Sponsor Smarter, Not Harder: Creative Sponsorship Strategies for Lean Nonprofit Teams

Presented by:
Mariah Monique, Founder of The Sponsorship Catalyst



About Me

Energetic, optimistic, analytical thinker who's spent the last 9 years building and maintaining relationships. I am a 3-in-1 sponsorship strategist.

Distributed over $7M to nonprofits in Los Angeles and coached organizations across the U.S. to secure $1M in sponsorship dollars.

Dog mama, amateur golfer, Oreo cookie lover, and missions.



Drop in the Chat

A

You're a **new organization** or new to securing sponsorships

B

You've tried to secure sponsors, but you **haven't had much traction.**

C

You've secured sponsors, but you have a **hard time getting them to return or increase commitments.**

Today's Objectives

Identify sponsorship oppportunities beyond traditional arts funders

Build sponsorship opportunities that are valuable without becoming operationally burdensome

Use audience and community data more strategically to sell sponsorships

Leverage AI as an efficiency tool for lean teams

Sponsorship is not a donation. It’s a marketing tool!



New mindset

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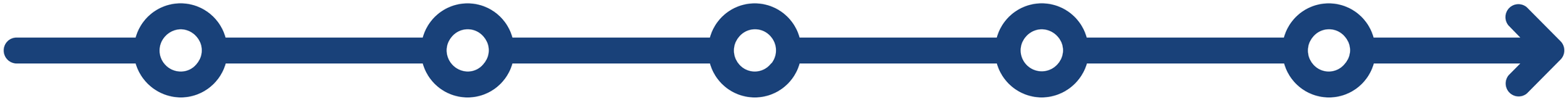
The Process



Research

Connect

Invite

Deliver

Report

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Make a Friend



Ask the Right Questions



Find the Gap, Be the Solution



Deliver with Excellence



Cultivate and Steward

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Do You Know Your Sponsors?

1. What is your application process?
2. **What are your organizational goals and focus areas?**
3. How long does it take to approve a request?
4. What does your organization value most when sponsoring?
5. When does your fiscal year begin and end?
6. What brand benefits does your organization value?

Why Do Sponsors Partner?

1. Generate referrals and leads
2. Seize new opportunities with ideal target audience
3. Engage niche markets
4. Capture direct customer feedback
5. Boost brand visibility and awareness
6. Reframe companies client perception/foster positive brand reputation
7. Increase potential sales/ROI
8. Test and showcase a new product
9. Association
10. Gain competitive advantage
11. Establish brand authority

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Prospect Management Grid

First Name	Last Name	rganization Nam	Email	Phone number	Industry	Communication Method	Follow-Up	Proposal sent	Follow-Up	Meeting Date	Meeting Result/outcome	Notes
John	Doe	Macy's	jdoe@macys.co	313-333-444	Textile/Fashion	Phone Call	2/20/2024	Yes	2/27/2024		Preliminary Yes	Board member Nancy will

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Sponsor Industries

Airlines
Automotive
Banking/Finance
Beauty
Education/Schools
Energy
Entertainment/Music
Food & Beverages/Grocery Stores
Healthcare
Hotels
Insurance Companies
Oil/gas
Real Estate
Retail Stores
Social Apps
Technology
Wine & Spirits

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Understand the Brand

Nationwide®

Community Development
Emergency Response
Financial Literacy

Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers

Food Security
Education
Pet Welfare
Entrepreneurship
Recreation

ally®

Economic Mobility
Social Equity & Inclusion

H-E-B®

Arts and Humanities
Disaster Relief
Diversity and Inclusion
Education and Literacy
Environmental and Sustainability
Health and Wellness
Military and Veteran support

COSTCO WHOLESALE

Education
Health and Human services
Community Development

xfinity live!

Civic & Community Development
Education/youth support
Hunger Relief

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The 5W's

Who - What- When- Where - Why - How

Brand:

- Bank of America

Offering & Need:

- Presenting sponsor level, financial literacy workshops

Outreach Plan:

- Apply for a sponsorship 90 days before the event and execute their sponsorship according to the proposed timeline

Activation Plan:

- Community festival, annual gala, and financial literacy workshop series

Alignment:

- They provide financial services and educational tools aligned with our audiences' needs.

Cultivation Plan:

- Integrate Bank of America into our partnership cultivation campaign to develop the relationship in hopes of inviting BoA into additional partnership opportunities aside from our annual events.

Deals Done Well

SXSW x Pandora

Brand objective: Build awareness around Pandora Premium and music discovery.

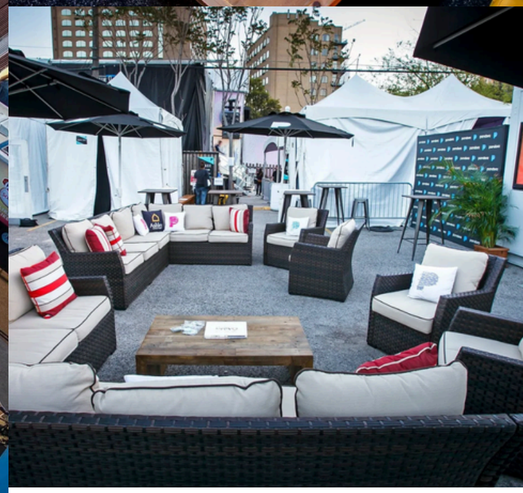
Activation: Pandora created a branded music environment with performances, a music-discovery dome, interactive sponsor experiences, shaded lounges, charging areas, and artist spaces.

Sponsorship lesson: A technology company could sponsor an interactive music-discovery or digital-art experience that reinforces what the brand offers customers.









Deals Done Well

Coachella x Neutrogena

Brand objective: Demonstrate product benefits to younger consumers.
Activation: A skincare brand created an immersive experience explaining how skin responds to desert conditions, with expert guidance, personalized assessments and sunscreen dispensers throughout the festival.

14,000
Activation Visitors

720
Skin Assessments

Sponsorship lesson: Turn a brand's expertise or product into an educational experience that makes the festival better for attendees.





Deals Done Well

Wolf Trap Foundation x Kaiser Permanente

Brand Objective: Increase physical activity and wellness

Activation: A hands-on wellness activation that combined physical activity with artistic expression

Sponsorship lesson: Intergrate the sponsors goals into your organization or event purpose. Kaiser Permanente wasn't simply advertising healthcare services. It helped create an experience connecting health, movement, and the arts.



Deals Done Well

Mile for Music x Family Dental Studio and Fox Valley Hearing Center

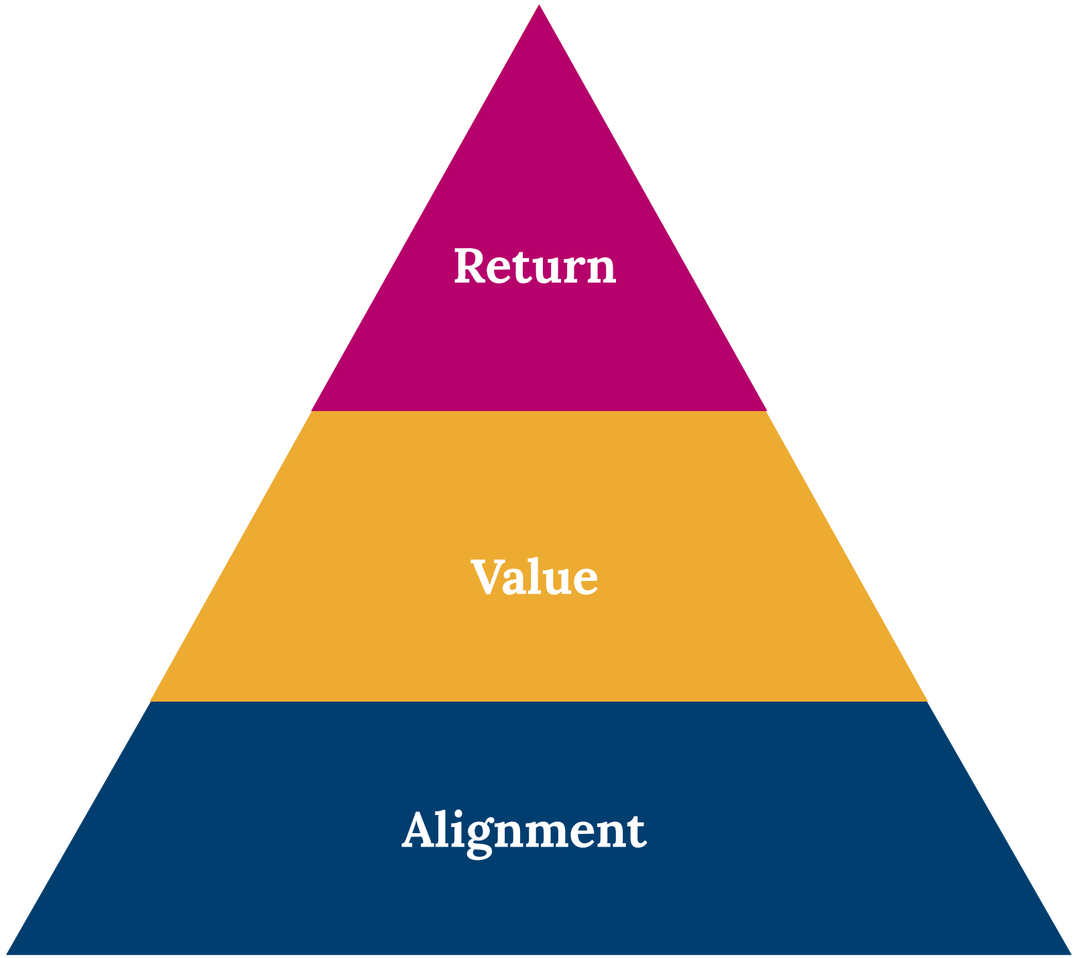
Brand objective: Demonstrate professional expertise, build community goodwill, and support the well-being of local and touring musicians.

Activation: Provide musicians with complimentary dental care, hearing screenings, physical therapy, massage, and other wellness services during the free music festival.

Sponsorship lesson: Local businesses can contribute their expertise and services to improve the artist experience, reduce festival expenses, and create meaningful community partnerships.



Three Components to Close a Deal



Your Audience Is One of Your Greatest Sponsorship Assets



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Your People

Demographics & Psychographics

Demographic	Challenge	Age Identifier	Lifestyle
Gender	Unhoused	Middle school	Entreprenuers
Ethnic group	Special Needs	College students	Travel
Education	Food insecure	Young professionals	Newlyweds
Income	Foster children	Elders	Service

Audience Segments

Families w/Kids

- Live in STL city
- Married
- $90K +
- Work in healthcare
- Likes new tech
- Enjoys family time
- Enjoys sporting events

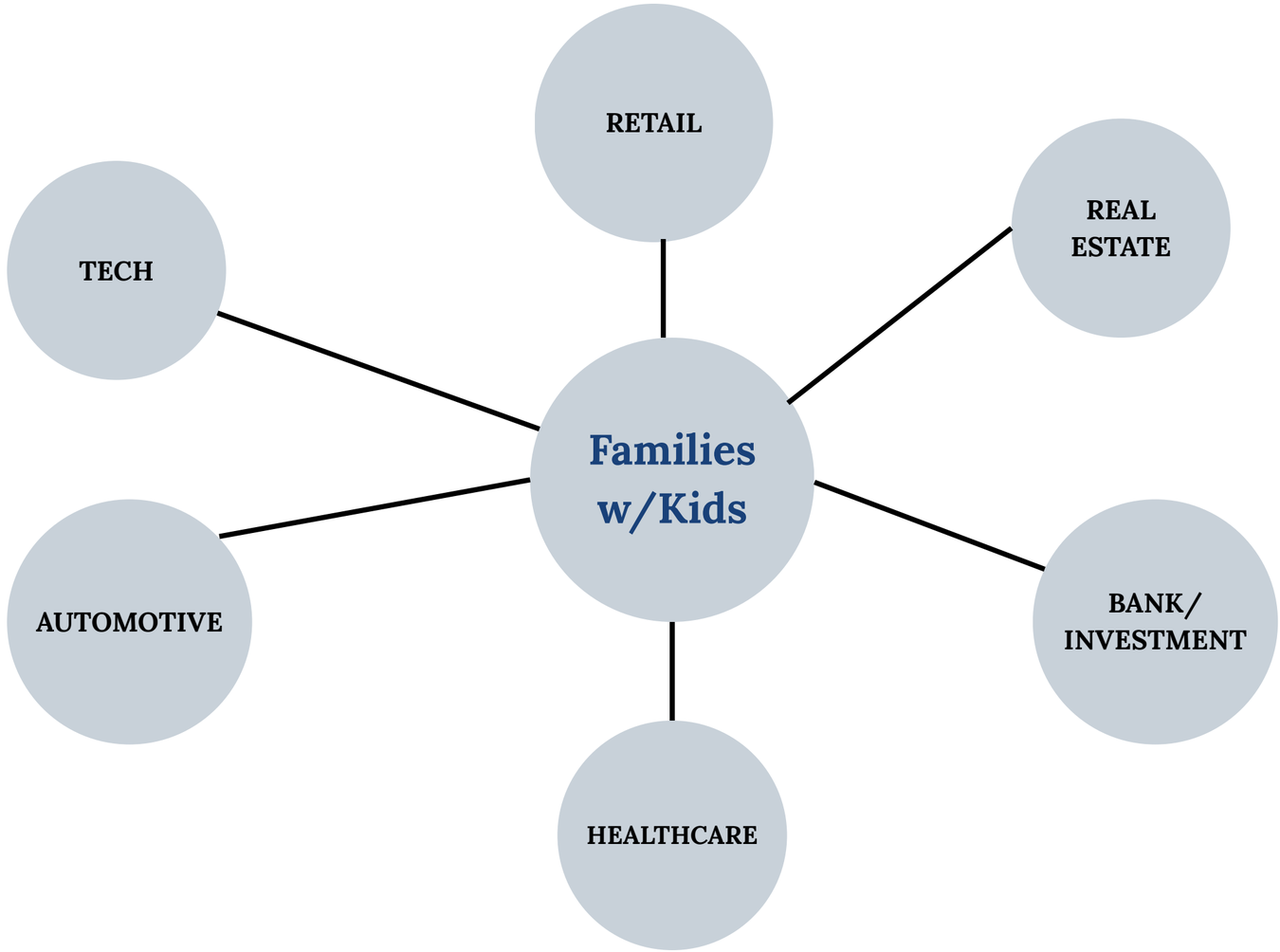
College Students

- Attends Washington University
- Majors in Creative/Performing Arts
- 17 - 24 years old
- Likes new tech
- Like learning about finances

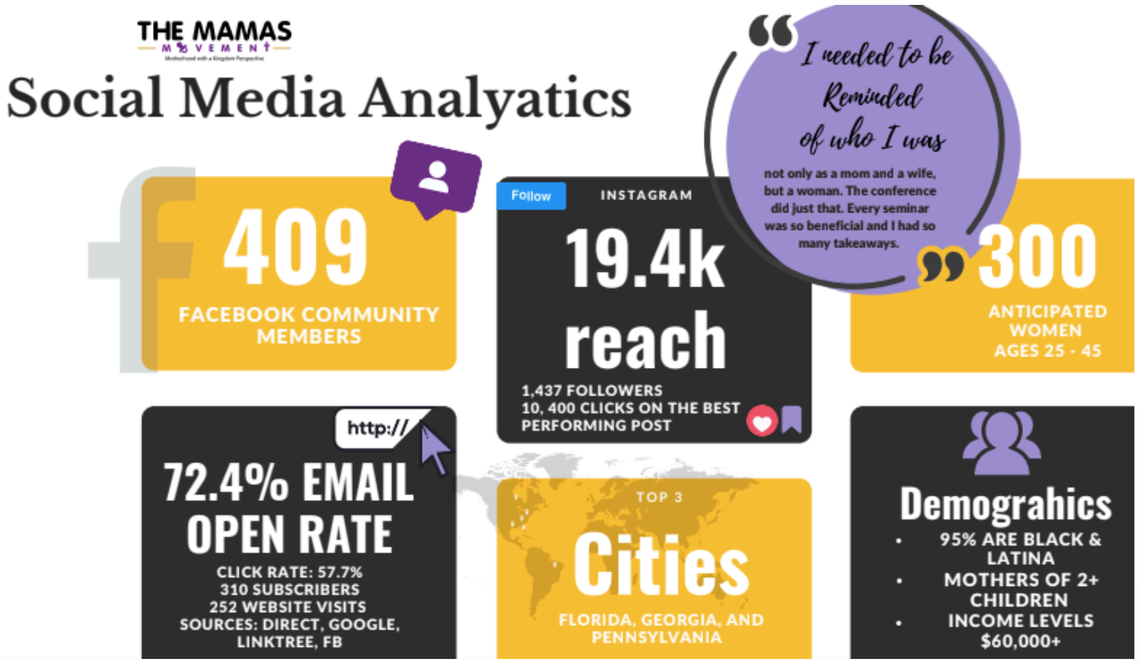
Seniors

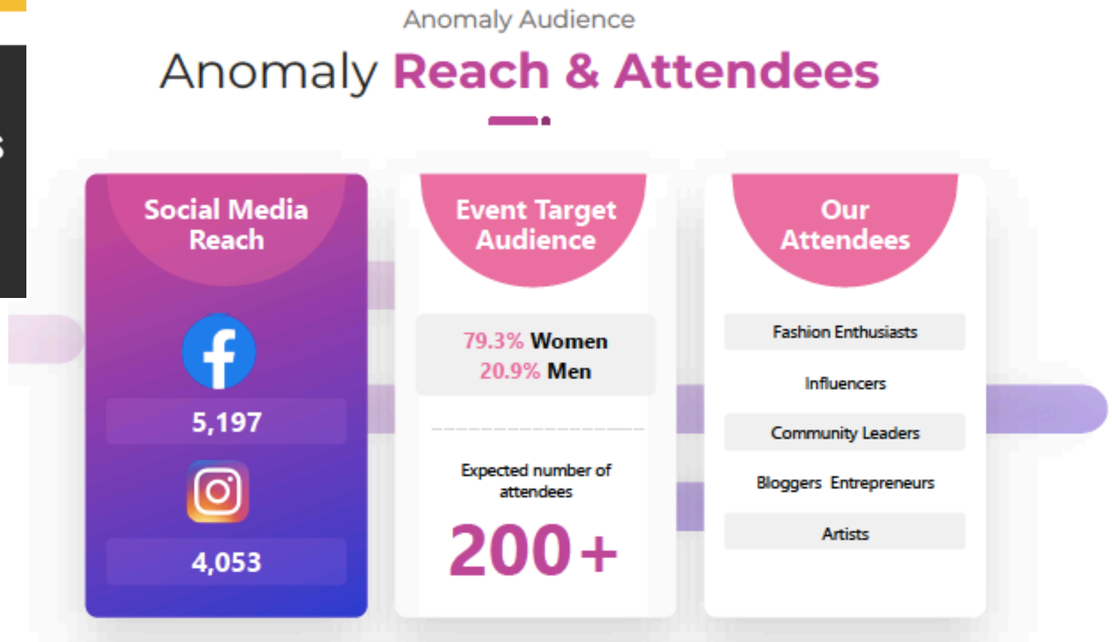
- Retiree
- 65+
- Loves pets
- Brand loyal
- Loves concerts
- Enjoys online shopping
- Enjoys social events

Sponsor Mapping



Making Data Visual





Create Sponsor Value Without Creating More Work

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The 4 Components of Your Package

1 SPONSORS NEEDS

Asking the right questions to gain insight about your potential sponsors needs.

2 BRAND BENEFITS

Assets that can be packaged and sold to a brand to help them meet their goals.

3 BRAND ACTIVATIONS

Audience and sponsor engagement opportunities.

4 BUDGET

Create a budget so your sponsorship ask is in alignment with your actual needs.

What To Offer Sponsors?

Logo Placement	Verbal Recognition	Brand Activation	Press Release	Promotional Materials	Naming Rights
Social Media Shoutout	Newsletter	Event Signage	Event Tickets	VIP Access	Honorees/ Awards
Speaking Engagement	Product Sampling	Media Coverage	Promo Item	Radio Advertisement	Program Ads
Volunteerism	Community Engagement	Parking Access	Logo on Website	Attendee Insights	Wifi Signage

You can mix and mingle these benefits!

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What To Offer Sponsors?

1. Stage backdrops and banners
2. Entry gates
3. Wristbands
4. Festival maps
5. Photo booths
6. VIP sections
7. Water stations
8. Branded activations
9. Product sampling
10. Floor decals
11. Bathroom activations
12. Directional signs
13. Volunteer shirts
14. Lanyards

1. Promotional materials (website, event pages
2. Artist meet & greets
3. Sweepstakes/contests
4. Mobile charging stations
5. Gamified apps or interactive maps
6. Augmented reality (AR)
7. Custom Behind-the-Scenes content
8. Muralist or Eco-art installations
9. Accessibility space
10. Branded transportation
11. Co-branded campaigns
12. Branded engagement passports
13. Social media campaigns

Pitch Angles

Sponsor industry	Potential sponsor objective	Festival positioning angle	Activation opportunity
Banks & Credit Unions	Financial education, customer acquisition, community investment	Position the festival as an opportunity to strengthen local economic vitality and make arts experiences accessible to families.	Financial Literacy & Family Arts Zone; Emerging Artist Grant
Healthcare & Hospitals	Preventive health, wellness education, community trust	Position arts and music as ways to promote connection, well-being, and healthier communities.	Community Wellness Lounge; Artist Wellness Program
Utilities & Energy	Customer education, energy efficiency, community relationships	Show how the sponsor can power creativity while educating residents about energy and sustainability.	Energy-Powered Art Installation; Community Music Stage
Telecommunications & Internet	Digital connectivity, technology adoption, brand awareness	Demonstrate how connectivity brings people, creativity, and communities together.	Connected Community Lounge; Digital Art Experience
Grocery Stores & Supermarkets	Customer loyalty, family engagement, neighborhood goodwill	Position the festival as a celebration of local families, food, and community traditions.	Family Picnic Experience; Community Culinary Stage
Automotive Dealerships	Vehicle awareness, lead generation, community visibility	Offer a natural environment for families to discover transportation options while enjoying community entertainment.	Vehicle Discovery Experience; Festival Shuttle

You set the terms

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Package your sponsorship opportunities based on your capacity and capability.

Brand Benefits Matrix

Brand Benefits	Sponsorship amount	Event signage	Logo on website	Vendor booth	Event tickets	Speaking opportunity	Verbal regonition	Press release	
Company/Organization									
Macy's	$10,000	1	1	1	10	1			
grocery	$5,000	1		1					
Total	$15,000	2	1	2	10	1	0	0	0

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AI as Your Sponsorship Strategy Assistant

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AI Sponsorship Strategy Assistant



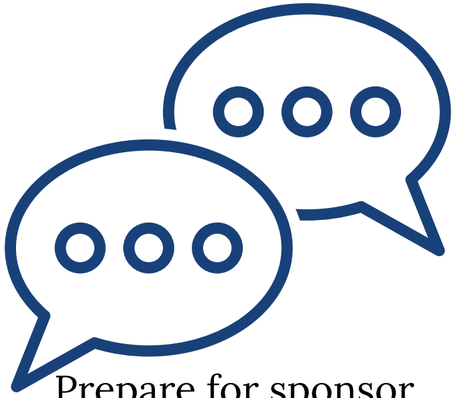
Brainstorm nontraditional sponsor categories



Develop preliminary prospect profiles



Identify corporate sponsor alignment



Prepare for sponsor conversations



Create manageable sponsor tasks

AI Tools I and My clients Use

boodlebox

To help make a sponsor strategy, letter, & communications

Claude

To help make a sponsor strategy, letter, & communications

Apollo

To help identify and find specific sponsor contacts

beautiful.ai

To help create sponsorship decks

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Try this Prompt

AI Prompt:

Act as an experienced corporate sponsorship strategist who understands how companies evaluate sponsorship opportunities. Help our nonprofit identify potential sponsors, develop compelling partnership ideas, and create a realistic action plan for securing corporate sponsorships.

Organization Name
Website
Event Name and Type
Event LocationEvent Date(s)
Anticipated Attendance
Primary Audience Segments
Our Mission/Community Impact
Sponsorship Goal
Existing Sponsors
Team Capacity

Give it an Assignment

AI Instruction Prompt:

Identify Our Top 10 Potential Corporate Sponsors

Research and recommend 10 companies that could be strong sponsorship prospects based on our geographic location, audience, event type, and mission.

Think beyond traditional nonprofit sponsors. Include l**ocal, regional, and national** companies with a meaningful business presence in our community.

Prioritize companies with strong audience, business, and community alignment. Do not assume that a company's charitable giving automatically makes it a strong sponsorship prospect.

Stop Fundraising. Start Solving.



New mindset

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From Training to Action

YOUR ACTION PLAN

1. Choose **three** new sponsor categories to investigate
2. Identify **Six** prospective companies to research
3. Define at least **one** audience insight you can use more effectively
4. Refine **one** existing sponsorship benefit you can incorporate or strengthen
5. Pick **one** sponsorship action you will complete within the next seven days
    a. Research a new company
    b. Reconnect with an existing partner
    c. Refine your sponsorship opportunities
    d. Tighten up your renewal strategy

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Thank you for coming!

CONNECT WITH ME



Connect with me

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YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS

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