

Raising Non-Dues Revenue through Sponsorship Packaging

How to Avoid Going Back to the Well

Are you tired of constantly asking for sponsor support? Are your sponsors feeling more and more like credit cards, and less and less like partners with your association?

There is a way to create mutually beneficial sponsorship partnerships that create a more reliable revenue stream for your association. Take the leap into packaging sponsorship support into a once-a-year “ask” instead of what has become year-round begging.

Keep in mind: Everything your association has to offer has a value to someone. Start by forming a task force to do the following.

Step 1 - Reflect

- Identify your assets. *What does your association have to offer?*
- Determine true value, both dollars and sense.
Do not hesitate to break things down into their component parts since component parts have value. You don't have to give away everything at once. (ex. various ways to provide web site recognition: logo with or without a hotlink to their web site, box ad, streaming ad, straight credit line with or without a hotlink, etc.)
- Consider your organizational culture, policies and procedures. Agree upon what is appropriate and that you are willing to provide to a sponsor.

Step 2 - Research

- Seek input from potential “buyers” on what they perceive as having value.
- Determine how much they are willing and able to invest.
- Determine the most appropriate budgetary timetable for making a sponsorship commitment.

Step 3 - Align

- Understand your potential sponsors' objectives. *What do they need to accomplish?*
- Determine how to fulfill those needs and provide maximum value.
Example: Some need exhibit space; others prefer web presence; some want their name displayed; others want direct access

Step 4 - Package

- Create a matrix of potential benefits in order of value.
- Consider whether the options are in line with your tax exempt mission or will create UBIT (unrelated business income tax). If anything will trigger UBIT, is it worth it?
- Determine what should be included in each of a number of attractive packages.
- Set realistic price points for each package.

You've considered all options, assessed value, obtained buyer input, and created attractive packages at various price points. Now it's time to market.

- Develop a plan for who you will approach, how and when. Collect current contact information.
- Create a variety of compelling, branded written material that establishes your credibility and focuses on the value you offer.
- Distribute information in a variety of ways, on a schedule, to build interest and prepare your target audience for telephone follow up. Start with a teaser to tweak interest
- Prepare scripts, including how to respond to objections, for telemarketers.
- Personally contact your targeted audience.

NOTE: **Once size does not fit all.** Be prepared to develop unique custom packages. Flexibility is the key to partnerships so that everyone's needs are met.

If your association would like help in developing such a program or in implementing aspects of your program, do not hesitate to call upon *The Association Advantage*.