

ALCOHOL FACTS



Alcohol Sponsorship and Community Events

When community fairs and festivals accept sponsorship from the alcohol industry, they become an unwitting part of the industry's marketing strategy. Concerned community members can work with event coordinators and local policy makers to replace alcohol companies with sponsors that better reflect the community's values.

Problem: Through sponsorship agreements, the alcohol industry co-opts community events, using them to market its brands and products to children and families.

- In response to restrictions on broadcast, print and outdoor advertising, the alcohol industry has increased the use of sponsorship agreements to keep the public aware of its brands.¹
- The alcohol industry spends almost \$5 billion a year in the United States on advertising and promotion. About 75 percent of those dollars go towards promotional efforts, including sponsorship of community events.²
- Alcohol companies pay anywhere from a few thousand to several hundred thousand dollars to sponsor events.³ Agreements usually permit the sponsor to place its brand logo and ads in the event program and on signs, tickets, T-shirts, hats, and the events Web site.⁴
- Many youth are exposed to alcohol advertising at community events. For example, Budweiser was a prominent corporate sponsor of the 2005 Arizona State Fair, where 24 percent of attendees were between ages 12 and 17.⁵

Solution: Through effective organizing and advocacy, community groups can work to replace alcohol sponsorship of local events and cultural celebrations.

- A coalition of community organizations called PlayFair replaced Miller Brewing Company as the title sponsor of the Marin County Fair in 2004, ending thirty years of sponsorship by an alcohol company.⁶ By 2006, Play Fair members convinced Marin County to pass an ordinance that bans alcohol-related businesses from sponsoring the Fair or any other County events in the future.⁷
- The Indiana State Fair has long been free of both alcohol sponsorship and sales; officials say that these policies help attract families.⁸
- In California, Latinos & Latinas for Health Justice conducts an annual statewide "Cinco de Mayo Con Orgullo" (Cinco de Mayo With Pride) campaign that encourages family-friendly Cinco de Mayo celebrations. The campaign seeks to reclaim the cultural holiday from an alcohol industry intent on using the day to sell more beer.⁹



1. Ruth, Julie A and Bernard Simonin. (2003) "Brought to You by Brand A and Brand B." *Journal of Advertising* 32(3), 19-30
2. American Medical Association. "Alcohol Industry 101: Its Structure and Organization."
3. Prentice, Kathy. "Moo! Take your client to the state fair." *Media Life Magazine*, May, 2001.
4. IEG Valuation Statement. California Exposition and State Fair: 2002 State Fair Presenting Sponsor.
5. Arizona State Fair. "2005 Demographic Summary" www.azstatefair.com.
6. Halstead, Richard. "Marin fair dilutes alcohol connection." *Marin Independent Journal*. June 24, 2004.
7. Brenner, Keri. "Alcohol sponsorships banned at fair." *Marin Independent Journal*. March 1, 2006.
8. Prentice, Kathy. "Moo! Take your client to the state fair." *Media Life Magazine*, May, 2001.
9. Gallegos, Bill and Bernardo Rosa. "Don't Hijack Cinco de Mayo." *USA Today*. May 4, 2003.