

# Event Sponsorship

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## Chapter Objectives

After completing the chapter, the reader should be able to do the following:

- Define sponsorship and comprehend the relevance of the event triangle.
- Identify the various components of sport sponsorship.
- Recognize and relate the benefits of sponsorship to potential partners.
- Develop a sponsorship proposal.
- Identify sponsorship implementation strategies and evaluation techniques.

## Industry Profile: Patrick Scully, NFL Tennessee Titans

Patrick Scully is in his fourth season in the NFL and his third with the Titans. As sponsorship sales coordinator, Scully's primary responsibility is to establish strong working relationships with local, regional, and national companies and to understand

individual marketing and business goals and initiatives so as to create lasting partnerships with the Tennessee Titans. Among other duties, he develops customized proposals and sales presentations for new business prospects, identifies and researches key open sponsorship categories as prospective new business leads, and works to grow existing corporate sponsorships and media partnerships through service and communication.

A native of Hoffman Estates, Illinois, Scully graduated from DePaul University in 2014 with a degree in sports management and a minor in marketing. He spent time working with Learfield Sports, the Green Bay Packers, and the Chicago Fire prior to joining the Titans in 2016. He resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

Tell us how you ended up working with sponsorship and the Titans.

I went to DePaul University in downtown Chicago where I studied management with a concentration in sports management and a minor in marketing. I started my professional career with Vivid Seats, a secondary ticket marketplace based in Chicago (with a business model similar to StubHub). I was their first-ever intern, and after my internship I joined the sales staff where I would receive inbound calls and help people process their ticket orders. From there I took an unpaid internship with the Chicago Fire (MLS) in the corporate partnerships department. After my summer internship was completed, they were able to create a position for me while I finished up my senior year. I was working with the team Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and some weekends and going to school Tuesdays and Thursdays. I always knew I wanted to work in the NFL, so after I got my degree I took another internship with the Green Bay Packers. After my internship there was completed I went to work for Learfield Sports, where I was in charge of selling and managing sponsors for Northern Illinois University Athletics. I wanted to get back in the NFL and when an opportunity opened here in Nashville I called my friends with the Packers and asked them to put in a good word for me.

What was the attraction for you to work in the area of sponsorships?

I took a class at DePaul that focused on sponsorship sales and I really enjoyed it. At that time, I knew I wanted to work in sports but wasn't sure exactly what area I wanted to focus on. I fell in love with the idea of partnering with organizations to create meaningful experiences for fans. The challenge of gaining the fans' attention while making a natural connection to the brand that has a lasting impact is one that I enjoy facing every day. There is also the thrill of sales and the eat-what-you-kill mentality that makes going to work every day enjoyable.

What is a typical day like for someone in sponsorship or sales for an athletic department?

Depending on the time of year, I am generally doing one of the following things:

- Prospecting potential partners to see who I should reach out to
- Calling or emailing those prospects and trying to set up a meeting
- Meeting with the prospect to discuss what their needs are and discover if the Titans are a fit for their organization
- Building a proposal of sponsorship elements based on that meeting
- Pitching that proposal to the prospect and answering any questions or concerns
- Negotiating back and forth with the prospect on different assets, investment levels, term lengths, and so on
- Creating, adjusting, and signing the final contract
- Executing the contract and making sure the client is happy with all aspects of their partnership
- When it comes time for renewing their partnership, discovering what we did well, what we didn't do well and how we can improve, what other things they would like to try

How do you determine what type of sponsorship to pitch to a potential client?

You must do your research on the prospect and their industry before you meet with them. Sponsorship is about finding the right asset mix that turns them from just being a sponsor to becoming a partner of the organization. Certain brands may have very large budgets and just want their logos everywhere. Other brands have smaller budgets and are more interested in different areas while still maximizing their spend. One thing that is consistent is that people want to feel important and want to know that you care about more than just getting their money.

What is one of the most unusual sponsorship deals you have negotiated?

I will give you a few:

- Rackley Roofing: a roofing company based 45 minutes outside of Nashville that has never spent a dime on marketing. They wanted to prove to people that they were a legitimate business, drive digital traffic to their new website, and have an opportunity to entertain some of their VIP clients while also providing fans with an unforgettable experience. I was able to put together a package that addressed all those objectives with the following assets:
  - Trademark rights: Official Roofer of the Tennessee Titans
  - Banner ads and logo placement on TitansOnline.com: helps with SEO when an established site has their advertisements on it
  - Suite: great opportunity to host guests in a controlled climate with food and drinks just steps away

- Rackley Roofing zip line at the pregame tailgate: a once-in-a-lifetime experience that fans can enjoy for free, and Rackley Roofing can tell the story that the harness that you use when riding the zipline is the same harness that is securing a Rackley employee when she is up on a roof
- Permobil: a company that makes wheelchairs, both manual and automatic, based about 30 minutes outside of Nashville. They have a very specific target that they are trying to hit, and they want to show that they are a valued member of the community here in Tennessee. Nissan Stadium has the most ADA platforms in the NFL and we rebranded all of them with Permobil branding. We also added Permobil signage to our existing handicap parking spaces. In addition to all that, every year we pick a winner and surprise them on the field with a custom Titans-branded wheelchair. In 2018 we honored a young man who suffered a horrific football accident and has been a big Titans fan his whole life. In 2019 we will honor a wounded warrior during our Veterans Day game against the New England Patriots.
- Ole Smoky Moonshine: simply because we are the only team in NFL history to have a deal with a moonshine company!

It seems everyone wants to work in professional sports these days. Do you have any advice for someone who is looking into the marketing or sponsorship area as a career?

I got my job with Vivid Seats through a job application website that DePaul had set up for us students. I met my future boss from the Chicago Fire at a networking event. I was able to get this job here with the Tennessee Titans because of connections I had made at the Green Bay Packers. Connecting with people is the most important thing you can do and when you do connect with them, make sure you stick out in some way (send a follow up e-mail). Everyone wants to work in sports, but if you're able to have a clear vision of what you want to do within sports and you can tell people "I want to sell sponsorships in the NFL" at a young age, you will stick out when compared to your peers.

It is fascinating to ponder the impact that marketing has had on society. Years ago, when television was in its golden phase, commercials were estimated to reach about 70 percent of the population (Johnson 2006). With the advent of digital cable and the ability to bypass commercials, one might assume that commercials lost their ability to reach an audience. But with all the new technology and means for reaching an audience wherever they are, by today's advertising standards, it has been estimated that each of us is exposed to between 4,000 and 10,000 messages a day. Stop and think about that for just a second. In fact, in that second you stopped, another media platform was launched and it is safe to say you were exposed to yet another advertisement on Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, Instagram ... you get the picture. Have you ever considered that abundance of messages you are exposed to on a daily basis and the impact they have on you? Or how

much we are now addicted to social media and how it has impacted our lives and our consumption habits? The technology and the methods may be new, but the concept of communicating a message is not. Magazines, billboards, newspapers, direct mail, television, radio, the Internet, phone apps, and virtual placement are all viable media to convey a message to a specific audience. Some of these messages are advertisements and some are sponsorships. In this chapter we will focus on the idea of soliciting sponsorship as a means to financially support and market your event.

Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2014) define sponsorship as the “acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product, person, organization, team, league, or event for the purpose of deriving benefits related to that affiliation or association” (p. 231). Solomon's (2002) simplified definition states that sponsorship is one company paying a fee to a promoter to endorse the event and promote its products. The 2015 Plunkett Research report on industry statistics and trends asserts the sport industry weighs in at a healthy \$1.5 trillion. The International Events Group (IEG), a leading expert in sponsorships, reported that global spending on sports sponsorship in 2018 topped 65.8 billion (Ukman 2018).

Advertising and sponsorship are kindred spirits, but their intent is very different. Kokemuller (n.d.) explained the relationship best: “sponsorship is typically regarded as a stronger and deeper relationship than a simple advertising exchange of value. An advertisement is a singular message placement while sponsorship is an ongoing arrangement” (para. 1).

To fully understand the role of sponsorship, we must first identify its place in the promotional mix and define various terminologies associated with the traditional marketing mix and promotional mix. The traditional marketing mix consists of the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion (McCarthy 1960). The promotional mix (discussed in chapter 7) encompasses advertising, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotions.

What is the lure of sponsorship? Why sport sponsorship? And how can seeking sponsorship help you manage your event? Much of the growth can be attributed to the growing desire (and need) for corporations to be affiliated with sport entities to help them achieve their strategic goals. Sport is consuming, sport is exciting, and sport provides an avenue for businesses, large and small, to reach their target demographics and to grow and maintain relationships with customers through mutually beneficial interactions. Sport and sport-related properties (fitness centers, apparel, equipment, and shoes) are a constant for most people; daily interactions are almost a given. These interactions come in many different shapes, sizes, and methods, but the common denominator is the link to sports and the opportunities that are present through sponsorship.

Keep in mind that sponsorship is a triad, a dynamic connection of the event, the fans, and the sponsors. As Ammon, Southall, and Nagel (2010) present, this relationship triangle

"represents important stakeholders who must be satisfied for the event to be a success" (p. 14). SponsorMap (2008), a marketing research firm, describes the event triangle as "the emotional connection" between an event and the fans that turns emotion into a reaction that ultimately benefits the sponsor. In essence, the relationship the event has with the sponsor encourages fans to take action, purchasing the product or service offered by the sponsor. The relationships within the event triangle can be described in three distinct but related parts. First, the event delivers the opportunity to attract fans and provide exposure for potential sponsors. Second, fans seek entertainment from the event and are exposed to the various promotional activities during an event. And third, sponsors exploit the opportunity to leverage fans through what we call borrowed equity, or marketing through sport.

These connections and actions allow a sponsor to achieve its anticipated return on investment (ROI) or return on opportunity (ROO). ROI and ROO refer to the effectiveness of the investment either in monetary terms (ROI) or in accomplishing the goals set for the sponsorship (ROO). The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) provides great examples of how the event triangle is utilized to a sponsor's advantage. Having great success with fan loyalty, NASCAR has been the subject of many marketing studies. One such national study by Performance Research, an analytical sport and event marketing firm, randomly surveyed NASCAR fans, revealing "71 percent [of them] elected to purchase products that were involved in NASCAR over one that is not" (Performance Research n.d.), ranking NASCAR the number one sport for brand loyalty.

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a give and take process. One side says, "show me the money" (Jerry McGuire) while the other says "show me your audience" (Kear 2017). As our own definition states, this is a formalized relationship involving an exchange that is designed to offer benefits to both parties who "use sport, entertainment, and other forms of lifestyle marketing to send messages to a targeted audience" (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton 2014, p. 231). Over the past 23 years we have seen the definition of sponsorship evolve from simply communicating an association (Cornwell 1995) to an avenue for achieving organizational goals (Shank 2009) to exploitation for commercial potential (Ukman 2012). We have seen the results go from mass broadcasting of relationship to very targeted attempts to reach certain demographics.

For event planners, sponsorship is a means to an end in terms of funding their endeavor. Many organizations rely on funds raised from sponsorship sales to achieve their event goals. In fact, many events exist solely as fund-raisers for a specific cause. Even high school sports teams still rely on fund-raising (selling of sponsorships) to augment their increasing expenses and decreasing federal funding. Nolensville High School (Tennessee), which is only in its third year of existence is one such example. The athletic committee at Nolensville hosts two events each year benefiting their athletic department. In the fall they

host a 5K event cosponsored by the local running club and in the spring they put on "Boots and Bling," an event that connects the Nashville music scene with the school, bringing musicians and songwriters to the campus for an acoustical performance while the attendees are treated to a buffet meal that is sponsored (donated) by local restaurants. These two events raise over \$25, 000 for the athletic program.

Sponsorship has found its roots and is now firmly entrenched in sport, and sport has clearly welcomed this partnership and the benefits it provides. Sponsorship opportunities within the sport industry have attempted to bridge the gap between needs and wants, tempting the sports fan through enticing promotional campaigns, direct selling strategies, and heightening emotions. Ultimately, businesses associate with sport to achieve sales goals, while sport organizations view the relationship as necessary to support the escalating costs of fielding a team (Stotlar 2005). Making sure you have the right fit, philosophically and demographically, is also critical. Conflicting philosophies or values could produce negative outcomes. For example, the X Games, more directed at the young adult market, might not be a good fit for Johnson & Johnson's Bengay line but would align better with their Clean & Clear products.

For event managers, sponsorship is a means to an end, if you will, generating the necessary funds to create a memorable event, thus satisfying customers. Sponsoring an event can range from a simple advertisement in the program to full-blown naming rights, and various levels in between. As event planners map out their plans for creating, planning, and executing a successful event, they create manageable components that become targeted sales pitches to businesses and organizations. Golf tournaments provide an excellent example of the various types of sponsorships you can create. A typical golf fundraiser might offer the following sponsor opportunities: event, hole, cart, range, lunch, long drive, hole in one, closest to the pin, beverage cart, raffles and prizes. A kind of if-you-can-tag it-you-can-sell-it mentality.

Companies seek these unique ways to engage potential customers. Traditional methods such as advertising, public relations, and promotions are still utilized, but adding sponsorship to that mix provides myriad opportunities to communicate a message. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) create a symphony of promotional efforts that work in concert, linking all promotional pieces. This unified effort increases the likelihood that marketing will be successful, leading to consumer action. This process aligns with Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) hierarchy of effects model (see table 5.1.), which suggests there is a force that guides people through the six-step (stages) model. The six stages of consumer involvement range from thinking to feeling to *I must have* (VanDen Heuvel 2009).

**Table 5.1. Applying the Hierarchy of Effects Model**

Stage	Application
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Stage	Application
Awareness	If your target market is unaware of your product or service, then the first order of marketing priority is to achieve awareness within your target market. To test awareness, you might ask "Have you heard of our firm?"
Knowledge	Awareness can answer the question of whether or not a prospect knows of your firm; however, she may not know the context in which she heard your name and thus cannot accurately describe what you do or what you sell, nor can she determine whether or not she would ever do business with you. To test for knowledge, you might ask "Do you know what our company does for organizations like yours?"
Liking	When a prospect knows what your firm does and what you might do for him, he begins to form opinions about your firm. Perhaps, because of his heightened awareness, he now seems to notice you in the newspaper and in trade journals, and he now receives your newsletter. He's forming an opinion of whether or not he likes you. Perhaps you provide valuable thought-leading wisdom in the industry, and he likes you for that fact. To test for liking, you might ask "What is your overall perception of our firm?" His response might range from favorable to unfavorable.
Preference	The preference stage is where we begin to see the real value of the hierarchy of effects. A prospect in the preference stage has a clear definition of why she would want to do business with your firm or purchase a product or service in the category you serve. To test for preference, you might ask "What criteria will you use to make your decision about XYZ?" Marketers also gauge interest through trials, surveys, and other means to better understand the customer at this stage of the buying cycle.
Conviction	At the stage of conviction, the prospect is in a state of already being convinced that you are the right choice for whatever problem he needs you to solve. He believes, through your credible demonstration of capability, that you're the right fit and that you've done everything right to this point. Testing for conviction is now a matter of moving the conversation to purchase. However, in long sales cycles, maintaining conviction is also important. Any lead-nurturing activities you have in progress should not cease once you believe you've reached the conviction stage.

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Stage	Application
Purchase	Ultimately, the work to move the prospect through the hierarchy will result in her purchasing your offering. However, beware of the purchase or signal to purchase from a customer who has not gone through the various stages. Nor should you try to induce a customer purchase without recognizing the aforementioned stages. A customer purchase without the rigor of traversing the hierarchy of effects can lead to postpurchase dissonance.

Reprinted by permission from D. VanDen Heusel. The Hierarchy of Effects (Green Bay, WI: MarketingSavant), 3-4.

As event manager, you can leverage this information by presenting the various marketing opportunities you can offer to potential sponsors. Sometimes a potential sponsor does not immediately see the need to become a sponsor. This presents you with the opportunity to help them see the bigger picture. Realize that you may be the guide on the journey that will take a potential sponsor through the hierarchy of effects to become your partner.

### Sponsorship Components

As you begin to consider the idea of soliciting sponsors for your event, first make your marketing goals and objectives clear to ensure that potential sponsors know, understand, and relate to them. Consider sponsorship a three-step process of identifying (research), securing (selling), and maintaining (servicing) (Skildum-Reid and Grey 2008).

Once you have planned your event and established your goals, you can turn your attention to developing the components of your sponsorship program. These components allow you (or your sales team) to give companies various opportunities to be associated with your event. Kim Harrison, author, consultant, and founder of CuttingEdgePR.com, asserts that it is up to event managers to identify what a company needs and to package event sponsorship opportunities in a way that will provide the company “with value for money” (“Focus on What” n.d.). Typical sponsorship components are identified in the sidebar Typical Sponsorship Components.

### Costs of Sponsorship to a Corporation

When a company is considering a sponsorship opportunity, they have two available options, in-kind donations or traditional monetary support. In-kind sponsorships are nonmonetary partnerships that provide a service or product to an event in exchange for sponsorship recognition. In-kind contributions can include such items as gift bags, basket

giveaways, prizes for raffles, entertainment services, volunteers, food and beverages, photography services, and T-shirts, to name a few. Our Nolensville High School example earlier in this chapter shows how in-kind donations are appreciated. In 2017, Leigh Ann Danzey-Bussell's event management class at Trevecca Nazarene University partnered with the Nolensville Athletic Committee and the Nolensville 5K event to provide several in-kind services. First, the class was charged with creating an operations manual for the event; second, they were to volunteer during the event; and finally they were divided into groups representing the various logistical and management functions associated with running the event. For the group assigned to sponsorship and hospitality, an in-kind donation of granola bars, bagels, and chocolate milk was secured from Trevecca Nazarene University's dining services and made available to the participants at the end of the event. In return, Trevecca Nazarene University was identified as a sponsor of the event and the students were recognized for their outstanding efforts.

### Typical Sponsorship Components

Access to property mailing lists or databases

Inclusion in event promotions

Category exclusivity

Link on the event website

Complimentary advertising

Right of first refusal

Displays and sampling

Right to purchase additional tickets

Distribution rights

Right to use event trademarks and logos

Free tickets

Signage

Hospitality areas

Other items as determined by contract

Although in-kind donations are great for helping eliminate many of the expenses you might have with that support, it is still necessary to secure funding to host an event. Your financial needs are identified during the planning phase, presented in your proposal, and secured during active selling. This monetary involvement entails the exchange of cash for the right to associate with an event. You must first know your inventory and your available

sponsorship opportunities and then you must craft your proposal with your vision and mission in mind.

## Components of a Sponsorship Proposal

You have planned your event's mission, goals, and objectives; defined your sponsorship levels; and identified potential companies to approach for sponsorship. Selecting companies entails a carefully crafted plan of attack based on market research and acumen. With these elements in place, you are ready to construct your proposal—a carefully crafted and tailored packet that will address all the questions necessary for a company to decide whether to participate or not. Skildum-Reid (2010) boldly stated that “sponsorship is not about your need; it's about achieving the sponsor's objective” (p. 2). You can draft a sponsorship proposal after you have identified the various items you have to “sell” to potential sponsors. As this is a mutually beneficial process, it can best be described in terms of a partnership or relationship. You are looking for those potential sponsors who will best fit your needs while accomplishing theirs.

There is no magic formula for a proposal, but certain elements are necessary in order to properly ask for sponsorship. According to Singh (2009), event managers should keep these questions in mind when writing the proposal:

- Why should I sponsor this event? (benefit)
- Who is going to attend the event? (audience)
- Why will they come?
- How do I target the audience?
- What is the credential of the organizer?
- Who else is sponsoring the event?
- What is the cost, and does it justify the benefit?

These questions will help you construct a proposal that will garner attention. It has been stated that potential sponsors look at two segments first: what you are offering and how much it will cost them.

Your first step is not just to put together and mail the proposal. You must first secure the name of the person responsible for making sponsorship decisions. With technology, you may be able to acquire this information on the company's website. If not, a simple phone call will do the trick. It is imperative that your proposal reach the right person for full consideration. In her blog, Skildum-Reid (2010) professed that most sponsorship proposals are “total crap” because someone failed to do adequate research.

Constructing your proposal in a sensible order, presenting your case professionally, and keeping the proposal as brief as possible is a great strategy (Skildum-Reid 2011). Various

authors suggest that the following information be included:

- Provide a concise overview of your organization, including your location, main activities, and goals and a brief history.
- Include the benefits your organization can offer a sponsor and demonstrate how these benefits relate to the sponsor.
- List the credentials of your organization and key personnel. Sponsors need to know they will be dealing with experienced and reputable people.
- Supply a list of current and past sponsors (if applicable). This allows potential sponsors to check for competition.
- Outline any benefits you are prepared to offer the sponsor.
- Explain the nature and extent of potential media coverage.
- Supply a realistic estimate of the number of people who might participate in the event.
- Demonstrate the current level of community support and awareness for your project. Sponsors have a strong interest in supporting projects that have wide community support.

According to Stotlar (2005), the sponsorship submission should include the following elements:

- *Cover letter*: address it to the appropriate person, focus on tailored benefits for specific partners, be specific, let them know when to expect a follow-up
- *Description of the event and the program*: location, duration, size, media plan, promotional elements, and demographic profile
- *Sponsor's benefits*: signage, hospitality, pre- and postevent activities, on-site opportunities, cross-promotions, rationale for partnering, evaluation methods, and VIP opportunities
- *Sponsorship investment amount*: include levels or categories of sponsors, parameters, and a list of former sponsors
- *Deadline for decision*: this is critical for keeping the event on schedule

Sponsors are looking to determine the viable benefits of this relationship. Stotlar (2005) contends that sponsorship bridges the gap between how people want to be reached and how marketers want to reach them. Keeping these things in mind will help you craft a proposal that will land you the partnership.

Mullin and colleagues (2014) suggested an eight-step sponsorship process that includes research, a meeting with the decision maker, listening to the potential sponsor's needs during the meeting, taking the information and looking for a fit, creating a proposal,

presenting the ideas (tailored to their needs) to the potential sponsor, negotiating if necessary, and handing off to an activation team. The proposal is your offer to the potential sponsor that outlines what you are offering, the worthiness of the offer, and what you would like in return. Specifics such as demographics, exposure, cost, and benefits are outlined in your proposal (McCue, 2016). As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are various ways you can package your offerings. In the next section we discuss one popular way to present sponsorships through different levels of support.

## Sponsorship Levels

Keep in mind that what you are creating with your sponsorship opportunities is value. The value varies for each potential sponsor, and sponsorship packages neatly represent the various sponsorship levels that can be purchased. Most classic sponsorship values are presented as gradual levels (packages) of involvement ranging from minimal investment to full-blown rights of ownership. These levels allow you to address your own needs and the potential sponsors' needs at a level that is comfortable for both. For years the standard levels for many events were gold, silver, and bronze, following the ever-popular Olympic medal model. But the increased desire by corporations to be associated with sport has driven event managers to cast aside cookie-cutter models and creatively construct unique levels for their events. Still, some distinctive categories have emerged, such as the following:

- Contributing
- Corporate
- Hospitality and food
- Major
- Media
- Naming rights
- National
- Presenting
- Supporting
- Title

Depending on the event, event planners develop specialized categories that represent the available opportunities. For example, a golf tournament might have tee, hole-in-one, or hydration station levels, while Little League organizations might offer levels such as uniforms and fields. The differentiation of these levels from greatest involvement down to minimal involvement allows potential partners to see what level they can afford and helps them identify the best fit (Ukman 2012). Table 5.2 shows an example of sponsorship levels

for a local Little League organization.

**Table 5.2. Example of Sponsorship Levels**

Package	Fee	Details
Teamwork Fall only	\$175	Company banner on walkway fence, team sponsorship, listed on seasonal allsponsor recognition banners throughout park, and fall season team plaque Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1
Teamwork PLUS Fall Only	\$275	Company banner on infield fence, team sponsorship, listed on seasonal all-sponsor recognition banners throughout park, and fall season team plaque Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1
Single Spring Only	\$350	Company banner on walkway fence, team sponsorship, listed on seasonal allsponsor recognition banners throughout park, and spring season team plaque Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1
Single PLUS Spring Only	\$450	Company banner on infield fence, team sponsorship, listed on seasonal all-sponsor recognition banners throughout park, and spring season team plaque Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1
Double Play Spring and Fall Combo	\$500	Company banner on walkway fence, team sponsorship, listed on all-sponsor recognition banners throughout park, website listing, and spring and fall season team plaques Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1

Package	Fee	Details
Double Play PLUS Spring and Fall Combo	\$650	Company banner on infield fence, team sponsorship, listed on seasonal all-sponsor recognition banners throughout park, and spring season team plaque Copy for banner, logo, or sign must be submitted before March 1
Manager	\$600 each; \$1200 all	One garage door signage at barn for both seasons (painted artwork, lasting a minimum of two years)  Up to three garage door sponsorships available  Approx. 3' x 3' space reserved for color artwork to be painted on garage door(s)
Power Play	\$750	All three golf carts sponsorship for both seasons (metallic sign on front of each cart) 1' x 2' color sign affixed to each golf cart
Triple Play	\$750	Signage on all three storage sheds around the park for entire year 18" x 36" color sign affixed to each storage shed
On Deck	\$750 ea. \$1500 all	Signage on any batting cage for entire year Up to three batting cage sponsorships available 2' x 4' color sign to be suspended from each cage facing walkways
Cracker Jack	\$1000	Signage on a concession stand at the park for entire year  2' x 6' color sign to be affixed to concession stand below windows
Clubhouse	\$1250	Walkway naming rights for entire year, with one street sign to be affixed to post at each walkway juncture

Package	Fee	Details
MVP	\$1000 to \$2500 each	<p>Official naming rights for entire year; field uses sponsor name in all league documents</p> <p>4' × 8' color sign suspended above top of each backstop</p> <p>Rates are as follows:</p> <p>\$2,500: fields 2, 6, and 13</p> <p>\$2,000: fields 1, 3, 4 and 12</p> <p>\$1,500: fields 5, 7, 8, and 9</p> <p>\$1,000: fields 10 and 11</p>
Packages are available on first come, first served basis, depending on availability.		

All sponsorships automatically include company name listing on

- company-specific recognition banner along one of our three entrance paths
- OYO's website, where we will link listing to your company's website

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Event managers are limited only by their creative energies as to the types of levels they can offer. But take note: You don't want to overwhelm the client with your offerings; your goal is to create interesting opportunities that will provide the potential sponsor with the greatest ROI. This is why researching potential partnerships is the first step in drafting your proposal; know your audience.

## Naming Rights

As one of the fastest-growing segments of sponsorship, naming rights have truly come into their own as of late. Burton (2008) identified three distinct naming rights options:

1. Rights to a legacy gift
2. Rights to be a title sponsor of an event
3. Rights for a long-term partnership

Legacy gifts are best exemplified by names such as Rockefeller and Kennedy and the many buildings that bear these names (Burton 2008). Since many of the events in the sporting world do not require such grandiose names or funding, of particular importance

to you is what to name your event. The extent of the financial undertaking to produce an event has become so great, why not explore new opportunities to augment out-of-pocket costs for your event?

Golf tournaments have had a long tradition of using naming rights for their events. Some tournaments have gone so far as to utilize a legacy right, an event sponsor, and a course name (Bissell 2011). A cursory glance at the PGA Tour schedule is evidence enough that events do draw large sponsors. Names such as AT&T, FedEx, Honda, Sony, Waste Management, and Wells Fargo stand out (PGA.com 2012). BB&T, a leading financial services holding company, has truly bought into sport sponsorships, leaving an imprint on collegiate sport (official bank of the Atlantic Coast Conference and 10-year naming rights to the Wake Forest University Football Stadium), motorsports (official sponsor of Jeff Burton, NASCAR driver number 31), and its latest acquisition, the Atlanta Tennis Championships (Limpert 2012; USTA.com 2012).



Golf tournaments, such as The Honda Classic, have had a long tradition of using naming rights for their events. MIKE EHRLMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Don't underestimate the power your event may hold for a potential sponsor. Reach for the stars, and you just might get what you want. You must be willing to accept whatever response you get. Sometimes that response is yes, we would welcome the opportunity to partner with your event; other times, it will be no. But perseverance and belief in your event will ultimately pay off.

## Cost of Sponsorship for Event Organizers

Harrison ("How to Calculate" n.d.) maintains that the investment you seek from potential sponsors is a uniquely crafted formula of identifying the cost to fulfill the sponsorship multiplying by two. In simplified form, Harrison presents the formula this way:

Total investment asked = cost of providing the benefits offered; admin staff costs + sales costs + servicing costs = total cost to deliver the package + 100 percent margin = sponsorship fee.

To illustrate this, let's refer to the Little League levels outlined in table 5.2. Oaklandon Youth Organization (OYO) is seeking a teamwork-level sponsor for the fall. The costs break down as follows:

Company banner	\$18
Team sponsorship	\$12
Sponsor-recognition banner	\$30
Plaque and administration fees	\$17
Sales fees	\$10
Total OYO cost	\$87 + 100 percent margin = \$175 (rounded)

Harrison adds the need to include both direct and indirect costs associated with staff, noting their involvement from conception to fruition of sponsorships. She concludes that event planners should not just think selfishly about what it will take to run the event but must consider what is most valuable to the potential sponsor. It is also important to consider the competition (i.e., what they are offering and charging) to ensure you are operating within the boundaries of what the local market will support.

## Sponsorship Benefits

Inevitably, when a potential sponsor is approached, they want to know the details of what's in it for them. To have that conversation, you need to understand what you have to offer. Ukman (2012) contends you must take inventory of your assets before moving forward. She identifies your potential offerings as follows:

- An audience
- Database information
- Hospitality opportunities
- Marks and logos

- Media coverage
- Merchandise
- Possible broadcast package
- Printed materials
- Signage
- Talent
- Venue
- Website and social media outlets

Familiarize yourself with the benefits that sponsorship—or maybe a better term is *partnership*—offers to each potential sponsor. Various authors have outlined the benefits of sport sponsorship (Ukman 2012; Lawrence and Wells 2009; Shank 2009; International Events Group 2018; Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton 2014; Logh, Irwin, and Short 2000; Schmader and Jackson 1997); their consensus is as follows:

- Award presentation (perpetual trophy naming)
- Change in or reinforcement of image
- Community engagement
- Differentiation
- Exclusivity
- Fresh, nontraditional promotional strategies
- Increased brand awareness and loyalty
- Increased sales and achievement of sales goals
- Merchandising opportunities
- Naming rights
- Narrowcasting (targeting a niche market)
- Philanthropy
- Product promotion
- Publicity
- Showcasing of products through samples or displays

Remember that you are not the only horse in the race. Your ability to understand these elements, package them to fit your potential sponsors, and then deliver on your promises will not only reduce the clutter of traditional marketing mechanisms but also generate

greater opportunities for you, your sponsors, and the fans (event triangle) (Ukman 2012). Your success, according to deLisle (2009) is based on two principles: understanding your product and understanding your audience. Understanding your product (event) requires that you grasp the appeal it will have and how it is unique compared with alternatives. This allows you to differentiate your offerings, creating that necessary appeal. To understand your audiences, deLisle suggests that you consider marketing to be like dating (p. 135). Growing the relationship requires nurturing and effort. It also requires that you do your homework, researching and preparing for that initial experience in hopes that it leads to a "long term and mutually beneficial relationship" (deLisle 2009, p. 135). As with any other relationship, it needs close monitoring to ensure that you are both providing the necessary elements initially prescribed in the arrangement. Shank (2009) concluded that sponsorship provides benefits to all involved and produces the proverbial win-win partnership (p. 333).

## Activation and Evaluation Techniques

The old adage *What's in it for me?* absolutely rings true in sponsorship. Each partner is looking for the win-win scenario that satisfies their needs in terms of exposure, recognition, ROI, and ROO (Stotlar 2005). Activation of a sponsorship refers to the process of actively marketing and managing the sponsor's partnership with an event. Technology has greatly changed the way sponsorships are being activated. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have (literally) virtually enhanced the way marketers interact with target markets. With the advent of quick response (QR) codes, the speed at which a fan can connect to a sponsor is fractional. Butcher (2010) reported that Swiss watch manufacturer Tissot added a QR code to the hood of NASCAR driver Danica Patrick's race car.



BRIAN BAHR/GETTY IMAGES Taco Bell's 'Ring the Bell' promotion is an example of activation.

Activation closely aligns with advertising—creating public awareness of a product and its association with an event. This process requires more than simply putting a logo on a sign at your event; it requires action. As the term implies, activation refers to stimulation, stimulation translates into action, and action is what the sponsor desires. The relationship you build with the sponsor will help identify the methods of activation you select for your event. Coca-Cola, a longtime supporter of the Olympics and one of 11 companies designated as part of the Olympic Partners (TOP) program, continually shines in the area of activation. Most recently, the Youth Olympic Winter Games saw Coca-Cola sponsoring the Youth Olympic Torch Relay and utilizing red London-style double-decker buses in Innsbruck's city center to provide music and giveaways in conjunction with the Coca-Cola Happiness Truck that traveled the city handing out Coca-Cola products (Mickle 2012).

Concepts such as cross-promotions and cause-related marketing are exciting activation techniques. Cross-promotion is a *partnership* where two (or more) businesses join forces to engage in joint promotion (Jones 2018). For instance, Donnor uses the example of the recent cross-promotion of the Dodgers Pride Night tickets on sale at a Los Angeles Kings game. He contends that the leader in cross-promotion is MSG Holdings; the organization that operates Madison Square Garden utilizes cross-promotions for the seven professional teams it services.

Cause-related sponsorship, better known as cause-related marketing (CRM), is relatively

young in comparison to other forms of marketing. Essentially, CRM brings together not-for-profit and for-profit entities that share mutually beneficial goals in an effort to increase attention and facilitate action. American Express was the first company to enter into such an arrangement when it offered to donate a portion of each of its transactions to the fund to restore the Statue of Liberty in 1983 (GrantSpace 2012). Some may call this double-dipping—promotion of products or services while raising money—but for event planners, it ultimately comes down to the idea that the show must go on, in any way and by any means possible. Regardless of how you spin it, activation is critical to a sponsorship opportunity. Donna's Hope is a nonprofit foundation for breast cancer survivors started by Donna Ward, wife of Turner Ward, the hitting coach for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Turner, a former MLB player, is the recipient of Yasiel Puig's kisses in the dugout after a successful at bat. Using that as a parody, Donna's Hope partnered with BreakingT, a company that creates fan T-shirts, to create a Pucker Up Puig T-shirt. The shirt depicts Turner doing the kissing this time, and a portion of the proceeds are being filtered to Donna's Hope.

After you have implemented your marketing plan, you must have a means of evaluating the success of your efforts. For an event, this can be as simple as whether you sold all the tickets. But evaluating sponsorship can be accomplished in various other ways, such as on-site distribution of products; website traffic before, during, and after the event; and an increase in sales after activation. How you establish the success of your event relies heavily on what you are offering and how you will track it. International Events Group (2012), a leader in sponsorship research, asserts that event managers must consider both the tangible and the intangible benefits of sponsorship when determining value and success. Tangible benefits are easily noticed elements such as the use of a logo on goods. The intangible benefits, such as name awareness, loyalty, and the collection of names for a contact database, are more elusive.

At the close of your event, you should generate and distribute a report encompassing the various components of each sponsor's package. This report, according to Spoelstra (1997), should contain samples of all materials that utilized the sponsor's name and logo. This will aid in determining ROI and ROO. Return on investment relates to the idea of tangible benefits because it asks patrons to recall the sponsors. Built-in expectations can be quantified through data gathering to allow sponsors to determine if their investments were profitable. But what about the qualitative aspect of sponsorship, those intangible benefits discussed earlier? In terms of return on opportunity, the qualitative information that can be gathered from interviewing patrons or conducting focus groups can better answer whether objectives were met through sponsorship affiliations. Both ROI and ROO are effective in valuing and evaluating sponsorship success. These data also justify the relationship between the sponsor and the event (Stotlar 2005).

## Summary

Sport is big business thanks in part to the immense sponsorship deals that are carved out

by major corporations. The billions of dollars spent annually on sponsoring sport entities is quite astounding. You may be wondering why anyone would want to sponsor your event. Do not get caught up in the idea that your event may seem small or insignificant compared with others. There are companies and organizations out there that are seeking an event just like yours to sponsor.

Events are created with the goal of at least breaking even financially. In today's tough economic environment, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to pull that off. To help defray the cost of planning and implementing an event, event managers turn to sponsorship as a lucrative and viable option to raise the necessary capital. Knowledge of the sponsorship process and the event triangle will help ground your efforts. Do your research, identify those entities that will benefit the most from an association with your event, and go out there and clinch the deal!

### Learning Activities

Assume you work for an athletic department at a local high school. Because of recent budget cuts that have plagued interscholastic sport, you are looking to raise money for the department. Golf tournaments are a great way to secure funding from various sources, including sponsors. The local golf course has donated the use of the course for your event. You must now solicit your sponsors.

1. You begin the process with goal setting. What are your goals for this event?
2. How would you begin to identify potential sponsors? Are there any sponsors you should be leery of approaching? (Remember your product.)
3. Identify the parties of the event triangle. What are the investments of each?
4. Categorize the levels of sponsorship you will utilize. (This may require you to research similar golf tournaments for ideas.)
5. What benefits will you provide to sponsors (i.e., what differentiates the levels you have established)?
6. How will you present the ROI and the ROO to the potential customer? How will you evaluate?

### CASE STUDY: THE NAME GAME PAYS OFF

Over the past 15 years there has been a steady decrease in federal education funding to states. When the federal monies are cut, the states have to either find a way to make up the funds or pass the cuts along to the state department of education. In lean times, it is customary to turn to a pay-to-play plan to help fund the various sports teams. But following the precedent set by college and professional teams, high schools looked to sponsorship deals, specifically naming rights, to raise the necessary operating funds.

In 2006, Noblesville High School (Indiana) was struggling to find the funds they needed

to complete some renovations to their football stadium. Athletic director Steve Hurst decided to seek corporate funding to help pay for the installation of the new \$575,000 turf field.

Hurst approached Dave Cox, owner of Hare Chevrolet, a local car dealership with strong ties to the community. Cox and Hurst came to an agreement on the terms of a 10-year deal; for the sum of \$125,000, Hare Chevrolet, secured the naming rights deal for the football stadium. This agreement was the first of its kind in Central Indiana, but it would not be the last. A one-year, \$12,000 extension was awarded for 2017. In August 2018, it was announced that another local company, Beaver Materials, has secured a 5-year, \$83,000 deal to put their name on the stadium.

In 2008, the Hamilton Southeastern School District (HSE), the district just south of Noblesville, struck a deal with a local farm supply company, Reynolds Farm Equipment, to provide funding for their turf campaign. The \$400,000 deal would place the Reynolds name on the stadiums of both HSE high schools, Hamilton Southeastern High School and Fishers High School. Westfield Washington Schools, the neighboring system to the west of Noblesville, landed a 10-year, 1.2-million-dollar naming rights deal with Riverview Health in 2014, which allowed them to build a new stadium.

It is becoming the norm for high schools to seek naming rights deals as a means for making improvements across all campuses and for all programs, not just for sports. Jerry Thacker, superintendent of Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation in Mishawaka, Indiana, commented: "We have a parking lot we could name, the middle school gymnasiums, every single classroom could be supported by some organization."

### Case Study Application

1. Every time there is an event in one of these stadiums or the media covers a football game, those corporate names are mentioned, and the sponsorship investment pays off. Some might say that these schools were selling out to the highest bidder just to make sure sports were adequately funded. How would you defend striking a deal with a local company for naming rights to a local high school?
2. Is this idea a positive one for all involved? Or is this a disaster waiting to happen?
3. What types of conditions would you place upon a naming rights deal if you were to negotiate one?