



What's art got to do with it? Sponsoring the Museum: Example of a worldwide brand

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<http://www.bmwgroup.com/kultur>

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<http://www.theartnewspaper.com>



CASE STUDY NOTES:

Why do big businesses sponsor the arts?

1. There is a wide range of high quality cultural events - art, theatre, music, etc. – from which to choose. This makes the cultural world attractive to potential sponsors. There are fewer world class sports events and there is fierce competition between sponsors. Twice a year those managers within major companies in Germany whose job it is to oversee funding for the arts, meet to discuss their activities. They can afford to be 'open' because there is so much choice and as a result, companies can find ways to be 'unique'. However, sponsors do not necessarily want to simply *fund* arts events –BMW Group f. ex. values genuine partnerships, in which each partner retains their independence and integrity.
2. Businesses want to reinforce their brand image by association with other brands. For example, BMW has a 5 year agreement with Art Basel and it has recently signed up to Frieze. How does this support the BMW brand?
 - Art Basel and Frieze are A-List fairs for modern and contemporary art, in other words 'premium' events which profit from the 'premium' BMW brand and vice versa.
 - The events offer opportunities to meet potential customers e.g. there is a VIP shuttle service at Art Basel, provided by BMW, so the product makes an appearance. And the type of people getting into the cars bought €3 billion worth of art in the first week!

3. Businesses often want to demonstrate 'corporate citizenship' through sponsorship. So BMW has recently donated a €1.3 million photograph collection to a museum in Leipzig two weeks before the opening of the BMW Leipzig Plant (the central building of which was designed by architect Zaha Hadid).
4. Sponsorship also helps to engage employees through discounted tickets, access to events, etc.

Advice to museums approaching businesses for sponsorship:

1. Plan ahead to allow enough lead time. BMW sets its budgets for the whole of 2007 in October 2006.
2. Research the company. Does the brand of the company 'fit' with your museum's image and strategy? Demonstrate the links (in terms of prestige, target audience, etc) between your museum and the company you are approaching.
3. Think about what the company wants – competitive advantage, brand reinforcement, etc. Think about what how you can help them - know your strengths and possible unique selling points. But don't compromise your integrity, which is one of the most attractive qualities of arts organisations.
4. Be aware that you are one of many. The Cultural Communications department of BMW receives a lot of mail each week looking for sponsorship. So you have to be creative in the benefits you offer - offering logo space on leaflets and posters is now an automatic part of any deal. Also beware the 'logo cemetery' where a sponsor is just one of many. Sponsors value exclusivity; at least within their own industry e.g. even if BMW is one of 10 sponsors, it must be the only sponsor from the car industry.
5. Do your homework on who is the right person to contact in a big business. It can be counter productive to send the same letter to 10 people in the company if each letter is passed to the same person in the end.