



## SPONSORSHIP BEST PRACTICES

These best practices serve as a guide for Clubs and SIGs as they build out their sponsorship strategy. Please note, when engaging in sponsorship activities, Clubs and SIGs need abide by the [HAA Sponsorship Guidelines](#).

### Define Sponsorship Objectives

- Identify which sponsorship types are needed, amount, and what they are needed for:
  - Cash (e.g., funding, operational, specific programs/initiatives)
    - Use sponsorships strategically to cover fixed operational costs (i.e., FTE)
  - In-kind (e.g., space, catering, source of speakers)
- Per the HAA SIG Policy, the amount of the SIG sponsorship must not exceed the greater of (1) the expenses for the particular event, or (2) the SIG's annual operating expenses. This policy does not apply to Clubs.

### Cash Contributions

- Create sponsorship packages:
  - Offer flexible packages, including one-year or multi-year options to ensure stability
  - Consider tiered packages with clear benefits for each level
  - Offer customization options to fit the objectives, preferences and budget constraints of a particular sponsor
- Include various promotional elements in sponsorship packages:
  - Website placement of sponsor logos or banners
  - Inclusion of sponsor logos in marketing materials such as newsletters, social media posts, and event flyers
  - Promotion of sponsors at events (e.g., sponsor table, signage, acknowledge/thank sponsors publicly at events)
  - Opportunities for sponsors to advertise job openings or career opportunities
  - Offer speaking engagements or panel participation opportunities at events
  - Refer to the *Harvard Trademark Sponsor Policy* section for information on abiding by sponsor policy
- Aggregate small contributions - local businesses seek exposure to the Club or SIG's local audience but are more likely to give small monetary donations
- Implement creative fundraising campaigns such as a holiday campaign and individual contributions from Club and SIG members

## **In-Kind Donations**

- Make it easy for sponsors – in-kind services simplify the process for companies to provide support
- without the red tape of cutting checks
- Request support for a variety of event needs (e.g., space, parking, food, alcohol, registration materials)
- Cover your costs – in-kind services cover essential event costs to help achieve breakeven or reduce overall expenses
- Ask for non-financial contributions, such as providing space for an event. This cuts the costs of running local events and frees up the revenue from ticket sales
- Encourage repeat sponsors to cover a logistical service for ongoing events or an event series

## **Single Large-Scale Event**

- Host an annual flagship event such as a conference, dinner, or keynote speaker event
- Select speakers with substantial networks to attract both sponsors and attendance
- Target corporate departments with budgets allocated for large events (note: recruiting departments often have the budget to sponsor large events)
- Offer dinner tables tiers for sponsors to purchase
- Offer tiered dinner table packages for sponsors to purchase

## **Promote Sponsor Visibility**

- Regardless of cash or in-kind services, ensure sponsors receive recognition through multiple channels, including event and promotional materials as listed under “Cash Contributions”
- Acknowledge sponsors publicly during events, highlighting their contributions and support
- Host an event for a sponsor where they can help co-create the content
- Provide opportunities for sponsors to interact directly with alumni and attendees during events

## **Outreach**

- Decide who reaches out to potential sponsors
  - Dedicate a volunteer leader or committee specifically to engage with sponsors and manage relationships
  - Enlist the help of all Board Members, leveraging their own personal networks, professional relationships and places of work
  - Involve highly engaged Club and SIG members who can also champion the solicitation with their place of work and personal networks
- SIGs are encouraged to look into potential sponsors whose mission aligns with or has a mutual interest in that of the SIG

## Highlight Value Proposition

- Emphasize the vision of the alumni network and brand affiliation to attract sponsors
- Inspire companies to be a part of Club or SIG's achievement and community impact
- Provide testimonials from previous sponsors to illustrate successful partnerships
- Align sponsor interests with specific activities or initiatives within the Club or SIG

## Relationship Management

- Approach sponsorship engagement as a long-term relationship
- Build trust - close long-lasting relationships between a volunteer leader or senior member and a sponsor increases repeat donations
- Maintain regular communication to keep sponsors informed about the organization's activities, achievements, and impact
- Provide sponsors with timely updates on event and promotional opportunities, and attendee engagement
- Share aggregate information on membership, event attendance, and post-event feedback. Do not share individual information. Refer to the *Data Integrity Policy* section for more information.
- Solicit feedback from sponsors to continuously improve sponsorship offerings and benefits
- Prepare a contract to establish basic terms
- Explore opportunities for multi-year partnerships or renewals

## Data Integrity Policy

- Do not share an event's registration list or any Club or SIG community contact information with a sponsor. Only aggregate data can be shared (e.g., number of HBS, HLS, HKS, College members).
- Refer to the [HAA Clubs and SIGs Operating Agreement](#) section on *Data Privacy and Protection* for more information

## Harvard Trademark Policy

- Ensure compliance with the [HAA Trademark Policy](#) across all activities
- Reach out to the [Harvard Trademark Program](#) on questions concerning corporate sponsorship
- Maintain that publications or print listings of sponsors are not done in a way that suggests affiliation with or endorsement of the sponsor or its products or services by the University or its units
- No sponsor or third party may use the Harvard name or insignia or those of any of Harvard schools or units ("Harvard University Trademarks") without express written permission from the Harvard Trademark Program
- Include disclaimer language (to the effect that Harvard does not endorse products or services) on all websites that include corporate names, logos, etc. No advertising text or banner ads are allowed. Sample text: "The views expressed during the event are solely those of the speaker and participating audience and do not imply endorsement by the Harvard Club of \_\_\_\_\_ and Harvard University."

- Request the expressed written permission by the Harvard Trademark Program for the use of any Harvard University Trademarks on any non-Harvard web page, or in any marketing or promotional materials for such a web page