

Guide for Corporate Sponsor Exploratory Meetings

Preparation

- Review the company's history with your association in recent years, including sponsorships, advertisements, exhibits, research collaborations, and other engagements
- Visit the company's website and LinkedIn profile/posts to identify initiatives, corporate social responsibility programs, and announcements from the company
- Research recent news articles about the company that might provide useful insights

Notes

- Schedule the call/meeting for 30 – 45 minutes; note that this is not a sales call
- Clarify at the beginning of the call that this is an exploratory conversation, not a sales pitch
- Avoid discussing specific sponsorship/partnership packages or benefits during the meeting
- Do **not** ask about the company's sponsorship budget – focus on broader priorities and goals
- Steer the interviewee(s) to provide answers in terms of objectives and goals ... **not** tactics
- Ask probing follow-up questions, especially if the company's answers are brief; keep the discussion conversational
- Take detailed notes so you can develop a customized proposal
- Conclude the conversation by letting the interviewee(s) know you'll review your notes and draft a proposal brief for discussion; schedule a follow-up call or meeting

Sample Questions

- Would you please provide an overview of your company, including products/services and areas of expertise?
- Is your company's market local, state, regional, national, or international?
- What are your company's marketing goals?
- What would you like our association's members to know about your company?
- What outcomes would you like to achieve through engagement with our association's members in the coming year? Actions like purchasing, attending webinars, etc.?
- Are there particular segments of our membership you are most interested in reaching?
- What are your company's marketing and outreach initiatives? How do you measure the success of each one? What are your challenges in achieving success?
- Can you describe an example of a successful sponsorship? What made it successful?
- What companies are your key competitors, and how do you differentiate your company?
- When during the year does your company make decisions about sponsorships and allocate budget for sponsorships?

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