



Budgeting for Your Next Event – Part 2

Designing a trade show that dazzles attendees while staying within budget takes strategy, foresight, and creativity. In Part 1, we covered foundational budgeting principles—booth revenue, location tiers, contracts, and padding your numbers.

Now, let's dig into the hidden costs, smart investments, and revenue opportunities that can elevate your event without derailing your budget.

The Biggest Surprise Cost? Carpeting.

It may not be glamorous, but it can dramatically impact your bottom line.

According to Mike Bojesen, President of SourceOne Events, one of the most overlooked expenses when selecting a venue is flooring.

If you move from a traditional convention hall to a ballroom or multipurpose venue without built-in carpeting, the added flooring costs can be significant.

How to Offset Carpet Costs

If you fall in love with a venue that lacks carpeting, you still have options:

- Build carpet costs into booth pricing
- Have exhibitors cover carpet within their booths
- Allocate association funds to aisle carpeting only
- Seek sponsorship to underwrite common area flooring

Exhibitors are typically accustomed to purchasing booth carpet, so sharing the burden can make an "elite" venue financially feasible.

The key takeaway: **confirm what's included before you build your budget.**



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Plan and Budget for a Site Visit

The best way to avoid surprises? See it yourself.

A proper site visit allows you to:

- Walk the attendee path from hotel room to show floor
- Assess distances and flow
- Inspect loading docks and freight access
- Check door sizes, will exhibitor freight fit through the doors, or will you need to let exhibitors know to customize their shipping
- Confirm flooring, power drops, and layout logistics

Don't forget to budget for:

- Airfare
- Lodging
- Ground transportation

A few thousand dollars upfront can prevent tens of thousands in unexpected expenses later.

When it comes to event budgeting, fewer surprises mean stronger margins.

The team at SourceOne Events travels on many site visits with our clients because seeing the space firsthand is one of the smartest investments you can make.



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Entertainment: The Make-or-Break Moment

Your opening reception sets the tone for the entire event.

This is where networking begins, conversations spark, and exhibitors get valuable face time with attendees.

Strategically designed receptions:

- Draw attendees into the exhibit hall
- Position bars throughout the space to encourage flow
- Create relaxed environments that promote engagement

A thoughtfully planned kickoff event isn't just a party, it's a revenue strategy. More engagement equals happier exhibitors, and happier exhibitors return next year.

And here's a smart move: **Don't pay for it alone.**



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Sponsorships: Your Budget Multiplier

Sponsor dollars can offset major expense categories, from meals, to receptions, to signage.

“Breakfast sponsored by ABC Company” might mean:

- Significant direct revenue
- Branded signage throughout the venue
- Logo placement on napkins, screens, and floor graphics

Strong sponsorship strategy can fund:

- Food & beverage functions
- Entertainment
- Charging lounges
- Registration areas
- Entrance Units
- WiFi
- Lanyards & badges
- Floor decals and directional signage
- Branding

The most successful associations view sponsorships as branding ecosystems, not just logo placements.

When done right, sponsors gain visibility and prestige. Associations gain budget flexibility. Everyone wins.

SourceOne Events can help with sponsorship ideas for your pre-function and exhibit hall areas.



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The Power of Details

Large-scale productions with massive LED screens and live bands are impressive, but impact doesn't always require extravagance.

Sometimes the most memorable touches are subtle:

- Branded room key cards
- Welcome gifts or turn-down gifts
- Custom entrance units
- Elevator wraps
- Association-branded directional signage

These touchpoints reinforce branding throughout the attendee journey.

Many hotels can implement key card branding or in-room gift drops, but you must coordinate early and confirm associated labor fees.

The difference between a good show and a great show often lies in these finishing touches.

Final Takeaway: Be Strategic, Not Reactive

Budget creep usually comes from:

- Overlooking venue inclusions
- Underestimating décor or flooring
- Ignoring contract clauses
- Missing sponsorship opportunities

Instead of reacting to rising costs, plan for them:

- Identify where your budget may swell
- Secure sponsor dollars early
- Invest in experiences that drive exhibitor ROI
- Focus on details that amplify branding

Note: When you combine careful forecasting with creative revenue streams, you gain the flexibility to enhance your event where it matters most. Because at the end of the day, budgeting isn't about limiting your vision, it's about funding it wisely so you can truly **Trade Up to a Better Experience**.