

How to get Corporate Sponsors for Your Event

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Running an event is a lot of work and can be very expensive if you're footing the bill, but here's the great thing: you don't have to! If you can convince local businesses that they can benefit from being a part of your event, you may be able to get corporate sponsors. How do you convince them? Well, that's what you're about to find out.

Target the right businesses

Regardless of the event you are holding, there will be businesses that can benefit from being a part of it. You just have to find them.

To find them, think about the audience that will attend or hear about your event. Think about everything: age, gender, interests. Once you understand your audience, think about the types of businesses that would be interested in reaching that audience, and compile them all in a list.

If your event is going to attract a lot of children, you might want to include local restaurants, children's clothing and shoe stores, toy stores and school supply stores. If your event is going to attract people who are conscious about the environment, think green companies that will want to promote their earth-friendly products. If your event is going to attract a lot of people concerned about animals, think pet food supply stores and animal hospitals. Okay, you get the idea!

Once you've got a list of businesses, the next step is to create a sponsorship package that will tell them exactly why they should sponsor your event.

Create a Sponsorship Package

You need to approach businesses with a business mindset, so use the sponsorship package to present a logical business case that clearly quantifies the benefits for them and speaks to them in their language. Use language like "we are offering you the opportunity to..." rather than "we really need..." to make businesses see sponsorship as a business deal rather than a donation.

Make sure the package is skimmable, with bullet points highlighting information businesses will want to know, and that it includes everything they will need to make a decision:

1. Information about your organization. Remember that they are businesses, so they will be interested in the financial aspects of your organization: anything that demonstrates you are good stewards of the money you receive. Also, if they decide to sponsor your event, they will be making a decision to be associated with your cause. So, tell them about your cause in a way that will appeal to them on a business level.

2. Information about the event. Besides the general details about the event, you may want to talk about the number of people you are expecting and their demographics. If this is the kind of audience the business is interested in reaching as well, it will certainly make your case stronger.
3. General description of the benefits of sponsorship. Talk about how being associated with your cause will benefit them. Remember, they are businesses and are usually interested in additional sales or brand awareness.
4. Specific sponsorship levels, cost, and specific things they will get. For example, you may want to offer to put their logo on your website, a sponsor banner, or the event program. There are many possibilities, but be sure to offer many levels of support. Depending on how relevant your event or audience is to the potential sponsor, they may want to be a major banner sponsor, or just get listed as an “also supported by...” in the event flyer. When designing sponsorship opportunities and levels, it helps to think about the business needs; what will appeal to them in terms of gaining exposure. Also think about your needs. Maybe you need bottles of water, t-shirts or pens. Instead of buying them, there may be a company that wants to provide them to gain exposure for their brand.
5. A sponsorship reply form and a return addressed envelope. Sponsors are frequently local businesses, but you will likely need to leave the sponsorship package with them, and you want to make it as easy as possible for them to reply.

Finally, be sure to personalize the package for each business and include a short letter that explains the benefits of being a part of your event. Here is a great example [sponsorship package](#) that Delta Hotels created for Operation Raise the Roof in support of Habitat for Humanity.

Be Personal

Where possible, arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone at the business to ask for their support. Personal visits are much more effective than sending the package in the mail.

When you do meet with someone, they will likely need some time to look over the information and get approval. That’s okay, people need time to think. Leave the package with them, but remember: your sponsorship request is likely to fall off their radar in their busy schedule, so be sure to follow-up!