

SPENDING MONEY TO MAKE MONEY

STRATEGIC BUDGET NEGOTIATION TIPS FOR EVENT PROFESSIONALS

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THE PROBLEM

The Budget Dilemma



We've all felt that knot in our stomach when advocating for event budgets. Despite knowing exactly what would elevate our events, we struggle to find the language that convinces decision-makers to invest in our vision – and too often, our area is seen as a cost center rather than a strategic investment. Have you experienced:

- Denied requests
- Requests for line-by-line justifications
- Having to cut high-impact elements due to costs
- Struggles with articulating value for key event elements

MINDSET SHIFT

The secret to securing resources isn't about more detailed planning or prettier proposals. The game-changer is shifting how we communicate about money and value to budget decision makers.



It's Not About:

- Better planning
- Prettier proposals
- Detailed spreadsheets

It IS About:

- Changing how you talk about money
- Transforming "costs" into "investments"
- Speaking the language of decision-makers



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BUDGET CONVERSATIONS

Most leaders don't truly understand the event business, which creates a natural apprehension about investing in something they don't fully grasp.

This knowledge gap, combined with humans' natural risk aversion around money, means decision-makers instinctively focus on what might go wrong rather than what might go right.



3 PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIFT EXAMPLES:

FROM COST TO INVESTMENT

- X "THIS COSTS \$10,000"
- ✓ "THIS \$10,000 BRINGS IN \$30,000"

FROM EXPENSE TO OPPORTUNITY COST

- X "WE NEED THIS NEW PLATFORM"
- ✓ "WITHOUT THIS, WE LOSE \$45,000 IN LEADS"

FROM FEATURES TO OUTCOMES

- X "WE NEED A NEW STAGE DESIGN"
- ✓ "WE NEED 30% MORE ENGAGEMENT"

THE ROI FRAMEWORK

To secure budget, you need to think like an investor, not just an event planner. These five categories provide a framework for identifying and quantifying the true ROI potential of every element in your event.

5 Categories of Event ROI:

Category	Examples
Direct Revenue	Registration, sponsorships, exhibitors
Lead Generation	Qualified leads, conversion rates
Relationship Value	Retention rates, lifetime value
Brand Enhancement	Media coverage, social engagement
Internal Benefits	Employee engagement, knowledge transfer

BUILDING YOUR EVENT VALUE CALCULATOR

Numbers get budgets approved, while fluffy talk about 'better experiences' simply doesn't move the needle. This four-step process helps you create a simple but powerful calculator that transforms event elements into concrete business value.

4-Step Process:

1. Baseline Measurement - What can you measure now?
2. Element Mapping - Connect investments to ROI categories from slide 5
3. Impact Estimation - Example: "Premium speakers increase attendance by 15-20%"
4. Value Calculation - Example: "250 more leads \times 10% conversion \times \$5,000 = \$125,000"

ALIGNING WITH BUSINESS GOALS

Many event professionals miss opportunities by focusing too much on creating amazing experiences while losing sight of why the organization is hosting the event in the first place. Understanding these three critical areas helps you align your event objectives with what your company truly cares about.

Find Out What Matters:

- **Strategic Priorities**
Where to look: Town halls, annual reports, direct questions
- **Key Metrics**
What to track: The numbers leadership cares about
- **Leadership Language**
How to learn it: Listen in meetings, study communications






CREATING ALIGNMENT

When you speak the language of your decision-makers and align with their priorities, you transform from 'the expense' to 'the solution.' These three alignment strategies help you position your events as strategic tools that directly address business objectives.

3 Alignment Strategies

Map Event Elements to Strategic Initiatives	Example: Hands-on demos = Product adoption
Adopt Executive KPIs	Examples: Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) = "Our event reduces the cost of acquiring customers by 15% vs. digital ads" Net Promoter Score (NPS) = "Attendees show a 40% higher loyalty score than non-attendees"
Use Their Language	Example: "Targeted retention initiative" vs. "Networking event"

THE 7-POINT BUSINESS CASE FRAMEWORK



This seven-point structure transforms how you present your budget requests, moving from what can be considered simply a “cost” to the business challenge you're solving.

- Start with the Business Challenge
- Assess the Current Situation & Needs
- Present the Solution as Investment
- Provide clear ROI Projections
- Address Risks and Alternatives
- Connect to Strategic Priorities
- Close with a Clear Request

Action Steps

Knowledge without action doesn't create change, so here are three specific steps to implement what you've learned today. This approach helps you build momentum, starting with a simple reframing exercise this week and building toward strategic conversations.

This Week:

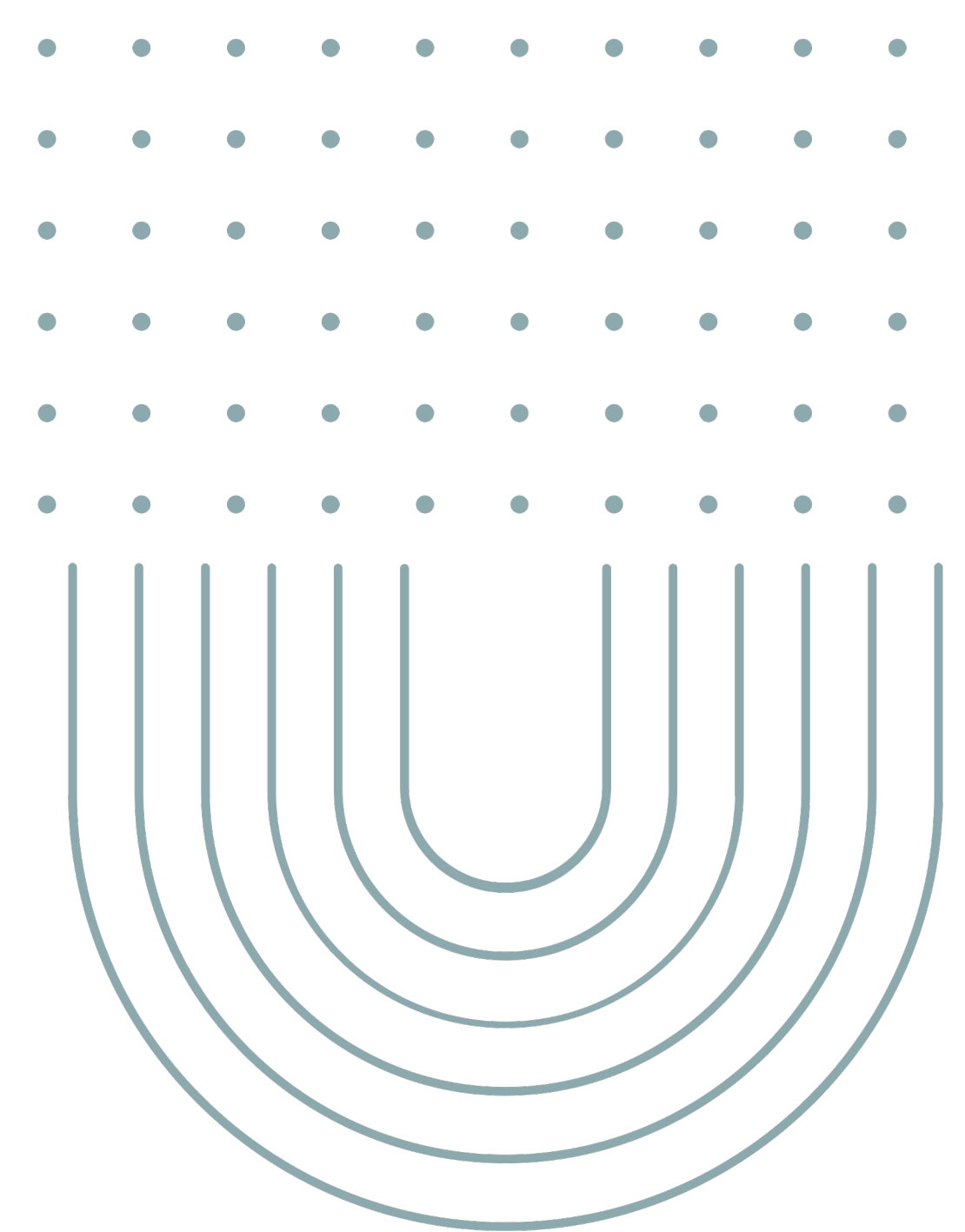
Reframe one expense as an investment

This Month:

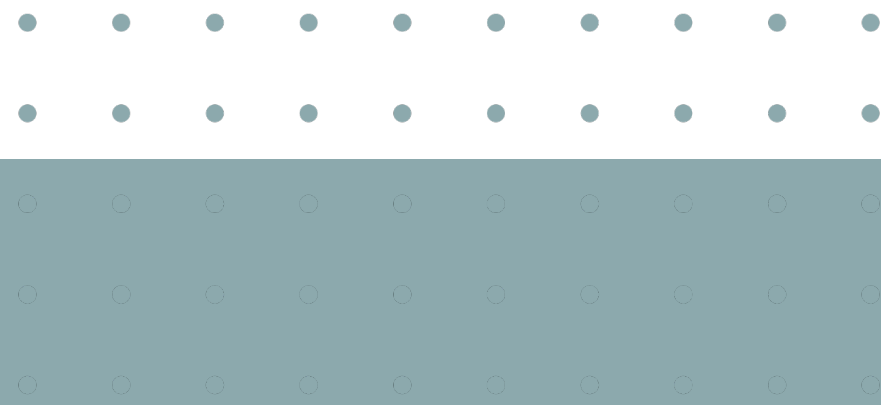
Create your Event Value Calculator

This Quarter:

Schedule conversations with executives



Remember: You're not a cost center. You're a strategic business driver creating measurable value!



THANK YOU

Do you have any question?

