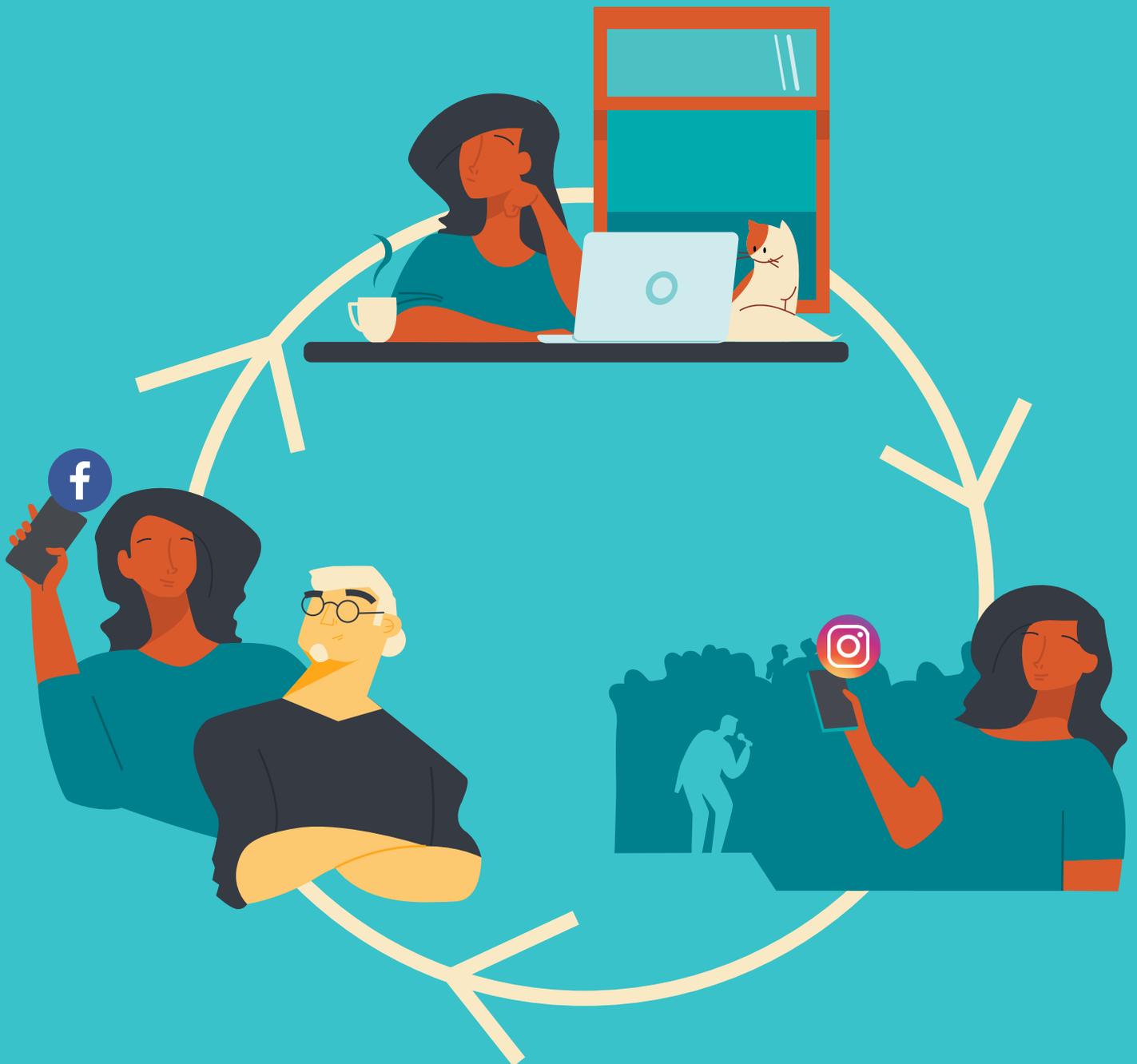


Eventbrite |



# Facebook and Instagram Reveal How Users Discover Events



Facebook and Instagram are two of the most powerful event promotion platforms. But if your team treats them like any other marketing channel, you're missing out on their unique potential to power your events business.

Unlike most advertising channels, Facebook and Instagram aren't a platform for one-way marketing messages. If your team treats them that way, your message will fall on deaf ears and you'll leave a window open for competitors to steal your audience. And with **half of smartphone usage** spent on customers' most used app — which for the majority of the world is Facebook or Instagram — you can't afford to get your message wrong.

Instead, take advantage of your audience's tendency to discover, react, share, and engage all in one place. Use the platforms to build a powerful connection with your event's local community.

People turn to Facebook and Instagram every day to discover local businesses and experiences like your event — and they want to share what they discover with their friends. This creates what Mike Bronfin, a product marketing manager at Instagram, calls a “flywheel” of event discovery. Once you set the wheel in motion, it will spin faster and faster on its own momentum — growing your following and attendance without taking up more of your team's time.

You can turn these platforms into the most impactful part of your marketing strategy. But to do so, you need to understand how event discovery works differently on these channels.

No one knows how event-goers use these platforms better than the teams at Instagram and Facebook. Keep reading for insights straight from their teams, and examples of how events like yours have already put these learnings into action.

## This guide is for...

Event creators whose teams are already using Facebook and Instagram, but who suspect they could be getting more return to their investment.

## What you'll learn:

- Data-driven strategies from the Facebook and Instagram teams to put the flywheel into action
- How to use the platforms to reach a local audience and build your event's community
- How events like yours have used the “event discovery flywheel” to grow their followings and attendance

## Meet the Facebook and Instagram team



**Mike Bronfin**  
Product Marketing Manager,  
Business Platform Instagram



**Virginia Maloney**  
Product Marketing Manager,  
Facebook Events

## Meet the event experts



**Marcy Coburn**  
Executive Director, CUESA



**Craig Hammill**  
Founder,  
Secret Movie Club



**Jonah Holland**  
PR & Marketing, Lewis Ginter  
Botanical Garden



**Joan Rosenberg**  
Director of Marketing,  
Maker Faire



**Morgan Schaffner**  
Marketing Manager,  
Ad Hoc Presents

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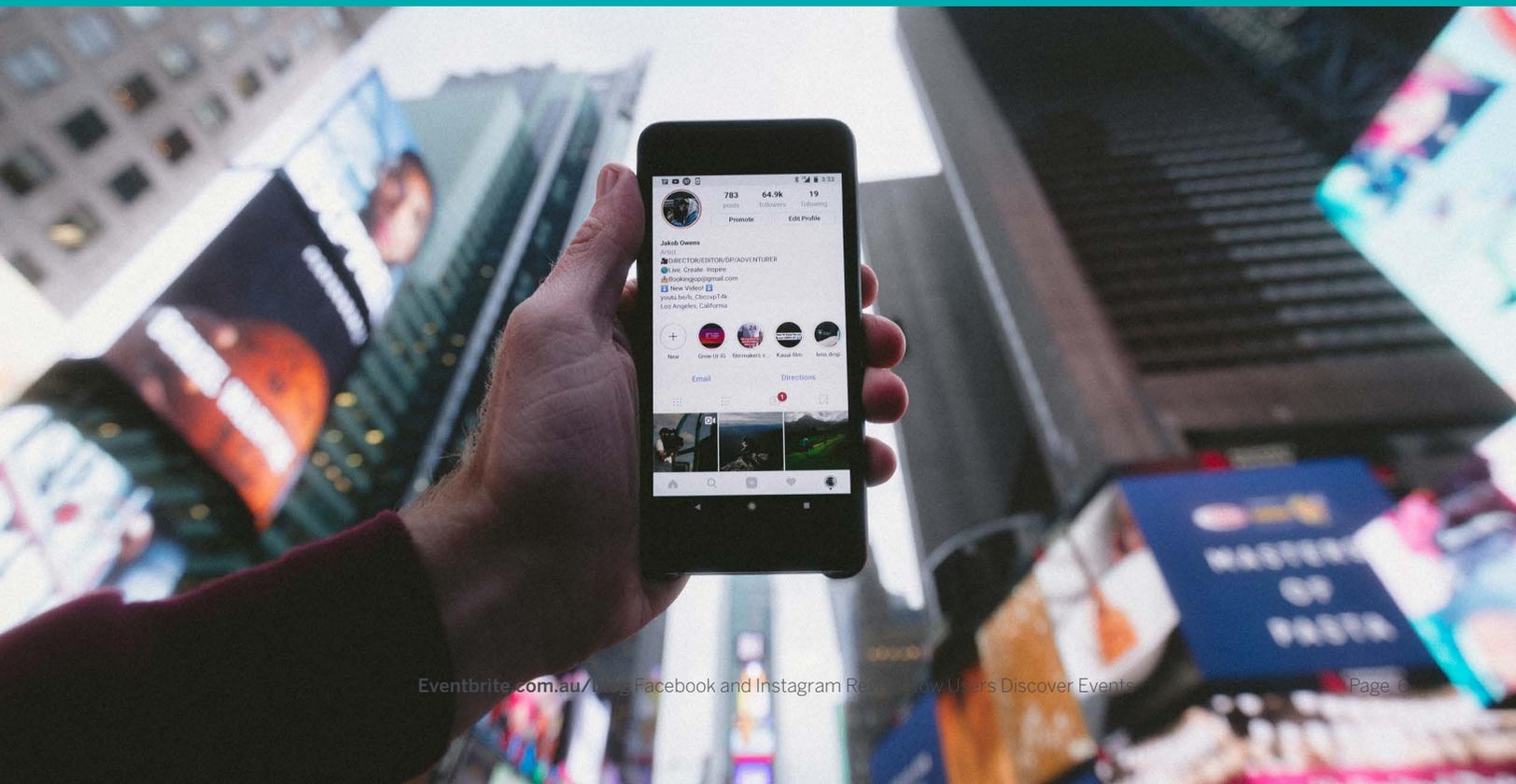
## The event discovery flywheel on Facebook and Instagram

A flywheel is a self-reinforcing cycle made up of a few key initiatives that feed each other and build long-term momentum.

Social media is a prime example of the flywheel effect in action. The more you post and gain followers, the more people come to your event, the more people post on social media about your event — which in turn drives more followers to your account, and the cycle begins again.

On Facebook and Instagram, where users are constantly engaging with local businesses' content, events have a prime opportunity to push the flywheel into motion with a few simple steps:

- The content you post on Instagram and Facebook grabs users' attention
- Users learn more about your event and buy tickets
- People post at your event, driving more people to check out your content and your events



## The event discovery flywheel



“This flywheel is a powerful way for businesses to be discovered by their local community,” says Mike Bronfin, product marketing manager at Instagram. “Encouraging the right types of content creation and sharing while customers visit your event is the best way to get discovered.”

It’s a cycle that creates exponential exposure and — if your team takes full advantage — massive ticket sales.

## The content you post on Instagram and Facebook grabs users' attention

“ Anyone that isn't using Facebook Events in the music industry is missing out on a huge opportunity. Creating an event on Facebook is the first thing we use when we promote our concerts. It is one of the best ways to fulfil our mission, which is to bring awareness to emerging local artists to the community.

Morgan Schaffner, marketing manager at Ad Hoc Presents

To set the event discovery flywheel in motion, your team's first step is to grow your following through content. "Instagrammers are constantly inspired by visual content taken at local businesses and experiences in their community," says Instagram's Mike Bronfin. In fact, one-third of the most-viewed Instagram Stories are from businesses.

So what type of content will activate your event's flywheel? Most events are inherently visual, making your Instagram content a prime opportunity to bring the experience to life for users. That's the approach that Joan Rosenberg, the director of marketing for San Francisco's Maker Faire, uses.

“Maker Faire is a very visual and hands-on event with a lot of projects, so we feature the makers that create the experience.” Rosenberg says. “That way people who look at our Instagram account get a good taste of what the faire is.”

If you have a Facebook Page, using Facebook Events promotes your event to a built-in audience. Those that have already liked or followed your Page will automatically be notified when you have an Event coming up after you publish the event to your page.

Take a note from CUESA, a San Francisco-based agricultural nonprofit that uses Facebook Events to connect local farms with shoppers in person.

“Part of our mission is to cultivate a healthy food system, and we do that through the educational events and farmers markets,” Marcy Coburn, the executive director at CUESA, told Facebook. “Making a Facebook Event is the first thing we do. It’s the thread that links a lot of different parts of the community together.”

“ Facebook Events makes it easy for people to find things happening near them. People can explore events in their area, see suggested events their friends are interested in, and get notified about events created by pages they follow. It helps strengthen local communities.

Virginia Maloney, product marketing manager at Facebook Events

## Put the flywheel in motion

- **Use your Facebook Events or Groups to engage your community:**

Your Facebook Event or Group is where the entire community surrounding your event can connect. In fact, there's been a 40% growth in engagement with Facebook Events each year.

"We post once or twice a day on the Event page." Maker Faire's Rosenberg says. "Our posts are a mix of schedule announcements, engaging news articles, reposts, and features on the makers and presenters who exhibit at our flagship fairs. We try to keep the messaging fresh and not just focus on ourselves."

Share content in your Facebook Event or Group such as pictures, videos, stories, or updates, or even go on Facebook Live from your Event to drive even more engagement.

- **Lean into video:** On both platforms, video — both recorded and live — sees massive engagement. Host a weekly "behind-the-scenes" live video leading up to an event, and have one person dedicated to video at your event itself. [Take advantage of Instagram Stories](#) (which you can post directly to Facebook Stories) for other video clips and interactive content throughout the week.
- **Make sure each post is well written:** To build your following, content is everything. If your team simply shares dry announcements and information, you won't trigger the flywheel into action. To help your team write social media copy that engages followers and turns them into attendees, point them towards this free guide: [Storytelling Sells: Bring Your Event's Copy to Life on Social Media](#).



## See the flywheel in action

### How Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden builds its following

“When I meet people in the community and tell them where I work, the first thing they say is ‘I love your Instagram!’” Jonah Holland says. She’s been managing the social media accounts for Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia for 10 years.

In that time, Holland has observed a shift in how people engage with the Garden’s social media presence.

- **On Facebook,** Holland creates Facebook Events whenever she can because they get better engagement than posts. By adding Facebook Groups for Garden members, volunteers and for Virginia gardening questions, she is able to engage followers on a deeper level. Posts continue to generate engagement, but the community group gives fans a more intimate way to connect with one of their favourite local nonprofits and with each other.
- **On Instagram,** Holland’s mission is to share the beauty of the Garden while educating fans about plants. “We use botanical names of plants in our hashtags,” she says. “People click on them and see photos of that plant from all over the country, or even the world.”
- **And on both platforms,** Holland takes advantage of the live video options. With Facebook Live and Instagram Live, she can showcase events at the garden in real time. She and her colleague, Horticulturist Megan Lacey, also host a weekly live broadcast every Thursday on a topic that combines botanical education with promoting that weekend’s events.

“Through Instagram and Facebook Events we’re able to reach an audience that is engaged and looking for things to do in Richmond,” Holland says.

## Users learn more about your event and buy tickets

“ Facebook and Eventbrite are the engines that drive our enterprise. The integration is how we get the word out, sell out events, and build a community. Our business really soared when we started using Eventbrite and Facebook. The combination enabled us to take off.

Craig Hammill, Founder, Secret Movie Club

There is a natural connection between posting compelling content and driving sales. “Content inspires Instagrammers to learn more, which is why 200M Instagrammers visit business profiles every day, with two-thirds of these visits from non-followers,” Instagram’s Bronfin says.

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200M

Instagrammers visit business profiles every day

over

1.6 billion

people around the world are connected to a small business on Facebook

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But that doesn’t mean the sales will come automatically. Once these users are on your Instagram business profile or Facebook Event, it’s up to you to turn them into attendees.

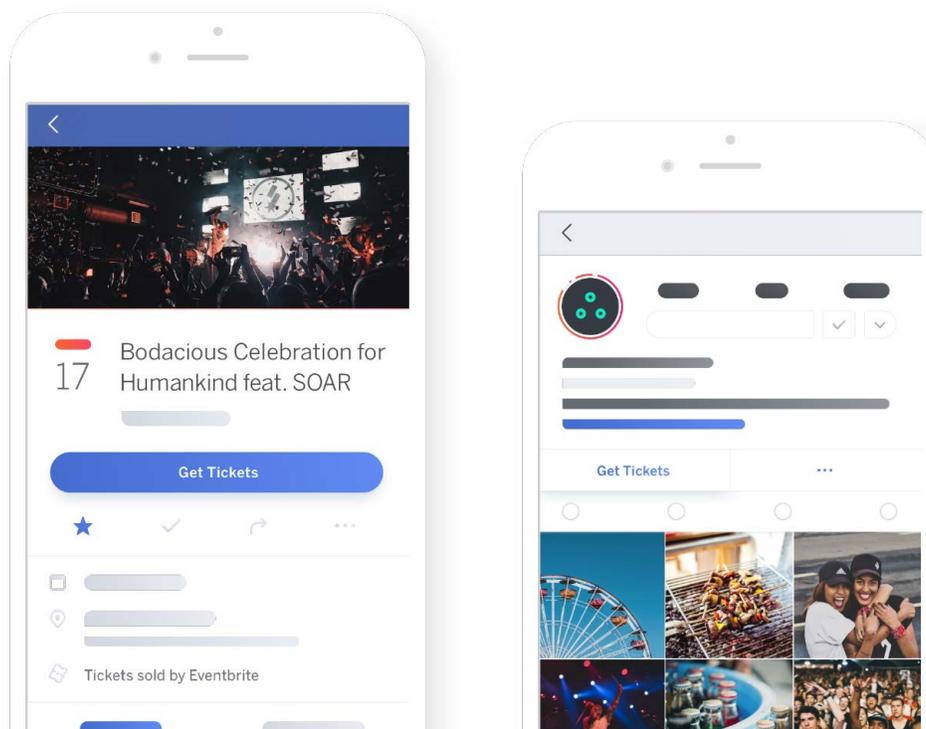
## Put the flywheel in motion

On both platforms, you can turn customer discovery into real business results. The key is to make it extremely easy for fans to buy from your Event Pages or business profile.

There are a few ways to do this:

- **Link directly from your profile to your ticketing or registration page** — not your website, necessarily, but the place people can actually buy tickets or register. Don't make them take an extra click to commit to a purchase.
- **Make sure your payment process is built for mobile viewers.** Most people scroll through Facebook and Instagram on their phones or tablets. It's critical they can easily buy tickets on those same screens.
- **Feature a “Get Tickets” button** on your Instagram profile page, your Facebook Event page, and any Facebook Event ads you invest in.

If you're an Eventbrite customer, you can [publish your event to Facebook](#) directly, to enable an integrated “Get Tickets” button and purchase experience. On Instagram, simply [edit your Instagram profile to add your Eventbrite URL](#) to see a “Get Tickets” button instantly appear.



Selling tickets directly on Facebook and Instagram helps you take full advantage of the flywheel. Eventbrite events that offer native tickets have, on average, twice the number of viewers on Facebook as those without native tickets.

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And events that sell tickets directly on Facebook drive

2X more sales and free registrations



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“Eventbrite allows you to sell tickets to your events directly on Facebook — to capture your audience where they spend their time,” Facebook’s Maloney says. “People are no longer redirected from Facebook to a ticketing page to buy or register for your event. Instead, their payment information is pulled directly into Facebook’s checkout, making it easier and more likely that they complete their order.”



## See the flywheel in action

# How Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden turns engagement into ticket sales

Jonah Holland and her colleagues at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden put a lot of effort into creating colourful content for the Garden's Instagram and Facebook presence. But Holland has relied on the "Get Tickets" buttons to translate this buzz to attendance.

For a recent Garden Soiree event, Holland was facing a challenge: attracting the next generation of garden members and raising awareness about their educational programming. "Reaching a new and younger audience was one of our goals for this event," Holland says.

Holland decided to set up a targeted ad campaign focused on people who had already engaged with other after-hours social events. Then, she used Eventbrite's integration so that attendees were able to purchase tickets without ever leaving Facebook. Thanks to Holland's strategy, the Garden Soiree saw 27% of tickets to the event sold directly on Facebook.

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61xROI

from the Facebook ad spend

19.58%

conversion rate on Facebook

27%

of tickets to the event sold  
directly on Facebook

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Holland used a similar strategy for the Garden's first-ever floating lantern event, which reached 300,000 fans on Facebook alone and got 14,000 responses. "We were floored!" says Holland. "It was unprecedented. The first event sold out immediately, so we created a second members-only event. That one sold out within three minutes."

## People post at your event, driving more people to check out your content and your events

“ Followers are always tagging their friends or tagging us as their location. For example, we hosted Pokemon Go Community days back in August. When we posted those events on Facebook, followers tagged their friends who play the game, who might not have otherwise known about the event.

Jonah Holland, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

This stage is what turns the flywheel into a marketing machine driven by its own momentum: Attendees and followers naturally want to share their experience at your event with their own friends, fans, and followers.

This desire to share is largely organic — and is what kicks the flywheel into motion. [53% of Aussie millennials](#) say they attend live events so they have something to share on social channels, and [4 out of 5 say](#) they enjoy seeing other people's unique experiences on social media.

All you need to do is give attendees a little encouragement to share, and then the flywheel effect will kick in.

53%  
of millennials

in Australia say they attend live events so they have something to share on social media

“When people share their experiences at local businesses and events on Instagram, that repowers discovery for others,” Bronfin says. “Instagrammers love to see content from their friends that tag local experiences. A person’s story or post from a local concert, in which they tag the artist or venue, often inspires their friends and followers to learn more in a natural way.” Similarly, on Facebook users see suggested events their friends are interested in in their feed and notifications, driving exponential engagement.

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### Put the flywheel in motion

Some attendees will naturally share their experience at your event — but others need a bit of encouragement. On both platforms, you need a strategy that inspires user-generated content.

For example, Jonah Holland hosts four [Instagram contests](#) each year. These contests are tied to special exhibits and events at the garden, such as "A Million Blooms" and "Origami in the Garden."

Instagram fans are invited to “submit” pictures to the contest by posting shots of these exhibits on their own feeds and tagging the images with a hashtag. “The goal is to see how people are enjoying the garden,” says Holland, “and encourage them to share that experience with others.”

“We see huge engagement on the original photos visitors post to enter,” Holland says, including comments along the lines of “Where is this place? I want to go!”

Attendees aren’t the only people who can spread your message far and wide on Facebook and Instagram. Brand ambassadors, [influencers](#), and [sponsors](#) can be key in this step as well. But don’t expect their engagement without asking for it: Make it easy and include your ask in your partnership agreement, like Maker Faire does in the example below.



## See the flywheel in action

### Maker Faire

## How Maker Faire makes partners part of their flywheel

Maker Faire showcases the work of creative makers in San Francisco and New York City at annual flagship events, as well as in a growing number of cities. More than an event brand, Maker Faire is leading a cultural zeitgeist known as “the Maker Movement,” where tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, and more all come together to show their creations. Each one of those makers is a part of Maker Faire’s marketing strategy.

“We have a marketing strategy in place with the makers, and provide them with a marketing resource kit and engage them in friendly contest competition for who can sell the most tickets. We use the Eventbrite Affiliate links to help track the results,” says Joan Rosenberg, Maker Faire’s director of marketing. She provides each maker with a digital resource kit that includes every link, logo, and asset they need to promote the event to their own social followers. She also supplies them with prewritten posts they can use in a pinch.

“We had one robot maker (of the giant mech racing machine “Prosthesis”) at Maker Faire in San Fran. The maker sent us a video of the Prosthesis in advance so we could use it in our social media feeds.” Rosenberg says. “He promoted to his own fans that he’d be premiering the operation of Prosthesis for the very first time at our faire.”

This maker tagged the Faire and included a link to buy tickets with his posts, boosting the flywheel’s natural momentum.

When you approach your event’s partners with an ask to share, follow Rosenberg’s lead: Give them all the materials they would need for a post, and ask them to use your hashtag and link back to your ticketing or registration page.

## Use this flywheel to power your entire events business

The event discovery flywheel is simple — but its impact can be massive. To take make the flywheel turn, focus your team on concrete steps to build momentum at each stage.

- **The content you post on Instagram and Facebook grabs users' attention:** Lean into content that resonates and builds community, like compelling images and video and posts in Facebook Event or Community pages.
- **Users learn more about your event and buy tickets:** Make it as easy as possible for people to buy tickets on Facebook and Instagram.
- **People post at your event, driving more people to check out your content and your events:** Encourage (and incentivise!) attendees and partners to share posts at your event.

Want to make it easy for people to buy tickets right on the social platforms where they hear about your event? If you're already using Eventbrite, install the "Get Tickets" buttons on your [Instagram profile](#) and [Facebook Events](#). Or, make the switch to trigger the flywheel effect for your event by [contacting Eventbrite here](#) or calling us at 1800 820 172 in Australia, or 0800 448 422 in New Zealand.

# Eventbrite

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