



Tool Kit - Fundraising

Designing Sponsorship Opportunities

Learn to put a dollar value on the assets you brainstormed earlier, and conduct the business of fundraising like a professional!

As a fundraiser, you'll be approaching several, if not dozens, of businesses and asking for help. So play fair! It's important to develop a consistent and fair system of sponsorship so that everyone who comes on board will feel they're getting their money's worth. Remember that this is a very public project, and each business will be aware of the others' involvement. Don't make any promises you can't keep, and don't play favorites! Here are a couple of ways to act like a true business professional:

Sponsorship Levels

The idea of sponsorship levels is simple: businesses donate one of three or four set amounts, and in return they receive a set package of benefits (usually publicity). The more they give, the more they get! Have you ever seen an event program listing "silver," "gold," and "platinum" donors? That's exactly what we're talking about.

Here's how to do it:

1. Pull out your assets list. Try to assign a rough dollar value to each asset. For instance, how much does a radio ad cost? If your project can mention a sponsor's name on air, perhaps during a live Build Day show, that's worth at least as much as a paid advertisement. Often, it's worth more, because it's more genuine. If you're not sure of a particular asset's worth, ask any business owner!
2. Next, decide how many levels of sponsorship you want. We usually suggest having three or four. By having a range of sponsorship levels, you open opportunities to businesses both large and small.
3. Now, select a menu of project assets for each sponsorship level. The highest level of giving should receive all the benefits available. The next step down might get half to three-quarters of those benefits, while a third level down might receive one-third to one-half the total benefits.
4. Add up the estimated value of each level's assets. After you calculate the price tag for the package, you can inflate the total price as much as you want – after all, this is a great community cause and there are always those intangible benefits!
5. (Optional) Make some inquiries among local businesses and non-profit organizations to find out what the standard level of giving is, and what donors usually expect for their money. You may find that you're asking for too little!
6. Finally, create a fun name for each sponsorship level – something that's playful and reflects the different degrees of involvement.

The key is to assign a set donation to each sponsorship level and stick to it. Also, make sure you can deliver on the promised benefits. Besides being fair and consistent, sponsorship levels offer a neat psychological trick: people will donate more if they're asked for a specific amount than if they're asked for "whatever they can afford"!

“Selling” Your PlaySpace

If KaBOOM! has a fundraising secret weapon, this is it. Our community partners have raised more money by asking people to “buy” a piece of the playspace than by any other single fundraiser, and it’s easy!

Here’s how to do it:

1. Divide your playground into logical pieces: a slide, a climbing wall, an overhead climber, a staircase, and so on. Be creative: what else do you need to build the playground? You need safety surfacing and border timbers, but also wrenches, bolts, and cement.
2. Now, assign a dollar value to each piece of the playground. Here’s the key: each piece’s “value” to the community and to a potential sponsor is far greater than its actual price tag. Don’t sell your playground short! A \$700 slide can be “sold” to a sponsor for at least \$1,000-\$1,500. After all, the sponsor’s donation needs to support not only the purchase of the piece itself, but also its installation, its maintenance, and the months of work behind your project.
3. Make sure you’re offering the full range of giving opportunities: from a \$10 box of bolts or a \$25 cubic yard of surfacing all the way up to that \$2,000 climbing wall. You can involve individuals and families as well as businesses!
4. Decide how you’ll recognize sponsors and make them feel integrated into the project. The playspace “sale” might be combined with your sponsorship levels, or you might put up a permanent plaque with the names of the “buyers.” Be creative: maybe people will “adopt” their playground piece and receive a packet with the piece’s photo, description, and updates on how it’s being used. This can come in handy down the road when your playground needs maintenance!

Here are some variations on the same theme:

- **Buy a Brick**
Help pave the way to a playground! Sell commemorative bricks in your community and then use them to build a walkway, a patio, or a low wall near the playground. It’s a special way for people to remember a loved one while contributing to a great cause. Find a good brick-supply company who will work with you on a complete sales strategy: some offer mini-paperweight bricks for your desk!
- **Buy a Picket**
Same idea, but with a picket fence! If your playground’s neighbors and your planning committee are game, let people decorate their plank however they choose – it can make for a colorful addition to your park! A more tasteful option would have engraved pickets ... still a great fundraiser.
- **Buy a Handprint**
If you’ve got a blank wall near the playspace, this can be a fun and special fundraiser for young families. By buying handprint privileges, parents can immortalize their little ones as part of a colorful community mural. Make the painting day a celebration!
- **Playspace Shares**
Does your community love investing? Playspaces offer a huge return on your money! Playspace “shareholders” can be recognized with an annual shareholders’ meeting, a stock report on all the great outcomes of the playspace’s work.

- **Playspace Insurance**

Why not add play insurance to the list of policies we buy every year to protect our health, our possessions, and our life? Purchasing one-time or even annual “playspace insurance” will help cover start-up and maintenance costs. Make up a mock solicitation letter with playful versions of the policy’s deductible, what’s covered, and how to make a claim.

All right, are you feeling confident? You can do it! If you’re ready to make that big leap and put yourself out there, move onto [developing your approach](#).

Find out what others are thinking about in terms of funding and building playspaces in our Forums at www.kaboom.org/forums!