

What does your nonprofit bring to the table?

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw, FUNdraising Good Times Corporate partnerships
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Does your nonprofit's special event help sponsors and underwriters meet their business objectives? Do the benefits you offer align with the business needs of your sponsors/underwriters? Here are some things to consider as you build your corporate partnership program.

Philanthropic support can be directed by an executive within the business, through the community relations department, or its foundation. Marketing dollars are typically secured from the marketing department. Distinctions between the two types of giving include the expected "return on investment." Sponsorships from the marketing side of a business need to advance the business' objectives. Pursuing such a relationship will require you learn these objectives; know your demographics; and are prepared to apply creativity in creating sponsorship benefits that have meaning to your partners.

Businesses know who they want to communicate and interact with. They know which communication methods work best with specific target markets, and they have prioritized their markets. They will want to know the demographics associated with your event, program, or nonprofit as a whole, so be prepared. What do you know about the people you serve; those attending your events; people you reach by email, social media and print communications? Can you provide traditionally requested information such as gender, race, age, zipcode, income, education, and children in the household, for your different constituencies and/or audiences?

Some businesses may value the opportunity to sponsor intimate events that provide an opportunity to participate in meaningful conversations with individuals who represent their target market. Others know their ideal consumer communicates via social media. Still others want a very specific demographic such as highly African American educated females with incomes over \$60,000 who are homeowners. Some businesses will want to build and strengthen brand loyalty. Others may be searching for a new market. You won't know until you do some research and talk with those responsible for creating or influencing partnerships.

Here's the bottom line: Growing a corporate partnership program requires data management systems that provide accurate demographics, as well as staff – or qualified volunteers – who

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can manage the program and meet sponsor/underwriter expectations. Focus on your sponsors' needs and how your nonprofit will advance their brand. Be prepared to answer specific questions such as: How will results be measured? What will the metrics be? For events, what happens before, after and during the event? Are there multiple "touch points" through which sponsors can engage with your audience? Will you provide sponsors/underwriters with the names of people attending the events they support? Are you offering industry exclusivity? For example, will you engage five banks as sponsors, or one bank, one realtor, one national retailer....?

Most businesses know who they want to communicate with. They also know their demographic and geographic markets. The question is, are you a match?

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Mel and Pearl Shaw are the authors of "[Prerequisites for Fundraising Success](#)." They position nonprofits for fundraising success. Visit them at www.saadandshaw.com