

Eventbrite®



How to Organize a 5k:

Tips from 5k Race Directors Who've Been There

Organizing a 5k is one of the most effective ways to draw new people to your race. After all, in [a survey of more than 2,000 race participants](#), a 5k race was by far the most popular activity — nearly two thirds of racers had completed one in the past year.

Whether you're starting a brand new race, or adding new distances to your existing race, a 5k is the safest bet to increase participation. So how can you take advantage of this participant favorite to grow your brand?

The key to organizing a successful 5k is to find new twists on the traditional distance — while making sure nothing goes wrong. We sat down with some of Eventbrite's race director partners to find out how they go about hosting fabulous 5ks. Read on to steal their strategies.

Step 1: Get a feel for the other 5ks in your area

Whether your race is new in town or the community's annual tradition, you need to stay current on the competition. That means regularly attending other races in your area, as well as getting the scoop on events happening the same weekend as your 5k.

“We always encourage the staff to sign up for other walking and running events so they can see what everyone is doing. That way we can learn best practices, and see who may be copying us. You don't want to become stagnant.”

— **TAMMY ELLIS**, Special Events Coordinator of Drumstick Dash

Step 2: Choose a registration partner that will support you

If you're just getting started hosting a 5k, or have new staff without extensive experience, questions will need to be answered — ASAP. A registration partner that can answer your questions is vital. That way you can spend your time on what really matters — making your 5k the best it can be.

Take it from the Longhorn Run, an entirely student-run race at the University of Texas, Austin. It doesn't take an expert to put on a 5k, it just takes some support.

“We were truly blown away by the Eventbrite customer service... We were always greeted with a smile on the other end of the line, and there was no question too simple or too complex.”

— **CECILIA LOPEZ CARDENAS**, Program Coordinator of the Longhorn Run



Step 3: Experiment with new marketing options

If you're putting on a 5k in a region that already has several established races, you need to get creative with your marketing. Consider targeting younger generations to reach an audience that doesn't already have a bias for pre-existing races. Even if you are the established race in your area, reaching millennials on social media can help expand your market.

“ We have a social media-focused marketing plan. Creating giveaways or raffles and writing creative posts — these activities help get your audience involved. We have created weekly Facebook giveaways or discount codes... We want to be smart about our marketing dollars.”

— **BRYAN GANEK**, COO of Adrenaline Sports Management

Step 4: Prioritize open communication with your team

Whether your team has worked together for years or is newly formed, you need to make sure you're in sync on project ownership and responsibility. Since races have such a tight timeline, you can't afford to let anything slip through the cracks even for just a couple of weeks. If you do, it may be too late to get back on track.

“ Since each person wears so many different hats and is responsible for so many different aspects of our event, it's easier to find out about glitches, concerns, etc. by encouraging open communication... When dealing with a small group, it's important to encourage people to speak up so the small problems don't turn into larger problems, and everyone is comfortable with their roles and responsibilities. This also eliminates the possibility of two people working on the same part of a project, and allows for the shifting of responsibilities if someone has too much on their plate.”

— **PAOLA TORNABENE**, VP of Corporate Affairs at Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation

Britetip: Consider dynamic bib

One sure-fire way to shorten lines on-site is to use dynamic bib assignment. Instead of having to find each participant's pre-assigned bib, volunteers can assign bibs as people arrive to power through lines.

“The Dynamic Bib assign feature is a game changer. The days of spending hours pre-assigning bibs and having 20+ volunteers to hand out bibs at pre-race packet pick-up are gone. It is the most innovative thing we've seen. For putting on shorter races like 5Ks, it was important to keep registration open as long as we could. With Dynamic Bib assign, we can now leave online registration open all the way until the gun goes off.”

— Easy Day Sports

Step 5: Plan ahead to make the on-site experience easy and painless

Once participants arrive on-site, the last thing you want is long lines or grumpy volunteers. After all, a delightful experience is vital to retaining new participants and spreading word-of-mouth recommendations.

It's important to encourage your volunteers to have fun because their attitude sets the tone for the whole event. They're the party and entertainment, and will leave an impression on the participants, even if they're just handing out water to them during the race. So make sure every volunteer understands their critical role.”

— **JOHN KORFF**, Owner of Korff Enterprises races

Now that you're ready to organize a 5k, it's time to figure out what to do once the race is over. A recent survey shows that 86% of participants want to stick around after they've crossed the finish line. [Check out our discussion with the organizer behind lululemon's successful race series](#) to find out how you can delight your participants and bring them back next year.

Eventbrite is the world's largest registration platform, providing a seamless solution for race directors to set up, promote, and manage their events. Eventbrite has powered more than 200M registrations to date, connecting race organizers with millions of athletes in more than 180 countries worldwide.

To find out why tens of thousands of endurance events have used Eventbrite's platform, go to www.eventbrite.com/endurance or give us a call at (855) 292-7905.

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