

# DONOR RECOGNITION



Different than thank-you efforts, donor recognition refers specifically to the ways in which you **publicly acknowledge your supporters or promote businesses in exchange for sponsorship**. It is important to remember that you really must do both; it is not appropriate to use a company's logo on a banner at an event without also officially thanking them. Below are some ways to recognize donors and a few items to keep in mind when choosing your methods.

## Website

Many organizations choose to have a "Thank You" section on their website that lists donors' names. Your organization may also choose a more detailed and visible recognition of donors.

- Feature either an individual donor or a business sponsor in an article on your website that rotates periodically.
- Use a business sponsor's logo directly on your home page.
- Provide a link to a business sponsor's company website to help drive traffic there.
- Post and caption photos of donors participating in events with your program or staff.
- Ask a donor to do a video interview and embed it on your home page.

## Social Media

All of the items listed above for use on a website could also be applied to social media. In fact, it makes sense to always post links on your social media sites the same day you update your website with new recognition information about a donor. **You can use social media to give quick praise to donors on multiple occasions, which is a nice way of extending the promotion and the partnership over time.**

## Local Media

When you have high-level sponsorship for an event where publicity was promised, **be sure the featured donor is mentioned in all newspaper articles and any stories covered on local television or radio.** Be vigilant about proper spelling, pronunciation, and appropriate use of any logos or slogans.

## Event Signage

Typically, an agreement with a sponsor of an event will include a promise of recognition in a designated manner and for a specified number of places or instances associated with the event. These may include:

- Signage on the day of the event
- Signage during a time period leading up to the event on display at your site(s)
- Recognition on printed promotional materials
- Recognition on favors or merchandise associated with the event such as t-shirts, keychains, coffee mugs, tote bags.
- Mentioned as described above in all web, audio, visual, and print materials.

## Permanent Displays

Generally associated with a gift that supports the building of a new structure, such as a playground, an additional wing of a center, or an entire new building, are **permanent displays recognizing donors**. This might be an engraved plaque, a stone or brick in a wall or walkway, or a piece of artwork commemorating the construction.

## Permission

Before publicly recognizing an individual or a company, **you must be sure to have permission in writing.**

- Indicate on donation forms if you plan to publicly recognize all donors.
  - Ask them to write their name exactly as they would like it to appear.
  - Explain in detail every possible place it might appear, so there are no surprises.
  - Give an option for them to select NOT to be listed.
- If you plan to only publicly recognize a certain level of donor, decide if you'll mention that on your forms or if you'll contact them separately to get permission.
- With business sponsors, you will want descriptive information about exactly how they'd like their logo to appear.
  - Some companies are very particular about the circumstances in which their logo can be displayed, so be sure to ask. For example, they may not want it appearing next to certain other businesses for philosophical or competitive reasons.
  - There are also sometimes strict rules about altering a logo, even minimally, to make it fit. Don't assume you can modify a slogan or that it's acceptable if the color prints slightly off.

## No Elaborate Gifts

Most donors give because they believe in your organization's mission. Because of this, they generally do not wish for you to spend valuable time or the funds on thank you gifts even though it is tempting to give framed certificates, small plaques, or a desk item. **A better choice is to promote them well, make them your true partner, and genuinely appreciate them both privately and publicly.**