

Creating effective sponsorship proposals

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Many companies need sponsorship to meet critical objectives and this is often achieved through events. However, given that most major corporations receive numerous requests for sponsorship, it is necessary to craft a sponsorship proposal that answers the major questions of who, what, when, where and why the company would benefit from its collaboration.

The financial director needs a formally drafted request in order to justify such allocations, not just a vague marketing document.

These are key elements in a proposal document:

- Describe the event – who is it aimed at, what is the nature of the event, when and where and why this event offers the sponsor unique benefits
- Give a history of event and previous successes, if the event has been run before eg how many people came to the event, how many contracts were signed, how much media coverage was obtained etc
- If the event is new – describe the reasoning behind the belief in its success, backed up by sound research
- Set this year's scene – briefly go over the venue, logistics and suppliers already in place
- Describe target market – in detail and link it directly to the prospective sponsor's own target market
- Break the total investment needs into separate sponsor opportunities – this enables sponsors to select categories or items, rather than give a blank cheque. This is often described as Platinum, Gold and Silver categories but do not discount sponsors that offer product, as these can be used as prizes, 'goodie bag' fillers or gifts to VIPs
- Indicate how sponsors will be acknowledged – programmes, logos in advertising, thank you mentions on the day, part of the PR campaign etc.
- Answer, "What's in it for me?" – list the tangible and intangible benefits of sponsoring this event
- Indicate if the sponsorship is exclusive or shared and whether there is a risk of ambush marketing
- Indicate how long the association will run – is it just this once or are you seeking a long term contract
- Inform them who is in charge of the event and who to contact
- Give a time limit in which to answer – you need to know what is confirmed and what is not to keep on track with budget and find new sponsors

Do not be afraid to go over one page; there is no magic in the 'one page' doctrine – if you need sponsorship of hundreds of thousands of Rands, the prospective donor will appreciate detail.

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