## Quillbot, Simple:

Gladiator games gave their sponsors expensive but effective ways to promote themselves. They also gave their clients and potential voters exciting entertainment that cost them little or nothing.

Gladiators turned into a big business for trainers and owners, politicians who wanted to get ahead, and people who were already at the top and wanted to stay there.

A politically ambitious privatus (private citizen) might put off his dead father's munus until election season, when a generous show might get people to vote. Those in power and those who wanted to be in power needed the support of the plebeians and their tribunes, whose votes could be won with the promise of an especially good show.

During his time as praetor, Sulla was as smart as usual. He broke his own laws about luxury to give the most expensive munus that Rome had ever seen for the funeral of his wife, Metella.

In the last years of the Late Republic, when politics and society were very unstable, any aristocrat who owned gladiators had political power.

In 65 BC, Julius Caesar, who had just been elected aedile, held games that he said were for his father, who had been dead for 20 years.

Even though he already owed a lot of money, he used 320 pairs of silvered gladiator armour.

He had more gladiators in Capua, but the senate put a limit of 320 pairs as the most any citizen could keep in Rome. They did this because of the Spartacus revolt and because they were afraid of Caesar's growing private armies and growing popularity.

Caesar's showmanship was bigger and costlier than anything that had ever been done before. He put on a munus as a memorial instead of a funeral rite, which made it hard to tell the difference between a munus and a ludi.

Gladiator games, which were often tied to animal shows, were played all over the republic and even beyond.

In 65 and 63 BC, laws against corruption tried but failed to stop the games' sponsors from using them for political gain.

After Caesar was killed and the Roman Civil War broke out, Augustus took over control of the games, including the munera, and made them a civic and religious duty.

He changed the sumptuary law to limit how much people and the government could spend on munera. He said this would keep the Roman elite from going bankrupt and limit gladiator munera to the festivals of Saturnalia and Quinquatria.

From then on, an imperial praetor's official munus could have no more than 120 gladiators and could cost no less than 25,000 denarii. An imperial ludi, on the other hand, could cost no less than 180,000 denarii.

Throughout the empire, the best and most famous games were now linked to the state-sponsored imperial cult. This made the public know, respect, and like the emperor's divine numen, his laws, and his agents even more.

Trajan celebrated his victories over the Dacians for 123 days with 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 animals. This happened between the years 108 and 109 AD.

The price of gladiators and munera kept going up and up and up.

Marcus Aurelius's law from 177 AD didn't do much to stop it, and his son Commodus didn't even care about it.