

Kelli Vrla – Sponsorships session

Kelli began the conversation by expressing her eagerness to hear feedback before proceeding with a program. She mentioned her pre-program preparations, realizing that she couldn't approach it empty-handed. In her search for sponsorship resources, she stumbled upon a sponsorship collective and sent an email to inquire about their offerings. She shared a link containing various resources related to selling sponsorships, such as a tactical guide, prospecting worksheet, discovery questions, audience data survey questions, sponsorship assets by value worksheet, and a valuation template.

Kelli then turned the discussion towards the group, asking if anyone had prior experience with sponsorships. A participant mentioned Linda Hollander, an individual who had attended the program a few years ago but hadn't been in contact recently. One participant, (Candy) who had experience with sponsorships, shared their success story. They organized a healthcare workshop for nurses and managed to secure 17 sponsors, including schools of nursing, Massage Envy, and Sleep Number bed. They highlighted the importance of narrowing down the target audience and offering opportunities that align with their needs.

The conversation shifted to the topic of pricing sponsorships, with participants expressing their opinions on the matter. It was suggested that sponsorships were potentially undervalued in the mentioned case, leading to missed opportunities for higher revenue. The participant reflected on the advice received from Linda, indicating that sponsors should be able to afford the investment and that nurses might not be the ideal target audience for high-priced sponsorships.

Another participant shared their experiences with sponsorships, particularly in real estate and nonprofit sectors. They often received requests from real estate professionals to organize events, which they would support through sponsorships from title companies or mortgage firms. Additionally, they mentioned their success in securing sponsors for a nonprofit organization by reaching out to larger organizations in the community. By offering sponsorship opportunities tied to a local charity, they were able to generate significant support and establish long-term funding.

A participant further expanded on her own experiences with co-promotion, and described a model where he collaborated with the State Society of Association Executives to organize events. Through this partnership, they would secure hotel accommodation and split the net profits, thereby minimizing expenses. We emphasized the importance of demonstrating audience value to sponsors and leveraging existing connections to promote events effectively.

Participants agreed on the significance of understanding the target audience and providing tangible benefits to sponsors. They acknowledged the need for precision targeting, focusing on quality rather than quantity in sponsorships. By identifying specific sponsors who align with the target audience, it was suggested that higher returns could be achieved with fewer sponsors. The group expressed enthusiasm for further exploring sponsorship strategies and refining their approaches.

During the conversation, the participants discussed the potential of reaching out to sponsors and the possibilities for collaboration. They shared their personal experiences and provided advice on what

sponsors might be interested in. One of the main points of discussion was the various benefits that sponsors could receive, such as naming rights, presenting rights, logo placement, speaking opportunities, and more. The participants highlighted the importance of targeting the right sponsors and tailoring the sponsorship approach to specific audiences.

The conversation also delved into the differences between long-term sponsorships and one-time deals. While some participants shared their success stories with long-term sponsorships, others pointed out the challenges and limited ROI associated with one-time sponsorships. The group emphasized the need to consider the amount of time and effort required for securing sponsors and whether the investment is worth the return.

In terms of sponsor outreach, participants suggested different strategies. One idea was to partner with associations and offer sponsorship opportunities to their existing sponsors. Another suggestion was to approach companies directly and propose customized sponsorship packages that align with their brand and target audience. The participants also explored the idea of targeting specific industries or niches, such as women's leadership events or industry-specific conferences and seeking sponsorship from companies that have a strong presence in those areas.

Furthermore, the conversation touched on creative sponsorship ideas, such as offering custom comedy bits related to sponsor products or collaborating with breweries to create branded beverages. The participants discussed the potential benefits of offering unique and tailored sponsorship options that go beyond traditional signage and branding.

The discussion provided valuable insights into the world of sponsorships, highlighting the importance of understanding sponsor needs, tailoring sponsorship packages, and finding the right balance between investment and return. The participants encouraged each other to think creatively and explore innovative approaches to sponsorship collaborations.

The participants engaged in a detailed discussion about the sponsorship journey and provided further insights into each step. They reiterated the significance of understanding one's own brand and target audience, emphasizing the need to have a clear identity and purpose before approaching potential sponsors. By knowing who they are and who their audience is, individuals or organizations seeking sponsorship can effectively tailor their pitch and offerings to align with the interests and goals of potential sponsors.

Creating a hit list of potential sponsors was discussed as a crucial step in the process. This involves identifying companies or individuals that resonate with the brand or align with the target audience. The participants acknowledged the importance of research in this stage, as it helps determine which sponsors are most likely to be interested and receptive to the sponsorship proposal. It was emphasized that the hit list should radiate relevance and be specifically tailored to the goals and values of the organization or individual seeking sponsorship.

Segmenting the audience based on demographics and preferences was highlighted as a valuable practice. By understanding the different segments within their target audience, sponsors can better

customize their offerings and engagement strategies. This segmentation allows for more effective communication and helps sponsors identify which assets and benefits would be most appealing to each audience segment.

Building an inventory of sponsorship assets was discussed as a critical step in the sponsorship journey. This involves identifying and highlighting the various opportunities and benefits that sponsors can gain by partnering with the organization or individual. These assets may include logo placement, signage, speaking opportunities, VIP experiences, social media mentions, or product placement, among others. The more comprehensive and diverse the inventory, the greater the appeal for potential sponsors.

Internal buy-in and evaluation were emphasized as important factors in securing successful sponsorship. It was suggested that individuals or organizations seeking sponsorship should gather support from internal stakeholders and decision-makers, as their endorsement can significantly impact the sponsorship process. Evaluation and research play a key role in this stage, enabling sponsors to assess the potential value and impact of the sponsorship opportunity.

The participants shared examples and ideas for sponsorship packages. Elizabeth McCormick, a successful speaker, was mentioned as someone who offers a comprehensive sponsor package. Her package includes various benefits such as pre-event meet and greets, VIP seating, logo placement, book options, and media coverage. The participants found this package to be impressive and viewed it as a valuable reference for creating their own sponsorship proposals.

The conversation also explored unique sponsorship ideas, such as live painting performances and school visits. Sponsors were encouraged to consider supporting initiatives that have a positive impact on the community or align with their brand values. These initiatives provide an opportunity for sponsors to generate positive PR, gain media coverage, and create meaningful connections with their target audience.

The participants emphasized the importance of creativity, research, and strategic planning in the sponsorship journey. By understanding their own brand, knowing their audience, and tailoring their offerings to potential sponsors, individuals and organizations can increase their chances of securing successful and mutually beneficial sponsorships.

The conversation revolved around the concept of sponsorship and how to effectively reach out to potential sponsors. One participant shared a story about a client who had a unique Guinness World Record for frisbee and partnered with a prison company to provide frisbees to children. This collaboration allowed the sponsor to donate to schools while promoting their brand, and it highlighted the potential for creative partnerships that benefit both parties. The discussion emphasized the importance of leveraging existing marketing budgets and approaching companies for sponsorship opportunities, even for individuals or influencers with niche audiences.

The participants discussed the significance of addressing common objections that sponsors may have. They shared a resource that provided sample responses to objections, allowing sponsors to overcome doubts and gain a better understanding of the value they can provide. The conversation also touched

upon the importance of measuring and reporting on deliverables to maintain a strong relationship with sponsors. By demonstrating the impact and results of the sponsorship, individuals or organizations can build trust and credibility with their sponsors.

The conversation then shifted to finding potential sponsors for specific topics or themes. One participant raised the question of how to identify companies or organizations interested in neurodiversity in the workplace, as it related to their speaking topic. The suggestion was made to research past conferences or events that focused on diversity and inclusion, as they often attract exhibitors and sponsors who align with the subject matter. This approach allows individuals to target sponsors who already have a demonstrated interest in the topic they are addressing.

Overall, the participants encouraged each other to act and proactively reach out to potential sponsors. They emphasized that sponsorship opportunities are not limited to celebrities or those with a large following but can be pursued by anyone who can demonstrate the value they offer. The discussion highlighted the need to find sponsors whose goals align with the target audience or topic being addressed, as well as the importance of effectively communicating the benefits of the sponsorship opportunity.