

CWA Summit Session Spotlight: Rethinking Event Sponsorship

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in [CWA Blog](#)



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In the more than a decade since the start of the [CWA Summit](#), the event has never been projected to be this large. The event continues to grow over time, much like the indoor climbing industry itself. With that in mind, we highlight a rather topical session at the CWA Summit this year: rethinking event sponsorship.

Chloe Mandell, who has been in the indoor climbing industry as a professional event planner for years, actually helped in the past with the CWA Summit itself. We're excited to hear her present at the CWA Summit in 2022.

2022 CWA Summit Session Spotlight Series

Rethinking Event Sponsorship: How to Create Sustainable Partnerships

- **Speaker:** Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC
- **Who Should Attend:** Program managers, gym owners, and anyone who has to interact with the public at the gym
- **What Will You Learn:** The fundamentals of event planning in the modern era with new tactics from inside and out of the indoor climbing industry.
- **Where and When:** At the [2022 CWA Summit](#), May 18-20 in Salt Lake City, Utah

Jake Byk, CWA

Tell us about your climbing background and why you wanted to present at the CWA Summit.

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

I started climbing in France when I was 15. I was studying abroad and attending a French high school. My host mother, being the amazing human she was, handed me a catalog of activities going on in Boulogne Sur Mer in the north of France. And I was like, oh, climbing would be kind of cool.

[When I got back to the US], I joined an outdoor adventure group based in Portland, Oregon. And so as a high school student, I was then learning outdoor skills. Then the [Circuit Bouldering Gym in Portland](#) opened in 2005. I was one of the first five employees there. Now it has four locations and a hundred plus staff.

I moved on in 2015 to start my own company and got my first client, which was The Circuit, to run the Portland Boulder Rally.

Jake Byk, CWA:

You've helped orchestrate very unique events across the United States. What do you think are the elements of any type of successful event?

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

So first you need to address [delivery] format because each one is unique and has unique needs. [For this conversation] I'm going to assume that you mean in-person. Then you have to address [long-term] strategy. So is it a one-off event or a multi-year event, because those are going to have their approaches. So, for first-year events, you will only ever have one first-year event in and of itself [so that's something to take advantage of]...I think successful events that are annual can continue to push the boundary and look long-term in their strategies and their planning.

Jake Byk, CWA:

For me, I would've thought, okay, there's got to be elements across all venues, across any frequency, that will determine success. And maybe that's not the case. They all have their own goals and their own success measurements.

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

And I think that's a good way to put it. I say events are like backpacking. Even climbing, on a single-day climbing trip versus a 20-day climbing trip, you're bringing the same [essentials]. You need the rope if it's one night versus 20 nights, it's just the amount of food [you bring] or how many trips you go to the grocery store. So same thing with events, no matter how you scale it out, whether it's a single day tiny event [or] multiday or multiyear, you need all the same

fundamentals.



Chloe Mandell working behind-the-scenes during the CWA's Survive & Thrive Workshop, held in September 2020.

Jake Byk, CWA:

Who is your session for?

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

Any person and gym staff that is working with an external partner. That's routesetters who are purchasing holds. That's retail buyers, that's owners who are talking to their neighbors. That's marketing managers who are working with media partners. So we're talking not only there's a sales aspect to it, then there's a relations aspect to this talk.

Jake Byk, CWA:

What would you say is something specific for the indoor climbing industry in terms of events that we can look forward to in your session?

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

I believe I'm [one of] the only independent event planners in the climbing industry in the U.S. You get a really, really diverse perspective from me. And I do a lot of work outside the climbing industry nowadays. So you're bringing entire [event] industry best practices into climbing, which has been kind of my... goal overall. Hey, we don't need to reinvent the wheel here. There are

best practices and everything out there that we can learn from.

We rely on one another. This community has given us so much as climbers. And so...find yourself in a position where you can take those connections and help them grow and manifest, particularly in an experience like an event. You can take those connections and turn them into something really beautiful. There's just so much opportunity.

And so it's really focused on togetherness...So that's what's super exciting and that's what gets me out of bed and gets me excited about this topic of partnership. It's about something way bigger. It's about connection and the enrichment of our lives, which I think is what events do.

Jake Byk, CWA:

What are you looking forward to the most about the CWA Summit?

Chloe Mandell, Mandell Experiences LLC:

Seeing everyone. That's as simple as that. These are friends and community – it's been forever, talk about partners! These are people I'm used to working with and I haven't seen them in years, so yeah.

**Attend Chloe's session, and many more, at the CWA Summit,
May 18-20 in Salt Lake City!**

About the Author



Jake Byk is the marketing coordinator for the Climbing Wall Association. He's an avid hiker, mountaineer, lover of hard-to-reach places and long drives. He's spent four years as a journalist, then a public lands advocate, documenting the Great Plains and Mountain West before joining the CWA.



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