

**Section D:
Corporate
Sponsorship
&
Publicity**

EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY

An event is a theme activity created to meet the needs of a special interest group. From a corporate perspective, an event is a promotional opportunity to enhance business by communicating with a corporation's defined markets. As such, an event is a communication vehicle for a sponsor carrying more impact than traditional advertising.

Sporting events convey the positive images of:

- good citizenship
- fair competition
- hard work
- health and wholesomeness
- community interest

An event typically consists of several elements that can be utilized by the sponsor to capitalize on all of these positive images. The Chairperson of Sponsorship, must identify these elements and offer them as a package to potential sponsors.

A "give-to-get" strategy must be designed i.e. "What can you offer the sponsor or supplier in exchange for cash, product or services or a combination of these?"

Marketing, then, can be best defined as "the sum total of all exchange relationships" within the context of the event.

Identifying Saleable Elements of Your Event:

Athlete

- competitive numbers
- participation certificates
- t-shirts
- meals
- photographs
- videotaping
- awards presentation
- other

Communications

- poster
- flyers/bulletins
- souvenir program
- TV show
- letterhead
- radio
- newsprint
- PSA's during the competition

Organizing Committee

- t-shirts
- transportation
- post event social

- gifts
- other

VIP Reception/Lounge

- concessions
- banquet
- opening & closing ceremonies
- accommodation
- transportation
- meals
- demonstrations
- awards presentations

Facility Space

- lounge area (parents, coaches, media)
- pillars, beams
- apparatus, perimeter of floor, walls
- backs of judges chairs
- coverings for tables
- outdoor signage

CREATION OF A SPONSORS' PACKAGE

Title Sponsor

- Title of event
- Recognition on television production (i.e., corporate logo on opening and closing billboards; mention by your TV commentators; on-air cheque presentation)
- Poster title (i.e., "ABC" presents)
- Banners in gymnasium (on walls or near apparatus)
- Corporate logo on competitive numbers, participation certificate, T-shirt, letterhead, poster, flyers, etc.
- Media acknowledgements
- Public service announcements at event (PSA's)
- Tickets to the event
- Product display/sampling at event
- Ads in souvenir program
- Involvement in awards presentation
- Other suggestions from sponsor

Separations for Different Level Sponsors:

Title Sponsor:	\$3 X Associate Sponsor
Associate Sponsor:	\$1
Supplier:	\$.5 X Associate Sponsor

Contra Goods and Services:

During these economic times, it is increasingly difficult to secure sponsorship dollars for events. Your sponsorship committee must be sensitive to this trend and may have to work extra hard and be extra creative to make your competition a financial success.

Often times, local business may not be in a position to contribute cash, but may be willing to contribute goods or service in kind (free) to your committee. The donations are often as good as or better than a cash sponsorship.

When developing a plan as to which local businesses you will approach to sponsor your event or purchase an ad in your souvenir program, identify those businesses that produce goods and services that are in your event budget. For instance, most events will require several of the following items:

- food for coaches, judges and volunteers
- beverages
- office supplies
- printing materials
- lumber
- shingles/weights for uneven bars, ring tower, high bar
- advertising space in newspapers
- transportation services (people and equipment)
- hotel rooms
- gifts for athletes, coaches, judges
- flowers and other staging equipment

Local businesses producing these goods and services could be approached to donate in these areas in lieu of cash. They should still be treated as a sponsor and recognized according to the retail dollar value of their contribution. Remember that your budget should be based upon retail prices. In the worst-case scenario, you have to purchase these items from a store. Businesses will realize a cost savings of donating goods and services to your event, due to the usual retail mark-up and might be more apt to come aboard as a sponsor.

These types of donations must be financially evaluated and recorded carefully to ensure that the advertising space in your program etc. is in line with the value of the contra-sponsorship. Develop a sales checklist for your program ads that account for the payment of each ad space and if it was paid in cash or via a contra donation. Tally the sums in separate columns.

Not all contra donations are directly related to your event budget. For instance, if you approach a local restaurant to purchase a \$100 advertisement, and they cannot afford the price - try to walk away with something. The restaurant may be willing to donate a "dinner for two". Similarly, the local flower shop may not be willing to spend cash but may donate flowers for the athletes. Although these items do not directly help the running of your event, with some extra effort you will find that you can collect quite a valuable number of valuable prizes that can be used as:

- draw prizes to raise funds
- door prizes to help boost ticket sales
- gifts for athlete goody bags
- special recognition for hard working volunteers etc.

So as you can see, Contra Goods (donations) cannot be overlooked and are often the key to ensuring a profit.

PUBLICITY AND SOUVENIR PROGRAM

With the internet and social media, a print program is becoming irrelevant. However, it can still be a great way to acknowledge your sponsors and provide coupons for local companies. If you choose to produce an event program, the Sub-Committee responsible for developing the souvenir program and publicizing the event should become actively involved early in the months preceding the event (6 - 9 months prior).

The basic committee responsibilities are:

- Publicize the event by all media means available
- Develop and print an event souvenir program
- Obtain program advertisers
- Assist the Marketing Chair to obtain financial sponsors
- Promote the sponsors

Publicity:

Public Relations and Publicity is a means of communicating your competition highlights to the public and is a key to determining the success of the event. You must first assess the scope and possible publicity impact of the competition:

- Is the event local, regional, provincial or national in scope?
- Will it appeal to spectators, advertisers and sponsors within and beyond the local area?
- Will any high profile athlete(s) be competing?

The answers to these basic questions will help you determine the scope and extent of your publicity campaign.

Keep in mind that the objective is to "sell" or promote the Event. To achieve this objective you may:

- Print posters and flyers for distribution to schools, clubs, stores, plazas, malls and information centres
- Contact the local/regional/national press to publicize the event well in advance. Provide competition facts, dates, location, competitor's names and dignitaries to attend.
- Prepare Press Releases for use by newspaper, radio and TV stations. Continue with the Press Release as the event date draws closer updating the public on any new information. See sample Press Release in the Appendices.
- Follow up on the Press Releases distributed to ensure that the event remains fresh in the minds of the local sport reporters
- Invite the media representatives to the event or the opening reception. Prior to the event explain to the media representatives the controls under which they will be allowed to operate (i.e. no flash bulbs during competition). Assign a sub-committee member to greet the press and keep them informed throughout the competition. Provide them with a program, identify high profile competitors and attempt to meet all requests they may have; be especially considerate of their deadlines. Do not allow a photographer, cameraman or reporter to disturb a gymnast or disrupt the event.
- Immediately after the event, prepare a Press Release for the media including a full set of results. The Press Release should be given to those media representatives who attended the event as well as other selected media sources. Remember a well presented, hand delivered release will get the best reception and will result in better coverage.

Souvenir Program:

A souvenir program is a profitable and viable means of informing the audience and raising funds for the event. The program content and format should be decided on by the Organizing Committee well in advance of the event. A results summary sheet may be all that is required for a local Invitational Event. Those involved in regional or provincial events should develop a program which promotes present sponsors and attracts new sponsors and will inform the spectators.

Determine:

- the size, layout and basic content
- the number of pages feasible
- the amount of space to be used for the draw; event announcements; results and statistics pictures; new competitors, profiles of participants and advertisements
- the event timetable/draw
- if a club information section will be of use
- insert an acknowledgement of the organizing committee and any non-advertising sponsors
- number of pages committed to advertisers/sponsors

Approach a printing company to sponsor your event by printing the program at no cost or a reduced rate. If you must pay to have your programs printed you should consult with and review quotes from 3 printing companies to obtain the necessary technical requirements and to ensure that the printer can best service your needs for the quoted price. When preparing your budget don't forget to add HST to both the cost of the quote, and the advertising rates to your clients.

If your club plans to host more than one event per year you may consider reducing costs by developing one generic program where inserts can be used. A second print of the same program is not economical. Additionally, advertisers may prefer the option of coupon ads versus a standard welcome ad.

Also, by offering an attractive package to prospective advertisers (i.e. "package advertisement rate for two meets for the price of one") the club may turn their program into a profit making vehicle. Another value added idea is to recognize the advertisers through Public Service Announcements (PSA's) at the competition.

Developing a program with saleable advertising space is a considerable task but it is not complex. A program is the host club's opportunity to promote the club as well as raise a substantial amount of money. Use the contacts within your club to develop a prospective advertising list. Your club members may know someone who may be willing to participate in some way to the competition. Use your club network!

The most effective way to sell advertising space is by personal contact rather than by letter or telephone.

Keep in mind that the more advertising space sold the more revenue generated. Advertising space can be sold in a variety of sizes. Common sizes are: full page; half page; quarter page and business card size. A higher price is generally asked for the inside and outside cover pages. Although it requires more work the most profitable advertisements to sell are the business card sizes which should be priced within the range of the small businessman within your community.

Develop a "dummy" outline of the souvenir program that plans all of the contents of the cover and pages

within. Simply take some pieces of paper and fold them together and staple them to take the shape of a magazine. Then sketch with pencil the design of the cover, and the layout of the text, photos and advertisements within.

When you get to the advertising layout, attach a price tag to the ads, according to the size of the ad (½ page, ¼ page etc.) and the prominence of the ad (inside cover, back cover, middle). Then you should make a checklist of all the advertisements that help you keep track of: space sold; if you have received the appropriate artwork and information for the ad for printing; if you have received cash or contra goods or services equal to the cash value of the ad. You should keep an accurate inventory of when and how the ads have been paid; when contra goods will be delivered or should be picked up.

You will find that this will be an excellent tool to help you plan your program and account for all of the ads. It will also be helpful when meeting with prospective advertisers by visualizing their ad space for them.

One helpful hint is to develop the ads as coupons redeemable at the local business. This will help to increase business for the advertiser and help to legitimize their purchase of your ads. Offers such as "2 for 1", "10% off", "free pop with purchase of ..." are all incentives for your spectators to patronize your advertisers. Be sure to tie in your PSA's to these offers!

In completing the sale of an advertisement, be sure to obtain final print copy that is of good quality and usable by the printer. Record the sale, invoice the advertiser and issue a receipt on payment of the bill. Also, enclose a final copy of the program along with the receipt.

Ensure that the print copy is received from the advertiser and competing clubs well in advance of the competition. Allow enough time for layout and printing of the program. Remember, a well prepared program adds class to your event and can benefit your club through exposure and profits.

Retain 25 copies for reference and sales pitches your club will make when hosting future events. Respect the rights of other clubs by requesting written permission to use pictures or original artwork that they may have developed and used in a previous souvenir programme. Give credit where credit is due.

HELPFUL TIPS

Creation of a Sponsors` Package

- You can offer many different levels as well as level titles
 - Title Sponsor, Associate Sponsor, Supplier packages
 - Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsor packages
 - Title Sponsor, Corporate Sponsor and Donation Sponsor packages
 - Use your club colours: Black, Pink and Teal sponsor packages – get creative!!

Publicity and Press Releases

- Local community TV cable stations, newspapers and Radio are attracted to those events that will highlight a local athletic hero or high profile athletic hero who will be in attendance.
 - Most times the local athletic hero does not have to be a national level athlete. Communities enjoy writing about the "next big star" who happens to only be 10 years old. It also could be the local coach who has produced provincial level athletes for 20 years.
 - Creative ideas; set up an interview with young athlete and coach. Have the media present

the award for the coach's excellence at the competition.

- Media will also like to follow the attendance of a higher profile athlete who competes nationally and internationally.
- Creative ideas: set up an interview with high profile athlete and local "next big star"
- Ensure that the media has the schedule of both of the local up and comer as well at the High Profile athlete if in attendance

CHECKLIST: PUBLICITY

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE	✓
Contact and set meeting with local TV cable stations (4 months out)			
Advertise event to local Radio and Newspapers (3 months out)			
Contact and follow up with press, etc. to provide and update as much as possible (1.5 months out and on-going)			
Arrange for results to be submitted to press after event (1 week out)			
Arrange meeting with local TV cable station to go over details of event (1 month out)			
Send out Press Release for details on new releases (include category times, awards, march in times) (1-2 weeks out)			
Prepare PSA's for your announcer (1-2 weeks out)			

CHECKLIST: PROGRAM

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE	✓
Set advertising rates and deadline for submissions			
Decide on program format and size			
Approach printers for contra or reduced rates for printing. In the event that a sponsor does not develop then get quotes from printers and place the order for printing.			
Contact potential advertisers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by letter • by phone • by personal visit 			
Use club member contacts if possible			
Arrange program layout, including photos, and event schedule, club information of activities			

and schedules			
Proof-read program before printing			
Assist with collection of advertising money; provide receipts and billings where necessary			
Provide advertising revenue to Program Chairperson			
Cooperate with floor manager and admission chairperson on program sales			