

# SPONSORSHIP

Increase your chances of gaining sponsorship



## What is sponsorship?



### Sponsorship

An exchange where a company offers your group money or practical support in return for an agreed benefit (e.g. PR, free tickets, access to the sport, advertising space, etc.)

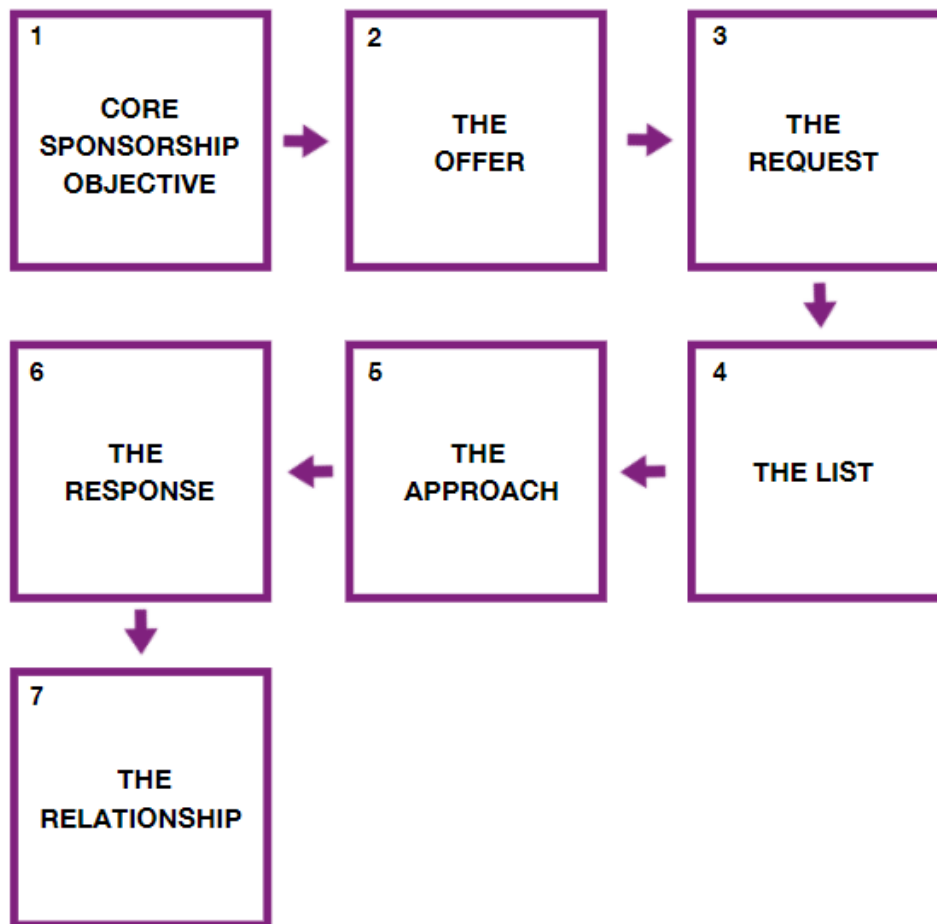
vs.



### Other forms of fundraising

Raising funds for a particular cause or group with limited to no returned benefits (e.g. organising events, selling raffle tickets, holding sponsored activities, asking for donations).

Sponsorship is an option for any group regardless of its size, capacity or expertise. Unlike many other forms of fundraising, it can offer your group a more sustainable income. By following these 7 simple steps, you can increase your chances of gaining sponsorship:





## 1. Core Sponsorship objective

The first thing to do is clearly understand the needs of your group and write them down as the "core objective" of the sponsorship project. Consider the following questions:

- What resources does your group need to operate? (e.g. money, transport, exposure)
- What resources would help you achieve the objectives from your business plan?
- What resources would help your group grow and develop?

### Make it S.M.A.R.T.

Once you have found answers to the questions above, the next step is to fine tune them. How? Using the very common business tool called **SMART**.

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timely
Your objective should state clearly what it is that your group wants to achieve.	Will you be able to measure whether you are meeting your objectives or not?	Can you achieve your objectives and are they attainable?	Can you realistically achieve your objectives?	Can you attract enough sponsors in the proposed timescale and is it the best time of the year to ask?
"We want to purchase a new away kit for the junior team."	"We need to buy the kit for the new season in 20 weeks' time. We are now at week 6 and we have raised 30% of the amount required."	"The complete kit will cost £2,000 and we have 20 potential sponsorship opportunities at £100 each."	"We have identified 400 potential sponsors and we believe that our offer is attractive to them because of what they will receive in return."	"We have allowed 20 weeks to attract 20 sponsors and the best time to ask for sponsorship is the start of a new season."
<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>T</b>

## 2. The offer

Consider what a potential sponsor could get in exchange for providing you resources. Typically, a company will sponsor a group for 2 reasons:

**Emotional** They have an emotional link to the group because they know someone who is/was a member or they used to be a member themselves.

**Commercial** They can see a return on their investment.

Whether you realise it or not, you will most likely have a lot to offer a sponsor based on delivering sport and physical activity. In this field, you naturally work with partners, have a number of participants, travel and are embedded within the community. These are all attractive features that can be turned into 'selling points' for a sponsor.



## Here are some common “selling points”:

Preventing discrimination within the recruitment process allows your organisation to promote diversity, improve your chances of finding the best person for the activity/task and creates a welcoming space for any person or business looking to get involved with your organisation. Any form of discrimination discredits your organisation and can lead to increasing costs. It is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of:

- Provide positive exposure for the business
- Use their logo on your kit/promotional material
- Add links to their website from yours and mention them on social media as many times as possible
- Invite the company to any events that you're running and involve them in presentations/ competitions/prize giving
- Offer opportunities for them or their family to join in sporting activities
- Offer opportunities to distribute their brochures or other publicity from your group
- You can help them collect data about their product/service and provide feedback
- Positive relationship with local community

### **Sported Tip: Top tips for perfecting your selling points**

Take some time to research the potential market of the proposed sponsor. Then research who lives and works in your area, your members, delivery partners, etc. Identify what might be the most interesting statistics to back up your offer. This will show the sponsor that you are interested in their business.

## 3. A balanced ask

The key is to try and make the exchange as beneficial as possible for both you and the potential sponsors. You do not need to match the exact cost/resource required of the company, but you should be able to offer something relative to what they are offering.

Examples:

- If the company is going to provide you with a new product to use - you can offer survey feedback for the products or pictures for them to use in its promotion.
- If you are asking for them to pay for you kit - you can put their logo on your kit to promote the company wherever you go.



Line up your “selling points” next to your potential asks and attempt to balance them to the best of your ability.



## 3. The list

### Build an 'ideal sponsor' profile

Once you understand what you have to offer and what you can feasibly ask for in return, you can start to consider the types of companies that would be 'ideal sponsors' for your group (e.g. travel company, local bank, a regional kit company). Don't make it too specific - this is to help you start thinking about which specific companies you will approach.

### Potentials list

Take your profile and begin to gather a list of potential businesses to consider. It can be time consuming but is worth the effort. Where to start?

- Your group will have had some links in the past with companies, either buying from them or event.
- Every local council will have an up-to-date database of local companies.
- A simple internet search to locate and find information about local companies.
- The local paper will run news stories about local business. Companies featured will most likely be wanting the public to know they support their local community.
- A local chamber of commerce or local business networking group you can approach.

### Sported Tip: When it comes to volunteers...it's worth asking

It's always worth remembering that volunteers rarely volunteer until they are asked. Quite often people will feel they don't have the skills or experience to get involved or they are scared by the level of commitment they think they may have to give. The more your organisation can talk to people the more likely you are to be successful in your recruitment.

### How to research the companies you plan to approach

The more you know about the business that you are going to approach the more likely that you will be successful. Most information can be found after a browse of the company's website and a few internet searches. The main aims of the research are:

- The aims and objectives of the company
- Their products and services
- Have they sponsored other groups or donated to charity?
- Do the managers/owners get involved in their local community?
- What time of year do they plan their promotional budgets? Easy way to figure this out - identify when their financial year ends and assume that they will plan budgets 2 to 3 months before that.
- What is their turnover? (If it is a larger company, they could become involved in a larger project providing they can see the value)

# SPONSORSHIP

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## Narrow down the list

Once you have researched your list of potential sponsors, split it into two:

1. Very close to the profile
2. Close to the profile

You can then select a few to pursue initially from the 'very close to the profile' list.

## 5. The approach

So now that you have your objectives identified your target list of businesses to approach and what you would like to exchange, it is time to plan how you are going to make the approach and the ask.

Whether you decide to make the approach over the phone, in an email or in person, there is no perfect method. It will come down to the preference of the group and any individual you have chosen to lead the sponsorship process.

### The basics

Whichever method that you choose the basics of the approach will be the same:

- research the appropriate contact before reaching out
- a list of your past successes to hand
- a list of your objectives to hand
- the reason you have chosen this company to approach
- what benefits you think such a deal will bring to the sponsor
- how your group can fit with the objectives
- how you will use the sponsorship
- your marketing strategy for the partnership
- remember that it is a 2-way business transaction that you are discussing and both of you would benefit



### By phone

The easiest first step is to phone the company. It will give you the opportunity to identify the right person to speak to and either make an appointment or complete "the pitch" on the phone then and there.

Quick tip: Before you call decide what you want to achieve from the call, review your preparation thus far and have the relevant information in front of you.



### By email or letter

A calculated and measured approach, where you can get everything you want to say down on paper. It's important that your mail is unique, personalised and brief because individuals/ companies receive a huge amount of mail.

Quick tip: Find the correct person's email to send information to (info@ emails are often ignored or deleted) and try to use the email address of your group vs. your personal email (more professional).



## Face to face meeting

A personalised approach where the "potential sponsor" is able to read all the documentation with you and absorb your passion for your work.

Quick tip: Dress appropriately for the company and try to stay relaxed and calm because they will pick up on your confidence and you know you have something "to sell".

## 6. The response

### Dealing with a 'no'

Even the most talented sales people are told 'no' on many occasions. Whatever the reason, don't be afraid to ask for feedback. An honest reply can help you for next time and most companies will be happy to explain.

Always follow up a "no" with an email thanking them for their time and consideration. Leave them with some promotional information and, potentially, a token of appreciation (e.g. a complimentary ticket, year subscription to your group). Just because it was a "no" this time, doesn't mean it won't be a "yes" next time.

### Closing the deal after a 'yes'

Once a company has agreed to sponsor your group, you need to close the deal. Depending on the type of exchange that is taking place, you can do this with varying degrees of formality.

Regardless, it is always a good idea to reach out, thank the company for agreeing to sponsor your group and put together a short timetable of events/action points outlining your understanding of the agreement.

You might think that writing a contract is going a bit too far, but don't forget that you have agreed to a business transaction, and it is important that both parties are in no doubt as to the agreement. It is a protection for both the group and the sponsor.

The contract can be in the form of an exchange of letters, or it can be a formal document. Key things to include:

1. The title for the event or the group's name
2. Start dates and end dates
3. Financial terms, amount, payment dates, etc
4. What you have agreed to do for the sponsorship
5. What the sponsor has agreed to do
6. A line for signatures and the dates on which the contract was signed

When you print the contract, make 3 copies; one for the sponsor, one for your files and one to keep with the accounts so that the treasurer knows the exact terms that have been agreed.

## 7. The relationship

It's important to nurture the relationship between your group and the sponsor. A one-off sponsorship can develop into a long-term relationship that offers many more benefits. Here are a few ideas to maintaining a positive and productive relationship:



# SPONSORSHIP

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- Keep them up to date with events, successes and other newsy things
- Invite them to attend events, matches and any other activity
- Provide them with examples of how you are keeping your side of the deal (e.g. copies of adverts, brochures and shirts with their logo on)
- Show them how the money has been spent and how the sponsorship has helped them
- Ask them if they would like to hold a mid-contract meeting
- Don't overstate the successes - be honest. If things are not going as you thought they would, tell them and then tell them what you are going to do about it

## Need more guidance?

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to work with a volunteer who specialises in sponsorship, [request volunteer support from The Sported Hub](#).

