

Marketing Your Event

Remember to consider your why and use it to create your event's unique selling point!

Have ready some good quality images ready to promote your event, as well as the key facts (date, location, cost), and unique selling points (family friendly, themed etc).

It helps to choose a few methods from the list below to create a plan, and then make sure that you have people ready to action the plan, and crucially respond to enquires your marketing will generate.

Realistic and achievable methods

Create event listings on Triathlon Scotland website and the British Triathlon website! This will also give you access to their printed event publications (deadlines apply).

Use an online entry sign up process such as British Triathlon, Entry Central, Active, Results Base, EventBrite etc. There are many more out there.

Offer specific incentives. Early bird discount, priority entry for Triathlon Scotland members, buy one race in a series, get one half price, refer a friend etc. Don't forget also to offer a discount to members of Triathlon Scotland.

Consider how you can add maximum value to your event. For example, you are planning to host a sprint event, and you usually sell 75% of entries. Next time offer and advertise for aquabike entries to fill the remaining 25%. Having an aquabike should not necessarily add additional logistics to your event. If you host a youth aquathlon, consider adding an adult wave to the event to get parents or grandparents racing.

Use your club website and create a specific event section

Create a bespoke event website

Create listings on local 'what's on guides' through Council / Sport Development

Create a listing on Trip Advisor and aim to become a top 10 'thing to do' in your area

Create a Facebook page for your club / or a specific page for your event

Create a Facebook event within your page for your event (and share widely by inviting other people involved in the event, to be an event host).

Use Facebook community groups or pages to post and promote your event e.g. Bridge of Allan Community Group, What's on in Bridge of Allan etc.

Create a Twitter handle for your club / or a specific twitter handle for your event. You can also create a bespoke hashtag e.g. #socialtri and use this on your messages and printed materials.

On Twitter you can be quite specific and apply a targeted approach (you can directly @ organisations, how can re-tweet your message) and you can also tag up to 8 organisations in images used. Each organisation will have multiple followers, and so if they can re-tweet, they can really widen your audience. E.g. Local councils will often re-tweet to 1,000s.

Makes sure that whatever you post, your volunteers are also sharing too on their own social media and business networks. If you have sponsors, ask them to share your messages.

You can also create specific Twitter and Facebook banner images and you can pin important posts to the top of your page to remind visitors about how to sign up. On Facebook there is also a sign up button that you can link to your event entry system, which is located at the top of the page, near your banner image.

Create and maintain an email database of everyone who enquires / signs up for your event. An easy way to do this is to use a spreadsheet. Email your database to let them know when entries have opened / when entries are 50% sold out, and when they are 75%+ sold out, to create urgency to buy.

Consider using Mail Chimp, a free email marketing tool to make your emails professional. It will also maintain your database and you can have a direct subscribe link on your website.

Approach Active Schools / Sports Development (may require a longer lead time needed as they plan ahead for activities).

Press launch / press release. Get contacts for your local paper, radio station and send them a press release, and a photo that they can use.

You can go further to invite them to hear all about your event at your press launch. Make sure you use your unique selling point to make your event interesting to journalists. Consider sourcing a well-known local person / local celebrity to be part of your press launch, as either a supporter, or a participant.

Banners at your venue / in a prominent local area well in advance of your race.

Create a PDF flyer, or a small number of printed flyers, and hand them out at other events (with the permission of the event organiser first) and post onto community notice boards.

Make a short video of your event. This can be as short as 60 seconds, and can be filmed and edited on your phone. iMovie is a great free app to do this.

You can also film the bike and run routes specifically to give your customers an idea of the profile of your race, and it will help them not to get lost!

Methods that require more planning / preparation / finance

Social media promoted posts - you can pay Facebook and Twitter to create adverts that run for a set duration, and also target specific audiences e.g. people who like swimming, being outdoors, do yoga etc. Adverts are from £1 a day and you get detailed insights as to how your advert performed. If you only have the money to pay for one thing, then use Facebook advertising. It is very effective.

Source a large corporate sponsor, with a wide staff base. Incentives can then be offered to the staff, and the corporation can also promote your event to their other corporate networks e.g. inter-company competitions.

Commission a videographer to create a professional video showcasing your event.

Training activities - create a 6-12 week training plan that includes coached sessions and an entry to your event.

Large posters on bus stops / billboards

Magazine listing or magazine advertorial (you would need to plan to meet print deadlines and have budget for advertorial)

Regular blogging and encouraging other bloggers to mention your event. You could also create a YouTube channel and vlog, or simply just upload videos of your event.

Ambush marketing - create a sandwich board and get volunteers to stand at strategic points e.g. a roundabout, during other community events.

Organise a flashmob (maybe in conjunction with the above)

Depending on your unique selling point, consider teaming up with a partnership organisation who can also help to promote your event. E.g. if your event has a social enterprise focus, you can offer 'Pay it Forward' race places, where people can purchase a race place for someone else. You can then match that race place, adding up to two free race places for someone who might face a socio-economic barrier to participation. This could then be picked up by Firstport and the Social Enterprise Network, as well as your local press.

Paid for website banner ads on sport specific or tourism sites.

Banners on buses, trains, taxi or even an aeroplane banner!

Radio and TV adverts (you would need to plan to meet production deadlines and have budget for adverts). BBC Scotland has various features such as 'Something for the Weekend'.

FINALLY - Make sure that you ask your participants how they found out about your event, so that you can spend the most time on using marketing tools that work for you!