



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Sports Union

SPONSORSHIP – A GUIDE FOR CLUBS



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WHAT DO COMPANIES WANT FROM SPONSORSHIP?

All sponsors are different and so look for different things from their sponsorships. However, overall, most sponsors are looking for sports Clubs that can make a valuable and quantifiable contribution to their brand. To do so, the sponsorship must have a good fit with the brand's personality and, ideally, be unique to that brand.

Top of the list of most sponsors' requirements is media coverage. Sporting events create opportunities for exciting newspaper photographs and television images showing sponsor logos on shirts or banners. Such exposure creates brand familiarity for consumers making the logo stand out from competitors.

The sponsor will also seek activities that are enjoyable and memorable and provide occasions to build the brand and develop sales.

The sponsor will want the sponsorship to provide an opportunity to communicate with the customer in the setting where he is enjoying a quality leisure time experience. This will hopefully make him feel favourably disposed to the sponsor.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, sponsors and their employees want to feel comfortable with a sport and feel that they are getting good value for money.

HOW TO FIND A SPONSOR

Sponsorship can be hard to find and it is therefore important to be organised and professional in the way you go about it. The following tips may be helpful:

- **Appoint a sponsorship co-ordinator**
It is important - no matter what the size of your sporting Club - to have a coordinator who is responsible for seeking sponsorship and to whom all sponsorship communications are directed.
- **Decide what you are seeking sponsorship for**
This should be done through what is known as a sponsorship audit. There are two elements to this:
 - The Sport Audit** - identifying what your Club has to offer a potential sponsor. This should include the number of events you hold, the number of participants and spectators, and any secondary audience you have through newspaper, television and radio reports of your events. It should detail the opportunities you can offer to display the sponsor's logo, not just at an event but on promotional items, posters, programmes, letterheads or vehicles.
 - The Sponsor Audit** - identifying potential sponsors and what they are seeking to achieve through their marketing activities. Research in local or trade papers is an effective way of obtaining names of companies - for example, the Hollis Sponsorship and Donations Yearbook lists 1,000 sponsoring companies, their interest areas, budgets and contacts. There are also number of trade publications for sponsorship and a growing number of websites trying to match sponsors and companies. Then, carry out research to find out how accurately the marketing objectives of each company meet your sports Club.
- **Draw up a shortlist of companies**
After you have an idea of which potential sponsors might be interested, draw up a shortlist. Research to find out how accurately the marketing objectives of each company meet your sports Club. Consider the different attributes of the smaller and larger companies on the list and learn as much as you can about them: use annual reports, company newsletter, press cuttings or personal contacts to find out about their interests,



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management and employees. The most popular with student groups tend to be graduate recruiters, local clubs and bars, and companies associated with a group's particular activity.

- **Write a sponsorship proposal**

It should include the majority of information gathered in the sport and sponsor audits, along with details of the Sportmatch scheme. It is worth using pictures (e.g. of your sport or your Club) to help the potential sponsor visualise what they may be getting involved with.

Remember to include information about the history of your organization as this is important in establishing credibility. Good financial controls and report are also important. If you have been sponsored before, prepare case histories which show the activity and the results, as this will encourage confidence in your ability to deliver.

- **Write the sponsorship seeking letter**

This should be sent to the right person within the company whom you wish to sponsor you. At this stage, the purpose of the letter is to attract the interest of the company, with a view to setting up a meeting with them, rather than to sell the sponsorship there and then.

When you write to a company, make sure you **target your letter** - don't just send out a generic "Dear Sir/Madam" letter to lots of companies. It is time consuming, but companies will appreciate it if your letter is addressed to the correct person (you can usually find out by looking on their website or a quick phone call) and is specific to their company. Keep your letter **short, simple and to the point**.

- **Follow-up each sponsorship seeking letter with a telephone call**

You should follow the letter with a phone call to the company, usually after 3-4 working days. You should remind the potential sponsor of the letter, who it was from and what it was about and aim to secure a meeting with them. Remember that it may not be a priority for them and be prepared to explain what was in the letter as they may not have had time to read it properly. If you get a negative response, find out why. It may be because of budget restrictions or something which means that they may be able to sponsor you in the future.

- **Hold a meeting with a potential sponsor**

If a potential sponsor agrees to a meeting, it is essential that this is handled in a professional way. The meeting should be carefully planned and you should go to it fully prepared, so that you can make clear the following:

- What your organization can offer the potential sponsor
- What benefits they will get from sponsoring your Club
- How much sponsorship you require from them
- How long you would like them to sponsor you

- **Work together**

Once a sponsor has invested in your project, it is essential that it runs smoothly and delivers high quality experiences to participants and spectators. It is also essential to keep the sponsor involved and interested in the project: this will maintain their interest and demonstrate to them the value of their investment. The following tips may offer some guidance as to ways to achieve this:

- Work closely with your sponsor at all times. In particular, work hard on the personal elements, such as ensuring that the sponsor has sufficient tickets for themselves and guests and a chance to meet participants.
- Have a clear reporting procedure to the sponsor with regular updates on events and activities.
- Look for ways to increase the news-worthiness of the event by creating interesting photo-calls or background features. Try and attract a celebrity to the launch or the



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event to increase press interest. The press, and local radio in particular, will often run joint promotions or act as media partners to the event.

- Finally, remember that branding of an event and support materials is a key sponsor requirement. Sponsor logos must have prime position at any event and in all supporting material.

For the commercial success of a sponsorship the company's product needs to be as close to the sponsorship as possible. Product displays, sampling opportunities, even a sales kiosk at the launch and event are important means for the sponsor to reach its target market.

Sponsors and organisers should work together to devise longer lasting links.

WRITING A SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

Do

Appoint a Sponsorship Coordinator

Add Pictures

Word Typed

Attach a typed Cover Letter

Keep it formal at all times – even if you know them already

Make sure you have a professional email address and answer phone message.

Do Not

Make all text

Approach Tobacco Sponsors

Your Proposal

Break your proposal into Sections

1. Who we are

Put information in this section relating to:

Club History

Club Information,

Membership numbers,

Aims of the Club,

Successes – either of individuals or the Club.

2. Our Audiences

Put information here relating to:

- Size and popularity of Club,
- Scope of Club to reach beyond active athletes

2a) Internal

Put information here relating to:

- Any direct influences the Club has on for example, other students, staff, coaches,
- Alumni

2b) External

Put information here relating to:

- Number of teams and where they travel to
- Level of competition
- Any events the Club is hosting

3. Sponsorship Packages

The next section should outline all the packages that are on offer to the potential Sponsor:

These can include:

- Sole Sponsor
- Shirt Sponsor



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- Other Kit Sponsor
- Ball Sponsor
- Website Sponsor
- Community Schemes Sponsor
- Event Sponsor
- Sponsor Pub

In these sections make sure you list:

- Cost of package
- What the Club will do for the Sponsor i.e. link on website, appearances
- What the Club expect from the Sponsor i.e. branding
- Duration of the sponsorship - is it for a one-off event, or for a whole year?
- Is there anything you want that isn't money?
- Benefits to the company
- What the company will get - for example, their logo on your T-shirts or publicity and adverts on tables at your Club's Ball

4. **Contacts Page**

Make sure you put in full contact details (Make sure you have a professional email address and answer phone message)

For an example Sponsorship Proposal please look here:

<http://www.eusu.ed.ac.uk/files/EUSUSponsorship.pdf>

SPONSORSHIP CONTRACTS

If a company agrees to sponsor you, you will need to have a written contract outlining the agreement - don't rely on a verbal agreement!

The contract should include the following:

- Full contact details (including an address) for both parties
- Obligations of both parties
- The sponsorship amount (check whether this includes VAT or not, or you could be getting less than you think!)
- A start and end date
- Cancellation and termination arrangements
- A renewal option for next year
- Signatures on behalf of both parties

If the company draws up a contract for you, make sure you read the small print and have someone else check it over too. Don't sign anything if you are not happy!

Make sure both parties get a signed copy of the contract - you can take this to EUSU Bookkeeper who can invoice the company and advise you on VAT.



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Further Information

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Acknowledgements

<http://www.sportsmatch.co.uk>