



HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

Dear Readers:

Instead of answering one of your questions in this issue, I hope you will allow me to vent and reflect a bit about some recent circumstances I've experienced.

A little background...CSG is a sponsorship agency. Our clients are event organizers which hire us to go out to find and fulfill the sponsors that fund and promote their events. Why don't they do it themselves? There are likely a number of reasons. They are great at running events, but the idea of *selling* is outside their wheelhouse... They don't know where to start... They don't really understand the objectives and motivations of companies that use event marketing... And for many, selling isn't very fun!

Just a few weeks ago, only a couple of days after we successfully completed a major event for a client, (after a record year of sponsorship revenue,) we were abruptly informed that our agreement to continue to represent the event, (which we have done for nearly two decades,) would not be extended. They candidly told us that they were going to take sponsor sales and fulfillment inhouse to save on commission payments.

Having been in this business for 25 years, this is not the first time a client has left us to take over their sponsorship inhouse. And that is certainly their right! But as I reflect on why this occasionally happens, it seems once we achieve the desired revenue levels for a property, someone internally wonders why they don't do it themselves.

Once we build and maintain a cadre of happy, engaged and fulfilled sponsors, it can look "easy" to those who don't see all the behind-the-scenes rejection and disappointment of the sales process, as well as the tedious work to fulfill benefits, engineer activations and play ombudsmen between the event and the sponsor.

I really believe that some of these clients think... how hard can this be? We'll do it ourselves and save on having others do it for us!

I can recall a moment just a couple years ago. We were transferring our sponsorship sales and fulfillment files and briefing several board members of a cycling event that we were transitioning from us to them to manage internally. After about 90 minutes of downloading to them, a board member actually exclaimed... "My God! I had no idea it was this complicated. There are so many moving parts! We don't know how to do this!"

So, what can we learn from these types of experiences? I think we need to be more transparent with the rigors of our work. I don't mean that you should moan and complain about how hard it is to do what you do, but don't hide your hard work behind the veneer of your successes.

Irrespective of what you do, whether you work for a client, a boss or a board, make sure that you are regularly and thoroughly demonstrating with those to whom you report, the joys and trials of your job... the successes *and* disappointments... the achievements *and* the frustrations.

Don't make your success look too easy. Otherwise... how hard can it be!!

Thanks for letting me vent.

The Sponsor Doc

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