

Annual Meeting Sponsor Panel Policy

1. Purpose and Philosophy

The Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals Annual Meeting aims to serve many purposes.

Among other things, it seeks

- To serve as a meeting place for courts, courts staff, practitioners, neutrals, the ADR community, vendors, academics, and others to advance the administration of justice and advance themselves professionally;
- To provide high-quality programming;
- To foster the personal and professional development of all attendees;
- To promote a sense of community;
- To reinforce the qualities that make ACAN as an organization and our annual meeting as an extension of ACAN unique
- To showcase innovative thought leadership;
- To be enjoyable for those who attend;
- To provide sponsorship opportunities that enhance our meeting and foster networking;
- To provide an experience that justifies all attendees' expenditure of time and money to attend and generates interest in returning for future meetings.

ACAN's efforts to serve these purposes requires balancing many competing considerations. ACAN strongly believes that these goals are, on the whole, best served by conducting the meeting in a common room without break-out sessions. But the time available for ACAN's annual meeting is limited. The number of sessions ACAN can schedule (and, therefore the speaking slots available) is limited. Programming needs to be balanced against the benefits of downtime and other networking opportunities.

This need for balance extends to the role of ACAN's sponsors in the Annual Meeting. ACAN's sponsors contribute to ACAN and its Annual Meeting not just financially, but also by their presence and participation. Historically, ACAN has developed sponsorship levels that are tied to increased opportunities for messaging and, at the highest levels, spotlight speaking opportunities. ACAN honors and respects its commitment to provide this return.

Frequently, and regardless of level of sponsorship, ACAN's sponsors are also interested in speaking on panels at ACAN's Annual Meeting. ACAN recognizes that the opportunity to speak on a panel can provide a significant return on our sponsor's investment and that many of the people who work for its sponsors are talented speakers whose thoughts enrich the quality of ACAN's meeting. While sponsor support is vital, however, all programming—including those involving sponsors—must serve the overall goals of the meeting. It must be educational, non-commercial in nature, top quality and fit the overall themes and subject matter of the meeting.

In addition, as ACAN is an organization of neutrals, ACAN is neutral. We do not endorse one sponsor over another. We strive to provide opportunities to a diverse group of sponsors, ensuring that speaking slots are rotated to allow different voices to be heard each year.

2. Content Standards (Quality & Objectivity)

- **Educational Focus:** Sponsor presentations on panels must offer actionable insights, research, or practical tools relevant to our attendees.
- **Non-Promotional:** Content must not be a sales pitch for a specific product, service, or company. Use of company branding in presentation slides should be limited to the title and closing slides.
- **Expertise:** Speakers must be recognized subject matter experts qualified to present on the topic, not just representatives of the sponsoring company.

3. Selection Criteria

Panel speaking opportunities are not automatically guaranteed based on sponsorship level. All submissions will be evaluated by the Program Committee based on:

1. **Relevance & Timeliness:** Alignment with the current year's conference theme and attendee challenges.
2. **Educational Quality:** The strength and practical application of the proposed topic.
3. **Speaker Expertise:** Relevant expertise.

4. Fairness and Rotation Policy

- **Rotation:** To ensure diversity of content and opportunity, we attempt to afford panel speaking opportunities to representatives of companies who have not had opportunities to speak at more recent meetings.
- **Exceptions:** Exceptions may be granted for:
 - Programs particularly within the experience of one or more of ACAN's sponsors that are of particular relevance to the meeting (for example, sponsor representatives who are working on matters of particular timeliness or importance given the location or theme of the meeting).
 - A specially curated "Joint Presentation" with a partner where the sponsor is secondary (for example, a program featuring the non-commercial work of a sponsor assisting the administration of the justice).
 - Specific, non-duplicative educational needs that cannot be filled by other subject matter experts.

5. Alternative Engagement Opportunities

Sponsors who are not selected for an Annual Meeting panel are encouraged to engage with attendees through other opportunities, including tables, literature, informal networking at the meeting itself and involvement through sponsorship of other ACAN events.