



CORNERSTONE LEAGUE

Best Practices: Getting the Most Out of your Community Sponsorships

There's nothing worse than putting a good deal of time, money, and resources into a community sponsorship only to find the results are not what you'd hoped. Here's a brief worksheet to help you assess your future efforts at the chapter level.

Step one: Determining Goals (Primary and Secondary).

Step two: Assess your current condition (Current commitments, active boards and volunteers).

Step three: Identify your capabilities (Resources: people, talent, facilities, money).

Step four: Identify events that command attention and meet your goals.

Step five: Promote by thinking visually (and not just a giant check). Understand what the media covers in your area

Common Community Event Pitfalls for Chapters

Piling on: Selecting an event with a huge title sponsor or that "everyone" does.

Problem – your sponsorship will not be noticed. While some events are requirements in small communities, don't expect this to be your "signature" event.

Examples: Fiesta in San Antonio, golf tournaments with title sponsors

Heavy lift: The event requires you to create it from scratch with significant volunteer resources.

Problem – many events take a year (or three) to pick up momentum in a community. Unless it's a relatively simple event, it could tax your chapter's resources.

Example – starting your own 5k run, Galas, etc.

Weak community partner: The beneficiary (if another charity) can't lend much support.

Problem – if the charity doesn't have staff to help out, you could end up with significantly more work. For example, they may not have background materials on the charity, have experience with the media, or have any volunteers who can help. If you can handle the event alone, then this is less of a concern.

Example – small charity like a church food pantry

Question Checklist

(For any chapter sponsorship effort):

- ✓ **Exclusivity:** Will you be exclusive sponsor or will there be multiple sponsors? Will you get lost in the clutter of numerous sponsors? If reasonable number of multiple sponsors, will you get exclusivity for banking/credit unions?
- ✓ **Frequency:** Do you want to make a one-time splash or are you looking to establish a long term sponsor relationship? (Often, multi-year sponsorship deals can save money over the term of the agreement vs. one year-at-a-time agreements)
- ✓ **Targeting:** Consider potential impact with desired audience demographics? Will you be able to reach the desired demographic element with the paid and “earned” media coverage anticipated?
- ✓ **Measurement:** Do you have an accepted way of measuring results from the sponsorship, e.g. print impressions/subscription number, Nielsen/Arbitron figures, station GRP & Reach numbers, traffic numbers for outdoor advertising, etc?
- ✓ **Commitment Level:** Do you have actual buy-in from Chapter CUs to commit volunteers and funding to make sponsorship a reality? Has the Chapter considered an annual assessment to each member CU to fund a robust marketing and public relations program?
- ✓ **Lowering the Cost:** Have you considered ancillary opportunities to generate support for your event which may not cost you a thing? Mayor/City Council proclamation? Local celebrity (media personality, elected official, civic leader, sports figure, attractive small children and cute puppies, etc.) testimonials?

REMEMBER: Try thinking “outside the box” to generate more ideas that may be unique to your local community.