

# CHAPTER 1

## Outstanding Events Sell Sponsorships

*If you do things well, do them better. Be daring, be first, be different, be just.*

*ANITA RODDICK, FOUNDER, BODY SHOP INTERNATIONAL*

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### **IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN:**

- The definition of commercial sponsorship
  - The most important thing you must do to be a successful event sponsorship manager
  - Why you need to update your event
  - Attributes of outstanding events
  - What you need to do to stage a great sponsored event
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Over the past 25 years there have been many definitions of *sponsorship*.

The International Events Group (IEG) located in Chicago and the industry's leading company among those that track and analyze

sponsorship, defines it as “cash and/or an in-kind fee paid to a property (typically in sports, arts, entertainment or causes) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property.”

The Exordium Group, an industry strategy company headquartered in Cupertino, California, describes it as “a mutually beneficial relationship most often between a corporation and event or rights holder, for the purpose of enhancing a product or corporate brand.”

Another way to look at sponsorship is that it is like any other form of marketing—it is an activity that puts buyers and sellers together, with both receiving certain benefits. In other words, if you have the right people coming to your event as far as your sponsors are concerned (their potential customers), you are probably going to have happy sponsors.

However, even though creating that match is very important, it is still not the most important thing an event manager needs to do if he or she is going to sell sponsorship.

Most everything written or said about successful sponsorship stresses that event managers must work on creating the best packages, writing the best proposals, creating added value, and learning the proper selling techniques. It is also important to establish a good relationship with your sponsors and research them very well.

But the most important thing to remember before you even attempt to sell sponsorship is that you must create an event that is better than the rest. You have to be very good at what you do in your community, no matter what its size.

This does not mean that you have to be the biggest, but it does mean that you have to be the best in a particular niche, or that you present something extremely creative, unique, or entertaining.

“Developing our brand is very important to us right now,” said Capital One’s “K” Alferio. “When people use their Visa or MasterCard, they readily recognize those brands. But they might not know that Capital One is the bank behind them. We want everyone to see Capital One, Capital One, Capital One.”

“In this era of bank mergers, brand awareness and enhancement are critical,” says Dennis Bash of U.S. Bank. “U.S. Bank was an almost completely unknown brand when the company entered the state of Washington market. We became an official sponsor of Seattle’s Goodwill Games in 1990 and used that sponsorship to establish our brand using Games themed advertising, merchandising, and hospitality.”

Bash, vice president and western region manager of corporate sponsorship for U.S. Bank in Portland, looks to creative, professional event staff to bring new ideas to the table. “In many markets our brand is well established so branding is a secondary or tertiary concern. But we do need to achieve ROI [return on investment] on our sponsorships, and we do that in part by selling product. It’s a huge help to us when an event’s staff comes to us with ideas on how we can sell product. That speaks volumes of their commitment to us as a sponsor.”

U.S. Bank also seeks to build unique experiences through sponsorships. “We’re in the third year of a deal with the hottest team in baseball,” said Bash in July 2001. “We’ve created an affinity checking program around that sponsorship and have increased our sale of checking products tremendously due to tying our brand with the Seattle Mariners.”

The bank also looks for nontraditional hospitality opportunities in which the only way people can have certain experiences is through their relationship with the bank.

“We did a batting practice event with the Triple A baseball team in Sacramento, the River Cats,” said Bash. “We gave customers the opportunity to take batting practice, take infield/outfield, receive a special jersey, and have lunch at the ballpark. We never fail to get business when we do this type of event.”

U.S. Bank also sponsors “Blues by the Bay” in Eureka, California. It invites musicians to come and join its customers at a lunch. “To blues fans, having a chance to talk with a name musician is just as important as a sports fan talking to a sports star, those experiences creating lasting memories for our customers,” said Bash.

## Tradition and Change

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Many events are very tired—they present the same program year after year, and fail to add interesting and new elements to their programs.

“Change for the sake of change is not good,” state Steven Wood Schmader and Robert Jackson in *Special Events: Inside and Out*. “But change to keep an event fresh and growing is essential.”

“Before hitting the streets to begin selling an event to potential sponsors, the first thing you must do is take a long, hard look at the event itself . . . like your child, you can love your event, but still recognize its faults. . . .

“Don't ask Mack Truck to sponsor the Royal Canadian Ballet,” say these authors. “It just doesn't fit. A good fit, on the other hand, is Pepto Bismol and the World Championship Chili Cook-off.”

## The Best of the Best

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The following are examples of events that have risen to the top, as either large or niche events.

### EVENTS IN LARGE MARKETS

#### **Roses and Hydros**

Two events located in the Pacific Northwest are extremely successful at selling sponsorship. One was founded in 1907 and the other in 1948, and both have, at times, bucked change.

The Portland Rose Festival has always been one of the best events in the country. Its parade, featuring numerous floral displays, is one of the top five in the United States according to *USA Today*. It has had two other parades for years—the Starlight, which is the second largest illuminated parade in the Northwest, and the Junior Rose Festival Parade, which is the oldest and largest children's parade in the country.

On the waterfront of the Willamette River, a carnival midway has drawn substantial numbers of people, including U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and Royal Canadian Navy personnel from the many large ships that dock near the midway site. It also has featured a rose show that began in 1891.

With that lineup, it would have been very easy for the Portland Rose Festival to rest on its laurels and retain the status quo. But its event managers have not stopped there. While keeping the events described earlier, they have made improvements and added others. There is now a CART automobile race and a huge air show, as well as a large festival.

Because the Rose Festival has changed and remained the top festival in the state of Oregon, its lineup of sponsors is extremely

impressive—this is an event that everyone wants to be a part of (see Figure 1-1). *In 2001 the Festival sold \$4.1 million in cash sponsorship and another \$2 million in in-kind trade!*

Seattle SEAFAIR is another old-time Northwest event that could have rested on its laurels. But it too has not. For years SEAFAIR has featured one of the best night parades in the United States and the largest unlimited hydroplane race in the country.

Over time, it has made changes and added to its mix of events. It has changed its controversial queen coronation to a scholarship pageant for women. It has added a preparade torchlight run, which is held on the parade route before hundreds of thousands of parade viewers.

Like the Rose Festival, SEAFAIR is very successful at selling sponsorship. Its sponsored events include:

- Southwest Airlines Torchlight Parade
- General Motors Cup
- SEAFAIR Milk Carton Derby presented by Navy Recruiting
- Benaroya Research Institute Triathlon
- Talgo Criterium
- UPS Torchlight Run

It is easy to say that SEAFAIR and the Rose Festival are successful at selling sponsorship because they are in large markets. But there are many other large markets that do not have festivals equal in quality to these events, and there are many events in

- Fred Meyer Opening Weekend Celebration featuring the STARsmATM Fireworks Spectacular
- Pepsi Waterfront Village
- KeyBank Starlight Run
- Portland General Electric/SOLV Starlight Parade presented by Southwest Airlines
- George Morlan Plumbing/1190 KEX Festival of Bands
- Southwest Airlines Grand Floral Parade
- Portland Arts Festival presented by Verizon Wireless
- G.I. Joe's 200
- Rose Festival Air Show presented by Intel

**Figure 1-1**

2002 Portland Rose Festival Sponsored Events

Seattle and Portland that sell few sponsorships because they do not measure up.

### **International Celebration**

Started in 1947, Scotland's Edinburgh International Festival is recognized as one of the most important celebrations of the arts in the world.

The Festival brings to Edinburgh some of the best in international theater, music, dance, and opera and presents the arts of Scotland to the world. It is held for three weeks in August each year and comprises more than 180 performances, including 78 different productions and concerts featuring arts from around the world.

This celebration is so big that a recent survey shows that it generates almost \$200 million for the economy of Edinburgh and sustains more than 4000 jobs in Scotland. It has also led to the creation of several other great festivals that are held at the same time

## **SUCCESS STORY**

### **THE SALZBURG MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The Salzburg Festival in Austria is universally regarded as the world's best-known musical and theatrical event. It runs for five weeks each year, starting in late July.

After World War I, several German-speaking cultural figures, including Richard Strauss and Max Reinhardt, developed the idea of an annual summer cultural festival to be held in Salzburg. It debuted on August 22, 1920, and from the beginning the main focus of the festival has been on Mozart, who was born in Salzburg.

The Festival first achieved its great brilliance in the 1930s, when Arturo Toscanini and Bruno Walter were its leading conductors. Vienna State Opera productions of works by Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Verdi directed by these maestros were especially distinguished. When the Nazis took over Austria in 1938, the Festival declined

in significance, as many musicians could not (Walter) or would not (Toscanini) participate. Nevertheless, the Festival continued through 1943.

It was revived as an international event in the summer of 1945, immediately following the Allied victory in Europe, and has been held every summer since then. Close to a quarter of a million people attend the event annually.

Because of its brilliance, sponsors flock to the event in order to be tied with such a magnificent event. Nestlé says it is involved to "establish consumers' trust." Audi sponsors many music festivals, but especially Salzburg. This company says that "cultural involvement expresses the corporate culture of Audi." The company portrays itself as being creative by sponsoring projects that seek to treat new themes and expand dramatic creativity.

in Edinburgh: the infamous Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Military Tattoo, a jazz festival, a film festival, and a book festival.

No destination in the world has so many good events going on at the same time except for the Olympic Games. For this reason, the Festival is an opportunity that sponsors cannot afford to miss. In fact, 28 percent of the Festival's budget is sponsorship revenue.

## **EVENTS IN SMALLER MARKETS**

There are many smaller market festivals that have become extremely good events and are very successful at selling sponsorship.

### **National Cherry Festival**

Perhaps the best example of a good event in a small market is the National Cherry Festival in Traverse City, Michigan. Located in the northern part of the state, the city has only 15,800 people, but there are few events that have as high-quality programming as the Cherry Festival.

It was founded in 1926, and more than 500,000 people visit the Festival over an eight-day period. It features 150 events and creates \$30 million in economic impact for the area. It has a diverse lineup of events that are extremely well run.

Event managers include activities for kids, such as cherry pie eating contests and turtle races, and a large number of events for special populations and seniors. There are events designed to expand the public's awareness of the cherry industry and its products: a Taste of Cherries event, the Cherry Farm Market, the Grand Cherry Buffet, and the Cherry Connection.

The Cherry Festival annually brings in top-name entertainment that few markets the size of Traverse City ever see. Bonnie Raitt, the Beach Boys, Christina Aguilera, Bad Company, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, and many others have played on Festival stages.

However, probably the most impressive thing its managers do is sell sponsorship. They are able to do this because the Cherry Festival is one of the top events in the country, despite the size of its market.

The festival's official sponsors include CenturyTel, Pontiac-GMC, Northwest Airlines, and Pepsi.

There are more than 70 event sponsors, such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Touchstone Energy, Domino's Pizza, Country Fresh Ice Cream, Nabisco, Home Depot, Kentucky Fried Chicken, MetLife, Miller Lite, Budweiser, and Sara Lee Bakery.

All told, each year the Cherry Festival brings in more than \$850,000 in sponsorship.

### **The Sequim Irrigation Festival**

Consider an even smaller market in the state of Washington. Sequim has a population of only 4000 people, but for its annual festival, the Sequim Irrigation Festival, event managers sold \$185,000 in cash sponsorship for their 100th anniversary event in 1996.

They were able to do so because they took their event to a higher level. They staged the largest fireworks show in the region's history. They brought in the Shirelles and Fabian—big names for a city the size of Sequim. The parade featured Macy-style inflatables.

Many sponsors who for years “donated” to the festival at the \$250 level became sponsors at the \$5000 level. In Chapter 7 of this book you will read more on how they were able to do that.



The International Festival of Lent in Maribor, Slovenia, is located in a mid-sized European market and is only 10 years old, but it already is one of the best events in the world—and the best at selling sponsorship. *Photo courtesy of Rich Riski.*

## EVENTS IN MIDSIZED MARKETS

### The International Festival of Lent

Midsized markets produce good events too. Not only is the International Festival of Lent the largest open-air multicultural event in Slovenia, it is also the biggest in Eastern Europe.

## SUCCESS STORY

### THE ANATOMY OF THE BOISE RIVER FESTIVAL

As with the other events cited in this chapter, there is something special about the Boise River Festival. It was started in 1990 by a visionary board of directors consisting of the movers and shakers of Boise.

Before creating the Festival, they knew they first had to have a top-notch staff. They immediately started a nationwide search, which led them to hire Steven Wood Schmader away from Up With People. Schmader led the festival as president and CEO for more than ten years. The International Festivals and Events Association board, however, thought so much of him that they lured him away to become their president and CEO in 2001. Following Schmader, the board selected Beth Knox, who had a tremendous amount of event experience working for SEAFair and One Reel in Seattle.

A visionary board and quality staff meant that in the Festival's very first year it became the signature event of Boise. They produced an event that was not only the best in the state of Idaho, but also became one of the best in the country. When they started parades for the event, they did not choose just any float builder. They picked

Tim Estes of Fiesta Floats in California—one of the top float builders for the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and one of the best in the world. The Festival's fireworks show was produced by one of the industry's top producers, Zambelli Internationale of New Castle, Pennsylvania. It has presented top-notch entertainment each year, including Patty Loveless, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, and John Tesh, which was the lineup for 2001. It has also had great entertainment for children. In fact, the event calls itself "America's Finest Family Festival."

The American Bus Association has named the Boise River Festival as one of the top 100 events in North America, and members of the International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) picked it as one of the top 10 summer festivals in the country. *Travel & Events U.S.A.* chose it as one of the top 40 events in the United States, and *Special Events: Inside and Out* named it as the top regional event in the country.

What does all this have to do with sponsorship? Boise River Festival event managers have created an event that sponsors want to be part of. In fact, 54 percent of their budget is revenue from sponsorship—\$884,000 from 371 corporate partners.

The Festival was not started until 1993, but it features annually approximately 300 performances and 450 different events (classical music; opera; theater; folk and jazz music; jam sessions; rock, pop, and country music; street theater; carnival performances; exhibitions; dance performances; folklore dances; fashion shows; children's workshops; sporting events; and fireworks).

It is held on 18 different stages, with the main venue being the floating stage on the River Drava. Performers such as Ray Charles, Jose Feliciano, James Brown, B. B. King, Paquito D'Rivera, the United Nations Orchestra, and others have all played at the festival.

Despite being in a market of only 140,000 people, the event has a budget of \$1.3 million, with *80 percent of revenues coming from sponsorship!*

### **The Macon Cherry Blossom Festival**

Macon, Georgia, stages its International Cherry Blossom Festival each March, when the city is ablaze in pink. It is successful because it has something no other city has—millions of cherry blossoms.

The Festival is a tribute to William A. Fickling Sr. He, and his family after he passed away, have donated 271,500 cherry trees to the residents of Macon since 1973. In 1982, Carolyn Crayton founded the festival to honor Fickling for his gift and served as the event's executive director until November 2001.

What has evolved is a special event, which featured Jimmy Carter *and* James Brown as grand marshals of its parade one year. There is an abundance of pink at the festival—pink pancakes, ice cream, dental floss, and many other pink items. The whole community gets into the act; the city even has a pink garbage truck and pink buses. Yellow Cab paints its cabs pink, and mailboxes, porches, and automobiles have pink decorations.

“Florists tell us that they are as busy during the Festival as they are during Christmas and Easter,” says Crayton.

And what does all the pink mean? *It helps the Festival to sell \$355,000 worth of sponsorship each year.*

## Sporting Events

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Sporting events that are able to rise above the rest are also the most successful at selling sponsorship.

## **FIESTA BOWL**

Before it became the first bowl game to sign a title sponsor, the Fiesta Bowl was a fledgling but growing event that had a vision to be the best. Beginning as a pre-New Year's game, it was one of the lower-ranked bowls in the first ten years of its existence. In 1982 the day of the game was moved to New Year's Day, then the magic date for college bowl games, and the Bowl immediately began recruiting better teams.

Once it was scheduled for New Year's, it fared well against other televised bowl competition. Because of its success and the promise of future success (it landed national championship games in 1987 and 1989), it was able to sell its title sponsorship to Sunkist Growers of Arizona and California.

In addition to the game, the Bowl has 34 events, sponsored by the likes of Ernst & Young, Insight.com, Nordstrom, Honeywell, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and the current game title sponsor, Tostitos.

## **NATIONAL FINALS RODEO**

When Las Vegas leaders decided to recruit a rodeo to come to town, they went after the best. What followed was a competition that attracts 115 contestants who compete for \$4.6 million in prize money, the largest purse for a U.S. event. Every one of the ten events is a sellout (175,000 tickets sold).

Staged alongside the rodeo are the Bucking Horse and Bull Sale, the World's Champion Banquet, and the Spikes and Spurs Golf Tournament. Because the event is a good one, many sponsors—Dodge, Copenhagen, Jack Daniels, Justin Boots, and Wrangler—have stepped up to the plate.

## The Arts

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Good arts events, like the Houston International Festival, Seattle's Bumbershoot, and the Washington Mutual Coconut Grove Arts Festival in Florida, attract sponsors too.

## **HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

The \$7.4 million Houston International Festival sells \$1 million in sponsorship. Approximately 550,000 attend the event, which features nine Festival stages highlighting regional, national, and in-

ternational performers, including Celtic, country, blues, rock, Tejano, zydeco, and other diverse musical forms.

The Festival also stages the highly successful Art Car Parade, featuring wildly decorated automobiles.

What makes the event unique is that it features a different country every year as its central theme. In 2001, the Festival showcased Ireland, thus including many Irish performing groups as well as a visit by the president of Ireland. For sponsors who do business in Ireland, this was an opportunity to interact with a head of state—a tremendous benefit to them and to the Festival itself.

## **BUMBERSHOOT**

One of the many events produced by One Reel of Seattle, Washington, Bumbershoot has been called the “Mother of All Festivals” by *Rolling Stone* magazine. The entertainment at this performing arts event is diverse—the Black Crowes, Loretta Lynn, David Lee Roth, Taj Mahal, and the Lily Cai Chinese Dance Company have all performed on the event's stages.

Bumbershoot calls itself the “granddaddy of all parties,” and each year the Labor Day event features the wacky, the wonderful, the artful, and the outrageous and sells \$600,000 in sponsorship.

## **WASHINGTON MUTUAL COCONUT GROVE ARTS FESTIVAL**

This event's title, the Washington Mutual Coconut Grove Arts Festival, already tells you that it is successful at selling sponsorship. It is also successful as a visual arts festival, held Presidents' Day weekend in the community of Coconut Grove, located next to Miami.

The Festival began in 1963 as a small clothesline art show featuring a few dozen artists and several thousand browsers. Today it attracts more than 750,000 visitors and generates approximately \$20 million for the local economy. It is consistently ranked as one of the top art shows in the United States by leading publications. The festival features artists adept at working in watercolor, clay, fiber, digital art, glass, sculpture, painting, photography, wood, jewelry, metalwork, mixed media, printmaking, and drawing.

“Washington Mutual's [a new company in Florida when it first became a sponsor, and therefore very interested in strengthening its brand] commitment to the Coconut Grove Arts Festival is the

company's largest ever financial commitment in support of a community event in Florida," said Gwynn Virostek, the company's senior vice president group manager for Florida.

## MUSIC FESTIVALS

Two of the nation's top music festivals also do well in the sponsorship arena.

### SunFest

SunFest of West Palm Beach, Florida, was created in 1982 to extend the Palm Beach County tourism season to the beginning of May. It draws 300,000 people annually and is one of the best-produced festivals in the country. Members of the International Festivals Association selected it as the best event in the state of Florida in 2000.

What separates SunFest from most festivals, besides its exceptional staff and volunteer organization, is its music. Whereas most festivals are content to have one or perhaps two name acts, SunFest had George Clinton, Chuck Berry, Melissa Etheridge, the Black Crowes, Tower of Power, and several other performers during the four-day event in 2001 alone.

### Summerfest

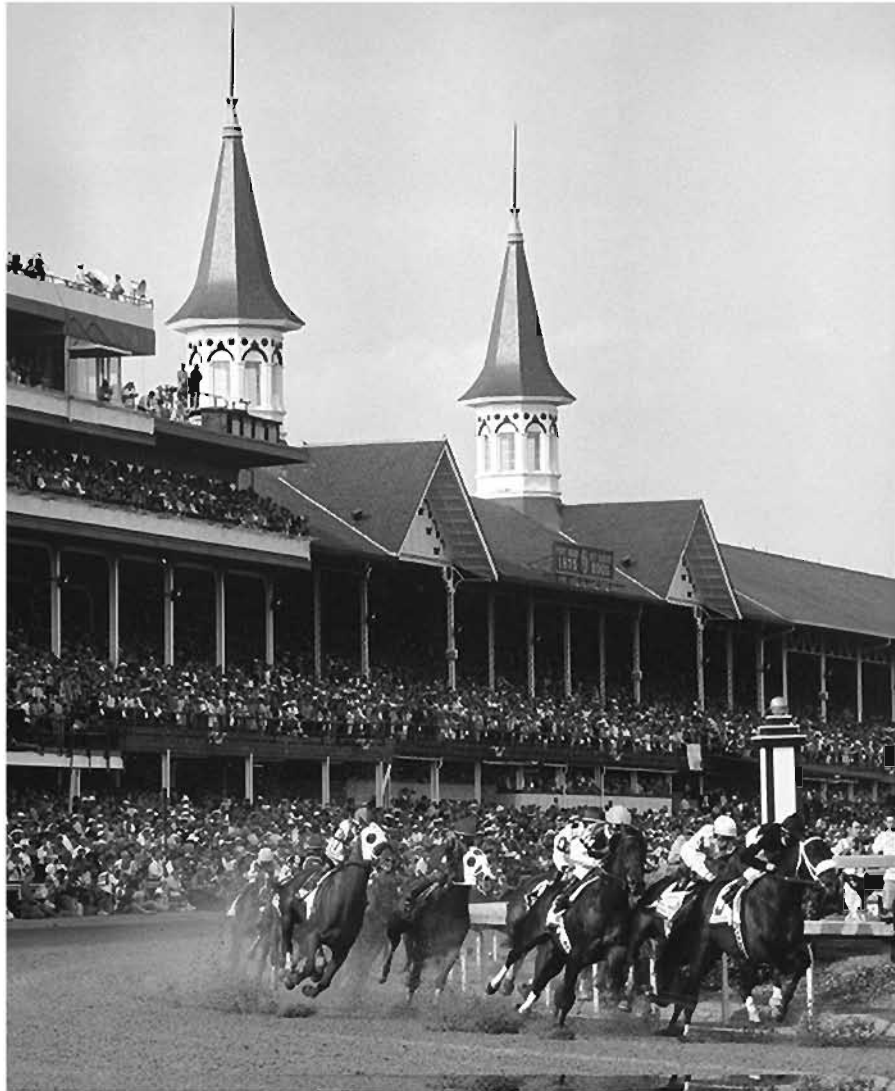
Summerfest is the ultimate music festival—in fact, it was dubbed “the biggest music festival” in the world by the *Guinness Book of World Records* in 1999.

This festival evolved from an idea inspired by networking. After visiting Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany, in 1968, the late former mayor Henry W. Maier dreamed about bringing a festival to reenergize the downtown area of Milwaukee.

What followed was an incredible event that has featured almost every major group. In the year 2001 alone, the festival featured Prince, Paul Simon with Brian Wilson, BoDeans and Joan Osborne, Poison, Destiny's Child, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Jackson Browne, Tim McGraw, and Bon Jovi.

In 1990, Summerfest had Huey Lewis, the Temptations, and Michael Bolton, *all playing at the same time on different stages*. And, of course, along with this array of stars comes an incredible level of sponsorship—approximately \$5.6 million.

“We always look for the predominant event in a market,” says Dennis Boese, corporate manager of fair and festival marketing for the Miller Brewing Company. “If the event is featured in the six



The spires of Churchill Downs have inspired two outstanding events that conclude with the Kentucky Derby horse race each year on the first Saturday in May. The first is the Derby itself, while the second is the Kentucky Derby Festival, a series of events that lead up to the U.S.'s most famous horse race. The Derby Festival was one of the forerunners in the selling of sponsorship in the festival world. *Photo courtesy of Churchill Downs Incorporated.*

o'clock news, and in the hearts and minds of everyone all day long, that's where we want to be. That's why we're involved in events like Summerfest and the Kentucky Derby Festival."

## **THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL**

The Kentucky Derby Festival organization is entirely separate from the Kentucky Derby horse race, which is run by Churchill Downs. In fact, the Festival is so good, it would still exist if the Derby ceased to operate.

The Festival has many very large events (most festivals are lucky to have one): the Great Steamboat Race, the Pegasus Parade, and the largest annual U.S. fireworks show, Thunder over Louisville.

## Sponsorship Selling

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The Indy 500 Festival is similar to the Kentucky Derby in that it surrounds another celebrated event—in this case, the Indianapolis 500 automobile race. Like the Derby, it would continue even if there were no car race. This festival, too, has many large events. The Derby and Indy 500 festivals are both adept at selling sponsorship; in fact, the Derby Festival set the standard for sponsorship selling in the early 1980s under the leadership of the late CEO Dan Mangeot and is continuing this trend with current CEO Mike Berry.

All the events that are chronicled in this chapter—and many others that are too numerous to mention in this book—have one thing in common: They are so good that sponsors feel that they have to be a part of them. *So set a goal to make your event the very best!*

Yet it must be said that sponsorship is not for everyone. Mardi Gras in New Orleans does not have corporate sponsorship in the traditional sense. The event has more than 50 parades, all run by Krewe—clubs supported by individual members' dues. It is the dues that provide the funds to build Mardi Gras floats and to purchase beads.

Although membership in these clubs offers great opportunities for business networking (see Chapter 5 on benefits), it does not constitute sponsorship (see definitions at the beginning of this chapter).

Individuals who are members of Krewes receive benefits, but the sponsorship goals of their companies, besides the business-to-business opportunities, do not come into play. Brands are not strengthened, there is no sponsor visibility, and there is no return “for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with [the] property.”

There are also the cases of Stanford University and the University of California. The former cut back on sponsorship sold by its athletic department, and the latter also questioned its athletic department’s sale of corporate sponsorship, concerned that it would lead to “excessive corporate entanglement.”

Volker Kirchberg, in *Arts and Business*, writes that many German companies seek to maintain a low profile in arts sponsorship. “They do not ask for big plaques at restored buildings or an ostentatious display at a performing arts event (e.g., naming the event after the sponsor or displaying the name of the sponsor on stage),” says Kirchberg.

## Choosing to Go Noncommercial

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There have also been instances in which successful events elected to go noncommercial after selling sponsorship for many years, and the decision backfired on them.

In October 2001, CNN reported that the use of Adolf Hitler’s image to advertise the Adelaide Arts Festival, Australia’s most prestigious arts festival, triggered a \$500,000 snub from Telstra, the country’s largest telecommunications company.

A black-and-white television commercial showed the German World War II dictator behind a camera, apparently taking a photograph, then with his head superimposed on the body of the painter Pablo Picasso, and again sitting in a film director’s chair.

A voice said, “In 1908, Adolf Hitler was turned down by Vienna’s Academy of Fine Arts. If only his artistic side had been embraced and nurtured, who knows what he might have put his energies into? The arts do make a difference, as you are about to find out.”

Telstra pulled its sponsorship of more than \$500,000 when organizers hesitated to cancel the Hitler advertisements immedi-

ately. Even after the commercials were canned, the telco company still elected not to be involved with the event.

“Telstra is not prepared to be associated in any way with an organization using this person’s name or image to obtain publicity for itself,” a spokesman said.

Telstra had been a festival naming-rights sponsor for many years, until festival organizers decided that year on a deliberately anticommmercial approach. “It appears they have succeeded beyond expectations,” CNN reported.

The festival, regarded as Australia’s finest, had already been cut by almost half following a decline in international tourism since the September 11 terrorist attack, and the demise of the country’s second carrier, Ansett Airlines.

Despite the rare cases cited here, sponsorship is now sold by almost every significant event, as well as by several other entities. Needless to say, sponsorship is here to stay.

Now that you have determined that you are going to have an outstanding event, you are ready to move on to the nitty-gritty of sponsorship sales. That is what the remaining 14 chapters of this book are about.

## The Keys to Creating a Strong Event

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To create a sponsor-wowing event, make sure you:

- Present the dominant event in your community, or at least the best in your category (arts festival, music event, etc.).
- Appear on the six o’clock news often.
- Position the event in the hearts and minds of a good portion of your community.
- Do something that others cannot—present something special about your community (like the Gilroy Garlic Festival—90 percent of the garlic in the United States is processed in Gilroy).
- Develop an event that is held in high regard, and that has value.
- Change your event (keep the good things you do, but make them better and add to your program).
- Always strive to take your event to the next level each year.

- Act visionary.
- Research and adopt ideas from other events, and adapt them to your own situation.
- Make your event something that sponsors cannot stay away from.

### Sponsorship Activities

1. Read Dr. Joe Goldblatt's book, *Special Events: Twenty-first Century Global Event Management*, especially Chapter 2, "The Five Critical Stages for All Successful Events."
2. Visit the following Web sites to learn more about the top events mentioned in this chapter.
  - Portland Rose Festival—[www.rosefestival.org](http://www.rosefestival.org)
  - SEAFAIR—[www.seafair.com](http://www.seafair.com)
  - Salzburg Music Festival—[www.salzburgfestival.com](http://www.salzburgfestival.com)
  - Edinburg International Festival—[www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk)
  - National Cherry Festival—[www.cherryfestival.org](http://www.cherryfestival.org)
  - Sequim Irrigation Festival—[www.irrigationfestival.com](http://www.irrigationfestival.com)
  - International Festival Lent—[www.lent.slovenia.net](http://www.lent.slovenia.net)
  - Macon International Cherry Blossom Festival—[www.cherry-blossom.com](http://www.cherry-blossom.com)
  - Fiesta Bowl—[www.tostitosfiestabowl.org](http://www.tostitosfiestabowl.org)
  - National Finals Rodeo—[www.lasvegasevents.com](http://www.lasvegasevents.com)
  - Houston International Festival—[www.hif.org](http://www.hif.org)
  - Bumbershoot—[www.onereel.com](http://www.onereel.com)
  - Washington Mutual Coconut Grove Festival—[www.coconut-groveartsfest.com](http://www.coconut-groveartsfest.com)
  - SunFest—[www.sunfest.org](http://www.sunfest.org)
  - Summerfest—[www.summerfest.com](http://www.summerfest.com)
  - Kentucky Derby Festival—[www.kdf.org](http://www.kdf.org)
  - Churchill Downs—[www.kentuckyderby.com](http://www.kentuckyderby.com)
  - Mardi Gras—[www.kernstudios.com](http://www.kernstudios.com)
  - Boise River Festival—[www.boiseriverfestival.org](http://www.boiseriverfestival.org)
3. Read Steven Wood Schmader and Robert Jackson's book, *Special Events: Inside and Out*, especially Chapter 4, "A Matter of Quality."
4. For a European perspective, read Rosanne Martorella's book, *Arts and Business: An International Perspective on Sponsorship*.
5. Using the events in this chapter, make a list of the common characteristics of successful events.

### **Sponsorship Tool Kit**

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