

Promoting Your Restaurant's **Holiday Events**

Email and social media marketing are powerful tools to publicize your gathering

Now that autumn is in full swing, planning for your restaurant's holiday fundraiser, open house, or other special event is probably well underway. Most of these events will likely occur in that hectic stretch between Thanksgiving and Christmas, so the time is right to start promoting your events and driving registrations sooner than later. For those who use Constant Contact, the combination of Event Marketing, email, and social media is a perfect mix for spreading the word about your event to prospective attendees.

Targeting key customers and attendees

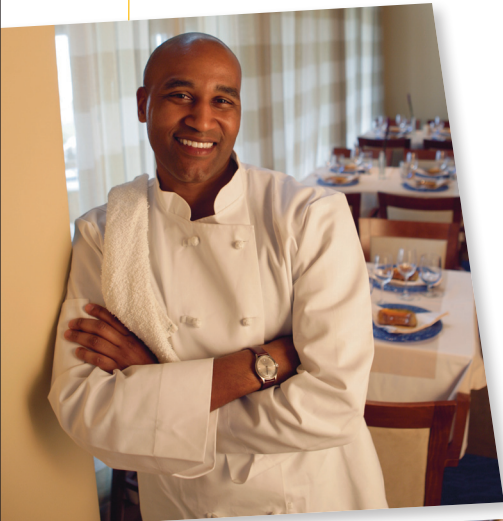
Whether your event is public or private, you should start by sending out a "Save the Date" email to your most coveted attendees, be they members of your frequent diner club or just on your email list. A simple postcard email with the date, time, and location will suffice. Everyone's overscheduled, particularly around the holidays, so get your event on people's radar sooner rather than later.

Once you have your [event homepage](#) and/or registration form published in Event Marketing, it's time to send out a more formal invitation to would-be attendees. Even if it's a public event where the goal is to register as many people as possible, sending personalized invitations to your key attendees is a good practice as it will make them feel special and more welcome.

Plus, by sending email invitations to your contact list, you can easily track sends, bounces, spam complaints, opens, and those who have registered. As your event draws near, you can then use this information to send a follow-up reminder to those who have registered, or have yet to register.

Use social media to spread the word

Promote your event with social media before, during, and after the event. For events that are open to the public, [social media marketing](#) is a great way to spread the word beyond your inner circle of customers. Within Event Marketing, there are two ways to take advantage of social media to promote your event. As the event host, you can post a link to your event on your Facebook and Twitter accounts right from the Event Details



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page. Combining social media and email invitations will publicize your event to the full spectrum of your prospects, members, and customers.

If your event is public (meaning it's listed on your [Events Calendar](#)), each registrant will have the option to post the event to his or her own Facebook and Twitter accounts once the registration process is complete. This helps raise awareness of your event through word of mouth marketing and allows you to reach a broader audience beyond your own network. Put a note on your event homepage to encourage your attendees to share the event with their own social network. Adding a sense of urgency (i.e., "Only 5 seats left, register now!") can also help drive clicks to your registration page.

Use a [hashtag](#) (i.e. #ABCHoliday) to brand your event-related Twitter posts. Make sure to ask your attendees

to use this same hashtag as well. This will let you and your attendees more easily track all of the posts related to your event.

Time is of the essence

The combination of email and social media marketing is a great way to get your holiday event promoted to the largest audience possible. For those December events, now is the time to start with those promotions. You want to be top of mind with your audience heading into this holiday season. Waiting until later in November could result in a number of regret responses, so get started now promoting your events.

Want to know more about how Event Marketing can help your restaurant? Visit ConstantContact.com to learn more.

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