

# Virtual Race



# Marketing Checklist

# Define Your Audience

Why do people want to join your Race?

- Personal Achievement
- Shared Experience
- Swag
- Support a Cause
- Community Connection
- Tradition
- Accountability
- Gym Replacement
- Try New Activity

Top 3 reasons people want to join my Challenge	Online and local communities that have this reason to join my challenge
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

# Getting Ready to Market to Your Audience

**1. Preparation:** Get some of your logistics in line before you start communicating with your audience(s).

- Confirm your date range and challenge goals
- Set up registration with the [Race Wizard](#)
- Review the [Virtual Race Setup Checklist](#) to ensure best practices for a virtual event (most settings also apply to Challenges)
- TEST registration to ensure you are collecting the data you need and the process is simple
- Create a Race Website that features the virtual race structure, mission, and messaging. Consult the website [presentation](#) and [slides](#).
- Use a graphics program to create a collection of images in various sizes to use for various social media sites and advertisements

**2. Marketing Budget:** Before you start planning your marketing, create an estimated budget. This means calculating all costs for the event, including expenses, marketing costs, donations, and expected profit.

- With a traditional race, we generally recommend spending 2-4% of gross sales (including registrations, add-ons and store items, and sponsorships, but excluding donations) on marketing. For a virtual race, we would set aside a little more than that (6-190%)
- Aside from marketing, likely costs include:
  - Annual/monthly costs** (Domain, Canva, G-Suite)
  - Consultants** (Graphic Designers, video creators, etc)
  - Swag:** Per-person cost for swag items, as well as shipping/fulfillment
  - Donations:** Any fixed or per-person contribution to a cause (whether an internal cause or an outside charity)
  - Revenue:** Once all expenses and donations are made, how much revenue do you need to bring in for it to be a worthwhile event?

# First Touch: Reaching Potential Participants

**1. Email Marketing:** Use your existing participant lists to get out the word.

- Learn how to use RunSignup's Email Marketing platform here: <https://runsignup.com/emailmarketingwebinar>
- Export list of participants from previous events and build a Custom List to market to.
  - If you want more flexibility with your email template, use a builder in a platform like MailChimp, copy the HTML, and paste it into the RunSignup email system.
- Turn on incomplete registration emails to automatically reach out to potential participants who abandon their carts  
*Email Marketing >> Automated Emails >> Incomplete Registration*

**2. Digital Marketing:** Before you start planning your marketing, create an estimated budget.

- Google (Organic Traffic)**
  - Google is the #1 source of race website traffic and is responsible for more than 28% of all traffic
  - Make sure the name of your race in the Race Wizard and the titles on your page all include your Challenge Name and key details about the goals of the Challenge.
  - Google your race name and make sure you come up at the top of results
- Event Calendars**
  - Make sure you're listed on national calendars like Running in the USA and Race Directors HQ - even if you're virtual!
  - List your event with local calendars like running stores or local newspapers, especially if there is a place-based theme
  - Reach out to running clubs, workout groups, and other fitness organizations to see if they will include you on their lists of events

**3. Facebook Organic Reach:** It's hard to build a huge following strictly with organic Facebook Marketing, but it's still key to keeping people engaged once they find you.

- Create a Facebook Business Page and customize the branding and messaging.
  - Customize the message and image that is seen when people share your race website.  
*Promotion >> Social Sharing*
- Use custom source tracking to monitor conversions on your unpaid posts  
*Promotion >> Source Tracking >> Custom Source Tracking*

**4. Facebook Paid Ads:** Facebook advertising can be the best bang for your advertising dollars.

- If you have a solid list of previous participants that would be interested in your Challenge, use Facebook Custom Audiences to target them on Facebook
  - Setup Facebook Custom Audiences (you can find a webinar [here](#))  
*Promotion >> Facebook Custom Audiences*
  - Create ads for Lookalike Audiences made up of users similar to your previous participants
- To reach entirely new audiences, use demographics (like gender, age, and location) and targeting (like interests and page likes) and exclusions (for people who likely won't be interested) to build a target audience for your ads.
  - Start broad and test out different combinations of interests. Keep your budget small for testing, and increase as you see success.
  - Use different creative designs and messages for different audiences. Try setting up an A/B test to see which messages and images work best.
  - Budget to waste some money before you find what works.
- Set up and monitor analytics. In addition to using Custom Source Tracking and [RaceInsights](#), set up your Facebook Pixel.  
*Promotion >> Facebook Pixel*



**5. Google Ads:** Google Display Ads can require a larger financial investment and more time to learn, but if you're going big, Google can reach a large audience. Google Ads are generally suited to larger organizations.

If you have a robust custom list, you *may* be able to target specific people with ads using Customer Match. However, this option is only available if you have been on Google Ads for more than 90 days and have spent more than \$50,000 in total lifetime spend.

Create Display Ads Campaigns

Use different creative designs and messages - try setting up an A/B test to see which messages and images work best.

Monitor closely and don't be shy about making changes or ending a campaign that isn't working. You can find some good guidance to help you determine the success of your campaigns here:

<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>

**6. Re-Marketing:** Use Facebook and/or Google to re-engage with people who demonstrated an interest by visiting your website, etc.

Take advantage of the Facebook pixel that you installed before to advertise specifically to people who have visited your site through Audiences. Facebook explains this more [here](#).

Create a remarketing campaign through Google Ads. There is a good YouTube tutorial [here](#).

# Expand Your Funnel, Grow Your Race

It's not always enough to put an ad or a post in front of someone. You need to reach them again, and through channels they trust.

In normal times, 50%+ of participants come out to a race because a friend or family member asked them to. While race day looks a little different for a virtual race, social connections are still key. Virtual participants are looking for ways to share an experience with their friends and family - you can provide them with a way to accomplish something "together" and hold each other accountable.

**Pick 1, 2, or 3 of the marketing tricks below, and use them to turn your participants into informal ambassadors for your race.**

**1. Referral Rewards:** The single most effective way to get participants to refer people to your race is to ask them to...and provide them with a little incentive for doing so.

Setup a program for referral rewards and/or swag to incentivize participants to refer people in their network. Learn more about the setup of a referral and swag program: <https://runsignup.com/swag>

Referrals are incredibly effective for virtual events, making up 18-20% of all registrations for virtual events (as compared to 7% for in-person events). For virtual events with strong referral programs, that can be as high as 40% of all registrations.

Example of a strong referral program:

- Refer 5 friends: Get a \$25 refund of your registration fee
- Refer 10 friends: Receive an exclusive branded winter hat
- Refer 20 friends: Receive a premium winter running jacket

Effective setups are high threshold, high reward. Most referrers never reach the threshold to get a reward - so the 1-4 people they do refer are "free".

Customize your social sharing images and text  
*Promotion >> Social Sharing*

Stacking rewards is encouraged, but don't go overboard - your program should be easy to understand.

- Over 70% of referrers are female, and more than 60% of virtual participants are female. Offer gender appropriate sizes and options for rewards.
- Use registration follow-up emails 1-10 days after someone registers to capitalize on their excitement and encourage sharing.  
*Email Marketing >> Automated Emails >> Registration Follow Up*
- Promote your program early and often - participants need to know about it for referrals to be successful.
- Any swag for a referral reward should be something that participants can't buy or get in any other way - it's value is in exclusivity.

**2.Teams:** The most literal way to encourage participants to join together is to have them on teams together.

- Learn how to set up teams for your race:  
<https://help.runsignup.com/support/solutions/folders/17000128484>
- Set up the appropriate team type(s) for your audiences.  
*Participants >> Groups/Teams>>Setup*
  - Social: 100% for fun, with no competitive consequences. Increase the fun with a casual social-media competition for the best (socially-distant) team costume.
  - Competitive: with teams competing against each other. Understand that competition will never be 100% "fair" for a virtual race.
  - Fundraising: focused on raising money collectively  
*Donations >> Setup >> Basic Setup*
- Automate discounts/refunds for anyone on a team that hits a certain size.  
*Participants >> Groups/Teams >> Pricing Setup*
  - Consider using team discounts instead of coupons for your race. You will satisfy participants' "discount demand" while simultaneously incentivizing your price sensitive participants to get their friends to join their team

**3. A Cause:** If you are a nonprofit, or are supporting a cause, that's a reason for people to join the event - and for them to encourage others to join.

- Younger generations want to know what your race does for others. Setup donations.  
*[Donations >> Setup](#)*

- If you're a for-profit choosing a charity partner, choose carefully. It's a mutually beneficial relationship.

*[Donations >> Charities](#)*

- Your charity partner is another channel for new participants for your race.

- Your race is another channel for your charity partner to get new donor & supporter contacts (and extra donations).

- Setup fundraising for your race to maximize your benefit to the cause. Learn how to set up fundraising:

<https://help.runsignup.com/support/solutions/articles/17000064552-advanced-fundraising>

- Get more fundraising tips here:

<https://www.slideshare.net/runsignup/advanced-fundraising-runsignup>

**4. Swag:** Swag is a huge motivator for any virtual event. Cool swag is a selling point for your event.

- Offer swag that people want to wear - when participants actually wear (and share) your swag, they promote your race.

- There are 3 ways to offer swag to your participants. Learn how to set up swag here:  
<https://help.runsignup.com/support/solutions/folders/17000128471>

- Giveaway: T-Shirts or other swag that requires a choice (i.e., size, color, etc) that you want to offer all participants when they register.

*[Race >> Giveaways/Add-Ons >> Giveaways/Giveaway Inventory](#)*

- Registration Add-Ons: Additional items that you want to sell during registration to participants only.

*[Race >> Giveaways/Add-Ons >> Registration Add-ons](#)*

- Store: Additional items you want to sell to participants *and* non-participants

*[Store >> Setup](#)*



- Reward your participants with swag
  - If you push referrals, present top 3 referrers with swag.
  - If your race is focused on fundraising, reward the top 3 fundraisers with swag.

**5. Drip Campaigns:** Use automated emails from RunSignup's free email marketing platform to continue to remind participants about your team, referral, or fundraising programs - or just show off your cool swag.

- Learn to use email marketing: <https://runsignup.com/emailmarketingwebinar>
- Set up your drip campaigns in minutes and let them run on auto-pilot with automated emails.
  - [Email Marketing >> Automated Emails >> Incomplete Registration](#)*
  - [Email Marketing >> Automated Emails >> Price Increase](#)*
  - [Email Marketing >> Automated Emails >> Registration Follow Up](#)*
- Don't send too many emails! Limit campaigns to 2 or 3 follow-ups.
- Your drip campaign should support the rest of your marketing. Keep your messaging concises and consistent, and focus on your main programs (like referrals or fundraising).