



SPONSOR GUIDE

How to Get the Most Out of Sponsoring a Hackathon.

Looking to get the most out of the hackathon movement but don't know where to start? New to sponsoring hackathons? We're here to help. This guide has been organized based on three major benefits of sponsorship — recruiting, product feedback, and brand recognition.

RECRUITING

Hackathons are a great place to find some of the world's best talent, and there are a number of ways to maximize your company's impact. Reviewing resumes in advance gives you a good idea of the talent pool and which of your company's positions will be the best match. Below are some additional tips to help ensure your company's presence is well received and memorable:

1. **Bring your star engineers and mentors.** Being a mentor at hackUstate is a great way to interact with and get to know the participants one-on-one. Hackers tend to remember the people who were crucial to helping them finish their hack and will associate those positive experiences with your company, keeping you at the top of their minds during their job/internship search.
2. **"Sell" your company and prepare to answer questions about internships/jobs.** When you get recruiting-related questions, share anecdotal experiences. Work with the participants, give them feedback and advice on their hacks to build a rapport with the hackers. Strike up conversations with people that come by your table and be excited to explain what you do each day and what the culture is like within your organization.

LIVE API/PRODUCT FEEDBACK

Engaging with hackers and suggesting your API/product is vital to boosting adoption. Additionally, offering a prize for the best use of your product is great for branding and encouraging product use. Here are some of the most important things to do:

1. **Bring company engineers and mentors.** Having engineers present creates a positive experience for hackers when they have questions about an API and in turn will improve the quality of the hacks produced. Also, engineers will be able to effectively improve their product's documentation or functionality based on feedback received over the course of the weekend.
2. **Be proactive.** A lot of hackers (especially less experienced ones) may not feel comfortable approaching you for help. Mentors who tend to be most impactful and feel most fulfilled walk around the venue, ask teams about what they're working on and offer their help or suggestions. This is also a great way to get to know who is using your API/product and gather feedback. Remember to go back to people you've met and check in with them throughout the event!

3. **Incentivize people to use your product.** You can do this with an inspiring stage demo or a unique prize. Offering hackers free access to your hardware or paid service is a great hook and will usually convince a lot of hackers to try your product.

BRAND RECOGNITION

The key to brand recognition is having people see your brand everywhere and associate it with positive experiences. You also want to be as engaging as possible to help demonstrate your company's culture. We have some ideas below to get you started but would love to have a conversation with you about to ensure we give you the best experience possible.

1. **Bring cool swag/interactive demos/engaging table displays.** Your sponsor table is the face of your company at hackUstate and decking it out with lots of unique giveaways will undoubtedly draw attention to your company. Some companies have had video-gaming setups, hoodies, and branded backpacks to give out at their table. You are also welcome to have your swag included in the swag bags given to every participant, ensuring that all hackers receive a branded item from your company.
2. **Offer technology focused prizes that promote your brand.** When choosing prizes focus on items that will improve the hacker experience. Some good examples are [Arduino Kits](#), [Raspberry Pi's](#), [drones](#), [Spheros](#), rechargeable battery packs, branded headphones, and other accessories.
3. **API sponsors — make good use of your stage demo.** Your minute onstage is going to be your company's introduction at hackUstate as well as your only chance to address all 300 attendees at once. A few tips to ensure your demo is engaging and informative:
 - Keep things short and sweet
 - Don't use too much field-specific jargon (hackers all have varying levels of experience in your field)
 - Focus on the demo of how it works, there won't be enough time for live coding

FINAL WORDS

Remember to follow the Codes of Conduct and venue rules (for example, no alcohol); nothing too complicated. Just sending a group of awesome people to hackUstate to rep your company is enough to do wonders!

Now that you know how to make the most of sponsoring a hackathon, check out our sponsorship tiers at hackustate.org! When you're ready, send us an email at sponsor@hackustate.org and we'll get moving on giving you an awesome hackathon experience.

See you at hackUstate!