101 Ways To Market, Sell, and Monetize Your Live Entertainment Experience
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Introduction

This PDF contains 101 ideas that can help you sell more tickets, grow your audience, and generate more revenue.

Know that this document isn’t meant to be comprehensive, far from it.

In truth, this document is a response to the idea that we are limited in the ways that we can market, sell, or generate revenue from the live event experience.

My ambition in creating and sharing this document is to inspire you:

• To revisit an old idea
• To take a new look at the way you are doing things currently
• To apply one of these ideas in a way that is specific to your organization

If you find something useful here, you can do two things for me:

  1. You can share this with one person that might also find an idea that inspires them to take action.
  2. You can subscribe to my weekly newsletter by sending me an email to dave@davewakeman.com with the subject line: “newsletter” and I will get you added.

Most importantly, if you do find something that gets you a positive result, let me know.
You can always email me with ideas, questions, or thoughts at dave@davewakeman.com or give me a call at (917) 705-6301.

Go do good work!
Dave
Sales:
1. Bundle tickets to multiple shows.
2. Allow customization of purchase during the buying process.
3. Offer refund protection to create an incentive for buying earlier.
4. Include additional value like merchandise, beverages, or access.
5. Create a rewards program that allows guests to earn points for purchase.
6. Make the buying process simpler.
7. Use a strong call-to-action in all of your sales and marketing efforts.
8. Allow upsell or upgrade opportunities on the day of the show.
9. Use contactless pay options, mobile pay options, and pre-purchase options as ways to accelerate food & beverage, merchandise, parking, and other add-on sales.
10. Design and sell a ticket that people can buy at the show or after the show as a piece of memorabilia.

Pricing:
11. Use dynamic pricing to capture more sales and more revenue.
12. Offer group opportunities that encourage groups to buy together at once.
13. Offer group opportunities that make it easier for groups to buy as individuals.
14. Use bundled packages as ways to increase perceived value.
15. Offer incentives to get people to take actions that will boost sales and lift marketing like sharing on social media, filling out a survey, or joining your newsletter.

Food & Beverage:
16. Partner with a local brewery to create a house beer.
17. Partner with a local chef for a special menu in your bar or dining area.
18. Allow people to pre-order drinks and snacks for before the show, during intermission, or after the show.
19. Use wine, beer, or food as a cultural experience that will enhance the experience and create a more comprehensive experience for your guest.
20. Bundle food and beverage together to increase the likelihood of a higher spend like a wine and cheese platter, or a soda and candy.
21. Make upselling in the F&B department an essential part of the job. Think about asking what brand of liquor someone wants in his or her martini or gin and tonic.

Merchandise:
22. Create event specific merchandise like the Portland Trailblazers have done with their posters for each game.
23. Make the buying process faster by offering more locations or having certain locations sell specific items.
24. Offer the chance to pre-order merchandise.
25. Deliver a bulk-discount or bundle.
26. Limited edition items that are only available for a certain period.
Marketing:
27. Start an email newsletter that you use to regularly talk to your audience about your venue, your shows, and your events.
28. Use a comprehensive marketing campaign that focuses on multiple touches and media.
29. Incentivize word-of-mouth marketing.
30. Don’t become a building or organization that will always offer a better deal.
   People knowing you’ll discount like mad at the end is a form of marketing and it hurts you.
31. Create partnerships with local businesses that allow you to promote each other and add value to your customers.
32. Focus on the experiential nature of your experience.
33. Offer world-class customer service that’s marketing too.

Word-of-mouth:
34. Incentivize people to share on their social media accounts.
35. Get guests to review you in online forums or on sites.
36. Create a “tell-a-friend” program that rewards sender and receiver.
37. Make a contest out of sharing the word about a show or a production or your organization.
38. Make it easy for people to share their feelings by emailing, texting, or using social media with Tweet This buttons and the like.

Experiential:
39. Host special events on now-show times like lunch and learn with the conductor.
40. Host pre-show events where guests can mingle, network, and connect with likeminded people from the community like a Donor’s Club or B2B forum.
41. Create a bonus event like a wine tasting, tasting menu, or other added value that gives people a chance to experience the building in a new way.
42. Question and answer sessions for certain membership types or ticket purchasers.
43. Backstage access or post-show access or something that offers patrons a glimpse of the behind the scenes.
44. Just for kids events that help create opportunities to engage with younger audiences.

Use technology:
45. Use data and ready-made tools to find insights that will create magical moments for your guests.
46. Discover trends in your customer’s habits to reward behavior that you want to continue or to nudge people towards behaviors you want.
47. Create emails and newsletters that are comparable to other world-class products and services on the market.
48. Allow video to help you tell your story like the Diablo Ballet in San Francisco does with Facebook Live videos.

49. Host podcasts, Q&As, and other forms of audio that can drive people to your site, get them to open a newsletter, or engage with you in some manner.

50. Automate follow-up and outreach so that you can ensure that people are communicated with in a timely manner and that the communication isn’t left to fall through the cracks.

51. Work with technology partners that offer pricing insights, better purchase options, or that smooth out the buying process for your customers.

52. Post snippets of your production to YouTube or Twitter.

Top of Sales Funnel:

53. Create a landing page with a special offer for subscribers to your newsletter.

54. Use a pop-up on the landing page that creates a specific offer in the moment.

55. Host a free introduction to the theatre, sports, opera, etc. event where you collect data, emails, etc.

56. Advertise in newspapers, video, online, etc.

57. Have a presence at trade shows, events, hotels, and other places in your community that people will see you, may learn about you for the first time, and are open to seeing the message.

58. Don’t sleep on direct mail.

59. Earned media.

60. Microsites built around specific shows or events.

61. Webcast a Q&A with your director or star.

62. Photos or illustrations that can be shared on social media.

Social media:

63. Create a YouTube page to host clips of shows, short videos with your staff, or other video content.

64. Host a podcast on your website dedicated to your building, your organization, or the kinds of events you host.

65. Use Twitter to engage with your audience and potential audience.

66. Set up a Facebook page.

67. Put together a Pinterest page that shows off visuals from your events.

68. Follow up with your social media feedback quickly and openly to help show your awareness and engagement.

Traditional media:

69. Do a radio interview about your upcoming season.

70. Use a direct response radio or TV ad.

71. Have a team sell over the phone when applicable.

72. Use direct mail. Especially when you do something unique with it.

73. Billboards.

74. Banners.
75. Your marquee.
76. Local magazines, newspapers, and flyers.

Getting customers to come back:
77. Follow up with customized offers for attendees.
78. Use a survey to find out how their event was and to begin building a relationship.
79. Offer loyal customers special perks.
80. Use social media and forward facing media to show you care and to call them out.
81. Give customers special perks or bonuses when they least expect it.
82. Have a points program.
83. Pick up the phone and call someone to check in.
84. Handwritten notes.
85. Remember and use special occasions.

Going mobile:
86. Create an app.
87. Use tablets or phones as point of purchase locations.
88. Understand mobile buying personas.
89. Establish Key Performance Indicators for your mobile efforts that are focused on impact for your customers.
90. Make sure your website is mobile friendly.
91. Make sure your buying process is mobile friendly.
92. Don’t forget mobile advertising.
93. Text messages.
94. Push notifications.
95. In-app notifications.

Strategy:
96. Remember that your event is a once in a lifetime experience.
97. Focus on the impact of a night with you versus other forms of entertainment.
98. Play to your strengths: consumers are buying experiences.
99. Focus on emotional impact.
100. Brainstorm new ideas for adding value.

Maybe most importantly:
101. Always keep trying new things, measuring their impact, learning, adjusting, and trying something new. That’s the key. There isn’t one destination, there are many.