



# Event Directors Share Tips from the Ticketing Trenches

By Florence May

There is nothing quite as exciting than talking to event management experts – one in particular being energetic leader of the Virginia and DC festival scene, Barry Feil, the creative Executive Director of Celebrate Fairfax. Meeting him leaves you a little breathless! In addition to being passionate about growing the hugely successful Celebrate Fairfax; he is overflowing with ideas about how to expand ticketing sales to a variety of audiences.

When we asked Barry about some of his Ticketing tips and pointers, he provided us with six great tips which we've shared with you below.

## Target the Most Profitable Ticket Buyers

Barry advises event managers to "think of their festivals as a business." He encourages a focus on an audience who are consumers of your target sales items and promoters of the event. "Do your event attendees like the bands AND the beer, international food, organic products, local art or other items that create event revenue at your event?" And he adds, "Do you know what percentage of your attendees tell Friends & Family about your event?"

## Sell Early!

Weather is a continuous gamble for outdoor events. Online sales are a critical path to reduce risk and guarantee a profitable event. Barry recommends that online

promotions should begin 8 weeks prior to the event with a focus on people who have come before. He uses a super early bird combo ticket with ride passes. "Promote early and give previous years attendees a reason to purchase early." Barry reminds us, "This is your opportunity to rainproof your event!"

## Grow the E-mail List!

That's it.

## Grow Family participation

Barry is testing new marketing partnerships. He was looking for organizations who trust and love the festival. He found an ideal partnership with Not For Profits exhibiting at the festival to create online e-mail and social media campaigns talking about the festival. Every ticket sold using a NFP code helps grow the e-mail list. And every festival ticket sold sends money back to the NFP as a reward.

## Grow Awareness

Barry has grown Celebrate Fairfax while decreasing his promotional budget. Barry's two cents on Social Media?

*Facebook Ad:* Grow your likes via e-mail campaigns. Focus FB ads on new audiences not those people who like your festival page. Make Facebook ads cost effective.

*Twitter:* Not great for ticket sales but re-tweets are great for awareness.

*Google:* Works if you use the right keywords. Create ads that mention radio stations that play music of your artists and locations related to artists and your event location. Mention keywords in Google ads.

*Pandora:* 0% so far but still working on it.

## Great Experience

People come back to events when they have good memories. Unfortunately great bands can be overshadowed by long lines, dirty bathrooms or feeling unsafe.

Go fast! Experienced staff is a key element to reducing traffic at the gate. In addition, be certain to regularly move money from gates to secure locations to reduce theft risk.

Barry closes with a reminder, "Remember a Great Event Experience is Everything!"

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