

SPONSORSHIP SUCKER

Stop Writing Checks and Calling It Community Marketing

A fast field guide for local insurance agents who are tired of buying invisible logos.

**A donation can be generous. A sponsorship should also
have a plan.**

A free resource from Agents in the Community

THE GREAT LOCAL SPONSORSHIP SHUFFLE

A school calls. A nonprofit emails. A client asks. The Chamber sends another packet. Somebody needs a hole sponsor, a banner sponsor, a table sponsor, a jersey sponsor, or a sponsor for the sponsor reception.

You say yes because you want to support the community. That part is good.

Then you send a check, email a logo, and wait for “brand awareness” to happen by itself.

That is not a sponsorship strategy. That is logo-based philanthropy.

There is nothing wrong with making a donation. Give because you care. But when the money comes from the marketing budget, it deserves a marketing plan.

DONATION OR MARKETING INVESTMENT?

A DONATION	A SPONSORSHIP
Supports a cause you believe in	Supports the cause and creates a business opportunity
Success is helping	Success includes visibility, interaction, relationships, content, and follow-up
No return required	A reasonable return should be defined
A thank-you is enough	Activation is required

Call it what it is. That one decision will save you from expecting marketing results from a charitable gift - or pretending a sponsorship worked because your logo appeared somewhere near the potato salad.

THE FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU SAY YES

1. WHO WILL ACTUALLY BE THERE?

Not “the community.” Which people? Parents? Business owners? Teachers? Drivers? Homeowners? Young families? Your ideal audience should be present in meaningful numbers.

2. WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY GET?

A logo is not a complete benefit package. Ask about booth space, announcements, tickets, attendee communication, social posts, email recognition, speaking opportunities, photos, introductions, and category exclusivity.

3. HOW CAN WE PARTICIPATE?

The best sponsorships let your agency do something useful: volunteer, teach, host, judge, present, collect donations, run an activity, recognize participants, or solve a small problem.

4. CAN WE EXTEND IT BEYOND EVENT DAY?

Look for stories, photos, partner content, employee involvement, customer invitations, follow-up resources, and future relationships. One event should create more than one day of value.

5. WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Choose a simple objective before you pay: relationships created, conversations, qualified contacts, content captured, partner introductions, appointments, referrals, community visibility, or renewal potential.

THE FAST NO: If the audience is wrong, the benefits are vague, and participation is impossible, politely decline. Your marketing budget is not a community ATM.

ACTIVATE IT OR WASTE IT

A sponsorship becomes valuable when the agency does something with it. Use this simple three-part activation plan.

BEFORE

Create anticipation

- Announce why you are involved
- Invite customers, prospects, and partners
- Recognize the organization and its mission
- Prepare your booth, activity, giveaway, or resource
- Assign staff roles and a follow-up owner

DURING

Be visible and useful

- Show up early and help
- Stand where conversations happen
- Take appropriate photos and short videos
- Introduce yourself to organizers and other sponsors
- Collect contacts only when there is a clear reason
- Avoid turning a charity event into a quote ambush

AFTER

Turn participation into momentum

- Thank the organization publicly and privately
- Share photos and recognize people, not just your logo
- Follow up with permission-based contacts promptly
- Connect with new partners
- Record results, costs, lessons, and next steps
- Decide whether to renew, improve, or walk away

Attention without activation is just an expensive logo sighting.

THE SPONSORSHIP SUCKER SCORECARD

Score each category from 0 to 2 before committing money.

CATEGORY	0	1	2
Audience fit	Poor	Mixed	Strong
Participation	Logo only	Limited	Active role
Visibility	Vague	Some	Clear and repeated
Relationship value	None	Possible	Strong
Content potential	None	A few moments	Multiple stories
Follow-up opportunity	None	Indirect	Clear and appropriate
Cost value	Weak	Fair	Strong
Long-term potential	One-and-done	Uncertain	Repeatable partnership

YOUR SCORE: ____ / 16

13-16: STRONG OPPORTUNITY - Build an activation plan and negotiate the best package.

9-12: MAYBE - Improve the benefits, participation, or cost before saying yes.

5-8: DONATION TERRITORY - Support it personally if you care, but stop pretending it is a strong marketing buy.

0-4: SPONSORSHIP SUCKER ALERT - Smile, decline, and protect the budget.

THE LOGO-ON-A-BANNER HALL OF SHAME

- ☐ Your logo is printed smaller than the dessert sponsor's logo.
- ☐ The banner hangs behind a tree, food truck, or inflatable dinosaur.
- ☐ Nobody from the agency attends.
- ☐ The organization misspells the agency name.
- ☐ You receive two tickets and send nobody because "we got busy."
- ☐ Six months later, nobody can explain why the sponsorship was purchased.

YOUR NEXT SPONSORSHIP DOES NOT NEED MORE MONEY

It needs more intention.

Choose one sponsorship you already own or are considering. Before lunch is over, do three things:

1. Define the audience and one business objective.
2. Ask the organizer for one additional participation benefit.
3. Write down what your agency will do before, during, and after.

Stop writing checks. Start building relationships.

THE SPONSORSHIP IS ONLY ONE PIECE

Strong community marketing also requires choosing the right opportunities, building a calendar and budget, preparing your team, executing events, following up, measuring results, leveraging partners, and improving every quarter.

That is what Agents in the Community OS was built to do.

BUILD THE WHOLE COMMUNITY MARKETING SYSTEM

Explore Agents in the Community OS

[INSERT AITC OS LINK OR BUTTON]

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Part of the AITC Rebel Field Guide Series

Community Marketing Makes Insurance Cool.