



Extend a Grant-Funded Program with Corporate Dollars

One of the best ways to gain corporate support is through an existing program.

By Karen Eber Davis

What's the key to obtaining corporate support for your work? "It's all about the leverage," says Pam Nabors, describing how Capital Workforce Partners used corporate dollars to fund services for more than 500 summer youth. Each youth was supported by a business scholarship of \$1,000 to \$1,600. In turn, Capital Workforce transformed this investment into \$7,000 of services.

“It's all about the leverage.”

helping them? Are these people potential customers of the business? Does the company want to improve its relationships with the local community? Jot down a list of why support might be both logical and emotionally satisfying for a corporate

partner. These ideas, when tidied up and verified, will become the reasons why you request corporate funds.

How and Why It Works


- **The requested funding helps local youth and supports a shared vision** of a better life in the community where the corporation conducts business.
- **The nonprofit sought funding for a proven summer program.** The existing program was funded by governments and foundations.
- **Since the program infrastructure already existed, 100% of the donated dollars** went to youth who wouldn't otherwise be served.
- **Corporations weren't asked to solve all the community's challenges.** Each sponsorship required a small investment to help one youth.
- **In return for their investments, corporations received immediate leverage** and long-branding support.

Four Steps to Corporate Dollars

1. Identify a Need. Design a Why. From your most successful program, identify the people you want to help but can't because of limited money. Why might corporate executives care about

2. Determine Cost. What does it cost to provide the service? How much for direct service? Program oversight? How about overhead: audits and the like? How will the cost change if you add more people? Total the costs and divide this by the number of participants. Round up to the nearest hundred. This is the amount to request per person.

3. Calculate Leverage. What else does it take to create results? Determine the value of all the in-kind resources your nonprofit brings to customers. Does a guest speaker teach them to write resumes? Do you refer people to counseling services? Do you provide coaching? Books? Estimate the value for all such resources. Again, divide your total by the number of participants and round to the nearest hundred. This is your leverage, the amount of resource each corporate gift creates.

4. Make It Irresistible. Explore what else, above and beyond this existing leverage, you can provide to corporate partners. Will a press release offer media coverage? Will a celebration draw community stakeholders and a chance to publicly thank the corporations? Will your customers write thank-you notes that corporations can post on their brag walls and in their media? Will you provide a story several months later for a newsletter — to extend the benefits of supporting your customers over time? Create even more leverage before you request corporate funding to make your offer irresistible. 

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