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Achieving Win-Win Scenarios for All Interested Parties: Rethinking Sponsorship Sales

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Kristi Casale (moderator): All right, we're gonna get started with the session. I was honestly not expecting these lights. So maybe it's a good thing because I can't see any one of you. But I'm Kristi Casale. I'm the Vice President of meetings and continuing education at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and my big joke is that it's a mouthful. But I'm also the immediate past president of the greater Midwest chapter. So thrilled to be here today. Thank you, go GMC!

I'm thrilled to be here today with these talented ladies. I do have some housekeeping notes that I want to read to you all before we get started. So we are in the session, *Achieving Win-Win Scenarios for All Interested Parties*, (which is going to come up a little later). *Rethinking sponsorship sales*. We encourage you to ask your questions throughout the session in the Questions tab of the app. So, if you go into the app, it says live discussion, you click on that and you can ask questions in there. And I can see them here on this iPad. There are also microphones available in the audience if you choose to just ask the question live. Before the session ends, we're going to take a few minutes for everyone to complete the evaluation as your feedback is vital to the development of future PCMA programming all evaluations for the sessions added to your schedule can be found on the sessions pages or in your notifications at the bottom of the app. Also, before you leave, please share your top takeaways from this session in the chat. Your participation in this is critical if you want to maximize your collective learnings from this week. You'll walk away with even more tips and ideas to test from our closing keynote where we'll showcase the most impactful takeaways from the entire week. So be sure to bring those back to us.

In the meantime, I am going to introduce our speakers. We have Karen Daniele. She's the Vice President of Strategic Services at Nth Degree. She is on the executive leadership team and has more than 25 years delivering sponsors' programs and revenue. She's recognized throughout the industry as an expert designer of high-impact sales programs and revenue and a revenue driver. Her unique perspectives and insights are much sought after by clients like Google, RSA Conference, and many others. And then we have Amy Hitchcock, who is RSA Conference's Senior Manager of operations. Amy's main role is managing the day-to-day operations for RSAC globally. Her main responsibilities include program and space management, special events, logistics, sponsorship management, vendor management, and ensuring a great attendee experience. So, join me in welcoming them all to the stage. And in addition to that, we'd like to play a little video so you guys can get a little bit more familiar with the RSA Conference and give you a little context.

[Video plays]

KC: All right, so let's get started here. So, Amy, tell us a little bit about this RSA Conference. Who's your audience? How big is it? What's your attendee profile? That type of thing?

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Amy Hitchcock (RSA Conference): Sure. So, RSA Conference is the leading cybersecurity conference. We're bringing together cybersecurity professionals where they're talking about current and future trends, as well as challenges they're seeing in the industry. We just had our 32nd Conference this past April where we had a little bit over 39,000 attendees. So, we're just starting to see those pre-pandemic numbers come back, which is really exciting. We have over 600 speakers and a little bit over 500 exhibitors.

KC: So just so you know, I asked her what RSA stood for because I was interested, and it's the last name, the initials of the founders of RSA. So, I guess I was expecting something different because you know, we love our acronyms in this industry. Okay, so moving on, Karen explained the title of the session. We talked, I mentioned this a little bit earlier, all interested parties. Tell me how it relates to events and more specifically to sponsorships.

Karen Daniele (Nth Degree Events): Sure. You know, in the past, what we've done is - we look at sponsorships as just a transaction between the organizer and the sponsor like, "you pay us money, we put up your sign", all that kind of thing. But if you really look at an event, an event is made up of three really distinct audiences - and it's the organizer, the attendee, and the sponsor. There are others like the press and those kind of things. But if you really take a look at it, none of them can exist without each other. All three of those are very, very related. Like if you lose sponsors, most of you lose the funding to put on here, but you lose the attendees. Why would a sponsor come if you lose an organizer? So, it's really a symbiotic relationship - you can't survive without the others. And when we create these sponsorships, we should have that in mind. It shouldn't just be about a transaction. It should be more than the money. It's about building that community as you go forward.

KC: So, Amy, as the show organizer of the RSA Conference, can you give us some examples of how changing your approach has impacted the success of the event and maybe growing the audience, that type of thing?

AH: Sure. So, I think the best example we have is, we have our event in San Francisco and there's been a bunch of open storefronts on Fourth Street, which connects the Moscone Center (we're in all three buildings of Moscone and in the Marriott). So, in the past two years, we've added different sponsorship activations in those storefronts, so it's branding, it's activations, like coffee shops. So not only are the sponsors excited about new experiences and new things that they can do, but it's bringing a new experience for our attendees. It's meeting a need. You know, they're always asking for more coffee, and different activations, and it's making me happy because it's branding. It's connecting my campus so that we feel more together and not so spread out and it provides that touch point for our attendees.

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KC: You know, so she didn't tell me this in advance it's like a brilliant idea. Bring some vibrancy to the city and it really makes that connection felt with your attendees in those spaces that might otherwise be just blank space.

KD: But what also it adds – for any of you guys doing events in San Francisco right now - it really creates a wider campus. It's more of a community as you go in there and it provides safety because the campus covers all the way to those hotels. And what's great for the sponsor is now they're getting some single exposure, right? So you're within the buildings, you're, there's a lot of noise, visual noise of, you know, 20 different logos coming at you. But when you're down on Fourth Street, and you see one company have a storefront, you remember that storefront - it stands out - and it doesn't take away and that's probably the biggest thing that all you guys worry about is - if I let my sponsors do too much, then my brand goes away. But if you build out that floor plan or that map and make the space bigger, you don't have to give up as much of your own brand recognition.

AH: Yeah, and part of that, too, is all of those are approved by us. So our branding is on it as well, so that the attendee knows that it's approved by RSA Conference. They're an approved vendor to be there. They're trusted. It also gives our branding which is excellent.

KC: So, digging a little deeper into this interested parties approach, Karen. What are the benefits of using this approach beyond just increased sponsorship revenue?

KD: Yeah, increased sponsorship revenue is key. We know that's the first thing anyone says – “I need the millions; I need to support the event”. But what you should be looking at is what else can I do to add to an attendee’s experience. Right? Creating a concert, creating a workshop, something that the attendee is going to use. We all know most conferences right now. The hardest thing is keeping your attendees - it's not even your sponsors. It's getting that retention to come back. Now, all of a sudden, if you can improve that experience by giving them a moment, you're guaranteeing them to come back. If it's such a cool moment, they've now become an advocate for you guys - they tell all their friends, “hey, when I was at this conference...”, right, and it doesn't have to just be about the knowledge because you can get a lot of this kind of knowledge and education online. But you know, it is that extra experience. As silly as it is like having, you know, a puppy park in the middle of your Expo where you can adopt a dog – that all of a sudden makes a memorable moment. And that's what we're really trying to do with these sponsorships is really kind of grab that attendee, give them something even more, give the organizer more. They're expanding what their brand is, they're riding off the coattails of some of these activities that the sponsors are bringing to it.

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AH: Yeah, one of our big initiatives this year was “moments”. We wanted to create these little touchpoints with our attendees and being able to bring in our sponsors and doing that was very successful. I thought it was good for the attendees. It was good for us, and the sponsors were happy to have that extra touch point and it just creates a more holistic event.

KC: So, tell me a little bit about these little moments that you create. And we've... similarly in our shows, we've been incorporating the puppies and the crocodiles and all the other whatever local flavor there is. Tell me about some of the things that you all did in terms of like, just practical little ideas.

AH: Yeah, so we have different activations on the show floor, you know, built-out areas where the sponsors can do different things. We also added in musicians this year, going to and from keynotes just connecting again, our campus a little bit more. And then one thing that was hugely successful - it wasn't sponsored - was our golden ticket where we picked five attendees in our keynote who were able to meet Christopher Lloyd, which was huge and it created that you know, awesome moment for a first timer and now she's excited to come back. So getting our sponsors more involved in stuff like that. It just - it *makes* the event for people.

KC: Okay, so now kind of coming back to like the sponsor packages, I think all of us in the room at one point or another, whether its involvement in our chapters or whatever, we make these bundles and packages that we put together and they're the traditional silver or the metal packages, as we'll call them. Talk to me about - do you do it that way? Do you want to bundle them? Has this changed pre-COVID, post-COVID?

AH: Sure. So we do have our traditional metal packages. We also do our EMOs - our event marketing opportunities, and I do rely heavily on Karen and her team to create those packages. I mean, they're the experts. They're seeing what's out in the field.

KD: Yeah, I think there's, you know, there's a need for packages. I am very against breaking things up and doing a la carte. There's a tendency that if things go bad for one year, you really get that turn off, where when you have a package and someone wants to stay a diamond there, there's this kind of coattails, not even coattails, but like a prestige to be that kind of level and you lose that. I do think we build in too much into packages, right? We all have that guilt. We write these packages. We're like, oh my god, it's \$100,000 or, you know, in this case, they're \$500,000 in like an AWS. They're a million dollars. So we start throwing stuff into those packages, but you should look at your metal packages as covering their *basic* needs. They should have content, they should have speaking, they should have access and some branding. But don't keep throwing in all these other things. You want to make sure that you're holding back enough things not just because you want to make more money and sell them. But like you throw in, you know your sponsor of a special event and you've got 15 silver

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sponsors' names up there. The value isn't that great. I mean, it's a little logo, but you go sell that to one single company - that can really brand it. They own the theater that night on the show floor. It's their bars, it's their names, it's you know, that is worth so much to one company, but if it's in a package, it's not worth that much so don't be shy about just giving people the basics in those packages - that's really what they want to see. Get their basic needs covered. And then, you know, let them add on and have their own moments for very individual kind of exposures.

KC: So first of all, I would love it if I could get a \$500,000 sponsor. But secondly, association planners, like our budgets aren't necessarily as large as maybe some of like the show or even you mentioned like Google or AWS. What suggestions would you give like an association planner as some like really high value but maybe because my sponsors aren't used to spending as much money as \$100,000 or \$150,000. So give us some ideas on some of these like maybe more inexpensive options that you could put together.

KD: So one of the things that you should first do is look at your budget - what you're already budgeting for, right? So if you already know you're doing something, so it just offset that cost, like don't add things to it. And I look at so many people saying, I know but let's do a T-shirt or these things, but now you've got these additional costs. You know, the first thing that Amy and I do when we start the process of MPOs is we look at the budget and we see everything that was planned you know whether you know it's a walkway that gives me stickers, whether there's a welcome reception that I could do a pub crawl in, you know, pub crawls are simple. They have one little bar in their audience, creating you know, a fast talk kind of thing. So I think these worked fabulously, and especially if there's like a party going on, and there's a theater there, you get the sponsors up and give them all five minutes to do quick kind of pitches - costs you nothing they're willing to pay three, four or \$5,000. And some of our clients are not RSA, I mean, RSA is you know, truly our biggest client, but we've, you know, shows that are less than 2,000 attendees, and you just try to balance those. And you're not going to sell, you know, a \$500,000 package to get access to 2,000 people, it just isn't going to happen, right?

AH: No, I was just going to say my other recommendation would be to go through your attendee surveys. I spent a lot of time reading verbatims of what attendees are looking for. And where we're missing the mark in the event. We were just talking this morning and one of the things that came up that is now sponsored is our Cybrew Cafe again, attendees wanted coffee so we were like how can we bring it to them and make it affordable for us? So, we now have a sponsored coffee area where sponsors are getting their scans and they're happy their branding is on it. The attendee is getting their coffee, I'm happy because my surveys are getting better. You know, it's a win-win.

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KC: So with creating these opportunities do you suggest to us that as we're pricing them out, are we trying to make money on these opportunities always? Are we willing to take a loss? Like, how do you guys structure some of the pricing on this?

KD: If it's something that's brand new, and it's only about the sponsor, my requirement from this client is to make a 50% profit. Okay, okay. If it's something that's already in the budget, and I'm offsetting it's a very different question. If it is something that is handling, as you said, one of the attendees kind of basic needs, it's not 50% because it is supporting them. So one of the examples was, you know, you have them out here, the column wraps right and you see all the logos are on the on those wraps. We took those same kinds of column wraps, but we put the round seating around the edges and put QR codes around it, right? So, all of a sudden I've taken something that is only visual, right? So all I saw are logos whoopee, right? I gave the attendees something - I handled their comfort, and they gave a sponsor a chance to capture leads right by adding a little seating that just goes right around it. So, the value for *everyone* just got better, and again, that's taking something that was very transactional, like signage, and creating something that, again, goes to all three of these things. And now it's, you're like yay, everyone's a winner and if RSA puts in you know, \$2,000 in the bank from that, that's okay. But if they don't, they would be fine with that as well because it meets the needs of the sponsors.

KC: Thank you for taking that question on the fly like that. So, all right. In the video, we saw a glimpse of the sponsor rebook area at RSA. So, how important is that? And how do you capitalize on the rebooking on-site? This is a huge question. I can't wait to hear the answer to that.

KD: Well, for me, it saves me a lot of time with my sales reps later, but you know, we love to capture the excitement of a show, right? And there's no other way to do that than with a rebook and there's no other way to do it without throwing up big names - who's already signed up. Everyone wants what they can't have. So to walk away and lose that momentum is, to me, such a waste. And I know a lot of you are sitting there like "I don't know where my show is gonna be next year". If you know where it is, but you can't get a floorplan, you still can do a rebook. You got a date? You can do a rebook. You know, we're doing one - I'm actually leaving here to do it. They don't have a floor plan. But we're making it look like an NFL draft. So we've got all the levels up on these monitors. So you're out in the waiting room to resign and you're like, oh my god, you know, this level is about to go out. Like you want that surge of energy. And the good thing for you guys...

AH: Yeah, so from my perspective - that's the revenue that we know that we have, before we even leave on site, so it's creating that excitement for us. It kind of gives us an idea where we're going to be with budget and gauging the interest of our sponsors

DELIVERING IDEAS THAT WORK.



nth degree
EVENTS

coming back. Our rebook is really successful, which is great. It shows that they're seeing the value in being there.

KD: We did 85% of the revenue.

KC: Oh my gosh!

KD: And that - the only reason was because we didn't sell the EMOs - the individual opportunities - that was just from metal and exhibit packages.

KC: So, from that, or is there anything else and I assume that you guys just build just like a desk or something where you do these sales on site? Is that how it works? Or is it also an opportunity or fun engagement?

KD: In most other shows, I mean, it's more of a fun engagement - with RSA we're going through 400 - It's a machine.

AH: I'm sorry to even go down there. I'll pop my head in and just wave.

KD: I bring in all my sales reps from other shows. Two of them work the front board, getting people queued up to pick their space. The actual three sales reps who sell the show are on the sales board. I have two admins, one checking them in, one processing contracts, creating invoices. We walk out of there, everything is done. It is like, boom! Yeah, so that's a machine but other ones, you know, we have shows that only have 50 - so we have a nice breakfast and then we can chat with them. We can have this more consultative selling opportunity. RSA is a little difficult and for that reason we do the top 75 before they even go on-site and they all rebook.

AH: And it is great too because that's a touchpoint that we have with the sponsors throughout the week. So, I'm constantly checking in with Karen and I'm saying what are you hearing? You know, what are the pain points that they have this week? What are they looking for? Because when they're in that moment, that's when they're thinking of it. So, if you're waiting, you know, weeks after, maybe they're forgetting like, oh yeah, I was mad about the water or whatever it may be.

KC: Right. Yeah, I hear what you're saying. So, I guess what other elements would you recommend that some of these organizations associations, I know primarily, that's what we have in our audience, not all. But what other recommendations do you have to drive sales growth for like year after year and how are you guys doing that?

KD: I mean the conference, luckily, RSA is on that upward trajectory. Yeah, but it really is making sure you always have that balance. And if you don't have that balance, you're never gonna have growth, right? You need that attendee to be happy, you need the

DELIVERING IDEAS THAT WORK.



organizer [to be happy]. When you keep that - it's, to me, it's an ecosystem that is somewhat fragile. And we all know, you throw a pandemic in it, and what we all saw happened. But, you know, it's knowing *when* to price increase, knowing when *not* to, creating extra values, giving them access to a *certain* audience, not always the *whole* audience, right? Giving them what they need, and that's the way to do it. We're very big about exhibitor advisory boards, or sponsor advisory boards. We don't do this just by saying "Hey, this would be cool. Wouldn't it be? Like, let's do it." We really engage. We meet with them twice a year. There are about 60 members on this one, but we do have for smaller companies where there are only 10 - and hear their feedback. The package that you mentioned? The 500,000 I wish I had that? That was designed in an exhibitor advisory board because we had this level. And they were like, "Well, I'm not getting enough exposure." I'm like, "Well, what if we created a level above that?" And we kind of knew what we were doing. So they start creating it, and I'm sitting there going okay, but you know, that's (at the time) was \$400,000 I said that's \$400,000 and people were like "Oh my god, I could buy a house for that" right? You know, carrying on ... So, I took a break - I literally went to the ladies' room, and two people followed me into the ladies' room and said "We'll take it." I was like, "Can I like... not... you know", [laughter]... It's getting someone to almost, like, design something that is *exactly* what they want makes it easier to sell.

KC: So, when you do these advisory boards, are they in person? Do you do like a fun destination?

AH: We do it in San Francisco in the fall because that's where we hold the event. And then the second one is on site. So, we're getting them again, right in that moment. It's at the end of the week. Sometimes it's a little brutal because it's at the end of the week, but it's such vital information for us to have and you know, we're bouncing those ideas off of them and the one in the fall is really the planning piece of it. What they want to see in packages, that type of thing. And then when we're on site, it feels more logistical.

KD: Yeah, the one that's not on site, we get a higher level of the exhibitor - you know, we'll start to see some directors, VPs coming in, because the spend is at that kind of level. They want to make sure that they're spending very strategically. The one on-site - it's housing, it's you know, general service contractor all that kind of stuff, but they need to be heard.

KC: Do you feel like because you have all these people in the same room, maybe some sometimes they're competitors? In our space, we've got some different companies who compete with each other. Do you find that because they're in the same room having these conversations maybe they're leveling up a little bit more than maybe they would if you hadn't brought them all together?

DELIVERING IDEAS THAT WORK.



KD: I think the information becomes more clear, right? So, one person is describing an experience they're having with someone who maybe did *not* have that experience, or three people did not, making them think "Okay then what did *I* do? Maybe I didn't read this. Maybe *I* didn't do this." And there's a lot more clarification than what I would consider doing a survey. You know, so we can unpack it a little bit.

And I think the competition thing usually doesn't come into play because if you really focus on that, all the sponsors have to be there, you know, the organizer has to be there, the attendee has to be there. No sponsor wants their top competitor to drop out of the show, because they're bringing attendees there. They're helping support the conference. So knowing how dependent we are, it is a very cooperative relationship if you've started that way.

AH: It feels very collaborative. Because they're our partners, we're their partners, our main goal is to be successful. So I don't ever walk out of that meeting, thinking it was competitive for sponsors or whatnot. Everyone's contributing the same and brainstorming with each other, which is really cool to see. I didn't even think about the competitive piece of it. We don't see it.

KC: Yeah, we definitely have that in our space. But you talked about this ecosystem. You mentioned that earlier.

Talk to me about what happens when somebody tries to disrupt this healthy environment that you've worked so hard to create, or they're trying to go rogue and do their own thing. I mean, we're seeing that in our dental space.

KD: Yeah, it's a danger to us all, right? So, we call it "protecting our house". And, you know, we will do everything to protect that environment and specifically on the sponsor side, knowing you know, a sponsor's going off, if they leave, they leave, but if they leave and they put on their own private events in the next hotel, that's a danger. So we call them parasites.

AH: The technical term!

KD: But we want to try to close that as much as possible. But, part of it - we take on responsibility by saying "Are we giving them what they need?" And if we are, then we go after the parasites. You know, we block down hotels from their access. You know, (not this particular client, but other ones) they don't let the company speak. They don't let them attend. There are ways - in my mind, you should do everything to protect that. Because can you have ten of your big sponsors leave? Your world is starting to crumble. All of a sudden your event isn't as valuable anymore, right? Your attendee might say, "Why don't I just go down the street to ABC private events? I'll just buy an

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expo badge over here, and I can do it." So, locking down your hotel space is absolutely critical.

Not giving them that that kind of, oh, I can kind of play in there. But we're not afraid when someone starts to do that to go meet with them, and say "So what is it that we are not providing for you?" and having these meetings.

And we, I mean, I had one of these. I actually told this VP, I'm like, "You're a parasite!" Like, and most of the time they don't know it. And that's what's kind of amazing. They're like, "I know but - we love your conference, but we don't need *that*, so we're just going to do *this*." And I'm like, "Do you understand you're taking away 1000 of my attendees at this one moment to go sit in your hotel, *you* didn't pay to get them here - you didn't pay. But I have 400 sponsors on the floor that are helping support this, like you keep doing this, I'm gonna lose more and then there'll *be* no RSA Conference."

AH: And we do hear it from sponsors. You know, "Why does so and so got to do this?" and it's like, you know, they don't.

KD: So, we looked at it at two different levels. One - companies who leave us completely and not support us, and then the other ones that are our sponsors that guerilla market and are trying to get more than their share. We do have very, very strict rules. We have an entire security group that's out there trying to monitor those very different in different locations. San Francisco is a city, you get that kind of opportunity. Vegas is a little bit harder to kind of get those. It's hard for anyone to do show in Vegas because the confined kind of marketing, you know, opportunities that you have. But I will tell you, we spent a good 25% of our time, just as we call it, protecting our house.

AH: Our ecosystem is extremely important to us. So as Karen mentioned, we do a ton of different things. In my hotel contracts, it's written in there that they can't have competing events. Everything that's booked in the hotel needs to get approved by us. That way we're keeping a pulse not only on who's booking that isn't a sponsor, but what our sponsors are doing as well. The other thing is permitting, right, like I can permit certain corners in San Francisco so that I have control of the space. So it's either you know, nothing is there. It's a potential activation for sponsor as well. So you're controlling more of your ecosystem.

KC: We have also, because we have seen the parasites as you're calling them. They started to do these events, these big events, conflicting with some of our things, obviously we made them so they couldn't do things on the same nights we had our own events. But now we don't allow them to do outside events if they have to sign a contract with somebody, they're just not allowed to do it during our show. And if they do, then they don't get to come back.

DELIVERING IDEAS THAT WORK.



AH: So I think you should embrace it. I mean, part of our ecosystem *are* these parties and that's what makes our event feel so big, right? Like we want to embrace what our sponsors are doing, what our partners are doing. I mean, when they're not a sponsor, that's when you're getting into well, that's a different territory, that's what Karen's talking about.

KC: Well that's different, because they cut their budget on spending as a sponsor to put money towards their own parties, right.

KD: And we're supporting our biggest sponsors to do that. So there's one that you know, takes over a hotel and they run a big party one night, but they're very cooperative in there. Again, they understand the ecosystem and are not a parasite. So they're like, "We won't start until a half hour after." And the difference - a lot of you are an association or you have your own company and that - RSA is an industry event. So there isn't, you know, it's not a private event. So they don't *do* big parties. Like there isn't a big party. We actually kind of depend on all the sponsors doing their big parties, so they get what they want.

AH: And we'll help promote it. So that's part of it. It's on our website, you know, we're pushing it to attendees as well. I think that's part of, you know, if you're not a partner of us, and you're doing this stuff, you're not getting the backing from us.

KD: Right, and you're not getting the support with the hotels from us, all that stuff, but we, we again, you know, the organizers taking care of the sponsors, a sponsor is taken care of, you know - I kind of feel like a broken record - by making sure that something is in there for *everyone* is what's important. The sponsor just going off and doing their own thing that isn't bringing something to the conference isn't good. So in anything you're thinking, just look at it in these kinds of things. And like, does it help everyone?

KC: So, with all that said, I know that we're placing more emphasis on like reimagining this attendee journey, especially post pandemic. People are obviously blending work with personal. We see a lot of families at our show. We're seeing more now actually, we had our highest attendance, both member meeting as well as having the most guests on site with us this last year in Orlando.

But since they're doing all of this and making up for lost time and lost connections. How do you think this has influenced your thinking, your event design, and like your sponsorship program in total?

AH: So I think the first thing right is we've become a digital world. I mean, we were before COVID hit, even more so now. So we built in that virtual piece into our package. So that was one thing. I'm sure everybody in this room has done it as well. I think what we've seen too, is that face-to-face events and that connection and that

DELIVERING IDEAS THAT WORK.



networking is even more important. Last year when we came back, it was just so awesome to walk through the lobby and people are hugging each other saying they've never even met because they'd only seen each other on Zoom. Just seeing those moments where people were able to connect and if you can, you know, build on that and do those activations, creating those moments, I think is huge. One other thing I think we've heard a lot is people are asking for sensory rooms, which is very interesting, because we're so used to being in our home and on our computers, then you're at these huge events where you're, you know, it's exhausting networking and being face to face and don't realize how draining it is. Again, I think that's another potential sponsorship opportunity.

KD: But you know, we've all kind of blended that right? Work and home. I mean, a lot of us work from home all the time so we don't have those boundaries of - here's a defined this - so going to a conference that is just about work is a little bit difficult. But the one thing it's kind of forcing us to do is, there's a generation coming that has never had those boundaries, right? You know, like kids are on technology. Working, watching TV all at the same time. And we need to kind of stay up with the way people behave and the way people act and we saw a pretty dramatic switch because of the pandemic. But there's a generational thing that comes right behind it and creating you know, events and sponsorships that really match that need of that attendee and how they behave.

KC: So a little bit ago, you mentioned Las Vegas, Las Vegas-type city. And how do you create these opportunities in locations where either you're not allowed to use the space because the property doesn't have the opportunities available to you? Or like I mentioned in Vegas where there's just so much going on. So how would you handle something like that?

KD: Yeah, Vegas is tough. And you really do have to create environments within the space. They hate any kind of public space kind of branding, they hate anything tacked to their walls. But you do need to create ... ha look at you shaking your head because it's maddening sometimes.

But you need - even if you're going to create an activation space some kind of thing. You've got to direct people there. And you know, depending on us, just doing blasts of emails and trying to say hey, guess what, go to this room. It doesn't work. You need visual kind of thing.

Be creative. Ask your hotel rep. And it was funny. I was in this one. And I don't want to say who it is because they let me do it and I don't know if they'll let you guys do it. So as you're coming down into the to the meeting rooms and everything, there's this cactus garden, right and it's just sitting there. I actually talked to him I said "I'm not gonna stick anything on the wall. I'm gonna put a sign on a stick and stick into the dirt."

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Right? And it's going to direct it. He let me put 12 sticks in that dirt all the way down. And it directed people to that room and I know it sounds like when was the last time you put a sign on a stick? But they let us do it like you've got to come up with ways to direct people, give people a knowledge that it's there but you have to use spaces that are inside rooms. And he's like, "Oh, isn't this so cool? You could do this activation out here in this lobby. Oh, but you can't put anything on the wall, and you can't put anything on the pillar..." So I like using some of the more indoor rooms where they have less, rules on it. It's just you have to be extremely creative to get them into those spaces. You know, I will tell you the little sticks kind of worked, you know.

KC: Does anybody have any questions? I'm going to take some of the questions that were put in from the virtual audience.

Q1: I sold sponsorships and exhibits for an Association for a year, immediately following the pandemic and our focus was – and I'd love to hear how you would address this.

They lost everything - you know you lose all your registration revenue, you lose all your sponsorship revenue when a pandemic comes along. Anything could happen that would make that situation happen again and they saw all their eggs in one basket. So what our focus became was selling a year-round presence and engagement and I'd love to hear you guys talk about possibilities for that.

AH: We do the same. We have a 365 program that we do. It's all virtual. It's our websites or webcast, our newsletter, that type of thing. So we are selling year round. We did put some of it into our sponsorship packages for US conference, but look for things that you're already doing throughout the year that you have those touch points.

KD: And one thing there is a hesitation with some of the sponsors right - if you were good to your sponsors during the pandemic and gave them back their money, ok, but if you didn't - trust isn't gonna be there, RSA gave back you know, full on money when the show canceled.

They were probably one of the more fortunate they were that last one to get an event in as the world was coming to an end, but it's all in that behavior and there's got to be that trust factor and if you can develop that trust that you'll work with them, they're ready to spend and they're ready to come back to the event. They want to come back.

AH: Yeah, we wanted to be good partner. So in doing that, we either rolled it over to the next time we would be face to face or we gave them their money back. And in that we heard a lot from our sponsors that we were one of the only conferences that were treating them like partners, we were listening to their pain points. I mean, we weren't

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the only ones canceling - they had to cancel other events they were either holding themselves or sponsoring. I mean, there was tons of revenue loss across the board. So I think really building that partnership with your sponsors is huge and you'll see that as you build your year out packages.

Q2: [Can't hear]

AH: Yeah, I mean, we definitely do. I mean, we all do. I mean, nobody's got an event where they don't have that one problem child. But it's disruptive to the meeting right? And it's disruptive in whatever environment that you're in. Have the conversation with the person I mean, we have a really good relationship with our sponsors where we did ban her from a meeting because it got to the point where it was not productive. It was a little aggressive and it wasn't just towards us it was to other people in the room and like I said, our sponsors are our partners and it needs there needs to be a respect level. So level set, have the conversation. We did eventually let her come back after the conversation. She acknowledged what she did was not appropriate. So I would start there.

Q3: Hi, everyone, the American Association of endocrinology. I'm Sarah. I guess I have a question on what your thought on - you have the metal packages and those stay pretty consistent over the years. Everyone's always saying, "Oh, you could get this sponsored or that sponsored"... How important do you think it is to have new opportunities to sponsor like a la carte, or just to kind of keep refining what you have because we know there's such a learning curve to get companies on board with a new idea, a new initiative a first time event, some thoughts there.

KD: So we're pretty open to new ideas like we go in to like a Reebok and we do sell most all the metal packages, but we're constantly creating new opportunities that are there for some of the new guys. We don't - we have packages you have to be a little guy to even get, like certain give those kinds of opportunities. And that's funny that came out of an exhibitor advisory board as well as saying, Hey, we know we got more. We're paying for this amount we're paying 10 times maybe 20 times more than some people and we want our fair share. We want to make sure the little guys are covered. And we do you know creating those kind of opportunities, creating opportunities that are not for exhibitors, right, some companies, they don't have anything to exhibit but they need some branding out there - allowing those kinds of opportunities to be there. We always want to make sure that we're getting new companies in. But sometimes when you create loyalty programs or you know priority points system, you do have a tendency to keep getting the same sponsors. So it is a challenge and you've got your loyalty, but how do I keep it fresh? And look at some kind of cool opportunities for someone that's brand new, and don't be afraid to customize something that is totally unique. And getting, you know, especially like you have a show like RSA and then all of a sudden we get this giant industry coming in. So let's get a 10 by 10 for you that

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they're not going to come in at a 10 by 10. They're only going to come in if they can be a platinum or diamond or if they're something special.

Just be super creative in what you give them. And you know, like a lab or something and something that's high profile, they're gonna pay premium dollars to start getting that elevation and kind of a little bit jumping the line.

KC: So we're about out of time here. So I just want to ask these ladies one final question and that is - if you have one practical tip that you would give that they can walk out of this room and apply, what would that be?

KD: My tip would be - as you're writing your sponsorship packages, do it in Excel. And I know it sounds weird, but if you're we're creating this, like here's all the opportunities here's your your diamond, your platinum and gold and you put checkmarks that add an extra column there and put the value of each. If you know you're selling exhibit space for \$5,000, your 10 by 20 is 10,000 like start filling this out. Because the one thing you're going to realize is you're giving too much away for the packages you're not pricing correctly. Right and if you start to do that you're like you start writing everything out. And if you need to have a big enough change, get away from Diamond, Platinum, Gold if you're already doing it, rename them like I am going to a conference tonight. And - the company is called Snowflake and they have like Double Black Diamond, Black Diamond, like, I mean, I know it sounds goofy, but like, you know then I have another one's called Luminary Marquis Premier - like, don't get stuck into those titles. And if you know you've got something wrong, you've got too much in the package, you're not pricing correctly - throw it all away. Get the thoughts down. Put it together in a spreadsheet, put the values in there, your top package should be about a 30% gift, right? So if you want to sell a package for \$100,000 it should equal up to about \$125,000. The net package should be like 15% and all the way down and should be at 100. But make sure your packages are evenly spaced out and know the value of each one of those items. And I think what you end up pulling out of that is saying I can pull these three things out. Now I can sell something I just made this company an extra \$150,000 by what isn't needed in those packages, and I can sell those separately.

KC: Alright, well number one, go into the app and post or put in what your two takeaways were from the session. And then finally, please join me in thanking these two ladies for sharing their knowledge. I know I learned a bunch today!