

The Sizzabo logo is centered within a light pink, horizontally-oriented pill-shaped container. This container is positioned at the top of the page, where it meets the intersection of two large, light pink circular shapes that form a background element. The word "Sizzabo" is written in a dark, sans-serif font.

Sizzabo

The Strategic Event Sponsorship Handbook for Event Leaders

Unlock success with strategies for
boosting sponsor ROI and retention.

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Introduction

In today's cost-conscious business environment, event sponsorships play a significant role in powering events and financing event strategies. Yet, as event teams are increasingly being forced [to do more with less](#), many sponsors are facing similar budget challenges and subsequently tightening their belts.

Despite this, 80.4% of event organizers say in-person events are the most impactful marketing channel, and 69.7% of attendees say in-person B2B conferences offer the best opportunity to learn about new products.

80.4%

of event organizers agree that [events are the most important channel](#) for hitting business goals.

If you want to accelerate your event strategy in 2025, your team needs to prioritize event sponsorship and get creative with locking down sponsors. Not only can event sponsors make it easier to finance your events, they can also help you expand your marketing reach and attract more attendees by lending credibility and demonstrating your brand's relevancy.

Is your team striking out on sponsorships? If so, you're in the right place.

69.7%

of attendees say in-person B2B conferences offer the best opportunity to learn about new products.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the ins and outs of [event sponsorship](#), including trends and opportunities, challenges, [creative ideas](#) for boosting ROI and retention, examples and real-world vignettes illustrating sponsor ROI, and more. Keep reading to learn tips and tricks you can use to help your events team crush its sponsorship goals in 2025 and beyond.

The event sponsorship landscape: Trends and opportunities

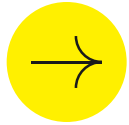
The event sponsorship landscape is always changing, shaped by new industry trends, tech advancements, and shifts in both business goals and consumer preferences. Let's kick things off with some of the top insights that are reshaping how event sponsorships work and what you need to do to ensure your next event is one for the ages.

Unfortunately, while sponsorship plays a huge role in enhancing the event experience, convincing sponsors to come on board isn't always easy. With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the common challenges event organizers face, according to our [State of In-Person B2B Conferences report](#) – and what event managers can do to overcome them.

More opportunities for sponsorship activations

Sponsors are looking for ways to go beyond just having their logo on display – they want hands-on, memorable experiences that connect with attendees. For example, a health and wellness brand might

sponsor a “Stress Relief Zone” at your conference where attendees can go for guided meditation, try out breathing exercises, or get a quick back rub. This setup doesn’t just promote the sponsor; it engages attendees in a meaningful way.



“One of the things that we really lean into is that we support our sponsors in a similar way that we support our speakers, which is that we give them data on what our attendees have asked to hear about this year specifically.”

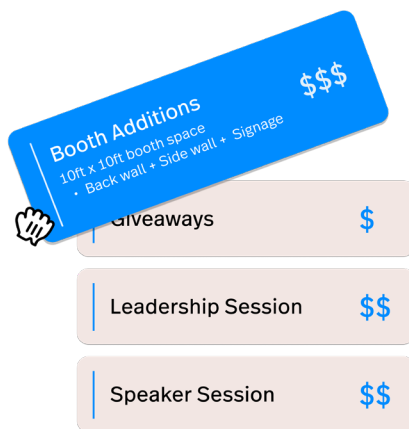
Arianna Black, *Director of Events and Digital Experiences, Women In Product*

Year-round sponsorship engagement

Sponsorship engagement doesn’t have to end when an event wraps up. Event leaders should encourage their teams to create year-round engagement programs, giving sponsors more chances to connect with audiences after the big day comes and goes. This approach not only keeps sponsors top of mind but also builds lasting relationships that benefit everyone involved. By staying engaged all year, sponsors can create a deeper, ongoing connection with the audience, driving [sponsorship ROI](#).

Customization & tiered packages

One-size-fits-all sponsorships are out, and custom options are in. Event leaders are thinking outside the box and moving toward a la carte [sponsorship packages](#), creating offerings that meet each sponsor’s unique goals. By offering tiered levels of engagement, it’s easier for sponsors to find something that works with their budget and objectives. This approach helps sponsors feel more invested and allows them to connect with the event audience in a way that resonates.



Expectations of social proof and tangible returns

Sponsors love to see proof that their investment will pay off – who wouldn't? Sharing past sponsors' case studies, testimonials, and success stories is a great way to build trust. When potential sponsors see that brands similar to theirs have successfully partnered with your events, it gives them confidence that they can achieve real results, too. Social proof like this makes all the difference in helping sponsors feel good about their decision to jump on board.

In today's fast-paced event sponsorship landscape, event leaders must encourage their teams to stay flexible, adapt to new trends, and keep sponsors happy with strong ROI. At the same time, sponsors need to take advantage of these opportunities to connect authentically with their audience and hit their business goals. Add it all up, and the evolving environment offers both sides plenty of chances to grow and win together.

Now that you have a better idea of what potential sponsors are thinking about – and how ROI is a top priority – let's turn our attention to some of the key challenges that event teams face when it comes to securing sponsorships.

The challenges of securing event sponsorships

Many of today's most effective organizations are doubling down on their event strategies to improve business outcomes. In fact, [80.4% of event organizers](#) agree that events are the most important marketing channel for achieving business goals.

Event sponsorship can have a profound impact on the event experience, but it's not always the easiest thing in the world to convince sponsors to reach into their wallets and come on board. Let's look at some of the challenges that event organizers brought up when taking our State of in-person B2B conferences report.

“There's not enough lead time to sell sponsorships, because most budgets have already been allocated.”

The challenge

Even in ideal circumstances, signing an event sponsor is a tall order, requiring extensive time and people resources. Even when they get a company on the line, many event teams find out the hard way that the budget has already been allocated.

How to overcome

Companies typically earmark their sponsorship budgets well in advance, often at the outset of their fiscal year, so it's crucial to get

ahead of that budget planning cycle. To do this, engage sponsors early, maintain open lines of conversation year-round, offer multi-year engagement packages, and stay flexible.

“Sponsor dollars are shrinking.”

The challenge

Even if funds haven't been allocated, many companies are being conservative by reducing sponsorship budgets due to economic uncertainty. As a result, it's harder for organizations to find the funds they need to be an event sponsor – making it more difficult for event teams to sign deals.

How to overcome

In a landscape where companies often allocate sponsorship budgets well in advance, it's essential to address the challenge of shrinking sponsor dollars proactively. To navigate this obstacle successfully, consider enhancing your value proposition, offering cost-effective packages, and diversifying revenue streams (e.g., by selling tickets and merchandise).

“Sponsors don't want to commit to event spends ahead of events and only confirm attendance/ sponsorships last minute.”

The challenge

Just because companies have room in the budget for event sponsorship doesn't mean it's any easier to convince them to come on board. Some organizations hesitate to sign sponsorship commitments well before an event because they don't know the future.

How to overcome

It's essential to adapt your approach – and get creative – to overcome this hurdle. Some companies even capitalize on sponsorship valuation to ensure sponsors choose the most effective opportunities. Overcome this challenge by offering last-minute sponsorship packages and flexible commitment options, enabling them to adjust their package if needed.

“There has been a power shift from event managers to sponsors.”

The challenge

With sponsorship budgets dwindling and organizations waiting as long as they can to decide whether to sponsor an event, negotiation power has shifted, and the ball is firmly in the court of would-be sponsors. As such, event teams can't necessarily negotiate from a position of strength anymore. They have to go to the table with a persuasive plan, ready to demonstrate sponsorship ROI and potentially make concessions clearly.

How to overcome

As the power dynamic shifts toward sponsors, event teams must adapt to secure partnerships effectively. To overcome this challenge, use data to design your proposals and clearly outline ROI. While you're at it, equip your team with effective negotiation and concession strategies.

“Venue costs, material costs, and labor costs have all inflated dramatically since the return from lockdown.”

The challenge

Although economic uncertainty has put budgetary pressure on event sponsors, it's also made events more expensive. As venue, logistical, and other associated costs continue to rise, event teams face the difficult decision to keep sponsorship package price points consistent or raise them in line with inflation—and risk potentially scaring off on-the-fence sponsors.

How to overcome

Dealing with rising costs requires strategic planning. To address this challenge, encourage your team to be transparent about pricing. While you're at it, explore alternative revenue streams (e.g. digital advertising opportunities) and design value-oriented sponsorship packages.

“Sponsorships from large companies feel unrealistic and unreachable, but small businesses struggle with finding the budget.”

The challenge

Large sponsors seek widespread visibility and premier speaking opportunities, while smaller sponsors are interested in getting their name out there as cost-effectively as possible. Event organizers need to thread the proverbial needle to strike a balance that ensures all sponsors are happy.

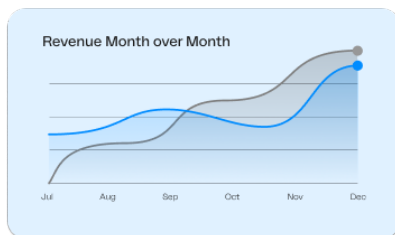
How to overcome

Balancing the needs of large and small sponsors requires a thoughtful approach. To address this challenge, offer tiered sponsorship packages, customized brand exposure (i.e. let sponsors pick their own channels), and plenty of networking and collaboration opportunities.

Now that you understand the trends and challenges event teams need to navigate to secure sponsor dollars let's examine some strategies your team can use to deliver more ROI to sponsors – making it easier to lock down sponsors in the future.

11 strategies for boosting sponsor ROI and retention

If you want to increase the number of sponsors at your next event, it's a much easier sell when you can [demonstrate sponsorship ROI](#). Here are some tactics your events team can use to boost sponsor ROI:



Registration Goal 5,289

1. Learn more about your audience.

When you know a lot about your audience, convincing would-be sponsors to partner with your event is much easier. By studying pain points, target markets, and industry affiliation, you can pinpoint brands that align with your event theme, making converting them much easier. They'll be more likely to sign up because your event will be relevant to their mission.

2. Increase sponsor visibility.

By displaying sponsor logos in many different places – on your event website and app, in promotional marketing materials, and on signage at the event – you increase brand exposure, making it easier for sponsors to generate ROI.

3. Enhance your event marketing efforts.

Your event doesn't have to end once the keynote is delivered and everyone's on their way back home. By doubling down on your marketing efforts – and prioritizing pre-event and [post-event campaigns](#) – you create additional exposure opportunities for sponsors, delivering ROI beyond the event itself.

4. Use social proof to showcase past sponsors.

As mentioned earlier, social proof – like sponsor case studies and testimonials – can help persuade other brands about the merit of sponsoring your event.

5. Offer content co-creation opportunities.

Work with sponsors to co-create content for the event, such as panel discussions or webinars, that can live on as evergreen content on your platforms, continuing to provide value and visibility long after the event.

6. Engage sponsors year-round.

The better your relationship with sponsors, the more likely they will be interested in a long-term partnership. Keep your sponsors engaged all year long to create opportunities for ongoing collaboration.

7. Post spotlights on sponsors on social media.

Run a “Sponsor Spotlight” series on your social media channels in the lead-up to the event, featuring interviews, product highlights, or guest posts from sponsors to increase their exposure.

8. Offer early commitment incentives.

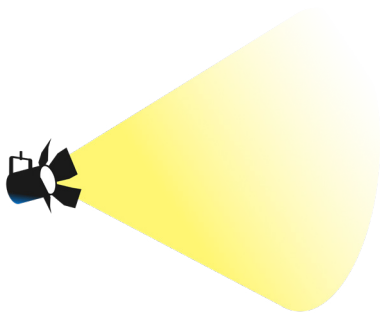
Consider offering early commitment incentives to combat sponsors’ tendency to wait until the last minute and offset budget constraints. These could come as discounts or perks (e.g., a webinar sponsorship or additional speaking opportunities).

9. Create a continuity campaign.

Develop a continuity program where sponsors can remain engaged with your audience through year-round content marketing efforts, such as regular webinars, podcasts, or newsletters.

10. Amplify early bird engagement.

For sponsors who commit early, offer the opportunity to be part of the event planning process, like selecting keynote speakers or shaping the agenda, giving them a sense of ownership and alignment with the event.

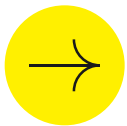


11. Upsell and cross-sell sponsors.

If a sponsor has been with you for a while and is still coming back, create a clear path for sponsorship growth by offering tiered upgrade options. Sponsors can move up levels each year, unlocking new benefits and opportunities for exposure.

Remember, successful sponsorship is a symbiotic relationship; it thrives on mutual benefit and growth. As you implement these strategies, keep the lines of communication open, be receptive to feedback, and continuously innovate your sponsorship opportunities. Doing so will not only secure sponsor loyalty but also attract new partners, creating a dynamic cycle of sponsorship success and event evolution.

Let your next event be a testament to the power of strategic sponsor engagement, where every sponsor feels integral to the event's triumph and is eager to return, year after year.



“Ask your potential sponsors lots of questions. Ask them about their KPIs and metrics and how they track their sponsorships. Getting a sense of their metrics and then trying to map your value against them is how you’ll get money from the sponsors.”

Bob Johnston, *Founder and CEO*, Executive Council

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4 event sponsorship ROI example scenarios

Companies are strategic with their investments, and event sponsorships are no exception. Sponsors seek tangible benefits in return for their support. Here are a few unique scenarios depicting [how sponsorship can yield fruitful returns](#) to pique your interest and drive creativity as you build out your event sponsorship strategy.

Green tech symposium with exclusive innovation challenges

Background: A green technology symposium aims to draw sponsors from sustainable energy firms.

Strategy: The symposium organizers crafted sponsorship opportunities that included hosting innovation challenges in which sponsors could present problem statements related to renewable energy.

Potential ROI: Sponsors saw a 40% increase in engagement with potential clients and a boost in collaboration proposals for sustainable projects.

Tech conference with tailored sponsorship packages

Background: A renowned tech conference wanted to attract sponsors from the emerging AI sector.

Strategy: Instead of offering one-size-fits-all sponsorship packages, the event team segmented their audience by interest and crafted customized packages. For example, they provided breakout sessions and workshops dedicated solely to AI innovations.

Potential ROI: The AI companies that sponsored these sessions reported a 33% increase in their lead generation compared to generic event sponsorships.

Financial literacy event with custom content sessions

Background: A personal finance app company needed to increase app adoption among millennials.

Strategy: They sponsored a financial literacy fair, offering custom content sessions on investing basics that featured their app's tools.

Potential ROI: The event led to a 60% surge in app downloads and a significant increase in active user rates in the following quarter.

Flagship user conference with data-driven sponsorship packages

Background: A global user conference seeks to engage sponsors interested in reaching software developers and IT professionals.

Strategy: The conference offers sponsorship packages that include access to smart badge data, allowing sponsors to track and engage with attendees based on session attendance, booth visits, and topic interest.

Potential ROI: Sponsors using the smart badge data reported a 50% improvement in lead quality and a 20% higher conversion rate, as they could tailor follow-ups based on precise attendee engagement insights.

These scenarios exemplify how a well-planned sponsorship strategy can increase sponsorship ROI. By providing sponsors with unique, targeted opportunities to engage with their desired audience, events can serve as powerful platforms for brand growth and customer acquisition.

Maximize sponsor ROI with Bizzabo and the Klik SmartBadge™

Getting the best results from your event sponsorship program is only possible when you build it on the strongest foundation. To do that, you need to invest in purpose-built tools designed to help make the sponsorship experience a breeze — for event teams, sponsors, and attendees.

Bizzabo's [Event Experience OS](#) is packed with features that streamline and supercharge onboarding, engaging, and retaining sponsors of all sizes. Plus, our [Klik SmartBadge™](#) lets you supercharge the event experience and maximize sponsor ROI. When you partner with Bizzabo on event sponsorship, here's what you can expect:

- **Enhanced brand exposure** with a badge that can be customized with sponsor branding
- **Real-time data collection** that gives sponsors valuable insights into engagement levels and preferences
- **Increased lead generation** with 4X lead capture and measurable ROI
- **Less waste** using recyclable badges and Klik-enabled content sharing

- **Targeted marketing opportunities** using data collected by the badge
- **More networking opportunities** by sharing contact data by clicking badges together
- **More meaningful attendee experiences** with a more interactive and tech-driven event environment.

Unlocking the full potential of your event sponsorship packages is easier than ever with Klik. By addressing common sponsorship challenges like lead retrieval, engagement, and value delivery, Klik empowers you to create larger, more enticing sponsorship packages.

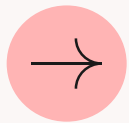
In fact, we've observed that most conferences charge \$3,000 to \$4,000 for lead retrieval, but with a solution like Klik, you have the potential to generate an *extra* \$3,000 to \$4,000 in profit per exhibitor. It's a win-win situation for both event organizers and sponsors, where enhanced sponsor offerings lead to increased revenue.





How Bizzabo's wearable event technology helped power HubSpot's INBOUND

INBOUND attracts some of the biggest brands in marketing tech that interact with customers through interactive booths, workshops, and more. Because Bizzabo helped sponsors “connect” via [badge clicking](#) instead of badge scanning, the sales process felt more natural – closer to networking than sales prospecting. By enabling sponsors to collect data quickly and accurately, Bizzabo delivered a ton of value and easy post-event follow-up with the more than 27,000 leads generated!



“It’s a really big selling point to have attendee badge data and access it in real-time. In full transparency, it’s something I don’t think we can go without now that we’ve shown that this is possible.”

Izzie Kirsch, INBOUND Marketing Manager, HubSpot



[Read the case study](#)

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Empower your team to crush your sponsorship goals!

At this point, you have a better idea of what sponsors are looking for and how your team can start delivering on those fronts. Now it's time to help your team start firing off [sponsorship request letters](#) that convert.

As you get more and more sponsors to say yes, you need to do everything in your power to ensure they have exceptional experiences and achieve the ROI they're looking for. That way, it'll be easier to convince them to come back next year.

With Bizzabo as your event management partner, it's super simple to [manage event sponsors at scale](#) and maximize sponsor opportunities.

Ready to learn more about how Bizzabo can help you enhance your overall event management capabilities and keep your sponsors delighted and engaged? [Request a demo today.](#)

Schedule a Demo

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