

Gimme All Your Stuff: An Insider's Guide to Sponsorships and In-Kind Donations

*Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia's March Spark Event of 2007
March 12th @ Society Hill Playhouse, Red Room*

***Remember the second Monday of every month is a new Spark event hosted by the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Individual & Organizational members attend free, all others are charged \$10 per person. (This money may be applied towards membership dues!)* **

Future Spark Event and Theatre Alliance Announcements:

▪ **Next Spark event: Design, Branding, and Direct Mail Marketing**

If you've got a great show and no one's around to see it, does it make a sound?

- This event will take place on **Monday, April 9 @ 7pm At Society Hill Playhouse's Red Room, 507 S. 8th St., Philadelphia.** Check the website for details on speakers.
- Reception following with food generously donated by Whole Foods Market, our Spark sponsor!

Special Guest Speakers

Danielle Hoffman - Development Director, Live Arts and Philly Fringe Festivals

Brett Mapp - Marketing Specialist & Community Liaison, Whole Foods Market

Amanda Ditsky - Special Events Manager, The Wilma Theater

Kate Tejada - Managing Director, 1812 Productions

Who are the people within your company who get the sponsorships?

1812 - It's a unified effort for all 5 full time staff members. We follow up on leads and create good relationships with our sponsors.

Wilma - Sponsors like to give to new companies, but it's nice to have a rich history to pull from as well. We also rely on our Board for help using their personal contacts.

Whole Foods - Whole Foods Market is committed to giving back to the community. They give 5% of their profit back into their community.

Live Arts - In order to find Corporate dollars, it's important to stretch out to your Board and find their contacts.

How can small companies target organizations for in-kind donations?

- Look in your neighborhood, their patrons are your patrons
- Look to your Board, Family, Friends, and where you yourself visit! What are your personal connections? What bars, markets, restaurants do you frequent? Those are your own personal contacts!
- Cultivation - invite potential sponsors to your events, opening nights, etc. Show them what you do. See where else they are giving and see if your company is a good match.
- Look at other theatre organizations to see who is giving where
- Remember that each of your audience members is a target audience for your sponsor

What about Corporate Sponsorships?

- Same process as in-kind - look at your Board & core audience to see what connections there are
- Cold calls are very difficult and don't often work - you need a contact!
- For blind asks - target local businesses not national, meet the owners and start a relationship
- Keep in mind, for Cash from sponsorships, they will look for widespread effect over the area, maybe trying to reach for 5000+ people

In-Kind Donations, what do the sponsors get in return?

- Visibility - access to your audience

- Their logo on your opening night invitations, banners, ads, etc
- Don't underestimate the logo on the backs of ticket stock as well as the ticket envelope - get creative!
- Think about how you can advertise their logo and/or brand
- Have true gratitude - have that thank you letter ready to send out immediately - all part of building the relationship. Even if you already said "Thank you" still send the letter, maybe with a handwritten personal note. Show your appreciation.
- All about acknowledgement and personal attention!

What should be included in my In-Kind proposal?

- If you are a cold call, you should definitely phone them first, give them an idea what you are looking for and what you are about then send them the proposal
- Proposals should include the following:
 - What your theatre company is
 - What you do in a season
 - What do you want from their sponsorship
 - What they will get in return for their sponsorship
 - Sponsorship terms are always negotiable and be sure to let them know that.
- Think of it as a mini grant and always give the number of people of people (estimated) that your sponsor will be reaching by contributing to your company.
- For corporate sponsorships of \$1000 and up, those are more like grants and is something different.

What is the appeal of giving a specific sponsorship? I.e. 1812's \$10 Tuesdays sponsored by Pat's King of Steaks.

- It is more of an impact if the organization feels that one particular night belongs to them. Sense of ownership in the company, the event, and the evening.
- Put monetary amount on that sponsorship so you are no longer losing money from ticket sales on cheaper tickets. You don't want to impact your ticket income.
 - For example, to get that dollar amount to ask your sponsor to cover, add up your hard costs (postcards, posters, mailing, etc) and find a sponsor to see that those costs are covered.

If I am not a 501 (c) 3 what happens?

- It fits into the Marketing Budget of the company you are asking for donations.
- It becomes an ad purchase or trade off
- Be aware that the Marketing Budgets of potential sponsors may go elsewhere within the company itself whereas the Community Outreach of a business is all non-profit related and giving to the community.
- 501 (c) 3 companies do compete with each other for the money and the in-kind donations but companies without the 501 (c) 3 compete with everyone else as well as the non-profits. There is definitely more competition.

How do I get a Corporate Sponsorship?

- Corporations LOVE educational programming, outreach, etc.
- Think of "other" types of education, not necessarily children related.
 - Discussions, symposia, etc.
- The more specific you can be with your ask the more likely your chances of getting a positive response.
- Money for General Operating is not sexy enough (unfortunately)
- Going GREEN is very popular as well these days. Definitely money in that

How can I, as a small company, give advertising "value" to my sponsors?

- Work with your Marketing skills to devise new ways to advertise
- Make sure you know what you want, be specific, and follow up

How do I make a relationship out of nothing?

- Keep them on your opening night invite list and invite them to other events as well. VIP receptions, Preshow parties etc.
- Find them through contacts and use the internet as your research tool

What are the steps in getting "stuff"?

- CONTACTS!
- Start small and then work your way up (start with one tray of brownies or something else simple and work your way up to bigger things)
- Time in on your side and with time you build your important relationships
- Get them in the door to see your shows!
- Suit the proposal to fit the sponsor
- Treat them well
- Think about what are your needs
 - Do you frequent a hardware store when you are building your sets? Ask them for two gallons of paint to start... once again start small
- Think about things those businesses already use that you could piggy back onto
 - At a bar, do they use coasters, would they be willing to put your show on one side if their ad is on the other? Would they be willing to donate the cost of those coasters and use them in their bar?
- The easiest thing for any restaurant, retailer, or market can give you is a gift card
- Last quick note: Starbucks and Target are national sponsors who are friendly to the arts!

Notes prepared by Karen DiLossi, Director of Program & Services for the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia.