# **You Make the Difference Initiative**

# ***Turning Sponsors Into Partners***

## *Purpose of This Exercise*

*Today’s businesses want more than advertising space — they want impact, alignment, and visibility.*

*This exercise will help you shift from one-time sponsorships to lasting partnerships that serve both your fair’s mission and your partners’ goals.*

## *Key Mindset Shift*

* *A Sponsor writes a check for visibility.*
* *A Partner invests in shared success.*

*You’re not selling logos.*

*You’re building relationships around shared values, mission alignment, and long-term impact.*

## *How to Build a True Partnership*

*1. Lead With Mission, Not Money*

*Start every conversation by sharing your fair’s story — what it represents, why it matters, and how it strengthens your community.*

People invest in impact, not advertisements.

*2. Discover What They Care About*

*Ask smart questions:*

* *What community issues are they passionate about?*
* *How do they want to be seen in the community?*
* *Are they seeking employee engagement, public goodwill, or future workforce development?*

*When you know their priorities, you can build a win-win partnership.*

*3. Offer More Than a Banner*

*Customize ways they can make a difference and be visible:*

* *Sponsorship of specific fair areas (education, youth, agriculture)*
* *Employee volunteer programs during the fair*
* *Co-branded content, storytelling, and social media spotlights*
* *VIP experiences tied to their sponsorship level*

*4. Build a Story They Can Share*

*Help them be proud of their investment.*

*Create easy ways for them to share their community impact with customers, employees, and partners.*

*Examples:*

* *Social media shoutouts*
* *Quick update videos showing impact*
* *Recognition at key fair events*

*5. Make It a Journey, Not a Transaction*

*Invite partners into a multi-year vision for building community.*

*Treat them like investors in your future — because that’s exactly what they are.*

# *Quick Action Plan*

* *Identify 5–7 businesses whose values align with your fair’s mission.*
* *Research their community involvement priorities.*
* *Brainstorm 1–2 meaningful partnership opportunities tailored for each.*
* *Schedule face-to-face conversations focused on mission first, visibility second.*

# *Closing Thought*

Strong partnerships aren’t sold—they’re built.

Lead with vision, align with values, and invite others into a future they’ll want to be part of.