

# The field marketing gifting playbook:

Stage engaging events that build pipeline





Field marketing isn't easy at the best of times. But, for a while, the very future of marketing events was in major doubt.

As marketing events make a comeback, the landscape is very different. We are embracing in-person events once more, but the virtual component that has been favored in recent years hasn't completely disappeared either. This means that for marketers to successfully engage attendees and drive pipeline and revenue from events in the future, everyone must be catered for.

To put on marketing events that engage an audience, raise brand awareness, and create advocates for your product or service, you have to reward your attendees for their time and keep them educated and entertained throughout. How do you do this? The key is direct mail.

In this guide, we'll give you plenty of ideas for how to use direct mail in conjunction with your marketing events. From webinars, to virtual, in-person and hybrid events, we'll suggest ways that you can drive event attendance up, generate more pipeline, and see better results.

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# The state of event marketing in 2022

In 2022, global marketing events came back with a bang, but they will probably never be the same again. Rather than in-person events dominating, by 2023, 90% of organizers believe that all large-scale events will be hybrid or virtual.

While digital events can offer marketers exciting opportunities to get creative as well as save on venue hire, and attract a wider, more global audience, they do have their downsides too. For starters, the digital events market is increasingly saturated and as a result, it can be much harder to engage attendees.

The solution for overcoming this and creating engaging experiences for attendees, both in the digital and real world lies in greater personalization, increased reliance on technology, and more interactivity during events.

All of these touchpoints can be enabled by utilizing direct mail and gifting at various stages of an event, from sending out invites to prospective attendees, to thanking them for attending once the event is over.



# How can direct mail improve your event marketing?

Employing direct mail as part of your event marketing strategy can boost [virtual event attendance by 42%](#), as well as yield tangible results that help drive revenue. Other benefits to threading direct mail into your event marketing strategy include:

- Sending gifts to attendees before an event creates anticipation, excitement, and sets the precedent for what guests can expect from the rest of the event
- Combining direct mail with an event can bolster the overall experience for attendees, particularly those who tune in digitally
- Sending direct mail to prospects before an event can help to nurture key relationships in the early stages
- Direct mail can [help brands build brand awareness](#), which is often a goal related to putting on marketing events

Gifting to prospects before an event can [improve webinar attendance by](#)

**76%**

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Gifting can be a key step in the post-event follow up process and [can increase post-event meetings by](#)

**120%**

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helping to nurture your attendees down the funnel



# How to make your events more engaging (and effective) with gifting

They say that the devil is in the detail, and the same principle applies to gifting as part of your event marketing strategy. Whether it's a webinar, virtual event, hybrid event, or in-person gathering that you're organizing, gifting can be used in small and incremental ways to make it more effective, engaging, and fun for attendees.

Don't believe us? Here's how you can use gifting at different stages of various types of events to surprise and delight attendees.

# Webinars

## Pre-event

# 61%

of B2B companies use webinars as a means to generate high-quality prospects.

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But not everyone is doing webinars well. To keep viewers engaged, the content must be top quality, deliver value, and be tailored to suit your audience. When done right, webinars can be a cost-effective and convenient solution for marketers who want to increase brand awareness and collect useful data on prospects and customers.

Here's what you can do at each stage to boost attendee engagement.

### *Play 1*

## Impress with your invitations

When your webinar invites go out, make sure to personalize and segment them according to the preferences of your [ideal customer personas](#). Emails should contain a prospect's name and be tailored to highlight how the content of the webinar solves their pain points.

Remember that email isn't the only channel for sending invites. You could have them printed onto cookies, cakes, or marshmallows and posted to your recipient's preferred address with the help of [Reachdesk's Address Confirmation feature](#). Edible invites are sure to equal sign ups!

# Webinars

## Pre-event

### Play 2

## Boost attendance by sending an eGift before the session

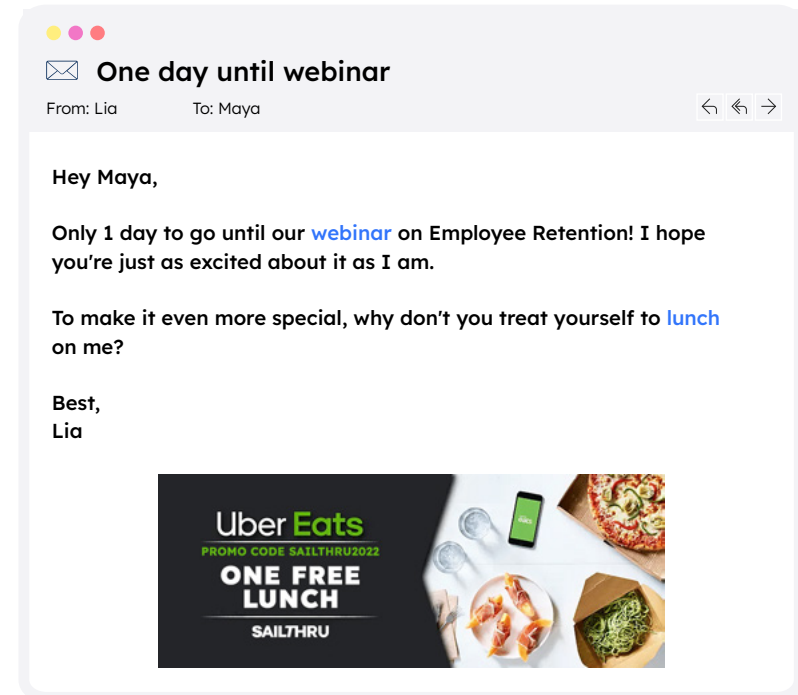
In the lead-up to your webinar, send out email reminders containing Uber Eats or Starbucks eGift cards, along with a message reminding attendees of how much time there is before the big event. Make the vouchers redeemable in the hour before the webinar starts, so that your attendees can enjoy lunch or coffee on you. This small gesture acts as an incentive for those who have signed up to follow through and attend.

### Case study

Sailthru increased webinar attendance by 76% by sending an eGift before the event.

*“Cold outbound email effectiveness dropped dramatically, and the only way we’ve been able to set high quality meetings at scale lately has been through combining highly personalized outreach with relevant gifts and gift cards sent using Reachdesk.”*

Brandon Ray, Senior Manager, Head of Sales Development, Sailthru





# Webinars

## During event

### Play 3

## Provide curated content bundles

Educational content is the gift that keeps on giving for B2B marketers. It's effective, too - conversion rates for [curated content experiences have increased 15% year-over-year](#) since 2020.

Providing personalized, curated content bundles for webinar attendees can be a great way to help bring them on board with your product or service. Links to blogs, eBooks, and whitepapers could be sent over via the chat function during the event to supplement and expand on the live content of the webinar.

### Play 4

## Gamify your webinar

Keep attendees on their toes as your webinar goes on by quizzing them on the content they've learned about during the session. Online games that involve breakout rooms can also be a great way to break the ice and keep attendees engaged.

Incentivize attendees to take part by offering prizes like food and drinks vouchers, relaxation bundles, or bottles of prosecco and champagne.



# Webinars

## Post-event

### Play 5

## Follow up with sweet treats

Nothing keeps a brand in a prospect's thoughts like sending a unique or tasty follow-up gift. Send a box of doughnuts to prime prospects along with a thoughtful note which says something like 'you're so sweet for attending our webinar, we'd love to talk.' You won't be forgotten in a hurry.

### Play 6

## Surprise no-shows with the event recording and a treat

Just because the live webinar is over, doesn't mean that it should be forgotten. The recording can be a valuable tool to engage those who didn't attend. Send the on-demand webinar recording to no-shows via email along with a coffee eGift and a note which nudges them to enjoy the recorded session over coffee, on you.

### Play 7

## Give attendees a personalized gift

For those who did attend the webinar, sending personalized notepads, pens, and bottles after the event can be a fun way to thank them for their time. It doesn't hurt to have reminders of your brand all over a key contact's home office, either!



# Virtual events

## Pre-event

For marketers, the advantages of virtual events are hard to ignore. They're more cost-effective than in-person events, and offer more flexibility for attendees. Virtual events also have the potential to achieve greater reach and ROI than those that take place in-person.

Just because an event is taking place digitally it doesn't mean it has to be dry. Let your imagination run wild and create [virtual experiences](#) like cooking classes, wine and cheese tastings, and live follow-along yoga classes for VIP prospects and customers.

### Play 1

## Get attendees excited before the event

Part of creating a memorable event is building up hype around it beforehand. To get attendees excited and increase attendance rates, send teaser gifts that relate to the virtual event your team is putting on.

If you're running a virtual yoga class for prospects, for example, you could send out personalized yoga mats to each attendee before the event, so that they're raring to go when the session rolls around.



# Virtual events

## Pre-event

### Play 2

## Send a virtual event care package

Digital fatigue can make concentration difficult for attendees during a virtual conference event. To combat this, send care bundles to each attendee ahead of the event containing home comforts like coffee and snacks to see them through and keep their energy up.

Mobile app security experts [Nowsecure](#) took this approach when running their biggest event of the year, virtually. They included candied bacon, skittles, moon pies, and oreos in the care packages they sent to attendees, which went down a storm.



# Virtual events

## During event

### **Play 3**

## Send over a coffee or lunch eVoucher

More than 72% of virtual event attendees say that learning is their primary goal with the virtual events they attend. So give them the fuel they need to get their best thinking done with an eVoucher which covers their lunch whilst at your virtual conference or expo.

### **Play 4**

## Give attendees a break

If your virtual conference event runs over multiple days, digital fatigue might take over for some attendees. To counter this, organize break sessions over Zoom where attendees can practice yoga or attend a mindfulness or meditation class to help relax and refocus them.

After these sessions, you could run a virtual happy hour to encourage attendees to network and take part, with food or drink vouchers they can redeem during the session.

## Post-event

### **Play 5**

## Offer an incentive to give feedback

Offering incentives to gain valuable feedback is a solid tactic, because, who doesn't like an Amazon voucher? If vouchers aren't their thing, offer attendees the chance to make a charitable donation to their chosen charity through your company, in exchange for their thoughts on your marketing event.

### **Play 6**

## Thank attendees with a personalized gift

Water bottles, coffee mugs, and notebooks are all handy mementos that keep your brand front and center, even after the event is over.

# In-person events

## Pre-event

With 84% of event attendees now saying they would always like to have the option to attend any event virtually or remotely, the challenge to lure prospects back to in-person events is on.

As marketers find their feet in this nuanced era for events, it can be tempting to avoid the hassle and simply choose Zoom as the destination instead. However, in-person conferences, trade shows, and product training sessions do have many advantages, including their ability to create demand, connections, and organically start conversations.

Here's what you can do at each stage of your in-person event to drive engagement and pipeline:

### Play 1

## Send out formal, printed Invitations

There's something special about receiving a personalized letter in the post. So, if you want to seriously impress your prospects, add a touch of class to your marketing event by sending physical direct mail in the form of a letter in a handwritten font, straight to their desk or door.



# In-person events

## Pre-event

### Play 2

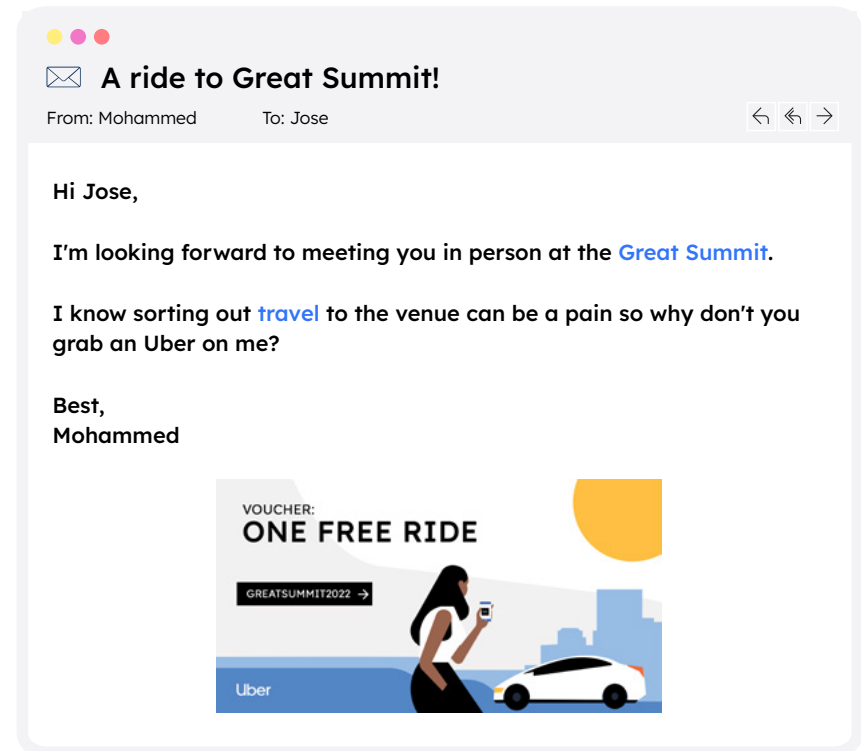
## Send a pre-event bundle to help attendees prepare

You can get creative here, since your attendees will be traveling to reach your event's destination. For example, if your conference is being held in rainy London, you could send attendees an umbrella before the event. If it's in sunny Hawaii, a pair of personalized flip-flops is exactly what they'll need!

### Play 3

## Provide travel or food vouchers

As part of the event package, make attendees' lives easier and ensure they're having the most comfortable time possible with travel or food vouchers. Tokens for Uber trips would be handy to help them get around, as well as vouchers for local restaurants where networking and meetings could take place.



# In-person events

## During event

### Play 4

## Stage giveaways and competitions at the event

Part of the excitement of in-person events is the feeling that anything could happen. Have your attendees walk away as winners by encouraging them to enter prize draws at your conference or trade show. Giving away exciting tech prizes like Google Nests or Apple AirTags is sure to generate some buzz around your booth.

### Play 5

## Give attendees a taste of luxury

When organizing a dinner event for VIP's, make them feel special by supplying them with luxury gift packs placed on their tables - think premium alcohol and high-quality food. This was exactly what [Naastar Channel](#) did for a dinner event they sponsored, and the gifts looked impressive:





# In-person events

## Post-event

### Play 6

## Give goody bags to live attendees as a memento

Being able to take something tangible away from an in-person event makes it even more memorable. Employ the help of physical gifting after your customer training session and reward attendees with a personalized bottle of bubbly or gin to celebrate them completing the session.

### Play 7

## Send edible thank you cards to follow up

Just when VIP prospects thought the fun was over, surprise and delight them once more with your post-event follow-up. Send cupcakes or cookies to their desk or door, inviting them to start a conversation about your product or service.

### Case study

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Zappi used Reachdesk to ship their goody bags and event swag directly to their event venues.

*“There’s the two ends of sustainability; where we’re actually sourcing from and the shipping. Having a gifting partner that has warehouses everywhere we’re shipping to and can source locally into those warehouses cuts down our carbon footprint. That was a big selling point for us.”*

Ariel Madway, Senior Manager,  
Community Engagement, Zappi

# Hybrid events

## Pre-event

Hybrid events combine the best aspects of virtual and in-person events. They have the atmosphere of a live event, set in a real venue, with a crowd, whilst also being streamed to an audience at home (or in the office).

Whilst hybrid events have the potential to reach large audiences, it can be challenging for marketers to try to meet the needs of both virtual and in-person attendees equally. In fact, [39% of people who attended hybrid events](#) virtually have stated that they didn't feel included in the event. However, with careful planning and the use of digital technology, both virtual and in-person attendees can have a positive experience.

Here's how you can ensure that both parties can have a great experience and gain value from the event through direct mail and gifting:

### *Play 1*

## Reduce drop outs with fun incentives

To encourage virtual and in-person attendees to turn up, offer them the chance to win by taking part. You could send them something edible, like a box of personalized chocolates before the event, which contains a code that they can activate by signing in to the event when it starts. By activating the code attendees are entered into a prize draw to win a virtual cooking class or luxury food hamper.

# Hybrid events

## Pre-event

### *Play 2*

## Send pre-event bundles to virtual and in-person attendees

Although their needs will be different, sending both sets of attendees something before the event creates excitement for what's to come.

For virtual attendees, tech bundles are a good option, perhaps headphones or a wireless speaker so they can listen to the event with crisp sound. For in-person attendees, a goodie box containing conference essentials like coffee vouchers, a reusable branded coffee cup, and a mobile phone charger would work well.

## During event

### *Play 3*

## Give the gift of networking

Create a unique but equal event experience for virtual and in-person attendees by building an interactive mobile app for your event that allows both types of attendees to meet and network with each other. Use the data you've collected about them to personalize the in-app experience, connect them with like-minded attendees, and allow them to converse with a chat function.

# Hybrid events

## Post-event

### Play 4

## Send a thank you bundle to all attendees

Show attendees that they're equally valued whether they attended virtually or in person by sending them all a gift bundle. It could contain useful items like a smart water bottle, wearable branded swag, such as socks or a cap, or, like [CommScope](#), tech gadgets that help attendees work smarter.

Don't forget to include a custom thank you card for each attendee - you could even let virtual attendees know how much they've helped reduce the event's carbon footprint by tuning in digitally.





# Tips for pulling off the perfect event with direct mail

To have your marketing event go off without a hitch, you'll want to cross all of the t's and dot all of the i's. Here are some best practices for creating an effective marketing event strategy.

# Tips for pulling off the perfect event with direct mail

## 1 Set specific goals and outcomes for your event

To run a successful demand generation event, it's essential to decide what outcomes you want to achieve and how you'll measure success. Setting measurable goals will help you to understand if your event is successful, so decide on two or three that will move the needle within your team and have the most overall impact on the business.

For example, depending on the size and type of event you're running, setting a goal of generating 10 prospects from your event could be useful. If you want to build brand awareness, you could set a goal for the number of user-generated social media posts that should be created about your event by attendees, perhaps 50 in the space of one day. If generating attendee feedback is your priority, you could set the goal of collecting 20 post-event questionnaire responses.

## 2 Use marketing tools and automate where you can

Picking the right automation tools will save your team valuable time at each stage of event planning, from the strategy to the execution. Whether it's choosing Hubspot to organize your communication touchpoints, selecting a platform like Drift to host the event on, or picking a direct mail and corporate gifting tool like [Reachdesk](#) to send gifts to conference venues, or to attendees' desks, consider the best tools to help you get the best results.

# Tips for pulling off the perfect event with direct mail

## 3 Source gifts well in advance

To ensure all gifts arrive at the right times and to the right places, you'll need to be realistic about the lead times for gifts and bundles. Organization is key, but sometimes endless spreadsheets just won't do.

Automated research company [Zappi](#) managed to pull off their events with ease with the help of Reachdesk's global gifting solution. [They saved time and the planet](#) by easily sending their branded merchandise to client events in bulk, directly to international event venues.

## 4 Encourage attendees to join the online conversation

To generate brand awareness at your event, motivate attendees to post photos and videos of their experience on social media. Give them a hashtag to use when posting, and incentivize them to keep posting by offering prizes for the posts with the most online engagement. Photo booths also provide attendees with a physical reminder of attending your event and can be an exciting addition.

# There's no time like the present to embrace direct mail

As the world of event marketing continues to bounce back, marketers are learning that organizing and executing engaging events requires creating unique and memorable experiences for your audience, from start to finish.

Both physical and virtual direct mail can help to reduce the friction around virtual events, create demand for your brand from prospects and customers, and make for a more exciting experience for attendees. Whatever type of marketing event you're running, direct mail can make it better.

## We'd love to hear from you

For help and support, and if you have any questions, get in touch with us at [hello@reachdesk.com](mailto:hello@reachdesk.com).

For more inspiration on leveraging direct mail and gifting, why not take a look at our [Direct Mail Guide](#) or [request a demo](#) to find out how Reachdesk can help you deliver the moments that matter at scale.

