



## GET SOCIAL WITH **YOUR SPONSORS**

### Dear Sponsor Doc:

I don't think I am keeping up with other events when it comes to using my social media to promote sponsors. We do posts to thank them, but it seems they want more. Any suggestions?

**T.T. Wheeling, WV**

### Dear T.T.

You are right! You are falling behind if that is all you are providing sponsors on your social media platforms. They expect far more. I noted recently in the IEG/ESP Sponsorship Report that in just the last eight years of sponsor surveys, "Presence in Social Media" has risen to the #2 desired sponsorship benefit. (In 2010 it didn't even make the list!)

According to their most recent sponsor survey, 42% of sponsors report that their presence in a property's digital, social and mobile platforms is a key expectation. Further, 36% expect access to a property's content for digital purposes and 28% want to capture leads and build their database. (Something social media can do very effectively.)

Sponsors will not be satisfied with one-dimensional brand "signage" on your social media platforms. They want to be part of the story while adding to your audience's experience. They are looking for content to build brand experiences. Engagement is the name of the game!

So, what can you do to elevate social media benefits? Here are some great tips from viaSport a British Columbia, Canada sports advocacy agency.

- 1. Create a Social Media Plan with Your Sponsors** – As part of your activation planning, meet with your sponsors to discuss your social media platforms and theirs. Come up with creative ways for them to engage your audience through interactive posts, contests, promotions and onsite activities.
- 2. Share Your Sponsor's Message** – Reposting, sharing and retweeting the content of sponsors is an easy way to provide social media benefit. Follow your sponsors on your personal Facebook account to see their posts and share the ones relevant to your followers on the pages you manage.
- 3. Create Mutually Beneficial Content** – Take sponsorship to the next level by creating content that benefits both your organization and the sponsor. Sponsors especially love photos or video that showcase the good work they are doing in association with your organization. It is also a great way to promote their products and services in an organic manner.
- 4. Tell A Story** – Storytelling is a powerful way to create content. Create a video or a blog post that tells a story which aligns with your sponsor's values. For example, how their support of your event is helping to reach new underserved audiences and provide experiences that would otherwise not happen.

- 5. Be Honest** – Never try to fool your fan base! Be clear and honest when a post is promoting a specific product or service that a sponsor is selling. Be transparent that this is an offer that your event sponsor wants to bring to your audience.
- 6. Hold A Contest** – A simple social media contest or giveaway can increase digital engagement and provide value to your sponsor. Keep it simple and fun and provide a prize that people want. "Throwback Thursday" photo submissions and "Caption this Photo," work really well.
- 7. Express Gratitude** – Sponsors like to feel appreciated. It doesn't take much to tweet a thank you message or post a photo of kids in a program holding up a thank you banner.
- 8. Show Results** – Send your sponsors an analytics review that highlights your success. These analytics can be pulled from Hootsuite for Twitter and Facebook, Facebook Insights or YouTube Analytics. Some of the metrics to report upon include growth in follower/likes/subscribers; increases in retweets, mentions, shares and comments; number of click throughs, etc.

T.T., I hope these ideas get you started in upping your social media game with your sponsors. Fortunately, they are very cost efficient to implement but go a long way to meet your sponsors' expectations and increase value.

### The Sponsor Doc

With more than three decades in sponsorship sales and consultation, **Bruce L. Erley** is the President and CEO of the Creative Strategies Group, a full-service sponsorship and event marketing agency based in Denver, Colorado he founded in 1995. Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America and a Certified Festival & Events Executive (CFEE) by the International Festivals and Events Association, Erley is a highly-regarded speaker on event marketing and sponsorship having spoken on the topic around the world in such places as Dubai, Vienna, Beijing, Toronto and New York.

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