

THE GUIDE TO: **SUCCESSFUL  
EVENTS FOR  
SMALL  
BUSINESS**

Event Marketing with Swiftpage Connect



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## Why Events?

*“Events for customers are a throwback to the days when a handshake was more meaningful than a text alert.”* - Sara Hottman, Inc. ([source](#))

Events offer unique opportunities for businesses to gain exposure, experience in depth customer interaction, and show a little vulnerability and humanness. Inviting your customers or potential customers into your world in the form of an event speaks volumes about your brand.

Still not sure? [Voices.com](#) lists these 8 reasons for hosting an event:

- Meet new people
- Reconnect with current and past clients
- Give a tour of your studio
- Teach about what you do
- Share how you can help other businesses
- Get some press from local papers
- Attract interest for potential collaboration
- Make yourself available to mentor / take on a co-op student

**Why use Swiftpage Connect for your event marketing?** Whether you are hosting an onsite event, presenting an online webinar or throwing an all company shindig, Swiftpage Connect can easily be used to effectively promote your event. Swiftpage Connect puts all of the event marketing tools you need in one place. From email marketing to list management to RSVP survey solutions and event landing pages – events become easy to manage with Swiftpage Connect. Try using Swiftpage Connect and set up your event marketing now!

### Did You Know?

67% of users increased event attendance by using Swiftpage Connect.

**Need some ideas for events?** While this is certainly not an all-inclusive list, here are some ideas for events to get your creative wheels turning.

- **Realtors**
  - Open Houses, Broker Opens, Home Buying Seminar, Real Estate Investment Webinar
- **Retailers**
  - Off-hours Sale, Trunk Show, Seasonal Showcase, DIY or Craft Events
- **Marketers**
  - Best Practices Webinar, Digital Marketing How-To, PR for Small Businesses
- **Restaurants**
  - Fundraising Dinner, Cooking Class, Wine or Beer Pairing Event
- **Artists**
  - Exhibition, How-To Class,
- **Builders/Contractors**
  - New Construction Tour, Choosing the Right Builder Seminar, DIY Lessons

## Step One: Make a Plan

Before you can market an event, you have to plan it. Spending time thinking through not only event details, but your goals and target demographic will enable you to analyze your event's success once the dust has settled. Plus, you'll be ready to hit the ground running with your marketing efforts.

### 1. What type of event do you want to have? Here is a short list of some event ideas:

- Customer Appreciation Event
- Charity Event or Auction
- Educational Online Webinar
- Invitation-Only Sale
- Conference or In House Training
- Open House

**2. Think about your goals for the event.** Is it about current customers or about attracting new customers? Are you trying to increase brand awareness or build brand equity? Are you after sales or community involvement? Spending time identifying the goals for your event will help gauge event success after the event.

**3. Who is your target demographic for your event?** You are hosting the event. Who do you want to come? Think about your current customers, potential customers, their locale and time zone when deciding on your target demographic.

**4. Schedule the event and book space.** Once you have targets in mind, pick a date. Consider things such as: can your target demographic fit the event into their work day? Would the driving distance/travel time be too much? What has their attendance history been at previous events? Confirm with speakers, presenters, booth attendants, and any other required event attendees to make sure they are able to attend. If you are having an event that requires space rental, book the space and put down your deposit to ensure its availability. Leave yourself plenty of time before the event to market it well.

**5. Create a Pre-Event Marketing Calendar.** Now that your date is booked and all of the key people confirmed, sit down with your calendar and begin to pencil in your marketing efforts. Below are some ideas for your pre-event marketing.

- If attendees need to travel, start your event marketing early. We recommend about 6-12 weeks before an event that requires travel and accommodations.
- If attendees don't need to travel as with an online webinar, don't start marketing too early. Try 4-6 weeks before the event.
- Mix up your marketing efforts. While your focus is email marketing, consider direct mail, online advertising, in office brochures, etc.
- Set dates for early-bird, regular, and late registration if applicable.
- Share your calendar with all of your team members who need to be in the know.

**6. Start marketing!** Sounds simple enough, right?

Let's get down to the nitty gritty of how to use Swiftpage Connect for your event marketing efforts.

## Step Two: Start Your RSVP Survey

An RSVP survey is designed to collect responses from your invitees. You can customize your RSVP survey form to collect the type of data that is most important to you. Learn more about Swiftpage Connect Surveys at [www.SwiftpageConnect.com/Grow-Your-Database](http://www.SwiftpageConnect.com/Grow-Your-Database).

- Navigate to the surveys area, click on New and give your survey a name.

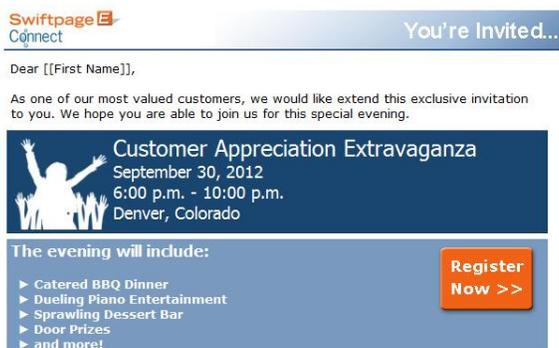


- Click on Survey Design and follow the onscreen steps 1-3.
  - Common questions added to event surveys include Name, Email, Phone Number, and RSVP options (Yes, I will attend or No, I won't make it).
- That's all for now. You will go back in Step Five to customize your survey design with a survey background page and set up your Survey Result Options.

## Step Three: Create Your Event Template

Now you will create an event theme template to use as the starting point for all of your event related pieces. The event template will act as a base for all event related emails, the RSVP survey background, and landing page.

- Browse through our [Template Gallery](#) to find a template that fits your needs or import an HTML template.
- Pick background colors and fonts that fit with the theme of the event and match your branding. Find an image or two to add some pop to your invite.
- Add basic event content such as when, where, and other pertinent event details.



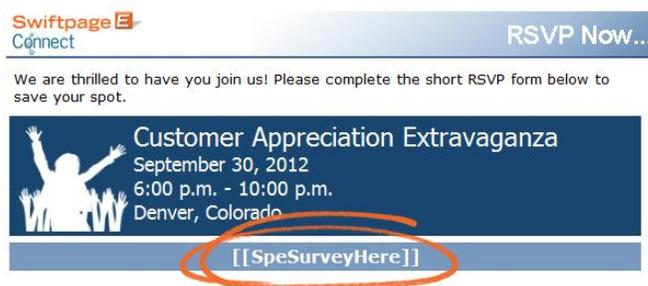
If you need help with your Basic Editor Template, you can watch our brief how-to video to get you started. If you don't have time to create a template on your own, order an affordable [Branded Template](#) or Holiday Template from our creative services division, Bright Peak.

### Duplicate Your Template and Update Your Content

Once you are happy with the design of your event template and have added the basic content, you need to create a few copies for your campaign. You will edit each copy individually. We recommend using the same prefix for your template and related copies to make them easy to find in your library. For example, start with the prefix Customer Appreciation Event. From there you can create Customer Appreciation Event **Invite**, Customer Appreciation Event **Invite Reminder**, etc.

- Click on the Copy button in the editor to create a copy of your template. We suggest making copies of your original template with the following descriptors added to the prefix:
  - **Invite** – this is likely your original template.
  - **Invite Reminder** – the second email you will send to remind your invitees of your upcoming event.
  - **SurveyBk** – this will serve as the backdrop for your RSVP survey. . SurveyBk is the code Swiftpage Connect uses to tell the Survey to use this template as a background.
  - **Landing Page** – after your invitees fill out the survey, they will be directed to this page letting them know their RSVP has been received.
- Open each template individually and customize the message you would like to appear on each.
  - It may be helpful to open and edit in the order that you will send.
  - Include important details such as date, time, directions, and contact information.
  - Use language to match the tone of your event.
  - Change up the content with each subsequent mailing instead of sending the same message multiple time.
  - While editing content, link each RSVP or Register link to your RSVP Survey using the tools in the Basic Editor.

- When you open the **SurveyBk** template, you need to add the survey code to the text area. Put the text: **[[SwiftpageSurveyHere]]** into the section where you would like your RSVP survey to appear. Find out more about using a template as a survey background by visiting [blog.swiftpage.com](http://blog.swiftpage.com) and searching for **survey background**.



- The **Landing Page** is where your RSVP respondents will be directed after completing your survey.
  - When you edit the **Landing Page** template you will likely want to have a reminder of event details, contact information for any event related questions, and a message about your event. Something like: “We are looking forward to seeing you there!” or “Your RSVP has been received! Be sure to mark the date on your calendar now.” Also include relevant links to lodging, driving directions, the main event website or your website.
  - Make sure your **Landing Page** template is *exactly* as you would like it to appear. If you make changes to your Landing Page template, you will need to remove and re-launch your landing page for the changes to be shown.

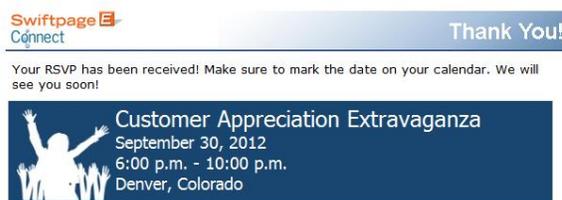
## Step Four: Design and Launch Your Event Landing Page

Now that our invitations have been created, we need to launch your landing page for the RSVP survey. Launching your landing page will give it a unique URL and make it live on the web. Don't launch your landing page until you are sure you are done editing your landing page template. Landing pages must be removed and relaunched if changes are made post launch.

- Preview the template you created in **Step 3** with the **Landing Page** suffix. Double check the template to make sure it is *exactly* as you would like it to appear. If you make changes to your Landing Page template, you will need to remove and re-launch your landing page for the changes to be shown.
- Click on the Landing Pages tab in the Editor, find your template in the top window and click on **Launch**.



- You will receive an email when your template has been launched and the landing page will also show up in the lower window showing active landing pages. Here is how our landing page looks:



## Step Five: Revisit Your RSVP Survey

Now that the rest of your campaign is complete, you need to update your RSVP survey design and result options.

- Navigate back to the Survey area, open your survey, and click on Survey Design then Background Page. [Follow the onscreen instructions](#) to make your SurveyBk template the background for the survey.
- After completing your survey design, click on Survey Result Options. Check the boxes next to **Autoresponder – email acknowledgement** and **Survey Landing Page** then click Submit. Follow the steps in the tool to add your [email autoresponder](#) and landing page.
- After these are completed, your RSVP survey is ready to go!

*Note on surveys: If you make changes to the SurveyBk template or the Landing Page template, you must update the survey again to reflect those changes. Changes made in the template editor are not automatically applied to surveys or landing pages.*

## Step Six: Test and Send

All of your pieces are in place and it can be tempting to send away and get your event marketing off the ground. Many an email marketer has skipped the all important testing phase and regretted it.

- Send yourself a test of each email in your pre-event marketing campaign.
  - Click on each link to ensure they work and go to the correct survey.
  - Take a look at your email in multiple email clients and browsers. Gmail, Hotmail, and Yahoo all offer free accounts and are the most common email clients.
- Fill out the survey form once or twice, testing to make sure the landing page shows up upon clicking Submit.
- Check your Survey Results to make sure that the responses are coming in as you expected. Delete any test responses before you send your first email.
- Verify that you receive the autoresponder email.
- When all systems appear to be working well, you are ready to move onto the final step.

### Send Away!

You can now go ahead and send your first email and schedule sends for the reminder email(s). If you need extra help learning how to send emails, visit [Swiftpage Connect Education center](#) and check out the how-to videos that will walk you through the sending and scheduling process.

## Bonus Ideas!

**For you overachievers, check out a few of these bonus ideas to take your event marketing to the next level.**

- Use the landing page feature to make a landing page specific to your event. Include a registration link to the survey form and other important details. The landing page becomes a mini website for your event and you can link to it from your website and email communications for more information on the event.
- Create and send a follow-up email after the event thanking your attendees for coming and letting those that did not attend know that you missed them – and what they missed at the event.
- Design a matching follow-up survey to include in your follow-up email, asking attendees for their feedback on your event.
- Add your event attendees to a drip marketing campaign that keeps them in the loop of other upcoming events and promotions, driving attendance to future events and staying in contact with your attendees.
- [Send a postcard](#) invitation using Bright Peak Creative Services to your invitees who haven't responded to or opened your emails with the link to the RSVP survey or landing page.

Congratulations, your event marketing is now under way! Get ready for the RSVPs to start pouring in. The more you use Swiftpage to market your events, the easier the process will become. Using the Swiftpage Connect system, you make your event marketing more efficient and we know your events will become great successes for your company.

## About Swiftpage Connect

Swiftpage Connect is a subsidiary of Summit 5, a software development company, whose founders have a passion for changing the way people communicate. Swiftpage Connect was designed to make email marketing one of the most cost-effective tools in a company's arsenal, simple and accessible to individuals and organizations of all types and sizes. Since its inception, Swiftpage Connect has helped thousands of for-profit and non-profit organizations create, send and track the performance of email campaigns. In addition to its standalone on-line email service Swiftpage Connect is the first server-based email management system to be fully integrated into ACT!, the leading contact management system in the world.

Swiftpage Connect takes performance, security and reliability very seriously so that our customers will have the highest possible up time. Our servers are hosted by Viawest, a co-location company in Denver, Colorado. Internet connectivity is provided by separate backbones from separate carriers assuring that your Swiftpage Connect system is always online.

In addition to the state-of-the-art technology infrastructure, Swiftpage Connect prides itself on the highest level of customer support.