Sponsorship Improvement Proposal:
The Ambassador Program

Current situation

- The organization is having a difficult time obtaining sponsorships, primarily because the value being given to sponsors – essentially the opportunity to advertise to the membership – does not reflect the current asking costs of the program.
- The organization tends to offer discounts in order to attract sponsors, further diminishing the perceived value of the programs.
- The membership is exposed to the sponsor spots only through limited print advertising in chapter materials
- Sponsors are only interested in the one or two high-volume, high-visibility slots.
- Sponsors are unwilling to commit for more than one year

Sponsor requirement

After interviewing three of the current five sponsors, it is clear that what they are looking for is the chance to sell their services to the organization's member companies. While this is not a new finding, it does suggest a way to increase the value provided to sponsors, thus providing more of an incentive to pay regular rates and commit for a longer period of time.

When broken down, the current value proposition runs as follows:

- Sponsors advertise in order to get their information in front of members
- Hopefully, members will recall the advertising and contact sponsors for their services
- Sponsors will set up meetings with interested member companies
- Member companies will purchase sponsor goods/services

The following proposal for an "Ambassador Program" essentially cuts out the two first steps of the above value proposition and skips directly to what the sponsors really want; contact with members and a chance to sell.

Ambassador Program overview

- Potential sponsors are given a list of all organizations with which members are associated
- From that list, sponsors choose a number of organizations with whom they'd like to arrange a personal meeting (total number depending on sponsorship level). They communicate that list to the management of the organization
- Management officers will contact the members of those organizations with a request to meet with the representative of the chapter sponsor
- The members meet with the sponsors' representatives to hear about their products and services

There is no requirement or expectation that participating members will guarantee to engage sponsors simply on the basis of having met through this program. The hope is simply that this program will facilitate the very type of introduction that brings value to sponsors.

Program calendar

In order to generate the most potential value, the organization's membership must be excited about the prospect of this new sponsorship program. The following communications calendar is recommended:

- Week 1: Email members with description of program.
- Week 3: Program description in organization's newsletter.
- Concurrent with Weeks 1-3: Prepare sponsorship package
  - Letter of intro from sponsorship director
  - Levels explanation
  - Ambassador program explanation
  - Calendar of "Events At-a-Glance"
  - Sponsor FAQ
- Week 4: Direct mail campaign to targeted sponsors w/ above package (50 top prospects)
- Week 6: Phone campaign to follow-up w/ targeted sponsors

Please note: In order to generate best results, week 1 must coincide w/ [DATE], in order for sponsors to be involved in the major two-day [NAME] seminar.

Seminar opportunity

Most of the membership will be at the two-day [NAME] seminar on [DATE]. This would be an excellent chance to allow sponsors to have meetings with their chosen ambassadors. In fact, sponsors who join during the initial campaign could be given a bonus meeting with one or more members based solely on who attends the seminar; i.e., we'll fix you up with a couple more interviews right there on the floor.

Costs

The Ambassador program ads almost no operational cost to the current sponsorship budget. The cost to prepare and mail the initial campaign documents to the 50 top sponsorship prospects in [CITY] would be around $200. The time of members and officers is the only other resource required.