

How to get sponsorship for your meeting or event

Whenever people say, "We can't afford you," I always ask, "Do you have sponsors to help pay for your event?"

Who would sponsor your event? Consider approaching the exhibitors at your conventions, or whoever sells to your members or who wants good PR with the people in the audience. List these "angels" prominently in the program. I always make a point of giving sponsors a good plug in my presentations. For example, after my opening story for the American Cemetery Association, I quoted the founder of my corporate sponsor, Service Corporation International. Then I gave examples to reinforce my points by reading from their newsletters, and my walk away line incorporated their name. I always let sponsor know, "Don't worry, they won't have any doubt who paid for me," and make a joke about it in my speech.

Corporate sponsorships are mutually beneficial because they help raise awareness of osteoporosis while fulfilling corporate community marketing objectives. Corporate sponsorships help you underwrite the costs of putting on your event in a creative and appealing way.

When soliciting for corporate sponsorships or donations, go directly to your local businesses, restaurants, retail chains, health clubs, etc., rather than the national headquarters or franchise headquarters. You should also contact area hospitals, health clinics, physician groups, pharmacies, spas and salons, and any other companies or businesses that have an interest in the female market.

Please note: NOF will not have relationships with tobacco companies, or their corporate subsidiaries or parents. "Subsidiary" and "parent" are defined as an entity in which there exists a 5 percent of greater ownership by, or of, a tobacco company.

To identify areas of sponsorship, think of anything and everything that you will need to make your event successful, including: tables and chairs, table cloths, signs/placards, microphones and speakers, lights, printing and postage, music, food and drink, and anything else imaginable. Once you've identified everything on your list, create a proposal form of these items – with a dollar amount on each – to present to perspective sponsors.

You will also need to create a list of benefits to the sponsors to illustrate how a company's outstanding support and commitment to the event will be recognized. These benefits may include: company logo identification in all promotional materials, registration brochures, posters/flyers, and on-site signage; a display area at the event; opportunity for company employees to volunteer; opportunity to place items in goodie

bags; tickets to the event, parties or award ceremonies associated with the event and more. The higher the level of sponsorship, the more benefits they receive.

Other Examples of Sponsorship Items for a Large Event:

Kick-Off/Award Parties

The company name and logo of the party's sponsor can appear on the invitation, program and in promotional materials.

Parking/Transportation

Would free parking entice people to come to an event? Does your community have a bus or trolley system that would help participants get from one place to another? This is an excellent sponsorship opportunity for a company – it's environmentally friendly, it's helpful to the community and it allows them to prominently display their company logo on the parking passes or buses and media materials.

Goodie Bags

Give all walkers, runners or event participants a take-home bag filled with anything from note pads and pencils to headbands and water bottles. Sponsor logos can be on any of these items.

The Ask

Identify all the companies and organizations you want to approach for support and be certain you have the correct contact person, address and phone number. The next step is to send a letter and follow-up with a phone call. That may be all it takes to get their support, or you may want to have a meeting with the company representative to present your proposal and talk in greater detail about their support and participation in the event.