

## Sponsorships

If your client is an association or non-profit organization, chances are they will want to find sponsors to cover some or all of the costs of putting on the event. There are several different ways that sponsors can make a contribution to an event:

- Donate **money**
- Donate an item for a **door prize, raffle, or silent auction**
- Donate items to include in **gift bags** for attendees

**EXAMPLE:** “More than 500 gift bags — each valued at about \$3,500 — tempted Sundance film festival party guests with such treats as Nautica ski gear and one-year membership passes to hip Crunch Fitness gyms.”

**Gift Bags: You Can Take It With You**  
<http://specialevents.com/ar/meetings-you>

- Donate **services** or **products** required to put on the event (for example, a printer could donate all the printing for the event)

## Where the Money Is

Don't limit your search for potential sponsors to head offices of major corporations.

Many **small companies** and **regional offices** will sponsor local events. Start by asking your client for lists of previous sponsors, current members or volunteers who own a company, and any personal connections your client or committee has with companies that might sponsor the event.

If you are seeking a donation of services from a small company, the ideal person to speak with is the company **owner**. With large companies, most people seeking donations usually apply to the Public Relations Department, the Marketing Department, or the President.

## Public Relations Department

Sometimes known as “**Corporate Communications**,” these departments often have control over a company's donations to the community. This department typically provides funding for groups involved with education, the arts, health care and community organizations such as United Way.

One Corporate Donations Coordinator said she hears every day from individuals and organizations seeking funding. She reviews each proposal to see if it fits within the company's funding guidelines (see the TIP below). Those that fit the guidelines are

forwarded to a donations committee that meets several times per year. The donations committee chooses the causes they feel are most deserving and successful applicants receive checks. Fewer than 5% of applications are successful, and an applicant might wait several months to hear they have been turned down.

**TIP:** Before applying for financial support to a Public Relations department, phone or email and ask for the donations guide- lines. If they do not specifically state that they fund events such as the one you are planning, contact the company's Marketing Department or President instead.

## Marketing Department

In many companies this is the department that is **most likely** to sponsor community events. When approaching the Marketing Department, it is important to keep in mind that unlike the Public Relations Department, which makes donations to 'good causes,' this department is focused on **what the company will get in return** for their sponsorship. Trying to convince them how much you 'need' money is a waste of energy. Thousands of events need money. This department wants to know that if they invest in your event, they will see a **return on investment (ROI)**.

Exactly what they want will vary from one company to another, but most companies want to enhance their image, increase awareness of their brand, gain visibility for their products and increase sales. By sponsoring an event, a company can achieve these goals through **association** with a high-profile event and:

- having their company logo, name or advertisement **seen by people attending the event** (on tickets, banners, programs, posters, ads for the event, etc.)
- having their logo potentially seen by thousands of other people through the event's **media coverage** (for example, if their logo is on a banner or podium that appears in a television story about the event)

To find out what a particular company wants, call the Marketing Department and ask to meet with them to discuss how the company might benefit by sponsoring you.

**TIP:** A personal meeting with a decision-maker is MUCH

more likely to result in a donation than simply mailing a written proposal. If you are asked to submit something in writing, ask to arrange a meeting so you can discuss it in person.

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## The President's Office

In some companies, especially smaller ones, the **President or Chief Executive Officer** can decide on their own to sponsor your event. In these cases, you don't need

to make a formal written proposal or jump through hoops. Instead, the President may decide to have the company sponsor you based on a personal meeting.

Even if the company has formal sponsorship procedures in place, having this person's support can make it faster and easier for you to get sponsorship. The President can put you in touch with the right people in the organization, give a personal recommendation

and help cut through any corporate red tape.

If someone on your committee knows the President, it's ideal to have them call, or to mention that person's name when you call the President.

**TIP:** The following sample letter shows information that can be communicated in a telephone call as well. (Phoning to ask a small business for donations is often more effective than writing.)

## Sample Letter Seeking a Donation



### Sunnyday Humane Society

September 6, 2006

Attention: Jane Jeweler

Jane's Jewelry Store

FAX: 555-1212

Dear Jane:

I am writing to ask if Jane's Jewelry would contribute to a raffle we are holding as part of a special event at Mega Mall.

The event is called "For the Love of Animals" and will take place at Mega Mall on Saturday, November 11. We anticipate a tremendous turn-out for this fun-filled day which will feature media personalities, displays, and some of our animals awaiting adoption.

The Sunnyday Humane Society has a strong community base of 10,000 members and donors, many of whom we believe will come to Mega Mall for the day to show their support. We are expecting this to be a well publicized event with plenty of media coverage. As a donor, we would ensure that your store is acknowledged in our signage and promotional literature.

Donations allow us to keep our doors and our hearts open. We are grateful for a donation of any size.

Please call me at 555-1234 when you have an opportunity to consider what your company would be comfortable contributing. We are grateful for any support you can give us and hope you will be participating in "For the Love of Animals".

Yours sincerely,

Eva Eventplanner

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