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The Sponsorship Potential of Mission-Based Assets at Cultural Institutions



A cultural institution's programs, educational initiatives and community relationships can give brands compelling reasons to become sponsors.

A conservation program may help a company engage people who share its environmental priorities. An arts education initiative may connect a brand with local families and educators. These opportunities draw on the institution's mission and the work it already delivers.

For institutions seeking additional revenue, that work deserves closer consideration. Its sponsorship potential depends on the audiences it reaches, the experiences it offers and the sponsor objectives it can support. Understanding those connections helps institutions develop partnerships that contribute to their mission and deliver value for a brand.

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Identify the Opportunity

Developing new sponsorship opportunities doesn't necessarily mean creating something new. Instead, institutions can look at existing initiatives, programs and relationships that could create value for a strategic partner. These might include:

- **Mission-driven initiatives**, such as wildlife conservation, scientific research, arts education, historical preservation and cultural programs
- **Educational opportunities**, such as school partnerships, workshops, public lectures, digital learning and content
- **Programming and experiences**, such as exhibitions, performances, seasonal events, behind-the-scenes experiences and special programs
- **Community engagement,** such as outreach programs, local partnerships, accessibility programs and activities that connect institutions with diverse audiences
- **Digital and off-site reach**, including online educational resources, traveling exhibits, off-site community programming and initiatives delivered in partnership with other organizations



Nicor Gas's partnership with Brookfield Zoo shows how conservation and visitor education can create sponsorship opportunities. In 2024, the partnership contributed to planting 11 trees and 215 pollinator plants to enhance habitats and promote biodiversity. It also includes Mission: Zoo-Possible, a scavenger hunt that teaches visitors about energy conservation. These activities connect Nicor Gas's sustainability commitments with the zoo's conservation work and visitor experience.

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BRAND SPONSORSHIP STRATEGY FOR LEADING BRANDS

We will make a difference in your business. Our sponsorship strategy begins with a consultation to tailor a solution to your goals.

Find the Right Commercial Fit

Once an institution has identified a promising opportunity, the next step is connecting it to a potential sponsor whose goals align with the work.

Bloomberg's partnership with The Metropolitan Opera illustrates how a brand can support an institution's work while helping it reach wider audiences. Support for The Met: Live in HD brings live opera performances to movie theaters worldwide, extending access beyond the Opera's New York venue. Bloomberg Philanthropies has also supported the Opera's digital presence through its Digital Accelerator for Arts and Culture.

Developing a partnership around these opportunities requires understanding the prospective sponsor's objectives. Institutions should discuss the audiences a brand wants to reach, the outcomes it hopes to achieve and how those priorities align with the institution's work. Those conversations help determine which benefits belong in the package and how success will be measured.

DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP AROUND THESE OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING THE PROSPECTIVE SPONSOR'S OBJECTIVES.

Understand what makes an asset valuable

An educational program or conservation initiative may be central to an institution's mission, but its value to a sponsor depends on what the partnership can help that brand accomplish. The audience, opportunities for engagement and promotional support all contribute to its commercial potential.

JPMorgan Chase's expanded partnership with Lincoln Center supports cultural experiences and community engagement through free and Choose-What-You-Pay programming across the campus. It also includes sponsorship of the Lincoln Center Night Market and Summer for the City, an annual festival featuring free performances, music, dance and community experiences. The range of programming provides multiple settings for connecting with audiences, illustrating why a sponsorship assessment should consider the experiences and engagement opportunities a partnership offers.



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When assessing the sponsorship potential of a mission-based asset, institutions should consider:

- **Audience relevance and reach:** Who does the program reach, and how closely does that audience align with the sponsor's priorities? Consider participants as well as people reached through institutional communications, digital content and community outreach. A larger audience does not automatically make an opportunity more valuable. A smaller program may offer closer engagement with the people a sponsor wants to reach.
- **Engagement opportunities:** How could the sponsor interact with those audiences? Hands-on activities, educational resources, employee participation and other experiences can give a brand a relevant role in the program.
- **Promotional support:** How will the institution build awareness of the program and its partner? Email, social media, public relations and on-site communications can extend the partnership's reach and help audiences understand the sponsor's involvement.
- **Alignment with brand objectives:** What could the partnership help the sponsor achieve, and how would success be measured? The answer should reflect specific priorities, such as engaging local families, increasing brand awareness or encouraging employee participation.

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Turn Assets Into Commercial Opportunities

IEG helps cultural institutions assess mission-based sponsorship potential and develop a commercial strategy.

Its analysis considers the institution's mission, audiences and existing commitments, using market intelligence to identify relevant categories and prospective sponsors.

Conversations with those prospects establish their objectives before the institution defines the package. A single entitlement partner can lead the association with a program, supported by benefits across the organization selected to meet the sponsor's goals. The package must also respect the institutions's mission, delivery capabilities and audience experience.

IEG's Valuation Next methodology assesses sponsorship assets, use of likeness and exclusivity within the context of the institution, its market and the proposed opportunity. That assessment provides a basis for pricing and negotiation specific to the partnership.

Build partnerships around your mission

IEG helps cultural institutions frame, structure and value mission-based sponsorship opportunities so they can go to market effectively.Contact IEG to discuss the sponsorship potential of your institution's programs and initiatives.



IEG is the leading authority in sponsorship consulting, trusted by brands and rights holders alike. For nearly four decades, IEG has provided the valuation, strategy, and market intelligence that allow organizations to enter, optimize, and exit sponsorship relationships with confidence.

To learn more about how IEG can support your upcoming partnerships:
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