



Achieving Sponsor Success:

Tips for Securing, Engaging, and
Retaining Event Sponsors

Few events would be possible without the help of sponsors.

But as you probably know, finding sponsors can be a challenge, as can ensuring they get (and having *them* feel like they got) their money's worth.

Not to worry, though! We've got some tips for not only securing event sponsors, but engaging them onsite in a way that'll make them want to partner with you time and time again.

Securing Event Sponsors

First things first: You NEED event sponsors. To find the right ones — ones that make sense for you, the sponsor, *and* your attendees — check out the following tips:

1 **Think about your attendees' problems**

One of the best ways to start building out a sponsorship prospect list is by identifying what your attendees commonly struggle with. What are some of their pain points? What keeps them up at night? What would help make their lives easier?

Then, once you've answered those questions, start identifying companies that have solutions to those problems. Solutions directly equate to value, and *that's* how you're going to find the right sponsors that make sense not only for you and your event, but for your attendees as well.

Offer customization

2

Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all sponsorship package, be open and willing to customize your offerings. What makes sense for and/or appeals to one company may not make sense for and/or appeal to another. Yes, custom packages may take a little more time, but you're bound to see better results this way.

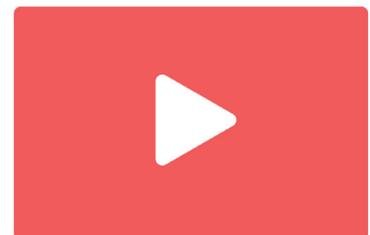
When reaching out to potential sponsors, let them know that you have a variety of sponsorship packages available for them to choose from. Ask them what their primary objectives are and then guide them towards a package that makes sense *for them*. You can even offer to customize a few things if that'll help seal the deal. Not only will companies be appreciative you asked, but they'll be much more likely to actually take you up on a partnership.

3

Create a sponsorship toolkit

When reaching out to potential sponsors, it never hurts to have tools by your side. Consider putting together a sponsorship toolkit, complete with testimonials from people who've sponsored your event(s) before, data from previous events (the attendee makeup, sponsor/vendor to attendee ratio, etc.), and even photos and videos of the space you'll be utilizing.

Why photos and videos? Well, it allows companies to see first-hand potential opportunities. If they can actually see where heavy foot traffic will be, they may be more inclined to take you up on that offer.



Engaging Your Event Sponsors

Once you have event sponsors, it's crucial to then engage them, both before the event and onsite. Now's the time to "give them their money's worth," so to speak. Below are a few ideas for doing just that:

Before the event

Recognize them on social media

Just as you promote your event on social media, you should also promote your sponsors. Give them a shoutout — on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram... whatever platforms you're using. And this probably goes without saying, but be sure to tag them. They'll likely share your post, which means even more awareness surrounding your event.

Provide them with an exhibitor kit

Prior to your event, be sure to provide your sponsors with an exhibitor kit. In that kit should be any information they should need to navigate your event and be successful. For example,

you'd want to include general contact information, important deadlines, event rules and regulations, move in and move out times, etc.

Don't make your sponsors have to ask. Make that process seamless for them by providing all the necessary information up front.

Provide them with a pre-show attendee list

If part of your sponsorship package included sharing the attendee list, now is the time to do it. That way, your sponsors can potentially reach out to those who've registered, encouraging them to stop by, learn more, utilize their product, etc.

NOTE

In your sponsorship packages and your exhibitor kit, it's a good idea to mention how many times sponsors are allowed to email those contacts, both before the event and after. You don't want anyone spamming your attendees, but at the same time, you want to provide your sponsors with value. Avoid any confusion and misunderstanding by making that clear from the get-go.

At the event

Incorporate contests and/or giveaways

This depends a little bit on the type of event you're hosting, but if possible, try incorporating a few contests and/or giveaways to prompt attendee-sponsor engagement. Give attendees a reason to approach your sponsors — the opportunity to win something (tickets to an event, a trip somewhere, a cool new piece of technology, etc.).

You could set this up scavenger hunt style or via a simple raffle. The point here, though, is to provide your attendees with a starting point and incentive to approach your sponsorship partners.

Place activities near where your sponsors are located

A good way to get attendees to gather around your sponsors is to place some kind of fun activity there. Now the type of activity you choose depends largely on the type of event you're hosting, but here's just one example: Let's say you work for a university and you're planning a homecoming event. Maybe it's an outdoor cookout-style event — before a football game or something

— where your sponsors are spread out across the lawn. Well, consider putting games and activities such as cornhole, giant Jenga, bocce ball, etc. near your sponsors' booths or set-ups. This will drive attendee traffic to your sponsors and the conversations can get started from there.

Create “non-salesy” environments for your sponsors

Often, people are hesitant to approach sponsors because they think they're just going to try and sell them something — even if it's something they could potentially be interested in! Eliminate that fear by creating non-salesy environments for your event sponsors. For example, let's say you're using a mobile app for your event. Well, you may want to have an “app lounge” onsite where attendees can go for help and support. The lounge could be manned by one of your staff members (or several staff members, if needed) and one of your event sponsors, giving them a smaller, less intimidating way to converse with your attendees.

Retaining Your Event Sponsors

Ideally, you'd like to retain your event sponsors. You don't want to have to hunt for sponsors every time you host an event. To keep those relationships strong, consider the following:

1 Send them a post-event recap

After an event, it's natural for your sponsors to ponder, *was that worth the money?* Answer that question for them! Send them a post-event recap with data such as how many attendees you had, what the demographic breakdown of your attendees was, the sponsor/vendor to attendee ratio, etc. If you can provide your sponsors with the data (given the data is good), it will prompt them to want to partner with you again. (Plus, by providing a recap, it shows you care about the ROI your sponsors receive.)

TIP If you have pictures of attendees interacting with sponsors, or a way to visually represent that ROI (like an image of their ad in your program or on your website), be sure to include that in your post-event recap!

2 Send them a post-event survey

Whether it's good or bad, you *want* to hear sponsor feedback. After all, if you take that feedback, it'll only make your event and corresponding sponsorship opportunities better. Be sure to ask questions, such as "Did this event meet your expectations?" and "How likely are you to sponsor this event again in the future?"

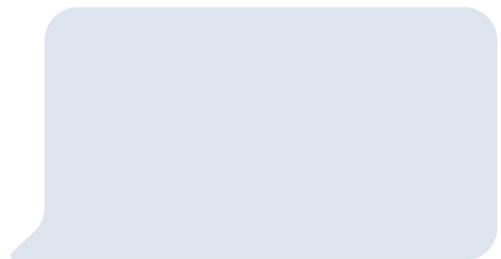
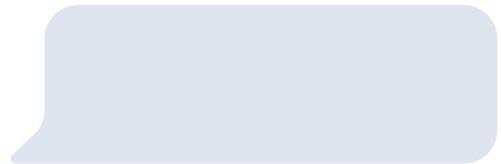
If any of that feedback really stands out to you — maybe someone was quite dissatisfied overall — consider reaching out to them via phone to first, apologize, but second, get them to explain their experience in a little more detail. Remember, your sponsors paid a lot of money, so sometimes, a courtesy call *is* needed.

3

Keep in touch with your sponsors between events

Don't you hate it when people reach out to you ONLY when they need something (especially money)? So do your sponsors! Don't do that to them. Keep the relationship strong by reaching out to them between events. If you saw they recently won an award or opened a new location, reach out to them to congratulate them or even send them flowers.

Showing you care about their success outside the context of your event suggests you'll also care about their success within the context of your event — all the more reason for them to want to remain involved!



Now let's say you have the sponsorship part of your event covered, but you need help with some of the other aspects — the budget, the registration process, the promotion, etc.

If that's the case, click here to check out our free guide, [9 Steps to Event Planning!](#)

From setting goals to collecting feedback, it has everything you need to plan a top-notch event!

And speaking of top-notch events, if you've got the planning down, but need help with the technology side of things, take a look at **ePly**. Whether you need an event registration system, an event website, a conference app, or all of the above, ePly can help make your next event the *best* event. Visit [eply.com](#) or call **1-800-507-3759** to learn more!



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