HQ SHARE

The world of sponsorship has changed, how do we manage expectations?
- **In short: talk to your sponsors**
  - Remember, the sponsor signed a contract and committed money for various benefits, and even if those benefits translate to a virtual format, it's still a good idea to get on the phone or a Zoom and make sure they're happy!
  - The conversation should not be "How do we get out of giving the sponsor money back"
    - It should instead be "Hey sponsor, I'm sure you still want to reach our members and partner with us. How can we best connect you? What is going to be most exciting for you? What is the second most exciting benefit for you?"

How do you strengthen relationships with current and long-time sponsors?
- It's easy for long-term relationships to go on autopilot
  - 2020 challenged that – after having individual conversations with sponsors, you'll find that we can't assume they will automatically get value out of a virtual experience, or that having an email list brings value to them
  - Ask very pointed questions to understand what is most impactful and addresses their business needs
- Offer them a new way to think about your partnership
  - For example, SMPS HQ didn't send a sponsorship prospectus to long-time sponsors this year – instead we connected with them individually and asked, "what are your dreams come true related to this partnership?"
- SMPS HQ created customized sponsorships for each of our partners and allowing them to share their specific business needs
  - One size does not fit all and keep in mind the various sponsorship levels and tiers of benefits that you offer when customizing opportunities.
  - Additional benefits included:
    - Opportunity to be a thought leader for a program
    - Write an article for your newsletter/blog
    - Have one of their team members participate in an online program to engage with the audience and see the questions they're asking
- An SMPS HQ initiative this year is to host speed networking opportunities prior to Build Business that allow face to face engagement with sponsors
- If you're sending a swag/experience box, a sponsor may want to contribute
- Vendors may be looking for new ways to engage audiences and get in front of people
  - There is opportunity to possibly engage a sponsor you've never worked with or tried to work with in the past

What has SMPS HQ done with our BB and TPE long-time sponsors?
- SMPS HQ has committed to sharing our audience segments and demographics in advance of the conferences
    - We don't provide the contact information, but do provide names so that the sponsor may be able to make a connection during the event
- We're allowing sponsors to create commercials that we will send out throughout our marketing plan
    - This won't necessarily be a 100% sales pitch, rather more geared towards sharing what SMPS means to them and the benefits of working with them
- We're hosting pre-conference events with social elements (mixologists, etc.)
    - Open to sponsors and attendees, but keeping the experience networking focused
- For certain levels of our sponsors, we will provide them an opportunity to present online learning either as a preview to the conference or something to take place after the conference
- SMPS HQ will send out experience boxes to attendees (possibly with swag) and plan to include sponsor related items
- We're also thinking of using a postcard with a QR code that can go to an article that a sponsor has written, or their website

How to cultivate sponsorships in a virtual environment
- Perhaps you focus most of your effort on your biggest sponsors that make up most of your sponsorship revenue
    - Doing a great job for those sponsors virtually can showcase what sponsorship at your chapter can mean for the next potential sponsor
    - Depending on your specific scenario, it may not make sense to go after smaller sponsors if that energy, virtual real estate, screen time, etc. can be used making your bigger sponsors even happier
- A great example is the SMPS A/E/C Momentum event in January
    - We used top sponsors in the promotional videos
    - We used sponsor logos in the virtual platform for the entirety of the program
    - Our top sponsor was given two minutes of facetime to introduce themselves and thank SMPS and the attendees
    - We also ensured that mentions of sponsors were trickled in during event transitions, breaks, etc.
- Social media utilization
    - Pick a social channel and try going live with your sponsor to give them face time
        - LinkedIn and Facebook are probably good places to start
            - Both will allow you to record and repost the recording
    - Consider resharing/reposting sponsor posts if they're related to your audience

GREAT IDEAS SHARED FROM CHAPTER SHARE

- **SMPS HQ Tips:**
  - [Download your chapter's demographic data](#) to run your reports. These stats can be very helpful for cultivating sponsor relationships, highlighting your member segments, etc.
    - These are updated monthly within the same folder
  - Use website analytics to showcase website impressions and hits for potential sponsors
    - If your chapter is a StarChapter user, these are the instructions to add Google Analytics code to your website
- SMPS Pittsburgh shared that they dropped the prices of their sponsorship packages
  - Even though it's a hit to their budget, they feel comfortable doing so for their sponsors
- SMPS Hawaii shared that since they're a small chapter they opted to not discount sponsorship
  - Instead they elevated their benefits
    - One upgrade was commercials on their website for a month for their Platinum Sponsors
  - They saw a jump in sponsors
- SMPS Dallas also elevated their benefits that were no cost to the chapter
  - Interview spotlights in their newsletter
  - Free registrations to all online events
  - They also saw an increase in sponsors this year
- SMPS Boston also added value for minimal cost items and found that sponsors we happy and willing to accept alternative benefits
  - CPSM scholarship
  - Job postings
  - Free registrations for certain events
- SMPS Sacramento noted they have a spreadsheet of the additional benefits that will be assigned to each tier
  - The spreadsheet gives the chapter a good tracking system to look back to
- A SMPS PRC representative shared their regional conference is planning on quarterly emails so they can still highlight their sponsors leading up to their 2022 conference
  - They also noted that they want to look beyond their member firms as sponsors (e.g., technology)
- SMPS Boston shared a recent speaker asked for a sponsorship package instead of a speaker fee
  - Their chapter is now thinking of creating a unique sponsor tier for speakers only (similar to in-kind)
- SMPS Pittsburgh noted they won't let competitors sponsor the same event

- SMPS Dallas shared they have trouble filling event sponsorship for educational events (e.g., Adobe training, proposal writing, technical)
  - SMPS Pittsburgh recommended reaching out to the most robust firms in the areas, as they may find value in the audience
    - Additionally, third party firms such as proposal generators, Adobe vendors, and trade publications
  - SMPS Sacramento shared they offer a lower rate for the educational sponsors
- SMPS Boston has suppliers that supply the industry host their events, provide the venue and food, etc.
- SMPS Sacramento shares statistics with sponsors highlighting the number of events per year, how many attendees per event, etc.
- SMPS Dallas recommends looking at other local chapter websites to see how you compare
- SMPS Pittsburgh provides discounts hefty for disabled-veteran, small business, women, and minority owned firms
- SMPS Orange County hosts a sponsorship appreciation event
  - Pre-COVID-19 they hosted happy hours and luncheons
  - During COVID-19 they provided a virtual event to talk about business development
    - They used the opportunity to send charcuterie boards and crystal awards with the date, sponsor tier, and their name

Questions? Contact Josh Miles, SMPS HQ Chief Marketing Officer at josh@smps.org or Marci Thompson, DES, SMPS Chief Growth Officer at marci@smps.org