



From the AACT Resource Library

Digital Marketing Strategies to Promote Your Theatre

Before the house lights dim, performing arts companies must tackle the challenge of filling seats — often on tight budgets.

Here's a look at five of what marketing companies say are the most effective ways to market your shows, both paid and unpaid, to reach your audience.

1. Earned media (and retargeting it)

“Earned media” refers to free publicity, like coverage from local news outlets or event calendars. Make the most of it by:

- Submitting show details early: Add your event to web calendars several weeks in advance.
- Pitching to editors: Send press releases with high-quality photos to increase your chances of being featured.

Don't forget retargeting, too. If your earned media links to your website, use a retargeting pixel on your landing page to reengage visitors—especially those who visit your site, but who don't buy tickets.

How it works:

- Reminder ads follow users as they browse the web.
- Requirements: Retargeting campaigns need at least 500 monthly visitors to your site.
- Platforms to try: Set up campaigns on Google Ads or Bing Ads.

2. Focus on key audiences

Theatre audiences aren't one-size-fits-all. Be clear about who you want to reach:

- Past ticket holders you can reconnect with via email
- Folks who have “fallen off” and you want to lure back

- Prospective attendees searching for events
- Untraditional theatregoers drawn to a specific title or theme
- Certain demographics (families, singles, age groups, etc.)

Your target groups may vary by show or season. Consult with your team to set priorities, and test your strategies as needed.

3. Social media ads

Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, let you reach the right audience with precision. Use your show's photos to create engaging ads targeted to:

- People interested in performance venues, Broadway or stage plays.
- Local parents, couples or specific age groups like millennials.
- Geographies like a 20-mile radius or an entire metro area.

Paid social media campaigns help you reach new audiences, but don't forget your own posts. Behind-the-scenes peeks, show previews and stories are all great ways to engage your existing followers.

4. Email marketing

Email is a direct way to stay top-of-mind with potential attendees—especially those who have already attended your productions. Craft campaigns tailored to specific audiences, whether they're your existing subscribers or new contacts from paid lists. Email is particularly effective with people over 60.

- Paid lists: Partner with a local media company or agency to access opt-in subscriber lists. Send display emails with strong visuals and a clear call to action, like "Buy tickets now!"
- Your list: Use your email list to build loyalty among current fans. Keep them informed about upcoming shows with regular updates, increasing frequency as show dates approach.

5. Retargeted ads based on keywords

Retargeting ads can keep your show visible to people searching for activities near your theatre. For example, if someone Googles "things to do near me," your ads can follow them as they browse other sites.

While this strategy aligns well with your audience, it can be pricier. Pairing with an agency that offers access to the right tools can help maximize results.

Final thoughts

Marketing your performing arts company requires focus and creativity. Narrowing your marketing efforts on a few key areas, paid and unpaid, can make an impact.