

## HOW TO GET SPONSORSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

- This flat pack guide has been compiled to share best practice on sponsorship and how to go about obtaining it.
- It is a broad outline and you should take the liberty to be creative in your proposals.
- Part 1 contains the theory about getting sponsorship
- Part 2 contains examples to use in practice

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**Credit:** This guide is heavily adapted from the “University of Greenwich Student Union: A Guide to External Sponsorship for your Club or Society”

**Ref:** <https://www.suug.co.uk/pageassets/activities/handbook/2013-SUUG-Guide-to-Obtaining-Sponsorship.pdf>

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## **PART 1: THE THEORY**

### **1. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUNDRAISING AND SPONSORSHIP**

Firstly, it is important to note that there is a difference between fundraising and sponsorship. Both are effective means of getting money to fund your activities....however:

- Fundraising is the act or process of raising funds for a specific cause, charity or project. E.g. bake sale, sponsored challenges, bucket collections, asking for lump sum donation etc.
- Sponsorship is a business transaction between two organisations that provides money for a project or an event carried out by your organisation. This partnership should be considered as a business transaction as the partnership generally benefits both parties in the agreement.

Before you start looking for sponsorship, there are a few important steps to take to prepare your case.

### **2. PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE**

When trying to get sponsorship some advance planning and preparation is key to your success. This will help you approach other organisations (who will become your partners) in a professional, well organized manner and help you put your best foot forward when you start building relationships between you and them.

Before you approach any potential sponsors you should clearly define your needs. Best way to do this is to create 2 or 3 SMART sponsorship objectives. Ask yourselves the following questions:

- **What resource do you need for your team or group to progress?**
- **Why do you require sponsorship?**
- **Are you looking for money, resources, equipment, venue hire or all of the above?**

Ensure you lay out your objective clearly and make them **SMART** objectives!

**(SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time bound)**

Be honest and upfront about what you need from your sponsors, as well as what you are prepared to do in return for them (i.e. names on programmes or signage etc.). Your sponsors will want to know exactly what's happening with their money.

The above will help you formulate your "business case" or "sponsorship proposal" (See Section 5)

### 3. DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT

Because the **nature of sponsorship is a business transaction**, organisations (especially businesses) want to know that they will get a return on investment for providing you with their resource. When selling yourself to a company, you want to make sure you're being accurate:

Under selling yourself would be doing yourself an injustice and potentially lead to an unsuccessful bid for sponsorship.

However, over selling yourself would be considered lying or making false claims which could not only lead to a negative response, but also to giving you a bad reputation.

Providing **data** is key to building trust and knowing this about your own organisation demonstrates the right level of professionalism and ownership.

Numbers don't lie - can you mention some specific features about your organisation?

#### KEY QUESTIONS A POTENTIAL SPONSOR MAY HAVE

- **How many members do you have?**
- **How many hits to your website do you get?**
- **How many region of the country do you cover?**
- **What past achievements have you made?**
- **What awards have you received?**

### 4. GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW

#### 4a. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO ASK FOR?

Ask for what you need based on your SMART objective and be careful not to over or under sell yourselves.

Don't ask a company to purchase £3000 worth of equipment just because you're a great organisation and they should want to be your sponsor for the sake of it.

On the other hand, make sure you don't bend over backwards for a company that's only going to provide food for you on one occasion yet expects you to hold multiple events at their venue, wants their logos on everything and wants you to send out e-mails on their behalf.

Remember, this is a 2-way relationship! Sponsorship partnerships can be a great tool for both you and the organisation that sponsor you - so look at your sponsorship objective and 'ask' accordingly.

With your objective, selling points and asking request defined you're ready to begin identifying who you're going to approach!

#### **4b. WHO ARE YOU GOING TO APPROACH?**

With your committee, put together a list of your past supporters and any organisation that may have a personal connection to one of your members. This should be the list you start working from and to whom you should tailor your proposals.

When researching external organisations not directly known to the group try and look for ones that may have a vested interest in your specialized area. The more closely you can associate the organisations with the better. Once you've got this shortlist together, take a final look and make sure the organisations listed are a good fit for this business opportunity.

#### **4c. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?**

It's important to tell organisations exactly what benefits you can offer them. Try and give potential sponsors both qualitative and quantitative benefits. For example, instead of saying that 1000 members will see their logo you can say, '1000 members will recognize that you are supporting our organisation and will raise your profile with them'.

**Some other ideas of what you have to offer companies are:**

- **Positive exposure to your members**
- **Co-branding of publicity (use their logo on your promotions)**
- **Website links from your webpage to theirs**
- **A presence at events that you run**
- **Presentations to your members, as organized by you.**
- **Help them collect data or feedback regarding their brands or products**
- **Organising events at their venue and publicising them**
- **Becoming a regular customer at their venue**

If possible, as part of your sponsorship proposal, include an "Example marketing plan" as to what you expect to do in terms of promotions. This way the potential sponsor has an idea of exactly what they may receive for example:

- **Use their logo on the your event tickets – that way everyone attending the event will see the logo, also remember, often people may keep tickets as mementos**
- **Use their logo on your event posters and any other publicity, social media outlets – that way anyone who sees the publicity will have seen the logo**
- **Consider gift items, Pens, Co-brand a T-shirt/item of clothing with their logo. There are over 50 members in the organisation who will be purchasing one, creating both income and value add etc.**

Large conferences regularly do this e.g. by offering Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsorship packages etc.

## 5. ARRANGE YOUR PLAN OF ATTACK

Now that you have a clear objective in mind, know who you're going to approach and why they would be a good fit with you, you can write your sponsorship proposal in full, prepare your approach and plan how you are going to make your official 'ask'.

### 5b. The Sponsorship Proposal

Also known as the "pack", your sponsorship proposal should emphasize the benefits of sponsorship to the company. If you word your proposal in a way that the company identifies you as a worthy cause but also as a nice fit with their business goals, then you've done a great job with your initial preparation and you're most of the way to achieving your goal.

There is an example of a good Sponsorship Proposal in Appendix A.

- **Sponsorship Proposals can includes**
- **Your past successes. For example, an annual report or favourable press cuttings**
- **Your future objectives. What you need and what you are going to do**
- **Why the company should sponsor you and what they can expect in return**
- **How you fit in with their business objectives and how both you and the companies business objectives will be achieved**
- **How the money will be spent – presented like a shopping list so the company knows their money will be spent wisely**
- **Your marketing plan**
- **Contact information**

### 5b. The Approach

There are a few ways which you can approach organisations. Generally the most effective way to begin this process is **through networking**, where you may know or can enquire on mutual contacts. A personal reference goes a long way so always keep business cards and ensure you understand who that person is. Failing that, simply start with a phone call.

You can often call the receptionist and tell them the reason for your call and ask for the name of the person that is most appropriate to speak to. Once you are sure you're speaking to the right person (which is key to the success of your proposal!) ask them how they would best like to receive your proposal.

If the person you initially make contact with doesn't know who to ask for, ask them for another contact who does.

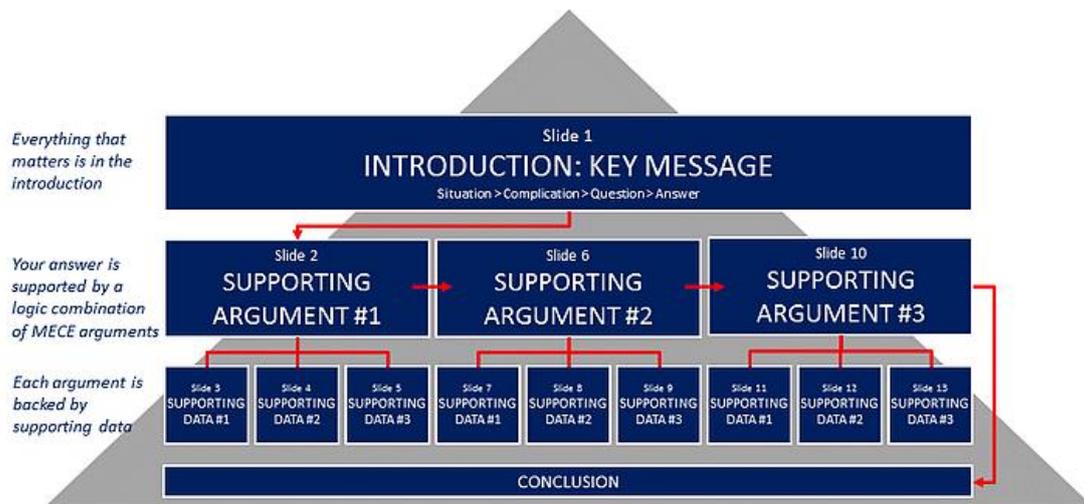
Finally, you should also keep a record of all correspondence between yourself and the organisations.

This will avoid confusion in the future and help you remember what has already been discussed or said between the two parties. Write down the name of the person you are put through to because you don't want to get it wrong when you get this individual on the phone!

## 5c. The Ask

Whichever medium you use, ensure you decide, note and rehearse what you wish to say, test your pitch on trusted others and take feedback prior to the discussion!

Consider using the Minto Pyramid principle in structuring your message and tailoring it to suit your audience (Google is your friend if you require more detail!)



## By Phone:

When you're speaking to the correct individual on the phone, they may ask for an outline on the phone right then and there. If so, be prepared and have all your research in front of you.

This method is great as it can leave a lasting impression. It will give you a chance to discuss your proposal with the organisations and also give you a chance to listen to your sponsor's initial response to the proposal.

This is also a great opportunity to verbally express the need of your organisation. If there is an initial interest from them, try to progress the phone call and schedule a face to face meeting where you can go over the project in more detail and can show them your information, proposal and pictures etc.

Try to **anticipate any problems or questions** that a potential sponsor may ask you. That way if the hard questions do come up you're ready for them and not thrown off guard!

**There is an example phone call conversation in Appendix B.**

### **E-mail:**

**Generally after the initial phone call with your target, you will be asked to send an e-mail with the details of the proposal.** This tends to be the most commonly used format of correspondence these days and is great because your message is delivered instantly!

Use the body of the e-mail as a brief introduction and set the right tone for the proposal. Emails will generally be shorter than a letter but still set the same tone.

Use that opportunity to tell your contact that you will follow up with them after they have had time to look at your proposal. Include the rest of your information to the e-mail as attachments but make sure to use common viewing packages (e.g. PDF) to avoid any unease for viewing your proposal.

**There is a sample e-mail in the Appendix C.**

### **Face to Face:**

- 1. This meeting may happen in one of two ways:**
- 2. The sponsor has asked you to come in and talk to them as opposed to a letter or an email, or following receipt for your letter or e-mail**
- 3. You have walked into their offices and are looking for an impromptu meeting**

If they ask to see you, set up an appropriate time and date when you can meet with them and won't be rushed. Make sure you also consider how valuable your potential sponsors time is so don't take up a full afternoon.

If possible, in addition to the research you have already done on them, do some research on the individual(s) you are about to meet. Stay calm and take advantage of the fact that a face to face interview can be quite flexible. Listen to what your potential sponsor says and respond accordingly with what you have to offer. A face to face meeting could be scary for some people but if you've done enough research and preparation you should breeze through. Your key objective is to start building trust between you and them!

## **6. GETTING RESPONSES – YES OR NO?**

### **6A. Dealing with a “No”**

At some point during the process of finding a sponsor you will surely have to deal with some rejection. Don't be deterred by rejection, its par for the course. Simply dust yourself off and try again.

If you get a “no” don't feel bad about asking for a reason as to why you have been unsuccessful. Be polite and ask for general feedback regarding your proposal or approach and they may have some helpful hints that will help you with the next organisations you decide to ask. **Use it as a learning opportunity!**

Sometimes the perfect organisation just isn't in a position to sponsor you that year due to business reasons or lack of resources. The important thing is to maintain the relationship for next year as you may find you don't have to look very far to get sponsored in the future.



## **6B. Receiving a “Yes” - Closing the Deal**

Great news! You’ve been successful and you’ve had a company agree to sponsor you. What now?

You’ll need to sort out some short-term admin stuff e.g. arrange payment, raising invoice, and transferring whatever kinds of financial or non-financial support you have agreed.

But the hard work actually begins now! You now have an important relationship to maintain – think of it as a marriage! It’s in your best interest to make this a successful and long term relationship.

Here are a few tips which will help you stay on friendly terms with your sponsors:

- **First and foremost is thanking them! Call them or e-mail them to say thanks and that you’re looking forward to working together**
- **Invite your sponsor to come along to your next event(s)**
- **Tell them how their money has been spent throughout the year and keep them informed of your successes. Don’t go AWOL on them now that you have their money!**
- **Provide them with all examples of where you were adhering to your end of the deal for example your tickets, programmes, or branded adverts and posters.**
- **Ask if they would like to arrange a mid-term meeting to conduct a formal feedback meeting. Use this opportunity to see if your sponsor is happy and how to keep them happy!**
- **Don’t lie!! A bad reputation gets around and your organisation will certainly suffer. Make sure you stay honest, and if things go wrong be upfront about it early, they will appreciate the honesty.**

## **PART 2: THE PRACTICE - APPENDIX**

### **APPENDIX A: Example Sponsorship Proposal**

Imperial College London – EESoc Sponsorship Pack 2014 (Double-click to Open PDF)



EEESoc\_Sponsorship\_  
Outline.pdf

### **APPENDIX B: Example Phone Call**

**Example Introductory conversation for case of a student sports club to FootballWorld magazine:**

**Student:** Good morning, my name is Jane Doe and I'm phoning from the Students Union, University of Greenwich on behalf of the Women's Football Team. We are contacting local football suppliers to see if they are interested in working with our team on a sponsorship deal for the upcoming year and I was wondering if you can tell me who the most appropriate contact at FootballWorld is to speak to?

**Secretary:** That would probably be John, he is our marketing manager. Should I connect you to him?

**Student:** Yes please, thank you. (Connect to John and introduce yourself as above)

**John:** Thank you for thinking of us when considering your sponsorship for next year. What can I do for you?

**Student:** I'm wondering if you would be willing to consider our sponsorship proposal. We think it would be a really beneficial partnership because we can help you promote your new store in Greenwich and would love to work with you in the next academic year. What is the best way for me to talk to you about what we can offer you?

**John:** What would I get from this sponsorship?

**Student:** We have 30 people on each of our three teams. That means that we are well represented in every level of football within the British Women's football league. All of our members wear kit which will carry your logo. Additionally we have branded casual clothing that's worn outside of games and would be exposed to many more students and the general public demonstrating your local support for the sport. As a further addition, we place your logo on all promotional material given out during Fresher's Week, which regularly has a average turnout of 15,000 students. There are more options we can discuss and are included in our sponsorship proposal, if I can e-mail that over, perhaps you can give it some further thought discuss with the marketing team and we can take it from there?

**John:** Sure, you can e-mail me all the information and I'll have a look at it when I get a chance.

**Student:** That sounds great. I'll send over an e-mail and follow up with you in a few days to see if you have any questions or would like to set up a meeting for some time next week. Thank you for your consideration.



## **APPENDIX C: Example Email**

### **Subject Line: Reach the student market and enhance your brand**

Good Afternoon John,

I am contacting you from the Diversity and Inclusion team at (Corporate Organisation), with regards to our end of year event which is coming up in December of this year. This event is a formal affair with the capacity to entertain 250 members from the Finance world. The event is fully booked out every year and this year will be no exception, with notable figures from Industry and the world of Media present as well as being filmed by the BBC.

I am writing to enquire whether your Hire Dress Company would be interested in sponsoring this prestigious event as many of our attendees will require formal wear for the event and the marketing would be highly beneficial for your company.

I have attached the sponsorship proposal, which includes dissemination of our e-flyer (potentially with your logo) across 20,000 members, as an attachment to this e-mail for your review and consideration. I'm more than happy to discuss this further and respond to any initial questions or comments you may have.

I hope this event sounds like something you might like to sponsor as we would love to have you on board and hope to hear from you soon

Kind regards,

[Your Name]

Position

Contact details

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