

Marketing Your Event Online

A comprehensive guide to promoting your event online, from creating content through to planning what to post and when

What is this guide and how is it going to help you?

When it comes to events, promoting them online is a total no brainer. You can make sure that so many more people know about your event and spread the word far and wide. But the gap between knowing that you can do this, and actually getting it done and making sure that your event is getting the coverage it deserves can feel pretty wide sometimes.

That's where I come in. I'm a Creative Director, specialising in podcast production and online content creation. I've been working in online marketing for almost 15 years now, from creating online communities to blogging to viral video content. I've been there, done it, got the jaded social media scars. And I've created this guide so you can get straight to promoting your event and making it a success without having to worry about any of that.

So join me, right here, and let me break down exactly how to promote your event. From knowing what content to create, to bringing that content to life, to promoting it consistently in the run up to the big day, this guide is going to go through it all, step by step, to get you sorted.

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Overview - let's get strategic before we get stuck in

When it comes to promoting an event, it might seem a little bit too much to get strategic about how you are going to do it. I mean, it's an event, it will happen on a certain day, at a certain time and there's kind of no stopping that. So why would you need to take a bigger picture view of that?

Well, I think that's what makes the difference when it comes to creating content for online audiences. Anyone can create content, but the content really engages is made with a goal and an audience in mind. The content that you see online that makes you want to take action, not just the ones that look pretty and have the 'scenic' music behind them, those ones are created with specific goals in mind. They create feelings, get likes, comments and shares and ultimately will sell tickets.

And if you're a small local business, organisation or charity, it's easy to think that things like strategy 'aren't for you', that they're for big organisations who take time to make a 20 slide deck detailing their exact strategy, goals, ROI, CTAs, engagement rates and all the other stats and acronyms.

I'd argue that even large corporations don't need a 20 slide presentation for their strategy, and you definitely don't either. But strategy doesn't have to be a big deliverable. It can be just some time you take before you get started to really focus on what you're doing, why and who it's for. That is what is going to make the difference when you come to promote your event.

It's always worth taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture first.

Action - Take some time to consider these questions:

- What is the goal of your event? *E.g. Tickets sales, brand awareness, taster session etc.*
- Why have you created this event? *E.g. Tickets sales for your venue, part of your business, show people what your organisation does, taster session for a bigger launch or product*
- Who is going to come along? *E.g. Who has been before? Who do you want to come along?*

This is your strategy, this is what you are going to refer back to when you create content and talk about your event. If it's a page of notes, great, if you want to formalise it and send it around to those helping you organise it, also great, but it doesn't have to be bigger than that if you don't need it to be.

How are you going to use your strategy?

As I just said, you're going to use this whenever you're creating content or promoting your event from now on.

Step One: Content Ideas

So now you've got your strategy in place, we're going to start collecting some content ideas. A list of the content you already have, and what you might want to create in order to promote your event.

At this point I'm sure you're thinking, well I was going to create a poster / post that gives all the info, what more do I need? OK, let's start with that, and work from there.

So your basic post is going to include all the details for the event. It's actually a great idea to think of it as the poster for your event, and you could use the same design for this post, the poster, and any other materials / flyers you create.

Action - Get really clear on the basic details for your event

- When
- Where
- Ticket Info - cost, how to buy (URL or QR code)
- What is happening - i.e. timings

And note that all down. This is just content ideas, so we'll come to creating the content in the next section.

And let's expand that section, make sure you also note down everything someone is going to need to know to come to the event

- Venue information - *parking, accessibility*
- Timings - *Are there different sections to the day? Different times for different people? How do people know which bit of the event they should come to?*
- Ticket Types - *Are there VIP tickets? Is there a seating chart? Are there early bird prices? What do people need to know to choose the right ticket for them?*
- Who should come? *Think about your audience, who is this event perfect for and why? E.g. Only metalheads need apply!*
- Who else will be there? *Is this an event with vendors? Who will they be? Is it a music event? Who is playing? Are celebrities coming? Is it a kids event with mascots coming? Note down anything that is happening that will be enticing to people who want to come.*

Think about all the questions that people ask you about the event and write them all down - e.g. can children attend?

Setting the vibes for your event

OK, so we've captured the basics, you've got your list of those. Let's get around to the fun part. Let's capture some ideas around the event that are going to show off what you're all about and why is going to be such a good time.

Think about that audience that you were making notes about earlier, what are they going to be excited about when it comes to your event? What else do you want people to know?

Action - capture ideas about everything that is going on around your event

Did you do this event last year? Have you got content from this that you can share to get people excited about this year?

What is different about the event this year? Bigger, better, more local, you've listened and there's more parking?

Venue - as well as practical stuff (you've put that in the list above) you can also share info about the venue, why did you choose it? What's great about it? History etc.

Who else needs to be involved? Do you want community groups to join in? Do you want stallholders? How can people help you spread the word? How can you create a community around your event so everyone is excited to share it?

If you've got feedback about the event from a previous event, then you can create that into more content. Find comments, feedback, testimonials, reviews from previous events and collect those.

Think about whether you can ask people for feedback now that you can use to promote it? Reach out to people who came last year, you can tell them about this year's event and also ask them what they loved about last year!

Action - Get people excited

Can you share set up, when the flyers arrive, goodie bags arriving etc.

What is happening in the run up that people will want to know about? Anything that feels like admin or something pretty dull is totally new and exciting to those that are getting excited for your event so write down all the steps that are happening and how you might be able to use those as content ideas.

Content Creation

OK, so let's get to the good bit, right? Let's create some content that you can actually start to share.

And as with the content ideas that we created, let's start with our poster / post that is going to be the most basic version of your event, ready for people to share online.

Think of it as a poster, and create something that is clear, easy to read, has the basic details on it, and shows people how to find out more.

If you haven't already used Canva, then I'd highly recommend that you take a look at this. It's simple, easy to use and contains plenty of free templates and options to create something that will look great and really show off your event.

Action - top tips to make sure your Canva posts don't look like everyone else's

- If you do choose a template, look at the colours / fonts that it uses and change those to suit the look and feel of your own business or organisation
- Upload your images to use in your posts / poster, don't use generic ones
- Search for the types of post you want to make - e.g. Instagram Feed Post - and use the correct size for each social media platform so that it will display correctly. Don't just make one size and post it everywhere, it's worth taking some time to make sure it displays right on each platform

Take a look at the longer list of content ideas that you had around your event with all the practical information on it.

Action - create further posts using the same template that give more information about the event

- Use the same Canva template / colours / fonts to create more posts. You are starting to create a look and feel for your event so everyone will know when they've found a post about it.
- Break down the information into small chunks - e.g. parking, accessibility, each question people might ask - and make new post for each of these
- You can use these as a carousel post, so put in an arrow on each one so people know they need to keep swiping through the photos for more info

With the next list that you created you're going to want to create different content. We looked at all the information that people need to know about the event. Now we're creating vibes!

Create content around your event to tell a story - Why have you created this event? What can people expect? Why should they come? What are the personal stories behind you organising this, the people who come along, the vendors and other suppliers you use?

This makes great short video content, think reels and TikToks that show off your venue, interview your acts, unbox your new materials and flyers, voiceovers that give people a guided tour or tell the stories from last year's event.

Look at trending content, is there a way you can create something that ties into this that is also about your event? POV (point of view) videos are great here. Show something about the event and add captions like 'POV: When your favourite summer event is back in just four weeks!' etc.

Action - Get everyone involved

Make sure that your content looks great and is easy to share.

- As already mentioned, make sure posts are the right size for each platform so it's easy to share and looks good on other people's profiles
- Tell people to share it - *Tag a friend who you want to go with! Buy your ticket and share the post so everyone knows you're coming! People want to be part of something, tell them to share so that even more people can enjoy this great event.*
- Reach out to your vendors, suppliers, past attendees, anyone that has had a part in the event and ask them explicitly to share your content. *E.g. You could add it to your emails when you send out information for stallholders, they will want as many people to come as possible so they will be open to promoting it, especially when you've given them such great resources to share!*

Content Planning and Posting

OK, we're on the home stretch! You've thought about your event strategically, created a list of content ideas, created some great content to promote it, and now we're going to create a plan to share that content far and wide.

Again, this doesn't have to be a complicated calendar with something in every day from now until the event. It can be a quick list of the weeks you've got between now and the event and some notes around what is going to go out each week.

You don't have to have all the content created before you start posting, you can also stagger this over the weeks so you have your basic posts and some other content in place when you start and then keep creating more content as you go along.

First up, let's get that one basic post out there in the world, and make sure that your profiles are set up so people can find the info they need to book tickets and contact you about the event.

Action - getting yourself set up for posting success

Get your basic post out there in the world.

- Post the version that you've made for each platform - in the correct size - posted.
- Pin it to the top of your profile wherever you can so when people come through to your profile to find out more it's right there for them to know they've got the right place and it gives them all the info they need

Look at your profile and make sure people can find out about the event when they come to your profile

- As mentioned above - pin the post to your profile where you can
- Put the ticket link in your profile or on your link page that is linked from your profile
- Remember - on some platforms like Instagram URLs in your captions aren't clickable, so don't put them there, put a call to action (CTA) to tell people where to go to find the link - e.g. Link in bio!

Right, with that sorted, let's take a look at how to schedule in the rest of the content you've created.

Action - Create a content schedule from these questions

When is the event?

How long have you got to promote it?

Work back from there and think about what people need to know - week by week - from right now to when the event is happening

Where are you sharing content?

What channels do you currently use? Where are you going to share content? Make sure that you are sharing in the right way for each platform - i.e. Insta links in bio, FB links in posts

How often can you share content?

It's better to do one update a week and stick to it consistently in the run up to the event, rather than think you'll do 3x per week and give up after the first week.

Who can help you share content?

Whenever you're sharing a post, think about who is involved in that part of the event and tag them where you can.

Encourage people who have bought tickets to share - can you put a note in your ticket email that tells them that you'd love it if they shared that they are attending?

Which suppliers / stallholders / other stakeholders do you have that you can tag, and / or contact outside of socials and ask to spread the word? Everyone loves to feel special and like they're being handpicked to help out, so drop them an email and ask them to be part of it!

Action - Get involved in your local community

What other local accounts / local groups / local noticeboards can you share your event with?

Have a look online and find other accounts local to you that might be able to promote your event.

This could be Facebook groups for the venue, the place where your event is being held, the town you're in.

You can write a short press release and send it to the local paper. So many have an online form where you can submit details about things that are happening locally and they often share them, especially if your event has a great story behind it!

If you're local to Leighton Buzzard, then definitely tag me!

If you've downloaded this guide because you're local to Leighton Buzzard and found it (and me!) through Leighton Buzzard Local then please tag me in your posts.

I share a weekly events update on my Instagram account, and one of the reasons that I wrote this guide is that there are so many events locally that I find it hard to share because it's actually difficult to work out what they're all about, or what is going on.

When you've created your amazing content, using this guide, tag me and I'll make sure it gets into the round up and on my stories as part of my shout outs, to make sure that you're getting as many local people seeing it as possible.

And if you're not local to Leighton Buzzard, then why not find the local equivalent of my account for your town? Just search for the name of your town and there is bound to be several accounts where someone is building a local audience who'd love to know more about what you're organising.

Round Up!

That's it! I hope you've found this guide helpful and it's given you some great ideas for how to promote your upcoming event.

Leighton Buzzard Local

There is a lot in this guide, and I know that sometimes it can feel overwhelming, but if you break it down into small chunks and keep working on it over time, you'll see that you're posting about and promoting your event loads in the run up to the big day.

As well as this guide, I do regular workshops and meet ups for people who are creating community in Leighton Buzzard whether through their small business, community group or charity. Find out more about what I've got coming up and subscribe to be the first to know about new workshop dates here:

<https://leightonbuzzardlocal.co.uk/leighton-buzzard-local-content-club>