

Stage 1: Identify Your Event Voice And Marketing Message

Annual event: Recommended start 10-12 months before the event

One-time medium or small event: 6 months before the event

- Identify your event goals and create an overarching message (like a mission statement for the event) that excites, explains, and demonstrates potential impact.
- Identify the event name, theme, colors, logo, and tagline, as applicable.
- Finalize your sponsorship/exhibitor/vendor packages and partnership details.

Stage 2: Establish A Presence

Annual event: Recommended start 8-10 months before the event

One-time medium or small event: 4 months before the event

Once these guiding elements have been confirmed, create the online presence for the event where interested parties can get more information. Even if all the actual event details/agenda/sponsors aren't finalized, people will need a place to go to get the latest info. A simple "save the date" message is great to start.

- Update main website.
- Create or update landing page, as needed (ensure all links work, payment options are set up, URLs redirect as needed, and/or the page has been tested to verify everything works correctly).
- Create separate registration page, if needed (this may be incorporated into the landing page or be a separate space, like Eventbrite).
- Distribute "save the date" messaging:
 - Social media posts
 - Website
 - All regular activities (ex: mention the upcoming event at the end of internal meetings, client webinars, existing marketing communications, and other events)
 - Emails
 - Printed materials

Stage 3: Start The Buzz + Gain Sponsorships/Partnerships

Annual event: Recommended Start 6-8 months before event

One-time medium or small event: 3 months before the event

Create ongoing content to draw engagement from partners. This is the time to build the financial and functional base of your event. Every post, email, or verbal communication should include relevant calls to action, like:

- Sponsoring the event
- Partnering or how vendors can participate
- Exhibitor booth information

Stage 3: Continued

Communication channels can include:

- Social media posts (at least weekly)
- Website
- All regular activities (ex: mention the upcoming event at the end of internal meetings, client webinars, existing marketing communications, and other events)
- Emails (weekly)
- Printed materials

Pro Tip

Keep in mind where these target audiences live. If most of your desired sponsors are other active businesses on LinkedIn, it makes more sense to focus more of your attention and resources on marketing your sponsorship activities on that platform, and maybe skipping YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Learn about WHO you're targeting and WHERE they are to most efficiently convey your message.

Pro Tip

While it's ideal to use as many marketing channels as possible, you also don't want to overextend yourself and leave potential participants hanging when you can't keep up with updates or posts. Only pick the channels that will have the biggest impact and you know your marketing team can keep up with.

Stage 4: Peak Of Promotions

Annual event: Recommended Start 4-6 months before event
One-time medium or small event: 1-2 months before the event

Communication channels can include:

- Social media posts (2-4 times/week)
- Website
- All regular activities (ex: mention the upcoming event at the end of internal meetings, client webinars, existing marketing communications, and other events)
- Emails (weekly)
- Printed materials

This is when you're most heavily promoting the event, encouraging registration, and building event details. Communications should include calls to action like registration and sponsorship, but you also want to build excitement for the event and share new details. Whenever something is finalized, share it! You can communicate:

- Venue details/amenities/benefits
- Keynote speakers or other distinguished presenters
- Networking happy hours or event-related social events
- New sponsors
- New vendors/exhibitors or other partners of note
- Flash sales, discounts, or early bird pricing
- Agenda
- Recaps/highlights from previous events

Stage 5: Event Communications

Annual event: Recommended Start 1 month before event

One-time medium or small event: 1-2 weeks before the event

For those who haven't signed up, continue heavily promoting the event. For those who've registered, make sure to share:

- Arrival and parking info or online access info
- Dress code and what items to bring, if applicable
- Food or drink information
- Agenda
- App or website access info, if needed

This is usually done via email and not all info will be shared with the general public.

Stage 6: Thank You Communications

Complete 1 day to 1 week after the event

- On all channels, share a heartfelt thank you to the attendees, sponsors, and other participants that made the event possible. Shout out and tag everyone you can.
- Share pictures, recaps, or highlights from the event.
- Explain how to stay in touch (ex: sign up for emails, follow us on Facebook, etc.).
- If applicable, include a save the date for the next event.