SPONSORSHIPS/RAISING MONEY FOR THE EVENT

Your community is probably your best resource in finding funding for your NPD event. Sources can include individual benefactors, foundations, other charities and for-profit companies. At the very least, most chapters develop sponsorships with print shops and other design firms to cut expenses on printing. But many chapters have gone beyond these sponsorships and have developed a series of options to raise money for their NPD event.

Sponsorships have become critical to the success of most NPD events. Below are some tips and advice from AFP chapters about generating sponsorships:

Don’t underestimate the value that AFP and its chapters bring to the sponsor. Chapters add a lot of value, especially with regards to the positioning and branding organizations gain from partnering with the largest association of fundraisers in the world that is dedicated to ethical and effective fundraising. In addition to local awareness and publicity that sponsors may receive, AFP IHQ conducts a significant amount of public relations and marketing with regards to NPD. For example, the NPD international website (www.nationalphilanthropyday.net) is an opportunity for local sponsors to gain more recognition, and AFP’s international media efforts also increase visibility. These are benefits that chapters should explain and include in the value of the sponsorships they offer.

Identify possible sponsors. Know who is in the community, and take a comprehensive inventory of everyone the chapter interacts with or knows in any capacity: vendors, associates, banks, foundations, etc. Some chapters are unsure about contacting previous award winners for money and sponsorships because they do not want to be perceived as rude or ungracious. However, most chapters with successful sponsorship programs have approached previous winners (perhaps not immediately after winning, but a couple of years down the road).

Offer multi-year sponsorships. AFP IHQ now only offers multi-year sponsorships, and most chapters are moving towards this as well. It can be difficult enough arranging sponsorships, especially with NPD and sponsorship chairs changing annually, without having to go back to sponsors every year to get their support. Multi-year sponsorships ensure consistent support and encourage continued and strong partnerships, while annual sponsorships are often subject to short fluctuations in the economy or other factors. Three years seems to be a standard amount of time, although some chapters and AFP IHQ offer five-year sponsorships. If sponsors are reluctant to commit to multi-year agreements, make sure your one-year pricing option reflects the additional work that will be required.

The name game. Some chapters use the “AFP Award Name, sponsored by” format. AFP IHQ has moved to a format whereby the sponsor’s name is included in the award (e.g., Freeman Philanthropic Services Awards for Outstanding Corporation). Because the award is given at an association event that already contains sufficient AFP identification and branding, and is always referenced in relation to AFP’s own awards programs, including the sponsor’s name is a way to give the sponsor greater value and awareness while not diluting AFP’s own marketing efforts.

www.nationalphilanthropyday.net
SPONSORSHIPS/RAISING MONEY FOR THE EVENT (cont.)

Conflicts between chapters and members’ organizations approaching the same sponsor. One chapter avoids this problem by identifying its key NPD sponsors at the beginning of the year and informing members of those potential sponsors. Members then can approach them later in the year after NPD. Another way to avoid the problem is to focus on the brand of the event. NPD is not just a chapter event, but a community event celebrating philanthropy that involves every group. NPD does not pit chapters against charities, but rather seeks to be inclusive of everyone. All organizations (for-profit and nonprofit) should get involved because it is the event for celebrating philanthropy in the community.

In several chapters individual charitable organizations are encouraged to market their own brands during NPD events by purchasing tables; honoring their own volunteer or donor of the year; or making a commitment to always nominate someone affiliated with their organization and host that person regardless of whether they are the final recipient or not.

Program ads: A few chapters offer the opportunity for organizations to place ads in their NPD program, and several have raised significant revenue this way. These ads are not the typical commercial appeals, but rather are positioned as a way the advertiser can say “thank you” to particular donors, volunteers or the entire community. One chapter refers to their ad program as “Expressions from the Heart.”

Additional general ideas about sponsorships include:

- Invite corporations and local businesses to not only buy and/or sponsor tables, but offer to recognize a special guest of their choosing for his or her charitable work (usually an employee or board member of the company). This type of “corporate table” program has resulted in large increases in attendance and revenue for some chapters.

- Run a similar table program for charities, associations and other nonprofit organizations. Offer to recognize one of their guests (often a volunteer or trustee) in a special “honor roll” of philanthropy that can be promoted in your event program, chapter newsletter, website and/or NPD media materials.

- Have the awards that the chapter is presenting during the event be sponsored by organizations in the area. The sponsors would be on stage with chapter leaders and help present the award.

- If a foundation is interested in sponsoring the event, offer to allow them to announce one or two of their grant awards during the presentations. This is can be especially exciting if the grant is related to an important community issue.
• Organizations that have relationships with your award winners should be targeted for sponsorships and/or special table packages. Consultants and vendors that serve the nonprofit sector might be interested in purchasing vendor packages that provide them with space to promote their services to your audience.

SPONSORSHIPS/RAISING MONEY FOR THE EVENT (cont.)

• Previous award winners, especially corporations or philanthropists, may be interested in sponsoring your NPD event. They should always be invited back to your events and briefly recognized, if time permits. This may increase interest in sponsorship opportunities in the future.

• Many chapters offer educational sessions in conjunction with their NPD celebration and turn the whole event into a mini-conference. These sessions can be revenue raisers, and chapters can offer vendors a space in the lobby to set up a small exposition and booth area. Usually, this set-up works better if the NPD event is a luncheon, not a dinner event where the proceedings are usually more formal.

• Many chapters have their events sponsored by a local media outlet, typically a newspaper or business journal. Chapters can receive a lot of free publicity through these types of partnerships. However, the amount of publicity chapters receive, and what chapters have to do as part of the sponsorship deal, can vary greatly. See page 31 for more information.

Samples of sponsorship materials can be found on the AFP website. Click on “About AFP” and then “National Philanthropy Day®.”

Sponsorships are very positive, but we encourage chapters to ensure they’re only entering into agreements and working with organizations that will not tarnish their image and reputation. If questions arise, NPD chairs should bring the matter to the chapter board. AFP International Headquarters can also provide advice and assistance if necessary.
FINDING UNDERWRITERS FOR YOUR EVENT

One especially appropriate source for NPD funding is your local community foundation. Unlike private foundations, community foundations are actually public charities that offer highly favorable tax incentives for giving. They aggregate gifts and bequests (mostly from grass-roots donors) and make grants to support projects beneficial to their local region.

In working with community foundations, as with any other funding source, following a few basic rules will improve your chances for success. Most of the rules apply equally well to working with individual and corporate donors.

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<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do your homework before submitting a request.</strong> Read all the available information on the community foundation. Find the foundation’s grant-making mandate, sources, and timetable. Be sure that your organization falls within the geographic area and that NPD falls within the purposes of the foundation.</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Know your organization(s) and event.</strong> Be prepared with facts about the programs, budgets, plans, evaluations, and history of NPD and the organizations involved. Have a clear picture of your planned NPD activities, budget and timetable.</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Know the types of grants made by the community foundation.</strong> Community foundations often make grants in a variety of ways (e.g. challenge grants, matching grants). Don’t lose out on funding because you asked only for a direct grant.</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td><strong>View the community foundation as a resource beyond simple grant-making.</strong> Understand what resources the community foundation is already providing to other organizations. If it is not currently providing services beyond regular grant making, offer suggestions and explore that possibility with the foundation staff.</td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop an ongoing relationship.</strong> Even if you don’t get funding the first time, keep the foundation informed of your efforts and awards on behalf of NPD. If your request is turned down, get specific reasons and explore them with the foundation staff.</td>
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<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Start early!</strong> Community foundations have their own individual styles and procedures. Be sure to give yourself enough time to meet their deadlines.</td>
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