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The Art of Selling Sponsorships

REAL Training for Association Leaders
September 2025



Why Sponsorships Matter

- Declining reliance on selling speakers
- Sponsorships = recurring non-dues revenue
- Stronger, more predictable financial base
- Q: How much of your group's revenue comes from sponsors now?

Pricing Based on Audience Size & Reach

- Bigger audience = higher potential sponsorship revenue
- 40 people in a room \neq 200 people in a room
- 40 rehabbers in a room might be BETTER than 200 people in a room
- BUT quality > quantity (serious buyers matter)
- Q: How many qualified buyers do you consistently reach?

Pricing Based on Benefits offered

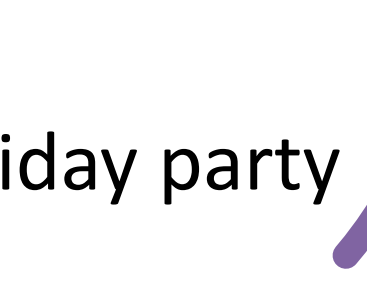
What benefits COULD we offer to sponsors that they value?

- Speak at a meeting—even if on a panel
- Speak at an appropriate focus group
- Do a “pop up” or “lunch and learn” online
- Exclusive sponsorship of a social event (with time to speak)
- Emails to the whole list for sponsor event/special/offer
- Social media shout-outs (if you have a big following)

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Pricing Based on Benefits offered

What benefits COULD we offer to sponsors that they value?

- Speaking room at your trade show
 - Carved out time at your haves and wants meeting
 - Talk during lunch at a relevant Saturday meeting
 - Prime table at your meeting or trade show
 - Exclusive sponsorship of holiday party (with 5 minutes to speak)
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- Four short, curved purple lines in the bottom right corner of the slide.

A blurred background image showing a business meeting. Several people in professional attire are gathered around a table, looking at documents and devices. A hand is visible pointing at a tablet screen in the foreground.

Matching the Right Sponsors to the Right Levels

- High-margin businesses (hard money, property managers):
 - Can justify \$5k–\$10k+ for premium access
- Thin-margin businesses (staging, inspectors):
 - Better for lower tiers or event-only options

Q: Who in your group is over/underpriced right now?

How to Price Sponsor Packages

- Tiered levels (Gold/Silver/Bronze)
- À la carte add-ons (tables, emails, ads)
- Event-specific vs. annual packages
- Value-based pricing (worth to vendor, not your costs)

Who Should Sell Sponsorships?

- Executive director or staff
- Volunteer committee
- Paid contractor (commission/retainer)
- Commission models: 10–20% of sales
- Key: track, report, and reward results



Who Should SERVICE Sponsorships?

- It needs to be SOMEONE...don't promise what it would be hard to deliver

How to Sell Higher- Dollar Packages

- Sponsors want RESULTS, not just logos
- Offer warm intros, speaking slots, hosted lunches
- Bundle: annual + expo + digital exposure
- Premium packages: \$5k–\$15k+ are possible



Case Studies & Brainstorming

- The group that auctioned off the \$19,000 annual sponsorship

Key Takeaways

- Stop undervaluing your exposure
 - Decide who sells and how they're compensated
 - Match sponsor type + audience size to package level
 - Get bold about pricing and packaging
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- Action item: Pick ONE change to your sponsorship program before renewals