



# EVENT SPONSORSHIP PLAYBOOK 2.1

*10 Event Sponsorship Mistakes and  
How to Avoid Them*

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# Make Events Your Secret to Success!

Welcome to the world of event sponsorship!

Sponsoring an event that attracts your ideal prospects is an excellent way to increase the visibility of your product or service.

In an environment designed to help people in your industry connect, you can share your expertise and build relationships with attendees.

In this guide, you'll discover the common mistakes event sponsors make. However, with a little planning, you can avoid these mistakes and use your event sponsorship to connect with attendees before, during, and after the event.

Whether you're manning a booth with a product demonstration or investing in a turnkey sponsorship, the tips and tactics in this guide will help you set goals and develop high-quality leads.

I hope this guide helps you get the most from your next event sponsorship. And if you like this guide, please share it with your colleagues!

Best,

Emily Crume, Director of Strategy  
Social Media Examiner and Social Media Marketing World

# 10 Event Sponsorship Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Do you sponsor trade shows or events to promote your business? Looking for planning tips to boost your success?

Presenting your solution at the right conferences is hard work, and following a few dos and don'ts can help you achieve a return on your investment.

In this list, you learn about the biggest mistakes companies make when they sponsor events and how to lay the groundwork for a successful event sponsorship.

## Mistake #1: You Did Not Begin with the End in Mind

Nothing sets a sponsor up for failure faster than having no purpose and no plan. Just showing up at an event without doing homework on the agenda, the attendees, and the overall focus is a huge mistake. Don't just show up and throw up your booth. You need to know what you want to achieve.

To get the most from an event, you need to do strategic planning. Put success metrics in place and make sure your goals are specific, measurable, and achievable. For example, many businesses sponsor events to generate leads, showcase products, meet influencers, and sell, so your metrics might be related to those goals.



For help mapping out what a successful event looks like for you, check out this **sponsor playbook** we created to help you achieve your ideal event outcome.

## Mistake #2: You Haven't Clearly Identified Your Ideal Target

When you don't know who your buyer is, you risk sponsoring the wrong event or reaching out to the wrong people at the right event. The attendees might not truly match up with the persona you need to reach. Or you might target the C-suite merely because it's convenient.

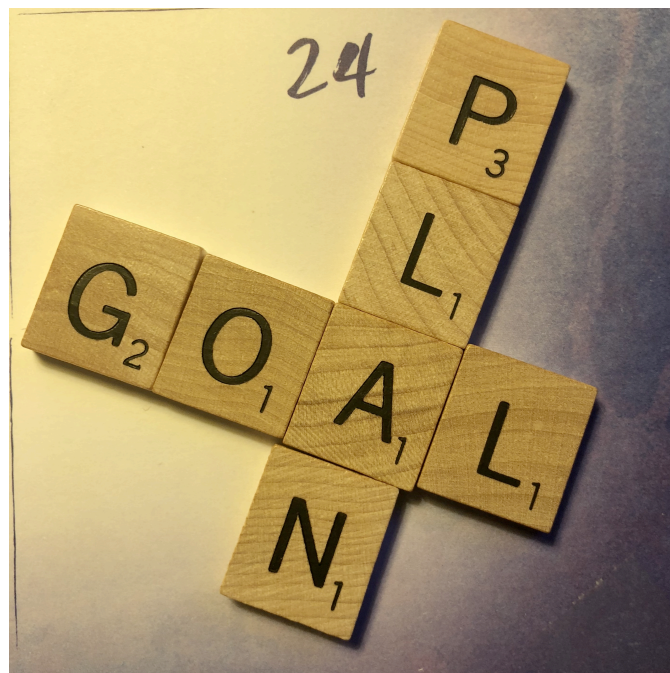
Instead, take time to understand the complex sphere of influence that puts your product on the short list for purchase.

For example, at Social Media Marketing World, social video service providers like sponsoring the event because it puts them in touch with marketers looking to employ visual marketing into their mix. Similarly, social media management suites like that our event puts them in touch with actual practitioners who help their company decide which new products the company will use.

To identify the right event for your business to sponsor, develop a buyer persona and then make sure the event attendees fit that persona.

To learn about an event and their attendees, look for an informational page that helps sponsors (like this one for Social Media Marketing World). You can typically find this information on the event website.

Look for a section dedicated to sponsors and the different ways the event helps connect sponsors to prospective buyers.





### **Mistake #3: You Haven't Created a Marketing Plan Specific to the Event**

An event-specific marketing plan is the most important part of sponsoring an event. Without one, you're not on the radar of attendees who may overlook your booth or not connect your company with their needs in favor of sponsors whose names they recognize.

You may also be tempted to arrive with generic marketing or sales material that doesn't align with your goals for the event sponsorship.

To successfully sponsor an event, you need to extend your general marketing by including activities that promote your presence at the event. These might include online advertising, printed promotions, giveaways, demos, and lead capture. Hosting a party or dinner can also be a great way to get closer to customers and prospects.



**Put a plan together and share it with your sales team**

### **Mistake #4: You Didn't Put Yourself in the Attendees' Shoes**

When you don't think about the event from the attendees' perspective, connecting with them can be more difficult.

To improve the chances attendees will gravitate to you, think about the most inviting way to reach out and engage at an event. A warm and welcoming experience can attract people to your booth and make your exhibit stand out.

For example, to make your booth come alive, give attendees a reason to stop by. A fun contest, raffle, or valuable giveaway can help you start finding valuable leads.



## Mistake #5: Your Booth Doesn't Have a Clear Call to Action

When your booth doesn't give prospective customers an action they can take, it becomes difficult to measure results.

Make sure your plan includes a clear action for attendees to take. Then, after the event, you can continue to nurture the prospects who took action.

For most sponsors, the key is to offer attendees valuable information and then ask for their contact information so you can nurture them toward making a purchase. When your information is helpful, people want to keep hearing from you.

You might offer a product demo that explains how your product solves a common problem or otherwise showcases your value. If you do a demo, make sure you have a canned demo as well as a live one in case the event Wi-Fi goes out.

You can also offer a lead lure, such as a limited-time special offer only for attendees, which can help you capture leads.



## Mistake #6: You Aren't Using Social Media to Amplify Your Presence

When you don't promote your presence at the event, you miss the chance to connect with prospects and build buzz for your product before, during, and after the event.

Customers and prospects use social media to get recommendations and spread the word about something they love! You want them to be recommending and talking about your product.

To help make these conversations happen, you can connect with the conference on all social channels and activate your brand alongside the event hashtag.

Create a #hashtag to go along with your activation and create a live contest on-site!



You can even extend your sponsorship beyond the event walls by promoting a special offer with a short link on social media.

Then, people who can't attend the event but are watching on social can get involved with your brand or special offer.

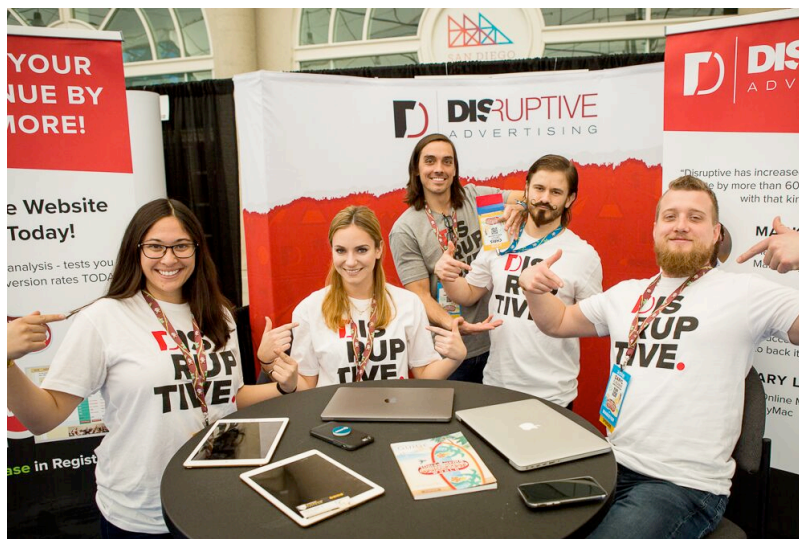


## Mistake #7: You Don't Set Clear Expectations for Your Team

When your team isn't sure what you expect, they'll have a hard time meeting your goals.

This mistake can happen when marketing makes the arrangements and then sends salespeople to man the booth. Unless that sales team finds value in hunting for new customers, they may be more interested in the purchase orders coming through their phones than engaging with event attendees.

To avoid this issue, make sure the right personnel are in place and everyone understands and agrees upon the goals.



## Mistake #8: You Didn't Do Your Homework About the Event Schedule

When you don't understand the schedule, your team can be out of sync with the event and miss opportunities.

For example, if the booth team is late to breakfast at the event, your booth might go unmanned while attendees are milling around talking to sponsors. Or you might want to attend some sessions, but you don't have adequate manpower to show the demo at the booth.

As you plan your event sponsorship, make sure you study the schedule and take into account when the team needs to be present.

Also, make sure to schedule time for your team to rest, eat, and take breaks. Standing on your feet all day can be exhausting.

## Mistake #9: You Expect People to Buy on the Spot

Conversion is complicated. And unless your product sells for a reasonable price, there may need to be corporate buy-in for that sale to occur.

Having a compelling offer to buy on the spot can help speed up the buying cycle, but if your product costs more than a few hundred dollars, the purchase may not happen during the event.



Make sure you have a plan to follow up with interested attendees to further cement the sale. Know the competitive landscape, and ask what it would take to make a switch from their current solution.

## Mistake #10: You Don't Have an Action Plan After the Event Ends



Without a plan to follow after the show is over, you might struggle to understand and communicate your success to your team or management. You can also miss opportunities to build upon the connections you made at the event.

Knowing that you achieved what you wanted to achieve goes back to Mistake #1. You must have a clear plan to measure success.

Making a plan and monitoring and analyzing your metrics will give you the data and insights to calculate success and return on your investment.

To maximize the information you capture at the event, insure that sales and marketing have clearly defined roles for following up on leads.

For example, you might input leads into a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for further qualification and send an email thanking them for visiting your booth at the event.

What do you think? Have you made any of these mistakes? What fixes would you add?

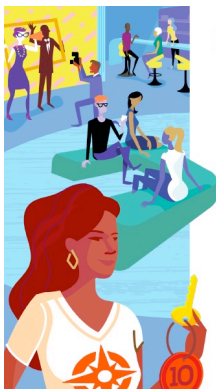
# Focus on Your Goals and Audience to Succeed

When you understand the goals for your event sponsorship, you can develop an event-specific marketing plan and call to action for your booth. Then, by understanding your ideal customer and viewing the event from their perspective, you can connect with valuable prospects.

When you combine effective planning with a keen understanding of your audience, your follow-up plan will put you on the path toward event-sponsorship success!

## More Resources:

Building a smart, measurable, and achievable action plan is where you always want to begin. For more on goals, see our **Sponsor Playbook** from July 2017.



### EVENT SPONSORSHIP PLAYBOOK 2.0

*Secrets to Event  
Success on a Budget*

SEPTEMBER 2018

BY EMILY CRUME

Turnkey sponsorships can make a splash at industry events and help extend your reach without breaking the budget. For more ideas, see our **Sponsor Playbook 2.0** from September 2018.



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Let us know if we can help you create a successful sponsorship at Social Media Marketing World. Email [emily@socialmediaexaminer.com](mailto:emily@socialmediaexaminer.com).



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