



CHARITIES ~ EVERYONE WINS

By Lori Colborne

Offering your financial support or goods/services to charities is an excellent way to gain exposure and to give back to the community at the same time. Start by writing a list of charity groups or organizations that reflect your values and perhaps even your target market. Gather information about their events and the fundraisers they are planning. Get as many details as possible.

I recommend you create a form that includes the following details –

Sponsorship Form

- Name of group/organization
- Mission/philosophy
- Number of Board Members
- Contact information
- Event & Date
- Location
- Participants
- Invitees
- Activities
- Ticket Prices

Sponsorship Marketing Opportunities

- Written Recognition Programs
- Posters, Flyers
- Verbal Announcements
- Promotion in Newspapers
- Auction
- Brochure Handouts of Sponsors Material
- Gift Bags
- Fashion Show
- Display Table for Sponsors
- Sponsor's Banner Display
- Miscellaneous

This form is also ideal to give to charities that are soliciting your support. I recommend you appoint a committee that reviews all requests and opportunities once every month. The charities should fill out your form so the committee can make informed decisions. Here is a script you may want to use when getting back to a charity after the committee has met. "Our committee has met and reviewed all of the requests we received this month. There are so many worthwhile organizations such as yours and we are honoured to be a part of as many events as possible. The committee has decided we will provide you with ____." Always give **something**, even if it is minor. Try not to decline the charity. If the charity has gone through the effort to complete and submit the form, it is worth something, even if it is your company's promotional products.

The rules should remain the same for all charities. If a charity approaches you the day before they need an answer, and your committee does not sit for two weeks, their lack of planning is not your problem. Simply say “I am so sorry you missed our committee’s deadline to make a decision for this event. Please keep us in mind for next year. Remember our committee sits on the first of every month.” Using the ‘committee’ makes the decision less personal for the business owner/manager and reduces the pressure of giving too much or giving to organizations that are not a good fit.

It is appropriate to ask for a letter of reference from a charity if you have provided goods or services utilized by the group. If you have given a donation, or provided a door prize or auction item, request a letter recognizing your support of the charity. These letters should be proudly displayed in your *Brag Book* or prominently displayed in your place of business.

So many businesses have been blessed in this lucrative Alberta economy, it is only right that we share.

*Written by **Lori Colborne, President - LSL Marketing Consultants***

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