Nonprofit Event Sponsorships Guide
Raise more money and increase awareness through partnerships.

Nonprofit events can benefit from sponsors as a way to raise more money, to increase brand awareness and to give clout to new organizations or new events. Use this guide to set up your next event sponsorship program.

Planning timeline

Your event timelines will vary depending on if your event is being held in person or virtually; consider the following as a general order of items to work through before you approach sponsors for their potential partnership.

- ☐ Align event budget with sponsorship needs
- ☐ Develop sponsorship levels and package 'gets'
- ☐ Design sponsorship packet, sell sheet or packet (include key demographics and information about your org.)
- ☐ Add sponsorship sign-up option to website/donation/event landing page(s)
- ☐ Assign team member(s) to act as sponsor liaison(s)
- ☐ Create sponsorship tracking document or spreadsheet to track outreach and status (using this in conjunction with an already-established CRM is a great way to plan)
- ☐ Develop sponsorship check-in process, event seating or other event day-related processes specific to sponsors
- ☐ Plan for sponsor thank you communications and continued touch points leading up to the event

Sponsorship levels and naming conventions

Make it easy for potential sponsors to research giving levels, pricing and sponsorship packages ahead of time. While it may seem like the easy option to have all of your event sponsorship packages 'customize-able' this can actual deter sponsors from reaching out on their own and can cause more work for your team. Think about event sponsorship levels in low, medium and high ranges. Name sponsorship levels in a way that resonate with your event theme, your organization, demographics, locations or price points. For example:

[Elements] **Diamond, Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze Sponsor**

[Seasonal] **Harvesters, Growers, Seed Sowers**

[Hierarchy] **Executive, Director, Cultivator, Supporter**

[Play on theme/words] **Superhero, Champion, Sidekick, Buddy, Warrior**

List your sponsorship levels and packages in order (highest to lowest) and use charts or easy-to-follow graphics to visually outline the differences between each giving level and the items provided in each sponsorship package. Provide enough distinction between giving levels (i.e. $5,000, $2,500, $1,000 and $500 packages) that line up with what they get at each giving level(see below).

Example 'gets'

The offerings you provide at each sponsorship level needs to be quantitative. It's not enough to say, "social media mentions" or "email promotion". Call out specific quantities of each and other measurable elements. For example:

- ☐ Sponsor logo on event website with link to sponsor website (or listing only, if lower sponsorship price point)
- ☐ Weekly social media mentions on (insert channels here); alternatively, provide number of posts for each sponsorship level (i.e. 8 posts/month for Diamond Sponsor, 4 posts/month for Gold, etc.)
- ☐ X number of free event tickets, table reservations, etc.
- ☐ Full-page, half-page, quarter-page ad(s) in event program
- ☐ Access to attendee list (specify if these would be emails only, phone numbers, names only, etc.)
- ☐ Private, virtual break-out room
- ☐ Logo on all event signage (larger sponsors = signs with logos, smaller sponsors = names/listing only)

Choose your sponsors

As you make your potential sponsors list, think of companies or high-profile individuals who relate to and support your nonprofit's mission, have additional reach within the community and would mutually benefit from this type of engagement. Use the following checklist as a way to build your event sponsorship outreach lists.

- ☐ **Start with who you know**. Are there sponsors that provide company matches for individual gifts? What about corporations who have made donations in the past? Do you have donors who are also small business owners or members of the media?
- ☐ **Brainstorm who you'd like to know**. Which companies or businesses are in your area that would be a great fit for your organization? Which national brands would make sense to be a part of who you are and what you do? Make a list of small, mid-sized and large companies to solicit.
- ☐ **Ask your board of directors**. Your volunteers, committee members and board members can give suggestions for who they know or ideas for companies and contacts to connect with.
- ☐ **Research top lists**. Use business publications, trade journals, online library sources or association directories to pull lists of those companies that could be a good fit.
- ☐ **Identify companies that have sponsored similar events**. Review past event programs or websites from other organizations to get ideas of companies who sponsor events like yours. Add those prospects to your list.

Set up an internal system whether it be in spreadsheet form in a shared drive or using tagging and custom fields within your CRM. Divvy up your potential sponsors and work your lists. Vet anyone on the list who may have a personal connection with those on your team to make decisions on the best person to reach out; make it a team effort. Personal touches work better than bulk communications. For instance, you may start with a personal email and follow up with a phone call. Alternatively, start with a phone call and if you receive a voicemail, follow up with an email.

Engage your sponsors

Sponsors want engagement and to be recognized for being a partner in your event. It's important to cultivate your relationship with them and make it easy for your sponsors to promote your event as well. The more you prepare ahead of time, the easier it will be for all parties involved.

Here are some great ways to engage your sponsors and provide them with the tools and resources to help promote your event.

- ☐ Create a one sheet of content with snippets sponsors can copy/paste to their social media channels
- ☐ Send sample email content that sponsors can include in their e-newsletters
- ☐ Tag sponsors in your digital posts so they can repost, retweet or share with their followers
- ☐ Provide discount codes for sponsors or special links they can share with their audiences
- ☐ Create custom event badges they can use on social media, on their website or in email signature lines
- ☐ Conduct an interview with a key spokesperson from their organization; post as a blog or video snippet online
- ☐ Design custom imagery with their logo, headshot, etc. to be used online and/or in print; share those images with them for free use on their digital channels, too
- ☐ Give them a one sheet of FAQs, pertinent information and key contact information

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