



How to Generate

Digital Sponsorship

Revenue in 2021



feathr.co



foreword

This book has everything you need to amp up your sponsorship strategy in 2021 and beyond. Get ready for a close look at all of the ways you can leverage digital sponsorships.

We'll start with some common tactics you might already be using and then zoom into sponsored retargeting.

You'll learn how to earn back any sponsor revenue you might have lost in recent months and how to offer more competitive sponsorship packages – all while creating a reliable new revenue stream for your organization.

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Why associations and events need digital sponsorships

"We don't just focus on selling this around events. It's a year-round thing. It allows clients to reach our audience 12 months of the year instead of two days of the year.

This has been particularly significant in the very changed world we are currently living in."

Haydn Williams

Senior Marketing Manager - Clarion Gaming

[SEE THEIR SUCCESS STORY](#)

Earning “found money” through sponsorships

You know that feeling when you find cash you didn't even know you had in an old pair of jeans? Pretty great right? And the best part is that all you really had to do was reach in and grab it. Let's be clear though, it's **your** money. So even if finding it felt easy, you put in all the work that led up to that pleasant surprise.

Let's look at sponsorships in the same way. You work hard all year round to provide your audience with educational benefits, networking opportunities, certifications and events – and you end up with loyal followers that look to you as an industry thought leader and content source. When sponsors and exhibitors in your industry see this perfectly curated audience of yours, they want access to it – and they're willing to pay a pretty penny to get it. Selling sponsorships is essentially earning “found money” – you already put in the effort, and now you can reach into your pockets and pull out the cash.

Now, all of this might sound obvious. You know how sponsorships work. You've probably been running them for years. But in order to get the greatest possible value out of your sponsorships **today**, you have to understand how valuable your audience truly is, and how you can leverage it in even more powerful ways for both you and your sponsors.

Moving from traditional to digital

There's no denying it – sponsors and exhibitors will always care about real-time activations that engage fans before, during and after an event. In-person event sponsorships are an extremely powerful channel because:

- ▶ Attendees have spent time and money to be at the event, meaning they are part of a niche, highly engaged audience that will likely be interested in what sponsors and exhibitors have to offer.
- ▶ Sponsors and exhibitors can make a more personalized and immediate impact, create memorable moments throughout the event, and in some cases speak directly with attendees.



● Sponsor signage at the South Beach Food and Wine Festival – a traditional live event held annually.

With that being said, people are spending a lot more time online nowadays, which means that ***the most valuable asset that you own is your digital audience***. As your audience members shift nearly all of their focus to social media, online news sources, online shopping and more, you and your sponsors have the chance to capture their attention across all of those sites and platforms.

You might be thinking, “Sure, maybe digital sponsorships are important right now because so many in-person events are on pause, but they won’t be a top priority once things go back to normal.”

If that sounds familiar, think again. Digital sponsorships have been delivering results since long before COVID-19 affected the events industry, so if you’re not on board yet, then why not use events being on pause as an excuse to get caught up? And the best part is that when in-person events do come back in full force, you will have added in this excellent new source of revenue that you can maintain all year round as part of a multi-channel sponsorship offering.

**Don’t get
us wrong:
COVID-19
is definitely
a reason to
offer digital
sponsorships.**

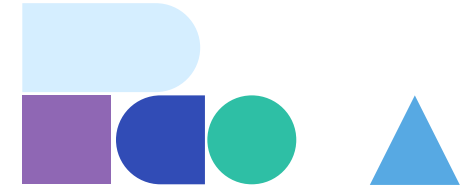
There are three game-changing factors to keep in mind in the midst of all of the recent shifts due to COVID-19:

You aren't the only one in your industry having to cancel events or switch to virtual.

All of your peers and competitors are doing the same thing. This means that your sponsors and exhibitors can't just go elsewhere to find what they're looking for. They're still heavily relying on you for brand awareness, lead generation and thought leadership opportunities, and it's up to you to pivot your offerings to fit those needs.

Due to social distancing, everyone is spending a lot more time online now.

Since March 2020, there were spikes as high as 50-70 percent in time spent online, and these rates have consistently stayed at or above 20 percent more time spent online than historically*.



Other traditional B2B marketing channels that your sponsors and exhibitors might have been leveraging before are no longer available or as effective.

With widespread event cancellation, there are fewer opportunities to sponsor or exhibit at in-person conferences and trade shows. Furthermore, with so many people still working from home, it's less viable to send direct mail or print publications to offices, and cold calling becomes less effective.

This just brings us back around to the first point, which is that your sponsors and exhibitors still have very clear needs, and they're counting on you to offer an option that meets their needs. (Spoiler alert: it's digital sponsorships)

* Source: www.forbes.com/sites/markbeech/2020/03/25/covid-19-pushes-up-internet-use-70-streaming-more-than-12-first-figures-reveal

How your organization is built for digital

We've talked about how you and your sponsors have to meet audience members where they are across the web. The next thing to note – and this is why digital sponsorships are **so** powerful – is that your audience isn't just live event attendees. It also includes:

Previous years' attendees

Active members

Former members

Social media followers

Website visitors

Newsletter subscribers

And more...



You've curated a large audience of people with a clear need for what you offer, which makes them more likely to be interested in hearing what your sponsors have to offer. The level of intent here is much higher than if your sponsors were to run their own Facebook, LinkedIn or Google ad campaigns.

In other words, your audience is one of the highest-quality audiences that a sponsor in your space could have access to, and there's no other way for them to get that level of exposure unless you offer it to them. So whether you're selling sponsored retargeting, on-site ads, email blasts, or some combination of these, what you are really offering is reliable exposure to an audience that is much more likely to convert – and that is something brands are always willing to invest their marketing dollars in.



Common types of digital sponsorships

Many associations and events are already going digital...sort of. When you hear that you need to get more digital with your sponsorship offerings, do you ever find yourself saying (or thinking) anything along these lines?

- ▶ “We place our sponsors’ logos on our site and sometimes at the bottom of email communications. Does that count?”
- ▶ “Our sponsors sometimes ask us ‘what’s new in digital’ but we never really have a great answer and don’t have the time to do more...”
- ▶ “Digital sponsorships are just an add-on in some of our proposals, but they’re not a priority for us right now.”

If any of that resonates, don’t worry – you’re not alone. A lot of organizations think that if they’re offering some form of digital sponsorships, they are ahead of the game.

The problem is that your sponsors need broader and more trackable exposure in order to keep up with their competitors, and they’re relying on you to offer them more powerful ways to get in front of your audience.

You might already be running these types of digital sponsorships:

- ▶ Sponsored email blasts or exclusive email content
- ▶ Logos or sponsored banner ads on your main website

We'll go deeper on the pros and cons of each of those in the next chapter, but we'll be focusing mostly on ***sponsored retargeting***.

Sponsored retargeting lets you leverage the value of your digital audience in ways that far exceed the impact and results of other types of digital sponsorships. It's about offering your sponsors access to your audience members wherever they are on the web through highly effective and measurable ad campaigns.

Up next, we'll go into the importance of having a multi-channel approach for sponsors, along with the benefits and limitations of these main types of digital sponsorships and why sponsored retargeting is standing out as the winner.



Why sponsored retargeting is the winning solution



Are your sponsors getting exactly what they need?

Previously we talked about how associations and industry events are perfectly built to reap the benefits of digital sponsorships. You've curated an audience that is deeply interested in what you have to offer, and therefore more likely to be interested in what your sponsors have to offer, too.

While there's no doubt that some level of access to your audience is better than none, nowadays sponsors want more than just exposure. They expect the right kind of exposure to the right audiences – and they want data to back it all up.

Many organizations have started to pick up some forms of digital sponsorships, like email marketing and on-site banner ads – both great starting points. But there are also substantial limitations that come with these types of sponsorships as the Internet becomes more saturated and it gets harder to control what your audience is actually seeing.

Before we get into how sponsored retargeting addresses a lot of these concerns, let's take a look at the benefits and limitations of sending sponsored email blasts and displaying sponsored ads on your own site.

Sponsored Email Blasts

Benefits: Everyone understands it

Segmentation potential

Very measurable

Essentially free

Limitations: Inbox clutter for recipients

No guarantee they ever open the email

One-time sends have minimal impact; you need multiple sends to deliver real value, but this isn't feasible when you're serving multiple sponsors

Very limited "inventory" to sell (e.g., limited spots in email newsletters)

On-Site Sponsored Ads

Benefits: Most people understand it

Very measurable

Limitations: Limited segmentation potential; only way is to put specific ads on specific pages, so people are seeing ones that correspond with pages they're looking at, but there are limitations to this)

Very limited "inventory" to sell (i.e., limited spots on site for ad placement)

No guarantee that the right people will see the ads; they have to go to the site or to a specific page on the site, and this is hard to control

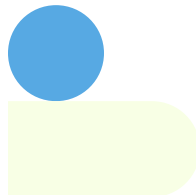
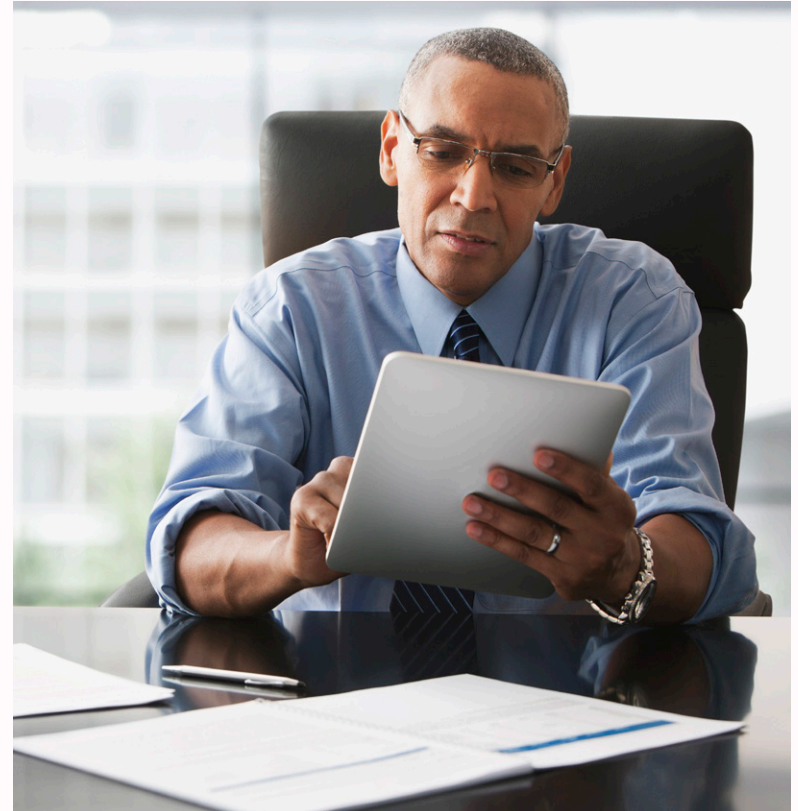
Can't guarantee impact; even if someone sees an on-site ad one or two times, it's unlikely to be enough to convert them

Unfortunately, many organizations are seeing low returns on these types of digital sponsorships, and there's a pretty simple explanation: the digital advertising packages just aren't compelling enough.

Think about it from the perspective of the sponsor. They pay for an ad package. Ads are placed for some amount of time – on your site, in an email, in sponsored content. People see that along with a half-dozen ads from other advertisers. Then it's over. That's not very compelling.

Sponsors might still buy a package like that because of the influential power of the association or event, but the package itself is underwhelming. So what else is there to offer your sponsors?

You can offer them sponsored retargeting.



- ▲ Organizations have something very valuable to offer to their sponsors: access to a highly-qualified audience. With retargeting, those audiences can still be reached — outside of events and throughout the year.

Why you should offer sponsored retargeting

For starters, let's do a quick recap on what retargeting actually is.

You know when an item you just looked at on an e-commerce site like Amazon follows you around the web? Or, in a broader sense, when an advertisement you saw on a website or in an app was speaking directly to your specific needs and interests?

That's retargeting in a nutshell. Google and Facebook have built multi-billion dollar empires on exactly this – putting the right ad in front of the right person at the right time, wherever they are online. There's a good chance you're already doing some retargeting for your own marketing purposes.

Now, imagine if you could offer your sponsors the ability to retarget your audience with **their** ads. You already know that your partners want to get in front of your audience. That's why they exhibit at your events and buy up sponsorship inventory wherever they can find it: tote bags, signage, email blasts, newsletters, journals...you name it.

With sponsored retargeting, you can sell your partners exactly what they want – sustained and strategic exposure to your audience across virtually all of the brand-safe consumer web.

That means that your partners don't get exposure to your audience only when they visit your website. With sponsored retargeting, they get exposure to your audience members **wherever they are online**.

So when an audience member visits your website, Facebook, CNN.com, and then ESPN.com, your sponsor's ads follow them along the entire way – increasing their likelihood of responding by almost 150 percent*.

That's legitimate value to offer your sponsor – and legitimate value that they will see.

There's also a huge advantage for you, since you can sell significantly more sponsored retargeting packages than any other kind of digital sponsorship.

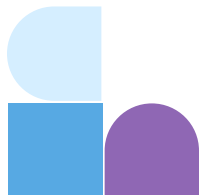
* Source: www.signifimedia.com.au/blog/2020-07-13-10-remarketing-statistics-you-need-to-be-aware-of-in-2020

How many on-site display packages can you sell while still guaranteeing compelling impression numbers for each advertiser? Not that many.

And how many sponsored emails can you sell before your audience tunes you out or unsubscribes? Even fewer.

On the other hand, how many sponsored retargeting packages can you sell, when the inventory for the ad placement is made up of 95 percent of all consumer websites? So many that you'll never hit the ceiling. You've got a more compelling product to offer advertisers and virtually endless inventory to sell.

And to top it off, in a world where live events are largely on pause and organizations are scrambling to make up as much sponsor revenue as possible, this uncapped inventory of sponsored retargeting – and therefore the number of packages you can sell – is critical.



By offering sponsored retargeting and expanding their digital offerings in 2020, Clarion Gaming found a clever way to make up for lost revenue in 2020 and to continue to serve their industry and help their partners.

Sponsored Retargeting

Benefits:

More “inventory” to sell

No increase in clutter

Guaranteed sustained multi-touch exposure

Segmentation potential based on behavior of targets

Highly measurable

90-95 percent profit margin

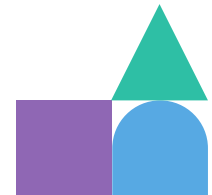
Limitations:

Lack of familiarity on the part of sales reps and sponsors/exhibitors

Luckily, this lack of familiarity is changing as people learn more about ad retargeting in general, and that’s why we’re creating content like this – to help you understand how your organization can earn that “found money” we talked about in chapter one.

With sponsored retargeting, you can create modern, multi-channel packages for sponsors that still include other digital offerings like email blasts and on-site ads as well as traditional sponsorships once in-person events are back in full swing.

In the next chapter, we’ll be discussing some ways to package and sell sponsored retargeting, tackling some common objections that you might hear from sponsors, and showing a couple of sample campaigns and creatives.





How to package and sell sponsored retargeting

- INDUSTRY ADVICE -

"There are two pieces to selling.

One, you have to teach people what retargeting is, which we do by utilizing the media kit and creating marketing email campaigns promoting the opportunity.

And two, we really listen to our exhibitors to see what their goals are, and we tailor our communications to that.

Is there a certain message they want to get across? Are they trying to get people to a certain website? It's about helping sponsors understand how retargeting will work for them and then executing that well."

Carmen Valls Beck, MBA, HMCC

Director of Resource Development, Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS)

[SEE THEIR SUCCESS STORY](#)

Knowing how to talk to your sponsors

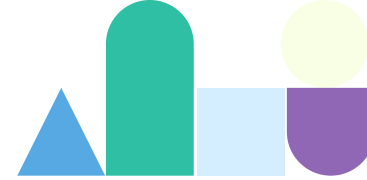
There are a lot of reasons to offer sponsored retargeting, especially these days with so many events being canceled or going virtual. We'll go deeper into specific applications in chapter four, but first let's talk about how you can go about leveraging sponsored retargeting.

The key is knowing your audience and your sponsors.

Armed with this information, you'll be able to segment your audience into more targeted groups and create custom packages that fit each sponsor's unique needs.

Once you start selling digital sponsorships, you'll quickly find that most sponsors can be placed into one of these two categories: digitally savvy and **not** digitally savvy. There are pros and cons to each type in terms of selling them on sponsored retargeting, and understanding those nuances can help you close more deals.

Here are some important points to keep in mind when pitching to a sponsor:



For a sponsor that is digitally savvy

(e.g. a more sophisticated SMB or a brand that works with a digital marketing agency)

- ▶ If they're running their own ad targeting campaigns, they will already know how powerful retargeting is, which saves you the step of having to sell them on the concept itself.
- ▶ They will understand that the only way to get in front of the best leads is to get in front of audiences like yours, and that the only way to reach your audience is if you give them access.
- ▶ They will know how they can align sponsored retargeting with other campaigns and assets they are already leveraging, like landing pages and special offers.

For a sponsor that is not digitally savvy

- ▶ Be sure to emphasize that these are powerful campaigns that you are running for them. They are trusting you to put their ads in front of the right people, and you can even offer to design the ads for them to further prove the value of the sponsorship.
- ▶ You're helping them leverage best practices in marketing and tech that are beyond their reach, so they don't have to spend time and resources to become savvy. Their lack of knowledge can be an advantage, since it means that they're relying fully on you to provide them with this modern, innovative tactic.

Segmenting your audience for optimal targeting

Let's start by thinking about the most traditional form of an event sponsorship, where a sponsor or exhibitor would expect to have access to the people who attend your live event, whether that's through ads in event brochures, booth space, sponsored parties or anything else. When in-person activations work, they really work – but they're still limited to the confines of the event itself, and they rely heavily on attendees being engaged enough to notice all of these other brands.

It goes without saying that the advent of digital sponsorships has opened up ways for sponsors to target more than just the people who literally set foot in your event venue. For example, with sponsored email blasts and on-site sponsored ads, you can allow sponsors to not only access live attendees but also potential attendees or registrants leading up to the event as well as afterward.

But like we talked about in chapter two, there are limitations here in terms of how far you can reach with these types of digital sponsorships. And as more events are going virtual in

2021, associations and event organizers are looking for ways to give sponsors broader and more reliable access to their digital audience members before, during and after events.

With sponsored retargeting, you can provide sponsors with virtually limitless reach – but campaigns will be a lot more effective if you're precise in your segmentation.


Generally, it's easiest to create a few segments and then use those appropriately depending on what a sponsor is looking for or how much they're willing to pay.



Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) sent a simple email to let sponsors and exhibitors know they could retarget PAS' audience members all year round.

Here's a standard breakdown that might be helpful for thinking about your own audience:

- ▶ People who are registered to attend your event
- ▶ Anyone who has visited your event website
- ▶ Anyone who has visited any of your web properties (e.g., your main site, landing pages, event page, etc.)

 **Pro tip:** Try targeting people based on job titles or other specific characteristics. The audience segment must have reachable web traffic of above 1,000 people, or a list of at least 2,500 emails associated with that segment.

Having pre-made campaign templates

If you come to a sponsor with a multi-channel campaign package that's highly tailored to their needs and includes other channels like email, they will be able to see how this adds immediate value to their sales pipeline and fits into the bigger picture. Plus you'll look all the more invested in the success of their campaign – good stuff all around!

One way to ensure you'll be able to quickly create these

customized packages is by having a few go-to templates that you can tweak for each new sponsor once you know what they're looking to accomplish.

Below are three templates based on some of the most common goals we've seen come up from sponsors in the association events space.

Thought leadership

If a sponsor is looking to gain or grow thought leadership presence through your conference or virtual event, here's an easy way to patch it up and present it to them:

- ▶ Goal: Drive engagement
- ▶ 30-day campaign
- ▶ Sponsor provides white paper, webinar, or another asset
- ▶ Two email blasts promoting the piece of content to your audience (one sent from you, one sent "from" the sponsor)
- ▶ 10,000 total ad impressions

Awareness

If a sponsor is trying to “make a splash” at your event – either because (a) they’re a new player and want to get their name in front of more people, or (b) they’re an industry veteran looking to maintain their authority – here’s a plan you can use:

- ▶ Goal: Saturate your audience
- ▶ 60-day campaign
- ▶ Decide on what is being promoted – is this a basic awareness campaign or is there some special offer?
- ▶ Three email blasts (one sent from you, two sent “from” the sponsor)
- ▶ 7,000 ad impressions during CTA drive to landing page

Lead Generation

If a sponsor needs to bring its sales team a specific number of leads from your show, you can offer them a plan that looks like this:

- ▶ Goal: Establish brand recognition, then drive leads
- ▶ 60-day campaign: 30 days of awareness, 30 days of promoting a call to action (CTA)
- ▶ Sponsor provides a landing page with a lead form
- ▶ Four email blasts (one sent from you, three sent “from” the sponsor)
- ▶ 7,000 ad impressions during awareness drive
- ▶ 15,000 total ad impressions



Pro tip:

If you already have a template built out for awareness campaigns, you can simply use that to cover the first 30 days of your lead-gen campaign plan.

Pricing your sponsored retargeting packages

Retargeting is actually a very affordable way to gain significant reach and exposure, which is an important point to harp on when you're pitching to sponsors. It's so affordable, in fact, that the unit we use to talk about ad impressions is Cost Per Mille (CPM), which is the cost of showing an ad 1,000 times.

The average CPM for retargeting is four dollars, but qualified B2B audiences like yours command a higher rate because they're much more difficult for other brands to reach, even through channels like LinkedIn in many cases. Since sponsors are so eager for this exposure, they're usually willing to pay quite a bit more than they would when targeting their own audience members – and they'll often go as high as \$50-\$100 CPM (which is actually still very affordable considering the level of precision that sponsored retargeting offers).

So, while you're paying the standard, wholesale CPM of four dollars, your sponsors are paying these significantly higher rates, which can lead to **profit margins as high as 90 to 95 percent** for your organization.



A few additional tips on packaging:

- ▶ Offer fixed-price packages, just like you would with any other type of sponsorship.
- ▶ Create two or three options (maybe small, medium and large) to have some variety while keeping things simple for you and your team.
- ▶ Charge higher rates for additional segmentation and customization.

Tackling common objections from sponsors

A huge part of selling sponsors on the value of retargeting is being able to ease any concerns they have and dispel any myths they might have heard.

Here are some common objections we've heard, along with how to reply if you're confronted with the same questions.

If they ask:

Can I determine on which sites my ads will appear?

You can say:

Your ads will be delivered programmatically wherever the targeted audience members are browsing online. That means that while you don't have "control" over the exact list of websites your ads will show on, they will only appear where a user is browsing, which is the best guarantee that your ads will actually be seen.

If they ask:

Why do I need a digital sponsorship in addition to my at-event sponsorship?

(You'll see this question start to pop up more once in-person events are back in full swing.)

You can say:

The real value we're offering is access to our tracked digital audience. While an at-event sponsorship guarantees exposure to people who show up, any audience members who don't go to the event in person simply wouldn't see your brand.

Sponsored retargeting allows you to get exposure to our digital audience digitally, both to enhance the value of your at-event sponsorship (by priming our audience pre-event) and to generate results all year long through a post-event or year-round campaign.

If they ask:

Why do I need to show my ads on other websites when your site focuses on my industry?

You can say:

We have the right web visitors, but we only have them for as long as they're browsing our site. Retargeting lets you interact with those users while they're on our website **and** follow them once they leave to browse the rest of the Internet – increasing the chances that they'll respond to your ads by 70 percent.

If they say:

This is too much work for our creative department

You can say:

We only need three sizes of ads – the most standard in the industry: 728x90, 300x250, and 160x600. Designers are usually very comfortable producing these ad sizes. If it's easier, we can even use an existing set of ads that you've used for other display advertising campaigns.

If they ask:

How will I know if the ads are being served properly?

You can say:

When your campaign is launched, we'll send you a link to a live report that will show you in real time how your campaign is performing. You can see the campaign length, total impressions served, total clicks, and unique users reached.

If they ask:

Will this feel creepy to the people seeing my ads?

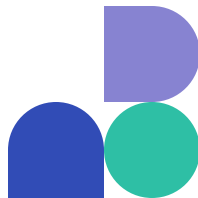
You can say:

There are industry best practices when it comes to ad frequency, so all of the packages we offer are well within those guidelines. We also offer a variety of options for ad frequency, so you can start off light and increase frequency once you start seeing the results.

Communicating value gets easier over time

Typically when you offer sponsored retargeting, things will start to pay off quickly after you close your first couple of deals. But the longer you do it, the easier it will become to sell – not just because your sales team becomes more proficient in actually pitching sponsors and addressing concerns, but because you'll have the social proof and data from your existing sponsorships to back it all up.

In the next and final chapter, we'll talk through some specific use cases for sponsored retargeting in 2021 and beyond.



Ways to leverage sponsored retargeting in 2021

While the current state of the events industry might be causing some major stress, there are plenty of ways you can keep delivering value to your sponsors.

It's a whole new world for sponsorships

When associations and event organizers were hit with the first big wave of changes in 2020, many decided to postpone their events or cancel them entirely, banking on the notion that they would be able to quickly resume in-person activities and sponsorships.

And while hope is now on the horizon, organizations still need ways to adapt in the meantime. You might find yourself scrambling for ways to retain sponsor dollars from a canceled event or offer more compelling sponsorship packages for virtual conferences. Maybe you're even planning to move away from in-person events long term and want to offer sponsors another channel for reaching your audience all year round.

Whatever your specific goals might be, sponsored retargeting helps you continue delivering value to sponsors and exhibitors by broadening their access to your online audience, with or without the help of events.

Sponsors need you now more than ever

One thing we know for sure is that the desire for sponsorships has not gone away. On the contrary, the effects of COVID-19 have left brands of all sizes with a greater appetite than ever for opportunities to get in front of new, relevant audiences. Many of your sponsors (both existing and potential) have fallen behind on lead generation over the last few months, and getting in front of a qualified digital audience like yours is one of the best ways they can make up those numbers.

Plus there's an increased appetite for this type of exposure in general, and it started well before 2021. We've begun to see more sponsors looking for ways to become thought leaders and start real conversations – growing their own audiences by sharing reports, e-books and other digital content with your audience – and they want to be able to get this exposure any time of the year, anywhere on the web.

The fact that live events are on pause only adds to this pre-existing desire for more exposure to your online audience, which means that sponsors are ripe for the picking, and sponsored retargeting is a great way to lure them in.

In this chapter, we're going to dive into three specific applications of sponsored retargeting:

- ▶ Retaining sponsor revenue from a canceled event
- ▶ Improving your virtual event sponsorship packages
- ▶ Driving more sponsor revenue all year round



Retaining sponsor revenue from a canceled event

Having to cancel an event will never feel easy, no matter how acclimated we get to the current state of things or how many times we hear about other events being called off. But as we discussed earlier, there are actually a couple of new factors working in your favor.

- ▶ ***Your industry peers and competitors are having to cancel their events as well***, which means that your sponsors can't simply "go elsewhere" to purchase in-person event sponsorships. They are still depending on you for brand awareness, lead gen and more, and if you can pivot to offer digital options that are just as (or more) compelling as in-person sponsorship packages, your sponsors will stick around.
- ▶ ***Your sponsors are in desperate need of new leads for their sales teams***, but many of the B2B marketing channels they might have been leveraging are no longer available or effective. With so many people working from home, it's not really viable to send direct mail or print

publications to office buildings, and cold calling becomes less effective.

The need is growing for digital marketing options

All of these changes mean that your sponsors need strategic digital marketing options, and they need them **now**.

By offering sponsored retargeting as an alternative to in-person activations that you had committed to, you can still deliver on the value that you promised your sponsors – plus your organization will be able to:

- ▶ Retain the business of your sponsors
- ▶ Keep sponsor dollars that you haven't reimbursed yet
- ▶ Recoup any lost revenue

Some of your more tech-savvy sponsors might already understand retargeting and know that this is what they need from you. Others might have no idea how it works or how it applies to sponsorship packages. Either way, it's up to you to start persuading sponsors that your canceled event doesn't have to mean no marketing leads for them.

In chapter one, we talked about how as an association or event organizer, you are primed for digital sponsorships because you've curated a large audience of people with a definitive interest in what you offer, making them more likely to be interested in what your sponsors are offering. Sponsored retargeting means that instead of firing off a sponsored email blast right before your event and then calling it a day, you're giving your sponsors sustained and strategic access to your high-quality audience, all over the web, all of the time.

Now, if you can use this logic to sell your sponsors on the idea of retargeting as a replacement for the original sponsorship package, then you can begin to work with them on customized packages that offer that sustained, strategic exposure – but to even broader segments of your audience.

Remember why digital sponsorships are so powerful for associations and events in particular? Because your audience is so much more than just your live attendees. By replacing a live event sponsorship with a sponsored retargeting package, you can provide your sponsors with exposure to any and all of the following segments of your audience.

Give your sponsors access to:

Previous years' attendees

Active members

Former members

Social media followers

Website visitors

Newsletter subscribers

And more...

By pivoting to sponsored retargeting, you can create new packages that make up for what sponsors missed from the canceled event, while adding in new layers of exposure to people they otherwise wouldn't have been able to reach.

Other easy ways to work with sponsors

While sponsored retargeting is an excellent alternative to any in-person sponsorships you've committed to, we understand that you also need tactics you can start applying immediately

If you've had to cancel a live event, then you might have already tried some of the following approaches. If you're still in the process of negotiating with sponsors, or if you know you'll have to cancel an upcoming event, here are some easy ways you can still deliver on the value you promised.

Transfer existing sponsorship to:

- ▶ Rescheduled date for this event
- ▶ Same event next year
- ▶ A different event
- ▶ A virtual event

Play with new or existing ad space in your:

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Newsletter
- ▶ Magazine

Make more assets "sponsorable":

- ▶ Online community
- ▶ Member directory or portal
- ▶ LMS/e-Learning site
- ▶ Blog or resources center
- ▶ Login pages
- ▶ Research reports
- ▶ Podcast
- ▶ Bookstore
- ▶ YouTube channel
- ▶ Scholarships (registration, dues, CE)
- ▶ Foundation recognition
- ▶ Name an award

- ▶ Webinar series
- ▶ Board/committee

Offer public thanks and recognition:

- ▶ Through video messages or open letters from your Executive Director, Show Director, etc.
- ▶ On your website
- ▶ Via social media
- ▶ In your magazine or blog
- ▶ In your email newsletter

For a deeper dive on these tips, check out our [33 Sponsorship Ideas for Virtual Events](#) handbook.

Improving your virtual conference sponsorship packages

Just as we looked at the bright side of event cancellations, let's have a quick look at some of the sponsorship-related benefits of taking your events virtual.

Virtual events remove most of the barriers to entry involved in sponsoring an in-person event. If sponsors don't have to physically get to your event, this can open you up to a much larger potential market of sponsors – possibly even a global one. And when you reduce the total cost of sponsoring your event by removing the need for physical collateral, travel, accommodations, it means that smaller brands might be able to participate, which further opens up your pool of potential sponsors.



**As more events
go virtual, it's
important to
offer competitive
sponsorship
options and
keep a wide pool
of potential
sponsors.**

Of course, there are also some sponsorship challenges that come with events going online. This mostly has to do with the fact that a sponsor's marketing funnel looks very different for a virtual event than an in-person one.

Traditionally, sponsors rely heavily on the pre-event stage for awareness and engagement with your audience, with most conversions happening at the event. This provided a natural stopping point, and it often wasn't even necessary for you to run a lot of post-event marketing on behalf of your sponsors

When it comes to virtual events, pre-event activations look largely the same – it's all about driving awareness for your sponsor and telling your audience to look out for them during the event. However, the activations taking place for the sponsor during a virtual event are not as impactful, which means that you need to provide significant post-event advertising in order to guarantee conversions.

The key is to adapt the traditional sponsor marketing funnel to fit the new flow of a virtual event. You can do this by leveraging sponsored retargeting and other digital marketing channels to run multi-channel campaigns for sponsors before, during and after your event.



■ You may already have creative opportunities where you can include a sponsor's plug, like video or audio content.

Before the event

This phase is about driving awareness of the fact that your sponsor will be participating in your event. You can include some light calls to action – like trying to drive your audience members to a landing page that the sponsor has set up – but simple brand exposure is the main goal leading up to the event.

Consider creating a multi-channel sponsorship package that involves some or all of the following:

- ▶ Sponsored ad retargeting (20-30 ad impressions per person)
- ▶ Sponsored email blasts – one sent from you, two or three sent “from” the sponsor
- ▶ Social media shout-outs at a cadence that fits well with your content schedule
- ▶ A spotlight article highlighting the sponsor, what they offer, and the fact they’ll be participating in your upcoming event

During the event

If you did a good job pre-event, there should be some level of awareness of who your sponsors are. But because the opportunities you can provide to sponsors during a virtual event are pretty limited compared to an in-person event, it's important to get creative in this stage.

Here are some ideas for driving awareness and engagement during a virtual event:

- ▶ Highlight sponsors in a “waiting room” or on transition slides
- ▶ Show an official intro video of your sponsor
- ▶ Offer slots for sponsor “commercials” accompanied by pop-up CTAs
- ▶ Have sponsor reps introduce live speakers, or even allow sponsors to moderate entire panels
- ▶ Have your host do a thank-you or shout-out to a sponsor before each content session begins

- ▶ Display sponsor logos in a virtual background during speaker sessions – like a virtual step-and-repeat to visually reinforce the sponsor's brand
- ▶ Offer “special interest group” discussions, interactive workshops or virtual happy hours/coffee breaks to give sponsors some more opportunities to start “real” one-on-one conversations with your attendees.



After the event

This stage is where you really need to drive conversions for your sponsor, so work closely with them to figure out what the CTA should be. Is the sponsor trying to book as many demos as possible? Do they want to set up sales meetings with your attendees? Drive people to a landing page to take a specific action? Whatever the goal is, make that the main focus of any and all promotions you run for sponsors after the event.

This stage is similar to pre-event marketing in terms of the channels you can use, which include:

- ▶ Sponsored ad retargeting (10-15 ad impressions per person)
- ▶ Sponsored email blasts – one sent from you, three sent “from” the sponsor
- ▶ Sponsored chatbots or pop-ups
- ▶ Social media shout-outs at a cadence that fits well with your content schedule

- ▶ A spotlight article highlighting the CTA and thanking the sponsor for participating in your event

Driving sponsor revenue all year round

Eventually, the world will return to a more normal state, in-person events will resume at full speed, and you’ll be able to apply a lot of what we’ve talked about to those efforts. But one thing that’s unique about sponsored retargeting is that you don’t need an event for it to work.

Sponsored retargeting is the most sustainable type of sponsorship – for both you and your sponsors – and there are a few main reasons for this.

Your sponsors don’t ever stop needing to reach your audience.

Although traditional sponsorships tend to revolve around specific events, particularly the “before” and “during” parts of the event, this doesn’t mean that your sponsors stop needing to access your audience once they’ve booked a few meetings with your attendees.

By giving your sponsors access to target your broader audience throughout the year, you're providing them with a more consistent drip of new marketing leads – plus you'll be raking in sponsor dollars on a more consistent basis, too.

Your event attendees aren't the only valuable audience for sponsors.

We've already talked about how your digital audience is more than just your event attendees, but that's particularly important when it comes to year-round sponsorships.

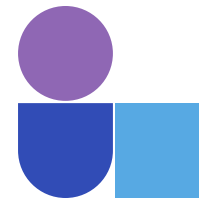
Your members, subscribers and social media followers are people who choose to stay opted in because they benefit personally or professionally by hearing from you all the time – whether you're inviting them to an event, providing them with a new piece of content, or promoting a sponsor's product or service. The intent signals of these audience members are so high that a year-round digital sponsorship with your organization is much more valuable to sponsors than anything they could get through Google or LinkedIn.

There's no brand fatigue related to your event or association.

With other types of digital sponsorships, you run the risk of exhausting your audience by over-promoting your sponsors leading up to a big event.

With sponsored retargeting, you're displaying your sponsors' ads to your audience members on sites other than your own, so it won't impact how your audience views your brand or interfere with your own marketing efforts. Plus your audience members are (a) accustomed to seeing ads online, so they won't feel annoyed; and (b) in your industry, so your sponsors' ads should feel like a relevant, natural thing to see.

All of this means that sponsored retargeting is safe to offer all year round, and you can sell as many packages as you'd like.





When you offer access to your audience year-round, your sponsors will see a steadier drip of marketing leads on their end, and you'll create a more consistent revenue stream for your organization.

Level up any sponsored retargeting package with email mapping

In a nutshell, email mapping (also called CRM retargeting) allows you to retarget your email contacts with display ads, even if they haven't visited your website recently. This is something that you can leverage in your own marketing efforts – by targeting prospects with your own ads – but you can also leverage it to show ads from your sponsors.

Here's a quick breakdown of how it works:

1. You upload an email list (e.g., members, event registrants, marketing prospects).
2. Your email mapping tool crawls the web to match those emails with associated cookies, providing you with a new list of "anonymous" contacts.
3. Usually about 60 percent of the list will successfully be matched up if your email list is clean and up to date.
4. You can now retarget the people on this new list, even if they haven't been to your site recently.

What sets email mapping apart is that it allows the data you would normally use to segment an email list to drive your ad retargeting efforts. Normally, retargeting is segmentable based on people's actions on your website (e.g., what pages people have visited) or other basic filters like location. Email mapping gives you the best of both worlds by letting you segment by specific data points, like membership status, and then using that indicator to dictate who is seeing specific ads.

When you leverage email mapping as part of a sponsored retargeting package, you can promise much more precise segmentation and targeting to sponsors who are trying to reach specific subsets of your audience – and you can charge higher rates for it.

Ad retargeting is the future of digital sponsorships

Whether you're looking to implement one, two or all of the strategies we've discussed in this book, just remember this - your event partners won't ever stop needing exposure to your audience members, so most tactics that work for you now will keep working for you once in-person events are back in full swing.

Think about 2021 as an opportunity to expand your sponsorship offerings to include more effective digital options that will benefit you and your sponsors for years to come.



Free Resources on Digital Sponsorships

For more ideas to get you started on digital sponsorships, we offer a library of free resources on our website that includes: customer case studies, webinars with our in-house experts, even more e-books, and helpful discussions with industry peers on our podcast, *The Association Marketing Show*.

It's all ready and waiting for you at **feathr.co/resources**



Suggested material to start with:

Case Study: PAS sees 629% ROI from Feathr Monetization after canceled event

Case Study: Clarion Gaming creates \$101k in new revenue with sponsored retargeting packages in just 7 months

Webinar: Creating New Revenue with Digital Sponsorships

E-book: 33 Sponsorship Ideas for Virtual Events

Webinar: Monetize Your Virtual Event with Better Sponsorship Packages



feathr.co

Start selling digital sponsorships with Feathr Monetization

Feathr Monetization lets you offer sponsors the broad, trackable exposure they're looking for, so you can retain and attract sponsors and drive net-new revenue for your organization.

Our tools help you sell more digital sponsorship packages, get sponsors set up in less than 24 hours, and adjust ad campaigns on the fly so that sponsors are continuously getting the best results.

The Feathr team will support you the entire way so you feel comfortable using the platform and confident when it comes to selling sponsored retargeting.

[*Click to book a strategy session*](#)

