

CHAPTER LEADER MEETUP RECAP

Chapter Sponsorship | 10/15/2020

Staff Tips & Considerations

1. Does your chapter have a dedicated sponsorship chair or committee? Can your board assist with sponsor outreach?
2. How has your chapter pivoted? What new (virtual) opportunities have you created for members that can be sponsored and swapped for some traditional benefits?
3. It's time to reassess and get creative. Sponsors crave more than just visibility. How can you create engagement?
4. What do your sponsors want? Have personal conversations with each sponsor to see what they hope to get out of the relationship.
5. Look at annualized benefits with packages that incorporate multiple engagements versus a one-off for an event. Keep them engaged year-round.
6. Consider multi-year packages at a discount or with bonus offerings.
7. What in-kind opportunities would help the chapter in addition to dollars?
8. Some low-cost sponsorship opportunities include:
 - Speaking opportunities like webinars or lunch and learns
 - Sponsorship of educational programs
 - Sponsored content on website or e-newsletters
 - Digital ads on website or e-newsletters
9. Some virtual opportunities include:
 - Sponsor-provided 15 second video clip at beginning of Zoom/program
 - Speaker introduced by sponsor
 - Sponsor gets to attend with virtual background (logo)
 - Chapter host puts their logo on their virtual background
 - Sponsor loop in Zoom waiting room
 - Sponsor opportunity for 2-minute elevator speech
 - Sponsor content/sessions as part of the program or a track
 - Live sponsor chat after programs, perhaps with giveaway incentive for participants, like a free software trial
 - Sponsored virtual networking event

Attendees Questions Answered

Q: How should we recognize sponsors and provide them with the biggest benefit - networking/contact with members?

A: Start with having a conversation with your sponsors. What are they looking for? Do they want to intro a speaker? Do they want to host a virtual happy hour? Figure out what would keep them happy.

Q: Do sponsors consider free or lower cost events as good opportunities?

A: HQ offers the free bi-monthly learning labs to members and we find that our sponsors are enthusiastic about participating and hosting them. Even though not all the attendees for a free/low-cost event may be qualified leads for the sponsor, the overall pool of leads is larger and may be appealing.

Q: Ideas for fulfilling missed in-person benefits?

A: Creating opportunities to replace things you can no longer do is key to keeping a sponsor happy. Consider offering items that are no/low cost to the chapter, such as digital ads on your website or e-newsletter, speaking/hosting opportunities, playing a sponsor-produced video at beginning of virtual event, etc.

You may also consider, if the sponsor is not an annual sponsor, throwing in a second event on top of their original event. This way, they can get more leads over time, hopefully equaling the amount they used to receive in person.

If your higher-end sponsors aren't getting what they need, consider offering an addendum to the agreement which outlines the new benefits you are promising them. This offers your sponsors reassurance.

Q: How to engage longtime sponsors that may be used to specific benefits?

A: Your longtime sponsors are the most important, they always come back and are loyal to your chapter. If able, jump on a call with the CEO or the decision-maker to thank them for sticking with you. Encourage a board member to participate with you to show them you value the relationship.

Consider giving them benefits only they can get to make them feel like VIPs.

Q: What is the pitch to new sponsors to give money during a pandemic + post-COVID-19?

A: Highlight the new opportunities your chapter is creating. Your overall pitch should not change, there is still value in SMPS, the members, and the network. The only changes are the new virtual benefits you're offering.

This can also be an opportunity to reach out to sponsors you've always wanted to get, but never have been able to reel in. Many companies are looking for new opportunities as well. Now is the time to find out what they want out of SMPS and customize a package for them.

IDEAS CAPTURED FROM PARTICIPANT CHAT

- One chapter's president-elect helps with sponsorship.
- During your virtual program, play a sponsor loop or have sponsor logos on the screen before the program begins.
- Don't forget to shoutout the sponsors during the program.
- If you're not seeing responses to a survey, phone calls to follow up can be very helpful.
- If sponsors can no longer do an annual sponsorship, a few chapters are offering event or multi-event packages.
- One chapter offers their sponsors a chance to host a raffle. i.e., \$100 gift card to get your name on the screen for a large event.
- Pre-pandemic sponsors would be able to leave a brochure or postcard on the tables, so a good idea now is to introduce circulating a PDF or posting download links in chats, etc. as a benefit.
- Play a 15-second video at the beginning of the program instead of having them live on the program to introduce themselves. This may save some time during the live program.
- One chapter hosts a sponsor chat after the virtual program. Attendees stay online to meet with the sponsor.
- For higher level sponsors, make virtual events free for anyone from their firm.
- Give discounts to returning sponsors.
- Even if you show the sponsor logo at the beginning, considering showing the logo at the end too for the late arriving people.