

SPONSORSHIP TOOLKIT

The power of sponsorship

Fundraising events support so much of what Kiwanis clubs do — from community activities to scholarship programs and more. Local sponsors are crucial to their success. Sponsorships increase club resources, raise your community profile and create access to potential members. All at the same time.

Tap into the power of sponsorship. Use this toolkit to:

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

With a well-run sponsorship program, your club gets more funds — and your sponsors get an association with a local organization whose impact is respected within the community.



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Download this toolkit at
kiwanis.org/sponsortoolkit.



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I. PLAN

Identify 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: The sponsor gives cash or in-kind materials/services in exchange for positive public exposure and/or contact with potential customers. Here's how to find 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. Visit their websites, review recent media coverage and talk to current and former employees. If you contact a company, your knowledge will show you've done your homework.



GET ORGANIZED

Soliciting sponsorships can be hard work. Ease the process 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 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 in the same month — 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 an advantage.

PLAN

Find like-minded people. Identify businesses that sponsor other social, educational and youth-oriented programs in your community. They might like to do 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 that obvious, but it's worth the effort to identify 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 top prospects, but don't dismiss other contenders. If some of your candidates don't fit your current project, they might be excellent sponsors for future events.



WHO'S COMING?

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

Green consumers. If your event has an environmental (or general outdoors) theme, it will attract folks coveted by garden centers and landscapers.

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. A less obvious but potentially fruitful option: 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

Potential sponsors want to know what's in it for them. The **sponsorship planning checklist** can help determine your most marketable assets. For example:

Your members. A potential sponsor may want to know all about them — how many there are, their demographic profile, the club's 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** 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 some place where a sponsor could set up a booth?

Publicity. If your event attracts 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 build 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?



2. SELL

Bundle or price it

Once you've inventoried your event's marketable assets, package them into "bundles." For instance, US\$100 might buy a single sponsorship banner and a dozen event tickets — while a greater amount would result in a larger bundle of perks. To get a firm grip on pricing:

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

Estimate attendance. If possible, determine how many people 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. If this is an annual event, consider offering multiyear deals.

Be ready to barter. Money is good, but so are products and 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.

Other tips are available on the [sponsorship rate card worksheet](#) in the Resources section.

CUSTOM BUNDLES

Brainstorm with club members about 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 (whether cars or golf carts), seek out a transportation sponsor. It may be as simple as placing magnetic signs on the vehicles to advertise their 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 cash your club needs. Talk about the benefits for participating companies. Include:

Club information. Briefly outline your club's history, successful projects, future goals and members' expertise and interests.

Event information. Times and dates are important, but demographic data is pure gold. Nothing seals the deal more quickly than showing you can attract the people whom the company serves.

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

A personal touch. This is no place for a 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.

Special delivery. When you finish the note, don't send it to the firm's general address, but to the person who handles sponsorships (the person you found through your research in Step 1). Even better, a club member who's familiar with the prospect's management team could deliver it. You might even include an event-related gift — for instance, a bottle of maple syrup if you're seeking a sponsor for your club's annual pancake breakfast.



A PACKAGE WITH PUNCH

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

Keep it brief. Don't go on for more than a few pages. Any longer and it will be ignored.

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 and offer opinions.

SELL

Meet potential sponsors

After you deliver the sponsorship package, ask for a meeting. If the prospect agrees, prepare carefully:

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 know your subject. 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 have a high profile in the community? Don't be too humble — share the best about your club.

Talk up Kiwanis. Explain how an association with Kiwanis and its members benefits sponsors. Familiarize yourself with our **Just The Facts sheet**. Highlight key points, such as Kiwanis' legacy of service and its commitment to youth via Service Leadership Programs.

Talk about money. Bring copies of your sponsorship option menu for everyone at the meeting. (See page 16.) Use this handout to guide the conversation. It wouldn't hurt to arrive with a sponsorship level in mind.

Keep communicating. Follow the meeting with an email or telephone call recapping what was discussed. And talk about the next steps.

LOOK AND ACT PROFESSIONAL

Actions and appearances speak louder than words. Put yourself in the best light:

Dress appropriately. For instance, suit and tie for a meeting at a bank, business-casual for a lawn care company. Wherever you go, leave your blue jeans at home.

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

Get to the point. Successful businesspeople don't have a ton of time. Share a few pleasantries, then make your case.

Turn off your cell phone. You're the guest — and the one asking for something. Make your host your sole focus.



3. DELIVER

Keeping your promises

If the prospect decides to participate, other meetings will follow to finalize details. Terms of payment, logo specifications, benefits to attendees and much more will be put in writing. A large, complex sponsorship may require a more detailed contract — and even legal advice. After that, it's time to hold up your end of the deal:

Get everyone on board. All club members need to be excited and supportive. 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. Make sure everybody's on the same page with standardized 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 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 sponsor liaison. 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

Show your sponsors how important they are.

- 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 images to 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 is also a good idea.
- A VIP might also like a designated helper to fetch things like meals and beverages.
- If possible, provide 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 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 a sponsorship next time (or next year).

Make memories. Present sponsors with an "album" (i.e., a digital file) of the event's media coverage. It's proof of the event's impact.

Accentuate the positive. Collect testimonials from your sponsors. These can prove extremely useful when pursuing other sponsorships.

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.



TAILOR YOUR OFFERINGS

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

- 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 ideas. Any suggestions for a large-scale project? Don't ask just to seem interested. 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**
6. **Club data checklist**
7. **Event data checklist**

Download this toolkit at kiwanis.org/sponsortoolkit.

RESOURCES

1. Sponsorship planning checklist

Objective: To build _____ new sponsorships by _____
(number) (date)

ACTION	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	STATUS
1. Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Form a team			
<input type="checkbox"/> Research potential sponsors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of top prospects			
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a demographic report on club membership			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential competitors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep your communications director updated for newsletter, website and other club messaging			
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete a club audit			
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			

2. Your proposal letter

Your proposal letter is your first contact with potential sponsors. Make it personal, informative and concise. Here's how:

Paragraph one. Write a personalized introduction. Avoid a generic 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 keep this section brief and on-topic. Make every word count.

Paragraph three. Explain how a sponsorship would help the company. Be concrete. Include 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, its other fundraisers, etc. Show that you have a track record of well-run events. Also mention Kiwanis International — a large organization that backs your efforts — and include information from **Just The Facts**.

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.

3. Sample proposal letter



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Dear INSERT NAME OF CONTACT HERE:

Your human resources director, Alyson Contact, recommended that I contact you about a 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 you probably know, this high-profile event is a highlight of the Ciudad Pretende cultural calendar. Now in its 22nd year, it takes place annually 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 the 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 lasts all year.

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

I will contact you shortly to arrange a personal meeting. 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

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 on page 16). Pricing and the composition of sponsorship bundles must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Here are some items that can be offered with almost any project. Put a check mark next to the benefits that would work for your club.

BENEFIT	WHO'S 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 various 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	WHO'S 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, itemized report showing 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, that data could be an invaluable and coveted resource for sponsors.		

5. Sponsorship levels and benefits (example)

	GOLD SPONSOR AMOUNT: \$XXX	SILVER SPONSOR AMOUNT: \$XXX	SUPPORTER AMOUNT: \$XXX
Company logo in club e-newsletter	X	X	X
Company name and logo on club website with link to your company homepage	X	X	X
Company logo on club event banner	X	X	
Accompanying 50-word text on website	X	X	
Company logo on T-shirts worn by club members at event	X	X	
Company logo displayed at event information tent	X		
An information table, chairs and signage in a high-traffic, high-visibility area at event	X		
Access to the club mailing list	X		
Access to the event attendee database	X		

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, have the right information handy.

ACTION	WHO'S 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. Show that you're backed by a large, well-established organization. For instance, give them our Just the Facts sheet .			
<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, financial standing, etc. Include only information you feel comfortable sharing.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Members with special skills. If your membership has skill sets that are of obvious use to the sponsor, be sure to mention it.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Web resources. Get information on your club and event websites' respective traffic numbers. 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.

7. Event data checklist

Putting on a great event is important. So is *proving* how great it was. Show sponsors exactly how much attention their participation earned them. And persuade them to sponsor future events with the data your club captures — before, during and after the event.

ACTION	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> Website activity. Document the number of “hits” your website and (if applicable) the event’s website receive. If the sponsor’s 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 what local and regional bloggers are saying. Clubs can even court coverage by giving free passes to high-profile bloggers.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials. Ask attendees for their impressions of the event. Good comments can be used in promotional materials. Less positive 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	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendee contact information. Access can be included in the sponsorship package. One idea: 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 participating person and organization.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Video. Professional (or even semi-professional) video can give your event a promotional boost.			