

GETTING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

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What are corporate sponsorships?

Corporate sponsorships are a form of advertising in which companies pay to be associated with certain events and organizations, such as nonprofits. When the sponsorship of a nonprofit or charitable event is involved, the sponsorship activity is often referred to as **event marketing** or **cause marketing**.

Corporate sponsorships are not advertising, which involves paying for a message to be delivered to a specific audience (billboard, online media, etc.). And they are not a philanthropic donation like a grant to a nonprofit.

How do I identify the right corporate sponsor?

Sponsors that “have a heart” for your cause

Sponsors whose product or services align with your donor base, client base, board members, or other sponsors

Sponsors that have previously sponsored events or organizations like yours

What questions should be asked before seeking a sponsorship?

What financial level are they likely to sponsor?

Who will sponsor from our current base?

Who will help us acquire other sponsors?

Will a sponsor hurt our brand?

How can a sponsor’s brand help my organization?

What types of organizations do they support?

What dollar amounts do they sponsor?

Is an in-kind contribution possible?

Who should I contact?

(don’t pitch the wrong person, never give your package to someone and ask them to pass it on)

How can I get an appointment? (don’t sell over the phone)

What are target market demographics?

Do they want to participate in an event or just get exposure?

What returns do they want? (logo placement, tickets, VIP, media, priority to other events)

What location do they want?

What is the value of your brand?

What are your organization's assets that have value to the sponsor?

Steps to acquiring sponsorships

1 - Develop a compelling unique sponsorship package:

Background: Introduction to organization, use of funds, profile of board, audience you reach (demographics, total numbers)

Event details: date, day, time, location, current sponsors, ways for sponsors to participate

Timeline: schedule for all activities (also include ad specs in the package if relevant)

2 – Find the correct person to pitch and build a relationship

3 – Develop a prospect list and a plan for each approach (including one person to call for each)

(Two reasons you didn't get the sponsorship: wrong play or the wrong person called)

Developing an event that best fits your organization's needs:

Purpose: Fundraising vs. sponsor or donor development

Donor base demographics

Average age

Average income

Number of donors

Location of donor base

Time of year

Assessment of any conflicts with another event that you produce, or events in the community

Examples of Events

5/10 K run/walk

Blood drive

Family festival

Fashion show

Gala

Golf tournament

Networking event
Poker tournament
Street fair
Job fair
Giveaway event (toy drive)
Wine & painting
Wine & taste
Workshops
Bundled events annual one sponsorship price
Honoring event
State of the city
Local heroes

Building an event

Date: watch for holidays and other large events in the community

Type: what type works best with your donor base, board, community

Sponsorship levels: determine the amounts to ask for each

Financial planning: always do a P&L statement before planning an event - Identify the income centers

Steering committee: have sub-committees for each major activity and a chair and co-chair

KEY: sponsor and guest greeting committing

Venue: is the venue an asset or liability? (location, traffic, parking, food, public perception, price, flexibility to work with you, unique, size)

Outside advertising and PR podcast, print, radio, signage/banners

Other key elements

Promise deliverables

Find the right person to approach in the company

Always follow up...test, under promise and over produce

Don't put follow up in the sponsor's court; if they are to get back to you have a date to follow up

Reasons to sponsor or not sponsor

Competitor is sponsoring with a larger sponsorship

They don't have the manpower to staff the event

They know it's a tax write off

Event built for client entertainment

Getting leads and making sales

Developing relationships business development
Community awareness

Considerations

Timetable to sponsor, printing, promotion, give them a closing date

Never play them off against a competitor

There are more events to sponsor than sponsors (discuss how you can work together & ask what they want)

Understand **their** process to sponsor, dollar amounts that need board approval

Be happy to get a relationship going with a small sponsorship, look to the long term

Be flexible and willing to negotiate so the sponsor gets maximum value for their investment

Have a follow up plan...be careful on how much money you spend for a thank you gift

Types of closes

This is our event how would you like to be involved? Some know, others you have to lead (ask can they see the benefit of sponsoring your event)

The best close is you are offering them a way to get the most from their investment, relationship, community benefit, sales, awareness,

Major brand sponsorship, even in kind can tell others that a company endorses you and has looked under your hood (due diligence)