



Nonprofit Sponsorships for Local Visibility

Boost your Presence with Community PR!

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

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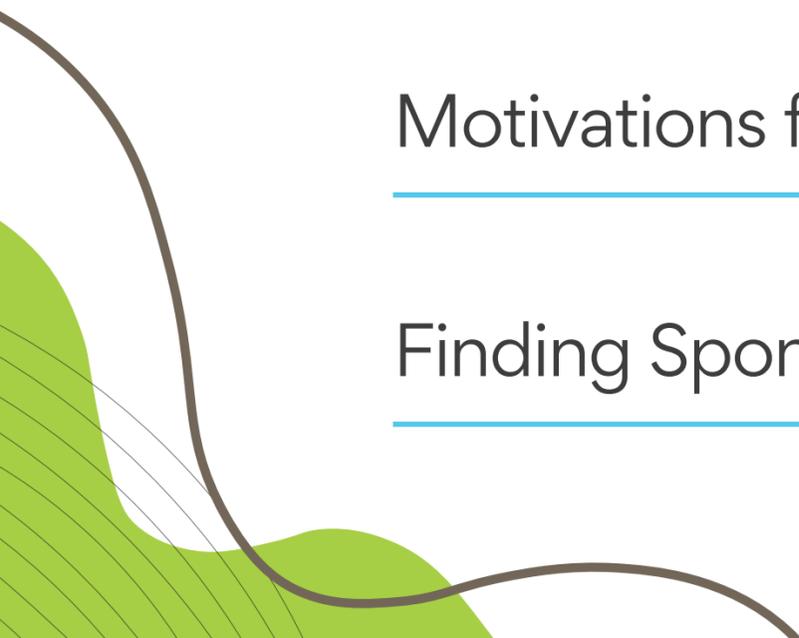
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Purpose of the Survey

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 - and determine if businesses perceive them as valuable tools for local online visibility.

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 actually boost brand recognition?**

Key Findings



SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT

Average investment is between \$50-\$300, with most businesses giving \$500 or less per sponsorship.



ONLINE VISIBILITY

48% of businesses said online visibility motivates them to sponsor.



SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Community engagement, logo & link listed on the website, and recognition at events stood out as the most valuable benefits.



IMPACT OF SPONSORSHIP

83% of businesses that sponsor 10+ organizations reported a strong or major impact on visibility.



BRAND RECOGNITION

Sponsorship value for brand recognition is still underestimated by many businesses.

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



72% sponsor 1-5 organizations per year



58% have sponsored for more than 1 year

Motivations

Community-Focused Factors

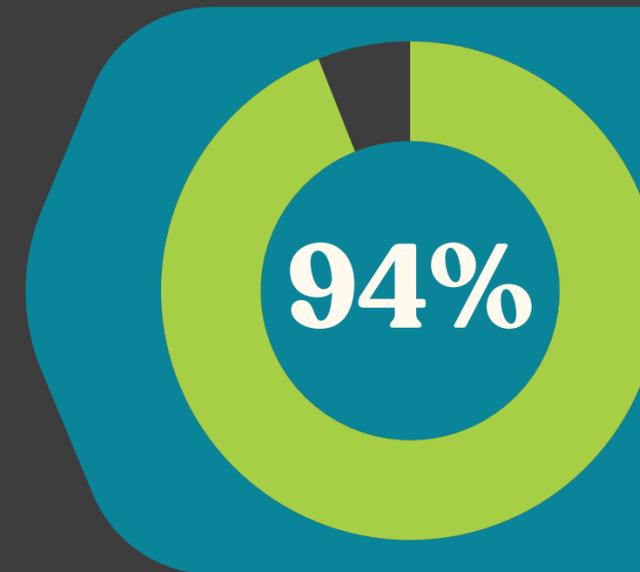


An overwhelming majority of businesses rated **community impact** and **having common values** as the highest motivations for sponsoring local organizations.

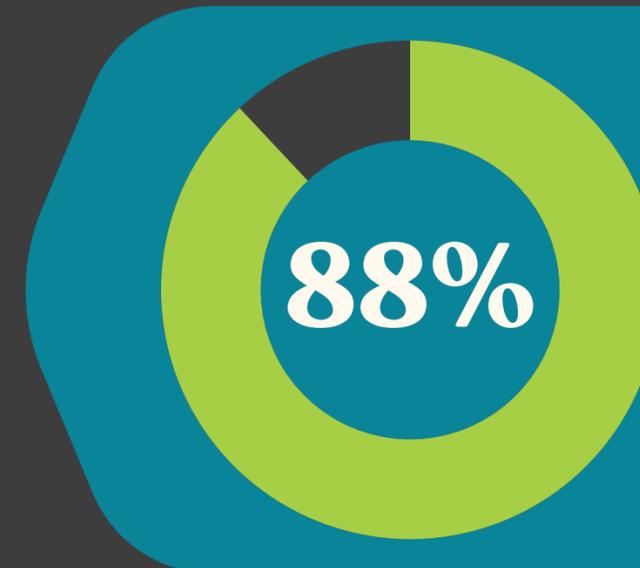
Among respondents who found these factors “very motivating” or higher:

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

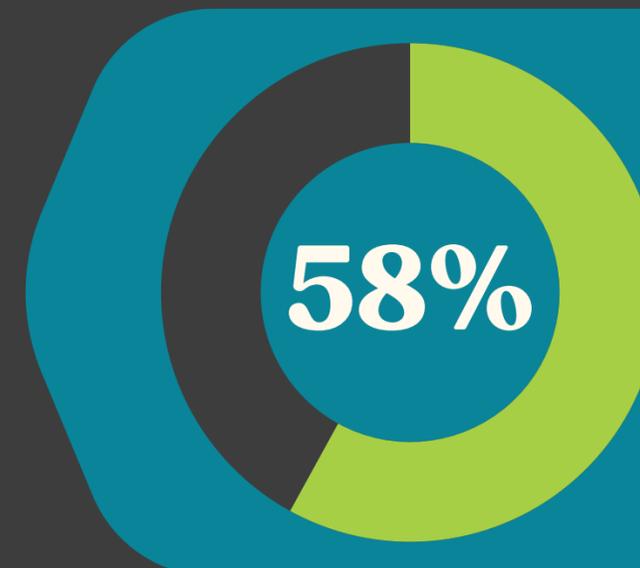
These community-driven motivations likely influenced renewal rates, as most respondents reported sponsoring the same organization for more than a year.



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.”



Finding Sponsorships

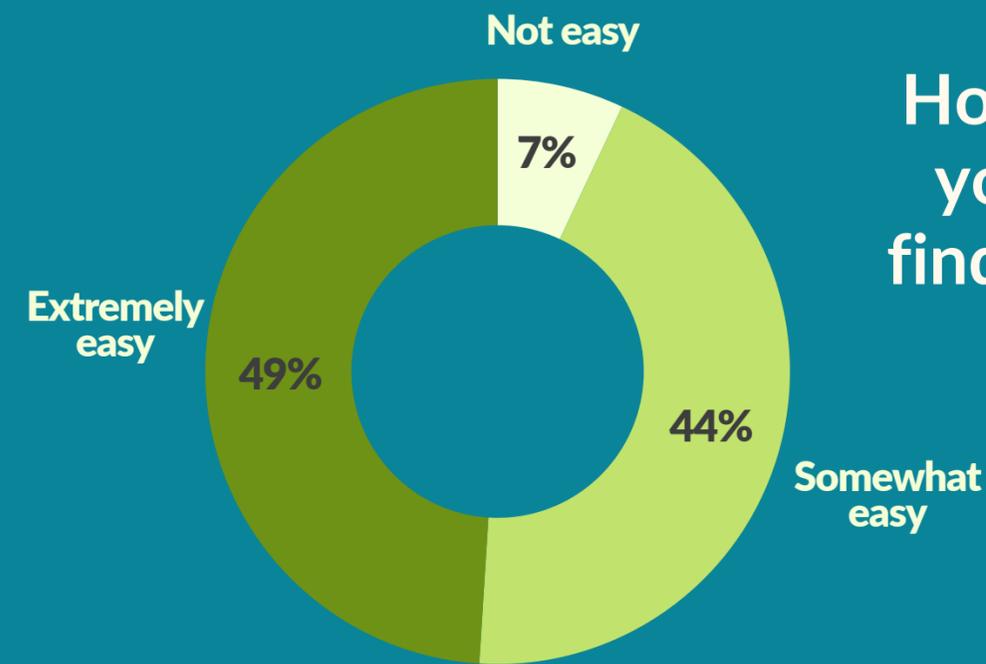
Annual Sponsorship Requests



Most businesses reported that finding organizations to sponsor is fairly easy.

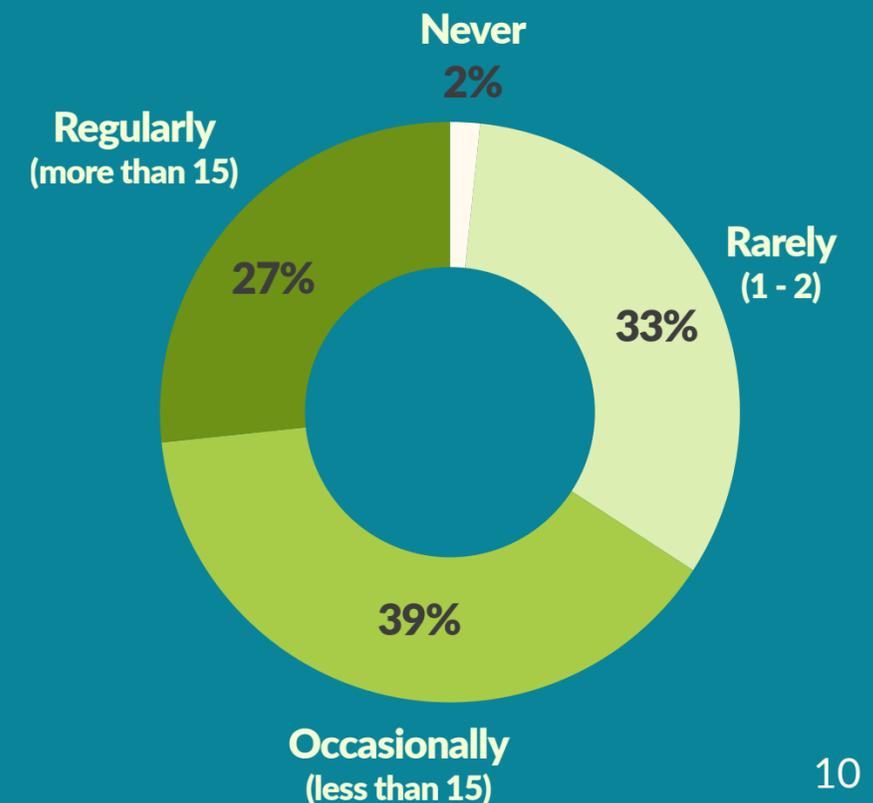
Almost **half** (49%) said finding organizations to sponsor is **extremely easy**.

The majority of businesses (66%) are approached **more than twice a year** with requests to sponsor, while 27% receive **more than 15 requests** annually.



How easy is it for your business to find organizations to sponsor?

Annually, how often do you feel your business is approached with sponsorship requests?



Finding Sponsorships

“When approached, **how selective is your business** in choosing which sponsorship requests to accept?”

Most businesses stated they are “highly selective,” accepting very few requests, when approached for sponsorship.

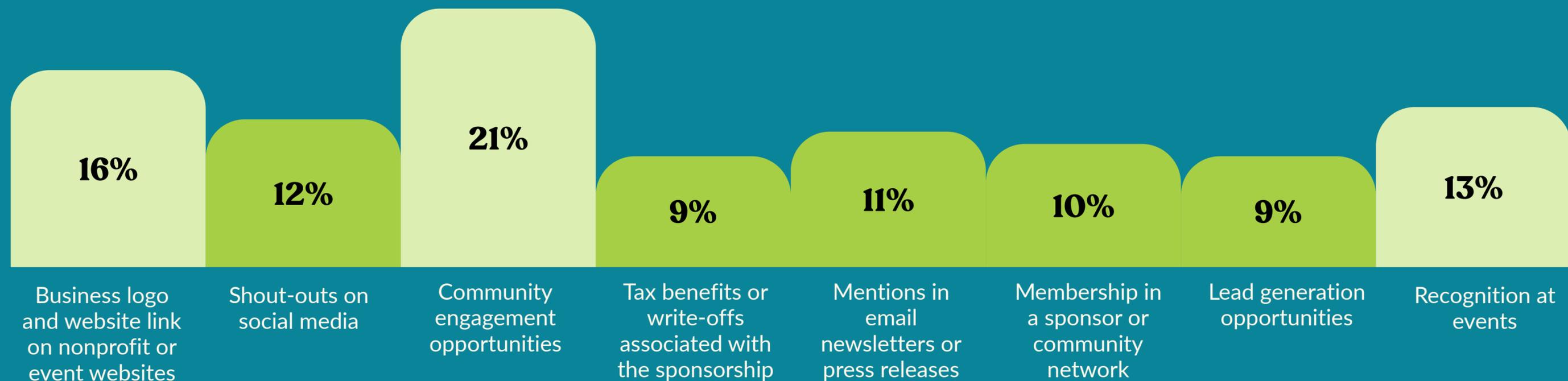


** Responses from businesses reporting 'We do not accept any requests' were excluded*

Sponsorship Benefits

“Which of the following visibility or reach-related sponsorship benefits do you feel are the most valuable to your business?”

Community engagement ranks at the top as far as perceived value from sponsorships. Having a business logo and link on the nonprofit website and recognition at events are also considered valuable to businesses.



Sponsorship Benefits

Most Valuable Visibility-Related Benefits



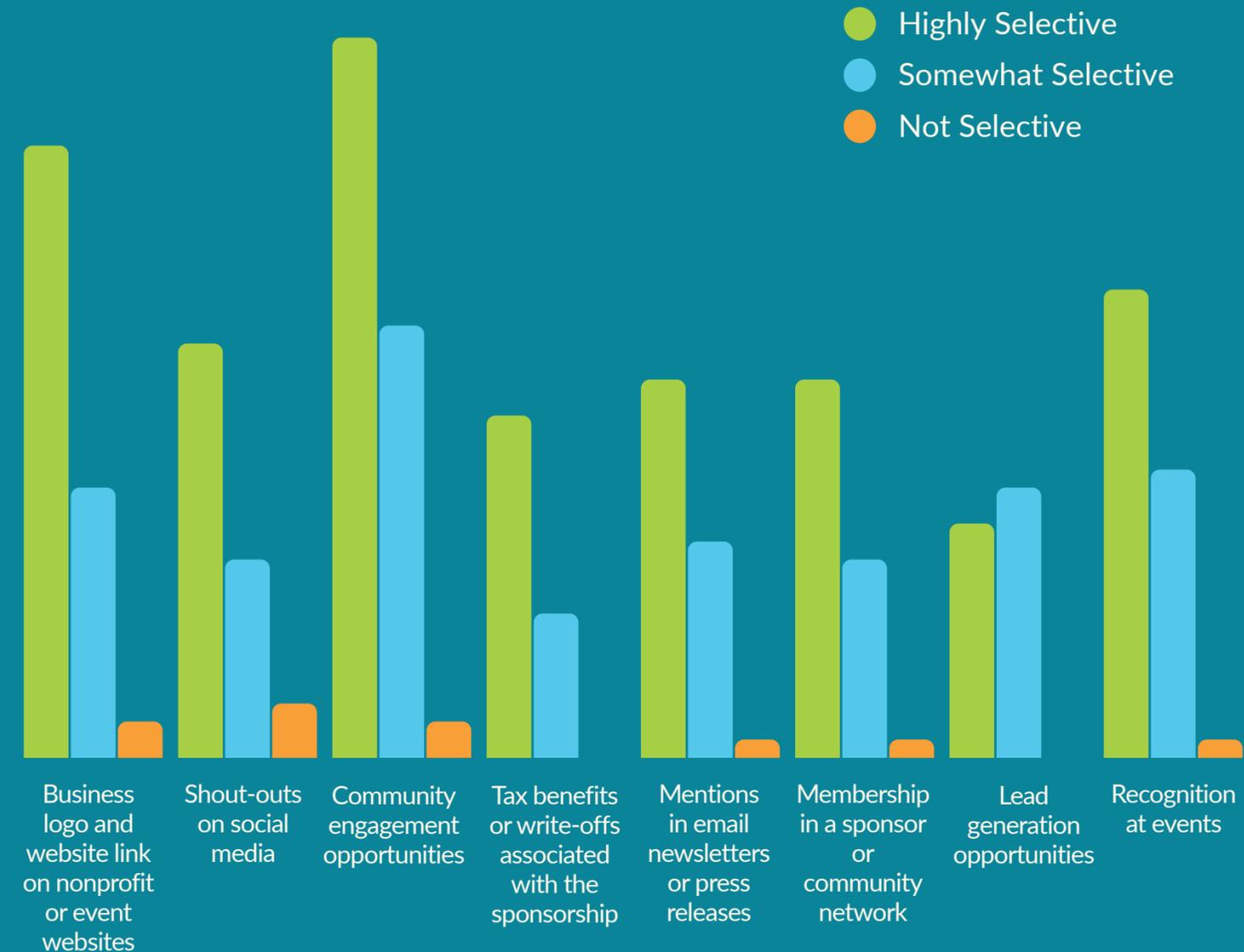
Businesses that are **highly selective** when approached for sponsorship **value community engagement the most**, which aligns with the responses from the other survey questions.

Somewhat selective businesses tend to value **lead generation opportunities** the most, even over community engagement.

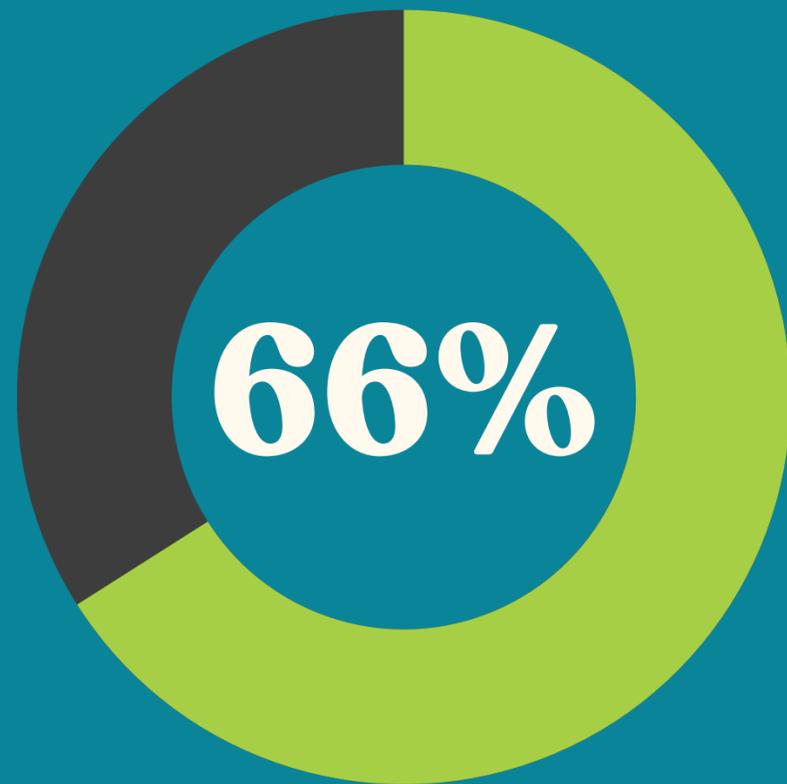
Businesses that are **not selective** make up a very small contribution across all categories, but seem to value **shout-outs on social media** the most.

* Responses from businesses reporting 'We do not accept any requests' were excluded from these comparisons

Most Valuable Visibility-Related Sponsorship Benefits by Business Selectivity



Investment Insights

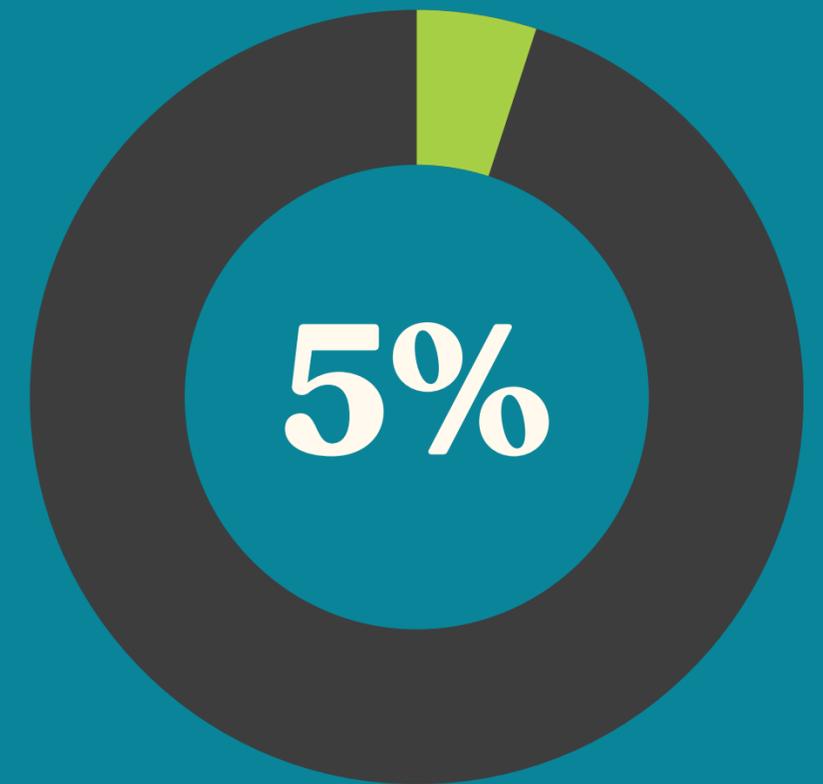


of sponsorships
average \$500 or less
per sponsorship

(excludes in-kind donations)



of businesses give
in-kind donations
instead of monetary
support

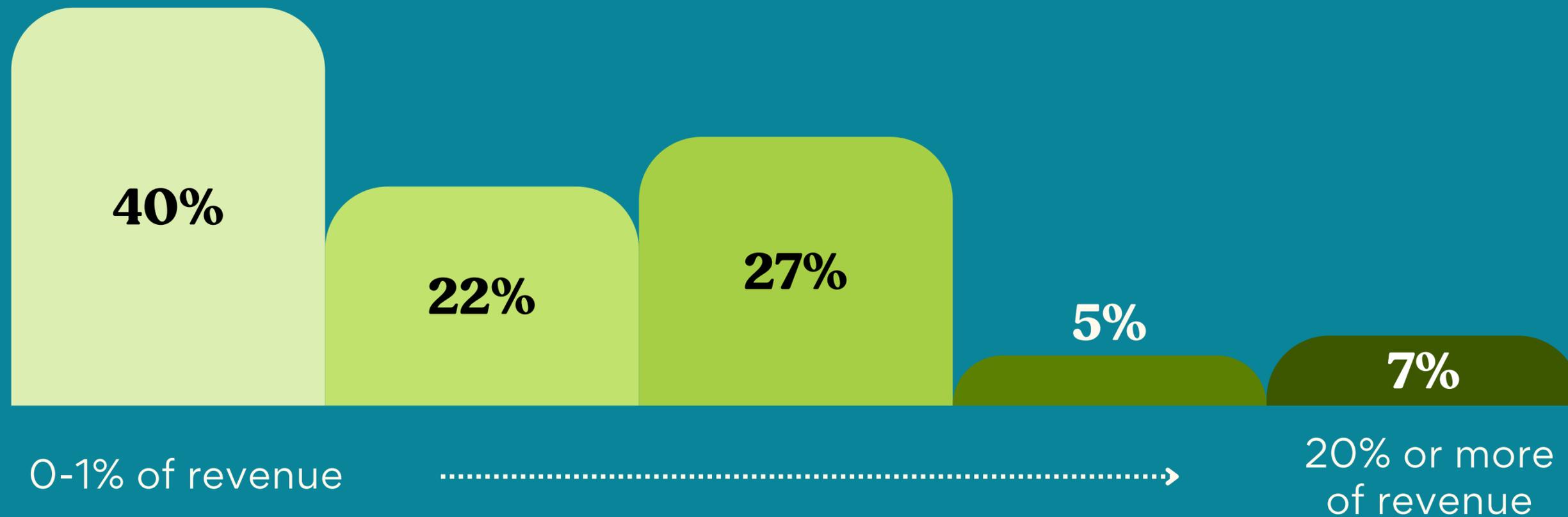


spend \$5,000
or more per
sponsorship

Investment Insights

“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**.



Investment Insights

Online Visibility & Amount Invested

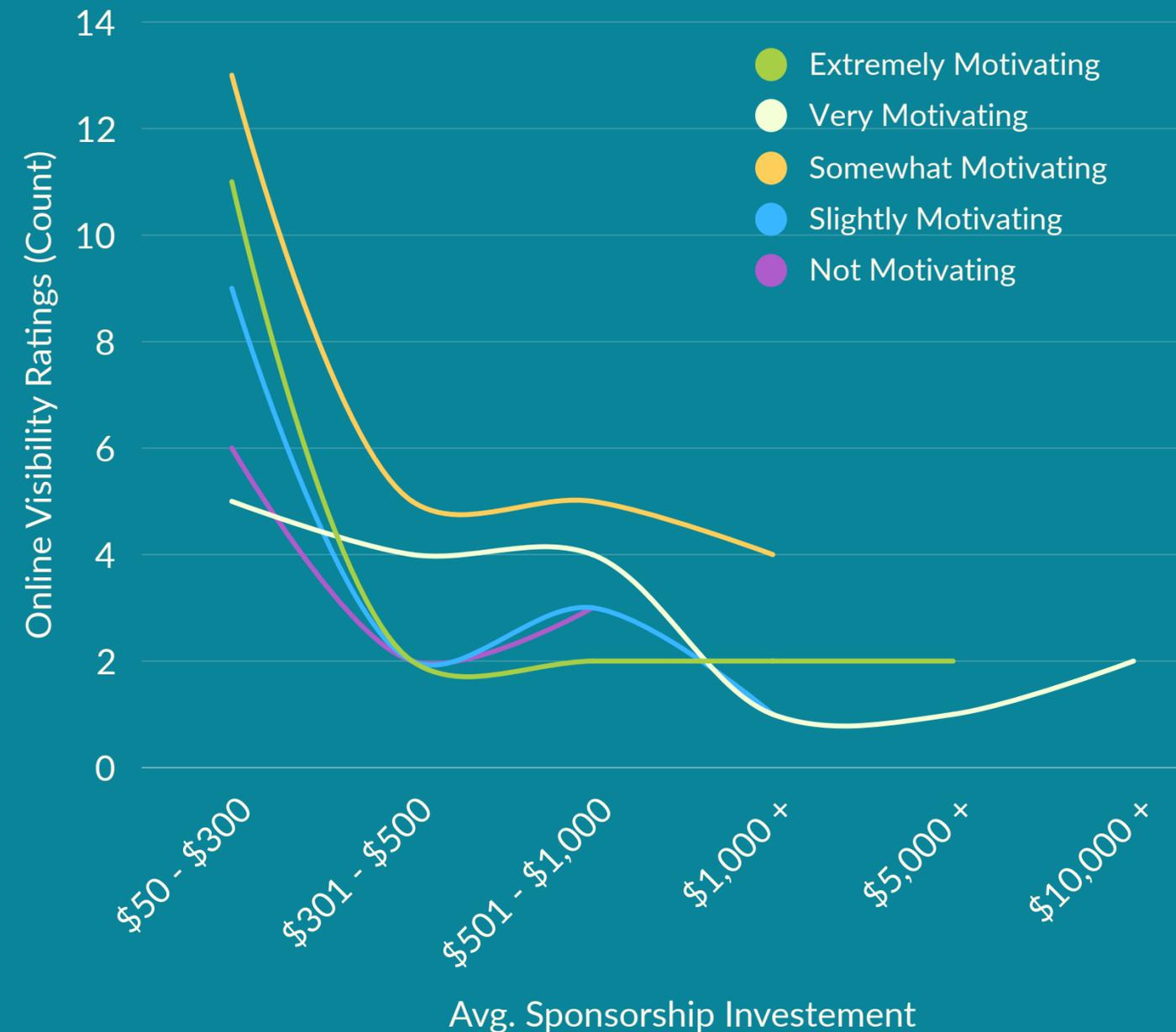


We analyzed whether motivation for **online visibility** impacts the **amount invested per sponsorship**.

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



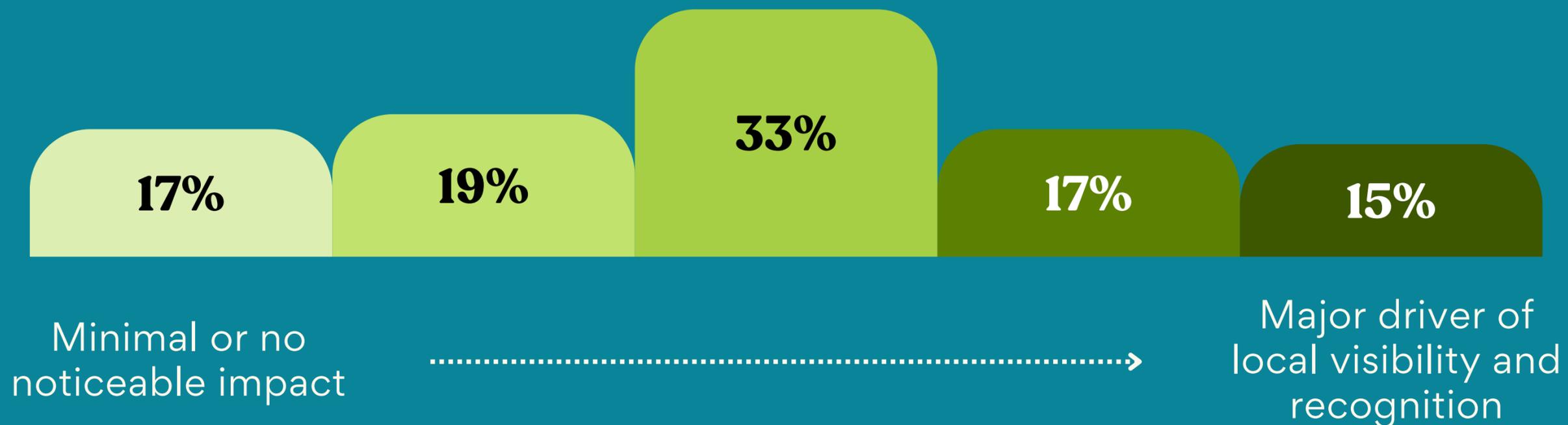
**responses listed as "unsure" or "in-kind" for average sponsorship amount not included above*

Impact on Brand

“How much do your sponsorships contribute to enhancing your **brand recognition** and strengthening your presence in the community?”

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

However, roughly a third of businesses (32%) still reported sponsorships have a strong or major impact.



Impact on Brand

Sponsorship Volume & Brand Recognition



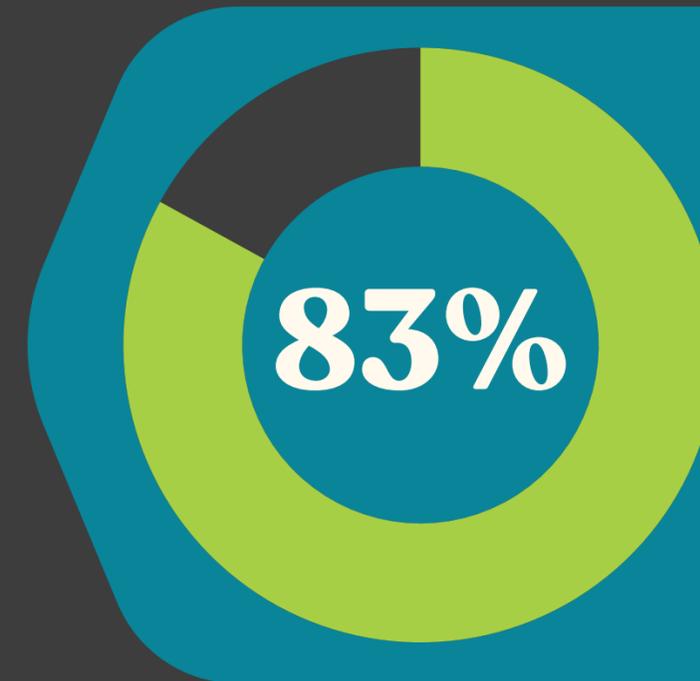
We explored whether sponsoring a greater number of organizations influences brand recognition from sponsorships.

The vast majority of businesses (83%) that sponsor **more than 10 organizations** per year reported that sponsorships have a **strong or major impact** on **brand recognition** in their community.

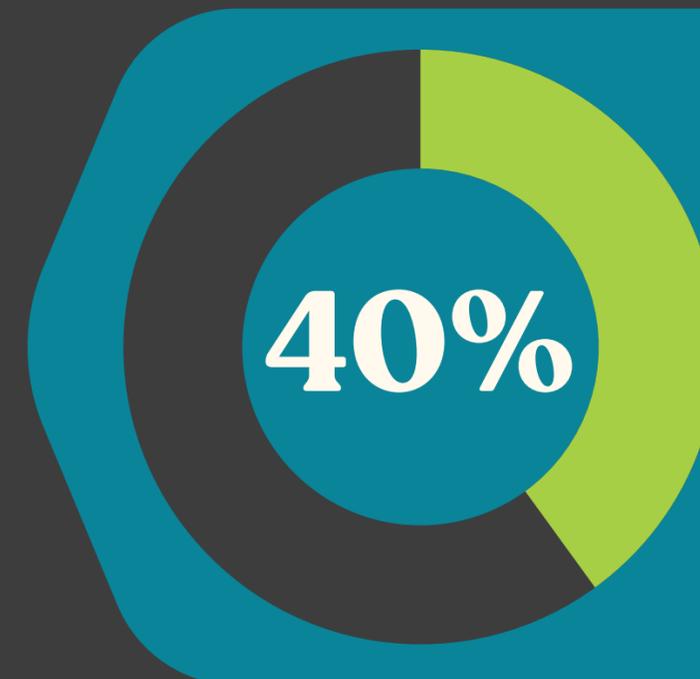
In contrast, out of the businesses that sponsor **fewer than 10 organizations** a year, 40% reported that sponsorships have **little to no impact** on **brand recognition** in their community.

This suggests a possible relationship between the number of organizations sponsored and impact on visibility, but more research is needed to confirm this trend.

** Responses from businesses reporting 'None' or 'Unsure' were excluded from these comparisons*



of businesses that sponsor **10+ organizations** reported a strong or major impact on brand



of businesses that sponsor **fewer than 10 organizations** reported little to no impact on brand

Discussion



Boosting online visibility (especially local visibility) is becoming increasingly difficult. The “goal posts” seem to constantly shift, with fewer businesses understanding the new playing field.

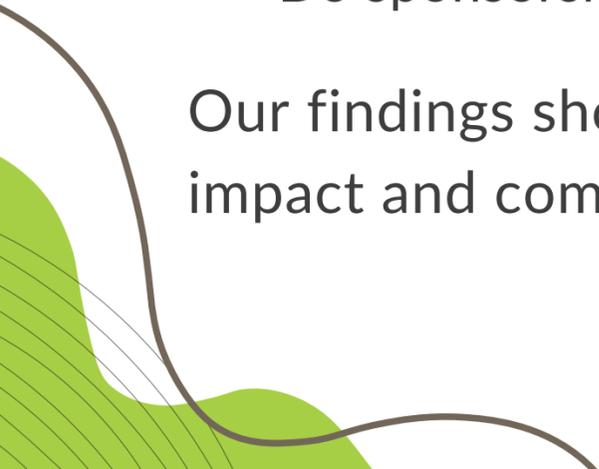
At the same time, nonprofits are struggling to bring in funding, heightening the need for local business sponsorships.

This has created the perfect opportunity for both businesses and nonprofits.

Before diving into this opportunity, we first need to understand what currently motivates businesses to sponsor organizations in their communities.

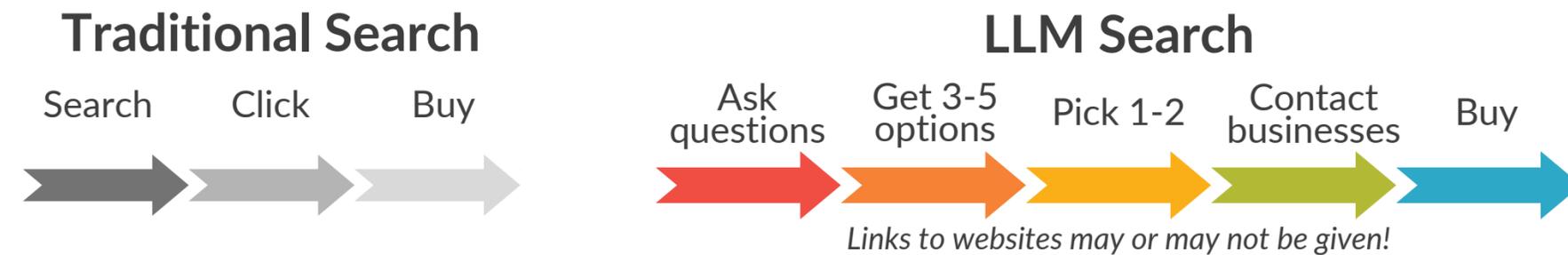
- Why do businesses sponsor local organizations?
- What factors influence those decisions?
- How much of a role does online visibility play?
- Do sponsorships actually boost brand recognition?

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.



Online Search is Changing

The increased use of AI search through Large Language Models (LLMs) is not only changing how people search for information online, but also how businesses are presented to consumers.



As this shift continues, click metrics and conversions will be less relevant, in turn making them less accurate indicators of visibility - and we're already seeing this decline.

Between January 2024 and October 2025, total organic clicks declined by an estimated 23-30%*.

Blogs and informational content sites are seeing a much more drastic decline than local businesses, largely due to LLMs providing summaries of information, while businesses still require customers to visit their website to buy or schedule an appointment.

- **Local service businesses saw an estimated 6% decline**
 - ~1-2% loss in total organic website clicks across the web
- **Information sites and blogs saw an estimated 35% decline**
 - ~16-32% loss in total organic website clicks across the web

* Modeled directional estimate generated using GPT-5 (OpenAI, Oct 2025), informed by publicly reported trends in AI search adoption, zero-click behavior, and declining publisher CTR. It is intended for strategic illustration, not as a primary dataset.

Local Visibility is the Future of Search

AI doesn't have access to traditional SEO metrics, so LLM visibility does not rely on search engine rankings (SERPs). This means these rankings, along with general website authority, carry less weight than before.

As AI search replaces traditional search, local trust is quickly becoming a crucial aspect of online visibility.

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)

So, what does this mean for businesses?

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

The good news: local sponsorships and community engagement can significantly improve a business's visibility in AI-driven search results.

Businesses Underestimate Digital Benefits of Sponsorship

Based on the responses to our survey, sponsorship value for online visibility is still being underestimated by many businesses.

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 **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 of digital representation from sponsorships on their online presence.

Businesses also may not realize they can help bolster this digital impact by engaging with the organizations on social media and highlighting their involvement in the community.

Finding Sponsorships is Easy and Affordable

Nearly half of businesses surveyed (49%) reported that finding organizations to sponsor is extremely easy.

The majority of businesses (66%) are approached more than twice a year with requests to sponsor, and 27% receive more than 15 requests annually. However, 61% of businesses stated they are “highly selective” when approached, accepting very few requests.

To get the most impact on visibility from local partnerships, businesses should strive to invest in as many local organizations as possible.

The vast majority of businesses (83%) that sponsor more than 10 organizations per year reported that sponsorships have a strong or major impact on brand recognition in their community.

Sponsorship investment is not only easy, but affordable.

According to our survey, the average investment for a single sponsorship ranges between \$50-\$300, with most businesses giving \$500 or less per sponsorship.

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.

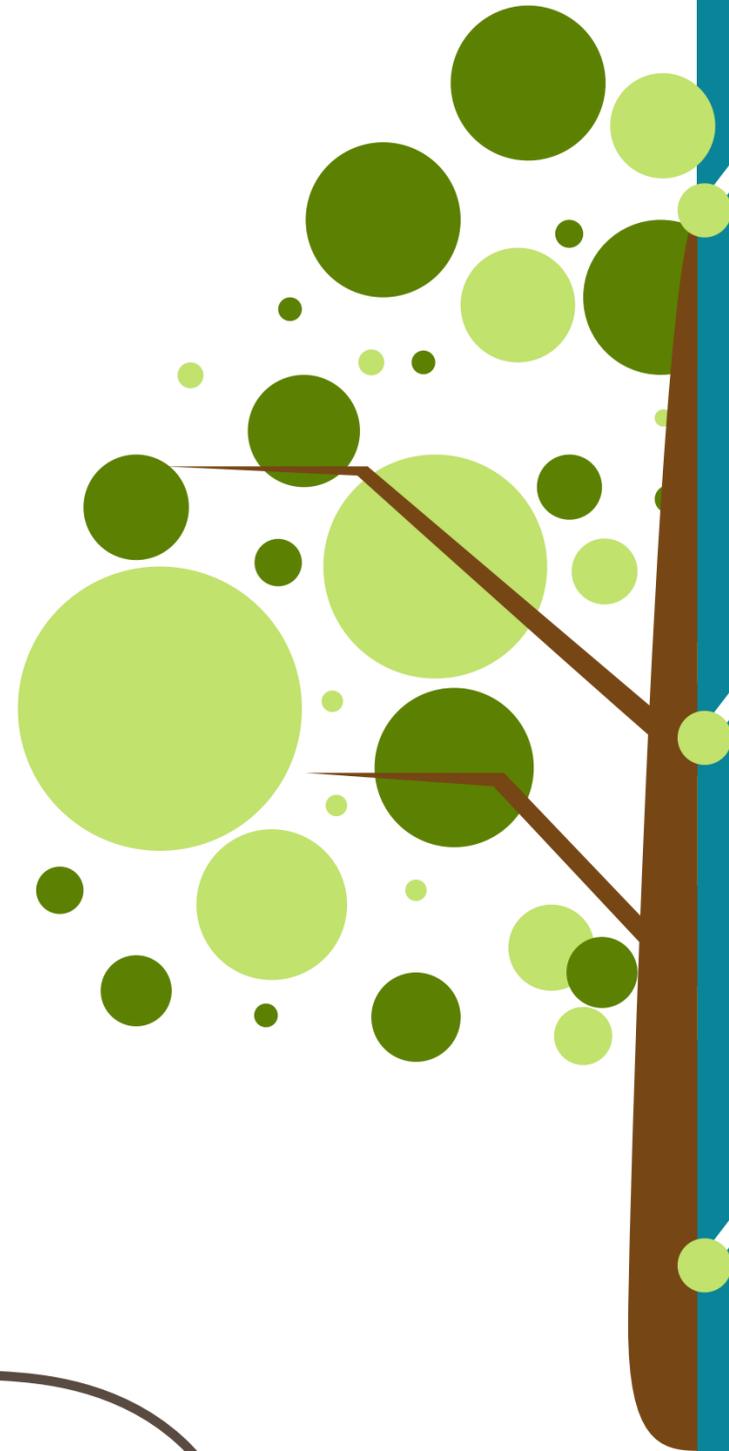
Our Vision

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.

