Sponsorship Acquisition for Festivals and Events – A Tactical Guide

For anyone that has worked in the festival and event industry, it's quickly apparent that one of the most important elements keeping festivals alive is the amount of sponsorship dollars they are able to pull in. It's not an easy job, and newer festivals have more of an uphill battle in convincing potential sponsors to invest money or in-kind trades into an unproven entity. Being successful at landing sponsorships requires a skilled balance of tenacity, delicacy, honesty, vision, and a bit of luck.

To help those starting out in this world, The Sponsorship Collective, a Canadian company based in Ottawa, has generously created a free guide for those looking to source sponsorship revenue for their event or festival. This guide includes the following:

- Sponsorship Proposal Template
- 34-Point Sponsorship Checklist
- Sponsorship Valuation Template
- Valuation Checklist
- Fulfillment Report Template
- Discovery Questions
- Email Templates to Get the Meeting
- Valuation Infographic
- The Sponsorship Journey Infographic

The Sponsorship Collective also has free webinars that you can sign up for to gain even more insight and useful tips on all thing sponsorship.

In addition to the above, they wrote an excellent article about the "Seven Deadly Sins of Sponsorship", which talks about the pratfalls of in-kind sponsorships vs cash deal, not understanding the sponsorship sales cycle, and the importance of a sponsorship activation budget.

Of course, don't forget to also check out our own FEP Sponsorship Guide that includes downloads to sponsorship deck examples from other festivals along with additional tips and strategies.

One final point that all festivals and events should abide by – **NEVER rely on sponsorship sales (or, worse, the projection of future sponsorship sales that aren't confirmed) to pay for your event.** Always have enough cash onhand to pay all of your expenses regardless of what sponsorship revenue you acquire. Same goes for trying to pay for your expenses with ticket sales that may or may not be enough to cover all of your costs. Producers who do not heed this advice often end up not able to pay their bills, all but ensuring the event or festival will be cancelled (and perhaps some legal action as well).

Armed with all of this new information, you should be in a fantastic position to properly acquire sponsorships; if any of you have success stories as a result of these guides, please post in the comments.

Sometimes, all it takes for a successful sponsorship activation is just giving your guests a place to lay around.