Virtual sponsorship

What is and is not permitted in a virtual setting? The same rule of thumb that promotion and education need to remain separate applies. Here are some specifics taken from webinars with the Colleges FALL 2020:

·   Sponsors can have no direct contact with attendee unless attendee requests it
·   Opening remarks can acknowledge sponsors with thank you but should not say "go visit sponsor".
·   Reminders about sponsors in chat box during education are not permitted
·   Participants do not need to fully logout but need separation between education and promotion
·   Cannot have 'Come visit our booth' video in YouTube as participants cannot opt out of ads
·   Ads cannot be on screen at same time, products never (only at virtual booth)
·   All interactions with sponsors by participants must be voluntary. Opt-in NOT opt-out
·   Cannot use chat box to remind participants to go to exhibits even if the education is not going on because that box is considered part of the educational 'room'
·   No verbal reminder after educational session by moderator, participants have enough reminders
·   No emails regarding sponsors can be sent from conference organizers
·   Sponsors cannot participate in sessions – but sponsors can see chat names of participants. This is considered same as nametag for live event. Still inappropriate for sponsors to chat to participants in education room – this is same as live event
·   In virtual setting, posters should never need to be in sponsor room again
·   Once participant is in educational room conversation with sponsors should stop
·   Program chair has the final say (permission) whether sponsor reps can unobtrusively attend educational sessions (non-participating). For live events reps used to wear different color name badges
·   Could add 'rules of engagement' for virtual sessions in contract with sponsors
·   Reps cannot participate in polling, discussions, evaluation, or anything that will feed into needs assessment for future education
·   No banner ads of sponsors or popups in any educational area
·   No ads in waiting rooms, this is considered tagging, Element 4.1
·   CMA is updating their guidelines for interactions with industry
·   No logos on program page, standard acknowledgement statement should be used, Element 5.1

Sponsorship Platforms

It is up to program organizers to use a platform that will provide appropriate separation, which comes down to the abilities of the platforms. Using the analogy of physical space to explain the difference between platforms offing a single room and those offering a virtual lobby and separate exhibitor areas:

1) **Single meeting room platforms is like booking a venue with only a plenary room and no space for exhibits**. Without space for exhibits for an in-person event the sponsor recognition would be the same – these platforms are less costly but do not have an ability to have a segregated sponsor space. The only opportunities for sponsors to be recognized are:
    a. Verbal acknowledgment during opening remarks
    b. Can have rotating slides during the non-accredited times (breaks), listing the sponsor name/logo and level of their support (gold, silver, etc.)
    c. Can set a limit to number of representatives to attend sessions (non-participating).
- Cannot verbally tell or email your delegation to go to sponsors website; nor can you offer incentives eg. ways for them to get access to say a subscription as that is considered offering a direct gift. These were not permitted even for in-person events.

2) **Platforms with lobby and exhibitor space is like booking a larger venue and paying for exhibit space.** This is a pricier option but does offer the exhibit hall, same as it would be for in-person venue. The sponsors can set up their virtual booth as they wish, as would be the case with a physical table. There actually is more communication and assistance to the sponsors by the CPD staff in setting up and arranging their virtual booths and individual representative profiles.

Note UBC CPD does not endorse any specific platforms. For example, if your program is smaller and all plenaries you could use Zoom with the breakout feature only if *"Let participants chose room"* is an available option in your Zoom license. It offers options to come-and-go, and can be managed by the host, who could step in and monitor if necessary.