30 Sponsorship Ideas for Virtual Events

As COVID-19 has shown us, many traditional "go-to" sponsorships and standard exhibit booths have mostly evaporated. While understandable, organizers have been merely scrambling to keep up with the changes in an uncertain and ever-changing landscape. As events transition to virtual options, many have started to ask about potential sponsorship ideas.

In partnership with the Exhibit Marketers Café, we have compiled a list to get you started.

Social Opportunities

Virtual Happy Hours
An exhibitor or sponsor invites attendees to sign-up and agree to opt-in to their communications (leads!) and provide them a mailing address (a contact list)! Prior to the event, the sponsors can mail them drink-related swag or items. For example, branded glassware, drink mixes, snacks/food, reusable straws, digital music gift card, etc. The exhibitor then sends a calendar invite with a link to whatever platform they choose to host the event. These networking opportunities can also be themed.

Break Sponsor(s)
At various points throughout the event, incorporate full-screen advertisements or videos highlighting your exhibitors’ or sponsors’ products or services.

Food Delivery
Just because attendees are tuning in from home does not mean you can't provide them something to eat! Sponsors can pay to have gift cards or actual food items delivered to the attendees on the day of your event. (One caveat – this mean attendees likey need to share their home address, which some may not choose to do.)

Virtual Games
Attendees participate in a group game, like trivia, puzzles or a virtual scavenger hunt.

Thought Leadership

Virtual Roundtables on Hot Topics
Allow exhibitors or sponsors to have one of their experts host a pre-planned topic chat for 15-30 minutes.

Consulting Coffee Talks
Exhibitors and sponsors can offer and host group or individual consulting sessions to provide free consulting opportunities.

Exhibitor Office Hours
These defined time occasions can act much like dedicated show floor hours where attendees "drop in" to an exhibitor’s office (via Zoom, Webex or other video conferencing software) to meet with company representatives.

Behind-the-Scenes with Speakers
Sponsor hosts a backstage chat with the keynote speaker.
Pre-or-Post Event Lead Lists
Opt-In lead lists can provide extreme value for your exhibitors and sponsors.

Social Media Sponsorship
Include sponsors (and shout-outs) in your digital marketing efforts.

Registration Survey Question
Selling a survey question during registration can be highly valuable data to an exhibitor or sponsors.

Interactive Poll/Q&A Sponsorship
Creating branded sponsorship or hosting of these popular attendee engagement tools is a win for both audiences.

Virtual Swag/Goodie Bags
Let sponsors provide exclusive promotions, discounts, gift cards, or free trial offers. Then assemble all sponsor offers into a "bundle" and send it out in an e-mail or post on a protected web page.

Branded Giveaways
Send sponsor-branded items such as drinkware or t-shirts out before the event in a VIP gift box. Then host a social media contest for attendees to share photos with the items and the event hashtag.

Attendee Care Package
Assemble items that show attendees you and your sponsors care about them and their welfare, such as hand lotion, tea, aromatherapy candle, eye mask, etc.

Virtual Store
Let sponsors sell products from their eCommerce site linked out from your event or their online profiles.

Banner Ads
Whether in email communications (newsletters) or on your website, banner ads are great way to feature your sponsors.

Login Screens
A login page for your virtual experience is a page that every attendee will see (many days in row) and it is extremely valuable real estate.

Website Ads
Your event website is a perfect opportunity to highlight some of your most valuable sponsors as part of your ecosystem.

Floor Plan Ads
Many are offering virtual show floors so do not forget this prime real estate as another opportunity to showcase exhibitor logos.

Mobile Push Notifications
Attendees of virtual events are only a click, tab or tap away from distraction. Mobile-based SMS messages provide needed reminders to participate and can include important messages from your premiere sponsors and exhibitors.

AR/VR
Augmented and Virtual Reality experiences are another opportunity for attendees to experience everything from a factory tour to behind the scenes or 3D demo.

Email Marketing Inclusion
Including ads, mentions or links to content from your sponsors in your email marketing efforts can connect your audiences with your most valued companies.

Gamification
Creating knowledge hunts or ways to engage attendees and exhibitors is critical (and fun)!
Brand Awareness

Zoom/Webinar Backgrounds
Much like a step-and-repeat background for photos, don’t forget this valuable space behind each of your speakers or presenters.

Sponsor Presentation Slides/Transitions
Never miss an opportunity to showcase an exhibitor or sponsor logo between sessions, speakers or slides. Also, do not forget to include contact information for that company so people may contact them.

Online Agenda Sponsors
Content and programming is always a top driver for online attendance. Take the opportunity to feature your sponsors and exhibitors with a logo or ad for increased visibility.

Virtual Offers
Every sponsor or exhibitor may have something to offer your attendees. Examples include an hour of consulting time, discounted coupons, free tickets, etc.

Virtual Event Tickets
Allow your exhibitors to purchase or provide free or discounted tickets if your organization charges for the event.

Branded Breakout Session Rooms
These sponsors can have their logo featured in the session slides or play a pre-session video.

Virtual Events Resources
Personify continues to develop tools to help you navigate virtual events. Below are just a few of the growing library.

Quick Start Guide to Planning Virtual Events
Virtual Expo Thesaurus
Virtual Events Engagement Calculator

On-Demand Webinars:
Future Proof Your Events
Engagement 365: Communities for Events and Conferences
Onboard New Event Tech

Want more?
Visit our virtual events resource page.

About Exhibit Marketers Café

There’s no shortage of information about exhibit marketing. But much of it never goes beyond the surface, and nearly all of it stops short of giving you the actual tools you need to take action. In the Exhibit Marketers Café, we provide you with training, support, and opportunities to connect with both industry experts and your peers.

Want to see our virtual events solutions in action? Schedule a demo today!