

# Gaining corporate sponsorship



With budget getting tighter CircuitWest looked into the small proportion of corporate support for the arts compared to sport. The fact of the matter is one WA footy team has more support than all the arts organisations times 10 – why are we missing out?

Remember, sports are often dropping the ball in terms of behavior and as such they are a risky option that some brands avoid.

Arts is a better fit for many blue ribbon brands as it represents innovation, creativity, community, originality and appeals to a wide range of markets and communities.

Overlook the sponsor  
Avoid going in without knowledge of an organisation - read their marketing and strategic documents

Overlook commercial needs  
Address how a sponsor can market their products or brand to your customers

Talk only about your organisation  
Partnerships are both organisations so if your proposal is all about you, you need to do more work

Use traditional standard gold, silver, bronze sponsorship levels unless you know there are benefits in these that meet the specific sponsor's needs

## Don'ts

What	How	Ideas	Your ideas	Final plan
<u>How will they benefit</u>	How is a corporate brand going to benefit from being alongside your brand – what does your brand stand for? Keep it simple – in the arts industry we are about creativity, change, beauty, vision and innovation – our venues are about community, pride, togetherness, joy and family. We have massive high ground on which sponsors can leverage – don't undersell what you offer in the marketplace.	<p>Examples</p> <p>Alignment with Mardee Theatre means you will be supporting our 43,000 visitors per annum directly from this community in Arts such as kids programmes, seniors activities and family nights out</p> <p>Hopetoun Regional Centre is known for its presentation of WA's finest creative arts productions and an alignment with us means you will be seen side by side with ballet, cutting edge theatre and rich classical and contemporary music</p>		

<b>What will they see</b>	A picture paints 1000 words – provide images of what you do, especially the joy of the people you impact as they are the people a sponsor will wish to influence	Make a photo library of full house events, community programme participants, on stage performances with sets and artists, public spaces and so on		
<b>Help them see where they fit</b>	Provide something for imagination – take some poetic license and have your designer impose your proposed sponsors logos in photography that will show them what the future could look like with a partnership between you.	Photograph your stage in production mode and superimpose the company logo at the front of the stage Photograph your front of house staff and superimpose logos on their uniforms Find a visually strong public place visible from outside the venue and superimpose the logo clearly on the building		
<b>Learn about the organisation and how you can help them</b>	Read their annual report, strategic plans, talk to them and find out who they are and what they want from life – where you fit into this plan is what drives a partnership. What are the things that drive your proposed sponsor?	Organisational strategic plans commonly cover areas like brand awareness and being a good community citizen - examples of what might be covered is have a brand regarded as high quality or retaining quality staff  Opportunities might be to put the corporate brand beside the demographic that attends performing arts. Good corporate citizenship involves things like supporting community events and being seen side by side with the venue when the public is looking.		
<b>What are the sell opportunities for the sponsor</b>	Somewhere in your organisation, however small, some sponsors will be attracted to the idea that they get to make offers to your customers/visitors- where are the opportunities	The website, catalogue, emails that you send and the venue itself provide ample opportunities for branding or retail space for sponsors. Look to where their marketers can reach out to your customers. A popular idea is the use of offers publicised in venue publications.		
<b>Include the sponsors teams</b>	Volunteering has become a major corporate activity so highlight opportunities for their teams.	Look for ways the sponsor's team can work with your team, venue renovations, front of house etc		
<b>What is in it for their customers</b>	Specific brands are keen to special offers exclusive to their customers, like discounts. Look to how you might make their people feel good.	Some organisations provide offers from those they support to their customer bases - consider pre sells, or discount bookings for the customers of your partners. Several venues have MasterCard partnerships which means they open to MasterCard holders first.		
<b>Ask questions</b>	If there is a sponsorship person, ask to speak to them and talk about alignments and get their advice first – it helps to know what they value and what their budget cycles are	Don't put work into a proposal and send it without some stakeholder management to discover, needs, timeline, formats, amount and especially if you are wasting your time		
<b>Find out who you are contacting</b>	Get your proposal read - if you can't speak to any contacts at an organisation, at least research who receives sponsorship. Post the proposal with a personal letter – it's 10 times more likely to get read than email.			

<b>Find out who can make introductions</b>	Somewhere in most organisations someone knows someone who knows someone – ask the question. An introduction is obviously better than a cold call. Organisations frequently go to their Boards for high level partnership leads.	Who in your board, committee, venue friends, volunteers or team know someone who knows someone in an organisation who can steer you in the right direction. Ask everyone for leads		
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