



# Planning a Successful Event Campaign

15 essential best practices for making your event a success



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# 15 Best Practices for Successful Events

Events are a great way to deepen relationships with current customers and can help you attract new customers as well. When done right, events are also one of the best ways to get people to take the next step from interacting with you on Facebook or reading your newsletters, to actually visiting your store, restaurant, or office.

But successful events don't just happen over night. To create a successful event campaign, you need to come up with a strategy that incorporates your different marketing channels — like email, social media, mobile and web — so that you can promote your event, reach the right audience, and drive meaningful business results.

**We've assembled 15 best practices for successful events. Put them to work at your next event and it's sure to be a success!**

## 1. Set a date that works for your audience.

As you look at the calendar to figure out a date and time for your event, consider who you will be inviting and what time might work best for them. For example, holding an event for working mothers and scheduling it between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., might make it difficult to reach them.

Consider conducting a pre-event poll or survey to determine your audience's interest in your event and their availability. Then you can determine when the best day and time to host your event would be.

## 2. Have a clear goal for the event.

Think about what you want to get out of it and, just as importantly, what you hope your attendees will get out of it by being there. For example, the goal of a retail store's open house may be to increase foot traffic to the location. But what does the customer get out of it? Make sure to offer them an incentive to come, such as discounts, door prizes, or giveaways — in addition to the affordable merchandise, of course.

## 3. Send a "Save the Date" announcement.

You might not have all the specifics of the event set, but once the date and time are nailed down, let people know about them.

This is particularly important if your event falls during a competitive time of year, like major holidays.

## 4. Send a personalized invitation.

It's a good feeling when you're invited to a "special event." Take the proactive approach in attracting potential attendees by sending them a personal email invitation.

Make your customers feel wanted by sending them a finely crafted message that refers to them by name, not just by an email address. Dave Smith will feel more of a personal connection from a "Dear Dave" invite than a "Dear dsmith@mail.com" or a generic "Hi there" salutation.



*REMEMBER, nearly half of all emails are opened on a mobile device. Today, mobile is one of the important channels you have for communicating with your audience online. Make sure you're considering your mobile readers when designing your event announcements.*



### 5. Get the details of the event out quickly.

Invitees should be given a brief description of the event and its purpose, along with the date and time. Make sure to give them a reason to attend: “Help raise money for an important cause while enjoying fine local cuisine,” for example.

The goal of the concise and compelling *What*, *Where*, *When*, and *Why* information is to make it as easy as possible for the invitee to say, “Yes, I want to (and can) attend this event.” Ensure that your call-to-action — “Sign up for our event now” — is well placed. That is what will drive people straight to your registration page once they’ve made up their mind to attend.

### 6. Make an impact with your subject line.

Email is one of the most important channels you have for promoting your event. But if you want your announcements, invitations, and reminders to get noticed, you need to create a subject line that will catch their attention.

Think about the type of subject line that would catch your

audience’s attention and get them to open. If there is limited seating, or an approaching deadline to register, make sure to highlight all details people need to know to take action.

### 7. Use an event page to keep people informed and up-to-date.

When promoting your campaign through all these different channels, it’s important to have a central landing page to link to, so people can find the most accurate and up-to-date information and details about your event.

Make sure the date, time, location, and directions are included, as well as any other pertinent information, such as dress code and methods of payments accepted.

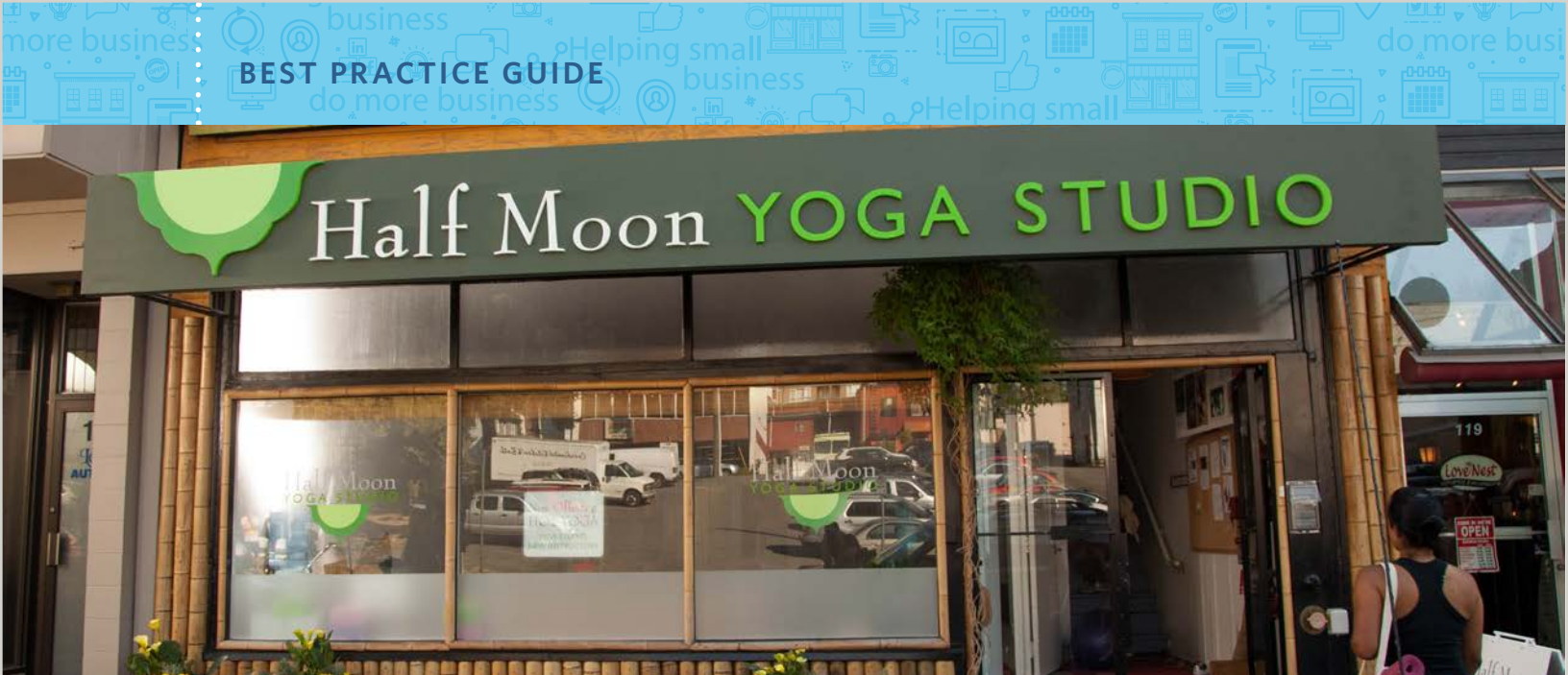
### 8. Give people the option to join your list.

By giving people the option to join your list, you’ll be able to stay connected and keep the conversation going long after your event is over.

Tell them that in addition to hosting great events, you also have a regular newsletter.



*LOOK AT YOUR EMAIL REPORTS when coming up with subject lines for event announcements. You can learn a lot about which subject lines your audience responds to by looking at your open-rates.*



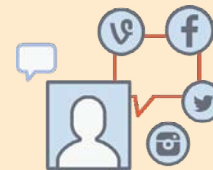
### 9. Use social media to promote your event.

No matter what kind of event you're hosting, posting regularly on your Facebook page, in your Twitter feed, or on another social media site will help to build interest about the event. Announce a new speaker or any changes to your program through social media. Put the spotlight on a new sponsor who will be offering discounted offerings during the event, start a count down, and, give updates about how many people have signed up to attend or how much money has already been raised. The more you share, the more excited people will be to attend.

Promoting your event on social media also spreads the word beyond those who have already been invited. This can increase your attendance and get even more people interested in your campaign.

### 10. Remind people about your event.

The "Save the Date" email has been sent, the invite is out, and attendees are signed up for your event. Don't stop there. Put reminders and links to your event web page in your regular email newsletter. This serves two purposes: It reminds signed-up attendees of the date, keeping it top-of-mind while building anticipation, and serves as an advertisement for those who have not already registered.



*USE AN EVENT HASHTAG to start a conversation before, during, and after your event (i.e., a quick phrase preceded by the pound sign — such as #yogatuesday).*

### 11. Send timely follow-up communications.

Your campaign doesn't end, when the event is over.

Make sure to send out a post-event communication to both attendees and no-shows.

You can thank those who made it to the event and provide any additional follow-up information, such as links to relevant presentations and photos of the event. You can also include a link to a post-event survey so you can get feedback on how successful it was for attendees.

For those who missed the event, say you're sorry they couldn't make it and include similar follow-up information, like presentation links and photos.





## 12. Collect feedback.

As part of your post-event follow-up, include a link to a short survey to gauge attendees' thoughts. Keep the survey short with questions relevant to the objectives of the event and its success.

Make sure to have at least one open-ended text box that allows attendees to express all their opinions without having to conform to a few checkboxes. Verbatim answers can provide some of the best material for measuring success and gathering constructive criticism. The ultimate goal is to figure out what worked well and what can be done better to make the next event much more rewarding for both you and your audience.

## 13. Act on the feedback you receive.

Use negative feedback to improve future events. Addressing potential problems will help you improve relationships with the people who matter most to your organization.

Remember, happy attendees tell a few people about their experience. Unhappy attendees tell a lot more people about their dissatisfaction.

## 14. Share event highlights in your newsletter.

Photos, links, and even quotes from your follow-up survey will help set expectations and build buzz for the next event. People will be warmly reminded of the great time

they had, and those who couldn't make the event will see what they missed, hopefully making them more likely to attend a future event.

## 15. Update your event page.

The event web page lives for 30 days after your event ends. Use it to its full potential by adding links to presentations and other information for those attendees that keep visiting the site.

This is also a great place to add a link to the next event's page, if available. Attendees who missed the first event will be happy to see there's another upcoming opportunity.



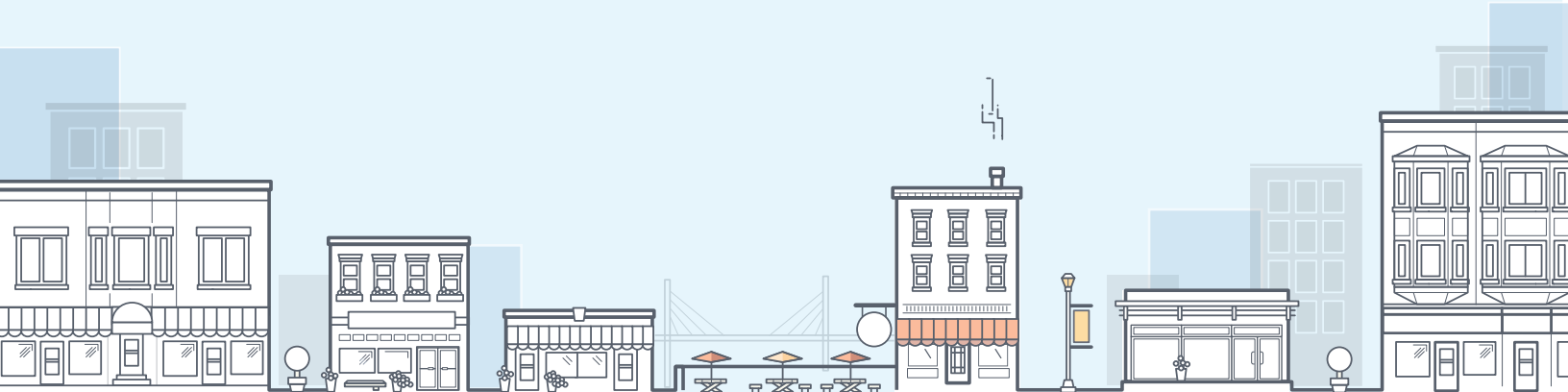
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