

## How to Guarantee Income Before You Sell Your First Ticket

Excerpted from  
Department of Canadian Heritage  
“Guide to Special Events Fundraising”

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Some expenses must be paid in cash. Use someone else's cash!

Many organizations will co-sponsor an event with a non-profit. This frequently makes the difference between success and failure.

Large or small, groups may find a partner who can make it easier to produce a successful event. If this is your first time, you don't need to go alone.

Sponsors can:

- pay some or all of the bills
- add experience and expertise
- provide labour power
- strengthen your credibility
- offer publicity
- donate goods and services for the event

A sponsor may be a business with a related product. Or a service club that is doing good work. Or another non-profit that will split the expenses and the revenue with you.

Radio stations can be valuable co-sponsors. They gain in public goodwill, and you gain from promotional services. Corporate sponsors who want publicity are attracted when radio station co-sponsors promise free air time.

Many radio stations are willing to do this as part of their community relations programs. TV stations and newspapers are much less involved in this sort of arrangement.

The station may offer a specified number of minutes of Public Service Announcements (PSAs). They may also arrange to have announcers mention the event during their broadcasts. Personalities may appear at the event as well.

Enrolling one radio station as co-sponsor usually does reduce your publicity on other stations. Make sure you chose the best co-sponsor. Pick a station that reaches the people you will want to reach. A hard rock station will not reach chamber music enthusiasts or senior citizens very effectively.

One classic example of radio co-sponsorship is the “Soda Pop Castle.” With this technique a local bottler of a popular soft drink donates dozens of cases of pop. The fundraisers build a castle or fort of stacked cases in a shopping centre parking lot or some other central area. A local DJ is then trapped in the middle, with broadcast equipment to do a radio show live from the site. Supporters set the announcer free by buying the drinks - usually at a discount. The proceeds go to your organization. If the castle is large enough, the DJ may be there for days - provide a bed, a portable toilet, and food!

Service clubs also make good co-sponsors. They can provide an army of talented volunteers ready to take on good work. Many have experience in fundraising, and can help a new organization learn the ropes. Since many service clubs are populated by business-people they frequently have the skills and contacts to sell tickets.

Some service clubs want part of the proceeds from events they co-sponsor, for their own charitable projects. Make sure all the details are clear beforehand.

Firefighters also have a remarkable reputation for generosity for a variety of causes. They are often willing to collect public donations of goods at their fire hall. Examples include used clothes for children, food for hunger programs, and even recyclable materials. In some towns, the firefighters will erect a "tollbooth" on a major road and collect donations from every passing car.

Some companies will donate samples of their products or services for your event. One or two large items are good as door prizes, or for an auction. They may offer enough smaller items for each guest, as a party favour. For example, a perfume manufacturer might provide a tiny vial of a new scent for each guest.