



# EVENTS 101: ATTENDING, SPONSORING & HOSTING EVENTS



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There are lots of different ways to make events work for your business. From attending an event to hosting an event, this guide will help you make the most of them.

## Participation

There are a few ways you can participate in events to find new customers and even establish stronger relationships with current customers.

The first (and least involved) is simply to **attend events**. Attending events is a fun way to meet new people, potential customers, and get the word out about your business. Business mixers (usually held by your local Chamber of Commerce) are a way of meeting other business owners and small businesses in your community.

The second way you can participate in an event is by **sponsoring a booth** at an industry trade show. You can find tradeshow in your area by searching the internet, or by using an online directory like [www.expocentral.com](http://www.expocentral.com). The third way to participate is to **host an event** for your business.

## Set Your Goal

The first thing you want to do for any event is set your goal. What do you want to accomplish with the event? Do you want to gain new customers, build a relationship with existing customers, get the word out about your business, or all of the above? Once you've set your goal it's easier to figure out what kind of event to take part in.

### What event type is a good fit for your business?

- **Attend:** Meet new people that could translate in to new customers. This is also a great way of establishing your business in your community.
- **Sponsor:** Get potential customer leads as well as your brand in front of a specific audience (i.e., your target audience, specific industry, or company size).
- **Host:** Host an event for a variety of different reasons like thanking your customers or promoting a new product or service.

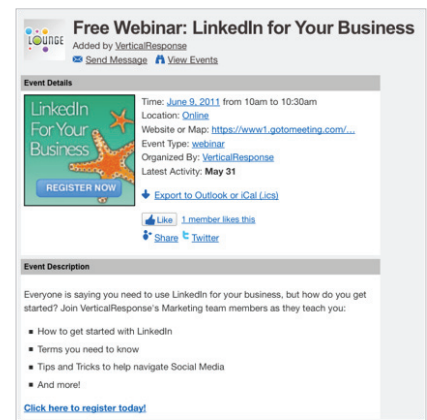
# Before the Event

There are a few things you can do to set your event up for success when hosting or sponsoring a booth:



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Time: June 9, 2011 from 10am to 10:30am  
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Website or Map: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/...>  
Event Type: webinar  
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**Plan:** Formulate what you need to do for the event and when you need to accomplish each task. Do you need to rent anything (a venue, tables, chairs, table linens), should you order food, and most importantly, what's your budget?

**Get the Word Out:** Where will you be, why should people join you, what does it cost, and can you offer a discount? Include the name of the event, location, date, time, and a link to more information. You can use [VerticalResponse Event Marketing](#) to create an event website, send an event invite, plus post info on your website, blog, and social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).



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**Catawba Burke** This is our newsletter service-free to non-profits! Praise the LORD!  
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**Send a Direct Mail Piece: [Use VerticalResponse Postcards](#)** and mail subscribers who might be interested. A good way to locate your ideal audience is to segment your list by location (i.e., people who live/work near the event). Remember to provide your booth number so people can find you. You can also offer an incentive for them to attend - like a free travel mug or 15% off coupon.



There are easier ways to get the word out.

With VerticalResponse you can make great looking postcards just like this one. We'll even print and mail them for you. Just customize your template and upload your list.

**Voila!**

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[www.VerticalResponse.com/deal](http://www.VerticalResponse.com/deal)

**Practice Your Pitch:**

People will ask what you do and/or what your company does. Have your elevator pitch nailed so you're ready. Be clear and concise because you only have a few minutes to capture people's attention.

**Make a checklist of everything you'll need at the event:**

- Business cards
- Pens and sharpies
- Swag and giveaways (pens, stress balls, candy, etc.)
- Marketing materials or hand outs

## During the Event

Organization is key for any type of event. Everything should be set up and ready to go before the “early-birds” arrive. Once everything is set, you can go over a plan for everyone working the event. Assign jobs to each person and answer questions before attendees arrive.

**Get Social:** Create a [#hashtag](#) for your event or use an existing hashtag if you're attending or sponsoring a booth at an event. This way you can track all Twitter tweets coming from your event. Also, encourage people to “check-in” at your event using Foursquare or Facebook Places. You can encourage people to check in by offering giveaways.

**Look the Part:** Your employees should be easily identifiable in the booth so people know who to talk to about the event.

This can mean that everyone has a staff name tag on and/or is in “uniform.”

Once the event gets underway, you and your staff should have welcoming body language.



# enter to win giveaway

If you're sponsoring a booth, make your booth stand out. Have giveaways visible and a clean and tidy booth. Check out the competition to see how they are set up and what you can do to your booth to make it more appealing.

**Be Personable:** When you're talking to future clients don't talk business the whole time. People like to get to know your personality. Don't be afraid to tell people something personal about you. Obviously it should be something that your comfortable revealing like “I'm training for a half marathon,” or “I have a pot belly pig.”

## Collect business cards!

**Grow Your List:** If you're talking to someone that seems interested in your business, ask for their card. If you are hosting an event or sponsoring a booth, have a fish bowl. It works every time, but make sure you add one business card in the bowl to start everyone on the right track. Offer an incentive for business cards like giving away a prize. The prizes can be businesses merchandise or services. People who give you their business cards can be added to your [VerticalResponse mailing list](#), so events are a great way to grow your list! Just make sure you tell them they're opting in to receive information from you!



Write the information that you discussed with each person on the back of their business card. This can include what services/merchandise they are interested in and when you should follow up with them. This will give a personal touch to communication when you follow up later.

\*Note: It's hard to tell how many business cards you should collect at each event. If you're hosting an event you should be able to get business cards from everyone checking in. If you're sponsoring a booth try to get a business card from everyone who stops by. It never hurts to ask.

## After the Event

**Evaluate:** Evaluate the cost of the event, the event itself, and see if it met your goal. How many business cards did you collect and how much business (new or old) did you get? How did your staff feel about the event? Get feedback from everyone to see what can you do better next time.

**Follow up:** Follow up on the business cards you collected with a personal email or phone call. Give people the information about your business that they asked for. You can always follow up to non-responders two or three weeks after the event with more information about your company.

These simple tips should help set you and your event up for success every time!

Check out [VerticalResponse Event Marketing](#) to learn more.