

IABC Houston: Sponsorships and/or Partnerships

Division 2: Medium Chapters

Introduction

IABC Houston is part of a global network of more than 10,000 communications professionals in 70-plus countries. With approximately 150 members, and a broader network with more than 2,200 influential Houston-based communicators, our members are committed to improving personal and professional growth as well as organizational effectiveness through strategic communications.

IABC Houston members include public relations, marketing, and communication professionals from Fortune 500 companies, small businesses, communications agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and freelance writers and consultants. All have a commitment to continuing professional development and a desire to network with other communicators.

For our chapter to have sustainable financial success, we view partnerships as relationships that must be beneficial for both our members and sponsoring organizations – and they must meet our overall chapter goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

IABC Houston's primary goal is to elevate the communications profession in Houston by offering strategic value, and professional development opportunities to our members and prospective members.

To accomplish our goal, our chapter focused on the partnership objectives below:

- **Create a partnership guide:** Our chapter website had contained generalized sponsorship opportunities for luncheons but failed to identify clear opportunities and value for partnerships with IABC Houston. Additionally, we didn't have a benefits guide that we could share with prospective partners at events, online or via email.
- **Retain existing chapter partnerships:** Our primary source for chapter partnerships comes from our annual bronze quill awards gala. With a mix of paid and in-kind partners, the financial support allows us to offset the cost of the annual event.
- **Increase sponsorship revenue by 15 percent:** By increasing partner revenue our chapter can afford to: (1) allocate funds for event speaker fees; (2) provide food at networking mixers; (3) reduce fees for unique chapter events; and (4) provide more financial support for board members to attend IABC leadership events (Southern Region, LI, World Conference, etc.)
- **Identify a year-long partner:** For IABC Houston, the gala has been the only source of partnership revenue for more than five years. We wanted to identify a year-long partner so that long-term value could be added to our chapter.

- **Identify and engage in-kind partners:** By leveraging external in-kind partners, our chapter is able to utilize their creative expertise to market and grow our chapter.

Budget

Outside of board volunteer time, our chapter did not allocate a budget for securing sponsorships or partnerships.

Implementation

IABC Houston lacked marketing collateral and an in-depth sponsorship guide that we could provide to local businesses. The IABC Houston board created a partnership brochure (attached) that outlined multiple opportunities at various price points that ranged from a podcast sponsorship to an annual diamond partner.

Then, a sponsorship committee was formed ahead of the annual Bronze Quill Awards — held in June 2019. The committee was tasked with retaining 2018 sponsors and identifying new corporate opportunities — both paid and in-kind — for the 2019 gala.

After facing unexpected financial issues to begin 2019 (having a tax issue with Fidelity resulting in more than \$10K being tied up; and having to create a new awards entry system), the IABC Houston board understood the need for a year-long partner that could help provide financial stability. The board recommended targeting a local PR agency, developed a strategic pitch note, and requested in-person meetings with their corporate leadership and our board president.

To maintain relationships, members of the IABC Houston board were asked to personally invite sponsor organizations to events, lunches, and even industry-wide networking opportunities.

Results and Measurement

As of October 2019, IABC Houston had generated \$21,500 in sponsorship revenue since the beginning of the year -- an increase of \$17,500 from 2018. Our board, chapter members, and sponsors, have been thrilled with the results.

- **Create a partnership guide:** *Exceeded*
 - Two brochures were created -- one specifically for Bronze Quill partnerships, and one for general chapter partnerships. The feedback from sponsors has been outstanding as our brochures clearly outline partnership benefits and expectations.
- **Retain existing chapter partnerships:** *Met Expectations*
 - For the 2019 Awards Gala, we retained three paid sponsors and one in-kind sponsor from the 2018 Gala.
- **Increase sponsorship revenue by 15 percent:** *Exceeded*
 - With only \$4,000 in sponsorship revenue in 2018, there was room for improvement. The chapter set a modest goal of a 15 percent increase in revenue for 2019 and blew past those expectations with more than a 5X return.



- **Identify a year-long partner:** Exceeded
 - While we didn't set a monetary goal for a year-long partnership, IABC Houston secured a diamond-level partner with Pierpont Communications. This was at a rate of \$12,500 per year. See attached press release for more information.
- **Identify and engage in-kind partners:** Met Expectations
 - IABC Houston secured three in-kind partners for our annual Bronze Quill Gala, and one year-long partner. For the Gala, The Fifth Business provided all graphic and digital support at an approximate value of \$5000; Sylvester Garza Productions captured photos at the Gala at an approximate value of \$1500; and CenterPoint Energy donated floral arrangements at an approximate value of \$1500. Content Co-Op is onboard to provide photos and video of IABC Houston events at a year-long value of \$4500. All told, in-kind partnerships have given IABC Houston an estimated value of \$12,500.

Work Samples (1-3)

- Sponsorship Guide
- Pierpont Press Release
- Sample Graphic from The Fifth Business