THE FUTURE OF EVENT SPONSORSHIP

How Successful Events Win (and Keep) Sponsors

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INTRODUCTION
by Julius Solaris

INTRODUCTION

It's happening. 53% of event professionals are struggling to secure sponsorship for their event. Many, many times that means that the very event is threatened. Less sponsorship jeopardizes the financial security of the event. Our recent research shows that a mere 10% of events happen without any form of sponsorship. So, what is behind the struggle?

We asked 438 event professionals their thoughts and many told us it is budget cuts that are impacting on sponsor investment.

2017 is an interesting year so far. The level of change we are experiencing on a political level is intense and the resulting uncertainty is impacting events.. While budgets play a part, evidence suggests there are other factors impacting sponsorship.

Multiple sources confirm that B2B events are seen as the most effective marketing channel. Yet the investment does not match the hype. As marketing evolves into a data-driven science, event sales are confronted with growing ROI questions.

When we look at marketing campaigns, channels such as online advertising have grown exponentially, thanks to the massive volume of accountability deeply embedded in the tools. On top of that, marketers have been able to gain massive intelligence about their audience. Gone are the days of randomly trying to fish in a big pond, hoping that a sound lead would bite.

Smart companies are producing their own events, inviting clients and prospects to attend. They are exploring digital tools as a method to create new revenue streams. Sometimes they are achieving 10x ROI.

A logo on a site or a pull-up banner doesn't work anymore. It seems that gold, silver and bronze are finally making their way back to the Olympics, where they belong, as they have failed massively as sponsorship options. The precompiled sponsorship packages events have offered every year are no longer appealing to sponsors.

2017 and 2018 will be remembered as cut-off years, when accountability finally buried the promise of exposure. In a pre-digital, pre-social era it was perfectly acceptable to sell exposure. After all, there were very few ways to access information back in the day; even press releases were tough to get hold of. But things have changed. Information is everywhere. Exposure at events is not going to make a difference. Suggestions we made years ago to event professionals have turned into a very vigorous warning to embrace change, as the very existence of certain forms of events is threatened.

Let's be clear on one item. The power of face to face will never be matched. You can drop as many dollars as you want into Virtual Reality machines, but you will never, ever replace face to face. Attendee needs have changed. The way they decide to attend, experience and evaluate events has changed. As a result, the way brands want to engage with attendees has evolved.

Much success can be achieved by looking at the meeting design, the way we conceive our events, but this is not the matter of this report. Instead, we want focus on what makes sponsors tick and how we can use the most important weapons we have to make the exposure we expect to provide more tangible.

This is not us being techno-enthusiast geeks. It's research speaking out loud. 78% of event professionals say that they use technology to keep their sponsor happy. Do you use it?

Whether the answer is yes or no, you will find valuable information in the following report.

It will give you the necessary strategy to approach your sponsors in a meaningful way to them, rather than to you.

It will shift the focus to make sponsorship an inevitable action for the decision makers in the companies you work with. It will filter out all the unnecessary noise from technology that, frankly, does not add much to the

bottom line. Many tools are available to extend your sponsorship offering or to make it more tangible but that is not necessarily a positive thing. With quantity comes confusion and we are deeply committed to offering solutions that reduce confusion for you.

So, please join us for a peek into what the future of event sponsorship looks like and how you can make your event even more successful by providing the tools your sponsors want in order to make their investment flourish.

"Make your event even more successful by providing the tools your sponsors want to make their investment flourish."

THE 10 TRAITS OF INNOVATIVE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

So, what are the characteristics of innovative sponsorship programs? What should we seek when investing in or selling sponsorship? Value, ROI, tangibility – we all know what we need to do, yet we sometimes forget how to deliver them. The following list is a first attempt to define the key traits of win-win partnership that deliver value for all those involved.

01

Authority

Events that show authority, independence, freshness will always be sought after for sponsorship. The paradigm shift here to swing your event positioning from push to pull.. Calling up, chasing, and sending proposals is perfectly acceptable when you are trying to push the idea to your sponsorship audience. Being chased, being asked, receiving inquiries about sponsorship opportunities, often referred to as inbound, are pull activities. You are simply harvesting the good results of your amazing event and event content. Brands may run their own events but customers know there will always be a bias or a secondary objective. To set yourself apart, you really have to step up your event content game and be recognized as valuable in the community, which makes your event almost inevitable as a sponsorship decision.

02

Collaterals are Worth Nothing

There is no value in a standard proposal. Innovative sponsorship programs start with the sponsor in mind, not with the dimensions of your booth or the logo size. Would you discuss the dimensions of your apartment at a first date? Instead, shift your attention to how your event can help sponsors achieve their objectives. That is why collaterals are quite worthless if mass produced. They immediately disengage your audience. They are a one-size-fits-all, generic attempt to just sell. Customization, conversation, flexibility in inventory makes sponsors happy.

03

Metrics > Logo Placement

Logo placement, though still appealing to some, definitely does not belong to the sponsorship of the future. Of course, logos on branding are nice to have but that's all. What sponsors want is solid data. They are after profiles, clicks, leads generated, how many people passed through their stand, how many people hung out around the booth. Do you have the technology in place to provide this data to your attendees? Have you taken advantage of the incredible number of developments in technology to support better metrics? (check part 3 of this report)

04

Matchmaking

Information overload is one of the biggest problems with today's events. Some event professionals took the flourishing of online content as a stimulus to do more sessions, invite more speakers, create more tracks. How does that help sponsors? It doesn't. They are looking to zero into those clients who can make a difference. They are not interested in noise or hundreds of people passing by. They want to be matched with those who could potentially become clients. Your job is to make this magic happen.

05

Meeting Design

Design is not decor. Design is creating a user-friendly experience where attendees, sponsors and all stakeholders get something out of the event. If you cram an exhibition hall with thousands of booths without some areas to rest, attendees are going to be in a bad mood. That means they will be negatively inclined to do business, which translates into poor sponsorship effectiveness. The real question is, can you get sponsors to work with you on creating value for your attendees? Lounges, games, food... the elements that can deliver a sponsor message are endless. Innovative sponsorship leverages experiences.

06

Rewrite Your Inventory

Directly correlated with how you design your event is the quality of the items on your sponsorship menu. Average menus are for average restaurants. You really have to work with your chef to create tantalizing sponsorship opportunities that stimulate the appetite of the most demanding brands. Make your inventory creative! Think how you can deliver better experiences by means of more innovative opportunities. A shout out on the main stage is worth zero. Think about that.

07

Deeply Assess Your Real Estate

It is very easy to give away too much too soon to those sponsors who show a little level of interest. Successful events are aware of the worth of their inventory and allocate it strategically, knowing exactly the demand levels for each item. Too often, few sponsors get too much, leaving too little for others. This harms your event because it precludes you from having healthy relationships with brands who may be more willing to engage with your audience. If your event is worth it, you have to sell it accordingly.

08

DIY

Some sponsors may know you. They know your audience. They also know what they want. Give them the flexibility to pick and choose whatever they want (and price it accordingly); a la carte wins over fixed menus, especially in times of budget cuts. You can always upsell, but start by giving them the freedom to choose what they think works best for them, rather than what you want to sell them. The standard rule is that if a sponsorship item doesn't sell well, it's because it is flawed. Learn from this. Create more opportunities your sponsors want.

09

Embrace Communities

One of the biggest changes social media brought along was the flourishing of spontaneous communities. They are often very unorganized and eager to find platforms to connect in person. Your event is the perfect opportunity to give them space. Having communities showing up at your event presents incredible sponsorship opportunities. Think about the echo you can have online from individuals who usually connect online every day. How can you offer such opportunity to sponsors? How can you support a community while delivering a strong message?

10

Shift Your Focus

Innovative sponsorship programs look at the needs of attendees first. They understand the core needs of those attending events and they offer the opportunity to provide solutions to sponsors. How can you solve the issue of attendees waiting in line for hours? Get a sponsor to pay for registration at the airport. How can you solve the issue of attendees walking too much on your trade show floor? Get a sponsor to pay for scooters. These are incredibly practical ideas that add value to attendees while delivering relevant sponsorship messages.

WHAT SPONSORS WANT & HOW THEY THINK

by Todd A. Uglow, JD

WHAT SPONSORS WANT AND HOW THEY THINK

Sponsorship spending is on the rise. According to the IEG Sponsorship report (considered by most experts to be the most credible sponsorship reporting entity in North America), global sponsorship spending is projected to rise 4.5 percent in 2017 to $62.8 billion from the $60.1 billion spent in 2016. That's a lot of money to go around.

The good news for those wishing to get into the sponsorship game is that brands are engaging in sponsorship activity in a big way and have been for some time.

So, if things are looking up, why then are sponsorship opportunities often so hard to secure? This is primarily because event planners are not always comfortable with the sponsorship process. Undoubtedly, if you are reading this report, you have some idea of how sponsorships work. Let's start by examining some sponsorship fundamentals to ensure a proper foundation.

First, it is important to recognize that sponsorships are different from traditional advertising, even though both are forms of promotion. In many ways, sponsorships are a better use of marketing dollars than advertising and recent trends show companies are moving money from traditional advertising methods into sponsorships. This is because sponsorships tend to be more strategic or "big picture" than an ad buy. As a result, long-lasting, strategic partnerships are formed that can be the basis of ongoing revenue streams for years to come.

Second, sponsorships benefit from a powerful phenomenon often referred to as the "event spillover effect." There is real science behind the idea that when people attend events, they are happy. And these happy guests begin to transfer those feelings to the brands which have a connection to the event. Most people have an emotional connection to events such as trade events, concerts or sporting event. (That's the main reason attendees will spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on tickets and wait in line for hours to attend!)

Brands do not receive this kind of spillover benefit from a straight advertising relationship because that ad is seen as trying to sell the consumer something. Alternately, in a sponsorship, the brand is merely **associating** with an event, so the message is more subtle and seen by the consumer as being more credible. If you can explain these positive effects to a potential sponsor, you will be surprised how quickly they get the

"Recent trends show companies are moving money from traditional advertising methods into sponsorships."

concept and become more open to accepting your offer as being a valid option for them.

With the above in mind, let's also remember that sponsorship activations are seen by brands as primarily a marketing activity. (Sometimes, a sponsorship relationship may exist solely for charitable or philanthropic reasons, which we will discuss below, but even that example has a marketing purpose behind it.) In most cases, the responsibility of sponsorship activation usually falls to the marketing department. Prospecting to the marketing department is your best bet, unless the prospect has a sponsorship person or department.

As we all know, one of the biggest challenges for any marketing department is being able to justify the "spend." It's often difficult to draw a line connecting certain marketing activity to a particular sales result. In such cases, marketing departments have a more difficult time convincing the finance department to approve the campaign. So, if you can show your prospect that your offer will yield "X" dollars, it will be much easier to secure that sponsorship activation. Fortunately, the returns of some sponsorship activations are easier to show than others.
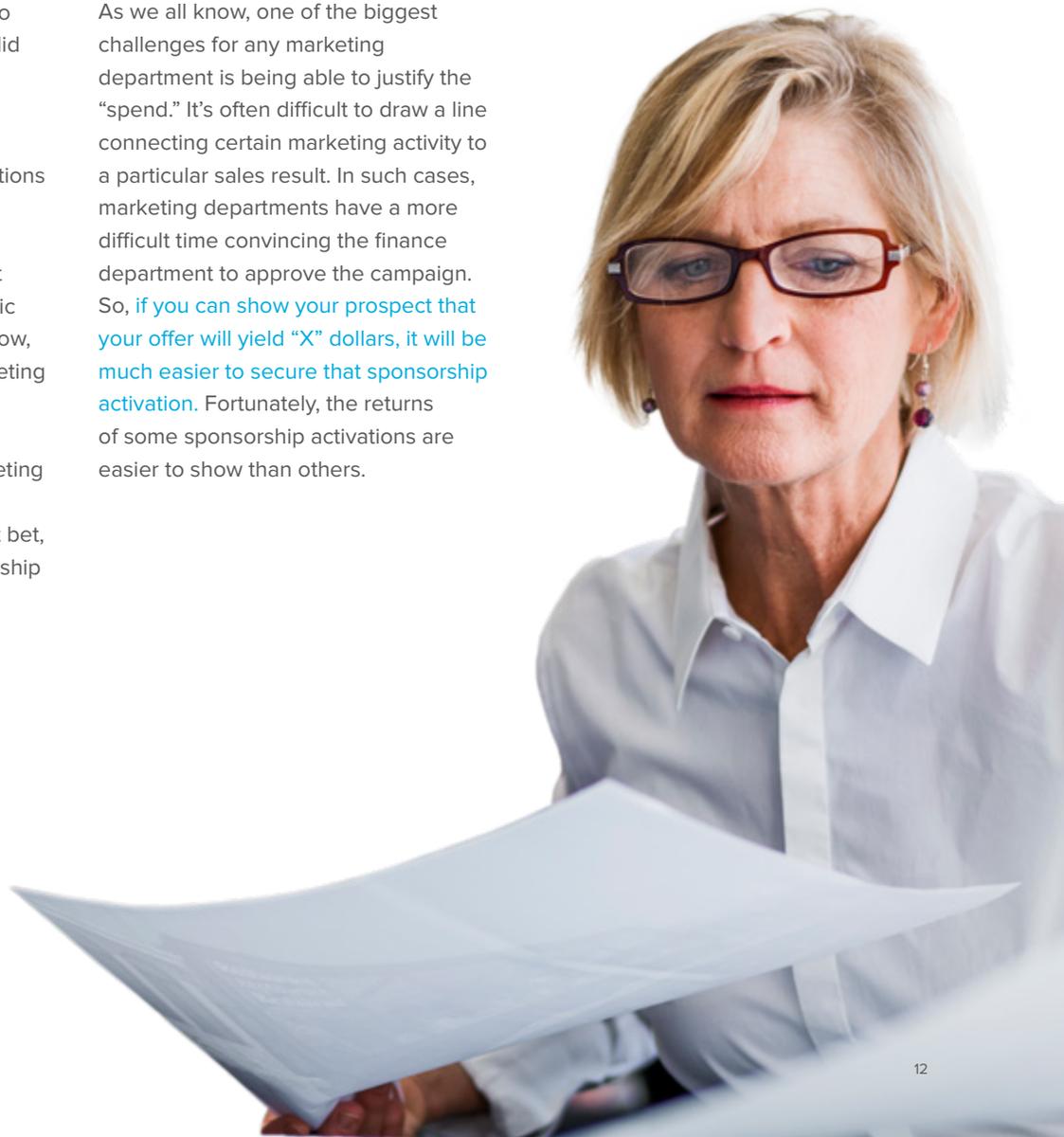
THE MOTIVATIONS FOR EVENT SPONSORSHIP

To better understand how sponsors think and what they actually want from a sponsorship relationship, let's look at the specific reasons companies invest in events. In the vast majority of scenarios, this list represents virtually all of the reasons companies activate sponsorships.

Increase Sales and Market Share

Your sponsor wants to sell product. Companies who want to sell product at a particular venue will often seek a sponsorship relationship because they can negotiate terms such as exclusivity or guaranteed exposure to the attendee. This is the most important objective for food and beverage sponsors, whose interest in the sponsorship opportunity is to be able to serve or pour product at your event. Pay special attention to whether or not the venue has an exclusive contract with another brand that may prevent the sponsor from serving their product.

Increase Target Market Awareness

Your sponsor is launching/testing a new product. Companies releasing new products love testing new products at entertainment related events. Putting products into the hands of thousands of happy event-goers is very appealing to sponsors. Examples here include goodie bags, toys or free samples.

"Due to the hyper-competitive industries they operate in, brands such as Pepsi and Nike sponsor hundreds of different types of events each year."

Target a New Customer Group

Your sponsor wants to expand its customer base. One powerful feature of event sponsorship is that event planners understand the demographic and economic makeup of the audience. Think about the difference in the audience makeup between a tennis tournament and a NASCAR® race. If your sponsor wants to promote its product to "middle America," they might choose to partner with NASCAR.® 7UP® recently teamed up with Electric Daisy Carnival.® Their purpose was multifaceted, including an interest in targeting millennials and upgrading their image.

Enhance General Awareness

Your sponsor wants to stay in front of consumers. Due to the hyper-competitive industries they operate in, brands such as Pepsi® and Nike® sponsor hundreds of different types of events each year —everything from cricket tournaments to the Super Bowl to local Little League baseball games. These brands feel their customers need to be constantly reminded that Pepsi® and Nike® products are best-in-class.

For most sponsors, the reality is that brand awareness is difficult to measure and therefore often not an important factor. Having said that, explaining to the sponsor that "X" number of attendees will see the sponsor's signs and messaging is always a positive. And, if you can show the sponsor historical data such as how a certain attendee demographic will be in attendance, that will resonate even more with the sponsor.

Enhance Trade Relations/In Kind

Your sponsor wants to build relationships. One strategy companies use to break into new markets is building relationships with the community. For example, a dairy company seeking to displace a powerful incumbent brand in Las Vegas recently began sponsoring a wide variety of events, including wine and food festivals. Due to their aggressive approach to building local relationships, the dairy was recently rewarded with a multimillion dollar contract that had been held by another dairy for decades.

Alter Public Perception/ Re-positioning

Your sponsor's brand is hurting. An effective method of rehabilitating a struggling brand is to associate that brand with prestigious events. During the 1990s, Hyundai® had a poor reputation in the United States for car quality. In fact, their reliability ratings were actually higher than some other brands, but the perception of American consumers was that the Hyundai family of cars, including KIA,® were poor quality vehicles. As part of a strategy to counter this perception, Hyundai began sponsoring prestigious events like PGA golf tournaments and the Australian Open tennis tournament. It worked, now Hyundai® is competing directly with Toyota® and Honda.®

Block Competition

Your sponsor is preoccupied with its competitors. There are some industries that can be characterized as "hyper-competitive." Examples include car insurance, soft drinks, beer and apparel. To these industries, being able to displace a competitor is a major focus and advantage. Brands often will sponsor an event simply to block one of their competitors from doing so.

Social Responsibility and Corporate Philanthropy

Your sponsor promotes (or wants to create) a caring image. Most brands, even smaller ones, set aside dollars each year to spend on corporate social responsibility. Starbucks,® for example, will even sponsor individuals! Why do they do this? Well, it's certainly not because of the huge promotional benefit they might receive. Rather, it is because they have a goal of social responsibility ingrained into their brand message. If you are approaching a brand that cares about certain issues, emphasize how a sponsorship relationship with your event can help achieve this goal.

Remember brands do not "donate" money when sponsoring events. In fact, you should never refer to it as a donation. A sponsorship decision is often a lengthy and thoughtful process. The decision to invest in your event will only happen when the brand (big or small) believes doing so will help it achieve one or more of the objectives listed above.

HOW TO SECURE EVENT SPONSORS

The next step in the sponsorship activation process is knowing who and how to approach to secure the activation. Unless you are the NFL, it will be a long wait if you choose to sit back and wait for a call from a sponsor wanting to give you their money.

Instead, the vast number of sponsorship activations occur when a thoughtful event planner or promoter has a plan they follow. Let's first look at a system you can use to determine which companies to approach first and then how to actually build the sponsorship offer.

Research

It's clearly much easier to convince a prospect to buy a sponsorship if they are already predisposed to buying sponsorships. It is a not a particularly good use of your time to try to convince companies who have never sponsored an event of the benefits of a sponsorship generally. Instead, make a list of the top 100 companies who sponsor events in cities where your event runs. Then make a separate list of companies that have products or services your attendees might buy. Be open minded and don't leave companies off the list because you think they are too big or too small at this point. 100 may sound like a big number, but it is very achievable for almost any event. Remember, only a small fraction of those 100 will convert to actual sponsors, so you will want to create a long list.

Another place to find helpful information is within event programs. Pick up as many as you find, even if they are not current. For example, if you pick up the program for virtually any trade show or sporting event you will discover it is full of sponsors. Make a spreadsheet of these companies, categorizing them by the products or services they sell. Another excellent source of potential sponsors are the websites for events. Often times, the sponsors for these events are listed. Keep in mind: your vendors make excellent potential sponsors too! With these lists, you will have more than enough to begin the prospecting process.

Simple Intro Emails Work Best

Now that you have your prospect lists, what do you actually send the prospect to generate interest? Send information about your event, rather than a predetermined "menu" of offers. For example, you often see flyers sent out listing a "Platinum Sponsorship" package which includes certain benefits. This is NOT an effective way of managing your event's brand. First, those offers may have no value whatsoever to the candidate you are pitching. Second, you are much better off listening to the prospect about what their needs might be and subsequently putting together an offer based on their needs and objectives!

Cold calling can be effective in some situations, but for sponsorships, it can be challenging. A better use of your time is to explain the benefits of having a connection to your event by emailing a simple one page document with a few compelling graphics, charts and photos along with your contact info. It is too difficult to run through this information on the telephone in 30 seconds, which is all you will have on a cold call if you even get anyone on the phone in the first place.

Understanding and Creating Event Attendee Profiles

How can you ask a company to invest big money in your event if you cannot succinctly explain who will attend your event? It's surprising how few event planners really understand their attendee. Before attempting a sponsorship sales pitch, planners should know specific information about the lifestyle habits of the attendees. For example, it might be known that the attendees work in the financial industry, but wouldn't what they do at home be much more interesting to a sponsor? The answer would be in the affirmative since there are many more products and services consumers will use during their non-work day.

"How can you ask a company to invest big money in your event if you cannot succinctly explain who will attend your event?"

Indeed, it is much more helpful when selling the benefits of sponsoring your event is to be able to show a sponsor what your attendees do when they are NOT working! For example, do your attendees own a home? Do they have children? Are they health conscious? Just by having answers to simple questions like these can be the basis of a compelling reason for a sponsor in the insurance industry, toy industry or health food industry to want to connect with your event.

This data can be used tell a story about your event attendees and presented in a visual way. Show the benefits of sponsoring your event by describing in great detail the attributes of your fans and event attendees. These characteristics and lifestyle traits also fall into what marketing professionals

call "AIO" dimensions. (A=activities; I=Interests; O=opinions). When you are building your attendee profile, try to find answers to questions like these:

+ What is the average age of your attendee?
+ Are your attendees predominantly male or female? What is the ratio?
+ What is the income range of your attendees?
+ What is their educational background?
+ Where do your attendees live? (By zip code or postcode is a good way to organize.)
+ What do your attendees like to do when they are NOT working?
+ Hobbies
+ Vacation destinations
+ Dining habits
+ Political ideology

At first glance, collecting this type of general data might not seem useful. However, much can be gleaned about the buying habits of individuals even from basic information such as whether they are male or female, their age range and what they do in their spare time.

If we can understand what is important to our attendees on a broad range of issues like these, we can build an incredibly compelling profile that will open up a new world of potential sponsors for your event. What's more, marketing professionals LOVE such data and are far more comfortable allocating marketing dollars when they know exactly who the promotion will reach.

Data Gathering

So, how do you collect this data on your attendees? There are a few methods for collecting such information:
Collect information during the event registration process - As event planners, we know there is certain information we must collect during the registration process, such as asking if the attendee needs any special accommodations or dietary restrictions. Asking simple and non-threatening questions about dining habits or hobbies are good places to start. A favorite food answer can lead to a potential food sponsor or vendor. If a potential sponsor can be shown real data which evidences a preference for their product, they are more likely to invest in your event. An INCREDIBLE amount of information can be learned about your event attendees just by having the answers to simple questions such as these.

Host a Focus Group

Focus groups are an outstanding use of your time and money when it comes to building a sponsorship program. Focus groups are more appropriate when asking personal or detailed questions. Consider no more than 10 participants and try to invite people from all backgrounds to learn as much as you can about your attendees. Keep it to three hours or less and video the session so you can review responses later. Expect to pay around $100 per person and serve them lunch. You will have to pay the participants for their time, but it will be the best use of those funds you can spend toward building a great sponsorship program.

E-Surveys

Follow-up surveys are great, but we all know the response rates are usually quite low. Consider implementing the following two suggestions to absolutely increase your response rates. First, keep the questions to no more than five and allow the attendee a few days to return home before sending. You can ask them biographical data such as age range, ethnicity and income range. (Always use ranges or people will often decline to respond.)

Second, couple your survey request with a small denomination of a gift card. *Watch your response rate increase at least 3 times when you do this*! And a great source for these gift cards, if you don't want to spend the money on them, is from one of your existing sponsors! Any sponsor can provide a gift card. Most of the time, they will agree.

Market research is often seen as being boring or too time-consuming, but it is crucial to the success of your sponsorship program. Without this data, you will be simply guessing and when pressed by a prospect, you won't have the answers they need. Data collection must be a priority if you really want your event sponsorship program to be successful. If you don't have the personnel, consider contacting a local university to see if a student intern might be able to help with the data collection aspect and investigate technology options that collect valuable data for you.

"An INCREDIBLE amount of information can be learned about your event attendees just by having the answers to simple questions."

KEEP SPONSORS HAPPY AND COMING BACK

The last step to realizing success in sponsorship sales is the post-event follow-up that must occur. The following three steps are essential to keep your sponsors coming back to your event year after year. We have all heard the adage "it's easier to keep a happy customer than find new ones." That certainly applies in the sponsorship sales context, too.

Several benefits come from working with past sponsors, including spending less time prospecting and working with someone with whom you already have trust.

Perhaps the most important aspect to ensuring your sponsors will continue to work with you is showing them how their earlier investment in your event provided good returns. Remember, each sponsor's definition of a "good return" may be different. For example, some will be most concerned with sales of products. Others, more concerned with eyeballs on their message. Still others may be more interested in gaining access to your event attendee emails for follow-up. Whatever the hot button, be prepared to provide a report that shows how your event helped accomplish this goal.

Follow-up Debrief and Report

One of the most common complaints often heard from sponsors is their disappointment when the event planner or promoter does not follow-up with the sponsor after the event has concluded. First, as a basic courtesy, it is a good idea to thank the sponsor; after all, they just spent thousands of dollars or more to have a relationship with your event. Perhaps just as important, this follow-up interaction represents a great opportunity to learn how things went for the sponsor so you can improve or repeat what is working well. Ask the tough questions, too, such as, "What didn't go as well as you had hoped?" or "How could we do better next time?" Use what you have learned. Then, provide your sponsor with a brief written report summarizing how things went.

Measuring ROI and providing feedback to your sponsors and learning from any constructive criticism they can give is a vital part of the event planner role. Without this, the job is not complete - the event isn't over when the final guests leave. The good news is that there is technology that can assist in the generation of data for this report, which is covered in detail in the next section of this report. Key points in the sponsorship report (which will vary based on your specific sponsorship arrangement) to show ROI could be:

+ Total event attendance
+ Data in terms of attendee behavior, actions and demographics
+ Number of leads gathered
+ Total sales of related product
+ Total number of samples distributed
+ Whether or not the event was live streamed and if so, how many views
+ Measurement of different touchpoints
+ Locations of signage and other brand exposure elements
+ Feedback received

"Building trust is essential for a long-term sponsorship relationship."

Maintaining Touchpoints

You will want to find reasons to stay in contact with your sponsors, even when your event is months away. *The best way to do this is by sharing information rather than asking for something*. In other words, instead of asking for another meeting, simply send useful information with a note that reads "thought you would find this interesting...". Useful information could be sales data from your event, announcing new partners or speakers at your next event, or even interesting articles from another source. The goal here is to say in front of the prospect at least once every two months.

Keeping Commitments

Finally—though it may seem obvious, it's worth mentioning again—i f you promise to do something for your sponsor, make sure you follow through! Small things matter. So, even if you

say "I'll call you next month," make sure you actually call. Building trust is essential for a long-term sponsorship relationship and doing so is a good way to keep your event 'top of mind' with your sponsors. The so-called "Early Bird" discount is effective in securing repeat business, as is extending a "right of first refusal" to your regular sponsors. This provides an immediate incentive to stay involved and the suggestion implies there may be other sponsors wanting to get involved. Emphasize the idea that securing sponsorship rights with you EARLY is a great way to design a more custom program for them.

Event Sponsorship sales can be very rewarding in many ways. There is often reciprocity offered in that you will be invited to other events they sponsor. Use such invitations as a means to strengthen the relationship and even look for more customers. Another perk to sponsor sales is being able

to travel to new venues, which could open up opportunities that would not otherwise be made available. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, sponsor sales represent very high-profit margins when compared to the amount of work they require. Once your program is up and running, most costs are out of the way, which means almost pure profit in the end.

If you get the right sponsors in place, you will be speaking to some amazing people who share your love of events, not to mention you will find yourself planning more exciting events as a result! Success will require a plan and the discipline to follow it. If you follow the steps above and are committed to following the tips shared in this report, you can have confidence you will lock in sponsors for your events like never before. It will, of course, take some time, but these are proven strategies which will deliver results year after year.

10 STEP SPONSORSHIP CHECKLIST

01 Be conversant on current sponsorship trends.

02 Focus on prospects who already sponsor events.

03 Understand your prospect's corporate mission and values.

04 Understand why your prospect wants to sponsor.

05 Commit to market research and data.

06 Offer creative solutions based on that intelligence.

07 Be flexible, not predetermined, in your offer.

08 Spend money to ensure your proposal looks clean and impressive.

09 Hand-deliver the proposal whenever possible.

10 Consistently follow-up with the sponsor to show sincerity and maintain contact.

TECHNOLOGY & SPONSORSHIP: A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

by Becki Cross

TECHNOLOGY & SPONSORSHIP: A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

Never before have event planners had more opportunity to create attractive sponsorship packages and secure the investment needed to deliver groundbreaking events. At the same time, securing support for events is getting harder and sponsors are demanding more than ever before.

If your event can't offer what sponsors need or come up with something groundbreaking and worthwhile, there will be another opportunity for them just around the corner.

Traditional sponsorship deals based on logo placement and name drops are no longer sufficient and it is long past time to shake up the options. The future of event sponsorship requires innovative ideas, strong commitment, accountability and deep knowledge of the new opportunities technology brings. Most event planners are aware of this, as some of the responses from the survey proved.

"Sponsors are looking for more out-of-the-box ideas on how to make sponsorship dollars extend in relation to ROI for them concerning an event sponsorship. They are over the regular ideas of ads in event programs, social media mentions and following etc. They now look for more client presence impact pre, during and post events."

Jennifer Kapsch, CEM, Special Occasions Montreal

"Sponsors are more demanding and it's harder to deliver ROI. The old standbys of logos on the promotions and exhibit tables aren't as attractive anymore."

Anonymous

14%

of event planners are not aware of or have no access to technology which could help them.

"We take a tailored approach to sponsorship. We dedicate the time to deliver real value; it's not all about logo placement. In fact, it isn't at all about logo placement.."

Anonymous

Sponsorship spending is big business. Technology is constantly evolving and offers new possibilities that can be mutually beneficial for event professionals and sponsors alike. If sponsors are investing considerable sums of money, understandably, they want to be sure that they are seeing a good return from it. Event technology can help event planners with all of the frustrations highlighted by the survey. To prove ROI, build trust and secure repeat business, technology and data are essential.

From the survey responses, 14% of event planners are not aware of or have no access to technology which could help them. Whether you are already using and exploring tech options or don't know what it available to help you, this section suggests the benefits of using technology as part of your sponsor activations. We explore innovative tech sponsorship opportunities and the value that technology can bring.

THE BIGGEST FRUSTRATIONS EVENT PLANNERS HAVE WITH SPONSORSHIP

The survey highlighted many of the frustrations event planners have with sponsors and sponsorship deals. The good news is that using the right technology can potentially remove all of these concerns. Instead of struggling on, now is the time to start using technology or explore better alternatives available on the market.

Need To Attract More Sponsorship Revenue

51% of event planners advised that their biggest frustration is that they can't attract the sponsorship revenue that they need.

We know that times are uncertain and that budgets are being slashed or spent on other priorities, but there are also many companies desperate to invest in live experiences if the right opportunity is presented to them. By speaking the same language as sponsors, understanding their motivations and approaching them in the right way event planners have a better chance of success. Through technology, there can be many alluring options to provide solid data and help sponsors to reach new audiences and to bond better with their customers.

Furthermore, the best plan to increase the revenue your event attracts through sponsorship is to keep your sponsors coming back. If technology can prove the return they are getting from their investment it makes it easy for them to stay loyal to your event or even to look at increasing their investment year on year.

Lack of Time and Short Deadlines

46% of respondents were frustrated by the lack of planning time and short deadlines they have to work fully with sponsors.

Technology can often increase efficiencies and save time. It can reduce the time spent on menial tasks by automating workflows or auto-generating reports. It can also offer digital solutions that can be updated or triggered in seconds. Event planners can't do it all - they need to work with technology that makes them more efficient and a more viable prospect for sponsors to consider.

Can't Prove the Return on Investment

43% said that they find it difficult to prove the return to sponsors.

It is impossible to prove the value a sponsor gets from a name drop and having their logo included on the event branding (if indeed there is any value derived at all). Event planners need to be choosing tech that can measure, analyze and share the results in a scientific way, tools that can give the data that is needed. You can't measure everything but technology offers a much better chance and the means to measure your sponsor's objectives.

Churn or Turnover of Sponsors
25% are frustrated by their turnover of event sponsors.

If you are delivering and can prove the ROI from your event, sponsors will have difficulty saying no. A high churn or turnover of sponsors can signal that you need to start doing things differently. Starting from scratch finding sponsors every year can be a big drain on resources. Make sure that you ask for feedback from sponsors about what improvements can be made. Then make improvements.

Sponsors Are Too Demanding
21% feel that event sponsors are too demanding.

There is no getting around this one. If you want to accept investment in your event, you have to appreciate that it is going to take up a chunk of your time and resources to keep them happy. If sponsors are looking to invest significantly in your event but need some guarantees in order to do so, it is your call whether you take the money and deliver on agreed objectives, or walk away.

Sponsors can push boundaries and shake things up and this can be a good thing! A partnership approach to sponsorship activations is the best way to get results, rather than just leaving them to get on with it, as often happened in the past.

Technology can be a lifesaver, though, and save time in terms of producing real-time stats and reports for sponsors to access, removing the burden on event planners to compile complex data manually. It can also empower sponsors to complete profiles, add logos and manage other deadlines themselves by uploading required information directly to an online system, instead of channeling everything through the event planner and increasing their workloads.

THE BENEFITS OF USING TECHNOLOGY AS PART OF YOUR SPONSOR PROGRAMS

There are numerous potential benefits of using technology for the event manager, the sponsor and the attendee. Here are just a few ways that technology can offer more, specifically as a sponsorship tool.

Measurements and Analytics

The biggest reason you should be using or considering event technology is for the rich data it provides. We all know the power of events, so this is our opportunity to actually prove it with hard facts and science. You can manage expectations more accurately if you have a baseline and then work hard to know what has the biggest impact and success rate for your sponsors.

Data and deep knowledge of your event and audience should be one of the most compelling reasons for a sponsor to come on board or to walk away. We need to be transparent and develop trust based on data.

This proof will make it easier for sponsors to commit again or perhaps persuade them to invest more money in the future.

Tailored Sponsorship Activations

As highlighted earlier in the report, sponsors are looking for opportunities that match their precise needs. The hook is to find out what these pain points are and come up with a solution for it, rather than offering them a menu of items or sponsorship packages which aren't tailored to them.

Providing a "grab bag" of activation options via technology will also drive poor results. All results need to be cohesive and easy to understand. Clear data is good. Baffling or bombarding with numbers which have little context is going to quickly lose your sponsor's interest.

Building Relationships and Trust

Your event sponsors may have the budget, resources and vision to create something really innovative and different, which can elevate your event if you can open a dialogue for the event planner and sponsor to understand each other. Approaching the relationship as a partnership agreement encourages creative thinking and new solutions to flourish, as well as generating constructive feedback to continuously improve.

The days of leaving the actual activation up to the sponsor are over; event planners want to be in the know and work together so that everyone benefits and to ensure that attendees want to engage more closely with the sponsor. For many sponsors, technology can be an appealing proposition to do something extraordinary to capture people's attention and position them as a forward-thinking organization.

The Lifecycle of the Event

Just as an event planner should consider the attendee journey through the lifecycle of the event, we must also consider the sponsor's journey and how thoughtfully it intersects with the attendee journey. What are the opportunities before, during and after the event to create meaningful engagement and interaction? We shouldn't just be preoccupied with the live hours of the event; there are countless opportunities before and after the event to drive interest and sales with technology that can even be pre-scheduled to deliver at the optimum time.

Multiple Touch Points

An event can use technology to craft sponsor-attendee touch points that are seamless to the attendee and to ensure consistent messaging across the lifecycle. Effective frequency is the number of times a message needs to be heard before someone takes action. The more touch points there are, the more likely it is that more attendees will take action.

There are lots of studies about what this magic number is and many

marketers swear by the rule of 7. However, for the entertainment industry, the average touch points could actually be as high as 9.5. If you can incorporate numerous touch points for event participants to encounter the sponsors messaging and offer as part of a digital marketing plan, you vastly increase your chance of a successful sale or engagement. These touch points could start before the event by sharing discount codes from your sponsors. They could continue at the event by offering a free gift for everyone signing up to the newsletter. And they could continue after the event with retargeting for anyone that showed an interest in the brand.

Understanding Your Audience and Improving Your Event

Incorporating technology can give a bigger picture overview of your event, which in turn, helps event planners understand their audience a lot more intelligently. As well as providing data about specific attendee-sponsor interactions, technology can share big data, improving the event and highlighting important findings, which will help you sell future sponsorship activations. For instance, you can

highlight the busiest times at the event and adjust staffing levels accordingly to minimize queues, you can use heat maps to track the most tracked routes around the venue and position key sponsors in these high footfall areas (or charge your exhibitors more in future for booths in these areas), and you can determine which products and sponsors your attendees are most interested in and what content they want to engage with. Greater satisfaction with the event in turn rubs off positively onto the sponsor.

Wider Reach

We shouldn't only think about the audience physically attending the event. Technology gives us the opportunity to attract attention and spread the sponsor's message further outside of the event, expanding the reach and the opportunity. For everyone that attends the event, there are probably several more people that would have liked to attend and are open to the sponsors messaging. Live streaming and digital marketing open up the potential to still capture their attention and generate further sales for your sponsors.

14 EXCITING TECH SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you're looking for great sponsorship ideas, here are some innovative technologies that can provide the data event planners should be able to provide and which your sponsors crave. To pique your sponsor's interest, this section explains some different technology options and how to get the most out of them.

Some of these tools may be familiar, but we suggest ideas for how to make them work harder for you and your sponsors. Other products might be completely new to you, so we point out how they could be a good option for your event. One or more of these items could be just what your potential investors are looking to hear more about.

Registration Data

As disclosed earlier in the report, asking simple and non-threatening questions to your attendees during the registration process can provide a wealth of information about their habits and lifestyle. This information can be very compelling in getting a sponsor to sign up to support your event.

+ Ask one or two key additional questions as part of your registration process
+ Make it easy and quick to respond by providing options and ranges
+ Questions could relate to age and location or preferences such as hobbies and habits
+ Use conditional logic to drill down further with follow-on questions dependent on the answers

Virtual Goody Bag/Swag

A virtual event bag is the modern version of event "goody" bags. Gone are the days of burdening your attendees with traditional swag bags, which are bad news for the environment and, from an results

perspective, virtually impossible to accurately track. Instead of packing and distributing physical bags or folders with printed flyers and promotional items, an event organizer can use Virtual Event Bags to create enticing digital offers. The attendee can then select and interact with the special deals that appeal to them. It is possible to measure the reach much more scientifically and gather data from those who are truly interested. Sponsors can create the offers that will have the most impact with the audience. Virtual event bags give event planners and sponsors powerful tools to track every visit, view and engagement.

+ A mix of offers such as discount codes, competitions and claiming free gifts will keep attendees interested
+ Limit the number of items to ensure maximum exposure for key sponsors
+ Virtual event bags can be used as a marketing tool for your event and drive registrations as offers can be limited to those attending the event

Event Apps

There are numerous event apps on the market offering features and functionality to match every need. Choose an event app that can give your sponsors greater prominence, such as static or rotating banner space in the app and rich profiles including pictures, text, links, videos and product listings. Some apps enable sponsors to highlight key staff who are attending the event to make it easy for them to be identified and approached.

The event app you choose should be able to provide meaningful stats, such as how many people have clicked through to the sponsor website, watched their video, or downloaded their sales brochure. Push notifications can be used to highlight your sponsors and some apps can incorporate other cool tools to increase engagement with sponsors, such as augmented reality, lead retrieval, gamification and AI.

+ Sponsors can be given prominent placing on many event apps (such as on the splash screen and the top banner) and complete more detailed and rich profile information

+ Measure clicks, views, downloads and interactions with sponsors via the app

+ Encourage connections and meetings with key staff

Chatbots

A chatbot is a computer program which conducts a conversation via voice or text and emulates how a human would respond to specific queries. Siri and Alexa are well-known applications of this type. Chatbots can collect data about attendees or non-attendees who may log in with their social profiles to use them. They are often used for customer service, so a good chatbot

can ensure higher satisfaction with the event. If the chatbot is associated with your event sponsor, it can transfer the good feelings on to the sponsor and help the attendee to self-solve their event queries in an innovative and accessible way.

+ Your chatbot could be named, branded and given a personality to match your sponsor

+ It could be an appealing prospect for your sponsors to provide a customer service role in this way and to harness new tech

Live Streaming and 360° Video

Live streaming allows you to share live video of the presentations or performances and have a wider reach to people who could not be at the event in person. It can still be an effective way to reach a larger audience, even if it isn't the same experience as for those people physically attending the event.

360° video brings a flat, 2D experience to life and is the most accessible and practical way to emulate the experience of the live event. 360° video is produced by specialized cameras, to render a 360° view of what is happening, resulting in a much more immersive experience.

It can be viewed on any computer or device, without any special equipment. You can peek around yourself by moving your device screen around or by swiping in all directions. This immediately opens up possibilities for events in terms of giving behind the scenes access or allowing the viewer to explore.
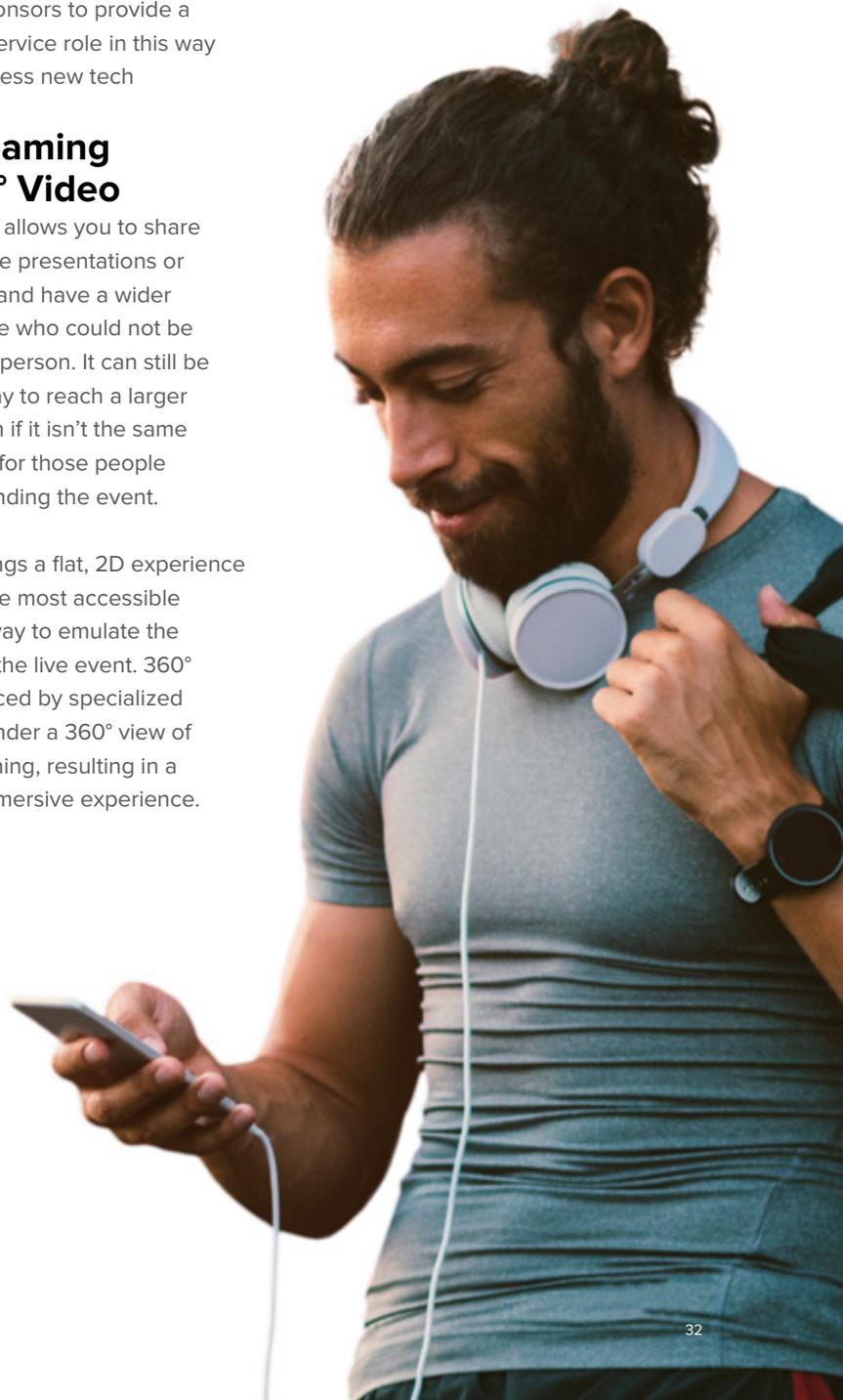
Whether it is used to entice those who are not at the event or captured to relive the experience, this could be an appealing sponsorship opportunity. Onsite, at your event, the use of 360° video by your sponsors could also help them to bring their product to life.

+ If you secure a live streaming sponsor, they could run an ad before the live stream is accessed and a digital campaign or offer that virtual attendees could still take advantage of

+ You can set up a professional live stream to capture details of attendees, such as their names and email addresses, before they can access the content

+ Ensure that you are clear about how contact details will be used and give an opt-out opportunity

+ Combined with VR, 360° video could create a mixed-reality experience

Lead Retrieval

Lead retrieval tools enable a sponsor to collect contact data from an individual by seeking their permission to scan their badge. A barcode or QR code can then unlock the attendee details so that further follow-up can be made. Some lead retrieval tools or apps can integrate and sync with popular CRM software and allows detailed notes to be taken, such as prioritizing the hottest leads and noting what the individual is specifically interested in learning more about. More data can enable a more personalized follow-up, which in turn is more likely to yield results.

+ Make sure the devices being used are well-charged as having the screen constantly on can be a big drain on the device battery

+ Keep complete, detailed notes about each lead to make follow-up easier

+ Make sure that the leads are followed up after the event! (You would be surprised how many organizations fail to do this.)

Gamification and Contests

An interactive game component, such as trivia, scavenger hunts, quizzes and leaderboards, can be used to encourage specific behavior, with rewards offered to encourage participation and competition. For sponsors, this could be used to drive traffic to their stand or encourage social media sharing.

+ Offering enticing prizes is a good way to get
people's attention

+ Think about whether the quality or quantity of the
leads is most important. It is easy to manipulate
behavior and many people will share their email
address for the chance to win a big prize, but if they actually have no interest other than this the quality of the leads may be disappointing

Cashless Payments

Cashless payments via a smartphone, wristband, tag or even a ring are becoming increasingly common and popular at events and festivals. It can speed up service and minimize queues (and therefore dissatisfaction). If the motivation for a food and drink sponsor is to get their product out there, this can ensure it is done effectively.

"If you can create a cool experience with a sponsor, it will be a great talking point for your guests."

+ If it is a food or beverage sponsor, reducing the queues to speed up service will be very enticing to them
+ Better data will be available which can be tracked to the individual in terms of their purchases and behavior
+ It can identify the busiest service areas and times, which can be used to adjust staffing accordingly
+ It can encourage event-goers to purchase more, knowing it is a painless process and they won't have to queue

RFID Bracelets

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is a form of wireless communication being used in many interesting ways for sponsor activations. Heineken, in particular, is using RFID in a big way at their events. RFID can be used by attendees to collect key information such as contact information, exhibitor brochures or to act as a virtual key to allow access to specific areas or to unlock a benefit, such as free hospitality or a giveaway. It can be used to flash different colored lights and pulse in time with the music, for gamification purposes, to influence the course of an event, link to social media and automatically receive pictures from the event. It can also be used to enable VIPs, staff or artistes to access complimentary options, such as free hospitality and perks.

+ Create something special
+ If you can create a cool experience with a sponsor, it will be a great talking point for your guests
+ Encourage social media sharing and impressions
+ The perception of a sponsor can change if they are linked with something cool and innovative and these good feeling can have a positive and lasting impact for the sponsor

Location-Based and Proximity Marketing

Event participants can receive alerts according to their specific location and this can be used to drive interest for sponsors, with proven results. For example, it could encourage people nearby to visit a sponsor booth or send a reminder that a sponsored seminar session is starting in the vicinity.

Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacons are widely used via apps and are accurate at pinpointing locations within venues. They can trigger a push notification when an attendee passes a beacon, if they match a specific demographic. Beacons are particularly useful because of the opportunity to segment your audience, personalize messages and gather more detailed intelligence about the individual.

Geofencing uses GPS technology and coordinates from a user's device to determine when they enter a predetermined area so that targeted messages can be triggered. Although not as precise as beacons, this works better in outdoor environments, such as for festivals.

CES, the SummerWell Festival, MacWorld, Electric Castle and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival have all used beacon-based scavenger hunts and gamification to get attendees exploring the event, the wider environment or city around it.

Proximity marketing can also be used to enhance the visitor experience in more ways than just push notifications. For example, the Reeperbahn Festival has such a diverse lineup,

"Computers are much better at identifying patterns and making intelligent suggestions than humans could ever be."

it can be challenging for attendees to remember everything they have seen. Beacons are used to record the attendee's journey around the site and automatically populates a logbook with relevant pictures, videos, and ready-made Spotify playlists so they can relive their event experience. Data is also collected about the flow of festival-goers around the site.

+   Limit the number of messages issued
+   Instead of just sending a reminder, try to issue an incentive for the participant to take action - for instance "quote this code to receive a free gift"
+   Personalize your messaging - only send to people in the area that meet specific criteria, such as females aged 18 - 30, for a higher conversion rate
+   Explore how to use geo-targeting for gamification and to add value to the event in ways other than just push notifications and ads
+   Encourage your sponsors to use beacons to send highly tailored product recommendations based on customer insights such as online browsing history, purchase history and dwell time
+   When placing beacons, look for obstacles, test to see if anything is blocking signals and if the signals are strong

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is intelligent behavior by machines, such as logic and problem-solving. Machine learning is when computers learn when exposed to new data, without being explicitly programmed. By recognizing patterns, it enables predictions to be made on data. Computers are much better at identifying patterns and making intelligent suggestions than humans could ever be and this can be used to the advantage of our events. Examples of this include matchmaking and suggesting meet-ups with others attending the event, and predicting areas of high traffic at trade shows, maximizing real-time sponsorship opportunities.

+   AI can be used to offer a more personalized service for your guests and can build up a history of data
+   It can predict the best choices for each individual, which can result in higher satisfaction levels with the event and revealing data
+   It can also be used to predict more accurately the sponsor's products and messaging which will resonate with the individual

Footfall Tracking and Analysis

Using infrared, heat maps, cameras and GPS technology, it is possible to monitor the number of people at your event and where they are hanging out and spending time. This data is really useful analysis for the event planner but also very interesting from the sponsor perspective. If they were positioned in the busiest area of the show floor, they are likely to be delighted with the amount of interest that came their way. This tracking can also be used to upsell the prime spots or redesign the event layout for next time.

+ Sponsors can do some interesting calculations based on the footfall past their booth. How many people passed by the stand and what percentage stopped to find out more information or purchase something?

+ This should also be analyzed by day and time to find out the peak times of the show. Did any of the sponsors' activities result in drawing particularly high traffic? Did the actions on other areas of the show floor have an impact?

Multimedia Displays

Touch screen digital posters, multimedia displays, kiosks, touch-activated tables, video walls and digital wayfinding can empower attendees to delve into the information they need about a specific sponsor in a more appealing and engaging way than any sales brochure. Think about how insightful this data is to sponsors, too, if they know what content is drawing the most interest. If there is a call to action and an attendee is happy to share their contact details as part of this exploration, a sponsor can combine information about an individual with the digital information that they viewed and what their journey was.

+ Use the data insights to personalize follow-ups with the individual

+ General data of overall usage, not tracked to an individual, is still worthwhile in terms of revealing the content people clicked on and where they spent the longest time. These are the elements which resonate with the audience in attendance

Augmented and Virtual Reality

Virtual Reality (VR) is an immersive and realistic environment created artificially by computer technology. Augmented Reality (AR) is computer generated content such as video, sound or imagery superimposed on our real-world surroundings to give a sense of illusion. Both technologies can offer exciting uses for sponsors to get excited about.

AR functionality is already incorporated within some modern event apps, meaning that sponsors can use it to show off their product on demand. On the trade show floor, it can be used to visualize what different car models and colors would look like or how

an outfit would look superimposed on the individual. Attendees are probably already familiar with AR filters and effects used on Snapchat and Instagram and sponsors can even create their own event-specific geo-filter to capture attention at the event (and probably likely to be available via paid Instagram Stickers soon).

VR functionality can create a completely new world and, with the use of VR goggles, can become completely immersed within the experience. VR theme parks, networking opportunities and other interactions become possible - the only limit is the sponsor's imagination - and budget!

+ Encourage your sponsors to create Snapchat geo-filters specific to your event

+ Demand is likely to be high so ensure your sponsors are ready to cater for the demand, as leaving potential customers disappointed isn't an effective sales technique

+ AR is easier to implement in a mass market situation, than VR, which requires hardware (even if that is just cardboard goggles to turn your smartphone into a VR device)

# EVENT SPONSORSHIP SURVEY

Below are the breakdowns of the questions in the survey.

About You

01   What title describes you best?

Event or Meeting Planner	38.13%
Special Event Planner	13.70%
Independent Event Consultant	13.01%
Other	10.96%
Event Planning Agency	7.53%
Venue	6.39%
Supplier	5.02%
Student	3.65%
Academia	1.60%
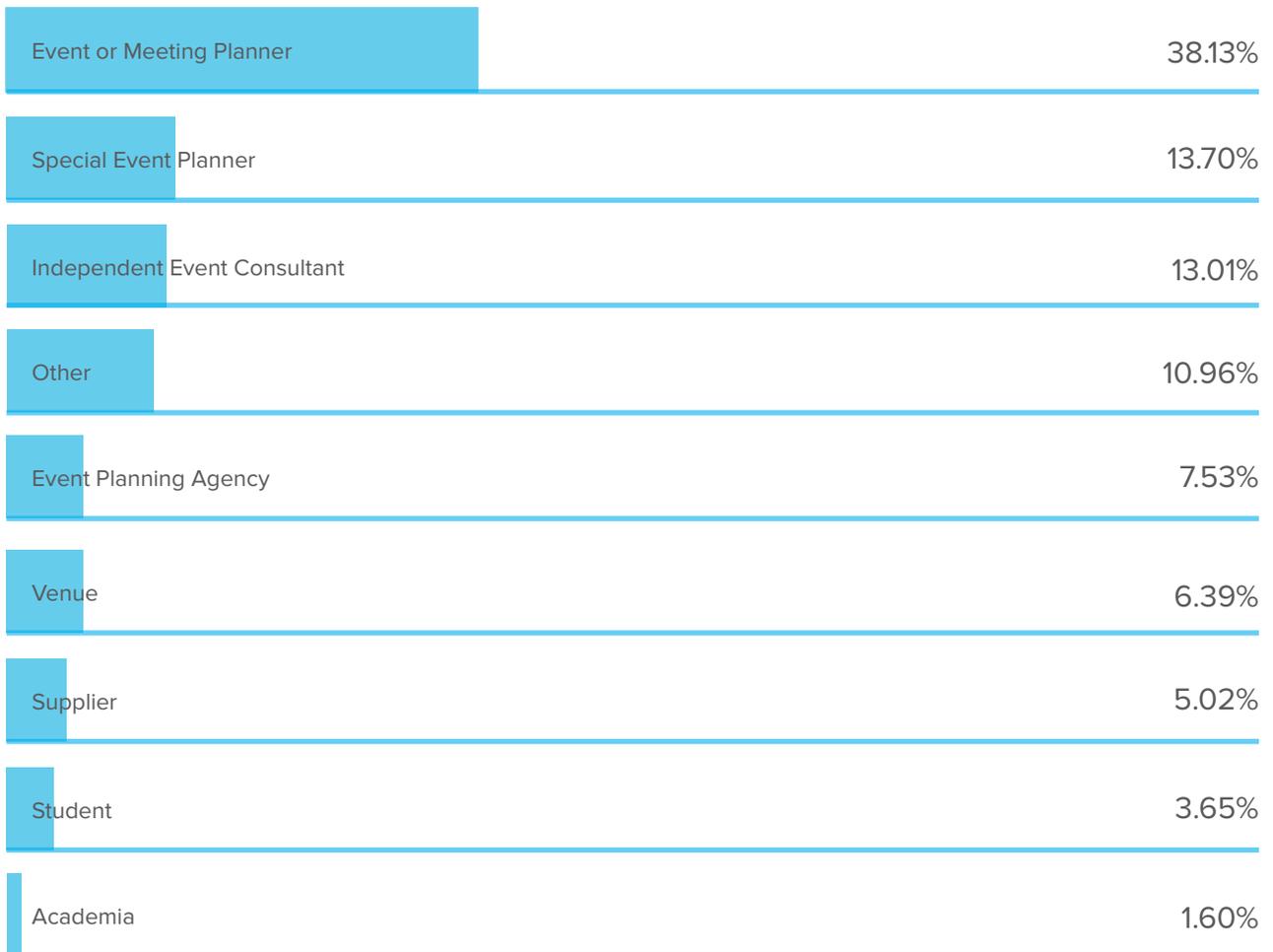
The Events You Plan

02   How many events do you plan on average per year?

I don't plan events	1.26%
1-5	38.99%
6-10	22.64%
11-15	12.89%
16+	24.21%
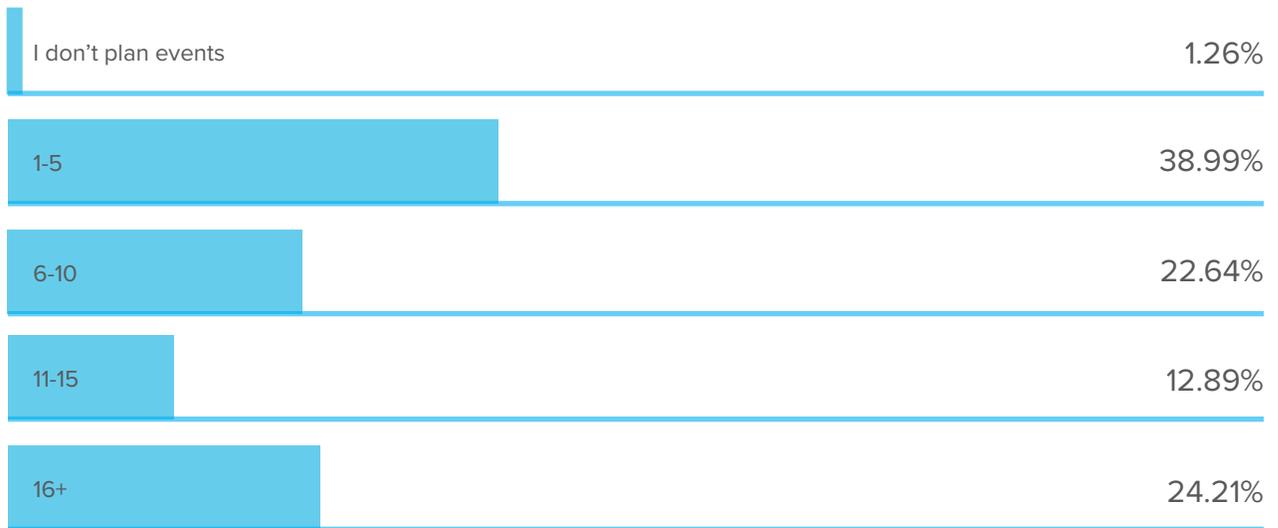
03   What role do you have in securing sponsorship?

Authorize	40.57%
Recommend	33.96%
Research	25.47%
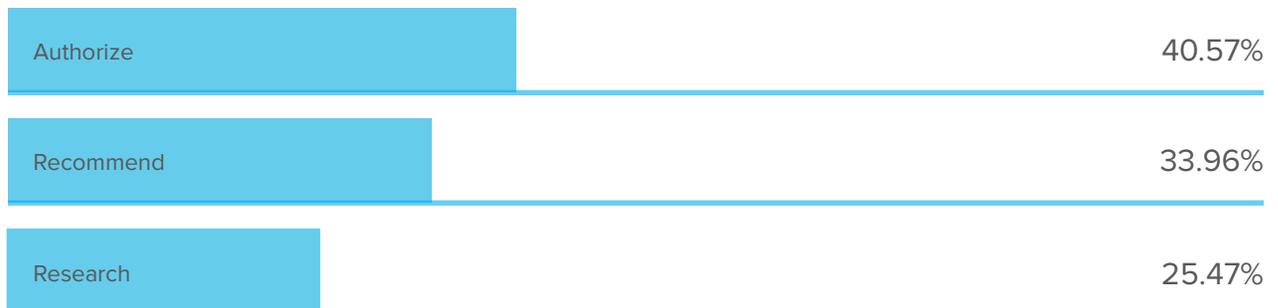
The Events You Plan

04   What is your/your clients' total event budget annually?

Less than $100K	35.53%
$100 - $500K	32.70%
$500 - $1 million	15.09%
$1 million - $5 million	10.69%
$5 million +	5.97%
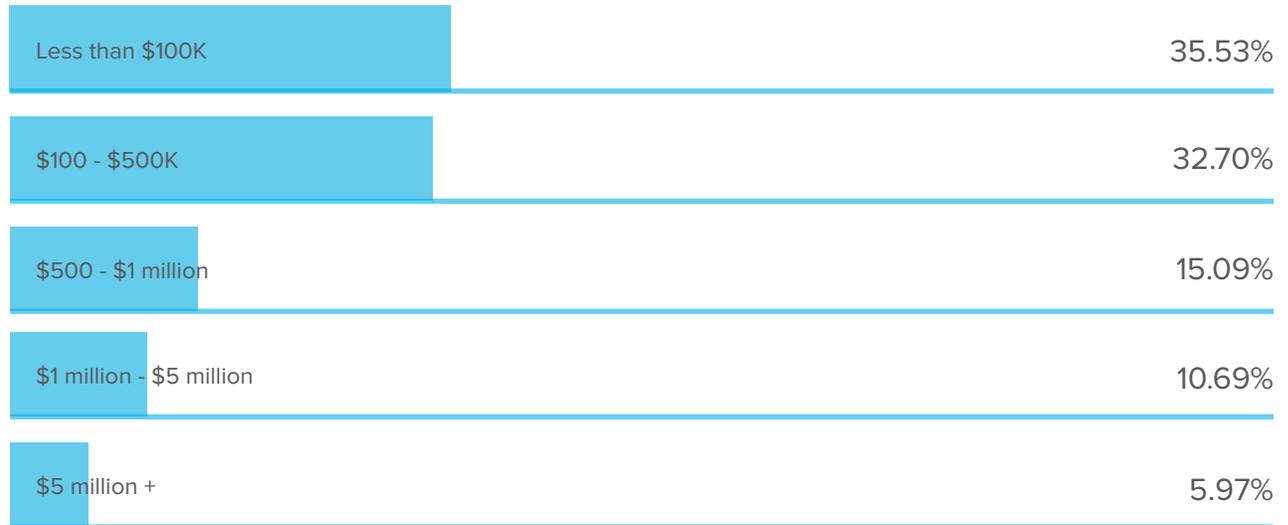
05   Roughly what percentage of your total event budget
is generated from sponsorship?

Nothing	7.55%
10% or less	22.96%
11 - 25 %	20.44%
26 - 50%	27.67%
Over 50%	21.38%

The Importance of Event Sponsorship

06 Do you use technology to keep your sponsors happy?

Yes	77.96%
No	22.04%
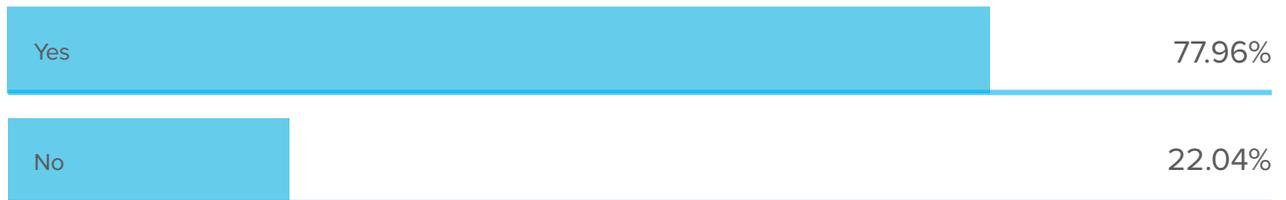
07 How important is technology to show ROI
(return on investment)?

|	
Extremely important	22.68%
Very important	29.39%
Important	31.95%
Not very important	12.46%
Not important at all	3.51%
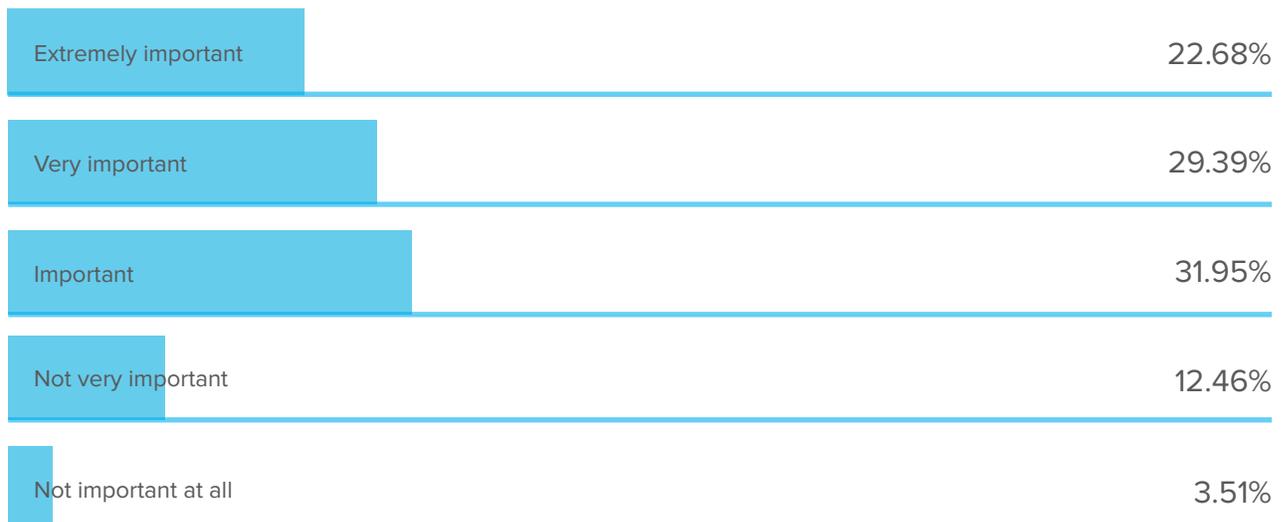
Important Factors and Frustrations

08   Over recent times (the last 12 months) has is become
easier or harder to secure event sponsorship?

Much easier	1.92%
Slightly easier	12.78%
Stayed about the same	32.59%
Slightly harder	33.55%
Much harder	19.17%
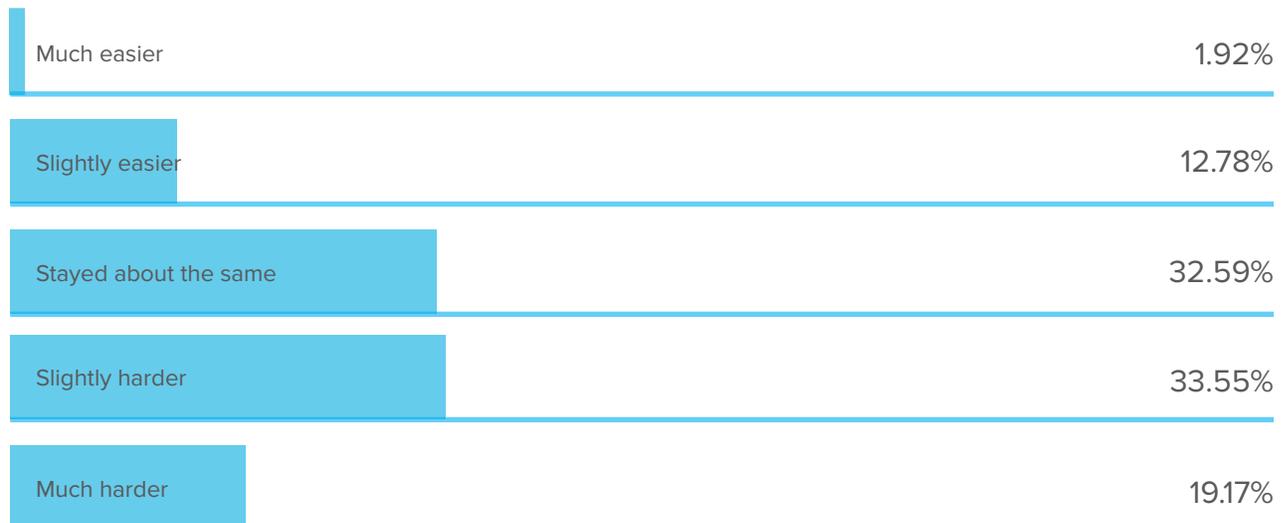
09   Do you have any of these frustrations with sponsors and
securing sponsorship?

We can't attract the sponsorship revenue that we need	51.01%
Lack of planning time and short deadlines to work fully with sponsors	45.61%
Can't prove the return to sponsors	43.24%
Churn/turnover of sponsors	24.66%
Sponsors are too demanding	20.61%
Not aware of/no access to technology to help me	13.85%
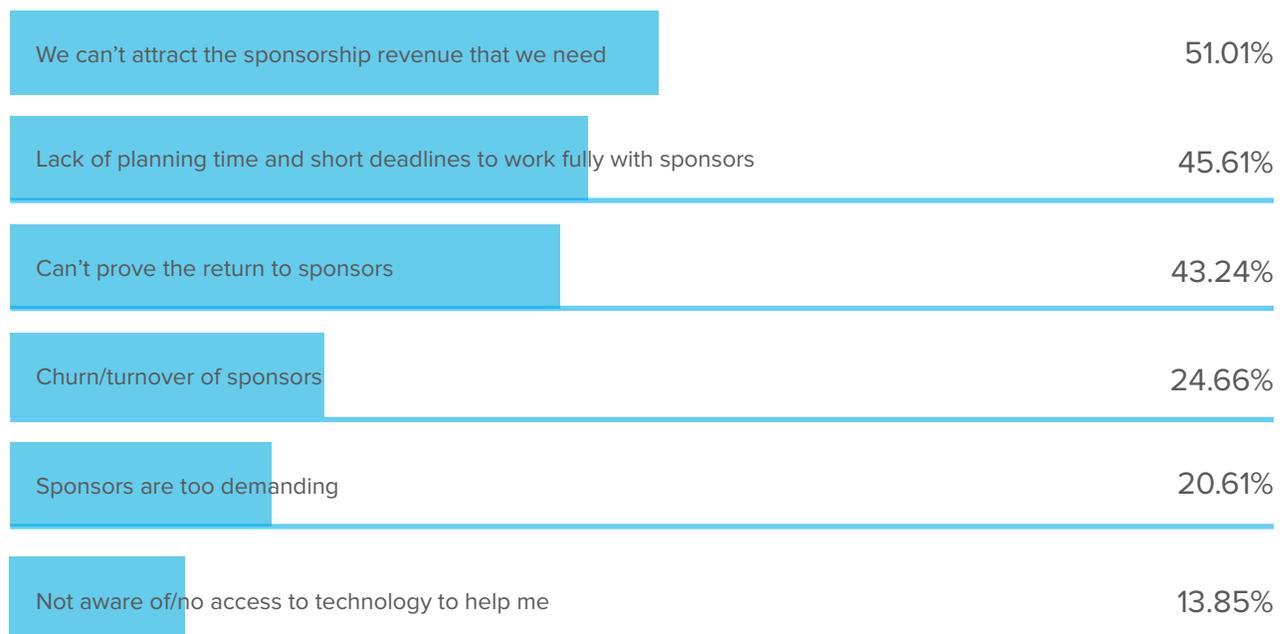
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Julius Solaris

Julius Solaris is the editor of Event Manager Blog. Started in 2007, Event Manager Blog is the number one website worldwide for event professionals, covering topics such as event planning, social media for events, event technology, event trends, event inspiration but also destination management marketing, meeting planning.

He has been named one of 25 most influential individuals in the Meeting Industry in 2015 and 2016.

Todd A. Uglow, JD

Todd Uglow is an Assistant Professor at UNLV's William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration and has been teaching Marketing and Events at UNLV for over 10 years. Past projects include working with Major League Baseball, National Football League, and Professional Bull Riders.

Becki Cross

Becki Cross set up UK based event management company and SME, Events Northern Ltd, in 2004. Becki has organized events ranging from conferences to exhibitions, festivals to awards ceremonies, fashion shows to golf tournaments and everything in between. Organizing conferences and corporate events is Becki's passion and she believes that conferences should never be boring!

She enjoys incorporating event technologies and social media into the mix and working closely with a diverse range of clients to achieve their event objectives. Becki is also interested in innovation and how entrepreneurial thinking and skills can be encouraged.

Becki is the Deputy Editor and Contributor to EventMB, which she describes as her dream job alongside event planning! Follow Becki on Twitter @beckitrain.

ABOUT THE COMPANIES

Event Manager Blog is the most influential website in the meeting and event industry. It offers education, innovation and inspiration through daily articles and industry reports. Founded in 2007, EventMB has been widely referenced as the go to resource for innovative event professionals wanting to learn more about trends in the event planning industry.

EventMB releases industry reports and intelligence about event technology, social media and engagement at events.

Thousands of event professionals have downloaded EventMB free reports at eventmanagerblog.com.

Virtual Event Bags is a digital platform that allows event organizers to deliver sponsor, exhibitor and partner offers to event attendees before, during and after the event, eliminating the need for a traditional goody bag.

Traditional event bags are time-consuming to stuff and provide no way to track interest or response. With Virtual Event Bags, sponsors manage their own content and organizers can easily provide detailed tracking of attendee action. Organizers can tie the local community into the event by including information or discounts to restaurants, hotels, transportation providers and entertainment venues.

Thousands of events of every size across the globe are including a Virtual Event Bag as a key part of their sponsorship program because it is the most efficient way to connect sponsors to the event audience.

If you would like to learn more about our Virtual Event Bags and get a free demo, go to http://bit.ly/2rPW8VJ.