



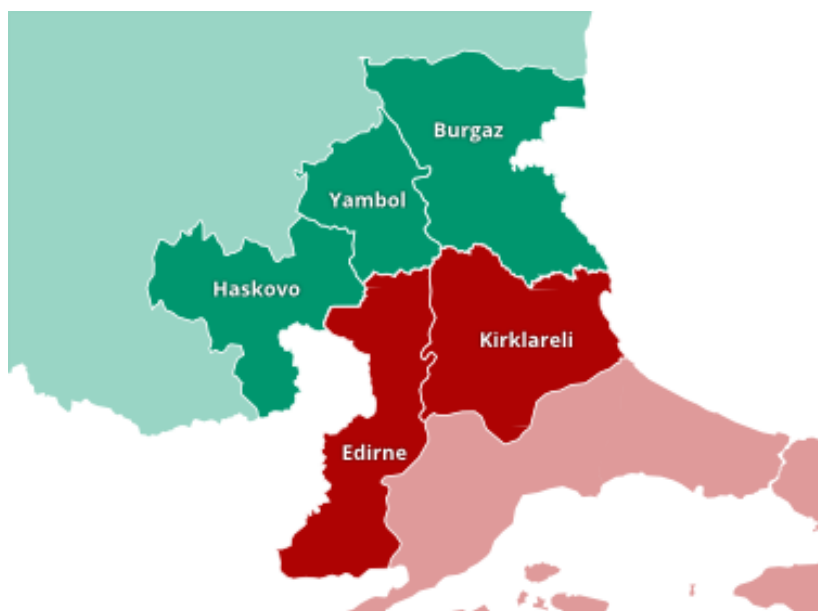
FINAL REPORT

From concluding discussion about

"How can you promote the festival to increase tourism"

The event is a part of the activities under the project “Growing UP Festivals with innovative Approaches”, Project no CB005.1.22.194, co-funded by European Union through the Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme 2014 – 2020.

The project is implemented in partnership between the Association of Promoting and Sustaining of Kirkpinar Culture and Municipality of Tundzha.



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Festivals are a great way to entertain large crowds, but all festivals must be well promoted to be successful — whether they feature local artists or world famous musicians or they're focused around a hobby or common interest. I'm often asked how to promote a festival, and fortunately, there are some easy ways to do it both online and offline.

Before you start thinking about promoting a festival, you need to take a few steps back. Planning a festival takes many months if you want to get it right. Use the Event Planning Checklist so you know what to do and when and be sure to review the common problems in planning an outdoor event. Furthermore, you need to develop a realistic budget that includes all of the pieces of the planning puzzle, including promotion.

Once your timeline and budget are ready, you can develop a marketing plan that will boost ticket sales to your festival. To help you get started, below are some of the most effective ways to promote a festival.

Information about the Kirkpinar Oil Wrestling Festival

Defined as two people engaged in a mental and physical struggle using no tools or equipment under equal conditions in a specified area, according to specific rules and for a specified time, wrestling is one of the oldest sports in human history. Wrestling has been a popular and traditional practice in every age. In Turkey, it is referred to as the ancestor sport.



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Mention wrestling in Turkey and the first thing people think of is the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling competition. It was born in 14th century Rumeli, and with its long celebrated history, it is one of the oldest wrestling festivals in the world. Oil wrestling is a type of wrestling where the wrestlers (pehlivan) wear leather pants (kispet) tied with a rope at the waist and cuff, and compete on grass after being covered in olive oil.

The Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling competitions include various rituals ranging from the invitation to the awards ceremony. The Historic Kırkpınar Wrestling competitions last for seven days and are generally held at the end of June, beginning of July. The festival begins on Friday when prayers are said for the wrestlers. The wrestling contests are held at a field in Sarayıçi, which is one of Edirne’s most important recreational destinations. The winning wrestler earns the title of Chief Wrestler and the golden belt for one year, a very prestigious prize. A wrestler who earns the Chief Wrestler title for three consecutive years becomes the permanent owner of the golden belt.

The invitation to Kırkpınar is made via a candle with a red base. Back when means of mass communication were not common, the Kırkpınar Master would send candles with a red base to towns and villages beginning in March to invite wrestlers and notable figures to Kırkpınar. The saying “to be summoned by a candle with a red base” so commonly used among the people actually originates here. The same traditional method is still symbolically used today in the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling competitions.



The most important actors at the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling competitions are traditionally the Kırkpınar Ağası (Kırkpınar Master), who is responsible for inviting the wrestlers,

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organizing the matches, covering the financial needs of the festival, ensuring that the wrestling matches are conducted in accordance with recognized customs and handing out the awards; the *cazgir* (announcer), who introduces the wrestlers to the audience and starts the match; a team of *zurna* (flute) players and drummers; the *yağcı* (oiler), who helps oil the wrestlers, and the *peşkirici*, who holds the towel.

The wrestler is at the center of oil wrestling and is responsible for passing on a 650-year-old tradition. The criteria for being eligible to be a wrestler have been determined over many years as part of the oil wrestling tradition. The most important requirement for being a good wrestler is to have positive character traits that complement the spirit of the sport of wrestling. The wrestler is expected to conduct himself with that understanding that he is always being watched from his closest circles to the most remote spectator.

With regard to transmitting the tradition, the *Kirkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival* is a week-long education arena without peer. It is a 650-year-old meeting place where wrestlers and aspiring wrestlers from all over Turkey come carrying their master's baskets. The master-apprentice relationship is where the oral rules for the continuity of wrestling culture are revealed in the clearest fashion. The cultural identity that has been kept alive until the present day thanks to this festival is passed on to apprentices and aspiring young wrestlers, which is how the tradition maintains its continuity.

The *Kirkpınar* wrestling matches are not only a sport that keeps individuals physically and mentally healthy, but social and cultural relations are also shaped by the competition.



The wrestling matches give individuals the opportunity to test themselves in different ways and winning wrestlers in particular gain self-confidence. Unlike other sporting events, mutual respect between the competitors is a prominent aspect of the *Kirkpınar Oil Wrestling*

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competitions. For example, the winning wrestler is supposed to console his opponent and lift him off the ground before the judge announces his decision.

Many activities have been conducted in keeping with the action plan of protective measures drawn up to ensure the transmission and continuity of the centuries-old Kirkpinar wrestling competitions for future generations. In addition to the action plan created by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Edirne Municipality, Trakya University and concerned NGO representatives, individuals and groups are working to keep the oil wrestling tradition alive and raise awareness.

Two former Chief Wrestlers Ahmet Yenici and Süleyman Kaplan as well as the Turkish Chief Announcer Şükrü Kayabaş joined forces and founded the Wrestlers' Coffee House in Istanbul. All of the information about the event calendar for oil wrestling competitions in Turkey, participating wrestlers, announcers and Kirkpinar masters is available at this coffee house. For many people interested in oil wrestling, the Wrestlers' Coffee House has become a hangout. The Chief Wrestlers say they have taken this ancestor sport to the most remote locations, and they encourage people to get involved in the sport. After leaving active wrestling, they organize many wrestling events, thus making an important contribution to the survival and safeguarding of this tradition.



The Kirkpinar Physical Education and Sports Academy was established at Trakya University in order to promote the tradition among young people, to conduct academic research on safeguarding the Kirkpinar wrestling competitions and to educate young people. The Kirkpinar wrestling competitions have been the subject of many theses, which have

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examined the tradition in terms of folklore as well as doing a detailed review of the wrestling music, training, and the physical and psychological characteristics of the wrestlers. The historic building on the Edirne Municipal grounds was restored and opened as the Historic Kirkpinar Center during the 640th Historic Kirkpinar Wrestling and Cultural Events Week, thus paving the way for the Kirkpinar Museum. The Kirkpinar Center has numerous photographs and objects unique to Kirkpinar wrestling, such as the clothes, baskets and oil pitchers used by masters and wrestlers, drums-flutes and golden belts. There is a Kirkpinar Room in one section of the Turkish Islamic Works Museum on the grounds of the Selimiye Mosque, which is a popular destination with many tourists both domestic and foreign. The Kirkpinar Exhibition Room set up in the museum contains artefacts representative of the tradition as well as photographs of former famous wrestlers.



The media promotes the Kirkpinar wrestling competitions around the world. It takes on a vibrant festive air that appeals to people from all walks of life. Furthermore, the remarkable photographstaken at this traditional event as part of the Kirkpinar Photography Contest held every year by the Edirne Municipality ensure that the ancestral sport of wrestling will be remembered for generations to come. A book about the Kirkpinar wrestling competitions entitled Pehlivan (The Wrestler) was released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2011 to ensure that the tradition is learned and passed down from generation to generation. The trousers (kispet) worn by wrestlers are an important symbol of creativity in the field of handicrafts. They are made from the hides of healthy animals, reach from the waist to below the knee and have tight cuffs. This special article of clothing worn by wrestlers at the festival demonstrates the fine handiwork of a small number of craftsmen. İrfan Şahin is extremely

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knowledgeable about and skilled at making kispet, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism proclaimed him to be a “Living Human Treasure” at a ceremony conducted in 2012. The Kirkpinar Oil Wrestling Festival was proclaimed throughout the world when it was added to UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010 on behalf of our country.

How to promote festivals to increase tourism

1 - Partner with Local Companies and Sponsors

Sponsors pay you to display their logo in various places before and during the festival, and many of them will want to spread the word to their own audiences that they’re sponsoring the event. Encourage this! It’s free advertising for your festival, so give sponsors the event logo file, a description of the event, photos, and other supporting materials that they can use in their own marketing.

It’s also likely that local companies in the community where the event will be held will want to be involved. Don’t be afraid to approach them and ask if they would be willing to display your signs or flyers in their locations to help spread the word. If necessary, you can barter for services. For example, you could offer to place a small ad for their company in the festival program in exchange for the company displaying the festival signs and other advertising materials around its business location.

2 – Working with Right Ticketing Company

Make sure you choose a ticketing company that offers a variety of tools in its software to promote the festival to prospective ticket buyers via email and text messages. You also need to be able to invite people who visit your ticket sales page but don’t buy immediately a way to opt-in to receive email reminders about the event. You can do this with AttendStar’s Remind Me feature. Most people don’t buy tickets the first time they visit your ticket sales page, so you need a way to keep them interested and convince them to buy.

Your ticketing company should also offer a way to keep ticket buyers engaged with you and encourage them to spread the word about the festival to the people they know. AttendStar offers this through its Ticket Buyer Buzz feature.

3 – The Importance of Social Media

Social media marketing is critical to your festival’s success. If you don’t already have accounts for your festival on the most popular social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, create them immediately and start posting useful, meaningful content that your festival’s target audience is likely to be interested in.

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Focus on sharing information about performers to get people excited. Also, publish helpful information such as schedules, parking tips, and so on, and don't forget video content, which is so popular these days! Finally, be sure to create an event hashtag, use it, and encourage other people to use it, too. Here's how to do it.

The trick to social media marketing success is twofold: 1) getting people to follow you so they have a chance to see your content and 2) generating engagement with them so they're more likely to share your content with their own followers. This is a powerful form of word-of-mouth marketing! To help you start your social media efforts, be sure to check out the most helpful tips to get more Facebook likes and tips to increase Facebook engagement. And here are 10 killer Facebook marketing ideas to promote your festival.

4 – The importance of Contests and Promotional Items

Contests are a great way to get people excited about your event. Host a Facebook contest and give away free tickets, backstage passes, a performer meet and greet, or merchandise to the winner. Photo contests work particularly well for festival promotion. Ask people to share a photo of themselves with their favorite album by one of the performers to get an entry into the contest.

You can even ask your sponsors and partners to donate prizes for your contests. It's a great way for them to get additional publicity while you promote the festival in a way that's guaranteed to generate buzz that leads to more ticket sales.

Well in advance of the event, invest in a supply of promotional items with the festival logo, venue, and dates printed on them at a minimum. These items can include T-shirts, coolers, coffee mugs, water bottles, hats, and more. The more hands you can get these items into, the more people will see them and learn about your festival! You can also use promotional items as contest prizes.

5 – Advertising

You should advertise your festival both online and offline. Local advertising is essential, and depending on the performers at your event and how likely they are to draw crowds from further distances, you might want to invest in regional advertising, too.

For online advertising, the key places to start are Facebook and Google AdWords. Make sure your ticketing company makes it easy for you to do ad retargeting, which is far more likely to drive ticket sales than most other forms of advertising.

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6 - Invest in Quality Marketing Materials

Don't try to cut corners when it's time to create marketing materials, messages, and visuals for your festival. Instead, make sure you understand how to create awesome graphics for your website and all of your promotional materials. From the festival logo to signage, ads, the program, promotional items, publicity materials, and everything in between – quality matters.

People will equate the quality of your festival with the quality of their first impression of it, and that first impression usually comes from one of your marketing materials. If your promotional materials look cheap, fewer people will buy tickets because they'll think your festival will be equally cheap. In other words, the value of the ticket price (which includes the actual ticket cost and the perceived cost of *not* doing something else during the hours of your festival) must be equal to or less than the experience people expect to have at your festival or they won't buy.

7 - Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the most effective promotional tactics as long as you're sending relevant content to a list of subscribers who have opted in to receive messages from you. Therefore, you should start building your email subscriber list as soon as possible.

Start your festival promotion by emailing people who attended the same festival in the past (if it's a repeat event), but understand that the key to successful email marketing for events is list segmentation. Once you've segmented your list, use these 10 event marketing email messages to sell more tickets to your festival.

8 - Reach out to Influencers and the Media

Who already has the eyes and ears of the target audience who is likely to be interested in your festival? You need to get your festival on their radar screens so they can talk about it with their followers. These people could be from media organizations or they could be bloggers, Youtubers, Instagrammers, and so on. Start by following them on social media, and then reach out with information about your festival asking if they'd like to cover it.

You can also email online influencers and members of the media if you can find their email addresses, and don't be afraid to pick up the phone and call key people you want to connect with. They might say no, but it certainly doesn't hurt to ask. If just one says yes, your festival popularity would increase.

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