

A large crowd of runners is participating in a marathon, running across a bridge. The Eiffel Tower is visible in the background, and the scene is bathed in a blue light. The runners are wearing various athletic gear, and their shadows are cast on the bridge deck. The overall atmosphere is energetic and scenic.

# 25 FREE WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR RACE

TIPS & ADVICE FOR RACE DIRECTORS





If you've ever organized an endurance event, this question has most likely haunted you: "How else can I promote my race?" To answer that question, here are 25 ways to promote your race for free. These online and offline tools are useful whether you're on a tight budget or have wads of cash to spend on marketing.

## ONLINE

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1. Include it in your email signature
2. Send out emails announcing your race with a link
3. Post it as an update on LinkedIn
4. Tweet about your race on Twitter
5. Connect with relevant Twitter users
6. Create a YouTube video announcing your race
7. Create a Slideshare presentation
8. Set up a Google Voice number for your race
9. Ask endurance blogs and local blogs for coverage
10. Create a Facebook page
11. Create a Facebook event
12. Post your race on ACTIVE.com
13. Create an online race registration form
14. Send your event info to major race websites

## OFFLINE

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15. Mention it in your voicemail
16. Post flyers around town
17. Ask local businesses for sponsorships
18. Ask local papers to cover it
19. Ask for an interview spot
20. Partner with a local fitness club
21. Partner with a charity
22. Get a celebrity involved as a host
23. Get a booth at the finish line of other events
24. Partner with other local events
25. Attend a local meetup related to your race



## ONLINE

### 1. Include it in your email signature

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How many emails do you send per day? No matter how frequently you send messages, your [email signature gives you an opportunity to promote your race each time you hit the send button](#). When you are designing your new email signature, **be sure to include the following:**

- The race name in plain text (it can be good to include the logo, but most email hosts block images)
- The date, time, and place
- A link to your registration page

**Here is how to set up an email signature** through a few popular email hosts:

- [Outlook](#)
- [Gmail](#)
- [Yahoo](#)

### 2. Send out emails announcing your race with a link

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You probably have a lot of friends and running buddies in your email contact list. And if you partner with a charity for your race, that charity should have a big database of email contacts as well. [Email will be an important way to spread the word to your community](#). Basically, you have two options for email marketing: you can send personal, plain text emails or build a campaign through an email marketing platform (we recommend both). First, send out personal emails to influential people you know and ask them to spread the word.

After that, choose an email marketing platform to build catchy emails and start your campaign. Companies like Mail Chimp and Constant Contact provide easy-to-use email tools. ACTIVE Network's race director software also offers built-in email tools. Find more tips about email marketing [here](#).

### 3. Post it as an update on LinkedIn

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How many LinkedIn connections do you have? [If you are an active user of LinkedIn, you'll probably have enough connections to spread the word to a decent number of people](#). To make an update on LinkedIn, simply log in to the home screen and start typing in the update box at the top. Post a notice about your event and don't forget to attach the registration link!



## 4. Tweet about your race on Twitter

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It's time to talk about Twitter, but don't be intimidated. We'll break this down into two types of situations – pick which works best for you:

### “I don't have a Twitter account”

- Create an account
- Pick a username that represents your race (you only get 15 characters, so be sure to include the type of race – 5K, for example – and whatever else distinguishes your event)
- Pick a real name for your account (you get 20 characters here, so you can get more information in or even the full name of your event)
- Write a description, add your race website or registration page link, and upload the logo
- Start tweeting!

### “I have a Twitter account”

- Tweet about your race details with a link to your registration page
- Ask your relevant followers to spread the word, too

## 5. Connect with relevant Twitter users

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To maximize exposure, try to connect with local event directories, endurance enthusiasts, runners, charity partners, sponsors, and early registrants. To find these people, use the search function and look for influential Twitter users (people with over 1,000 followers is a good place to start)

- Ask for retweets from these people
- Keep tweeting about your race!



## 6. Create a YouTube video announcing your race

Over three billion videos are viewed each day on YouTube and 800 million unique users visit the site each month. One of the reasons that YouTube is so popular is because people love visuals. If you have a short video about your race, be sure to post it to YouTube. If not, try to create a video with some pictures, music, and details – minimally. Most computers have some sort of video production program whether it's Windows Movie Maker or iMovie.

Once your video is complete, here's how to upload it:

- Log in with your Gmail or YouTube account, or create an account here
- Click "Upload" at the top right – you'll be prompted to create a YouTube channel
- Create a channel and upload your video
- Title your video with the name of your race and be sure to include the type of race
- Include a link to your registration page in the description of the video

## 7. Create a Slideshare presentation

Where YouTube is the biggest online destination for video, Slideshare is the same for slideshow presentations. [Slideshare is highly trusted by Google, so having a slideshow presentation online will help boost your race website's search rankings.](#) Here's how to do it:

- Create a Powerpoint presentation about your race with pictures, details, and a link to your race website or online registration page
- Create a Slideshare account (if you don't already have one) by clicking here
- Click "Upload" on the top bar of the website (as seen above)
- Just like YouTube, be sure to title your presentation appropriately
  - The goal is to attract people searching for races like yours by including keywords and writing an attractive title

## 8. Set up a Google Voice number for your race

Google has tons of free services. Google Voice is one of them and allows you to create a customized phone line for free. Click here to watch a short overview video of Google Voice.

A Google Voice phone number will allow you to manage all of your event's calls and messages in one place, online. Also, you won't have to post your work, home or cell phone online.



## 9. Ask endurance blogs and local blogs for coverage

Press coverage is great for any event. However, approaching newspapers, radio shows, and local TV stations can be time consuming. [Try connecting with local bloggers or endurance bloggers who like to cover events](#). Get together a short pitch (what's in it for them?) and approach them. One great way to connect with these bloggers is through Twitter (see #4). Here are some ways to search for relevant blogs:

- Use the [Google Blog Search](#)
- Search for people talking about [upcoming races on Twitter](#)

## 10. Create a Facebook Page

[Facebook has over 800 million active users](#). On top of that, nearly 1 out of every 8 minutes online is spent on Facebook. This is definitely a place where your endurance event should have a presence – bottom line. Set up a Facebook page for your race by clicking [here](#).

Here are **ten best practices** to follow:

1. Name the page the same as your event
2. Populate all fields with details
3. Set your logo as the profile picture
4. Upload photos from last year's event, the race map, sponsors' logos, pictures of the course, etc.
5. Include a link to your registration page
6. Add a Facebook "Like" button to your race website
7. Make helpful and informative posts (training articles and videos, updates about the race, registration deals, race details, prizes, etc.)
8. Encourage fan participation by asking questions
9. Connect with and "Like" your sponsors' brand pages
10. Create a Facebook landing page

## 11. Create a Facebook Event page

Facebook events are different than Facebook pages. A Facebook event expires at the end of a time frame and allows you to invite guests and your guests to invite their friends, as well. [Click here to create an event](#).

Just like on your Facebook page, make sure to fill in information wherever possible. Invite your Facebook friends to the event and encourage them to invite their friends.





## 12. Post your race on ACTIVE.com

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ACTIVE.com attracts over **eight** million visitors per month who search and register for endurance events and other similar activities. It's free for race directors to list an event **when using ACTIVEWorks Endurance** and online registration can be run through the listing, as well. [Get Started Here](#)

## 13. Create an online race registration form

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Part of race marketing is to make it easy for potential runners to sign up. **The easiest and most convenient way to register runners is by offering an online race registration form.** It's also eco-friendly and significantly reduces the amount of paperwork for your event. [Click here to learn more.](#)

## 14. Send your event info to major race websites

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There are many other websites for runners to search and find races. For this section, we've broken resources into two sections: one for running events and the other for triathlons. For whatever best describes your event, try contacting or submitting your information to these websites:

### FOR RUNNING EVENTS

- [RunningUSA](#)
- [RRCA](#)
- [Road Race Management](#)
- [Runner's World](#)

### FOR TRIATHLONS

- [USA Triathlon](#)
- [Triathlon America](#)



## OFFLINE

Let's not forget about offline marketing. It may not be as popular these days, but it's still effective. [Here are 11 ways you can promote your race offline for free.](#)

### 15. Mention it in your voicemail

How many phone calls do you get per day? [Start by adding your race information to your home phone and/or cell phone](#) (depending on your job, it may be inappropriate to promote your race through your work voicemail. If the event is tied to your business, however, your work voicemail is another opportunity to mention the race).

If you don't want to sound too intrusive with your wording, consider adding it on as a title to your name: "You've reached John Smith, race director for ABC 5K on June 1st in Middletown. To sign up, visit [myrace.com/register](http://myrace.com/register). Otherwise, leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as possible."

### 16. Post flyers around town

Your community is a great place to start promoting your event. [Design a flyer and distribute it around town.](#) Approach local businesses, gyms, and organizations and ask to post some flyers or leave some for people to take. Be sure to describe your event and cause to everyone you speak to so that your flyer doesn't sit and collect dust—they can become your advocates.

### 17. Ask local businesses for sponsorships

[There are two ways to approach potential sponsors – you can ask for cash or for giveaways.](#) If you are learning how to organize your first race, it might be unrealistic to go after huge sponsors and ask for cash commitments. Start by asking sponsors to chip in for race supplies. For example, a local business could fund the race t-shirts and get logo placement on the shirts. Or, a grocery store could donate finish line refreshments like sports drinks and power bars and get their banners hung along the fencing. If you do ask for cash, make sure it's small to begin with unless you are confident you have a generous benefactor.

Here are some **tips for finding sponsors**:

- If you see teams signing up, ask if they have a company that would like to sponsor the event
- Post a sponsorship page on your website with details for companies
- Attend networking events to make connections
- Send out emails to your contact list
- Visit local businesses





## 18. Ask local papers to cover it

Getting press is good for any event and covering a race/cause is a good story for a typical local paper. All you have to do is ask! Get in contact with the local paper's editor and describe your event and cause. Be sure to think from the perspective of the editor: what makes it worthwhile to cover your event? Pitch your story with the goal of grabbing a reader's attention.

## 19. Ask for an interview spot

If #18 goes well and you're feeling ambitious, step it up a notch! Another press opportunity is through radio and TV. First, search on the station's website and look for a contact tab. Generally speaking, there should be a section titled something like "press inquiries" or "story suggestion." Submit your pitch there and think about this: what's in it for the news station?

## 20. Partner with a local fitness club.

Most race directors are on a tight budget. One way to get more attendees without spending money is to [trade services with fitness clubs and gyms](#). Since the target market is a good match, try offering free entries in exchange for advertising.

Visit Google and search for fitness or gyms and the search will provide local places. Try approaching these organizations in exchange for a listing on their website, a flyer in the gym, an email to their subscribers, or anything else that makes it a fair trade.

## 21. Partner with a charity

[Having a charity partner helps you raise money for a good cause](#). On top of that, forming a partnership is a good way to get additional participants involved to increase your numbers and fundraising efforts. Here's how you can go about it:

- Visit [Charity Navigator](#)
- Search over 5,000 charities for spending breakdowns, financial health and more
- Look for charities with "teams in training" in place
- These teams are dedicated to help raise money for endurance events

Work together with your charity to promote the race and cause. The charity should have marketing channels in place and you'll be able to utilize those for your campaigns.



## 22. Get a celebrity involved as a host

Try to bring in someone who may be well known in the running world or your local community. Bart Yasso, chief running officer at Runner's World, referenced Olympic gold medalist, Frank Shorter, as a good example of a perfect host. You may not be able to bring in someone of that stature, but get creative with your selection. Once chosen, use the host's name in your marketing efforts leading up to the big event to attract more participants.

**Give yourself time to find a well-known host.** Try to book your host about a year before your race so that you can use the name in all marketing efforts. This person could be the mayor or maybe even an Olympian if you're persistent and persuasive enough.

## 23. Get a booth at the finish line of other events

Check for other races throughout the year that are in your area. Most race websites should have a link for exhibitors or vendors to apply. You'll be able to register for a booth at the finish line and can promote your race from right there. Again, though, you may be on a tight budget. Consider offering a trade – booth for booth so that you can cross-promote your events together. See #24 (below) for another way to work together.

## 24. Get a booth at the finish line of other events

As discussed in #23, **partnering with other races is a great way to increase registrations.** Here are some things you can do to form a strong partnership with other local endurance events throughout the year:

- Find two other similar and local races throughout the year and create a triple crown
- Offer discounts on registration for people who sign up for all events you are partnered with
- Reward participants with a grand prize for finishing all events you are partnered with
- Cross-promote races through each network

## 25. Attend a local meetup related to your race

[Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) helps people organize and attract members for offline clubs around the world. With more than 7 million people signed up and 75,000 local Meetup groups created, there is a lot going on here. Search for local running clubs or something similar and attend the next group run, meeting, etc. This is a good way to spread the word and get some new loyal participants.

## GET STARTED

PROMOTING YOUR RACE TODAY:

[ACTIVEendurance.com/moreinfohere](https://ACTIVEendurance.com/moreinfohere)

WHAT'S YOUR ACTIVE?