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How to Boost your Business through Sponsorship

The notion that only large corporates can act as sponsors for an event, charity, initiative or organisation is eroding as opportunities for small businesses to get involved in sponsorship is on the increase.

Apart from providing goodwill amongst staff, the local community and existing and potential customers, the right type of sponsorship can have far reaching benefits for a business, with some marketers claiming this to be the most effective form of business promotion. Among the results you can expect to enjoy through successful sponsorship are:

- Generating greater awareness of your company among customers
- Creating a stand-out image from competitors
- Forging stronger links with current and potential customers
- Showcasing products and services through great PR coverage in your local media
- Opportunity to compete with larger businesses (with bigger marketing budgets)
- Potential to attend and invite guests to an event
- Potential to boost long and short term sales

Sponsorship opportunities must be selected carefully and businesses must be clear on their reasons for aligning themselves with another organisation. For operators in the framing industry, it makes sense that you look to associate with groups that will benefit from the use of framing products in some way. Look for local photography societies, painting groups or talented individuals to whom you can provide services, experience or products that support their organisation or a current project such as an exhibition.

Larson-Juhl has been involved in 'The Art of Giving' exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London, providing over 50 frames as part of a fundraising initiative in support of charities including the British Red Cross and The Shooting Starts Hospice in London. The exhibition saw established and aspiring artists donate and exhibit their artworks alongside stars from TV and film, with a common goal of supporting these worthwhile causes.

Larson-Juhl's involvement with this event offered the company an ideal platform from which to showcase its framing products, whilst aligning itself with a high profile exhibition alongside a host of celebrated names. As with this (and other sponsorship opportunities), sponsors can enjoy joint PR and promotional benefits driven by the event organiser, whilst being part of an exciting initiative that supports an important cause.

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Contact local art galleries and photographic clubs to discuss potential collaborations. Donating materials, frames or simply experience and knowledge would often be welcomed. By supporting an event or group in this way, there is very little effort or expense needed on behalf of the sponsor, yet your association and support will be apparent in all resulting PR, promotional opportunities and positive messaging.

In the instance of 'The Art of Giving' exhibition, the association in the audiences' minds between the sponsor and the event was a hugely positive one in relation to charitable giving, quality artwork and a high profile event launch.

When forming a sponsorship alliance, businesses must be keen to capitalise on its involvement with an organisation or event independently. There is often a reluctance for self-promotion, particularly amongst smaller businesses, however, owners must recognise the benefits in conveying such up-beat messages and celebrate their support. For further advice about using PR to promote your sponsorship initiatives, please log on to our PR toolkit which offers excellent advice on gaining local media coverage.

Larson-Juhl's involvement in the 'Golf Through a Lens' photography exhibition, organised by the Seve Ballesteros Foundation, again offered a great platform to promote the business and its products. Over 50 photographs were displayed at St Andrews, each framed using Larson-Juhl mouldings and mounts. Attended by top golfers, TV pundits and celebrities, the event celebrated the beauty, history and emotion of St Andrews over the past 150 years and helped raise over £50,000 for Cancer Research UK. Larson-Juhl's reputation has been strengthened by this association, which was publicised to visitors and a wider audience through positive media coverage of the event.

"We can't thank Larson-Juhl enough for its generosity and support in making the event a great success," commented the organisers. Business sponsorship offers small businesses an unrivalled way to engage with their customers. Building closer relationships with your local community in this way can only be a good thing in the current economic climate, so it's worth putting in a little extra effort to forge these links – you'll reap the rewards in the future.