

The sponsorship industry within Canada has increased tremendously since the early 1960's. As the level of marketing sophistication grew during the 1970's and 1980's - most notably in professional sport - so, too, did corporate sponsorship of these activities. Canada has witnessed a level of sponsorship sophistication unparalleled in other developed countries except the United States. This growth is in part because **the CORPORATE COMMUNITY VIEWS SPONSORSHIP AS A VIABLE MARKETING TOOL TO MEET SPECIFIC BUSINESS OBJECTIVES.**

Sponsorship today is more correctly termed Event Marketing which is the process which *integrates* a range of marketing elements around a central event sponsorship or lifestyle themed activity. This is vastly different from the interpretation of sponsorship as something a corporation is doing when they spend \$x dollars on an activity in return for some tickets, a reception or mention in the programming. This form of "sponsorship" is in reality a *donation* or grant and is in fact not sponsorship at all.

This distinction between "sponsorship" as a donation/grant and the *leveraging of the sponsorship through the process of event marketing* is critical to understanding the "Why" and "How" of corporate sponsorship activity. *Event marketing* - the most sophisticated form of sponsorship - *is a tool used to build business.* Corporations become involved in sponsorship because it is a unique and concrete method of building business that can be measured against stated objectives. Funding for sponsorship comes from a marketing budget *not* a donations budget which is a one time "grant".

Within as short a time frame as the last decade, even the nature of event marketing itself has evolved. Recent trends have seen a shift from being used as a tool for "differentiating a product or service from the competition" or as a means to provide a "unique experience" to special guests, sales/trade to a means to develop a "partnership" relationship with another company or to create "ownership" of an event by a company/brand or service. Consistent throughout, however, is the ability of event or sponsorship marketing to build business via sales or image related tactics in a cost effective manner.

The challenge before EAICR clients is to tap the funding of the private sector community and channel it into the development of those specific cultural products which will best promote the Canadian identity abroad. Not only can willing corporations assist through funding and support in the development and promotion abroad of our cultural products, but, so too can this relationship serve to advance and enhance foreign policy objectives of trade promotion goals. With this in mind, EAICR has requested the services of Christopher Lang and Associates, the leading Canadian event marketing/sponsorship consultant in Canada with over 25 years experience in