



# How Villages Can Be Successful with Sponsorships

**Presented by Bruce Rosenthal and Donna Phillips Mason**  
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# Sponsorship misconceptions

## Story #1

- “Let’s get sponsors”

## Story #2

- Sponsorship vs. fundraising

# Sponsorship challenges

## **Villages face three related challenges**

- #1. Revenue shortages
- #2. Increasing needs for services
- #3. Difficulty in getting sponsorship money

# Introductions

**Bruce Rosenthal**

**Donna Phillips Mason**

## **Learning objectives:**

- How sponsorships can provide revenue and programming
- How to develop a value proposition for your village to attract sponsors
- How to overcome barriers within your village

# Why is getting sponsors so hard?

- More organizations are asking the same businesses for support
- Companies are scrutinizing funding requests
- Typical benefits (“Thanks for your support”) are of little value to some companies

# The potential risks of sponsorships

- Board members don't like “fundraising”
- Fear that sponsors will make sales pitches
- Village will lose its identity
- Lack of understanding about how to approach potential sponsors

# Overcoming the risks of seeking sponsorships

## **3 rules of a successful sponsorship program:**

1. Align sponsorships with your village's mission
2. Focus sponsorships on members' needs
3. Don't forget Rules 1 and 2.

# A new model for sponsorship success

Don't focus exclusively on "our village needs money"

Think "partnership", not "sponsorship"

Think "relationships"

Companies want to be part of the activity ... not just sponsor the activity



# Strategic approach to sponsorships

*A 3-step process*

# Strategic approach to sponsorships

## **Step 1: Identify your village's needs**

- Increase revenue (of course)
- Interesting programming; develop a list of topics
- Needed services/expertise; develop a list
- Also, know the demographics of your village participants/members

# Strategic approach to sponsorships

## **Step 2: Identify companies that can fulfill your village's needs**

- Focus on companies' expertise ... not products/services
- Consider whether companies want to reach your village's participants/members
- Research companies and decision-maker at company

# Strategic approach to sponsorships

## Step 3: Contact companies

- *Not* “our village needs \$XXX for our upcoming event”
- Seek a conversation with the business’ decision-maker
- Talk with each company about partnering to showcase the company’s expertise/commitment, not products/services
- Discuss and negotiate to build a relationship

# Focus on ongoing value

## **One-time events have limited value for sponsors**

- Multi-activity role for sponsors throughout the year
- Re-purpose content from sponsors: webinar, presentation, article, etc.
- Establish ongoing relationships

# Creating a successful sponsorship program for your village

# Examples of successful village/business partnerships – expertise, not sales

- Travel agency: creative packing; solo traveling
- Grocery store/restaurant: nutrition for seniors; organic foods
- Wine store: selecting wines for the holidays, for picnics
- Auto dealer: understanding cars' technology
- Home improvement: falls prevention
- Beauty product companies: skin care, makeovers
- Moving companies: packing and downsizing
- Air conditioning/heating contractors: home energy efficiency

# At your villages' next Board meeting, discuss:

- Board commitment to a (pilot) sponsorship program
- Identify top needs:
  - Village's needs
  - Members' and participants' needs
- How local businesses can provide needed revenue *and* programming
- Identify businesses that can fulfill village's and members' needs; conduct research
- Contact businesses to schedule a conversation
- *It's about **relationships**, not **selling**!*



# Questions and answers

**Q.**



**A.**



# Contact information

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