

Gaining Sponsorship for Community Groups

Sponsorships can provide many long-term benefits for community organisations. They are commercial relationships that need to be well managed to maintain existing sponsorships and provide opportunities to develop new ones.

Many volunteer organisations rely on various kinds of sponsorship to assist them in their activities. In particular, the business sector plays a key role in supporting volunteering, often factoring social and environmental responsibilities into their business and marketing plans. Despite this increase in social awareness, gaining sponsorship is not easy as it is competitive and often comes with performance expectations.

SPONSORSHIP PROPOSALS

The amount of detail required in a sponsorship proposal largely depends on the level of sponsorship which is sought. It may vary from a simple letter seeking in-kind support for a small community event or fundraising activity, through to a detailed multi-page document seeking financial support in return for an on-going corporate partnership.

The principals of all proposals however are similar:

- > Introduce your organisation and state its aims
- > Describe the events or reason you are seeking sponsorship
- > List the benefits and promotional opportunities available to the sponsor
- > Provide details of the level of support being sought from the sponsor, including “package” offers if available
- > Give contact details of the person/people in your organisation who will manage your sponsors.

About your Organisation

Provide a description of your organisation, including a brief history, its role and standing within the community, ongoing aims and objectives and, if appropriate, how it is funded. The more you individualise your proposal, the better chance you have of standing out above other organisations seeking sponsorship.

Research your target sponsors

If possible, find out as much about the potential sponsors you are approaching.

Ring their office or visit their web site as it will provide a wealth of information; from their corporate goals and vision to their existing sponsorships and annual report.

EVENTS

If you are seeking sponsorship for a particular event, provide details on:

- > What the event is
- > When it is to be held
- > Where it will be staged
- > Why it is being held
- > Who will be attending (i.e. names of civic leaders, local identities, celebrities etc.)
- > How many people are expected to attend.



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BENEFITS FOR SPONSORS - What do you have to offer?

Determine all promotional benefits which a sponsor may receive from being involved with your event or organisation.

Benefits could include:

- > Use of the sponsor's logo in any publication you may produce leading into the event, for the event, or after it
- > Use of the sponsor's logo on advertising materials including promotional posters as well as print ads
- > Placement of the sponsor's logo on your web site
- > Mention of the sponsor's name in articles provided to outside media
- > Give the sponsor the opportunity to place signage or a promotional stall at the event if appropriate (be sure to stipulate that the cost of producing and erecting signage is borne by the sponsor)
- > Offer the sponsor a guest speaking spot within your agenda if available
- > Provide a specified number of entrance / registration / hospitality (i.e. Meal) tickets to your event
- > Offer of naming rights for the event (if appropriate).

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES – What do you want in return?

Once you have provided details of your organisation and/or event, and outlined potential benefits for sponsors, you will need to provide the details of exactly what you are asking for, but be prepared to negotiate.

Every event will have different promotional opportunities. For larger events, where there are significant promotional opportunities for a sponsor, you may wish to set certain levels of sponsorship at fixed rates and give potential sponsors a choice.

SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS

In many cases, such as an in-kind deal, the sponsorship may be arranged via a verbal agreement, however in the case of more significant sponsorship it may be necessary to draft a formal agreement for both parties to sign. The agreement would detail the services to be provided to the sponsor and the sponsorship provided to your organisation. This should be checked by a solicitor to ensure it is legally binding, before signing.

It is vital to ensure that all benefits promised to the sponsor are delivered and the appropriate members of your organisation are informed of their responsibilities to the sponsors.

MAINTAINING A SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Keep your sponsors informed on progress and send them copies of all relevant publications, ads or articles which mention their sponsorship.

Remember at the end of the event, to formally thank them in writing for their sponsorship.

If you have kept your sponsors happy you will be well placed to continue your relationship in the future.

Further Information:

A more detailed Sponsorship Guide is available from the Office for Volunteers web site www.ofv.sa.gov.org.au

There are many sources of further information from libraries and from the internet.

Some other sources on the web are:

www.sponsorshipunit.com.au (The Sponsorship Unit)

www.fia.org.au (Australian Fundraising Institute)