



Local Nonprofit Sponsorship Trends for 2025

*Survey Conducted and Analyzed by Ellen Sartin at [ZipSprout](#),
a division of [Citation Labs](#).*

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Purpose of the Survey

We conducted a nationwide survey to uncover sponsorship trends in 2025 - from the *sponsor's* perspective.

Specifically, we wanted to understand why businesses choose to invest in sponsorships to support local nonprofits.

Launched December 2024, *Surveys for Good* set out to answer:

- **Why do businesses sponsor local organizations?**
- **What factors influence those decisions?**
- **How much of a role does online visibility play?**
- **Do sponsorships boost brand recognition?**

Key Findings



TOP MOTIVATORS

Community impact & common values were the highest motivations for sponsoring.



SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT

Average investment is between \$50-\$300 & most businesses give \$500 or less per sponsorship.



ONLINE VISIBILITY

Placing high value on visibility does not translate to higher sponsorship investments.



SPONSORSHIP RENEWALS

Renewing is common, with 58% of businesses sponsoring for a year or more.



BRAND & REVENUE

Sponsorship value for brand and ROI is often underused or underestimated.

Methods & Structure



We sent an anonymous online survey to a random sample of nonprofit organizations in the ZipSprout network that we've worked with over the past 18 months.

The goal: reach business owners who sponsored local nonprofits within the last year. Nonprofits were asked to forward the survey to their current or past sponsors.

The survey covered four areas:

1. High-level company details
2. Current and former sponsorship information
3. Motivations for sponsoring
4. Perceived return on investments (ROI) and brand impact

We received a total of 146 responses. 120 were used in the analysis.*

While more research is needed, the sample provided a solid foundation for early insights.

**10 blank & 16 incomplete submissions - these 26 were excluded.*

Methods & Structure

The “Good” Part



ZipSprout is proud to be committed to **good** works.

For every survey completed, we donated \$25 to the nonprofits that shared it with their business sponsors (up to \$500 per organization).

We donated a combined

\$3,000

across 17 participating
nonprofits!

Demographics



83% of businesses surveyed have 50 or fewer employees



66% sponsor 1-5 organizations per year



58% have sponsored for more than 1 year

Motivations

Community-Focused Factors

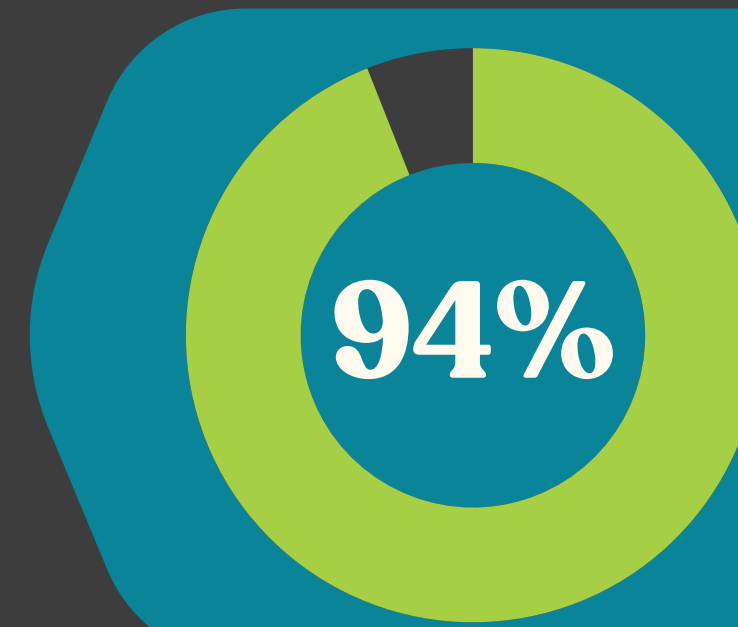


An overwhelming majority of participants rated **community impact** and **having common values** as the highest motivations for sponsoring local organizations.

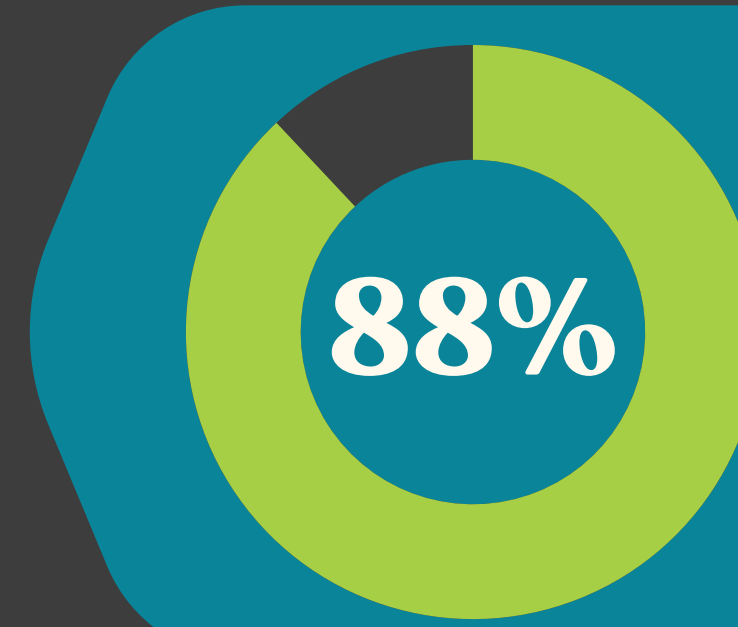
Among respondents who found these factors “very motivating” or higher:

- 81% rated **community impact** as “extremely motivating”
- 74% rated **common values** as “extremely motivating”

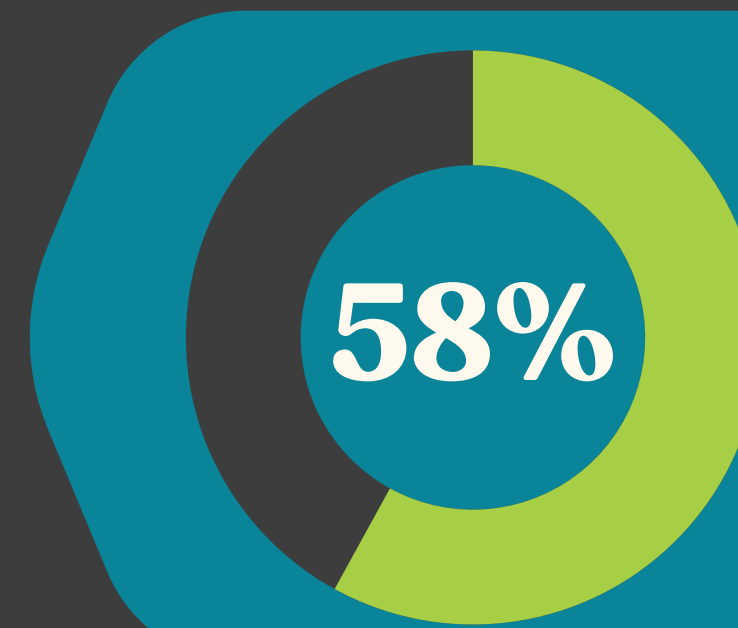
These community-driven motivations likely influenced renewal rates, as most respondents reported sponsoring the same organization for more than a year.



rated **community impact** as “Extremely Motivating” or “Very Motivating”



rated **common values** as “Extremely Motivating” or “Very Motivating”



have sponsored for **more than 1 year**

Motivations

Business-Related Factors



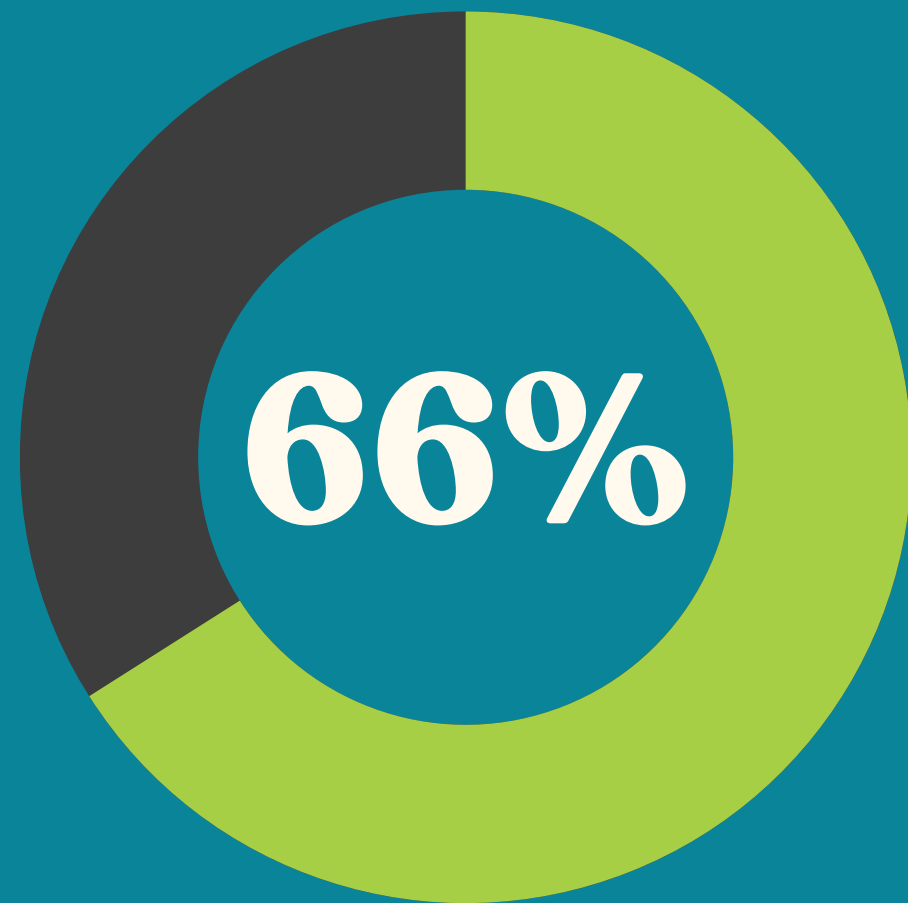
While less influential than community impact or common values, nearly half of respondents still classify **online visibility** and **business growth** as contributing motivators for sponsoring local organizations.

Business growth ranked highest among business-related factors, with **online visibility** close behind.

Tax benefits ranked the lowest, with **65%** saying they were “Somewhat, Slightly, or Not Motivating.”

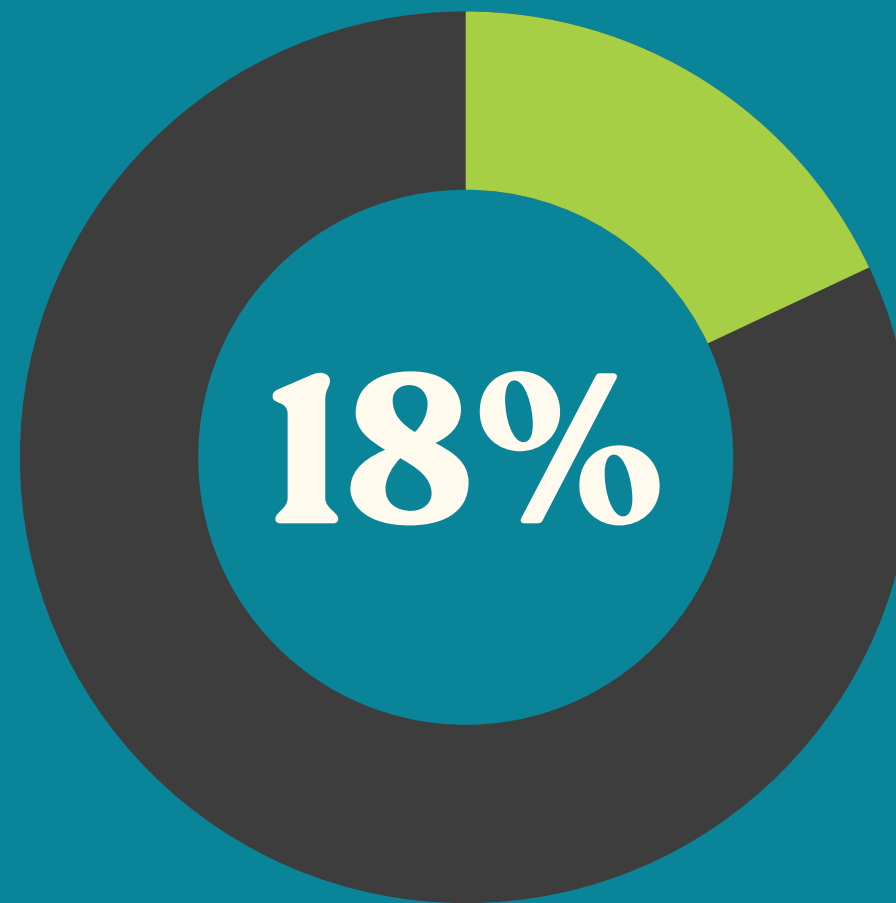


Investment Insights

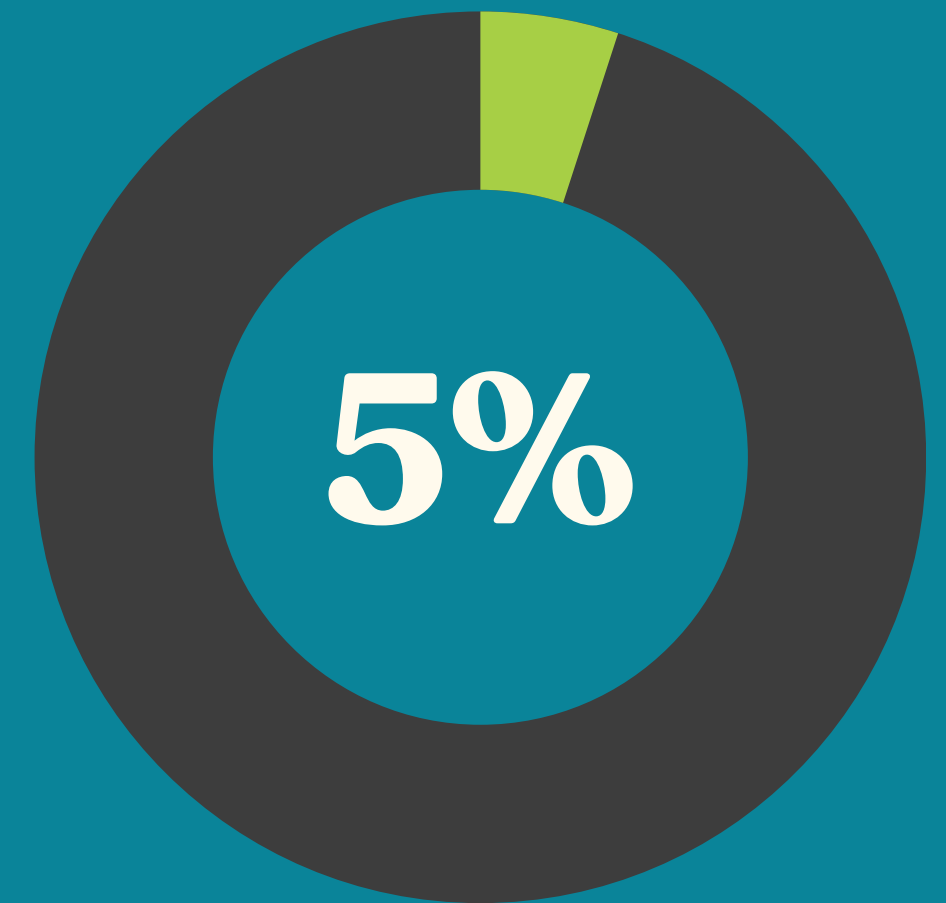


of sponsorships
average \$500 or less
per sponsorship

(excludes in-kind donations)



of businesses give
in-kind donations
instead of monetary
support



spend \$5,000
or more per
sponsorship

Investment Insights

Online Visibility & Amount Invested

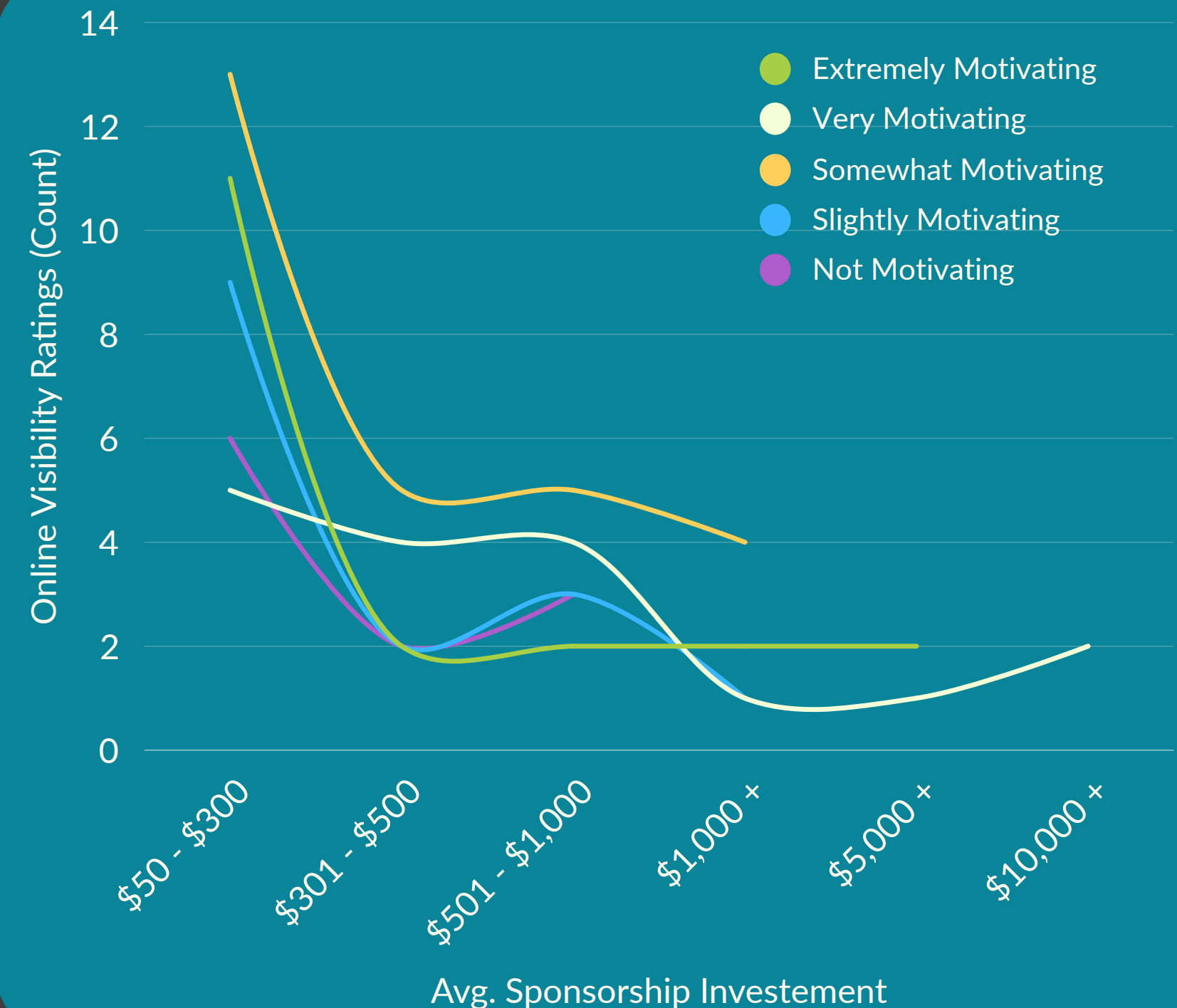


We analyzed whether motivation for **online visibility** impacts the **amount invested per sponsorship**.

Comparing businesses spending \$50-\$1,000 per sponsorship with those spending over \$1,000, we found **no correlation** - even among respondents who rated visibility as “extremely motivating.”

This suggests that valuing visibility does not translate to higher sponsorship investments.

Online Visibility Ratings by Average Sponsorship Investment

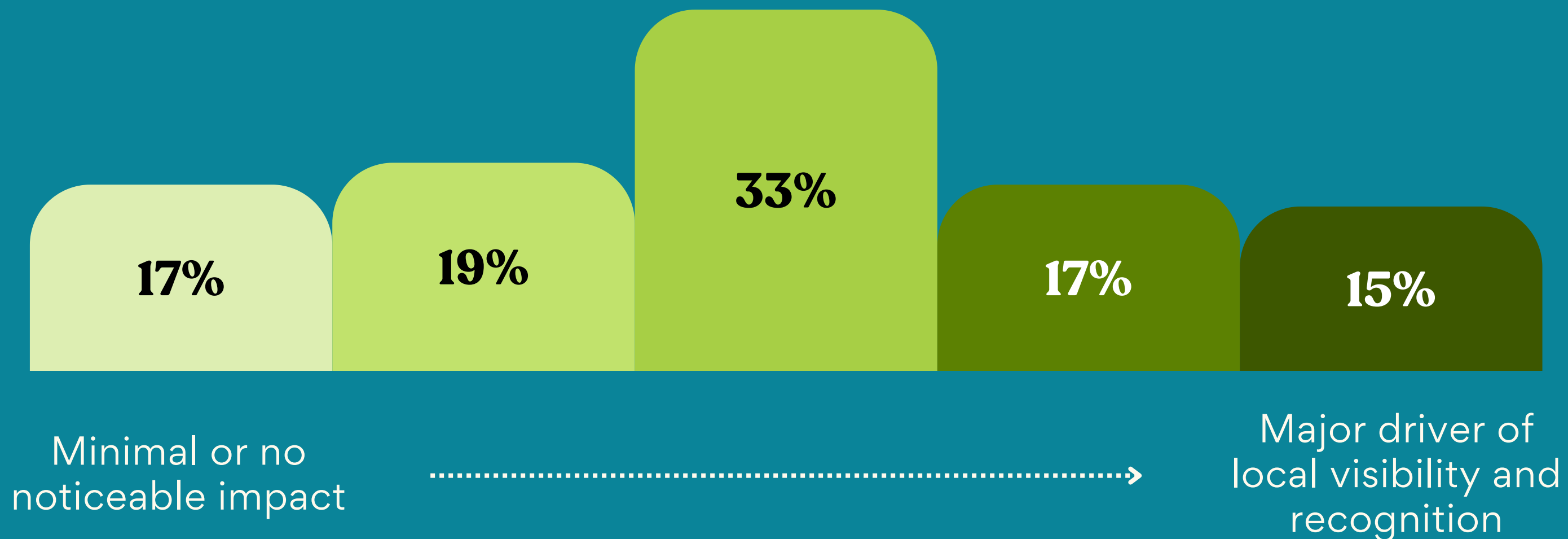


*responses listed as "unsure" or "in-kind" for average sponsorship amount not included above

Influence on Brand

“How do sponsorships contribute to enhancing brand recognition and strengthening a business’s presence in the community?”

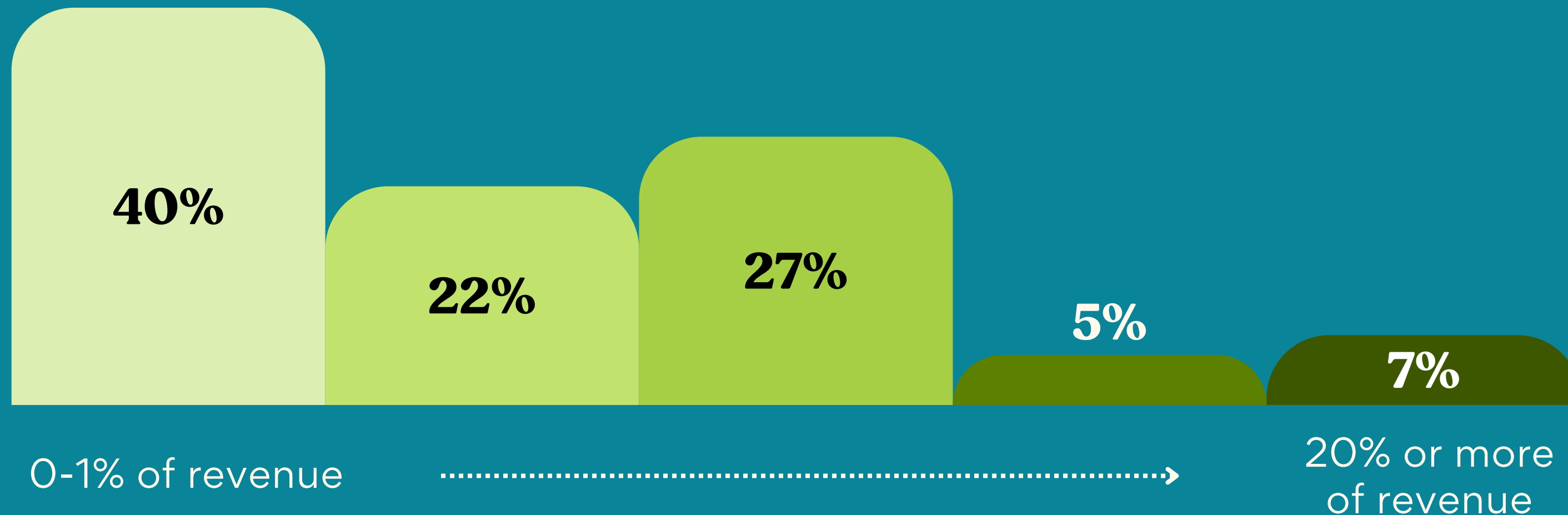
Responses were fairly evenly distributed at both ends of the scale, with a slight majority (33%) falling in the middle.



Influence on Revenue

“How significant are leads or customers gained from sponsorships to the business’s total annual revenue?”

40% of businesses said sponsorships account for **1% or less** of their total annual revenue, while **only 7%** said they contribute **20% or more**.



Discussion



In the past year, securing funding has become increasingly difficult for nonprofits. This pressure has heightened the need for local business sponsorships.

So how can organizations attract more business sponsors?

To answer this question, we first need to understand what motivates businesses to sponsor organizations in their communities:

- Why do businesses sponsor local organizations?
- What factors influence those decisions?
- How much of a role does online visibility play?
- Do sponsorships boost brand recognition?

Our findings show businesses are heavily community-driven; choosing to sponsor based on community impact and common values with an organization, rather than brand influence or financial gain.



Community Involvement Matters More than ROI

Almost all respondents (94%) rated community impact and shared values with an organization as highly motivating, showing that businesses see sponsorships less as a financial transaction and more as a way to engage with their communities.

While most businesses reported little to no impact on revenue from sponsorships, **48%** still cited business growth as a motivator. This suggests sponsorships are viewed as a **social gain** more than a financial return.

We also found that **58% of businesses** sponsor the same organization for more than a year, implying that strong, value-driven relationships lead to longer-term partnerships and renewals.

Businesses Underestimate Digital Benefits of Sponsorship

While **42% of businesses** said online visibility influenced their sponsorship decisions, **only 15%** consider sponsorships to be a major driver of local visibility. Many appear to undervalue the impact on their online presence.

Even among businesses who rated visibility as a strong motivator, few invested more per sponsorship or supported a higher number of organizations.

The average investment falls between **\$50 - \$300** per sponsorship, with **54%** spending **\$500 or less** per sponsorship, and only **26%** sponsoring **five or more** organizations per year.

Local Visibility is the Future of Search



As AI search through Large Language Models (LLMs) replaces traditional search, local trust is quickly becoming a crucial aspect of online visibility.

Based on ChatGPT research, local sponsorships strengthen LLM trust signals, thereby improving a business's likelihood of being cited in AI responses.

“AI models are contextual: a single well-placed mention in a trusted local source can dramatically improve the chance your business is cited in LLM responses.”

GPT-5 (ChatGPT, OpenAI)

If a business is not trusted well enough by LLMs, they won't appear *at all* in AI summaries or responses.

By promoting the digital benefits of local sponsorship (i.e. website placement and social media posts), organizations can attract more business investors. In return, businesses can help bolster these digital benefits of the partnership by engaging with the organizations on social media and highlighting their involvement in the community.



About ZipSprout

Founded in 2016 by Garrett French, CEO of Citation Labs, ZipSprout has made a significant impact in the local SEO and nonprofit communities.

We connect businesses with grassroots organizations in the places they serve, creating meaningful community partnerships through local sponsorships with nonprofits, organizations, and events.

To ensure a mutual fit, we talk to each organization individually, and then manage all the sponsorship details so our clients can focus on impact, and the organizations can focus on their mission.

This “hands-on” approach helps businesses grow their local presence, and gives organizations the support they need to thrive.

While we work with many smaller businesses and local brands, we also partner with enterprise-level companies and marketing agencies seeking authentic ways to connect with communities and build brand visibility.



Our Mission

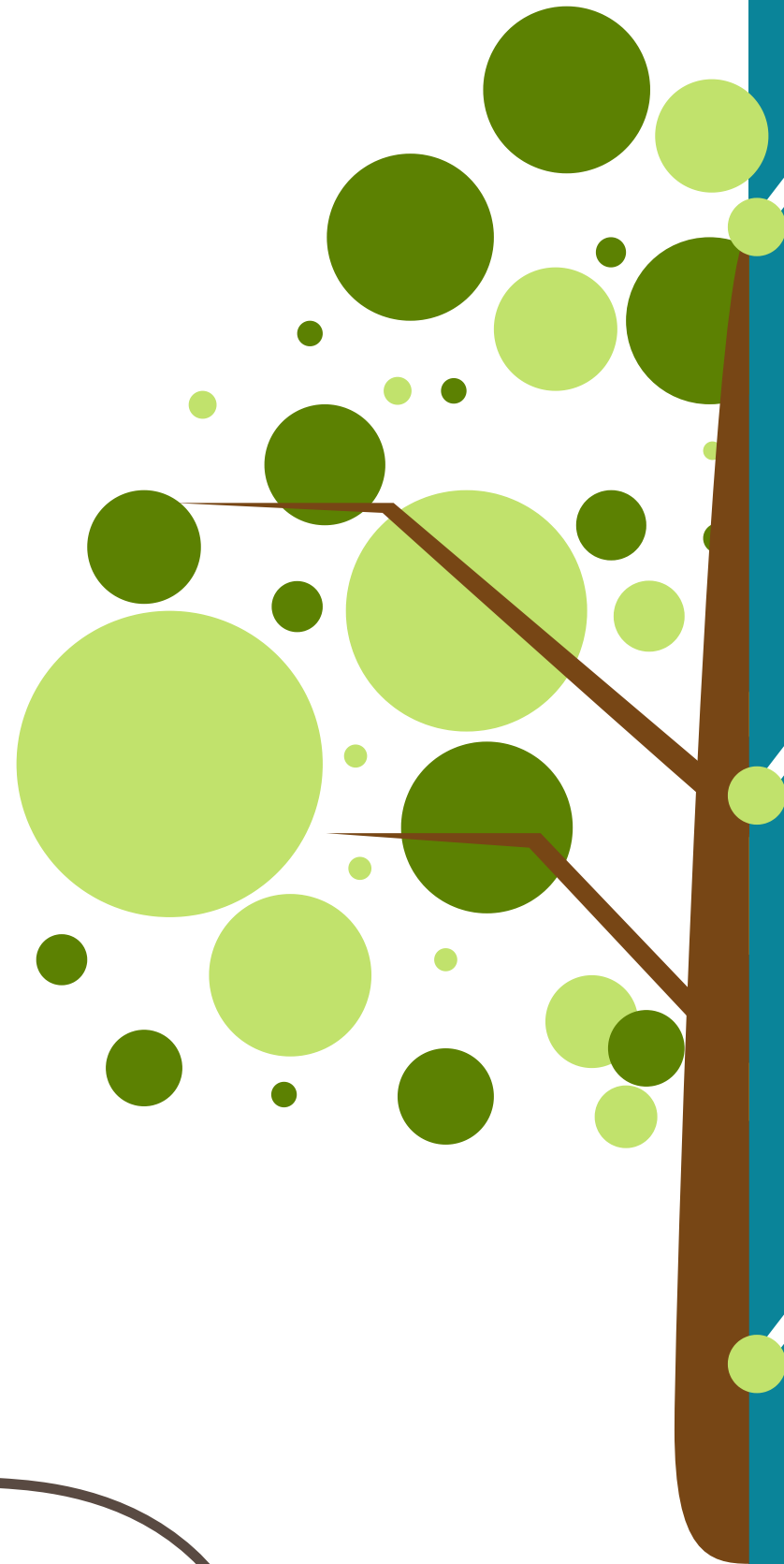
To create meaningful connections between businesses and grassroots organizations through local sponsorships that strengthen communities and drive real-world impact.

Our Vision

A world where marketing builds lasting relationships between local businesses and grassroots organizations, creating positive change in communities.

Our Impact

In Local Communities



\$9+ Million
sponsorship dollars placed
on behalf of our clients!
(As of Oct. 2025)

Over
\$2M
since
Jan 2025!

Over 24,500
sponsorship matches
facilitated!

Our service is
completely free
for the organizations!
(We even cover processing fees!)





About the Author



Ellen Sartin | Project Manager | ZipSprout



Ellen has over 10 years of marketing and business development experience, spending the first 8 years of her career managing a small coaching and consulting business in Atlanta, GA.

With a background in research development, including a minor degree in Applied Statistics and Data Analysis, Ellen is a proud “data nerd.”

Ellen has found a love for diving into the research and data aspects of SEO and search, and the tech world in general.

She is passionate about the work she does in Local SEO, and is extremely proud of the more than \$9M sponsorship dollars placed by ZipSprout with local nonprofits and organizations since 2016.

In her spare time, Ellen can be found playing video games, painting, or exploring nature with her husband, son, and dogs.

