



How to Find (and win) Sponsors for Virtual Events

A guide on everything your event team needs to know about sponsorship for virtual events.



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— Introduction

According to recent statistics, 57% of event marketers believe that the recent trend to deliver event experiences will need more budget. However, most event organisers have a limited budget to conduct their events and thus will have an increased need to seek sponsorship in the future.

Seeking sponsorship is a process, and one needs to plan well before you approach your probable sponsor. Hence thrash out a few details as a team:

- The amount of money that you are seeking.
- Do you need one sponsor or multiple sponsors.
- Devise a sponsorship chart that details the benefits that a sponsor can avail for a particular sum.

Having done this, you will next need to be prepared to answer the questions from your event sponsors. **The most common question that sponsors want to know is the benefits of associating with a virtual event.** The reasons you could give them are:

- A virtual event is more than just a webinar. There are ample avenues for personal interactions and feedback.
- Engagement on virtual spaces are more personalised, and hence lead generation is also better.
- Virtual events offer ample branding opportunities for a sponsor.
- Since virtual events provide higher avenues for networking, it leads to increases reach and attendance.

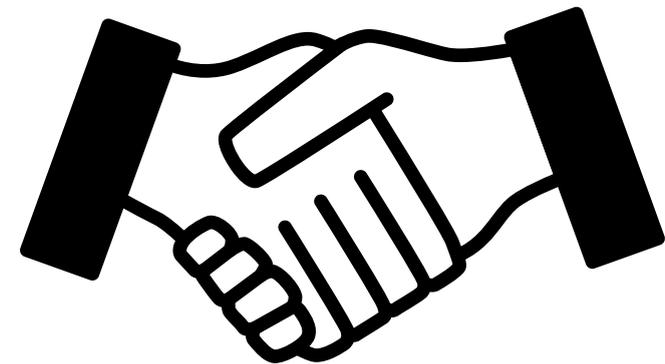
— Introduction

The next thing that sponsors would like to know is how would they get visibility in an event.

And this book helps you with the answer to that question.

Detailed herewith are some ways by which you can find sponsors and various ways by which your sponsors will be distinctly noticeable. [The former part will help you seek your ideal sponsor and the latter part will help you retain them.](#)

These ideas include inclusion before the event, during the event and after the event.



— Before Sponsors Say Yes to Sponsoring an Event, They Ask These 5 Questions



Now that you have a fair idea about the thought process of your sponsors, let's set up for the big question.

How to find sponsors for events?

1. Craft an Exclusive Selling Proposition

Prepare the event sponsorship proposition like you are selling a product or service because the concept is the same.

Draft a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) to the potential sponsors, which is a concise statement that outlines:

- The event's mission, vision, and cause.
- The value offered to the sponsors.
- The differentiator factor of your event as compared to other events.
- The event's audience size and key characteristics.
- How can it lead to a long-term relationship with your company.

It feels like a lot, but ideally, this USP should be short and should be the initial communication with potential sponsors to generate interest.



Sponsorships for virtual events is a two-way street. You build trust and deliver a positive ROI to keep the relationship going.

- Nishchal Dua, Director of Marketing, Airmeet



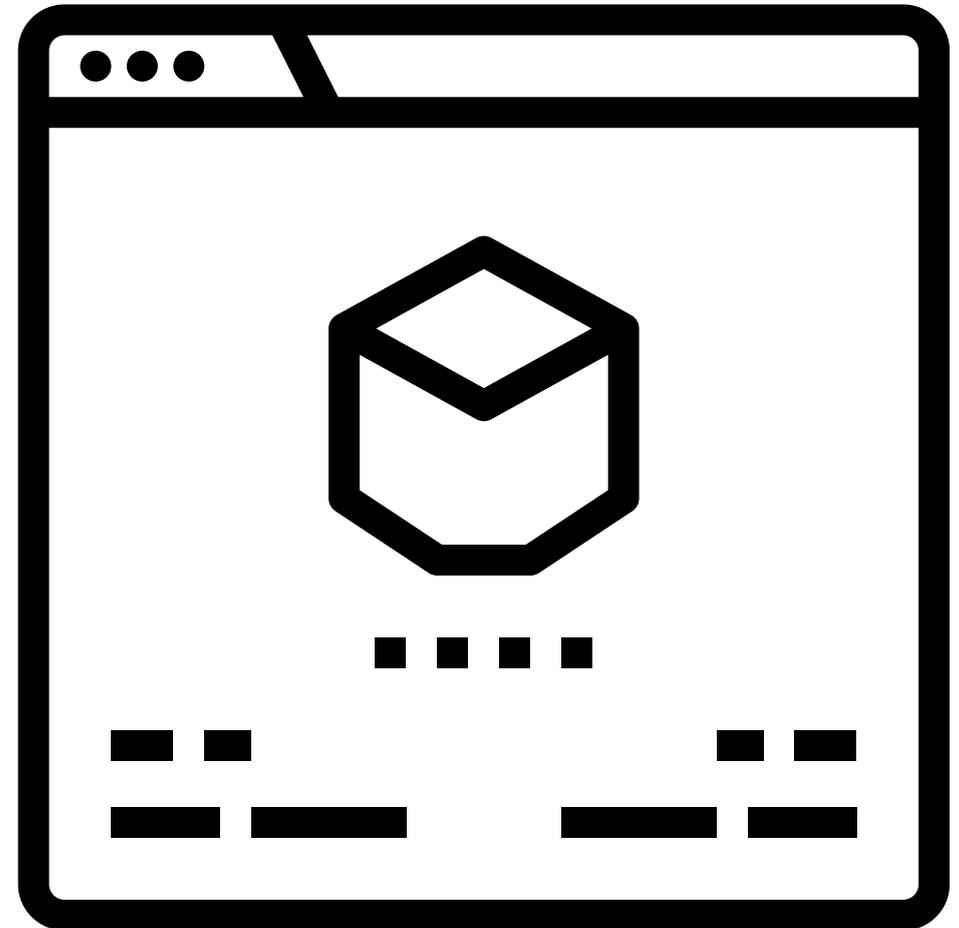
2. Showcase a Professional and Clean Brand Image

The sponsors will evaluate you first by checking your website, reviews, and social media presence, to know if you are legitimate and popular, so be prepared for it.

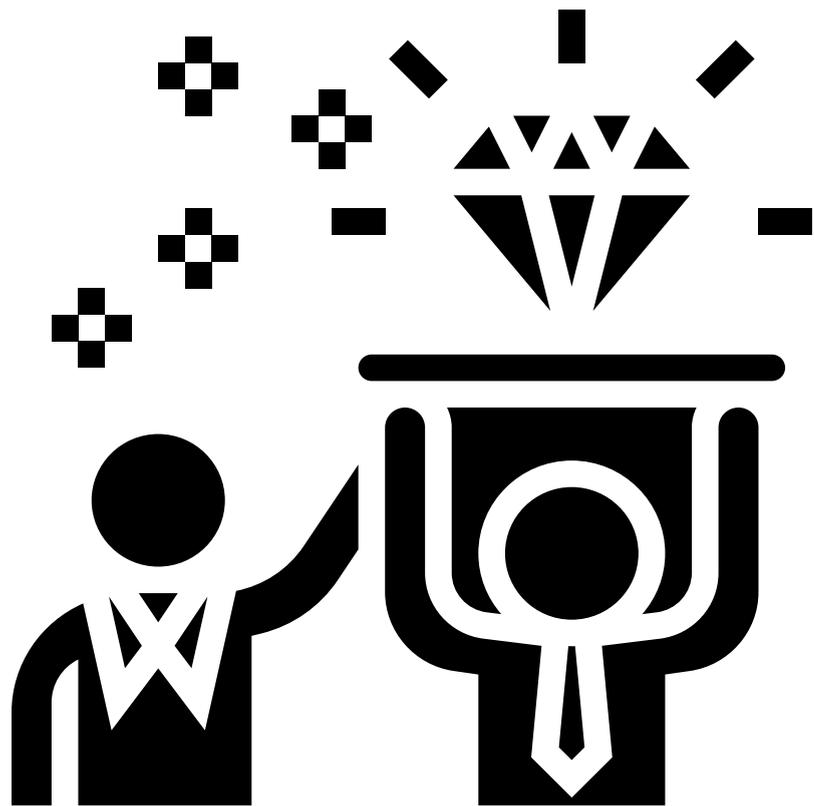
Check your website thoroughly for any broken links, page errors, redirections, etc.

Think from their perspective, what would they want you to have because they will be aligning their brand image with yours.

It's worth it to spend some funds to make your brand look professional before you reach out to sponsors.



3. Identify and Enumerate the Offerings that Would Interest Potential Sponsors



As you progress and get more clarity, start to define the specific things you can offer to the sponsors by providing more details like:

- The size and the kind of audience.
- Live presentation opportunities.
- Logo placements opportunities during the virtual event.
- Online marketing — Website, Email, Social media marketing.
- Offerings to sponsors — Explore digital swag alternatives instead of traditional ones. Think of some templates, GIFs, and other useful takeaways.

4. Create a List of Prospects that Align with your USP

Create categories of prospective sponsors and specific industries that would be interested, based on verticals, demographics or products.

Prepare an excel or CRM to manage the researched information & the outreach process.

5. Initially Connect Through Email, not Calls

You might think a call is more personal and effective, but most sponsors prefer that the first contact be online so they can do their homework before talking about it.

Many corporate planners reach out to potential sponsors via social media, because it is more casual and less intrusive.

6. Make your Approach Personal, Direct, and Concise

Make your approach personal, and let the business know why you chose to reach out to them specifically.

If you spend time crafting a message specifically for the company, they will also spend time evaluating your request. When you contact a potential sponsor, be direct, concise, and provide them with the requisite information.

7. Convince the Sponsor with your Marketing Campaign

Once the conversation begins, focus on KPIs that resonate with the prospect.

Try to get a clear idea of what the sponsors are expecting from the event and tell them how their investment will pay off by giving them more information about the audience and their influence.

Communicate to potential sponsors, details about the event's marketing campaign like pay-per-click ads, search engine optimisation, magazine ads, and online banner campaigns.

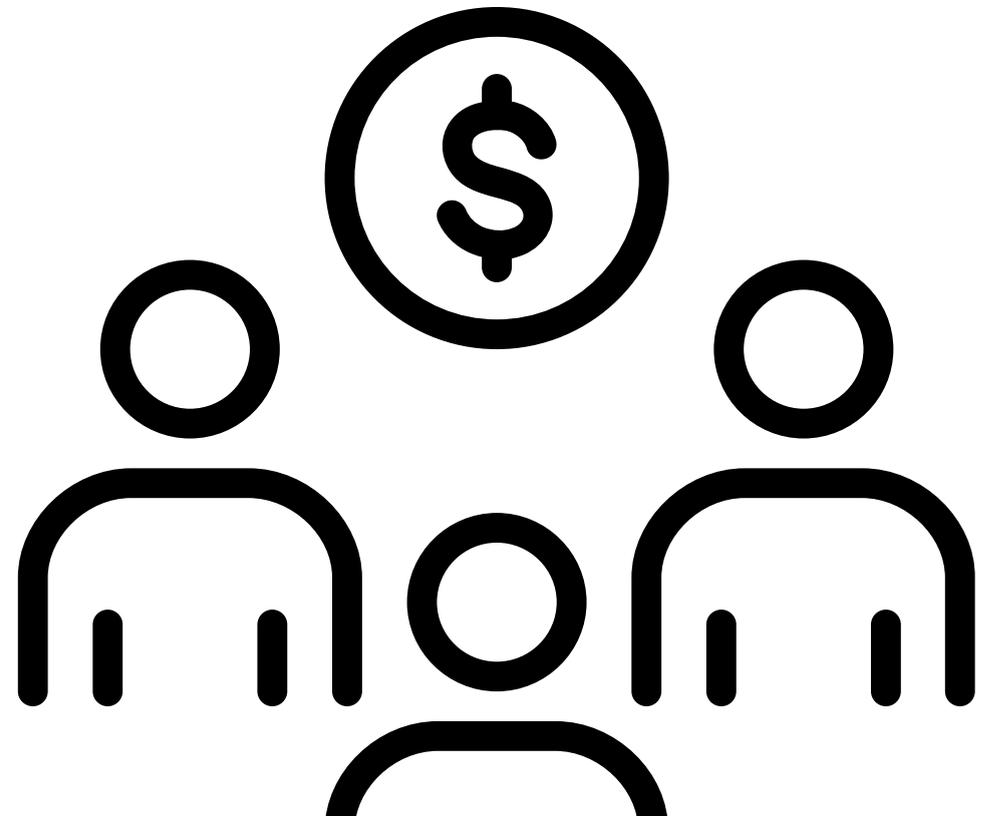
Show them, instead of telling them.

8. Customise Sponsorship Packages

You may customise your pitch and negotiate based on each event sponsor's particular needs.

One size fits all, doesn't work. Find out how you can relate it to their line of business and check out their plans. Once the agreement is done, prepare a detailed document so that there are no disagreements later.

Clarify to them how they will be featured or promoted during the event, on social media, and through links from your website or event signage.



The key to keeping event sponsors is to deliver what you have promised and foster an ongoing relationship even after the event is over. So, now let's look at ways by which you can keep them happy.

How to **retain** sponsors for events?

9. Registration Page and Emails

The first point of contact for attendees with an event is the registration page. These pages can be designed in such a way that your sponsors have amplified visibility.

However, make sure that the details are mentioned clearly. You do not want your attendees to get confused between the organiser and the sponsor.

Another detail to take care in the sponsorship page is to keep it clean and devoid of pop-ups or any distracting links. The purpose of the page is that people register for the event. Do not lose that focus.

Once your audience has registered, the next thing that follows is emails. It includes thank you mails and event reminders. You can insert the sponsor logos in this communication as well.

The final word with regards to placing the sponsor logos on the registration pages and emails is to let the focus stay on the event details and why they should attend while giving your sponsors visibility as well!

10. Social Media Promotion

Marketing of an event is the next task on the to-do-list for an event organiser. It is an opportunity for promoting your sponsor as well. While posting your event information, reminders and videos on your social media pages, include your sponsor as well.

Suggested are some ways in which you can throw some limelight on your event sponsor.

- **Social media:** Follow your sponsors' social media page. Like and share their content which resonates with the event. Also, you could ask them to create some content for the event which can be shared by both of you.
- **Co-create a hashtag:** Together with your sponsor, you can create a hashtag to be used for every event related post.
- **Live session:** Before the event, organise a Facebook or LinkedIn live session. Your sponsor can talk about their product and also elaborate on their reason to be associated with this particular event.
- **Blogs:** You could also ask your event associate to create a few blogs, especially for the event. You can again share this on your media handles.

Again whatever is the means of social media promotion you choose, remember **the focus should be on the event and not on the sponsor.**

11. Program Agenda

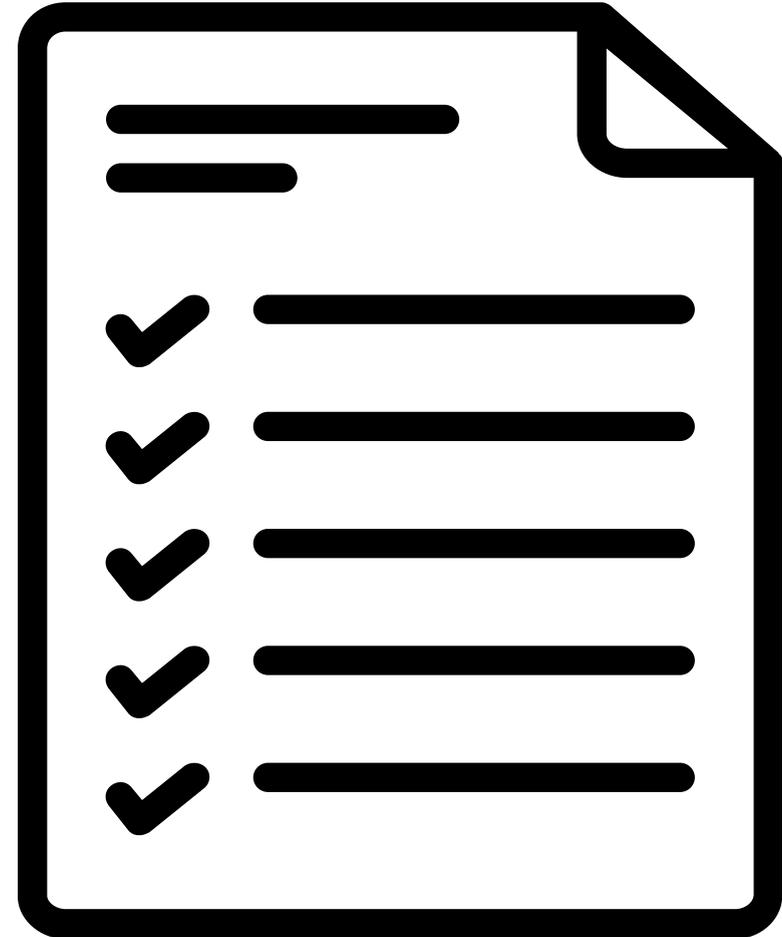
The agenda is the nucleus of the event.

These are usually sent by mail to attendees, and the same is visible to them when they login to the event platform as well.

Add your sponsors' logo on the event agenda. This way, their presence and participation in the event are known to the attendees.

The program agenda is also an excellent way to increase interaction between the attendees and the sponsor.

Design a pop-up or clickable link on the event agenda page that takes the attendees into the sponsor's page. Your sponsor can then determine how to leverage this interaction.



12. Maintain a Relationship with the Sponsors

Keep your promises and commitment detailed in your sponsorship agreement.

Make sure sponsors are involved and apprised throughout the process. They are your clients as well as your partners because a successful event benefits you both.

Share hard ROI data after the event. There are various ways to measure return-on-investment (ROI) for every event.

These can include the headcount, influencer attendance/outreach, social media mentions, attendee survey data (based on satisfaction, pre/post awareness, etc.), new/old website visitors, revenues generated, donations, leads, sales, and many more.



13. Swag Bags

From the academy awards to virtual events, swag bags are meted out on all functions.

A swag bag is probably the best way to market and promote your sponsor. Design a unique and thoughtful swag bag that will appeal to your audience.

From the logos on the bags to gifts from your sponsor/s, their presence can be highlighted incredibly by giving swag bags.

Digital swag bags typically contain coupons or freebies, video links, downloadable ebooks and other useful information. For example, if you are hosting a webinar for young professionals and have an ed-tech company as your sponsor, you could offer some course coupons in the swag bag. The bag can also include links to some premium videos and content.

A swag bag that adds value always thrills the audience. Another advantage of digital swag bags is that the data is traceable. Your sponsor can track how many attendees used the course coupons or accessed the online content. They can then follow-up with these leads and drive conversions.

14. Keynote Address From The Sponsor

A keynote address is of two kinds, opening keynote and closing keynote.

The opening keynote address tells the audience what they can expect from the session; it sets the tone and gets them all enthused.

The closing keynote address is a summation of the event. It inspires the participants and is the last memory that they will carry from the event. You could ask your sponsor to present either of these keynote addresses.

Apart from talking about the event, the sponsor will also have the opportunity to talk about their brand with the audience. The keynote address can be recorded earlier and telecast at the appropriate time.

Pro-tip: Share a personal story or anecdote in your keynote. Audiences always relate to this.

Lastly, you need to ask your event associate to be mindful of the time available for the keynote address. The maximum time recommended for a keynote address is 20 minutes.



15. Waiting Rooms and Lounge Areas

Yet another golden opportunity for sponsor branding is in the waiting room and lounge area.

The waiting room is where the participants gather before and after the event. You could utilise this time and bring the participants' attention to the sponsor by streaming a video or some relevant visual content for the attendees. [Airmeet's 'social lounge'](#) is a virtual 'ballroom' which can be customised in appearance and seating arrangements to deliver specific experience and highly relevant interactions among the participants.

Similarly, the lounge area is designed for networking. On some platforms, one can also design the look of these spaces. If your event hosting platform lets you design the networking lounge, place the logo of your sponsor on the networking tables.

In the situation where you have multiple sponsors, what can you do?

- Place banners of all sponsors in both the waiting and lounge area.
- Divide this space. One can have an exclusive presence in the waiting area and the other in the lounge area.
- Have logos of each sponsor on their designated tables in the lounge area.

Creativity can be unleashed here to include the sponsors and give them the needed visibility.

16. Inclusion in Presentation and Ad-Breaks

These are two more ways of including the sponsors during the event. Let us look at them individually.

Presentations

There are ample opportunities to include sponsor logos in the presentation — at the bottom of your slides or on alternate slides include the sponsor's logo, after every 5/10 slides have one transition slide. It will only have the sponsors' logo, and you can also have a sponsor banner behind the speaker, which gives the sponsor continuous visibility.

Ad-breaks

Ad-breaks between sessions in the event are similar to commercial breaks that we see on television. During the scheduled break of your event, stream your partners' ad. It could be a live stream or an ad launch that is done using the event platform. An ad launch will attract the audience and will increase their engagement as well.

Ensure that the video quality of your ad is up to the mark, and there are no hitches while streaming as well.

17. Entertainment Breaks

Entertainment during an event? Who wouldn't like it! Entertainment breaks in a virtual event have become popular over time.

During one of the event breaks, the sponsor can organise for an entertainment event. Some of the ideas for entertainment are:

- Music show
- Stand-up comedy
- DJ performance/DJ battle
- Mind reading
- Storytelling
- Fitness/Wellbeing session

Choose your entertainment program based on your audience's demographics, like age and interests. Having a celebrity performer at the event always attracts more attention.

The sponsor can have a banner at the bottom of the screen throughout the performance. This way, the sponsor gets their visibility. The performer can also be asked to give a special mention to the sponsor and event.

Create a hashtag for entertainment as they are the best way to attract attention and create visibility on social media. You can ask the audience to share the same.

18. Games

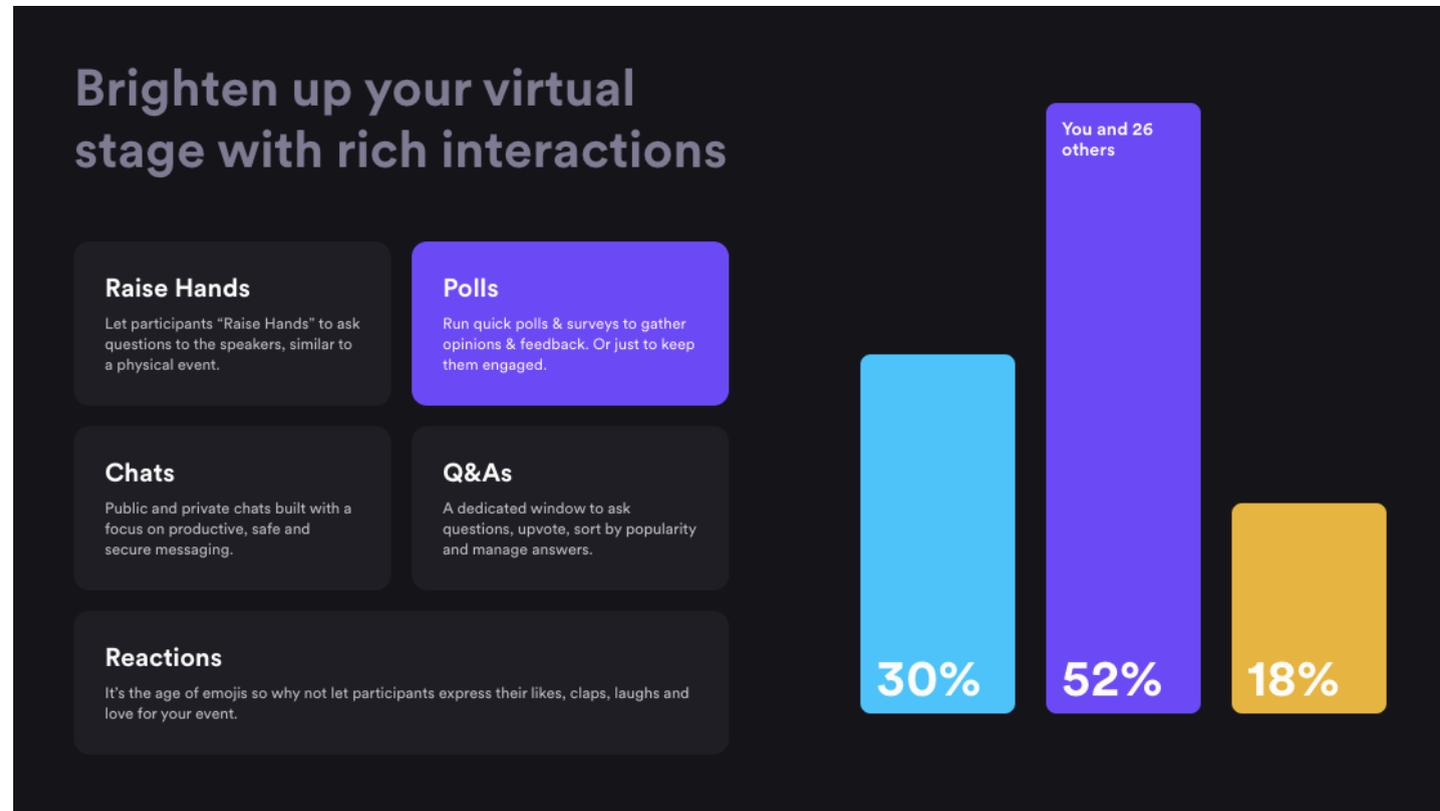
Games are an interactive and enjoyable way of engaging with your attendees even before the event.

They also give your sponsors excellent visibility and time with the audience.

Apart from higher levels of engagement, they also offer networking opportunities, greater brand awareness and better participation in the overall event.

Create something new, exciting and engage your audience. Again designing a game is a joint effort between the sponsor and the organiser. Some gaming ideas include interactive trivia, quizzes, polls or something even as simple as a puzzle.

With Airmeet's interactive features, taking up quizzes and polls to engage your audience is a smooth ride.



19. Use The Magical Word — "Offers"

There would be hardly any living soul who doesn't get excited by the word "offers". Discounts and offers are always welcome and attract people.

Here are some ways to set up some sponsor deals for your attendees:

- **Click on ads:** Attendees can be prompted to click and view ads. Each viewed ad reduces the cost of the event ticket. It increases engagement between the participant and the sponsor.
- **Buy and get free:** You can offer attendees to buy the sponsored product, to be able to attend the event for free. It works well if your ticket prices are priced more than the product or its subscription.
- **Discounted rates:** Those who attend the event get an instant discount on a select products range.
- **Gifts:** Surprise the attendees on the day of the event. Apart from the swag bag give them a gift on the day of the event. The gift could be small but should be meaningful.

20. Sponsor-Attendee Interaction

Before your event, you send an exclusive email to your attendee, asking them if they would like to engage with the sponsor on a 1:1 basis.

This engagement could be a product demo, a free health or wellness session, some financial planning advice.

Pro-tip: The engagement should be meaningful and of value to the attendee.

If your participant agrees to the interaction, the sponsor contacts them and sets up a meeting in their calendar. This way, your sponsor get some quality interaction time.

Also, the attendee would have gained something valuable and acquired some knowledge—a win-win for both parties.

21. VIP Access

Time to make your audience feel special.

Most stores offer previews of sale to premium customers. Similarly, you can also design some premium offers and access for your attendees. Of course, this will all be courtesy your sponsor.

The first criteria in the VIP access would be to select the attendees. They could be winners of contests, first 20 registrants, most event ad watchers etc. You need to decide this criterion first. Once you have identified this group of attendees, offer them something exclusive.

- **VIP lounge:** The selected attendees get access to this VIP lounge. This group can also get some exclusive time with the speakers.
- **Meet the brand ambassador:** If your sponsor has a celebrity brand ambassador, time to leverage that as well. Your VIP attendees get to meet the celebrity brand ambassador.
- **Upgradation:** If your attendees have purchased a product from the sponsor, these select few can be given a free upgrade.

Make this VIP group feel special and in each step of their VIP access, ensure that the sponsor has visibility too. Apart from visibility in the event, the VIP treatment will gain the sponsor some loyal customers or leads with whom they can follow-up after the event.

22. Post-Event Engagement

The attendee-sponsor interaction does not need to end once the central part of the event is done.

Post the event also there are opportunities for your sponsor to be given some screen presence. Listed below are some of the ways.

- **Q&A:** If you have planned a Q&A session, you can have your sponsor's logo or banner throughout the session.
- **Polls:** Post-event polls are standard. Here again, you can include the sponsor's logo. A better option would be to let the sponsor have a poll of their own. This will help them engage personally with the audience.
- **End credits:** Do not forget to thank your sponsor in the end credit. Include their logo or some other relevant images to make it more visually appealing.
- **Thank you mails:** It is the norm for organisers to send a mail thanking all the audience. Once again mention your sponsor. You could also include some links to information or a video that the sponsor would like to share with the attendees.

These are some ways where you can engage your event financier even after the event.

23. Appreciate their Support Post-Event



Upload your sessions to a video management platform embedding the links on your website and share it with your sponsors.

Consider gating this content to continue driving leads even after your virtual event is over.

Appreciate their participation and connect with them for any questions or feedback.

The key to keeping event sponsors is to deliver what you have promised and foster an ongoing relationship even after the event is over.

24. Conclusion

It is evident from the above that there is no shortage of techniques to include your sponsor in the event.

Whatever be your choice of technique, ensure that it is cohesive with the entire event. Ensure that it does not look like something that has been inserted for the sake of doing so.

Blend your sponsor with the event, ensure that the information coming from them is of value to the audience and do not go overboard in giving your sponsor their space and time.

Organise your event and manage your sponsors with these tips and you will have a happy sponsor who would like to associate with you again.



Host fantastic events, *virtually*

www.airmeet.com