



Summary of 30 Ideas in 60 Minutes

The *30 Ideas in 60 Minutes* session brought together downtown managers, Main Street directors, and tourism professionals to exchange **practical, low-cost, and high-impact strategies** for revitalizing communities. The session highlighted how small, creative actions can create meaningful results when paired with strong relationships and community collaboration.

Key themes included:

- **Sponsorship Development** – Building sustainable funding through tiered sponsorship packages, creative perks like event dollars, and strong business relationships.
- **Community Support Initiatives** – Cash mobs and support local mobs that generate immediate revenue for small businesses while building trust and camaraderie.
- **Creative Event Programming** – Food weeks, cocktail trails, walking tours, and educator appreciation campaigns that drive traffic and encourage repeat visits.
- **Collaborative Marketing & Partnerships** – Business pairings, civic group involvement, school programs, and state tourism partnerships that stretch resources and increase impact.
- **Adapting to Economic Uncertainty** – Flexible grant models, event rescheduling, business recognition awards, and collaborative advertising efforts that keep momentum during downturns.
- **Low-Cost Placemaking** – Seasonal art installations, scavenger hunts, pocket park enhancements, and photo-friendly displays that boost social media engagement and local pride.
- **Peer Learning & Resource Sharing** – Sharing templates, marketing tools, and success stories across communities to shorten the learning curve and multiply impact.

30 Ideas in 60 Minutes – Checklist

Sponsorship & Relationship Building

- ☐ Develop tiered sponsorship packages (\$1,000–\$10,000).
- ☐ Offer creative sponsor perks (event dollars, branded T-shirts, banners, exclusive booth space).
- ☐ Restrict outside vendors to prioritize local businesses and sponsor ROI.
- ☐ Expand sponsorships beyond one event (e.g., concerts → Christmas → festivals).

Community Support Initiatives

- ☐ Organize monthly **Cash Mobs** (\$10–\$20 spend per person at a surprise business).
- ☐ Launch **Support Local Mobs** with city leaders and merchants.
- ☐ Add fun touches (balloons, trophies, photos) to create excitement.
- ☐ Use a **passport system** with prizes/gift cards for repeat visits.

Creative Event Programming

- ☐ Host **First Friday concert series** or similar recurring live events.
- ☐ Create **Burger Week** or other food-themed weeks.
- ☐ Launch **cocktail, wine, or bonbon trails**.
- ☐ Offer **educator appreciation discount cards**.
- ☐ Introduce **walking tours** (e.g., Turtle Downtown Tour with app integration).
- ☐ Organize shop-and-stroll events with prize drawings.

Collaborative Marketing & Partnerships

- ☐ Encourage **business pairings** (e.g., boutique + restaurant specials).
- ☐ Promote “door-holding” or customer service campaigns.
- ☐ Partner with **schools** (e.g., junior city councils, student-led festivals).
- ☐ Partner with **civic groups** (Kiwanis, Scouts, nonprofits).
- ☐ Collaborate with **state tourism offices/welcome centers** (Explorer Days).
- ☐ Hold **merchant mixers** and networking events.

Adapting to Economic Uncertainty

- ☐ Remove or reduce **grant match requirements** to support businesses.
- ☐ Shift event dates to cooler or less competitive times.
- ☐ Adjust event formats (e.g., weekday markets, open-mic nights).
- ☐ Recognize businesses with **January awards or seasonal recognition**.
- ☐ Encourage joint **collaborative advertising** campaigns.

Low-Cost Placemaking

- ☐ Install seasonal **photo ops** (heart arches, clover walls, umbrella alleys).
- ☐ Launch **art scavenger hunts** downtown.
- ☐ Add **pocket park enhancements** (benches, flowers, play equipment).
- ☐ Create **temporary or permanent alley art installations**.

Peer Learning & Knowledge Sharing

- ☐ Share **sponsorship templates and event marketing materials**.
- ☐ Collect and distribute participant notes, photos, and resources.
- ☐ Use **AI/digital tools** for note-taking and summary distribution.
- ☐ Plan a **follow-up roundtable** to review implementation and new ideas.

Insights & Best Practices from *30 Ideas in 60 Minutes*

Looking across all of the shared strategies, several patterns emerge that can serve as guiding principles for downtown programs. These insights go beyond individual ideas and point to ways communities can maximize impact with limited resources.

1. Relationships Drive Everything

From sponsorship development to support local mobs, the strongest ideas were built on personal connections. One manager's ability to move from zero sponsors to a robust program came not from flashy materials, but from direct relationship-building with business owners. Programs like cash mobs succeeded because they brought city leaders, merchants, and residents together in a shared show of support.

- **Best Practice:** Invest in personal outreach, not just campaigns. A phone call or face-to-face visit often creates more buy-in than mass emails.
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2. Small, Visible Wins Build Momentum

Heart arches, umbrella alleys, scavenger hunts, and turtle walking tours all demonstrate that modest, budget-friendly projects can generate huge returns in foot traffic, social media engagement, and community pride. These projects created *shareable moments* that extended the impact well beyond their physical footprint.

- **Best Practice:** Prioritize projects that are inexpensive, photogenic, and replicable. Use them as proof points to build support for larger initiatives.

3. Flexibility Ensures Resilience

Economic uncertainty, event fatigue, and competition from nearby towns are constant challenges. Communities that thrived were those that adjusted quickly — whether by moving festivals to cooler months, removing grant match requirements, or swapping large events for lighter-touch recognitions and promotions.

- **Best Practice:** Regularly reassess timing, requirements, and format. A willingness to pivot can save a struggling event and keep downtown programming relevant.

4. Cross-Sector Collaboration Expands Reach

Programs gained traction when they pulled in partners outside of the downtown office: schools, Scouts, Kiwanis, state tourism, and city councils. These collaborations brought not only resources but also new audiences and legitimacy.

- **Best Practice:** Always ask, “Who else can we involve?” For every initiative, seek at least one school, civic group, or regional partner.

5. Data and Storytelling Strengthen the Case

Communities that measured foot traffic, tracked spending, or collected merchant feedback were better positioned to justify programs and secure funding. At the same time, sharing stories (e.g., a business overwhelmed with support from a cash mob) provided powerful narratives that data alone couldn’t convey.

- **Best Practice:** Pair numbers with stories. Use Placer data, sales figures, and social media analytics alongside testimonials and photos to communicate impact.

6. Peer Learning is a Force Multiplier

The very format of the meeting — rapid sharing of low-cost, replicable ideas — was itself a best practice. By committing to distribute templates, photos, and follow-up results, participants ensured the ideas wouldn’t stay siloed but could spread across multiple communities.

- **Best Practice:** Treat every successful initiative as a case study to be shared. Create a habit of documenting, packaging, and distributing resources for peers.