



technology

# VENUE SALES AND MARKETING GUIDE

Your comprehensive toolkit  
for driving revenue and  
increasing profits



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# Introduction

Welcome to our Venue Sales and Marketing Guide. We are glad to see that you are here because you want to maximise the revenue opportunities for your venue and increase the value of your existing accounts.

Packed with expert insights and tips, the guide is underpinned by our team's wealth of experience in venue sales and marketing.



We cover everything you need to drive client retention and acquisition as well as increasing the lifetime value of your existing accounts including:

- Email marketing
- Social media
- Proactive selling
- Account management

We cover a lot of ground in the guide so let's dive in!



# Harness the Power of Email

Done well, email can be a fantastic way to move your prospects through the “buyers’ journey” where they move towards making that phone call or arranging a sales appointment.

## How to write effective sales prospecting mails that work!

It can be disheartening when you have sent several cold prospect emails with little to no response. With a little time and effort it can be a great way to identify and engage with new prospects.



## We have five quick tips to get the most out of your target list

1. Focus on the subject line. Think about the pain points that will entice the recipient to open the email.
2. Sharpen the copy – make the email look like it was written to them personally, keep the tone conversational and have a hook in the first paragraph to keep them reading.
3. Keep it short – 5 to 6 lines is the optimum length.
4. Do your homework – research the prospect through social media so you can bring something personal about them to the email.
5. Have a call to action – always finish with a question such as “Do any of these options sound interesting to you?”

## Sales enquiry responses – make a great first impression

One area that is crucial but is often overlooked is the response that is sent after the initial enquiry. Given that [78% of prospects buy from the first responders](#) and that you may only have 5 minutes to get back to your prospect before they leave you for good then you need to be quick while impressing them. Your turnaround time should be no longer than 4 hours!



This is what you need to do:

1. Create a response template to all new sales enquiries you receive.
2. Keep the message simple and remember to say “Thank you”.
3. Move the conversation along – “When would be the best time for me give you a call?”
4. A quick response impresses – you have shown that you have their attention and that you are at their service.
5. Make them feel special.

## Email marketing – be a star performer

Email is one of the cheapest, scalable and effective ways to keep clients and prospects engaged and still outperforms social media in terms of reach.

We have found that it is also the preferred method for our clients to drive brand awareness and brand engagement with event bookers.



Our tips are:

1. Make sure that you are aware of all relevant data protection and GDPR best practices. These may be changing due to Brexit so we recommend you do your homework.
2. For optimum delivery of your campaigns we recommend that your database is clean and that unsubscribes are removed. This is a task that should be performed on a regular basis.
3. Promote your website and content – link to your website and use it to make them aware of new blogs.
4. Keep them engaged – explore a theme and plan the campaign around it.
5. Mobile is key – ensure your emails and images are mobile optimised.
6. Plan your campaign with care so you get the optimum opens and clicks:
  - Who are your audience?
  - What is the message?
  - How are you collecting data?
  - What is the call to action?





# Enhance Your Website

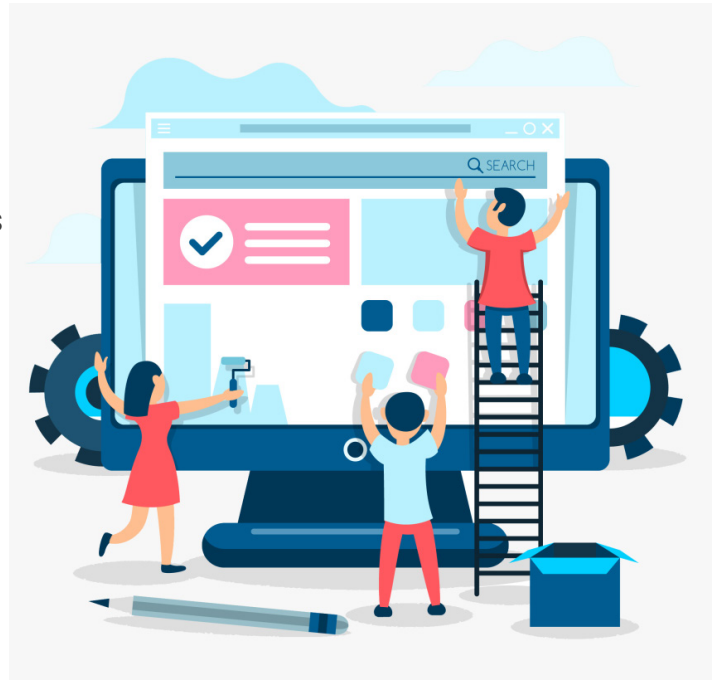
This is still the primary and most important touchpoint for bookers researching a venue.

How to optimise this vital promotional tool?



We recommend the following simple steps:

1. It needs to be pleasing to the eye but easy to update and change whilst maintaining brand consistency.
2. High quality images are key! Like a site visit, images are the window to your venue.
3. Use a voice and language that resonates with your bookers.
4. Don't sell to bookers/visitors to the site, educate them!
5. Your 'About' page is key. It must impress, build trust and make them want to know more.
6. Make the phone number prominent (and trackable).
7. Track website leads that call.
8. Add testimonials from your clients, prospects will be impressed if there competitors are using you.
9. Align the content around the bookers/ buyers journey.
10. Ensure that the website is built to drive traffic to a sale.
11. The objective of the website is to convert your ideal bookers into paying customers through knowledge, images and buying guides.





# Let's Get Social

## Why it's important

Our research has found that the personas of a 'typical' event booker is female, 24 – 35, organised, not married, socially engaged and will use social media EVERY day! You cannot afford to miss this vital channel. It's a great free way of promoting your brand and building your own online community.



## How to get the most out of social media

Make sure you have appealing social profiles profile that reflects your brand and communicates your values.

Post regular content – no one is impressed with social media that is updated infrequently. For Facebook one to two times a day is the optimum. For twitter three – or more – times a day is best practice. For twitter we also recommend spreading them throughout the day – tweets have a short shelf life.

Make the content interesting – make sure it will stand out on their feed. Use visuals to grab their attention. Use tools such as Canva to create eye-catching content.

Tailor content to each social network. For example for Twitter keep it short, sweet and quirky and for LinkedIn adopt a professional tone.

ALWAYS use high quality images – invest in an image library.

Put as many photos in a post as possible – tell a story with pictures.

## Marketing your venue on social media

Marketing a venue can easily capture people's attention because it is interesting and engaging.

Its a great fit for paid and free advertising. You need to invest time into understanding who you are marketing to, the language that they speak, their likes and dislikes.

If you do decide to invest in advertising on social then we recommend that retargeting campaigns are key as they enable you to market to those who have already been on your website/platforms and engaged with you.

A question we are often asked is “where do we find our customers?” The answer simply boils down to: For a B2B focus we recommend that LinkedIn is the best place to promote your venue to corporates. For a B2C focus then we recommend that channels such as twitter, Facebook and Instagram are going to give you more bang for your buck.

## What are the best tactics?

Before you invest time and money on social we recommend that you speak to your customers about the channels they are using so you can gauge what will work best for you.

Competitions are a great way for you kick start your campaign – easily boost your following, build engagement and, importantly, it encourages people to share content and motivate word of mouth promotion.



Video marketing is also a great way to make an impact on social. A few ideas:

1. For an event you host create a highlights reel.
2. Film a walk through tour of the venue.
3. Post video testimonials from happy clients.
4. Short 2 min videos of set up of an event.

Don't forget to upload to YouTube as well as social media channels.



Instagram Stories is another great platform for promoting visual content. For this we recommend:

1. Behind the scenes footage.
2. Featuring exciting projects.
3. Filming an event set up.

Remember that with this platform that authenticity is key – always engage with your audience while keeping it on brand.

Hashtags are a great tool for your social media audience to keep track of important topics and conversations. They are key to the visibility of the venue. Using hashtags is a great way to drawing attention to a topic or promote something in the venue.

We recommend that if you want to be part of the social conversation that you research hashtags for your area of the industry i.e. #EventProfs.





# Proactive Sales Approach – Best Practices

## Our comprehensive guide to account management

You need to do three tasks before you embark on an account management campaign:

1. Identify and target key accounts – generate greater revenue and opportunities from these accounts.
2. Ask yourself the hard question – Do they have a strategic value for your venue and business?
3. Define your objectives: to develop a deeper, more meaningful, mutually beneficial relationship.



Then you need to get into the detail:

### 1. Formalise Key Account Management

- Pull together a strategic account plan for each key account.
- Identify contacts you know and those you WANT to know.
- Identify what is the total opportunity from the account (ensure that you spend time and money on accounts that will give you the best return).
- How will you market and drive new business from this account?

### 2. Come up with a precise definition of what is a key account for your business

- Is this based on the size of the events, frequency of events, total spend value?
- Remember a base business account that does low value higher frequency events could have more value to the business than one or two large events a year.
- How hard would the gap be to fill if you lost the business?
- Strategic and financial worth should not be treated the same.

### 3. Start with a smaller number of accounts

- Don't overload your Key Account Managers – make sure the workload is manageable.
- You want to see activity and increased business from each account.
- Remember it is easy to add accounts as the year goes through.
- Remove accounts/downgrade accounts when necessary so that you focus on the right accounts.

#### 4. Understand the account with full context

- Go above and beyond to fully understand the account – who are the contacts you do know and what do they produce?
- Who don't you know? What do they do and what events do they organise?
- Where do they use apart from your venue?
- What is their total annual spend?
- What is the delegate profile for their accounts?
- What is the most important thing to them for their events?

#### 5. The Account Strategy must be of mutual benefit

- A key account must be based on what you can do for each other?
- Don't sell to the account, develop solutions and discuss those.
- Can you make their venue finding process easier, smoother and less stressful?
- Listen to their objectives for the events and come up with solutions for them.
- Don't oversell and over promise. If you can't deliver this will impact on the client/venue relationship.

#### 6. Meet with your accounts regularly

- Managing accounts requires regular contact.
- Try to meet or at least speak to key decision makers on the phone weekly.
- Keep them up to date on any personnel/refurb changes in the venue – this is a great excuse to call. They will feel important.
- Key is to maintain relationships, you want your clients to trust you.
- Take an active interest in their business.

### How to make great Sales Calls



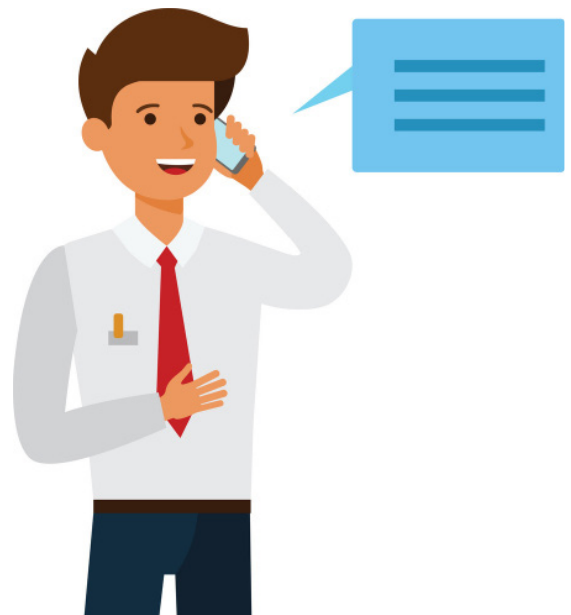
Research the client, establish a need, develop a solution and sound knowledgeable.

#### 1. Start your sales call on a positive note

- Think about the weather (but only if it's good), sports team win, time of year i.e. Christmas, fun weekend plans.

#### 2. Don't bad mouth competitors in sales calls

- If you say bad things about a competitor venue the client will automatically put those traits on to you (spontaneous trait transference).
- Don't enter into conversation about your competitors even if the client leads that part of the discussion.
- Turn discussion about your competitors around to your venue and what you have to offer.



### 3. Set out a reason for your call and a brief agenda

- Time is precious and a potential client would like to know in brief the purpose and timeframe for the call.
- This will also allow you to keep the call on track and accomplish what you want to achieve
- Customers will feel like they are in control of the conversation

### 4. Let your passion shine through

- Let your passion and excitement for your venue come through in your sales calls.
- Make it something your client can be excited about.
- Speak loud and proud about your product.
- Ensure that you complete any actions that were agreed on the call.
- Set a follow up call, 2 weeks after the initial contact. Don't leave it too long!

### 5. Position your product/venue smartly

- Frame your venue/product as a solution to a problem they have.
- Establish that they have a need before you continue with the call.
- Do they organise events? If not, who does?
- Make it sound so much more than a commodity.
- Solve a problem for the client, don't sell the product.
- Use emotion to sway a purchase decision. Pull on triggers such as how well the event went in the past, relieve their stress, reduce their costs.
- Use referrals, testimonials and great event examples to help the client to visualise what you can do and how it relates to the events they need to organise.

### 6. Research before your call

- Plan and prepare for each call.
- Use online tools, your CRM/Venue management system, social media to discover more about the business and the client themselves.
- What are their pain points? What events do they organise and when?
- LISTEN! Most powerful tool we have when on the call.

### 7. Follow up to each call

- Make sure that following your call you follow up to say 'thank you' for your time.

## Carrying out a great Site Visit



Before they arrive consider the following:

1. Where are they travelling from? Give clear instructions on how to find and locate your venue.
2. Determine the venue/hotel amenities that they are most likely to require and prep the team accordingly.
3. If elements require a fee i.e. WiFi determine whether these can be negotiated into your deal (the question WILL be asked). Find out before so you don't have to answer – "I will come back to you on that."
4. Set up meeting rooms in the required/intended set up.
5. Place their logo on a screen or door card prior to arrival. Make the client feel important.
6. Reserve a car parking space if necessary.
7. Reserve a table in the coffee area/lounge for refreshments and a chat. Someone quiet and not overlooked or overheard.



When the client arrives:

1. Meet and greet the client at reception, it is always so much nicer than them having to wait for a receptionist to become free and call for you.
2. Ask them 'how was your journey' – their feedback to this question could help you counter any challenges in the negotiation.
3. Show them where the toilets are as they may have had a long journey.
4. Ask them how long they have, even though this may have been in the diary invite it is always polite to ask.
5. Ask if they would like to see these spaces first.



6. Take them through for coffee (and any prearranged treats/refreshments)
- This gives you time to discuss with them their visit and event.
  - What are their priorities during the visit?
  - Talk through with them any areas they may not be able to see and have photos/ipad images available of this space prepared.
  - Take time to learn more about the greater organisation and other opportunities there may be. Don't push too hard, remember they are there for their event and it's all about THEM.
  - On the visit show as many of the relevant spaces as you can. Remember when you ask about their priorities, use that information to show the correct spaces. If they are Day Delegates the gym/sauna may not be most relevant.

7. After the walk around the venue ask the client if they would like another refreshment. This gives you time to ask for feedback and discuss their impressions and suitability of the venue.

8. GOODY BAG – give the client something to take away. This doesn't have to be a brochure but something memorable.

Always follow up from a site visit within 48 hours, thank them for coming and if any further information is required.

## Conducting a great sales meeting with a potential client:



Follow these tips –

### 1. Do your homework.

- Learn everything you can about the customer.
- Never put yourself in a position where you are asking a question that could be easily asked elsewhere i.e. company website, customer's LinkedIn profile.



### 2. Create an agenda.

- 5 – 7 questions or areas for discussion within your meeting.
- Focus on the customer's needs, going from general to specific.
- Send the agenda through to the client prior to the meeting so they can come back to you if anything they feel needs to be added.

### 3. Arrive in plenty of time.

4. Thank the client for their time, acknowledge you realise how busy they are and that they have taken the time to see you.
5. Pace the conversation so the customer isn't overwhelmed and stick to the agenda.
6. Keep coming back to the agenda to reinforce the fact that the meeting is moving forward and that you are respecting the customers time.
7. When the customer talks, listen make notes and read back anything you may not understand – never assume anything
8. Discover the clients booking timeframe, how far in advance do they book and what is their decision process from booking. This will help you to plan how you manage the account and your follow up.
9. Pre-empt inevitable objections – use these within the conversation and ensure that they are followed by the 'pros' of your venue
10. Never criticise your competitors – identify what they do well, but then show the customer why it would be a better business decision to use you.
11. Discuss with the client how you can meet their venue/event expectations. Use the information in the meeting to 'suggestive sell' on working with you. The focus is always to make their lives easier and less stressful.
12. Following all the above you will have earned the clients trust and built a rapport with them. Made them feel that you can meet their needs whilst making their role easier. This is the time to close the meeting, agree next steps and give your gift/goody bag.
13. ALWAYS FOLLOW UP and THANK them for their time.

We hope you enjoyed this guide!

To discover more about how Rendezvous venue management software from NFS can help you achieve your sales and marketing goals then contact us today:

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