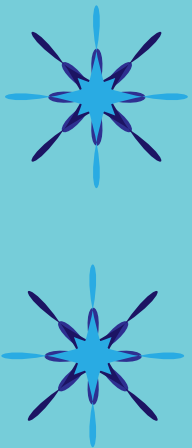


How to Create a Donation Letter of Request for Your Upcoming Discover Gluten Free Event by Debby Swoboda

Have you ever approached an event that you were hosting and came up with the terrific idea for including an additional vendor sponsor? You are really excited; this would make a perfect fit. You know this would really create increased brand recognition for the product and move much more product. Heck, there's time... the event is still a week away. So you pick up the phone and contact the vendor only to find out that they just don't have any support dollars left or samples to offer your event. (In reality, they weren't going to ship samples next day delivery which would add additional

expenses; they would have liked to support you and your event, but your last minute request just made it impossible.) You're bummed! Opportunity lost.

We know that last minute requests are a real problem. For instance, when a local organization comes to you the day before an event and asks for a donation, you know it is almost impossible to make it a positive win-win opportunity for many reasons. With ample time, you might have been able to secure a vendor donation or create some special coupons or signage. You're bummed! Opportunity lost.



Okay, let's design a different scenario by creating a letter of request. Using the example above about having a great fit for a vendor at your upcoming Gluten Awareness Event (which is now 6 weeks away), you present a letter of request for a donation. Now there is enough time to turn the request into a marketing opportunity (without additional overnight shipping costs) and a positive ROI (return on investment) for all.

Consider what a vendor needs to know from you in order to make a decision to support your request. My husband uses this motto at work and I thought it appropriate in this example: **Be Bright. Be Brief. Be Gone.** In other words... **Keep It Simple.** One page is all you need for the vendor to understand exactly what you are requesting and the deadline.

Be Bright. Be Brief. Be Gone.

Keep It Simple.

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Some vendors have their own request forms, but if they don't, I've compiled a list to help get you started. Remember this is just a template of ideas; you can customize your letter to fit your personality. With May's Celiac Awareness Month right around the corner, this how-to information comes at the perfect time! **Your letter should include:**

VENDOR INFORMATION {TO}

Name of company, name of person, title (or department), phone, email, and fax. If you don't know who to contact, it's simple to go on-line and find the company "contact us" information and who is responsible for donations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE STORE

What kind of store you have, how many years in business, how you serve your community, size, how much business you do with the vendor, and your preferred distributor and account number if applicable.

PERSON REQUESTING PARTNERSHIP AND CONTACT INFORMATION {FROM}

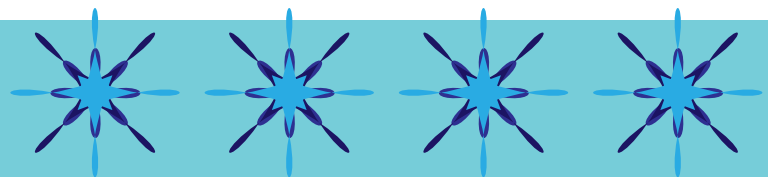
Your name, title (or department), store address, store phone, your direct line, email, fax, and the best time to reach you. (If a vendor has to make 3 calls trying to contact you, he might give up and pass on the donation. Make it simple to contact you.)

DONATION REQUEST

Describe exactly what you are requesting (example: 200 sample packets of an item and 200 recipe books that contain coupons that you saw at the recent regional show - with the green cover), where, when, and how it should be delivered, and what should be written on the box if being sent direct (to whose attention, name of event, etc.).

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Describe the who, what, when and where of the event, i.e., name of event, date and time, and location. Also include any benefiting organizations (good for PSAs [Public Service Announcements] from the media) and details of event (how many people are expected, what other things are going on at the event, what marketing/publicity you have arranged, etc.).



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APPROVED / DONATION ACCEPTED

Create a place for the vendor to sign and date when they have approved the request and ask they fax back the agreement as confirmation of participation (be sure to include the fax number again in the approval area) so that you can be sure to promote them as a supporter/sponsor of the event. NOTE: You might mention a deadline of acceptance giving you enough time to create additional signage and marketing to increase additional brand awareness of their product in return.

FOLLOW-UP CONTACT

Request a contact from the vendor (if other than who is approving the donation) so that you can follow up on the donation and get additional marketing support materials to help promote the vendor's product.



Once you create and save your new "letter of request" template, it's easy to change the vendor information for future requests. You can create demo requests, media requests, community organization support requests... the list is endless.

Want to gather more ideas and receive a customizable template to boot? Register and attend the upcoming **Discover Gluten Free – Event Success Series TeleTraining “Letters of Request: Creating Win-Win Partnerships”** which will be presented Friday, March 13 at 9am EDT.

TO REGISTER: Visit www.askDebby.com, click the TeleTraining tab, and click the date and time of the presentation to register!

