

9 ways to use meal-based marketing throughout the sales funnel



Let's face it: "Zoom fatigue" is real. People are experiencing virtual burnout, yet every day, they wake up to more emails for virtual engagement. And those inboxes are only growing — [40% of event marketing budgets](#) are being shifted to hosting webinars and digital events, and [nine out of 10](#) B2B decision makers believe that new digital sales practices will be a fixture through 2021 and beyond. With the abundance of meeting requests and virtual invites flooding consumers' inboxes, how can organizations stand out?

Whether it's a webinar for thousands or a 1-on-1 sales meeting, offering a meal is a proven method for increasing engagement. Meal-based marketing is a warm and welcome way for businesses to make their outreach connect with their target audience. Everyone has to eat, and everyone appreciates a free meal. It's "let's do lunch" for the 21st century, but it's not just lunch.

This E-book will detail nine ways meal-based marketing is applicable at various points throughout the buyer's journey, but the potential that meal credits hold is as limitless as an organization's creativity.

**77% of
event
attendees
say food is
important
when
attending
any public
event.**

SOURCE: EVENTBRITE

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Host a webinar and offer meal credits to the first X attendees

A meal incentive increases email opens, event registration and prospect attendance. Some companies give a certain number of prospects meal credits just for signing up, while others require attendees to stay through the entire duration of the presentation in order to ensure maximum engagement and ROI.

There are endless ways to tailor this initiative to align with agendas and budgets. Most companies offer a \$25 or \$30 meal credit depending on the value at restaurants in their prospects' regions (i.e., a little more for urban markets like New York and San Francisco; a little less for suburban and rural markets). Some companies limit the window of usage to the day of the event, while others allow attendees more leeway to enjoy the credit on their time. Either way, Grubhub's meal credits ensure companies only pay for the credits that are used during the specified time and easily allows organizations to set unique budgets.



“Grubhub has increased attendance for virtual prospect/customer webinars by 120%. The offer of a free lunch from their restaurant of choice, delivered to their desired location, in a secure and convenient way is what our attendees appreciate during times like this.”

Key C., Enterprise Account Executive, AppZen

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Create a meal credit sweepstakes to engage webinar attendees

Just like at live expos and conventions, virtual event sweepstakes are popular engagement tools. During webinars and events, organizations can have the host announce the ground rules for winning entries. For example, any attendee who asks a question or responds to a live poll or survey would be eligible for entry.

At the end of the webinar (or soon after), companies can draw from the entries and announce winners of meal credits. These awards can include standard \$25 or \$30 credits, or organizations can raise the stakes by offering a few premium \$50 or \$100 credits. Again, always set the exact amount.

Tying sweepstakes entries to participation ensures the eventual winners are actively engaged with the content and become better leads. Plus, it's a great icebreaker to casually reach out and ask, "How was your lunch?"



“We experienced a 23% increase in live attendance year over year by incorporating a meal from Grubhub into our overall digital event initiative. Throughout the week of our digital event, we received dozens of compliments from attendees on how awesome it was and how excited they were for their free meal.”

Mike Santos, VP of Digital Marketing, G3 Communications

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Put together a virtual happy hour

Invitations with meal credits can promote meet-and-greet happy hours where guests can be invited to order drinks, snacks and grub after work. A virtual meet-and-greet can be a welcome change of pace for people working remotely while also providing a relaxed environment for companies and prospects to get to know each other. Additionally, it creates an opportunity for a no-pressure reengagement meeting with current clients.

Creating a small window of time to use credits and suggesting restaurants to order from ensures that all attendees show up with similar food and drink, which adds a feeling of inclusivity. It's a unique way for people to connect in a stress-free setting, regardless of their geography. In fact, a virtual happy hour allows people from all across the country to interact — a scenario that might not have happened in previous times.



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Offer meal credits to leads who attend a virtual product demonstration

The main difference between hosting a webinar and offering a virtual product demonstration is the ability to target hot leads and move them down the sales funnel by focusing on specific content. Instead of requiring attendance (as organizations might with prospects), companies can stand out in their leads' inboxes by offering a meal credit just for RSVP'ing to a virtual event. If they've already been vetted as a qualified lead, chances are they will show up for a presentation.

Inviting leads to a product demonstration with a meal credit also allows for a great virtual "lunch and learn." These events invite everyone to have lunch at the same time while a subject matter expert talks and presents on-screen. For example, Hill's Pet Nutrition uses virtual lunch and learns to bring together prospects from veterinary hospitals. The company provides meal credits, then everyone orders food and eats together virtually as Hill's experts present a sales presentation that is relevant to these future veterinarians.

"At in-person seminars, it was hard to track everyone you fed. For webinars, it's hard to know how many people watched each screen. With a Grubhub virtual lunch and learn, we know exactly who we fed."

Dr. Andrew Hanger,
National Business Account
Manager, Hill's Pet Nutrition



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Take a sales contact “out” to lunch

As leads move down the sales funnel, getting a 1-on-1 meeting is one of the best ways to turn them into customers. But, with most people working remotely, it's harder than ever to secure those once-common intimate meetings. Offering to meet someone for a virtual meal is an innovative way to break through; sending a prospect a meal credit and inviting them to have lunch with a sales rep takes away the generic pitch experience.

The 1-on-1 meeting invites work great for any time of day and, as such, should be built around the prospect's schedule. Lunch time is the traditional choice, but with people working remotely across all time zones, breakfast and dinner meetings are rising in popularity. Everyone is tired of cooking meals at home, so a hot, fresh, restaurant-delivered meal is a powerful incentive.



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Organize a VIP dinner

With everything shifting to digital, virtual events now come with higher expectations. However, meal-based marketing makes the good, old-fashioned “wine and dine” event achievable. Reach out to top clients or prospects with an offer of a high-end meal and VIP event. Then, put together a small, intimate group of executives or VIPs and send each one a meal credit for \$50 to \$100. To help contribute to conversations and discuss sales goals, the hosting company should invite internal VIPs and subject matter experts as well.

After a date and time is picked, restrict the use of those meal credits to that specific window to ensure the credit is used appropriately. With thousands of restaurants participating across the country, VIPs can order whatever they’re craving — whether it’s steak, lobster or sushi — from their finest local dining establishment. What each person orders will become a topic of conversation on its own. The entire credit doesn’t have to be used, either, but the generosity will be noted. “Have a steak on us” is a hard offer to turn down.



“Our attendees really appreciate the free meal we offered via Grubhub and like the fact that they can pick their favorite local restaurant.”

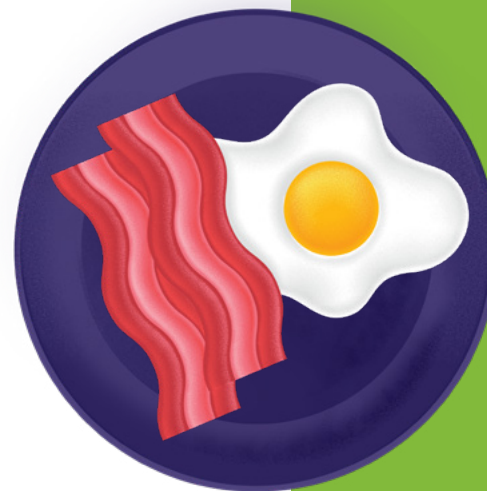
Cindy S., Sales Professional,
Rigidized Metals Corporation

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Deliver a “thank you” breakfast

After a lead converts to a customer, a simple “thank you” gift is always appreciated and goes a long way toward repeat business. This is where organizations can use meal credits to get creative. They can channel pre-pandemic times and send clients something that they may have enjoyed at their physical office but may not have had since working remotely.

For instance, ordering a hot bagel and coffee from one of the new customer’s local delis, sending a fresh-baked croissant and cappuccino from a local bakery or any other local treat will personalize the gesture. Through this offering, it also shows a support for local small businesses. They’ll appreciate the generosity and see that their local, small business economy is supported.



“Grubhub has allowed us to think outside the box when it comes to building customer relationships. With an increased number of remote workers, we can still host events with meals to make customers feel valued and included.”

Jennifer K., Marketing Coordinator, Clarus Communications

Gift select clients a holiday meal

Another way for organizations to show their best clients appreciation is to order them a delicious, restaurant-prepared meal around the holidays, such as a glazed ham for Easter, potato latkes for Hanukkah or roasted turkey and pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. Companies have the option of sending food directly from local restaurants or extending a meal credit that's only authorized for use during a specific holiday period.

To strengthen that gesture, organizations can donate an equivalent meal to a family in need in the client's name. Local restaurants, charities and families in need will all benefit, while the clients will appreciate the thoughtfulness behind both gifts, especially during the holidays. It's an all-around win-win, and it paves the way for a longer client relationship.



Grubhub recently partnered with Food Bank For New York City to host five pop-up food distribution centers in each borough of New York City: The Barclay's Center, Yankee Stadium, Lincoln Center, Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden and The New York Hall of Science. Together, Grubhub and the Food Bank were able to distribute more than 100,000 meals to nearly 11,500 New Yorkers in need.

Set up a virtual roundtable discussion

When clients burn out or disconnect, invite them to re-engage in a virtual roundtable discussion. Include them in a fun group of industry people, then propose a theme for the discussion so each person comes prepared. Send each attendee a meal credit that ties to the related theme. The idea is to have fun and remind your client what they enjoyed about engagement with like-minded colleagues.

Now more than ever, people are burning out and struggling to stay connected. Part of “Zoom fatigue” is disengagement and isolation. Reaching out to re-engage with a client is important on a human level as much as on a customer level. In the end, that re-engagement and reconnection will pay greater dividends simply because it’s the right thing to do.



At a time when everyone's inbox is full of event invitations, meal-based marketing is an innovative and proven way to stand out from the crowd. Buyers are more likely to engage at all points along their journey when offered a meal incentive. Whether all nine of these actionable ideas are employed or new ones are created, meal-based marketing is a valuable tool for connecting with today's virtual audiences.



To learn more about meal-based marketing or to set up a call to see how meal-based marketing can jumpstart your virtual events, contact Grubhub Corporate at officeorders@grubhub.com or by visiting corporate.grubhub.com.



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— CORPORATE ACCOUNTS —

Grubhub Corporate Accounts make it easy for marketers to cater virtual events via our nationwide restaurant network. Whether you're hosting a webinar or trying to win sales meetings, food brings everyone to the table. It's simple to set a budget and rules and you'll only pay for meals that are ordered.

corporate.grubhub.com



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