Sponsorship is believed to be the fastest growing form of marketing in the U.S. and in Canada It is still very much in its infancy. With this in mind, you can find unlimited opportunities to broaden marketing advantage by increasing your credibility, image, and prestige in sponsoring events attracting your target market.

Some trade show promotional opportunities include sponsorship of the press room, an international lounge, a speaker or VIP room, an awards reception, educational programs, banners, badge holders, audiovisual equipment, display computers, tote bags, shuttle buses, napkins and drink cups.

Sponsorship is the financial or in-kind support of an activity, used primarily to reach specified business goals. "Sponsorship should not be confused with advertising. Advertising is considered a quantitative medium, whereas sponsorship is considered a qualitative medium. It promotes a company in association with the individual, group or organization being sponsored. In other words, there should be a reciprocal benefit."

A large number of events these days use sponsorship support to offer more exciting programs and to help defray rising costs. Sponsorship allows you to reach specifically markets without any waste. In addition, it is a powerful complement to other marketing programs, in addition to having a dramatic influence on customer relations.

Sponsorship benefits include:

* **Enhancing Image/Shaping Consumer Attitudes:**Often companies are looking to improve how they are perceived by their target audience. **Driving Sales:**Sponsorship geared to driving sales can be an extremely potent promotional tool. This objective allows sponsors to showcase their product attributes.
* **Creating positive publicity/heightening visibility:**Every sponsor is seeking wide exposure in both electronic and print media. Positive publicity helps create heightened visibility of products/services. Various media covering the event may include sponsors names and/or photos.
* **Differentiating from competitors:**The mere act of sponsoring an event, especially an exclusive sponsorship, is a significant way to create competitor differentiation. Your company name has the opportunity to stand out head and shoulders above the competition.
* **Helping with good "Corporate Citizen" role:**Another powerful sponsorship objective allows companies to be viewed as a "good neighbor." To be seen supporting the community and contributing to its economic development is extremely powerful and creates enormous goodwill.
* **Enhancing business, consumer and VIP relations:**Sponsorship that offers hospitality opportunities is always very attractive to companies. Perks may include special exclusive networking settings such as VIP receptions or golf tournaments – opportunities to meet key customers and solidify business relationships.

***Follow up activity to class presentation on Sponsorship.***

Choose one of the two assignments below:

1. In your local community, find a person, event, or company that has sponsored or has been sponsored. Do a short write up asking and answering: what, when, how, why, who…
2. Select an event you may be interested in and create a levels of sponsorship chart that identifies what perks sponsors would receive in exchange for their contributions. You may refer to the MRSS Golf Tournament as an example.

