

AYSO Program: Marketing
Lead Instructor: Marketing
/development expertise; Advanced
Instructor preferred

How to Get Local Sponsors For Your Region

Latest Revision Date: 10/31/14
Length: 75 minutes
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How to Get Local Sponsors For Your Region

Class Length

75 minutes

Change Summary

October 30, 2014

Origination

1. Lesson Plan Goals

To give participants a framework for thinking about how to sell local Region sponsorships, sharing experiences and offering tips and suggestions to increase success.

2. Class Length – 75 min.

3. Instructor Requirements

4. Learning Objectives

Learn how to develop relationships with local companies, convert them into cash and/or product sponsors, fulfill sponsor's expectations and facilitate audience exchange of experiences and ideas

5. Prerequisites

None

6. Materials

None

7. Equipment

LCD Projector
Flip chart and markers

8. Special Instructor Notes

This is a session that commonly attracts people who are already doing sponsorship sales and want to be more successful...or want to hear what others are doing. If you have an engaged audience, feel free to move through the slides more quickly and get to the "Let's Share" segments. You can give these more time. If, however, the audience is more basic and/or not highly participatory, you can deliver more explanation on the slides. In some slides, we have added more notes to share if the audience is less participatory.

Slide # 2 Introduction

Introduce yourself as workshop leader, your topic and your co-instructor.

...In this workshop, we want to accomplish several things, including:

- Get you started on the road to getting local sponsors if you don't have any right now
- Hear about and share your sponsorship successes
- Give practical tips on selling and servicing sponsors
- Help understand the sponsor's point of view.
- Learn the AYSO National Rules & Guidelines on Region Sponsorships

Slide # 3 Let's Share...

Instructor note: Ask the questions:

- A. How many people, by show of hands, currently have sponsors from their Region?
- B. Tell us some of the sponsors you have.

(Note to instructor: later in the session, you will offer attendees the opportunity to discuss more details about their sponsors, so keep them from expanding on it here.)

Slide # 4 What are your sponsorship goals?

Setting goals is important for any initiative and sponsorship sales are no different. Selling and servicing sponsors takes volunteer time and effort. Be sure it's worthwhile for your Region! Consider...

- What is your Region trying to achieve?
- Can you effectively tell AYSO's story?
- What value does AYSO and your local Region provide to prospect sponsor
- What impact could a corporation make by partnering with your Region?

What are other goals that your Region may want to establish?

Slide #5 WARNING....Avoid having sponsor dollars pay for critical programs.

- Sponsorships take volunteer time and energy. Sometimes just a small registration fee increase could give you the same dollars.
- Sponsors can go away abruptly...marketing plans change, business declines, other local programs get some of those dollars, owner changes...lots of outside factors impact how much money you can bring in and how hard it will be to get.
- Your own personnel can change. Not everyone can sell sponsorships. Turnover in volunteers can leave you stuck.
- Sponsorships are great for “extras” and add-ons, but do your best to avoid them becoming part of your “must have” for the Region to operate.

Slide # 6 What is a sponsorship?

Instructor note: Ask the audience this question – have people shout out what they think a sponsorship is. If they’re not responding, ask individuals in the audience for their thought about what a sponsorship is.

Slide # 7 A sponsorship is...A REALTIONSHIP

- A business or organization gives cash or product in exchange for the ability to create a relationship with a group of potential customers that have a relationship with AYSO.
- A sponsorship is a business relationship. Once in a very great while, it may just be a straight donation, but most commonly, a business will want to see a return on that investment.
- The more effective your organization is at building the relationship between the sponsor, your members and the larger community, the more attractive your Region will be to current and future sponsors.

Slide # 8 What ROI is a sponsor looking for?

ROI stands for ‘Return on Investment’. The sponsor will invest in your Region in cash or product...but it is important that they see value back from that investment. And each sponsor may have a different way of measuring that value.

Instructor Question to audience: What type of return might a company be looking for by sponsoring your Region?

Slide # 9 Some possibilities for a sponsor’s return on investment

Slide # 10: Let’s share

Instructor Note: Ask your audience to share what have been some of their most successful sponsor programs what did they do for the sponsor or what did the sponsor do to take advantage of the sponsorship?

Slide #11 More activation ideas

Activation means: how you and the sponsor will work together to build the relationship with your Region parents and players.

Here are some more ideas of what Regions have done to “activate” a sponsorship”

Instructor Note: If the audience is engaged and anxious to share, move directly to the next slide and let them spend 5-10 minutes sharing activation ideas they have tried or thought about. If the audience is not participatory, share any or all of these expansions on the “Activation Starter” list

- Expo/vendor alley – an area near the soccer field(s) where sponsor tables or tents are clustered together to create more activity for all.
- Don't forget to add the sponsor website address wherever practical
- If your field doesn't allow permanent signage, you can buy or build frames to hold banners during games. Or have your sponsor consider a branded pop-up tent.
- Every logo on a Region website should be a link to the company's website.
- Articles could be written by the company or developed by you. A Q&A is often the easiest way to write this type of an article. It can be on your website, in your print or e-newsletters
- Get kids to help pass out flyers or coupons. Be sure to clean up any stray paper after the games are over.
- Get creative with your sponsor's store or space...could it be a registration location? A place for a clinic? A drop-off spot for forms? If your sponsor is a local service such as an insurance or real estate agent, they make like to become your “info hub”...good for you, and good for their business.
- Company logo on uniforms and/or practice t-shirts.
- Ad space or sponsored editorial in programs or yearbooks
- Advertising space or sponsored editorial on Region website.
- Logo on Region letterhead and other collateral materials.
- Signs/company logo/banners at the fields (signboards, light poles, fences, nets behind goals) and at events.
- Naming Rights of the field or complex (e.g. Citizens Bank Fields)
- Company name affiliated with a Region scholarship fund.
- On-site sampling or sign-up.
- Ability to use member mailing and e-mail lists.
- On-site product sales

- Naming Rights to an event that takes place at the fields.
- Involve sponsors in Region event such as picnics, award banquets, opening day ceremonies
- Host 1-3 'festivals' during the season. Invite all parents, kids, and sponsors to participate. Add clinics, face painting and other kid-friendly activities

Slide # 12: You're Ready...Now What?

Instructor note: Ask for a show of hands...

How many are new to selling sponsorships?
How many have experience?

Words of wisdom from the instructor:

- Encourage newbies to start small. Have some success and grow with it.
- Find an enthusiastic person to help
- Talk to each of your current sponsors about why they have found the sponsorship valuable and what could make it better
- Think about all the businesses in your community that your parents and players might choose to shop at, eat, or use their services.

Slide #13 'Packaging'

Spend some time thinking about what is practical for your Region to offer as a list or "package" of benefits. Create tiers of sponsorships starting small...even \$50. This can be a nice starting level for a "team" sponsor. They may only get a plaque or framed photo of the team as their benefit but it's a way to have many businesses able to participate. Service them well and they may grow. But keep the items you give manageable. You can come up with lots of good ideas, but someone will need to execute them. It is better to start small or just with a small number of sponsors than go large and have companies that are disappointed. Good word of mouth will sell sponsorships better than anything else!

Slide #14: Qualities of a great sales person

Finding someone (could it be you?) who enjoys selling community sponsorships is key to sponsorship success. They don't need to be a professional sales person, but they do need to have a warm personality, enthusiasm about AYSO and your Region, genially like meeting people, have good follow-up, and the ability to ASK for money. Consider a sales team...if you don't have one person who has all the skills, is it possible you have a couple of people who could combine their skills and do it together? Perhaps one is the "personality" and the other handles all the follow-up and execution.

Nothing beats a face to face conversation. Letters and emails work well as follow-up, but it is the rare sponsorship sale that is made through the mail. Stop by the store or office. Ask to meet with the owner. Ask if it's a good time. If not, make a future appointment. Have a flyer and business card to leave with your information.

Slide #15: The 5-Point Proposal

An effective sponsorship proposal is brief, clear and to-the point.

Include:

- 1) A short description of AYSO (how is it different than any other soccer or sports program in your town?)
 - 2) A description of your Region...when was it founded? How many players do you have? How many families? Will they prefer to shop or use the service of a Region sponsor? Details are great to have!
 - 3) A list of sponsor benefits your Region can provide;
 - 4.) How your Region can help the sponsor meet their needs – New customers? More sales?
 - 5) Price (in cash, product, service or a combination).
- This can be a simple one-sheet with 3 or 4 levels of local sponsors (this is adequate if your sponsor levels are \$200 and less.)
 - If your sponsor levels go beyond \$200, your are a larger Region or you already have an established sponsorship program, the proposal likely should be more detailed and
 - Include a short cover letter highlighting only one or two points you'd like to emphasize.
 - Include a folder of "support materials" if you have them, such as newspaper clippings from previous events, letters of recommendations from other sponsors, a publicity/media schedule.
 - A proposal can be very fancy, but doesn't have to be. A simple, accurately typed format is sufficient.

Remember: Be enthusiastic, but keep it professional.

Slide #16 Pricing

There are no magic answers to how much a sponsorship should cost. Team sponsorships – which give a company some visibility. Region sponsorships generally are \$.50-\$5 per player. But there are many that are lower and some that can go higher. It largely depends how many different benefits are included and what the potential return to the sponsor will be on the investment they make. As always, start small and grow!

Instructor Note: This is a perfect opportunity to ask for audience feedback. Pricing always brings lot of questions, but specifics are usually key to setting price. So if audience members have examples, that can be helpful

Slide # 17 Who is most likely to sponsor your Region

Instructor note: Use the flip chart and list the feedback from the audience

Slide # 18 Think Local!

Here are some businesses we thought of and perhaps some we didn't

b. Local Sponsorships Are The Ticket

- It will be local businesses that find the most value in a sponsorship of your Region.
- If it's a large corporation, they will only be likely to consider sponsorship if they have a special interest in your community. Perhaps it's the company headquarters, or they have a new store opening up.

Slide # 19: Take Advantage of Registration Events

Take a tip from Region 168 in El Cajon, Calif. Their sponsorship manager Sandy Jardine put up a table at their Registration event and talked to parents. Many had businesses or worked at companies that made perfect sponsors. She made sure every one of them know about the Region's sponsor program and walked away with a flyer

Slide # 20 Let's Share: How do you do Sponsorship Pricing & Packages?

Instructor Note: Have the group offer their experience with what they may include in sponsorship packages and how much they charge. Give instructions that attendees should keep it short (and you'll need to keep this moving as people tend to want to tell their whole history!)

- a. Common approach is to develop sponsorship “tiers” such as bronze, silver and gold. Each will receive an escalating set of benefits such as program ads, signage, etc. at increasing price points.
- b. Team sponsorships

Slide # 21 You have a sponsor, now what?

A. Regions have wide latitude in how you design your local sponsorships and what businesses you include, but there are a few AYSO-wide rules to keep in mind...

Slide #22: Financial Details

- AYSO is a single entity, so all Regions, Areas and Sections have the same tax exempt number : 95-6205398
- AYSO is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, the Franchise Tax Board and the Registry of Charitable Trusts.
- AYSO is 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization
- For sponsoring companies to write off their fee on their taxes as a donation to a non-profit, they will need a copy of the AYSO non-profit determination letter. It can be downloaded at AYSO.org/Resources (on the navigation bar at the top of the page. Look under Finance in the pull down menu and Documents.

Slide # 23 Sponsor No No's

Even if sponsorships are sold on a “team” basis, the funds are a donation to and managed at the Region level. The Region determines what the benefits of the sponsorship will be. This is a delicate balance as often a sponsor is a parent that really wants to support only their team. Even if it is a framed photo of an individual team that is the end-of-season gift to the sponsor, but this is still generally purchased at the Region level.

Sponsorships are an asset to the entire Region. But sponsors may not give money or product in exchange for some administrative role in the Region, or the ability to pick a coach or assign players to specific teams.

Slide #24 Please support our National Sponsors

Just encourage the audience to care and support national sponsors. They bring needed funds, services and third party endorsement to AYSO.

Slide # 25 National Sponsors & Region Sponsorships

Approach sponsors that do not conflict with exclusive National Sponsors. **Our National Sponsors with exclusivity include Score, Shutterfly, Herbalife, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Kerrygold and FOX Soccer.**

Choose sponsors that are reputable and respected in the community.

Avoid sponsors that advertise products not suitable for children. Consider carefully how they complement (or not!) the AYSO brand. Alcohol, tobacco and other adult-products are not appropriate.

Advise sponsors about the AYSO National Rules and Regulations concerning uniforms.

- The AYSO uniform may bear an optional emblem representing Region, skills, **sponsor** or sportsmanship on the upper right sleeve and/or the lower right front of the shorts. Such emblems shall be no more than three inches in diameter (or equivalent diagonal) and shall be approved by the Regional Commissioner. (**See AYSO Rules & Guidelines, Article VI. C**)

Sponsors are not allowed to:

- Purchase uniforms, warm ups, bags or special gifts for individual teams
- Select a team coach or require certain players get assigned to their team
- Control administration or Region details
- Spend an entire contribution on a specific purpose
- Show favoritism

Slide #26 How to Keep Sponsors Happy

- a. **Impressions.** Sponsors like to know how many “impressions” they are getting. That’s the number of times their logo or message is being viewed. One way to increase this count is to use a sponsor’s logo beside/within each page number in your program. Consider putting sponsor logos on: corner flags, rulebooks, flyers, restroom doors, medals, pins and trophies.
- b. Provide your sponsor with more than they provide you — and more than they expected. Document your efforts on their behalf and make sure you’re geared toward meeting their objectives.

- c. Always go the extra mile for your sponsors. Finding a good sponsor partner for your program is hard work, so don't lose them because you cut corners. Fulfill every promise, plus add in any extras you can. It's much easier to keep one sponsor happy from year to year than to go looking for a new one because you didn't follow through.

Slide # 27 Thank you!

- a. Send thank you letters to sponsors immediately confirming their commitment
- b. Start with a simple thank-you note — handwritten is best. **Pointer:** In addition, consider sending a framed certificate, a special sponsor trophy, a club jacket with the sponsor's name, notes from all the players or a framed team photo. You can't say thanks enough.
- c. Include in your thank you note an option to contribute for next season.

Instructor note: Ask the audience how they say thank-you to their sponsors.

Slide # 28: Bonus: Sponsorship Success is News You can use to enhance your perception of Customer Service!

Slide # 29: Parents are Customers too

They are customers of the sponsors, and of your AYSO Region. Your success in bringing in sponsors is something you need to talk about – because the sponsor will expect you to help them get the word out, but also because you want your parents to know what you are doing for them and how it benefits their AYSO Experience!

Parents deserve the same level of attention to customer service as any sponsor – remember, they are paying for a service as well!

Slide #30: Take any questions from the audience

Marketing

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