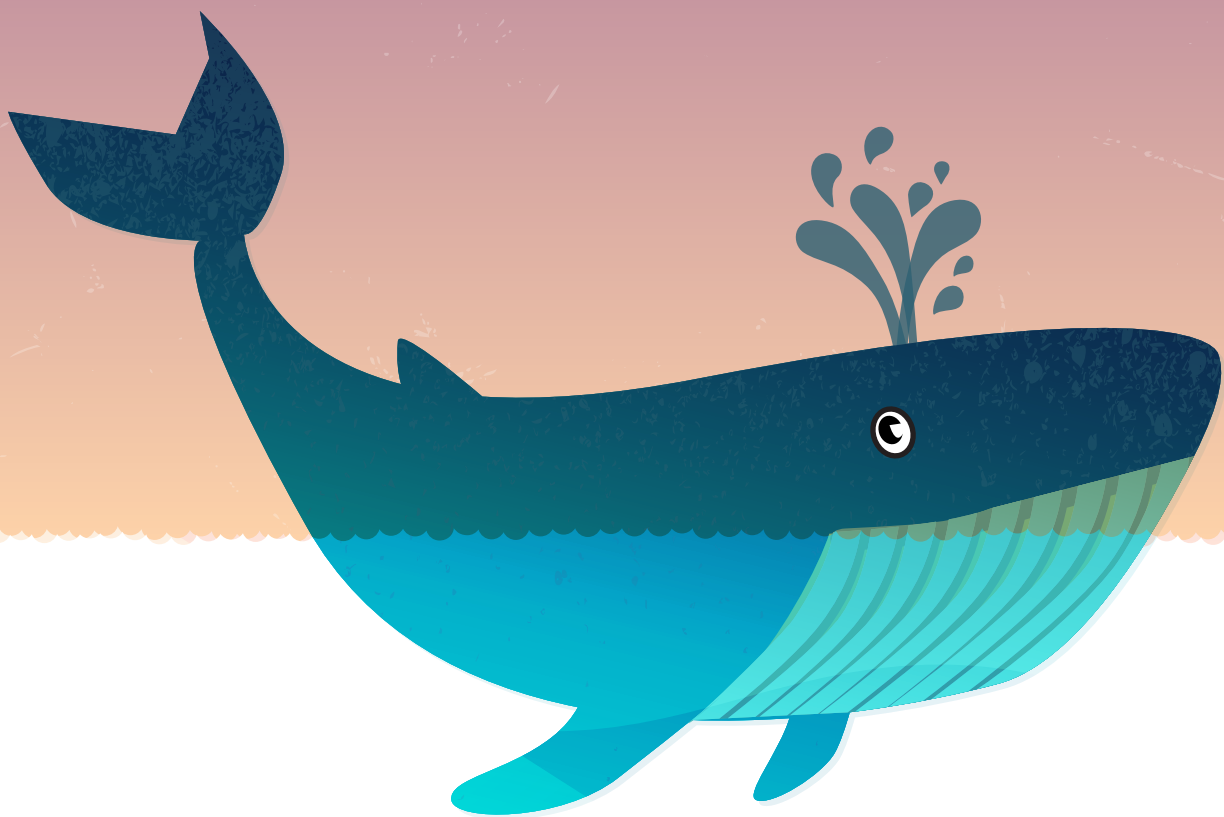


Catching The Big Fish:
***The Event
Sponsorship
Guide***

*Learn how to find, pitch and keep amazing
conference and event sponsors*



Sponsorship is a huge business. According to Statista, the total volume of sponsorship spending in North America in 2015 reached \$21.4 billion.

As an event or conference planner, it's critical that you understand how to attract and maximize relationships with sponsors.

Acquiring sponsors for your event not only supplies the funding necessary to provide value for your attendees, but it could also help expose your brand and build relationships between your event and companies in your industry.

Sponsorship is particularly important for events because a realistic ticket price for attendees sometimes does not match the financial investment required to make elaborate events or conferences possible. Thus, sponsorship becomes the financial cornerstone of many events.

Many event organizers often have a difficult time finding companies that are willing to sponsor their event. In this ebook, you'll get answers to these questions:

- How do you know if a company will sponsor your event?
- How do you know which companies to reach out to?
- How do you reach out to ideal target companies?
- How do you show the company that you provided them with value, so that you can build a long lasting relationship with them?

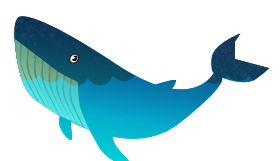
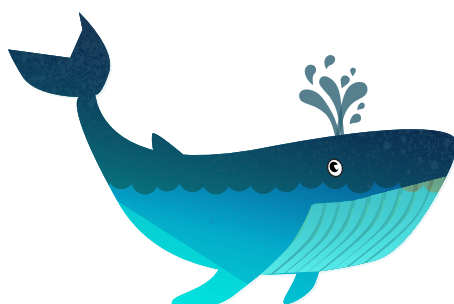


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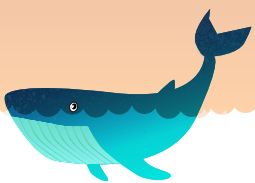
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Unit 1:

Collecting Event Data

The first step in the process of finding sponsors for your event is to collect enough event data to make the right choices. This includes data about your attendees, your event brand, social media impressions, event site visits, etc. Event data will provide you with the knowledge to make relevant and effective decisions regarding which sponsors to reach out to.

You'll also have the information you need to pitch your event to potential sponsors successfully. Therefore, even before reaching, or researching relevant sponsors, you need to find the data that will help you know all about your event and its place within the industry.



Know Your Attendees

Know your own audience. This self-reflection is a valuable step in maximizing the effectiveness of a campaign that will benefit both your sponsors and your attendees.

According to Idealist.org, **sponsors are more interested in your audience than in your event.** Sponsors will more likely partner with your event if you provide them with accurate details about the numbers of your attendees, their professional titles, the companies they come from, and even their demographic information.

Knowing your attendees is not just beneficial for securing sponsorships, it is also a great way to provide your attendees with sponsors that are relevant to them. Without providing relevant sponsors for your attendees, you'll limit your ability to provide value to sponsors - making it hard to build long lasting relationships with them. The reputation of your event brand rests on knowing your attendees' demographic information for the current event you're planning and for previous similar events you've planned.

Know Your Event Brand

You will not be able to pitch your event to potential sponsors if you do not thoughtfully pay attention to the objectives of your event or conference. This is because **most sponsors choose to partner with an event that has shared values.**

Being honest about your event and choosing sponsors that are similar to the objectives of the conference you're planning will be helpful in building sponsor relationships, while providing value to attendees.

The best way to get a comprehensive understanding of your event brand is to look at the numbers surrounding your event. Using an event management software that collects data like event website traffic, ticket sales over multiple events, and community engagement stats are all excellent pieces of data to help you better understand how your event brand will be perceived by potential sponsors.

Knowing these numbers will ultimately help you make realistic choices about which sponsors to contact, and will provide more concrete data to show your sponsors that your event is legitimate, professional, and has the numbers to back up your claim that your event will provide the sponsor with value.

With this information about your event, you can then formulate a pitch to potential

sponsors that accentuates the uniqueness of your conference brand and to explain why the sponsor should contribute to your event over others.

Tips To Collect Essential Data

As an event organizer interested in presenting your conference in the best light, you must be able to find data that displays your event's assets. Here is a list of tips to collect data that will make your event stand out to potential sponsors:

- **Event Technology:** Using a [event management software](#) will provide you with the data you need to secure an event sponsor. Data from event technology can range from the high open rates your emails have among event attendees, the amount of revenue you've generated from attendees who signed up after attending a previous event, or the percentage of event attendees who are actively using your event networking community. All of these numbers show that you are an event planner with a track record of creating great events.
- **Google Alerts:** Google Alerts is a great tool that allows you to track when your event is mentioned online. Tracking these mentions and presenting them to your potential sponsors will show that by sponsoring your event, they have the potential to reach a wide audience. For other options besides Google Alerts, check out programs like [Talkwalker Alerts](#) and [Mention](#).
- **Event Surveys:** Ask attendees questions that might help you support a future pitch. Good questions to ask are:
Did you find this event to be valuable (how much on a scale of 1-5)?
Did you find the sponsors we presented were actually relevant to your expectations/business objectives?
Having positive results from past events highlights your ability to provide value to new sponsors.
- **Case Studies:** You can create case studies that show the benefits of your particular events. For example, you can highlight the success of previous event sponsors or exhibitors to show that the events and conferences you organized have actually provided value to sponsors.

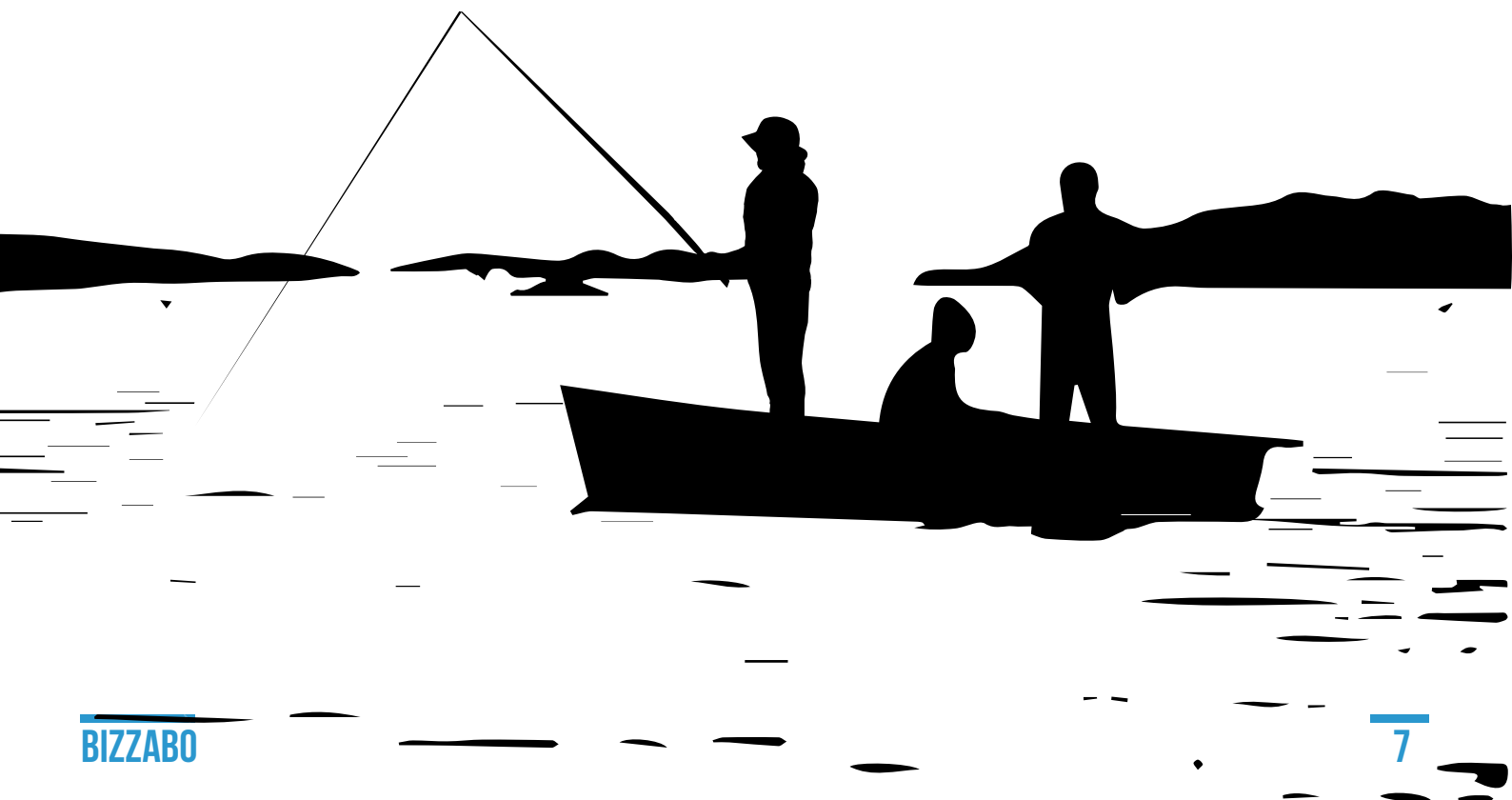
When building these case studies, try to separate them by industry to better speak to individual sponsors.

Unit 2:

Reaching Out To Sponsors

Now that you know what sponsors are looking for, and the data you need to showcase your event, you can then begin to reach out to target sponsors. Don't expect sponsors to find the sponsor guidelines uploaded to your website and then contact you ready to sign a deal!

Instead, most successful event organizers must spend a good deal of time reaching out to potential event sponsors in order to bring on board qualified conference partners.



Know How Sponsors Choose Events

Relevance: Companies, especially big corporations, often have a lot of sponsorship requests. **The first thing a company will look for in deciding whether or not to sponsor an event is its relevance to the company's brand and values.**

Sponsorship As Investment: Team and ROI: Sponsoring events is an investment, which means that companies are taking a risk when choosing to sponsor your event. Your job as an event organizer is to present your event keeping this in mind, and showing that because of your event specific data, the risk will not be too high.

- **Team:** Looking at sponsorship as an investment is a great way to understand the importance of a team in securing a deal. As Venture Capitalists would claim, a major factor in an investment decision, in addition to the market and the idea, is the team. In terms of events, present yourself to be part of an experienced team that is motivated and ambitious.
- **ROI:** Many sources would agree that ROI is the most important factor in sponsorship decisions. ROI may be different for different sponsors, for example, it may be exposure to a certain audience, or it may be entirely related to sales. Therefore, knowing the intended ROI of a potential sponsor will help you choose the right one. ROI is also where event data becomes especially relevant. Showing the numbers that prove that your event has succeeded in the past regarding the particular ROI the sponsor is looking for will ultimately secure the sponsorship at your event. For example, if a sponsor's ROI is a certain level of brand awareness, then you can show with real data the number of site visits, click-through rates for your advertisements, etc. to show that you have been successful in the past with raising awareness of your own event brand.

Look At Sponsor's Business Objectives

This can often be a complex endeavor, as most companies have multiple objectives. According to Gail Perry from Fired Up Fundraising, **in order to secure the right sponsor you need to keep in mind that sponsors choose to connect with you based on their sales and marketing objectives.**

Do your research to understand overarching company goals, then tailor to the relevant department you'll be pitching to.

Beyond objectives, look at shared values. If your intended sponsor is trying to market itself as a promoter of sustainability, does your event design use (and publicize!) sustainable best practices?

Event organizers should seek sponsorships from companies that share the “values and attributes” of their event brand. You’ll notice that thoughtfully choosing sponsors based on similar values and business objectives will serve to help you in pitching your event, because you know what matters most to them.

Seek Out Applicable Companies

- **A. Companies With Large Budgets:** Event organizers need sponsors who can provide enough financial support to match their pricing objectives. This means that you need to find companies that have large advertising or marketing budgets.
- **B. Companies With Advertising Departments:** You’ll often notice that companies that could supply larger sponsorship amounts are those that have an established advertising or marketing department. Filtering your research of companies to those that have these departments will make your quest for sponsorships a bit easier and help streamline the process.
- **C. Referrals:** A great way to get relevant sponsors to your event is to offer a referral program with other sponsors. By doing so, you know you will be reaching out to established sponsors.

Methods of Reaching Out

Cold Calling / Cold Emailing: While sending a proposal is a great way to reach out to potential event sponsors, companies will often overlook a bunch of bullet points explaining why you think you could provide them with value. Thus, according to Tweetwall, “there’s an art to cold calling,” which may get you through the doors that could be otherwise closed.

Here are some tips for cold-calling:

- **Contacting the Company:** Most sources agree that contacting the company instead of the direct person is the best option, because doing so will confirm who exactly the right person is to contact.
- **Language:** “Don’t Sell, Talk.” Most sources agree that you shouldn’t treat your sponsors as customers, but rather as partners in providing value for your attendees.
- **Timing:** In order to talk directly with a decision maker, it’s best to call in the early

morning, before 9AM or in the evening, after 6PM. That's because business leaders tend to work earlier and later than other members of their team, so calling at these odd hours will mean you're more likely to avoid gatekeepers who can get in the way.

- **Be Specific:** Being specific in what your event can offer the sponsor is the best way to expose the value of a potential partnership. When companies receive many sponsorship requests, being specific is a great way to differentiate your event from the competition. Using real data and numbers to back it up is a great way to get specific!

In addition, those reaching out to potential partners should show that they've really researched the company they're pitching. It's important to describe why the company is a good fit for your event. Mentioning how the company's values and the values event attendees hold is a good start. Another idea is for conference organizers to research previous events that the company has hosted themselves to find parallels.

Know The Decision Makers

Most sources agree that in order to secure a sponsorship opportunities, you need to make sure that you are reaching out to the right person within the company.

This requires some research, and LinkedIn is a great tool for finding the right person to contact. Even beyond the decision makers, you should know which department you are speaking with.

For example, if your talking with someone involved in partnerships, your pitch should center around the ability of your event to drive brand awareness and the ability of your event to expose attendees to a brand that shares similar values.

However, if you're talking to an employee who is primarily concerned with generating sales leads, say someone in Lead Generation or who is a part of the sales team, then you should focus on tools you have in place to directly drive customers to your sponsors landing pages, or sales team.

In other words, you should choose to present the data that showcases how that specific team can benefit from this sponsorship opportunity.

Unit 3:

Pitching Your Event

Let's recap, you've done your event research, you've located the right person to contact, and you've set up a meeting to properly pitch decision makers.

All of your hard work so far has lead to the pitch. It's your moment to snag a powerful event partner by them that your conference is worthy of investment. It's important that you sell the concept of your event and explain how you'll provide value to the sponsor, all while delivering a well polished presentation. Here's how you're going to do it!



Sell The Concept

The way you present your event is often more effective in securing a sponsor than trying to avoid exposing your drawbacks, like a lack of experience as an event organizer or lack of big name sponsors for past events.

According to Eve Gumpel of Entrepreneur.com, despite the lack of experience as an event organizer, Linda Hollander, planner of Women's Small Business Expo, told potential corporate sponsors like Walmart and Citibank, "I can offer you the women's market." Subsequently, she states, "they threw money at me." Here, pitching a concept that matches the objectives of the sponsor company can go a long way.

Event Technology

Your use of event technology is a great feature of your event to showcase to sponsors, because it shows that you are keeping up to date in newest developments that provide value for your event.

Event technology quantifies valuable data about your event, like the numbers surrounding attendee engagement, networking success, and website traffic. This data can show sponsors that by partnering with your event, they will be getting maximum exposure, while getting hard data to help them understand how the event really impacted their business. Altogether, showcasing event technology minimizes sponsors' perceived risk of investing in your event.

Pitch Uniqueness

Especially if your sponsor wants brand awareness more than ROI from actual sales, pitching your event as unique and as an event that will attain a high level of attention within the industry is a great way to go about securing your sponsor list.

Keys To Delivering A Good Pitch

One of the most important tips to delivering a good pitch is not to speculate on what you can provide for your sponsors, but to base your pitch on actual facts. Here is where data like numbers surrounding your attendees or previous case studies comes in, which show that you have provided value for sponsors in the past. Other important tips to delivering a successful pitch include showing that you are part of an experienced team, being concise, and being realistic about what you can and cannot provide the sponsor in terms of matching their expectations.

Questions Sponsors Typically Ask

- **1. Can you show me any case studies from past sponsors?**

Case studies are a great way to prove to your potential sponsors that you have been successful in the past and can thus be successful in the future. You should formulate a couple case studies showcasing the success of past events. Keep in mind that you should prepare a case study that explains how previous sponsors, or if you didn't have event sponsors, exhibitors were made successful by partnering with your event.

- **2. How will you promote my brand?**

The best answer to this question involves a detailed plan of action. From talking about how you'll promote the sponsor in your event networking app, to talking about ways you'll draw attention to the sponsor booth and where logos will be placed online and in printed materials, providing a detailed plan of actions is best.

- **3. Sponsorships have been hit or miss in the past, I'll have to pitch this to my boss. Anything they should know in particular?**

This question forces you to think about unique opportunity your event provides for a specific brand. The answer to this question must be tailored specifically to the company and should be based on research you've done on what the company will expect to achieve from partnering with your event. This can be anything from ROI in sales to brand exposure to a wide audience.

- **4. What other companies are sponsoring this event?**

Sponsors tend to ask this question in order to find out how established your event is within its industry. In other words, this question is meant to judge your event's legitimacy. Here is where finding sponsors through referrals from past sponsors comes in, which shows potential sponsors that other companies trust you enough to provide them with value. Also, showing potential sponsors that their competitors partnered with your event can really push them toward the decision to sponsor.

If you don't have sponsors from previous events, that's ok. The best thing to do is to be open about this fact, and to present a list of high profile attendees, speakers or exhibitors who are involved with this years event.

- **5. What're the demographics of your event attendees?**

As previously discussed, sponsors choose to partner with an event that matches their business and marketing objectives. Sponsors ask this question about demographics in order to see whether or not your event matches the audience that they are seeking to reach. This question should be easy to answer, because you should only choose to reach out to potential sponsors that share this same point of reference in the first place.

Unit 4:

Promoting Your Sponsors

Once you've brought a sponsor on board it's time to exceed their expectations so that you can build a long lasting relationship with them. To do that, making use of event technology while injecting creativity into sponsorship promotions is key.



Event Apps

Event Apps are becoming a necessary component of today's meetings and conferences. Besides providing a better overall experience for your attendees, event apps are also a great way to promote your sponsors. Here are some ways to utilize event apps for your sponsors:

- **Opening Page**

What better way to promote your sponsors than on the opening page splash screen when attendees launch the app? As most attendees use an event app for just about every stage of the event, this is a great way to get your event sponsor in front of a lot of eyeballs.

- **White Papers**

A great way to promote your sponsors through an event app is to provide the sponsor's white papers or other promotional content within the app, as long as the content is relevant to your event theme. Instead of an ad popping up while your event attendees use the app, white papers are a great way to get people engaged with material from companies in their industry, while also providing brand recognition for your sponsors.

- **Maps**

Venue or show maps are becoming more and more integrated into event apps, as they are more accessible and more user friendly than handing out a paper map to each attendee. Since most attendees will be looking at the maps numerous times throughout the event, clearly marking where your sponsor's booth will be is a great idea.

- **Special Offers**

The nature of an event app makes it very easy for an attendee to go from a banner ad or a special offer to the actual sponsor's landing page. Few other

circumstances allow a sponsor to achieve almost instant ROI at an event than through an event app.

- **Detailed Sponsor Profile** - Event apps that are integrated with an all-in-one platform make it easy for event organizers to build a complete event sponsor profile and post it to an event website and on a mobile app. Creating these profiles makes it easier for event attendees to learn more about a sponsor all within their mobile device.

Besides just providing the ways to offer sponsors audience engagement and brand recognition, event apps also make it easy to obtain the critical data you'll need to provide sponsors after an event. Information such as how many times an event attendee clicked on the sponsor's ad, or how many people view a sponsor's profile will help to build long lasting relationships with sponsors. That's because at the end of the day, they'll need hard data in order to really understand if their sponsorship was successful.

Be Creative

When it comes to presenting your sponsors at the event itself, you have a plethora of options. The flexibility derives from the fact that you can truly put an ad on anything. Take a look at the following examples of creative ways to incorporate your sponsors into your event:

- **Interactive Walls**

Similar to iPads, interactive walls are a great way to engage the audience with sponsors. These walls are great for displaying sponsors, and you should definitely work with your sponsors to determine how they would like to be presented on these walls. It is also a great way to show off social media impressions!

- **Award Ceremony**

What better way to present your sponsors than to honor them for their work in

your industry? By setting up for this ceremony, you can also be sure that you've done your research on competitors and your event industry.

- **Music**

DJs are become a staple at many events. Simply set up a banner around the DJ booth to let attendees know that the music is provided by your event sponsor. In addition, you could ask the DJ to quickly mention the sponsor throughout the day.

- **Charging Stations**

Since most event attendees will be using a smartphone at the event, some will find themselves in need of charge. Charging stations are a great way to present sponsorship information.

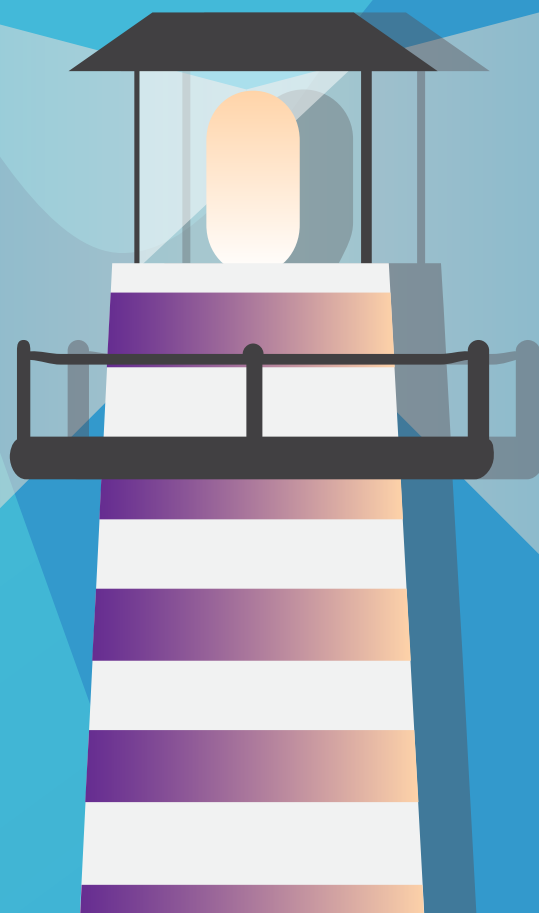
- **Wifi**

Since smartphones and event apps are becoming essential for attendees to fully experience the event, most event attendees will be using Wifi at your event. These can often be pricy, so let the sponsors cover it. In exchange, present their logo on the Wifi login page. You can also use your sponsors as usernames and passwords. After all, most attendees will see it!

Unit 5:

Nurturing The Relationship

So you've set expectations with your sponsors, you've promoted them at your event, and now it is time to evaluate the results. Even after the event, you should continue to provide value to your sponsors. Meetingsupport.org writes that the best way to court a sponsor is to treat them as a partner instead of a cash machine. Show them that you are actually interested in giving them value. To do this, you can try to find ways to boost their ROI even after the event, for example, showing their logo on post-event feedback surveys. Here are a few tips to help build the relationship with your event sponsor after the event has concluded:



Discuss Value

Share the value they achieved by sponsoring your event. Be sure present event performance data to sponsors, alongside analysis that shows you put in real effort to understand the value sponsors received from your event.

Scrapbook

Make a “scrapbook” to showcase the value of your event: use data to show that you have created the impressions that you initially estimated in the proposal you delivered. If your event underperformed be honest and explain why. But be sure to include actual media from your event with decision makers so that they can get a feel for your event or conference.

Improvement

Always discuss how to improve the partnership. What did not necessarily go as planned and how do you intend to solve this issue? This shows that you are thoughtful, honest, and actually interested in maintaining a relationship with your sponsor.

Communicate Regularly

Communicating regularly builds trust, and with trust, you can more successfully work toward the organization of your next event. And of course, taking the initiative to reach out to your sponsors frequently suggests that you are keeping them in mind.

Integrate Into Planning Process

A great way to consolidate this relationship with the sponsor is to invite them to your post-event meeting to go over the value of the event. Additionally, you can invite the sponsor to come to your pre-planning meeting for your next event. Doing so is also a great way to show that you have an experienced, success-driven event planning team.

Conclusion

Acquiring sponsors is the financial backbone to your event, and without a successful sponsorship campaign, you won't be able to organize the event the way you would like. Without sponsors, you also won't be able to make your event profitable.

Considering the weight of sponsors to the success of your events, you should not plan your event and then try to match it to potential sponsors, but you should plan your event with sponsors in mind the whole time.

When searching for event sponsors, remember to start by gathering your event data first. With good and descriptive data, you'll find it's easier to convince sponsors to support your event.

Next you'll want to do your research, find the right sponsors for your event. Work to understand what brands share your event values, and matchup with the demographics of your event attendees.

Once you've compiled a list of ideal sponsors it's time to reach out. Try to make contact with key decision makers through cold calling, and emailing. Remember to reach out knowing your event data, and their overarching company goals. Then pitch your event by being specific about the data of your event or previous events, and the strategy you'll take to promote your brand.

During the event, you've got to provide sponsors with the value you promised and then some. Utilize event technology and be creative to provide maximum exposure.

Post event, you must work to build a lasting relationship with your sponsor. Provide them with a debrief that highlights your event performance as it relates to the goals you outlined.

By following this five step method to getting event sponsors, you'll be well on your way to planning a profitable and prestigious event or conference.



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sales@bizzabo.com



[1-800-604-BIZZ](tel:1-800-604-BIZZ)



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