If you plan on hosting an event, you're also facing a big question: how are you going to fund it? Established companies might be able to dip into a generous marketing budget — but smaller companies likely need some help. A great financing option? Seek out sponsors.

Finding a sponsor, though, can be like trying to get hired for a job. Some of your proposals will be rejected or get no response at all. Luckily, there are a few strategies you can use to make your event a more attractive sponsorship opportunity.

Does your event need a sponsor?

For many events, sponsorship is the key to powerful marketing. In addition to raising funds, having one or more event sponsors can open up opportunities for:

- Building brand awareness
- Increasing sales numbers
- Improving brand image

All in all, there is a lot to be gained from this type of strategic partnership. But not every event needs a sponsorship to be successful. You don't even need it to achieve the benefits we just listed (although it really does help a whole lot).

So how do you know if your event really NEEDS to have them? Here’s how to tell:

1. **Your event is very large and/or high profile, with celebrity speakers or guests.** Media sponsorship assures that your event will get ample coverage.

2. **Your event goals require expensive or additional budget items not already accounted for in allocated funds.** If your goal is to expand your brand's image in the tech industry, having special extras like smart event badges or a mobile app will help you stand out as an industry leader.

3. **You need to bulk up your customer base.** Influencers like industry bloggers, local celebs, or top executives have audiences whose interests may overlap with your event. Bringing them on as your sponsors essentially transfers over that audience base and helps solidify your brand image in the eyes of this fresh market.

4. **You need help figuring out a major planning component like a venue, transportation, or catering.** Hotels, transportation companies, and even local restaurants can contribute their goods and services to events that either can't afford it or haven't been able to an alternative that works for them.
5. **Your event is brand new or your brand needs to build its industry cred.** Having sponsorships from established companies in your field is the best kind of testimonial. It shows they support what you’re doing which really helps influence people to register.

Obviously, there are lots of reasons why events big and small need sponsors. And, contrary to popular belief, finding one doesn't have to be really hard or difficult. In fact, all it takes is a little research and an understanding of what sponsors are best for your unique event.

### How to choose a sponsor for your event

Yes — you’ll have so many options, you’ll actually get to choose! And you might even find that because **event sponsors** are reaching out to you.

The key to choosing the best sponsor for your event is to fully understand your event goals, know what you want out of a sponsorship, and get really clear how your event provides value to potential sponsors.

### Which companies to reach out to

The choices can be overwhelming when you're just starting out. But the reputation of potential sponsors and their perspective on events will determine what kind of partnership you'll ultimately have with them and even how successful your event will be overall.

- **Sponsors who understand the value of this type of marketing.** Whether they've sponsored an event before or not, it's still up to you to convince them that the investment will pay off no matter what.

- **Sponsors whose audience matches yours in both demographics and interests.** It's impossible to completely align with any one brand, but you can definitely pick out key areas worth highlighting during the event and stick to sponsors who share them.

- **Sponsors focused on event ROI.** Vanity sponsors like to stick their names on an event and call it a day. But to fully get the most out of the partnership, you’ll want to reach out to companies who understand it's a **two-way street**.

If you're still stuck on who to reach out to, consider these 5 great methods for choosing event sponsors.

### 5 ways to find an event sponsor

A little creativity and some elbow grease are required, but finding options for event sponsors is a super attainable goal.

1. Use digital tools to find and secure sponsors.
It turns out that this is a common problem for both event planners looking for sponsors and sponsors looking for events. Thankfully there are now a few reliable solutions on the market that can help:

1. Get really specific about your event goals.
   - **SponsorPark** – Best for corporate sponsors and events under the arts, entertainment, sports, festivals, and special causes categories.
   - **Sponeasy** – If you need a well-designed sponsorship desk, try this drag-and-drop builder (it even has templates you can use).
   - **SponsorMyEvent** – Forbes and TEDx are just some of the brand names that use this search engine.
   - **OpenSponsorship** – This platform specifically caters to athletes, teams, and sports-related events.
   - **SponsorPitch** – Search their database, use their CRM, and export sponsor data with this collaborative tool.

2. Get really specific about your event goals

   Even if your goals are strictly financial, not just any old sponsor will do! For example, if you need help booking a hotel venue during a really busy season, you wouldn’t go looking for media sponsors to secure a space.

   And, if you have more than one event goal, you can utilize a combination of sponsors to achieve them. Like for instance, let’s say that same event needed help with PR for all the amazing industry speakers presenting, perhaps you could get both kinds of sponsors and have the hotel treat the media personnel to some VIP suites.

3. Reach out to sponsors from related events.

   Event sponsorship retention rates are slipping. 17% of experienced event professionals say there is a noticeable decrease — which is why you should take note of sponsors who already work with events in or related to your industry.

   These brands already understand the value of event sponsorship and are likely to keep investing in this type of marketing because it benefits them as well. Plus they already know that their audience will align with yours, which makes pitching a little easier.

4. Narrow down your options to brands who strongly align with your event values.

   Event sponsor pitches and meetings are time-consuming, which is why limiting the number of brands you reach out to is essential. Cherry pick the names on your current list that
represent the key goals and image of your upcoming event. For example, if your event is eco-friendly, do a little digging to see if the businesses you’d like to partner with also use sustainable practices for their products or services.

5. Let your audience decide.

Your target market research should reveal all the interests, social media accounts, and brands your audience loves. Why not reach out to companies who they’re already familiar with?

For an attendee, seeing a recognizable name on a sponsor list can be nice. But seeing a name they know and love can be downright exciting. It really helps make them feel like they belong in this ecosystem of interconnected brands and values.

And now, once you’ve found some sponsors worth reaching out to, here’s how to seal the deal.

8 Killer ways to attract sponsors

1. Give your proposal “wow” factor by providing all the details

When you’re job hunting, you don’t send the same generic cover letter to every company. The same principle applies to event sponsorship proposals.

Your proposal has to stand out. After all, the company likely reviews proposals like yours almost daily. So why should the company sponsor your event over other opportunities?

In your proposal, paint that picture by including these details:

- **Tell your company story.** Did your company have humble beginnings? Was it founded as a family business for the local community? Make an emotional connection to strike a chord with the sponsoring company.
- **Describe what you do.** What’s your mission statement, and how does your company live up to it on a daily basis?
- **Describe your audience’s demographics.** It’s best if your target market matches the potential sponsor’s. That way, they know they are reaching the right audience by contributing to your event.

Be specific about the funding you need. Don’t beat around the bush. Break down what the financing will go toward, such as venue rental, food, flying in guest speakers, and so forth.

2. Offer the sponsor incentives
Sponsorship has to be a give-and-take relationship. Sponsors want as much bang for their buck, of course. So what will the sponsors get out of funding your event?

Here are some ideas to help sweeten the deal:

- For trade shows or exhibitions, giving the sponsor a free booth.
- Place the sponsor's name or logo on event promotional banners and flyers.
- Mention the sponsor's company in your blog posts, email newsletters, and social media posts.
- Give event-related freebies or discounts to customers that purchase the sponsor's product or sign up for its service.
- Include the sponsor's logo in all of your promotional gear.

If you're willing to give more than take, it shows the sponsors that you're serious about making the event a success.

3. Offer a “minimum risk” solution

Sponsoring your event is a risk, especially if your company is relatively small. For this reason, why not propose a “trial” deal?

Instead of requesting the full amount you need, ask for a smaller portion in exchange for something small in return. For instance, if you need $100,000, ask for $10,000. In return, you'll offer some of the incentives listed above for free.

This “little risk, little gain” approach lets the sponsor test the waters with your company. This way, they don't take a big hit if the event doesn't go well.

This strategy works especially well if you want to work with this sponsor for future events. The sponsor can use the test run to gauge whether to work with you on future events.

Of course, with this method, you'll need multiple sponsors to fully fund your event. That's not a bad thing! With this method, you don't put all your eggs in one basket by relying solely on a single sponsor.

4. Form a partnership with more established companies

If your company is young or small, it might not have enough brand recognition or credibility to attract event sponsors. The solution? Reach to other companies in your industry and partner up to produce the event.

When potential sponsors see a more established brand attached to the event, they might have more confidence in the event. It may be better able to draw a bigger event turnout.
What kinds of companies are best for a joint partnership? Look for brands within your niche that aren't direct competitors. (Otherwise, there will be a conflict of interest.) If your company sells dietary supplements, for example, try partnering with an exercise equipment brand.

5. Study what your potential sponsors are up to

Do your homework on each sponsor before reaching. Scan the news for things like:

- Has the sponsor been involved in any recent events?
- Have there been changes to the company or its leadership?
- Do major current events affect the sponsor's business?
- Are they launching a new product?

Take advantage of these moments by noting them in your proposal and possibly weaving it into the event. If the sponsor just released a new product, you can help them market it at your event. When you reach out to the sponsor, sell your event as an opportunity to showcase their new product and attract new customers.

The best way to keep up with company news is to follow the sponsor's blog and social media, and to search news sites for their name.

6. Use data to make investors feel confident.

At the end of the day, your sponsors will have their own financial goals for your event. And the more confident they feel about achieving them, the better. But it can be hard to prove exactly what kind of return on their investment they can look forward to. Unless, of course, you use some event data to back it up.

This trick only really works if you have hosted similar events in the past. But the good news is it does work. Here are some key data points worth sharing in your pitch deck:

- Gross revenue from promotions
- Number of event check-ins versus registrants
- How many active community members you currently have
- What industries are represented by the top 25% of your attendance
- Your visit-to-purchase conversion rate
- What country or region past guests hail from
- Social media engagement levels
- Potential audience reach both on and offline
We could keep going but you get the idea. Really any valuable event KPI will do! Providing this kind of proof along with documentation from your event management software will be quite influential to potential sponsors.

7. Get the timing right.

Event sponsorship outreach might just be an art of its own. And time is an important aspect in a few different ways.

- When it comes to adding sponsorship outreach to your long term event timeline, be sure to start early. Working your way to the decision maker requires patience but, ultimately, talking to the most influential figure at the potential company is worth it.
- Showing respect for a potential sponsor’s time is important. Brief emails and meetings show that you respect them. Plus it'll show (not tell) that they won't have to overinvest beyond what they originally agreed to in the first place.
- And finally, there’s the timing of when to approach them. Experts say that May, June, and September are the best months since sales will likely be at a high. December, November, July, and August (aka the holiday months), on the other hand, are the worst times of year to pitch sponsors.

So to summarize: when you do it, how you do it, and how long you spend on each pitch will ultimately determine its likelihood for success.

8. Find the best people to contact.

There are several key decision makers for event sponsorships. And since every company has their own job title and hierarchy system, it's good to keep these basic principles in mind:

- **Avoid obvious titles.** Finding the right contact for selling event sponsorships means positioning yourself as strategically as possible. The “sponsorship manager” at your target sponsor is probably swamped with offers right now, so go left when everyone else is going right by seeking out less obvious options (which we'll touch on below).
- **The brand team is your BFF.** Brand managers focus on public image, which is one of the strongest benefits of sponsoring an event. Put them at the top of your list when reaching out.
- **For smaller companies, follow the money.** Anyone in charge of budgeting at a national or regional level will likely be in control of funds available for event sponsorships.
- **Consider who you already know.** There's no reason why a company you already have a relationship with couldn't be your event sponsor. Start within your network and reach out to people you have a dialogue with already.
Basically, the best people to contact about possible event sponsorships are the ones who have the highest possible ROI on your time invested. Less obvious job titles and people in your network will prove to be very fruitful and direct contacts for pitching.

Stay confident in your sponsorship proposal

Ultimately, remember that potential sponsors are businesses — not philanthropic organizations. They want something in return for funding your event.

The key is to be an effective communicator and clearly show what makes your event worth the sponsor’s marketing dollars. Be confident in your approach and you just might hear back from sponsors.

Want more information about sponsors for an event?

**How do you get sponsors for an event?**
Start early and be open minded. Specifically identify both your goals for the event, and the incentives and benefits for a potential sponsor. Lean on data points about the event audience to make a compelling case to a potential sponsor whose target audience aligns well with your attendees. Focus on the sponsor, not the event, in your pitch.

**What companies do sponsorships?**
The top 10 sponsors for local nonprofit events around the United States are Wells Fargo, Marriott, Dick’s Sporting Goods, Whole Foods, State Farm, Pepsi, US Bank, Bank of America, Budweiser, and Clif Bar.

**What do event sponsors want?**
At a high level, event sponsors want their brand to be associated with an event – either because the event is for a good cause that the sponsor wants to publicly support, or because the event is hosted by a business that can promote the sponsor’s brand in some way. Event sponsorship can also generate leads for a company, produce valuable material for content marketing, develop business relationships, provide audience insights, and improve public perception.

More like this:
- How to Write an Effective Sponsor Proposal
- 4 Ways to Increase Your Event Sponsor ROI
- How to Build Meaningful Relationships With Event Sponsors
- How to Get Event Sponsors Your Attendees Will Love
- 4 Fresh Content Ideas for Your Sponsorship Proposals