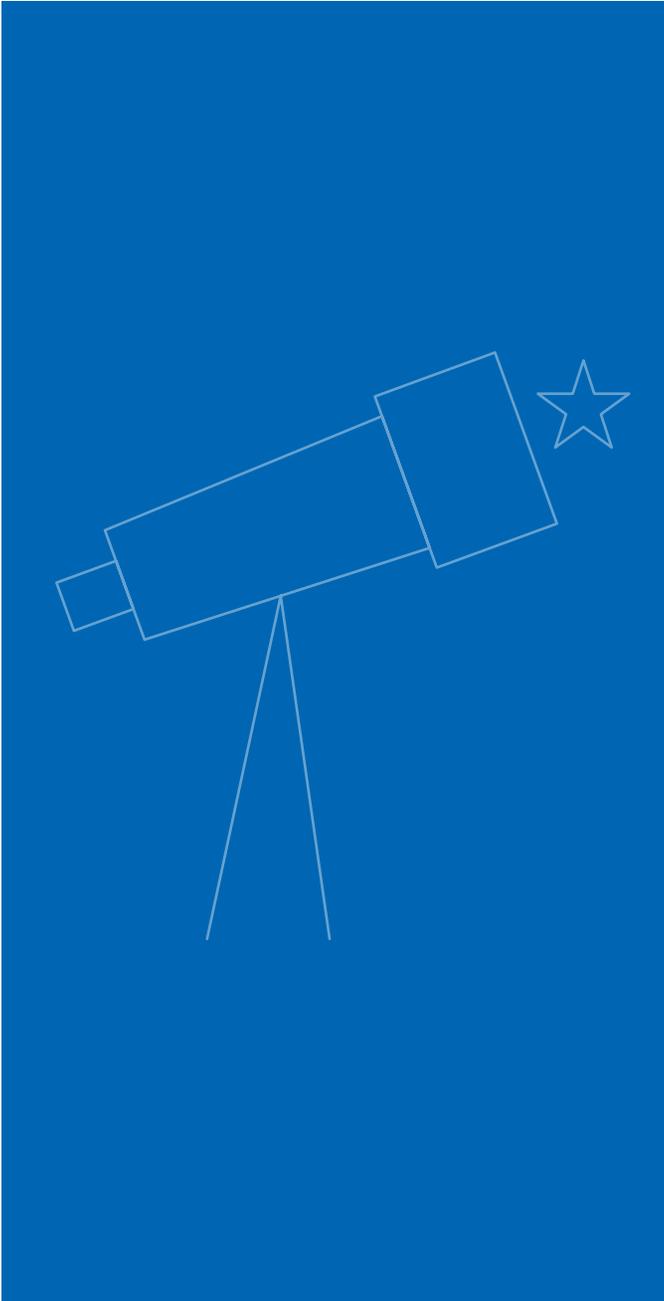




choosing the right sponsorship activation

A Primer for Today's Exhibitor



Effective sponsorship activations add to a successful exhibitor strategy by helping your brand get in front of more eyes, extend the reach of your message, and drive attendee traffic to your booth.

However, it is critical to find the right sponsorship opportunities that align with your brand goals and provide the most value to maximize both your exhibit and sponsorship investments. That's why establishing a process for selecting, executing, and measuring sponsorships is essential for predictable — and repeatable — success.



outlining goals

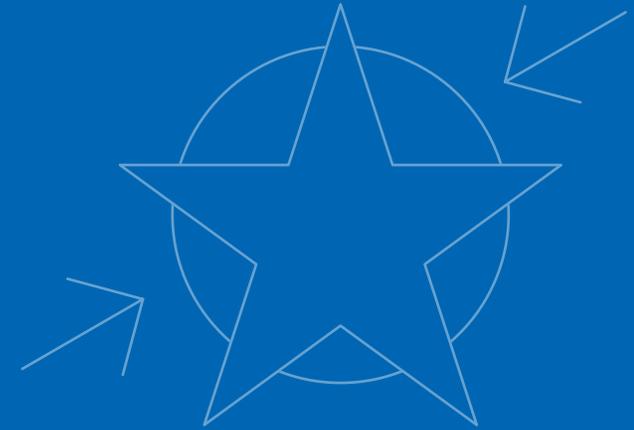
The first step in making effective sponsorship decisions is to look at your overall business and marketing goals. What yardstick are you using to measure success? Whether you're looking for hard data or qualitative objectives, vet sponsorship ideas against the key performance indicators (KPIs) that matter to your organization for a clearer view of how sponsorships can enhance your overall marketing activities.

For example, if you are looking to create greater brand awareness in a new market, you might want to look for big-impact opportunities that incorporate pre- and post-event surveying to evaluate the change in brand recognition within that audience.

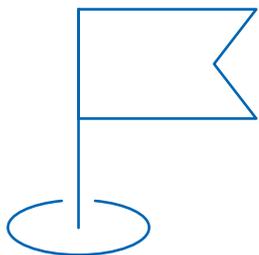
Key questions you should ask:

- 1 How does this sponsorship opportunity align with your overarching goals, and how do you know this is the right opportunity for your campaign or brand?
- 2 How will the sponsorship complement your presence as an exhibitor?
- 3 How will you maximize and leverage what you have to offer, connecting your campaign goals with your overall marketing objectives? Consider your roadmap: Do you have a major campaign or new product launch on the horizon for which you will want to generate buzz?
- 4 What sponsorships are in your existing portfolio? What impact are you looking to make with new or additional investments?
- 5 What resources will you need to make a sponsorship work?

selecting the right sponsorships



Once you have mapped out your objectives and strategy, you can establish the criteria by which you will gauge potential sponsorship opportunities.



What's the end goal?

The clues to the type of sponsorship you're seeking lie in your immediate goals. For example, if your goal is to maintain exposure to and awareness within your known audiences, industry events may offer the best opportunities because of their defined audiences and specific focus. If your goal is to reach a broader market, you may want to sponsor an event that attracts high attendee numbers in your target demographic.



What's the differentiator?

You're already investing money in your exhibit, so how does this sponsorship add additional value for the additional spend? Identify ways to set this specific sponsorship opportunity apart from the rest. What does it offer that others don't? You should evaluate opportunities based on factors such as audience and customer experience. So, if the goal is to reach a new audience segment, you might want to look for sponsorship opportunities that allow you to properly introduce your brand to the crowd over and above your presence on the show floor. This can include workshops, product demos, or speaking opportunities.

As you examine opportunities, also review the mix of other sponsors. If many of your competitors are also participating, work with the event organizer to help ensure that you create a sponsorship opportunity that drives maximum exposure while setting your brand apart from the field. For example, you might want to consider a substantial investment that allows your brand to own a particular category, or look for specific opportunities that offer focused impressions that matter to you before, during, and after the event.

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Customizing your sponsorship with existing assets and content is another way to get the most out of your sponsorship opportunity and focus on user and sponsor experience. Persona mapping is an effective tool that uses specific audience segment profiles to understand various insights such as:

- **Wants**
- **Needs**
- **Buying habits**
- **Topics of interest**

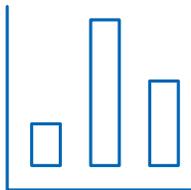
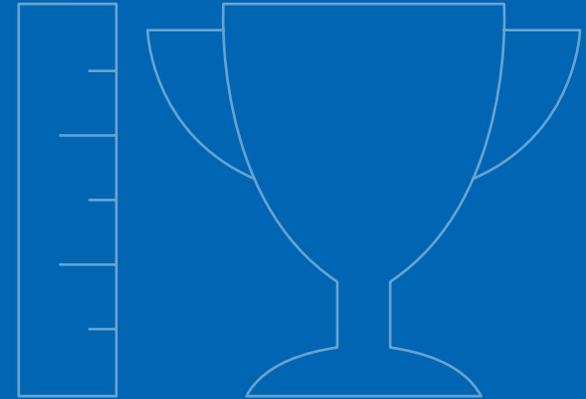
Because you're doing a deep dive into your target audience's viewpoint and preferences, you can work with your event organizer to customize experiences that drive home your brand message. What do these audience segments want? Do they want participatory experiences that let them interact with or "try out" your product or service? Or do they want more passive experiences that offer information?

Then think through not only how you can use this knowledge to inform your sponsorship, but how you can tie everything together more cohesively with your exhibit for a deeper, more engaged attendee experience.

Let's bring it all together with an example: say you want to reach small business customers to introduce a new device. How could you pull together a personalized sponsor activation? Here's a potential plan:

- **An event that targets small business owners and managers, including:**
 - Hands-on demonstrations of the device along with video.
 - A seminar led by a company on new strategies in using devices to make remote workers more productive.
 - Your company's logo on the device charging station.
 - An immersive experience for your exhibit that deepens understanding of your brand and builds on the momentum of the sponsored event.

measuring success



With a multifaceted sponsorship, there are a number of data points to review. These may include, but are not limited to:

- **Sheer impressions from logo and video placements**
- **The difference in booth traffic before and after a sponsored event**
- **How performance compares to a comparable event and exhibit without a corresponding sponsorship**
- **How many people participated in a demonstration or attended a seminar**
- **The number of discount offers redeemed**

Each of these components should be custom-tailored for your brand to reinforce your message. It's not only about how and what you measure, but how much each element is worth, depending on your goals. The final program can be as simple or immersive as you wish, focusing on thought leadership, lead generation, brand awareness, sales, or other objectives.

look for good partners



Of course, in order to design a creative and effective sponsorship program, you need event organizers who have vision — and are willing to understand and work with yours. It's essential that they're just as invested in strategy as you are. Discuss the objectives of the event, the goals for your exhibit, and how your sponsorship fits into the bigger picture, and look for organizers who value your input to not just make your experience better, but to improve the overall program.

Data tells the story

Good organizers will utilize the learnings of past show data and other insights into their attendee base to help choose the right sponsorship fit, both from their perspective and yours. Not only

that, but organizers who embrace data are more likely to be able to provide you with the kind of metrics that help you validate your sponsorship investment.

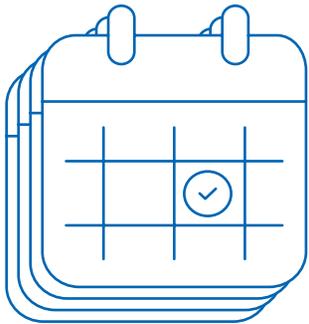
Keeping it custom

Working with partners that have multiple visibility options and customization available makes it easier to tailor your sponsorship. Utilizing visibility opportunities like social media, apps, and sponsorship zones, as well as customized approaches to package design and pricing, based on your needs. The event organizer should be forthcoming with information about the event and collaborative when it comes to tailoring your sponsorship.

Get good feedback

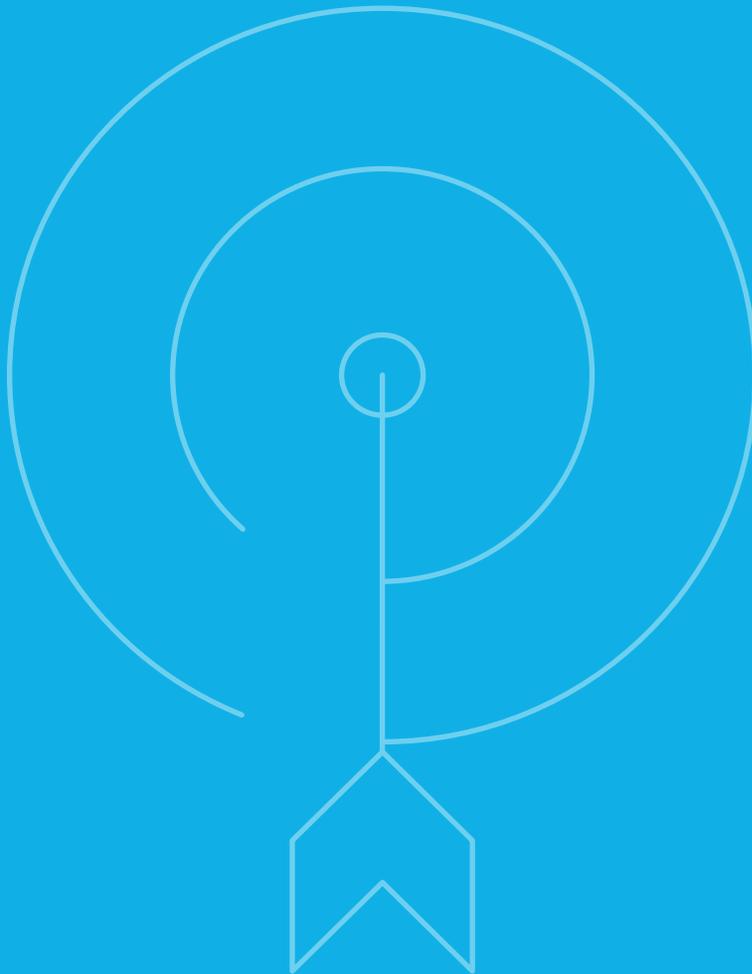
Always get references from previous and current exhibitor sponsors and contact them — the key is to understand their experience as much as possible to help you decide if adding a sponsorship to your exhibitor strategy at that event is a good fit for your brand. Not sure what info you should be looking for? Here's a starter list:

- **Learn about their plans and goals for the event in as much detail as they're willing to share.**
- **Ask specific questions about how easy the event organizer was to work with, as well as whether there were challenges in the program.**
- **Find out if there are areas that they'd like to see improved or if there were any insights that would be helpful to a first-time sponsor.**



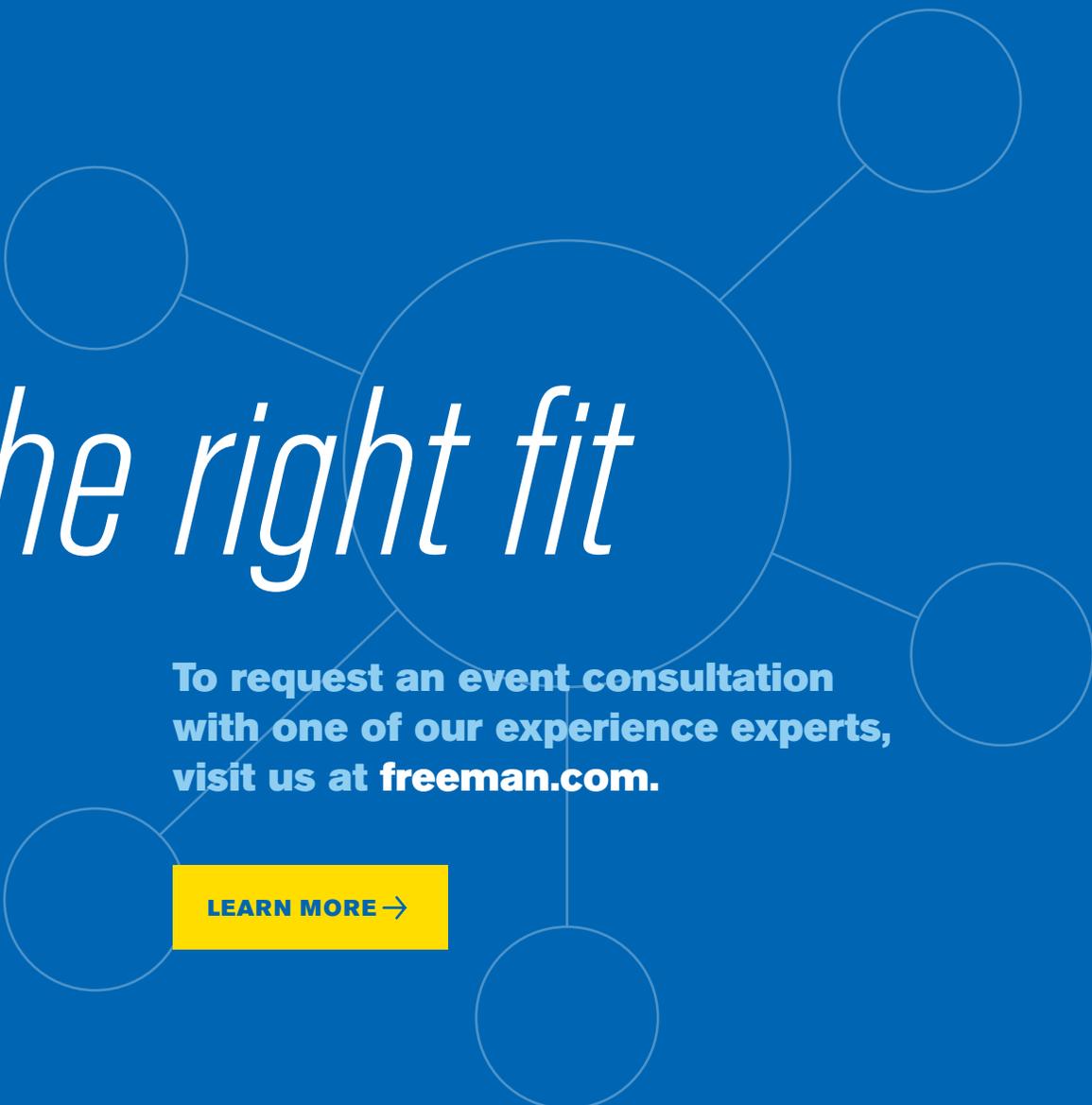
There are a few other places you can go for additional feedback:

- **Ask to review the survey responses for important attendee insights on the event's strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Look at overall attendance trends and seek out events and sponsorships with high sponsor retention rates year-over-year — return sponsors are always a good sign.**



why the right sponsorship matters

Maximizing your event sponsorship requires strategic thinking and creative tactical execution, but it's even more important to choose the right sponsorship from the beginning. The first step is finding a sponsorship opportunity that aligns with your existing goals, maximizes your event presence, and helps you reach targeted customers. But to really get the most boost from your sponsorship dollars, find a partner who is open, collaborative, and knowledgeable — it's the key to success.



find the right fit

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with one of our experience experts,
visit us at freeman.com.**

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