



TIPS FOR SECURING SPONSORSHIP

Two words: **time and planning**. That is what it's going to take to get sponsorship for your event. You want to start early and be organized.

Here are some things to consider before you get started:

- **Who is your audience?**

Who will be coming to your event? Are they generation X? Over-40? Under-20? Families with children? The more you know your audience, the easier it will be for you to decide which sponsors to approach. Once you know who your audience is, do some brainstorming. What are your assets? What do you have that is for "sale"? Think about which companies and local businesses are likely to be interested in reaching your audience. How will it help them grow their customer base, for example? Is this their target audience? Once they see the benefits of attaching themselves to your event, it will be easier to develop a relationship with your potential sponsors.

- **Where to Find them**

To start with, talk to your board, staff and volunteers for suggestions. Investigate their ideas and use their connections. You can also try contacting advertising and public relations agencies to see if they think any of their clients might be interested in your event. See if any events similar to yours already exist, and take a look at their sponsor lists. Once you have your list, take the time to make the calls and start to build the relationship. It may be tedious but it is worth the effort and time. Find out who the person is that you should be talking to. If it is a small business, you may be speaking to the owner. A medium-sized company may have a marketing department. And large companies may have guidelines to follow and forms to fill out. This all takes time so the key is to start early!

- **Do your research**

Companies are accustomed to sponsorship requests and they will expect you to know about their company and its values before you make your call. Try to learn as much about your potential sponsor as possible. Look up the company on the internet before contacting them. Do they have a mission or vision? What are their values? How does what you are trying to do fit into their goals and objectives? What can this event do for the sponsor? For example, if one of their goals is to allow their employees to give back to the community, make sure you give the company a chance to have their employees volunteer at your event. The more you know about them, the easier it will be to personalize your sponsorship proposal.



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- **First Date**

Meet with potential sponsors first and establish a relationship. This relationship needs to be nurtured just like any other. Identify the top six to ten deliverables or benefits you can offer. This stage takes time but the energy put in now will make it easier for you to create your personalized sponsorship package.

- **Sponsorship Package**

Each and every package does not have to be exactly the same as personalization is the key. Companies receive many sponsorship requests so find ways to be creative and step outside the box. It may vary according to the type of sponsorship requested, but the main submission should include the following:

- Complete details of your event. If you have news and/or online clippings from previous events, add them into the package.
- An outline of your target market(s).
- If this is a regular event and you have social media analytics from years past, add them in.
- Information on the expertise of the makeup of your committee. What successful events are you or your committee members affiliated with?
- Key contact information.
- Be clear in what you are asking for and what you are offering (remember, in-kind support can be as good as cash as long as it is fulfilling a budget need).
- Sponsorship details – what would you like from them? How can they benefit?
- How will the sponsorship be used? To feed volunteers? Advertising? Stage? Value-In-Kind?
- Customize, customize and then customize again. Sponsorship packages need to be customized and offer options for consideration.



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- **Face-to-Face**

Not every company permits (or even wants) face-to-face meetings but it is important to follow up after you have sent the sponsorship package. Do be respectful, but make sure to talk to somebody who has decision-making abilities. Ask them if they have received your package. If not, re-send. If so, request a meeting time. It may just end up being a phone call. But find out if they are interested in sponsoring your event. If so, that is great. If not, ask them why not. You do not want to put them on the spot but you may find out something that will help you on your next call.

- **Communication and Relationship Building**

Sponsors do not appreciate it when they contribute to an event and then never hear from the organizers again. Maintain effective communication before, during and after your event. Once an agreement has been made, send a thank-you note. This could be by email, and should detail the benefits that were agreed upon. After you receive their cheque or e-transfer, send another thank-you letter with an official agreement detailing sponsor and event commitments. Go beyond what is required. Put a news story on your website thanking the sponsor or write up a short article in a newsletter.

- **Over-Deliver on Your Commitment**

This sounds obvious, but make sure that everything committed to in your agreement is delivered and then some. You want to make sure that this sponsor will return in the future.

- **Post-Event Report to Sponsors**

After the event, send a thank-you note to your sponsor. Put a post-event package together that includes media impressions about your event, photos, copies of all the ads they appeared in, photos of their banners at the event, photos of people using their products at the event, etc. Add social media analytics. List how their sponsorship contributed to the success of the event, estimated attendance and include all information in a binder, folder or as a professional document.

Send newsletters throughout the year as you want to keep them informed about your event.

And then, do it all over again!



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In summary, you want to understand your audience and what you can offer sponsors. You can then create a customized proposal that you can “under-sell” and “over-deliver” to your sponsors.

Sources:

Marcato Festival: 10 Steps to Getting Corporate Sponsorship for your Festival or Event
<http://marcatofestival.com/blog/10-steps-to-getting-corporate-sponsorship-for-your-festival-or-event-by-ron-strand/>

Noosa Council: Sponsorship Fact Sheet
<http://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/documents/40217326/40227875/Sponsorship%20Factsheet.pdf>

University of Victoria: Sponsorship ToolKit
<http://www.uvic.ca/external/corporate/uvic/toolkit/index.php>

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