

Tips and Tricks for Marketing your virtual race

RUNSIGNUP TOOLS

Email Marketing

Save the money you spend on MailChimp or Constant Contact with RunSignup's free email marketing. Just upload your contacts into our email marketing system. Select past and current participants in RunSignup - the system will automatically de-duplicate your lists. Copy and paste your HTML template code. Simple.

Want to learn more?: Check out our [Email Marketing Session](#) to dig into the details.

Drip Campaigns • Use [automated Registration Follow-Up](#) emails to setup a series of emails that go out automatically to keep your participants engaged after registration. For an effective Campaign, select your key messages to hit in every email and limit email sends to 2-3 per race to avoid unsubscribes.

Abandoned Cart Emails • Enable and customize automated [Incomplete Registration](#) emails to reach potential participants who abandon their carts to incentivize them to come back and complete their registration.

Price Increase Emails • If you have price increases for your virtual run, enable and customize [automated price increase emails](#) for current participants ("get your friends to sign up before the price goes up") and past participants ("sign up before the price goes up").

Referral Rewards



Incentivize participants to refer their friends and family by rewarding them with refunds, swag, and recognition. Why does the Referral Program work so well? Because there is no better advocate for your race than your participants - and this holds

true for virtual races. With the influx of virtual races, referrals made up 17% of registration dollars in 2020, compared to 7% in pre-pandemic years.

Once you determine the parameters for your Referral Rewards, all of the refunds and swag selection are fully automated. Make sure you have a **fulfillment and shipping plan** in place if you decide to offer a **Swag Reward!**

Keep it simple • Make sure you can easily explain your referral program on your website and confirmation emails. Here's an example of how you can visually explain your referral rewards:

High threshold, high reward • The most effective referral reward set ups are high threshold and high reward. Most referrers don't reach the high threshold to get a reward - so the 1-4 people they do refer are free!

Registration follow-up emails are a must • Use registration follow-up emails 1-10 days after someone registers to capitalize on their excitement and encourage sharing.

Promote early and often • Referral rewards only work if participants know about them! Feature the rewards program on your website, emails, social media, etc.

Teams



Even though we have to stay apart, teams are bringing people together, virtually. Even in 2020, 31% of participants join a social team when it's available. You can also use them strategically for marketing your virtual race.

Team size refunds/discounts • Set a minimum number of members a team must reach to receive a discount. **Automatically reward teams** with an automated refund (for participants who have already registered) or discount (for participants registering after meeting the threshold).

Customize your team language • Make it fun! Tie your team challenge into the theme of your virtual race. It's simple to **customize your team set up** with your theme.

Fundraising Teams • If your event is focused on fundraising for a charitable cause, **fundraising teams** are the way to go. Be sure to feature the fundraiser leaderboard on your race website so teams can see how well they are doing compared to others.

Offer Multi-Race Bundles



Offer Multi-Race Bundles Have a physical, "real" race later in the year or next year? Are registrations stalled, but you need the cash flow now? Set up a multi-race bundle combining your real race with a virtual race that happens now. Automatically give a discount to incentivize participants to sign up for both the virtual and in-person event. This has the added bonus of getting participants excited about your future physical event.

Customize Social Sharing



Customize the text and images of what participants share on social media to encourage referrals and sharing. The best tip for images is to use pictures with happy people or cool pictures of your virtual race's unique swag - be sure it's something that people will want to click on Facebook!

BEYOND RUNSIGNUP

Facebook Groups



Love it or hate it, Facebook is key to a successful virtual race. Create a Facebook event and group to engage people where they spend time on the internet.

Encourage event posts • Create a hashtag and encourage participants to share selfies: "Post selfies after your run using #..."

Private or Public Facebook Groups • Create a public or private Facebook group to foster community and a place to ask for advice or share training journeys. Opportunities for interaction are appreciated!

Social Media Advertising



Advertise on social media • People are spending more time on Facebook and Instagram than ever - 24% of race website traffic in 2020 came from Facebook, compared to 16% in 2019.

Use swag images • Swag is a registration driver. Showcase your shirts, medals, or other swag. You can use Canva (for free) to design nice ad images - they have a number of Facebook ad templates that you can customize.

Advertise to lookalike audiences • Create targeted lists across all your participants, donors, and fundraisers from the free RunSignup CRM. Export pre-formatted Facebook and Google custom audience reports to effectively spend money on likely conversions - lookalike audiences work well!

Include time-limited coupons • Automatically give a discount to people who sign up from an ad by adding an auto-applied coupon URL. Make sure to only make the coupon valid for a day or short period of time to incentivize taking action now.

Charitable Partner

Connect with a charity partner to give your virtual race more meaning. Collect donations on their behalf and/or clearly state what \$ amount of the registration fee goes towards the charity.

Virtual Calendar Listings

Your RunSignup website is automatically listed on affiliate calendars (such as Running in the USA). Want to take it a step further? There are other options to get your virtual race listed on more event calendars for a small fee.

EVVNT • This event promotion site enables you to reach a greater target audience than ever before with filters optimized to hit specific categories and cities all around the world. Your race on 40+ calendar sites in 5 minutes:

[EVVNT Promotion for RunSignup Users](#)

Race Directors HQ • We are big fans of Race Directors HQ! Check out their calendar listing service that's tailored to endurance events:
<https://www.racedirectorshq.com/race-calendar-marketing/>

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