



The AI Sponsor Sourcing Playbook

How to find sponsors who fit and pitch each one personally.



Before you start

Sponsors do not pay for a logo on a banner. They pay to be in a room with the people they want to meet.

So this playbook starts from your room and works back to the companies that would pay to be in it. Five steps: who fits, where to find them, which ones qualify, what to write and what to show them. You approve every email and every deck.

What you need

- Your audience in numbers: roles, industries, seniority, headcount. Last year's list or this year's registrations.
- Your sponsor tiers, prices and what each includes
- One master sponsor deck
- Apollo, a Serper API key and Clay
- Claude, for the decks

What to expect

A few hundred companies go in at the top. A few dozen get an email and a deck made for them.

Replies per 100 first emails:

[needs number]

Weeks from first email to a signed sponsor:

[needs number]

Read this before you send a single email

Cold email is not legal everywhere. In Greece, unsolicited email needs prior consent, and that includes email to people at companies (Law 3471/2006, Article 11). If your sponsors are in Greece, use steps 1 to 3 to find and qualify them, then make first contact by phone or through an introduction. Send the email and the deck once they have asked for them.

Other countries differ. Some EU countries allow B2B cold email when you offer a clear way to opt out. Germany and Poland are strict. Check the country of each recipient.

GDPR applies in all of them. You need a reason to hold a person's details, you tell them where you got them, and you stop when they say stop. Page 7 has the basics.

The playbook on one page

Five steps and one review before anything goes out. The pages after this one take each step in turn.



1

Identify your Sponsor Campaign ICP



What to do

Describe your audience in numbers, then work out who pays to reach them. Your Ideal Customer Profile, or ICP, has four parts: the industries that sell to your audience, the company size that can afford each tier, the signals that a company is ready to sponsor, and who to leave out.

Tool and setup

Give Claude your audience data and your tier sheet.

Prompt

My event: [name, date, city]. My audience: [roles, industries, seniority, how many]. My sponsor tiers: [names, prices, what each includes]. Write a Sponsor Campaign ICP with five parts. One: five industries that sell to this audience, ranked, with the reason. Two: company size and location for each tier. Three: buying signals I can search for. Four: the job titles that own a sponsorship budget. Five: who to exclude. Ask me what you need to know first.

What good looks like

One page, with exclusions. "B2B software, 50 to 500 staff, sells to finance teams, office in Greece or Cyprus, sponsored an event in the last 18 months." [Example](#)

Common mistake

Starting from companies you admire. Start from who is in your room. A famous brand with no buyers in your audience will say no politely and slowly.

2

Generate leads from three sources



What to do

Use three sources, because each finds companies the others miss. Then merge them into one list.

Tool and setup

1. **Apollo** for companies that match on paper. In company search, filter by industry, headcount, location and keywords from your ICP. Save the list and export name, domain, size and industry.
2. **Serper** for companies that already sponsor events like yours. Run the searches below through Serper's search endpoint and collect the pages it returns. Sponsor pages list names you can add.
3. **Google Maps** for companies near the venue: regional offices, hotels, caterers, local firms for your smaller tiers. Use Clay's Google Maps source or Serper's maps search with "[category] near [venue district]".
4. Merge everything into one Clay table. Remove duplicates by web domain. Keep a Source column.

Serper searches

"sponsors" "[name of a similar event]" 2026
"proud sponsor of" "[your topic] conference"
"gold sponsor" [city] [industry]

What good looks like

A few hundred companies, each with a web domain and a note of which source found it. Past sponsors of similar events sit at the top.

Common mistake

Using one source. Apollo knows a company's size and sector. It does not know who sponsored the rival conference last spring. Serper finds that.

3

Enrich, qualify and find the people in Clay



What to do

Work on companies first. Enrich them, score them against your ICP and cut the list. Only then look for the person to contact at each company that passed.

Tool and setup

1. Enrich each company: description, headcount, industry, location.
2. Add an AI column called "Sponsor history" with the first prompt below.
3. Add an AI column called "Fit" with the second prompt.
4. Filter to a fit of 70 or more. Read those rows. Your judgement outranks the score.
5. Use "Find people" on the companies that pass. Search the job titles from your ICP, such as Head of Marketing, Events Manager or Partnerships Lead. In small firms, the founder. One or two people per company.
6. Add work emails only for countries where you may send cold email. Elsewhere, find a phone number or a mutual contact.

Sponsor history

Search the web for events that {{Company}} sponsored or exhibited at in the last two years. Return event names with links. If you find none, return "none found".

Fit

Using the ICP below, score {{Company}} from 0 to 100. Return the score, the tier that fits and one sentence of reasoning based on the company description and sponsor history. If information is missing, say so. ICP: [paste]

What good looks like

A few dozen qualified companies. Each has a named person and a reason you could say out loud in one sentence.

Common mistake

Finding people before qualifying companies. It burns credits, and it leaves you holding personal details of people you will never contact.

One qualified row, filled in Example

Company	A payroll software firm, 120 staff, office in Athens
Source	Serper: listed as a sponsor of a similar finance conference
Sponsor history	Two events in the last two years, both for finance teams
Fit	86. Silver tier. Sells to finance managers, who are a third of the room.
Person	Head of Marketing. First contact by phone, because the company is in Greece.

The company and every figure in this row are invented to show the format.

4

Draft the email copy in Clay



What to do

One short first email per sponsor. It says why this company fits, who is in the room and what you would like to send them.

Tool and setup

Add an AI column called "First email" with the prompt below. Then read every draft, and edit or delete it. Nothing is sent from this column.

Prompt

Write a first email from [name], organiser of [event], to {{First Name}}, {{Job Title}} at {{Company}}. Under 90 words. First line: the specific reason this company fits, using {{Fit reason}} and {{Sponsor history}}. Second line: who is in the room, using only these facts: [audience facts]. Third line: one sentence on the {{Tier}} package. Close with one question: shall I send the short deck? Plain words. No superlatives. Subject line under six words. Add the footer below exactly as written.

Footer

I found {{Company}} through [source] because [reason]. Not relevant? Reply "no thanks" and I will not write again. [Organiser legal name, address, link to privacy notice]

What good looks like

The email says something that is true of this company only. The audience numbers are real. You read it before it went.

Common mistake

Rounding the audience up. Writing "500 decision makers" when 180 people registered. **Example** Sponsors check, and the next conversation starts with an apology.

5

Generate a personalised deck with Claude



What to do

Keep one master deck. For each sponsor Claude changes three things: the cover, the "why you" slide and the recommended tier. Everything else stays word for word.

Tool and setup

Create a Claude project. Add the master deck, the audience data, the tier sheet and your brand rules. Run the prompt once per company. If file creation is on in your Claude plan, ask for a PowerPoint file. If not, ask for slide-by-slide text and paste it into your template.

Prompt

Using the master deck and audience file in this project, tailor the sponsor deck for {{Company}}. Change only three slides. Cover: "Prepared for {{Company}}". Slide 3, "Why {{Company}}": three points that link their product, described here: {{Description}}, to segments of our audience, with the real counts from the audience file. Slide 6: recommend the {{Tier}} package and explain why in two sentences. Keep every other slide word for word. Use only numbers that appear in the audience file. If a number is missing, write [needs number]. Do not change prices or what a tier includes.

What good looks like

The sponsor opens the deck and sees their own business on slide 3. Eight to ten slides. The prices match your tier sheet to the euro.

Common mistake

Letting Claude near prices or promises. A deck that offers a keynote slot you already sold costs you the deal and some trust. Check slide 6 by hand every time.

The rules, in plain words

GDPR basics for B2B outreach

- **Legitimate interest** is the usual basis for B2B outreach. Write your reasoning down: your interest, why this person would expect the contact and why it does not override their rights.
- **Say where you found them.** Article 14 asks for this at the latest when you first write. The footer in step 4 covers it.
- **Opting out is free and final.** One reply is enough. Keep a suppression list and run every new list against it.
- **You answer for the data,** wherever the tool got it. A contact database does not hand you permission along with the address.
- **Keep little, delete soon.** Remove companies that did not qualify.

Email rules by country

- **Greece:** prior consent before unsolicited email, for people at companies too (Law 3471/2006, Article 11). Go phone first or by introduction.
- **Germany and Poland:** strict as well. Treat them like Greece unless your adviser says otherwise.
- **Elsewhere in the EU:** some countries allow B2B cold email with a clear opt-out. Check each one.
- **Always:** your real name, your organisation's legal name and address, and a working way to say no.

This guide is practical advice, not legal advice.

After the first email

Track each company in one column: Sent, Replied, Call booked, Signed or Declined. Send the deck when they ask for it, and follow up once after five working days. Next year, start with the sponsors who signed: they are the easiest yes you will get.

The checklist

- ☐ The ICP fits on one page and has exclusions.
- ☐ The lead list draws on all three sources and has no duplicate domains.
- ☐ Companies were qualified before any person was looked up.
- ☐ You checked the email rules for each recipient's country.
- ☐ Every email names a reason that is true of that company only.
- ☐ Audience numbers, prices and tier contents match your real data, checked by hand.
- ☐ Each email carries the footer: source, opt-out and who you are.
- ☐ A suppression list exists and was applied.

Talk to **Bony**

Want Bony to look over your sponsor ICP, or tell you which tier a company fits? Send her a message. Tell her the event, the date and how many sponsor slots are still open.

Message Bony on LinkedIn

linkedin.com/in/bonny-bonfire-b50977441/

Bony is Bonyfire's assistant for event organisers. This guide is practical advice, not legal advice. Check the rules that apply to your event and your country before you contact anyone.

