

Using  
Corporate  
Sponsorships  
to Create Wealth and  
Steady Bookings

A Step-by-Step Guide to  
Success!

By Edward Leigh, M.A.

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**\* DO NOT CONTACT SPONSORS UNTIL YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT! \***

## **I. Proposal**

- Ask potential sponsor what they would like in the proposal.
- Follow the potential sponsor's proposal guidelines. For example, if they ask for up to three pages – do not send seven pages!
- Lead with the benefits.

## **II. Traditional Clients vs. Sponsorship Clients**

- Definition:
  - Traditional clients: Co. ABC funds you to do a program for Co. ABC.
  - Sponsorship clients: Co. ABC funds you to do a program for Co. XYZ.
- Approach:
  - Traditional clients are interested directly in our program – they want to know about our speaking skills. Traditional clients want to see our demo videos, one sheets, etc. (Traditional client job titles include: education director, training coordinator, etc.)
  - Sponsorship clients are indirectly interested in our program – they want to know about “exposure to their target market.” (Sponsorship client job titles are usually marketing positions.)

## **III. Direct vs. Indirect Sponsorship**

- Direct Sponsorship is when you go directly to a company and request sponsorship.
  - Talk with the person who is responsible for sponsorships --- usually within the Marketing and/or Public Relations Division.
  - Make it a warm call! Get the person's name from visiting the sponsor's store, booth at a trade show, etc. Experiment with key words on search engines.
- Indirect sponsorship is when you suggest to an organization that they can go to a company and request sponsorship. This is very helpful when an organization wants to bring you in but has no funds. Help them get the funds!
  - Be sure to give them tips on talking to potential sponsors! (review benefits)
  - Find out who is pitching to them and have your program as part of the deal. (e.g., A school textbook company can sponsor your program in return for the school buying their materials).

## **IV. How to Find Sponsors**

- Think about organizations that want exposure to your audiences. Some examples:
  - Medical supply companies want exposure to healthcare professionals.
  - Nutrition bars companies want exposure to fitness/wellness professionals.
  - Textbook manufacturers want exposure to education professionals.
- Review brochures and newsletters to see what companies are sponsoring programs. This is a very valuable source of possible leads.
- Attend events in your industry to meet potential sponsors. (If you are speaking at an association meeting and there is an exhibit area – visit the exhibitors!)

## **V. Sponsorship Benefits**

- Sponsor information (e.g., logo) in print materials, such as:
  - Handouts
  - Newsletters
  - Advertisements
- Sponsor information (e.g., link) in electronic materials, such as:
  - Emails
  - Websites
  - E-zines
- Booth at program for literature and/or product demonstration.
- Recognition at program (invite company rep to stand).
- Opportunity to network with participants.
- Distribution of company items (e.g., pens, cups, etc.).
- Display banner at function (company usually has this already).
- Certificate of appreciation.
- Attendee list (if appropriate).
- Media pitches. \*

\* Be sure to use the word “pitches” when discussing the media, otherwise the organization will expect media attention. The only way to guarantee media exposure is to buy an ad, which can be very costly.

## VI. Novel Types of Sponsorship

- Companies can sponsor our **products**, in addition to our programs. The products could be your current products or specifically-made products for this particular event.
- Companies can hire us as a company **spokesperson** to present programs for their clients or appear in media campaigns.

### Excellent Resource!

**[www.sponsorship.com](http://www.sponsorship.com)**

The website has excellent information about the sponsorship. There are Q & A forums, news sections, in addition to products. This is the one-stop sponsorship site!

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Edward Leigh, known to NSA as “Eddie” has several organizations sponsor his speeches and training programs. He believes every speaker could benefit from sponsorship. Eddie speaks at NSA conventions, workshops and chapters. His half-day corporate sponsorship training session at chapters is an in-demand program. He has also appeared on Voices of Experience and the cover of the *Professional Speaker Magazine*.

Sponsorship helps Eddie achieve his speaking goals ... creating positive workplaces to energize people and increase productivity. His clients benefit greatly from his practical tips to develop top-performing people. He presents programs for hospitals, corporations, schools, government agencies and a variety of associations. His clients include: Ernst & Young, Merck, NASA, Marriott Hotels and National City Bank.

He is often called upon to share his expertise, including an interview with Katie Couric on The Today Show.

**Sponsorship is a perfect win-win scenario!  
You receive funding for your program and the  
sponsor receives exposure to their target market!**

# **NSA Members and their Successful Corporate Sponsorship Experiences**

**Christine Clifford, CSP ..... Christine@CancerClub.com**

I am in my third year of having two corporate sponsorships for my healthcare-related programs: I serve as a Spokesperson for HealthEast Care Systems, a full service hospital based healthcare system, and as one of eight "Visions of Hope Community Speakers" for AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals. For HealthEast, I provide programming for their patients and staff throughout the year as well as participate in all media interviews about their services. I also helped them raise enough money to open a new Breast Care Center at one of their hospitals. I am paid a monthly retainer for their services. For AstraZeneca, I provide up to twenty full-paid speaking engagements on their behalf, for which I also provide media coverage, and put up signage, and handout materials regarding their products and/or services. Both Sponsorships started with me pitching them on having me present a single speech. Because I felt that there was a strong fit with each company between the services I provide, and their mission statements/objectives, I prepared a formal Proposal outlining what I felt the benefits would be to them to have me as a Spokesperson, the project specifications, timing, fees and my mission statement. It took close to one year to secure each of these contracts from the time I first pitched the concept.

My advice to those seeking corporate sponsorships: be patient. Decisions such as bringing a Spokesperson on board are not made overnight.

**Carole Copeland Thomas ..... Carole@TellCarole.com**

My Empowerment Recognition Breakfast series, held twice per year, is sponsored by a number of Boston area corporations and non-profit agencies. A concept I launched in 2000, it serves as a profitable way of expanding my empowerment message while recognizing outstanding civic activists who have made a difference to the community at large.

I negotiated a barter arrangement with the Westin Hotel in 1999. The meeting room and food secured in the arrangement started my first Empowerment Recognition Breakfast in June 2000. They served as my first "sponsor." I then switched hotels (Marriott), negotiated an attractive package for my second event in November 2000, and that hotel property has served as my hotel sponsor ever since. I positioned my relationship with the Marriott to secure other cash sponsors.

**Kathleen Hassan ..... Inspire@KathleenHassan.com**

One of my main teen youth programs is entitled "Our Future's So Bright ... We Gotta Wear Shades" and focuses on creating a positive vision for your life and making good choices that lead you in the direction of your goals. After attending Larry Winget's program at NSA and seeing grown-ups climb over each other to win prizes, I came to the conclusion that "people like stuff" and then figured teens would really like stuff! I want to give quality stuff away that anchors my message and I knew sunglasses would be the perfect item to keep teens engaged and participating in the program. I also want them to be excited after the program and every time they see those sunglasses and actually believe that their future will be bright if they believe and take action.

Through networking, I met a woman who is a consultant in the optical business and told her my idea. Within 24 hours she found two optical companies who wanted to partner with me and I went with ClearVision Optical Company as their name and company values were totally aligned with my mission. Not only do they provide sunglasses for my teen programs, but they sponsored me to speak at the Optical Women's Association in Las Vegas, which was part of the Vision Expo West and I have also spoken at their annual corporate sales dinner. I am currently working on a book for teen girls -- I just sent a mock up cover to my sponsor and will be meeting to discuss more in-depth strategic marketing for the book.

**Mary Marcdante ..... Mary@MaryMarcdante.com**

Never underestimate the power of showing your passion for your message and products and being persistent in your follow-through to find your perfect sponsor. They are out there! My largest sponsorship to date began with an enthusiastic comment about my forthcoming book to a bookstore clerk in the DFW airport following an NSA convention. The clerk offered his boss's phone number, saying he coordinated health events that use speakers. My follow-up over the next year included 29 phone-calls and transfers to different companies and people. I was ready to give up but decided to make one more call, which led to a chance phone conversation with a Foundation CEO who made her decision to buy in less than 15 minutes because she was on her way to meet with her largest sponsor who would "love" my book.

This six-figure contract included a ten-city speaking tour and 5,000 copies of my book, "My Mother, My Friend." At the end of the tour a year later, they asked to buy another book. Since I didn't have one on the shelf, I suggested turning my keynote program, "Living with Enthusiasm" into a book and customizing the front page, acknowledgments and first chapter to the Sponsor's mission and product. I sent a one-page outline and two weeks later received an order for 5,000 copies and a check paid in full before the book was ever written. That was followed by additional keynotes at the Sponsor's home office and a distributor's headquarters. And now, another project is in the wings. Be enthusiastic, persistent, and make that call!

**Rick Metzger, CSP ..... RicMetzger@aol.com**

I have had sponsors for different conventions as well as companies that sponsor my school programs. Through my athletic background and current status as a national and world weight lifting champion, I have been able secure many sponsors, such as York Barbell, Gatorade (Pepsi), PUMA and several others.

One company sponsored me speak to all the students and coaches in the school district that their company is located in. They paid for five presentations (full fee for each) in addition to all my expenses. They also distributed samples of their product to everyone in attendance plus gave me over a substantial product for my personal use! This company said they were more than willing to do this -- in fact the President of the company said, "WOW! I am glad you asked. This is our target audience and you got us in front of them -- plus you have a message they need to hear."

**Nancy Michaels ..... NMichaels@ImpressionImpact.com**

I've worked with sponsors like Office Depot, who sponsor a series of in-store seminars I deliver to their small business customers. I got the sponsorship by attending an annual event they produce called Success Strategies for Business Women, and bid on lunch with the CEO of Office Depot. My \$1,050 investment that went to Count-Me-In, a non-profit organization that gives micro-loans to women business owners bought me a 90-minute lunch meeting with the CEO. I pitched a pilot program and we continued to roll it out this spring.

I also partner with non-profit organizations who obtain sponsorship funding to pay my speaking fee. The key is to highlight and thank your sponsor for their support of your message and make it as valuable an experience for them as possible. I also offer to send tips to the attendees on behalf of my sponsor to make the entire event more of a value-add. It also helps those sponsors to request and capture the data for continued marketing purposes.

**Rebecca Morgan, CSP ..... Rebecca@RebeccaMorgan.com**

I've had numerous corporations sponsor me at conventions. The association got the sponsors to pay my fee and expenses. I had a retail pharmacy solicit funds from pharmaceutical companies to pay my fee. And I had one insurance company client pay me to travel to areas they had independent agents and sponsored me to the local insurance association so their agents could get educated on my topic.

**Maye Musk ..... Nutrition@MayeMusk.com**

Companies want their name to be known by association with a reputable professional speaker. When I give a talk on nutrition and fitness, my responsibility is to educate and motivate the audience. It's not necessary for me to keep mentioning my sponsor because the audience will become annoyed, stop listening and I will lose my credibility. I want sponsors to feel they received more than they paid for, so I encourage acknowledgment of the sponsor:

In South Africa, Canada, Britain and now in the US, my talks have been sponsored by numerous companies such as Procter & Gamble, Kellogg's, Uncle Ben's Rice, Mead Johnson, Ross Products, Borden's, Nike, Mead Johnson, Franklin Farms, National Cattlemen's Association, the National Dairy Board, McDonald's and Baxter Healthcare Corporation. The talks may be held at various locations - conference centers, health shows or association meetings. The topic often relates to the sponsor's products or services, but not always.

When I was living in Toronto, a headhunter from Montreal found me by contacting dietetic associations, universities and fellow dietitians. Hoechst-Celanese wanted me to present up-to-date research on their new product Acesulfame Potassium, a non-nutritive sweetener. The talk was to be held in Prince Edward Island at the Canadian Dietetic Association's conference. At the same time, the association was looking for a sponsor for a motivational talk I was to give. I suggested Hoechst-Celanese as they were already covering my travel costs. Although the talk had nothing to do with the company's products, they agreed to pay for the extra talk as it gave them additional exposure.

My book, *Feel Fantastic*, published by Macmillan Canada, has made sponsorship easier. One of my colleagues organized a series of talks in Canada, receiving sponsorship from a bank, hotel, the teachers, dietetics, nurses and recreational leaders associations and the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Recreation. The package included nine talks, television tapings, moderating a fashion show and book signings.

**Rosemarie Rossetti, Ph.D..... Rosemarie@RosemarieSpeaks.com**

After I was crushed by a 3 1/2 ton tree and paralyzed from the waist down, I repositioned my speaking business to broaden my topics, markets, and focus. Since I had disability income insurance, and utilize it as a financial solution to my situation, I started speaking to insurance professionals and financial planners about my case study and the value of disability income insurance. I shared statistics on the likelihood of a disability, and suggested strategies that would increase their sales of the product. After delivering this presentation in my home town to a professional insurance organization, I met an insurance representative that was interested in having me deliver the same presentation to producers and financial planners that sold the DI product that he represented. Sponsorship was offered to pay my speaking fees and expenses to speak at a number of cities.

**Barbara Thompson ..... Barbara@wlscenter.com**

I currently have a corporate sponsor who hires me about 20 times per year to speak to the customers of their products, which happen to be hospitals and surgical practices. Specifically I speak to support groups. When I speak the hospital and practice advertise that an author is coming to speak and they open the evening to the public. The PR departments of the hospitals have at times arranged for TV or radio interviews, and the hospital often puts a big sign in their lobby advertising my speaking event. All of this brings recognition to the hospital, highlights the practice, results in additional patients and provides patient education. It also greatly increases my visibility.

I insist that the surgeon or someone from the hospital is in attendance when I speak so that the sales rep for the corporation can receive recognition. The sales rep will also sometimes arrange for a dinner with me and those from the practice or hospital. The corporation considers it “value added” for their customers. Everyone wins!

**Jacqueline Whitmore ..... info@EtiquetteExpert.com**

About three years ago, the Miami Herald featured a story about my dining etiquette programs for executives. A week after the article was published, I received a call from O'Connell & Goldberg, a public relations firm that represents Sprint. The account executive asked if I would be interested in becoming the wireless phone company's local cell phone etiquette spokesperson. After several meetings and negotiations, I agreed to present business etiquette seminars to Sprint's clients and employees in the South Florida area. During my seminar, Sprint gets to set up a booth filled with their products and brochures. This is a win-win for everyone. The client doesn't have to pay anything, Sprint gets the exposure, and I get the business. As my role grew, so did my responsibilities. I was also asked to conduct radio and television interviews for them regarding cell phone courtesy.

After the first year, they were so pleased with the results, they expanded my role and named me the national cell phone etiquette spokesperson. Today, I am still contracted by Sprint and I enjoy the privilege of working with them on radio media tours, video news releases (VNR), seminars, and television appearances. They have also given me my own web page on their corporate web site!