

THE SPONSOR DOC

With Bruce L. Erley, APR, CFEE

#EffectiveSponsorship #DigitalActivation #MoBucks

Dear Sponsor Doc:

My sponsors keep asking me for more benefits on my event website and Facebook page. I've always included their logos and a link to their sites. Is there more I should be doing? A.B. Colorado

Dear M.C.:

I'm going to take a leap here that you are not in your 20's. I'm not either, but I have a couple Millennials who work for me. What you are describing is "digital activation" and yes, it is likely the most in-demand types of promotion we are creating for our partners.

Essentially, digital activation is when you utilize your event's digital resources from websites to social media to mobile platforms to create promotions that better achieve the objectives and ROI for your sponsors.

While displaying your sponsors' logo on your website qualifies as a digital activation, it is a "passive platform" that is barely scratching the surface of the really cool and effective promotions many events are conducting with their sponsors.

From Facebook contests, to electronic event guides, to text coupons, to tablet-based photo promotions, there is no end to the ideas you can accomplish digitally. Your sponsors are looking for digital activations that "push" them out to your audience using social media. *Push Platforms* include:

- Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.)
- Blasts (E-Newsletters, blogs, special sponsor offers)
- Texting (Mobile "clubs," special offers, people's choice awards, etc.)

These push platforms are great for providing sponsors with the opportunity to submit reader-relevant information

such as stretching and exercise tips for the night before a century bike ride, or recipes from the culinary demonstration stage, etc.

The next digital platform you can use for sponsor promotions are "*E-Collateral Materials*" which essentially is the information my event organizers now provided in digital formats in lieu of print. Examples include virtual goodie bags or interactive event maps such as those offered by companies like Guidebook. Your audience can download onto their smart phone a map of your festival site, list of exhibitor, stage schedule and dining options. Your sponsors get ID, links, the ability to make offers, etc.

Then there are "*Digital Promotions*" which are specially designed sponsor activations created expressly for digital implementation. These can include Facebook promotions (e.g. Post your favorite Parade of Lights memory to win two Frontier Airline tickets), to attendee engagement (e.g. Take a quick quiz on an iPad to see which animal at the Denver Zoo you are the most like.)

Sponsors love digital promotions because they increase overall impressions, reach a targeted demo and expand the sponsorship reach beyond live attendees. Further, they are immediate, sharable (viral) and cost efficient. Most of all, sponsors love that they are measurable and can provide immediate quantifiable metrics as to their effectiveness, (e.g. number of impressions, click through rate, views, shares, redemptions, etc.)

The bottom line is that social media is here to stay and you need to be working with your sponsors to create engaging, interactive and relevant digital promotions. And take my advice...hire a twenty something to help you maneuver through it, or maybe the teenager who lives next door.

#ImTooOldForThis

With more than three decades in sponsorship sales and consultation, **Bruce L. Erley** is the President and CEO of the Creative Strategies Group, a full-service sponsorship and event marketing agency based in Denver, Colorado he founded in 1995. Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America and a Certified Festival & Events Executive (CFEE) by the International Festivals and Events Association, Erley is a highly-regarded speaker on event marketing and sponsorship having spoken on the topic around the world in such places as Dubai, Vienna, Beijing, Toronto and New York.

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