percentage of page viewers who buy tickets by 50.

Use this checklist to make sure your ticketing and registration purchase process isn't hurting your bottom line.

- ☐ — No more than three to four steps for even the most complicated events (some outdated ticketing providers have up to ten!)
- ☐ — A “Buy Tickets” or “Register” button clearly visible at all times as people scroll
- ☐ — The entire checkout experience on just one page
- ☐ — Fees visible upfront, so potential attendees know exactly what to expect
- ☐ — No required login
- ☐ — The option to store credit card information to reduce steps to buy even further



PRO
TIPS

If you're using Eventbrite, there's no need to worry about your purchase process — all these boxes are checked. If you want to find out more about how to convert more website visitors into attendees, check out [this guide](#).

The takeaway

Millions of tickets are sold in the UK each year. And as more Brits opt for experiences over things, your event has an opportunity to grow along with this trend. Use the framework provided in this guide — as well as the in-depth guides recommended throughout — and you can create a blueprint for successfully selling out your event.

But realise one important fact: this is just a starting point.

As you know, your event — including your needs and resources — is unique. Test your assumptions during the first few weeks of promotion to determine which are truly the most effective at driving traffic and sales.

At Eventbrite, we help hundreds of thousands of event organisers reach nearly 50 million active ticket buyers. Reach out to an event expert on 0800 652 4993 or contact us [here](#) if you want more tips for mastering your on-sale.

Eventbrite

Powering more than two million events each year.

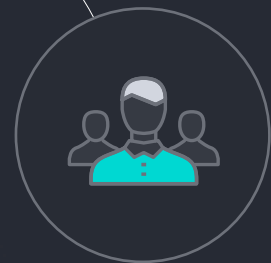
Eventbrite is the world's leading event technology platform. Hundreds of thousands of organisers use Eventbrite to boost ticket sales, promote and manage events, handle on-site operations, and analyse results across multiple sales channels.



Grow your event
Sell more tickets
to Eventbrite's nearly
50 million active
ticket buyers.



Simplify your planning
Promote, manage,
and analyse your event
from any device.



Impress your attendees
Delight with ease of
purchase, convenient
ticket access,
and speedier entry.

[Talk to an event expert](#)

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