

Kiwanis®

Sponsorship toolkit

Fundraising events help support everything from Kiwanis community activities to scholarship programs to participation in global campaigns. When it comes to bang for your buck, sponsorships are the fundraising version of a triple play. They increase club resources, raise your community profile and create access to a pool of potential members—all at the same time.

This online toolkit will help all Kiwanis-family clubs tap into the power of sponsorship. You will learn how to:

- Inventory your club's marketable assets.
- Price your event offerings.
- Seek corporate support.
- Develop long-term relationships with sponsors.
- Save time by using templates for proposal materials.

A well-run sponsorship program is a classic win/win. Your club gets more funds, and your sponsors enjoy the benefits of associating with a local organization respected for its impact in the community.



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Download this toolkit at
www.kiwanis.org/sponsortoolkit.

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1. Plan

Locate potential sponsors

There's a big difference between donations and sponsorships. A donation is essentially a gift—no strings attached. A sponsorship is a transaction from which both sides expect to gain. A sponsor gives cash or in-kind materials/services in exchange for positive public exposure and/or contact with potential customers. Here's how to locate businesses that might be interested in a sponsorship:

Form a team. Create a sponsorship committee to oversee the search. If possible, staff it with former or current businesspeople strongly connected to the local business community. Does someone in your club play golf each week with the president of one of your area's biggest firms? Consider putting him or her on the committee.

Do your homework. Learn about companies headquartered in or near your community. Gauge their sponsorship potential—visit their websites, review recent news articles and talk to current and former employees. If you contact them, your knowledge of their operations will show you've done your homework.



Get organized

Soliciting sponsorships can be hard work. Ease the process by taking some organizational steps in advance:

- Put together a demographic report on your membership, including average age, education level, professional background and anything else that a prospective sponsor might find useful. Use the **club data checklist** in the Resources section to get started.
- Identify particular club members who can bring special skills—or perhaps just enthusiasm—to the sponsorship hunt.
- Put together a report on your event. Gather as much information as possible about attendance, demographics and media exposure.
- Identify potential competition for sponsorship funds in your area. For instance, if someone holds a similar event on the same weekend—or even the same month—as yours, you might want to switch dates.
- If you haven't yet, put someone in charge of your club's website, newsletter and advertising. A communications director will give you a leg up.



Plan

Find like-minded people. Identify businesses that sponsor other social, educational and youth-oriented programs in your community. Companies already involved in such activities might be interested in doing more.

Seek synergies. Find out if the products, services or philosophy of a particular firm mesh with your event's goals. For instance, a playground equipment manufacturer would make a perfect match for a playground-building project. Of course, synergies are rarely so obvious, but it's worth the effort to pinpoint them.

Put your network to work. Seek out club members who have personal relationships with decision-makers at potential corporate sponsors. They can expedite the assessment process—and make it easier to get your foot in the door.

Keep your options open. Develop a list of “hot prospects,” but don't throw the other contenders into the wastebasket. Even if some of your candidates don't fit your current project, they might make excellent sponsors for events down the road.



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Who's coming?

It's nice to know how many people attend your event. But from a marketing perspective, it's more important to know who they are. This information can help determine your best sponsorship candidates. For instance:

Green consumers. If your event has an environmental theme or is generally outdoorsy (a garden show or a community picnic), it will attract the sort of folks garden centers and landscapers covet.

Foodies. Planning a meal-intensive fundraiser? Grocery chains, caterers, bakeries and restaurants should top your list of sponsorship candidates.

Sports enthusiasts. The obvious choices for a sports-themed event are sporting goods stores and professional and semi-professional teams. The less obvious (but potentially fruitful) option is your local sports medicine center.

Pet lovers. Cat and dog owners spend a lot of money on their four-legged friends—and plenty of businesses know it. If your event (or a portion of it) caters to this crowd, pet stores, veterinarians, groomers and kennels want to hear from you.



Plan

Decide what to offer.

Like all businesspeople, potential sponsors want to know what's in it for them. Completing the **sponsorship planning checklist** will help you determine what you can offer. These are likely to be some of your most marketable assets:

Your members. A potential sponsor may want to know all about them—how many there are, their demographic profile, the extent of the club's community impact, etc. Could a partner approach or market to them? Can they provide useful contacts or event assistance? Would they be interested in the sponsor's product or service?

Your audience. If it's an annual event, do you have attendance figures from last year? Either way, anything that charts its demographic profile and geographic reach can help seal the deal. If you don't yet capture this information, start now. Consult the **event data checklist** in the resources section for tips.

Your venue. Walk through the facility and identify places where sponsored signage can be positioned. Also, is there room for a VIP area (if applicable to the event)? Or someplace where a sponsor could set up a booth?

Publicity. If your event attracts lots of press coverage, gather examples from last year to prove it. Also, what sort of advance notice and support can you provide on your website? What other publicity efforts will the club undertake? Do you have a strong relationship with local media? If not, it's never too late to start building one.

Event tickets. Businesses love to hand out takeaways such as tickets to customers and clients. Can your event also furnish VIP passes or provide other forms of special access to sponsors?

Success story

Some Kiwanis clubs have worked with sponsors for years—and have real-world results to show for it. For instance, Andrea Screws, executive director, Kiwanis Club of Montgomery, Alabama, says the club's Alabama National Fair brings in both new members and plenty of funds.

"Our club recognizes sponsors at our annual grant awards, when we distribute fair proceeds to area nonprofits," Screws says. "The sponsor gets recognition and understands the importance of our fundraiser to the community."



2. Sell

Bundle or price it

Once you've inventoried all of your event's marketable assets, it's time to package them into "bundles." For instance, US\$100 might buy a single sponsorship banner and a dozen event tickets—while US\$1,000 might purchase several banners, inclusion in the event's program and print advertising, plus VIP passes and other perks. Other tips are available on the **sponsorship rate card worksheet** in the resources section. To get a firm grip on pricing:

Seek outside input. Ask managers of comparable, nearby charitable events how they create bundles and determine rates. You can also consult with Kiwanis clubs in similar-size communities.

Estimate attendance. Determine, if possible, how big of an audience your event will attract. In general, the bigger the crowd, the greater the value.

Know who's coming. Your attendees' demographics will make them more valuable to some businesses than to others. For instance, a child-friendly event might be of little interest to an office supply store—but extremely attractive to a bakery chain.

Offer something for everyone. Develop a wide range of sponsorship prices, from a relatively nominal fee for a banner and some tickets to a substantial charge for the event's naming rights. Also, if yours is an annual activity, consider offering multi-year deals.

Be ready to barter. Money is good, but so is payment in products and/or services. If you're running an outdoor event and need cases of bottled water, a grocery store might exchange them for promotional consideration.

Get creative. Think about offering sponsorships not just for the entire event, but for stand-alone activities. It could be for a concert or banquet, or it could be for one day of a multi-day gathering.

Custom bundles

There are no rules governing what sorts of rights to offer. Brainstorm with club members about innovative ways to sell your event. If it's practical, tailor sponsorship packages to specific business types. For example:

- A food service company might pay for exclusive rights to your event's meal-related components.
- If your event includes a children's area, approach kid-friendly businesses. A firm specializing in hosting birthday parties might staff the spot in exchange for recognition.
- If you need vehicles (cars or golf carts), seek out a transportation sponsor. It may be as simple as offering to place magnetic signs on the vehicles advertising their owners' participation.
- Consider hosting a VIP-only preview party—sponsored, of course.



Sell

Create your sponsorship package

Now it's time to put together a packet of information to deliver to prospective sponsors. Keep it businesslike and concise. Don't dwell on how much sponsorship cash your club needs. Talk instead about the benefits you can bring to participating companies. Be sure to include:

Information about your club. Briefly outline your club's history, past successful projects, future goals and members' expertise and interests. Prove to sponsors that you're a serious, disciplined group that keeps promises and delivers value.

Information about the event. Times and dates are important, but accurate demographic data about attendees is pure gold. Nothing can seal a sponsorship deal more quickly than showing you can attract the audience to which your sponsorship candidate caters.

A sponsorship option menu. Include prices and the list of marketing benefits offered with each option.

Personal touches. This is no place for a generic-looking form letter. Include a personal note asking for the company's support, and explain how the company will benefit. Be specific. Consult the **proposal letter outline** in the resources section for tips. When you finish, don't send it to the firm's general address, but to the specific person in the organization who handles sponsorships. (You know who this is because you found out during your Step 1 research.) Even better, have a club member who's familiar with the prospect's management team deliver it personally. You might even include an event-related gift—for instance, a bottle of Vermont maple syrup if you're seeking a sponsor for your club's annual pancake breakfast.

Build a package with punch

Make your sponsorship package stand out—and deliver its message more effectively—by following these tips:

Keep it brief. Don't go on for more than a few pages. Any longer and it simply won't be read.

Keep it tight. Don't include "loose" pieces, such as postcards, brochures, mailers, etc. These tend to fall out, making the package look cluttered and unprofessional.

Focus on one idea. Explain what you're planning and how your prospect would benefit by participating.

Mention your affiliation with Kiwanis International. Let the prospect know that your club is backed by a large, well-established organization.

Look twice. If possible, have an advertising professional or copywriter critique your work. At the very least, have someone proofread for mistakes and to offer opinions.



Sell

Meet potential sponsors

Deliver the sponsorship package, then follow up and ask for a meeting. If the prospect agrees, prepare carefully. To maximize your impact:

Rehearse. Write and practice a one-minute pitch. Again, don't focus on your club's needs. Reel off the ways your club will help the potential sponsor.

Memorize. Commit all relevant event-related stats to memory, or have them at your fingertips. This shows you have your act together. An introductory meeting is no place for stammering.

Develop talking points. Be ready to list your club's three to five top assets and how they can benefit the potential sponsor. Do you have a large membership? Do you maintain a high community profile? Don't be too humble—share the very best about your club. It isn't bragging if it's true.

Talk up Kiwanis. Familiarize yourself with the Kiwanis **Just The Facts Sheet**. Prepare to highlight key points at the meeting, such as Kiwanis' legacy of service since 1915 and its commitment to youth via Service Leadership Programs. Explain how an association with Kiwanis and its mission benefits sponsors.

Talk about money. Put together a one-page outline of sponsorship options and bring a copy for everyone at the meeting. Include pricing and marketing benefits for each level. Use this handout to guide the conversation. It wouldn't hurt to arrive with a sponsorship level already in mind.

ABC (Always Be Closing). Follow up the meeting with an email or telephone call recapping the proceedings and mapping out the next steps.

Look and act professional

During meetings, actions and appearances speak louder than words. Here are a few ways to put yourself in the best light:

Dress appropriately. A suit and tie for a meeting at a bank, business casual for a lawn care company. Leave your blue jeans at home.

Bring out your Kiwanis apparel. Put a pin in the lapel of your suit—or wear an item of Kiwanis-branded clothing.

Get to the point. Successful businesspeople don't have a ton of time for small talk. Share a few pleasantries, then cut to the chase.

Turn off your cell phone. You're the guest—and the one who's seeking something—so don't end up looking like you have other people to talk to.



3. Deliver

Deliver what you promise

If the prospect decides to participate, your initial meeting will likely be followed by others to hammer out details. Terms of payment, logo specifications, benefits to attendees and much more will be put down in writing. A large, complex sponsorship may require a more detailed contract and perhaps even legal advice. After that, it's time for your club to hold up its end of the deal. Be prepared to:

Get everyone on board. All club members and officers need to get excited about and be fully supportive of the sponsorship. Make the importance of the relationship clear, and emphasize that happy sponsors mean more money—and possibly more members.

Allocate resources. Make sure at least one club member (or more, depending on the sponsorship's scope) is committed to fulfilling all contractual obligations. Give this job to someone who's organized, reliable and unflappable.

Set standards. To make sure everybody's on the same page, standardize guidelines, procedures, packaging and messaging. Be consistent with all the marketing benefits for each sponsor's level of support. Treat top sponsors like VIPs.

Communicate consistently. Funnel all your outgoing event-related communications through a communications expert. If your club doesn't have one, appoint one. This person can ensure that all written materials look professional and consistent and stay "on message."

Pick a go-to person. Designate someone to quickly handle sponsor-related questions or issues that arise during the actual event.

Put your money where your sponsors are. Ask club members to patronize businesses that support club activities. This may sound like a small thing, but it can make a huge impression.

Extra touches

If a sponsor is particularly important to your club, pour on the pampering. Here are a few more ways to show you care:

- Ask a club member to photograph the event, paying particular attention to your sponsor's signage—or more accurately, to guests looking at the signage. (Photos with people are always more interesting.) Send the sponsor a selection of these images that he or she can post on the company's website.
- If appropriate, put a golf cart or car at the sponsor's disposal during the event. A volunteer could even serve as chauffeur.
- Consider a VIP lounge. It doesn't have to be fancy—just a clean, quiet place where a sponsor and his or her employees can unwind. A recharging station for digital devices would also be appreciated.
- A VIP might also like a designated helper to fetch things like meals and beverages.
- If possible, provide your sponsor with an unexpected "extra" that wasn't in the agreement. Perhaps a mention during the event, or a video of the gathering.



Deliver

Build a lasting relationship

What's better than finding a sponsor for your event? Getting that sponsor at your *next* event (or at next year's event, if it's held annually). Develop happy and long-lasting relationships:

Gather feedback. After the event, contact sponsors to get their views on how things went and what could have gone better. This is also an excellent time to broach the idea of another sponsorship *next* time (or next year).

Make memories. Present sponsors with an album (or more accurately, a digital file) of the event's media coverage. This provides concrete proof of the gathering's impact.

Accentuate the positive. Collect testimonials from your sponsors. These can prove extremely useful when persuading other companies to work with your club.

Stay close. Maintain contact throughout the year. Keep sponsors apprised of other club events. Maybe even drop off the occasional Kiwanis-branded item, such as a keychain or calendar.

Stay really close. Invite sponsors and their employees to join your club and/or participate in service projects.



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Tailor your offerings

When planning an event, it's never too early to think about potential sponsorship revenue. In fact, make future club happenings sponsor-friendly:

- Organize events in ways that create marketing opportunities. For instance, designate programs, shows or physical locations that can be offered separately to businesses.
- Bring in potential sponsors early, and offer to optimize the project (within reason) to suit their needs.
- Constantly update your list of potential sponsors. Keep them apprised of new projects, even if you're still planning them.
- Ask potential sponsors for suggestions. Do they have an idea for a large-scale project? Don't dismiss their suggestions out of hand. Good business leaders know how to draw crowds.



Resources

Use these samples and examples to help assemble your sponsorship proposal.

1. **Sponsorship planning checklist**
2. **Proposal letter outline**
3. **Sample proposal letter**
4. **Sponsorship rate card worksheet**
5. **Sponsorship levels and benefits (example)**
6. **Club data checklist**
7. **Event data checklist**

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Resources

1. Sponsorship planning checklist

Objective: To build _____ new sponsorships by _____

Action	Person responsible	Deadline	Status
1. Plan			
<input type="checkbox"/> Form a team			
<input type="checkbox"/> Research potential sponsors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of hot prospects			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a demographic report on club membership			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential competitors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Loop in your club communications director to integrate your newsletter and website			
2. Sell			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create sponsorship packages (also known as "bundles")			
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a leave-behind for sponsor meetings			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rehearse your presentation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with potential sponsors			
3. Deliver			
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform your club about your sponsorship plans			
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine who will fulfill contractual obligations			
<input type="checkbox"/> Assign a sponsorship contact for the club			
<input type="checkbox"/> Gather feedback after sponsorship events			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a schedule for communications touchpoints with sponsors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Invite sponsors to visit and join the club			

Resources

2. Your proposal letter

Outline

Your proposal letter serves the vital function of making first contact with potential sponsors. Make it personal, informative and concise. Here's how:

Paragraph one. Write a personalized introduction. Avoid a boilerplate salutation such as "To whom it may concern." Find out who handles sponsorships at the company and address it to him or her. Explain that you'd like to offer a sponsorship opportunity.

Paragraph two. Offer a quick, one-paragraph "executive summary" of your event. Include its name, location, dates and hours, the number of times it's been staged and what the project seeks to accomplish. Be thorough, but don't get carried away. Keep this section brief and on-topic. Make every word count.

Paragraph three. Explain how purchasing a sponsorship would help the company. Be concrete. Talk about your event's demographics, media coverage, etc. Tailor this information to each prospect.

Paragraph four. Talk about your club—how old it is, the number of members, other fundraisers, etc. Let the potential sponsor know that you're an organization with a track record of well-run events. Also talk about Kiwanis International. Show that a large organization backs your efforts. Offer tidbits from the Just the facts sheet.

Paragraph five. Thank the prospect for his or her time and promise to follow up soon with a phone call. Include your phone number and email, in case he or she wishes to follow up with you.

Resources

3. Sample proposal letter



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Dear INSERT NAME OF CONTACT HERE:

Alyson Contact, your human resources director, recommended that I contact you about a potentially lucrative sponsorship opportunity. My organization, the Kiwanis Club of Ciudad Pretende, would like to offer Widget Town the chance to participate in our popular fundraiser, the Ciudad Pretende Spring Festival, as a corporate sponsor.

As you probably know, this high-profile event, now in its 22nd year, is a highlight of the Ciudad Pretende cultural calendar. It takes place every year on the first weekend of May, drawing approximately 15,000 visitors and garnering television, print and Internet coverage. The two-day gathering, held each May downtown at City Park, also raises more than \$30,000 for area charities.

Widget Town could gain handsomely from an association with Spring Festival. The attendees' demographics closely mirror those of your clientele; press coverage is extensive, with all three local television stations planning live "on-site" reports; and the goodwill generated by the charitable funds the festival draws lasts all year.

Should you choose to participate, you will enjoy the full support of the Kiwanis Club of Ciudad Pretende. Our 86 members, many of whom are current or recently retired business leaders, are experienced at staging events. Indeed, the Spring Festival is one of six charitable gatherings our club oversees. And we're backed by Kiwanis International, a global organization with nearly 600,000 members that annually raises more than \$100 million for charity.

I will contact you shortly to arrange a personal meeting so we can discuss how Widget Town can become part of Spring Festival. Thanks very much for your time and attention. I can be reached at PHONE or EMAIL ADDRESS.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Kiwanis Club of Ciudad Pretende

Resources

4. Sponsorship rate card worksheet

The content and layout of your rate card will be determined by the nature of your event. In most cases, a grid will be most effective, with levels of sponsorship across the top, and various options listed down the left side (see example below). Pricing and the composition of sponsorship bundles must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Here are some typical items that can be offered with almost any project. Put a check mark next to the benefits that would work for your club.

Benefit	Person responsible	Package category
<input type="checkbox"/> Event logo use. Usually reserved for the top sponsor, it allows the company to include the event's official logo in its advertising.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Website recognition. If your club's website (or the website for your event) has high traffic, offer to recognize sponsors there. Another option: Offer a link from the event or club website to the sponsor's page.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion in publicity efforts. This can be presented in numerous ways, utilizing numerous price points. For instance, a sponsor's logo may be included on all event-related press releases or in the event program.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Award presentation. Again, this can be handled in numerous ways. The sponsor could receive an award during the event; have their name associated with an already-existing honor; or serve as a presenter.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Product category exclusivity. A car dealership might pay for the privilege of being the only car dealer at your gathering. Other types of businesses, from restaurants to landscapers, might pay for similar exclusivity.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Display space footprint. The bigger a sponsor's financial commitment, the larger its booth or display space.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Display space location. The best spots go to the highest-paying sponsors.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Public address mentions. Sponsors may pay to have their company mentioned regularly over the PA system.		

Resources

4. Sponsorship rate card worksheet (continued)

Benefit	Person responsible	Package category
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor signage. The bigger and better-located the signs, the higher the price.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Preferred parking. Give sponsors VIP parking.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Free program advertising. The size of the sponsor's ads in the event program will vary with the level of sponsorship.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Special offers. For a fee, sponsors earn the right to make a special offer to club members and/or event attendees.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Fulfillment report. Provide a written report outlining how your club met its contract obligations.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Access to event attendee database. If the demographic information and the email addresses of visitors are captured, the data can prove an invaluable and coveted resource for sponsors.		

Resources

5. Sponsorship levels and benefits (example)

	Gold sponsor \$ Amount	Silver sponsor \$ Amount	Supporter \$ Amount
Company logo in club e-newsletter			
Company name and logo on club website with link to your company homepage			
Company logo on club event banner			
Accompanying 50-word text on website			
Company logo on T-shirts worn by club members at event			
Company logo displayed at event information tent			
An information table, chairs, and signage in a high traffic, high visibility area at event			
Access to the club mailing list			
Access to the event attendee database			

Resources

6. Club data checklist

Potential sponsors will want to know all about your event. But they will also want to learn about your club. Perhaps they'd like to reach out to your members, or make sure your club can be trusted to fulfill its commitments. To answer these questions quickly and thoroughly, you'll want to have the right information handy.

Action	Person responsible	Deadline	Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Club history. Put together a concise history of your organization, including how long it's existed, well-known former members and past accomplishments.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Kiwanis International affiliation. Assemble statistics that demonstrate the size and tradition of Kiwanis International. Show potential sponsors that you're backed by a large, well-established organization.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor testimonials. Gather positive feedback from businesses that contributed to previous events.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demographics. Potential sponsors may wish to market to your club. Make it easy: Quantify your members' ages, sexes, financial standing, etc.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Members with special skills. If your membership brings skill sets to the table that are of obvious use to the sponsor, be sure to mention it.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Web resources. Get information on the level of traffic your club website and event website receive. Mention any other online presences, such as Facebook pages.			

For specific sponsor questions, most of the information can be set aside and used as needed. However, you could also distill the most useful points into a one- or two-paragraph summary that could be presented verbally at meetings or inserted in your club's proposal letter.

Resources

7. Event data checklist

Putting on a great event is important. Proving how great it was can be just as vital. Showing sponsors exactly how much attention their participation earned them is appreciated, and it really does persuade them to sponsor future events. Here's some of the data your club should monitor and capture—before, during and after the event.

Action	Person responsible	Deadline	Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Club website activity. Document the number of “hits” your own website and (if applicable) the event’s website receive. If the sponsor’s own site is linked to the club’s, note how many through-links your site generates.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Media coverage. Get copies of television reports from the event (or download them from YouTube or the station’s site). Also download electronic files of any print stories.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Blog coverage. Keep tabs on local and regional bloggers to see what they’re saying. Clubs can even court this coverage by providing high-profile bloggers with free passes.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials. Ask attendees for their impressions of the event. Good comments can be used in promotional materials. Less-good remarks might reveal possible improvements. Also, gather testimonials from sponsors. Their positive feedback could help with later events and other sponsorship campaigns.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demographic data. Gather as much information as possible about each attendee’s age, education, area of residence, etc.			

Resources

7. Event data checklist (continued)

Action	Person responsible	Deadline	Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendee contact information. Such data can be pure gold to a sponsor. Access can be included in the sponsorship package. One clever way to gather contacts: Stage a drawing that requires participants to provide an email address, so they can be notified if they win.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Photographs. Document everything. Big crowds. Signage. Celebrities. Speakers and performers. The images can be provided to the websites and Facebook pages of every organization and individual who played a part in the event.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Video. Professional (or even semi-professional) video can give your event a promotional boost.			