Community Gift Cards

Events Calendar

Introduction

An essential part of the responsibilities of most community representatives such as yourself, consists of showing prospective visitors what your area has to offer. One of the best ways to do this, is to show them a calendar of upcoming events, which allows you to showcase some of your member businesses and the activities occurring in the community.

In the past, this may have required a lot of effort on your part, to communicate with various parties/organizers in the community, to create those events, to update event descriptions, to add appropriate pictures, or to keep track of the dates of the events in order to remove past events.

No longer … we've come up with an approach to simplifying all of these tasks, and putting the majority of the work on the community at large, leaving them with the power to automatically be added to your calendar with a minimum of fuss and continuing to do what a number of them are likely already doing.

Our Approach

So how do we do this ? There are 3 components to our approach:

Eventful

The Eventful web site (www.eventful.com) is a well-known web site where hundreds of thousands of events are advertised. Anyone can submit an event, free of charge. Your member businesses or community organizers simply need to advertise an event on this web site, and put a special hashtag somewhere in the event description (likely at the bottom) … you choose this hashtag, and you simply need to tell them to use it in their descriptions.

Time.ly All-In-One Calendar

This web site (www.time.ly) offers a very feature-rich and beautiful calendar of events that you can place on your own web site, with a minimum of code. You have full control of different colors and themes, as well as the power to define how the calendar is populated (including Import functionality, more on that later). You must have a paid account with them (very reasonable cost). You can even automatically post events to your own Twitter account (remember that the event description already has a "hashtag" in it as well).

Community Gift Cards platform

So how do we fit in ?

In essence, you configure your Time.ly calendar to "pull" events from our platform. In turn, our platform pulls events from Eventful. Within our platform, you specify what hashtag (or hashtags) to look for at Eventful, how far from your central location you're willing to look for those events (all events in Eventful have a location identified), and we even offer a way to track when individual events are opened on your calendar by web site visitors (so you can tell your partners, member businesses, and/or organizers how successful the events calendar has been for them). Within our platform, you "map" the events to the organizers. You can even "exclude" certain events from your calendar (in case someone uses the hashtag you're looking for, but you don't want those events advertised on your calendar).

Using the approach above, your events calendar is refreshed on a regular basis (usually within an hour), you can view statistics/reports in our platform regarding the success of the calendar, and your administrative duties are at a minimum.

So what is my cost ?

There are 2 components to your cost:

Time.ly All-In-One Calendar

As mentioned above, you need to have a paid account with this provider. You need to have a PRO plan (while you're setting all of this up, you can use the free plan, but there will be a limit to the number of events that can be "pulled" into your calendar).

Their pricing can be found at this web site → https://time.ly/calendar-features-pricing-table/

As of this writing, it can be as low as **$6.99 per month (USD)** if billed annually, or $9.00 (USD) per month if billed monthly.

Community Gift Cards platform

Our pricing is very simple as well. We charge per hashtag that was used to "pull" events from Eventful, not the number of pulls, nor the number of events.

We charge **$2.00 per month per hashtag (in your currency, CAD or USD)**. Whenever a "pull" is made, we keep track of how many hashtags you had in the system at that time. On a monthly basis, we go through all of this data and summarize it. The average number of hashtags is what drives the cost. As an example, if for most of the previous month, you only used one hashtag, and for a few days (let's say 3 out of 31 days) you used 2 hashtags, the average would then be one hashtag, so your cost for last month's usage is only $2.00.

> We use system rounding … in this instance, it would have been 28 days of one hashtag, and 3 days of two hashtags … that is 28 x 1 plus 3 x 2, equals 34, divided by 31, equals 1.1 and this rounds to 1 only.

> On the other hand, if most of the previous month was two hashtags, the equation would be 28 x 2 plus 3 x 1, equals 59, divided by 31, equals 1.9, and this rounds to 2. So for last month's event calendar, your cost is $4.00.

This monthly charge is simply reflected in your system balance in the platform.

NOTE: During a "pull", if a hashtag has no upcoming events associated with it, that hashtag is still counted towards your total cost. You will be able to see hashtag-by-hashtag pull statistics (more on that later).

NOTE: In order to take advantage of this low-pricing, you must have a minimum of 10 active "Locations" (member businesses) identified in the system. If you don't, the minimum charge for the events calendar functionality is $10.00 per month (in your currency, CAD or USD).

Configuration – Time.ly All-in-One Calendar

First, get yourself an account with Time.ly. You can do so here → https://dashboard.time.ly/auth/signup . Once you have your account, log in to the dashboard.

Embedding the calendar: First, let's get the calendar added to your web site. Then, you'll be able to play with the display settings (colors, etc.) to get it looking the way you want it to.

To do this, navigate to Embed in your account on the left:

Embed

On the right hand side, keep all of the settings as they are. The defaults are/should be:
- Calendar Type: Calendar
- Dates range: Upcoming events
- View type: Same as Calendar Settings – Display
- Display recurrent events only once: OFF (no check-mark)
- Max. height: 0 px
- Hide toolbar: OFF (no check-mark)
- Filters (Categories, Tags, Organizers, and Venues): all blank (do not select any)
- Embed Type: JS/iframe (default) … IMPORTANT: leave this as-is so that tracking can be done

At the bottom, there is a box showing the code that needs to be placed on your web site … simply click on it and all of it will be highlighted, then right-click and "Copy" this code. This is the code that you (or your webmaster) need to put on your web site (preferably some sort of test page when you first start out – something that is not yet visible to web site visitors at large).

Display settings:

Now, you can adjust how your calendar looks. The Time.ly web site has a lot of online documentation, including videos, but here are a few items that we think may be helpful:

Views: When displaying the calendar, web site visitors can be given the option of showing the calendar a number of different ways. This is a personal preference. You can specify which views are available for viewing, and you can also specify which is the default view that is shown when the calendar is first displayed.

Go to Calendar Settings on the left:

Calendar Settings
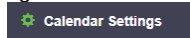
Then, go to the "Display" tab on the right:

Calendar Settings

General   Display
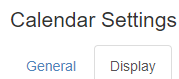
The two fields entitled "Enabled views" and "Default view" can be changed here.

In this same tab, you can also specify if you want to allow the visitor to "filter" the events based on a number of different criteria (categories, tags, etc.) … access the fields at the bottom of this tab and change these settings as you see fit.
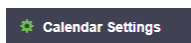
Colors: There are a number of settings that you can customize within your account, to specify the colors that you want to use when the calendar is displayed. These are accessed through the "Customize" tab of the Calendar Settings section (and the sub-tabs for "General", "Buttons", "Event Details", etc.).

Google Maps API Key: when zooming in on an event, web site visitors to your event calendar can be shown a map of precisely where the event is taking place, using Google Maps. In order to do so, you

must have an API key … getting an API key is free, and instructions for doing so can be found at the following web site → https://developers.google.com/maps/documentation/javascript/get-api-key

> NOTE: Even though you do need to set up a billing account with Google in order to get an API key, there will not be any charge … the use of this API key is for displaying maps with a place only (their "Embed" product), and there is unlimited usage (as of this writing) at no cost. For further details, see this web site → https://developers.google.com/maps/billing/understanding-cost-of-use#billing-overview

> Once you get an API key, navigate to Calendar Settings on the left:

<div align="center">

⚙ **Calendar Settings**

</div>

> Then, go to the "General" tab on the right hand side.

<div align="center">

Calendar Settings

| General | Display |

</div>

> Find the setting titled "Google Maps API Key", and copy the key you received into this field.

Importing events: You may want to import some events in parallel to changing your settings above (or you can create your own test events within your Time.ly calendar for this purpose). To import events, go to the Import section of the dashboard on the left:

<div align="center">

⬇ **Import**

</div>
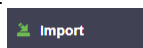
> This is where you specify how to get events from the Community Gift Cards platform. You will set up an "import feed", in the Synchronized tab on the right:

<div align="center">

Import Events

| Synchronized | (|

</div>
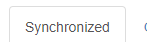
> For "Feed Name", give it a unique name – perhaps something like "CGC Import".

> For "Feed URL", you will need to get the URL from the gift card platform (see section below) … it will be of the following format:
> > https://www.communitygiftcards.com/secure/getevents.php?acd=XXXX

> > where XXXX is your account code … this import URL is visible at the top of the page in the "Events" section of the Community Gift Cards dashboard

> For "Timezone" (IMPORTANT), set this to ***your*** time-zone … do **not** leave it as "Event timezone".

> For "Import source tags and categories" (IMPORTANT), change this to "ON" (put a check-mark in the box).

> The other fields by default should be as follows:
> - Categories: leave this as blank (do not select any)
> - Tags: leave this blank (do not select any)
> - Delete past events on refresh: ON (with a check-mark)
> - Import as draft: OFF (with no check-mark)
> - On refresh don't remove the events deleted at source: OFF (with no check-mark)

> Now click on the "Import" button on the bottom-right – your calendar will "pull" data from the CommunityGiftCards platform, and will automatically update itself approximately once per hour.

<div align="center">

Import

</div>

TIP: You can hide the "Subscribe" button on the initial view of your calendar. This prevents potential competitors from simply using your calendar to populate their own web site with your events. Note that the "Subscribe" button will still show up on individual events when zoomed into, allowing web site visitors to add a specific event to their own calendar.

To do this, navigate to Calendar Settings in your Time.ly account on the left:
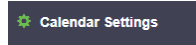
⚙ **Calendar Settings**

Then, on the right part of your screen, go to Customize, in the General tab:

Calendar Settings

| General | Display | Customize | Payme |

General

Now, in the Custom CSS box, add the following: **.timely-save-link { display:none; }** (note the period at the beginning).

Custom CSS:

.timely-save-link { display:none; }

Configuration – Community Gift Cards platform

To define the settings that are required for the platform to communicate with your Time.ly calendar, you will access the "Events" section of the dashboard. There are 3 sub-sections here.

Import Settings:
- At the top of this sub-section, you will see the "Import URL" displayed – this is what you copy into the Time.ly calendar account (see section above).

- Hashtag(s): Here, you define a comma-separated list of hashtags that you want the platform to search on Eventful for. There is no limit to the number of hashtags, but keep in mind that the number of hashtags governs the cost to you (see section above).

- Include Eventful logo ?: When using the Eventful API, the terms of use indicate that there must be proper attribution. Either every event "pulled" should include their logo, **or** (our preference) you should display their logo on your own web site indicating that the events are coming from their site. If you do not display the Eventful logo, then set this setting to "Yes" (which means that the CGC platform will include an Eventful logo with **every** event). If you want a single logo to be displayed on your own web site, please select one of the logos available here → http://api.eventful.com/branding, and set this setting to "No".

- Max. Distance: With this setting, you define how "far" from your central location (you set this in the "Settings" part of the dashboard) that you want the system to look for events. Note that in addition to the distance, the system will also ensure that the event is occurring within your state/province as well.

- Include Map Coordinates ?: If you have a Google Maps API key (see section above on Time.ly calendar configuration), set this to "Yes" and the import will include coordinates of the event – otherwise, set this to "No".

- Click on the "Save Settings" button to save your changes.

- Clicking on the "Show Pull Stats" button displays a pop-up window. In that window, you specify the year that you want to report on, and the window is updated to show you a month-by-month view of how many "pulls" were executed, for each hashtag included.

- Clicking on the "Show Upcoming Events" button displays a pop-up window. In that window, there will be 2 tabs. The first tab contains the "Tagged Events" (those that contain the hashtags you've defined and saved above), and the second tab contains the "Non-Tagged Events".

    - In the "Tagged Events" tab, you can specifically "EXCLUDE EVENT", which means that while the event does have at least one of your hashtags in its description, you want to exclude it from displaying on your calendar … note that if the event is a "multi-instance" event, **all** instances would be excluded when you exclude the event. If you already have the event excluded, you can choose to "Re-Include Event".

    - In the "Non-Tagged Events" tab, the description of the event is shown, and you can click on the Eventful link for it … you would contact the local company/organizer yourself and have them update their own description on Eventful if they want to be included on your calendar.

Tracking Settings:
- At the top of this sub-section, you will see the sample code that you need to add to your own web site, on the same page that you are displaying your Time.ly calendar. This code is what you (or your web site administrator) need to add to your web site, in addition to the code that is required by the Time.ly calendar itself. It is a widget that updates itself every half-second, and determines if the web site visitor has "zoomed into" or "opened" an event that is being displayed on your calendar.

- Enable Tracking ?: Set this to "Yes" if you want to enable tracking … if this is set to "No" but you have the widget installed on your page, the system will simply not track any opens/zooms.

- Allowed Referers: In order to ensure that the tracking is being accessed by your own web site, you must define at least one referer … as an example, if your page where the events are displayed is http://www.yourdomain.com/eventscalendar, simply enter "yourdomain.com" here. If you have more than one web site where you are displaying an events calendar and you have this tracking turned on, simply provide a comma-separated list of referers here, such as "yourdomain.com,yourseconddomain.com".

Reporting:

- Clicking on the "Organizers" button displays a pop-up window that allows you to create/manage your list of organizers … the pop-up window shows you how many Eventful URL's are currently mapped to each organizer as well.

- Clicking on the "Event URLs" button displays a pop-up window that shows you all of the Eventful URL's for events that have been "opened". There will be 3 tabs in this pop-up window.
    - The first tab shows you the "Mapped URLs" … these are the events that you have already mapped to an Organizer. You can re-assign to different organizers as needed here by changing the "Assigned to Organizer" field and clicking on the "Save Settings" button at the bottom.

    - The second tab shows you the "NON-Mapped URLs" … these are the events that are not yet mapped to an organizer … you can map them by selecting the "Assigned to Organizer" field and click on the "Save Settings" button at the bottom.

    - The third tab shows you the "By Organizer" functionality … selecting the organizer, displays all of the event URL's assigned to the organizer in question … you can "UN-MAP this URL" if you mistakenly assigned the event URL … doing this causes the URL to be moved to the "NON-Mapped URLs" tab.

- The next part of this sub-section allows you to report the statistics. You select the year, and you can optionally select the Organizer and/or the Referer, in order to get statistics displayed, by month for the year in question.