



## 2009 AAM Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo

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Session: 75 Winning Ideas in 75 Minutes

Segment: Corporate Sponsorship

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These ideas are based on the concept of museums serving as aggregators of audiences with subject-specific interests and related content. Sponsorship ideas are designed to create incremental revenue for the museum while creating awareness and driving visitor traffic.

### Sponsorship Activation Ideas

1. Create a special contest for museum attendees to develop content/exhibit ideas that could be sponsored by companies
  - a. E.g. Doritos Super Bowl commercial contest: consumers competed and winner's commercial aired during Super Bowl
  - b. E.g. Brand holds contest for consumers to create the most innovative exhibit using corporate sponsors' product or technology
2. Create small scale exhibits that can be featured at private events, conferences, office lobbies, airports, hotels, etc.
3. Leverage museum presence online with the use of social network/web 2.0 to create social network sponsorship opportunities (Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, etc)
4. Engage with top celebrity bloggers/advocates who have synergy with your museum or exhibits to host an event, online or onsite (PR benefit to museum) and attach a corporate sponsor
5. Make connections with retail venues (e.g. malls, big box retailers) or other non-traditional venues to get your museum outside its four walls – create a display, store outlet or interactive exhibit, that sponsors can support to take to non traditional venues
6. Hold an online auction hosted by a corporate sponsor and get other local businesses to donate products
7. Brand a van/RV and take your educational outreach on the road to tour schools, libraries, shopping malls, parks, tradeshow and other venues where your audience can be found in high density – museum on wheels
8. Create a series of events with an aligning theme that can be used to create a longer term partnership with corporate sponsors
9. Offer unique VIP sponsorship benefits – behind the scenes opportunities for corporate sponsors at museums, at other events, exhibitions, etc. Leverage museum relationships to create unique opportunities – special opportunities to experience what sponsors wouldn't be able to buy. (e.g. private showing of new collections, or private tour of collections archive, night with the artists/curators, etc). (Consider positioning this with corporate HR as an employee benefit – or as an opportunity to host clients)
10. Increase opportunities for corporate employees to garner recognition and “benefits” through corporate volunteer program
11. Add value to sponsorships by attaching media partners to sponsorship offerings



12. Enlist media partners as sponsorship sales agents – work with media partners to bundle sponsorship benefits in with pitches for ad buys
13. Develop content for mobile marketing/promotional/outreach program targeting audiences using mobile devices – offer as stand alone sponsorship opportunity or as incremental marketing extension
14. Create smaller scale sponsorship opportunities to attract small-mid sized corporate sponsors – or consider splitting larger sponsorship packages among 2 or more sponsors.
15. Partner with a social cause and host cause-related events at the museum- e.g. “American Heart Day” at the museum and find a sponsor; partner with the local school system and host the science fair at the museum and find a sponsor (finding causes that are of high interest)
16. Consider an after hours events program (e.g First Fridays at MCA, Jazzin’ at the Shedd) with a corporate partner
17. Collaborate with other nonprofits to increase sponsor bang for their buck – create “one stop shopping” experience for corporate sponsors.
18. Day program or one-off event series specific to industries still spending sponsorship \$\$ (e.g PECO & The Philadelphia Orchestra leveraged existing partnership to create one-off event promoting alternative energy by doing a wind energy powered performance
19. Create virtual extensions of museums’ physical exhibits which corporations could sponsor and reach consumers online
20. Create unique event sponsorship opportunities:
  - a. Host a wine tasting/wine festival at the museum sponsored by a corporate sponsor and partnering with a wind vendor
  - b. Host an antique car show in the museum parking lot
  - c. Host a kite flying weekend during which kids and families can bring their kites, or build there own.
  - d. Partner with local sports teams to create events that attract museum audiences and sports audiences as well, expanding the reach of the museum
  - e. Develop family-oriented workshop series
21. Inventory your assets and develop a plan to leverage them for greater exposure to funders
22. Develop specific exhibits/workshops with content related to your museum that is relevant to the audience the corporate sponsor is trying to reach
23. Build on the fact that you are subject matter experts by creating content generation/distribution sponsorships/partnerships
24. Use existing relationships to source new sponsors - leverage relationships of suppliers, board members, etc.
25. Have companies sponsor promotion where the museum attendees design an exhibit which features the sponsor’s product or service.
26. Partner with real estate companies which own office buildings or a marketing/media company such as Office Media Network to create sponsored exhibits for office building lobbies



## Bonus tips for Building and Leveraging Corporate Relationships

- Create testimonials from corporate executives about the value and impact of their relationships with your organizations – feature them in your press kits and marketing materials
- Understand your competitive environment – know what other organizations are getting corporate sponsorships and learn from them
- Leapfrog the competition – if your peers are making strides with new social media and technology innovations, go a step further
- Consider cross-promotions you can work up that will help prospective sponsors sell to one of your existing sponsors or team up with an existing sponsor
- Inventory your organizations' demographics – know who participates and why, where they live, and how that can add value to prospective sponsors
- Sponsorship that offers hospitality opportunities is always very attractive to companies
- Be very specific when submitting proposals for sponsorship deals – broad messages may come off as 'generic' or may appear that you didn't put much thought into why you're contacting them
- Make lots of phone calls – pitch sponsorship as a compelling marketing opportunity
- Create a forum, such as a summit, for existing (and perhaps prospective) sponsors to contribute to idea generation and feedback on your organization's sponsorship programs – this will say to your sponsors that they are valued partners
- Target sponsors with similar goals and audiences. Your prospects will generally be much more receptive if you can show that your sponsorship opportunity offers exposure to the people they are trying to reach or for a cause that they support.
- Prequalify your sponsors. Don't rely on outdated lists or "hunches" to determine a company's sponsorship manager. Make sure that you are not wasting your time speaking with someone who is not the decision maker
- Ask for the sale. One of the primary rules of sales is to always ask for the sale at the end of your presentation. Once you have done your homework, found the sponsor and presented everything that you have to offer, always ask for the sponsorship.
- Report your results. At the end of the project, or at periodic intervals in long-term sponsorships, submit a wrap-up or update report. In your report, spell out the goals you set, how those goals were achieved or are being achieved, activities that took place as well as appropriate survey information, news clippings, etc.
- Be prepared to evolve your sponsorship opportunities/benefits based on market trends/indicators
- Relationship management is everything – be responsive, engaged and willing to invest in the process of building lasting, mutually rewarding relationships
- Mine your existing networks (personal, professional, organizational) for untapped sponsor prospects (i.e. vendors, partners, affiliates, board connections)
- Customize your sponsorship opportunities – be prepared to provide unique ways prospective sponsors can get the most out of the relationship