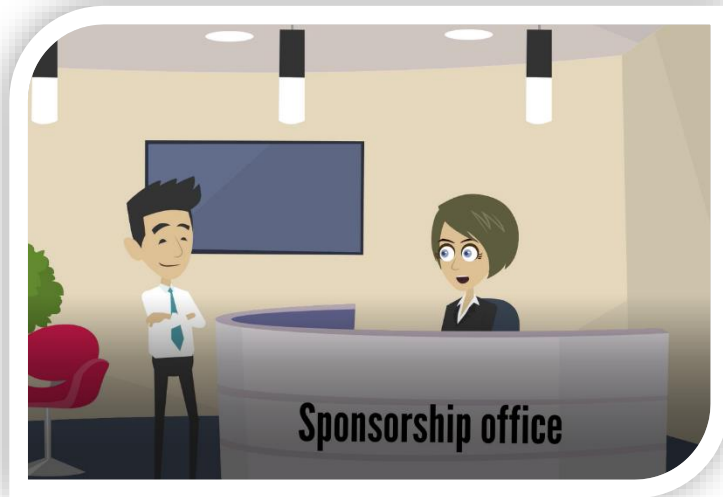


A Guide to S.S.R - Successful Sponsor Recruitment



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Introduction:

If until now, you have avoided approaching Sponsors, because you mistakenly thought that Sponsors weren't keen on giving their support and that it would be difficult to convince them – **Think again!**

Sponsors know that in order to make money they have to spend money, so the difficulty in convincing a Sponsor is not the financial issue, but probably due to **our inability to offer them what they are seeking!**

When a Sponsor provides support, he does this for **R.O.I – Return on Investment!**

Here are the main R.O.I sponsors can get:

1. Advertising and publicity,
2. Enhancing public image,
3. Receiving professional confirmation,
4. Reaching a specific audience.

If you add to all this, the fact that Sponsorship is regarded as a **business expense** – you have the perfect deal for a potential Sponsor.

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Step # 1 - Determine the object of the Sponsorship.

1. Is the Sponsorship for a **big public Bridge event** in which our goal is to reduce production costs? For example, as does the World Bridge Series with **Red Bull**?
2. Is the aim of the Sponsorship to purchase **equipment for Bridge**? Our goal being to convince a commercial body to pay for the order in exchange for printing their logo on the products?
3. Is the Sponsorship intended to **fund a National Bridge Team**? The goal here, being to reduce training costs, uniforms, travel abroad. Lavazza the coffee giant has been sponsoring national teams regularly and in so doing has promoted their brand.

Step # 2 - Characterize the Bridge audience.

The sponsors are divided into 2 main types:

1. Sponsors seeking to maximize exposure to a **large audience** in one go .
2. Sponsors seeking to reach a **specific audience** suited to their product.

What is great about Bridge is that our audience is vast and varied. In fact, suitable to appeal to any company for Sponsorship, irrespective of their product. We have it all and the idea is to clarify to a potential Sponsor that we are able to provide exactly what he needs and that the road to reaching this audience, goes directly through us.

Step # 3 – Draw up a list of Potential Sponsors

The list should include a range of companies who can advance their products or services by connecting with our audience.

For example retirement homes for the golden age group, insurance companies, investment companies, hearing aid companies, subscriptions to gyms, country clubs, travel agencies, lifestyle equipment etc.

Step # 4 - Know your sponsor!

Even before you approach the Sponsor, find out as much as you can about the company or individual: What do they do? Who would be their target population? What is their soft point? What are the difficulties that they face? What is really important to them? and How to approach them?

When the Sponsors hear that you can offer them what they need, you're half way there.

Step # 5 - Prepare a strategic Sponsorship plan.

The idea is to figure out exactly **what we are offering and what we are asking in return?**

It is important to include **different levels** of sponsorship in our plan, so that small business and large concerns alike can participate and budget accordingly.

If the levels are constructed and laid out correctly, they will encourage Sponsors to go the extra mile and **select a higher level.**

For example, if we are trying to recruit sponsorship for a huge Bridge event we could suggest:

A BASIC package to include publication in the Festival brochure, advertising on the festival website, their logo on the welcome signs.

A BRONZE package can include all these, plus for example their logo to appear on the competition forms, banner advertising in the festival bulletin and placing role-ups in the Festival hall.

A SILVER package would include all these as well as a stand with their logo and a company representative positioned there.

And finally, a **GOLD package** – giving exclusivity to the sponsor at the festival.

Now remember – Creativity is the name of the game

1. The payment does not always have to be in cash it could be in kind.
2. Often Sponsors want to receive direct access to our participant's contact details for their mailing lists, which of course, is not possible without their consent. Not to worry, we have a simple solution! Suggest that the Sponsor offer an attractive gift the likes of an air ticket, a weekend at a resort, tickets to a concert or even a mobile phone, which we will raffle among those participants who will fill in their contact details and waver privacy. So here both parties are happy, on the one hand the participant agrees to give his details to the Sponsor and maybe win a nice gift, and on the other hand the Sponsor has a nice worthy ROI.

Step # 6 - Contact the potential Sponsor

Only now, after we have studied, researched and planned, can we make that first initial contact.

Now even though we are living in a digital era, the topic of Sponsorship is based on **personal contact**. Call and make contact with the relevant person in the company. **Don't waste that first call -**

Introduce yourself briefly, the event and its participants; capture his interest by presenting the main advantages of linking up with you.

If he shows interest, suggest a one on one personal meeting so that you can present the project in detail.

If it is too early in the game for him, ask if you can send him a detailed proposal in the mail or email.

Remember, the written proposal must be personalized. It is important that the potential Sponsor gets the feeling that you have selected his company because you consider it to be special, unique and a possible t for mutual benefit.

Address it to him personally so he won't regard it as a general proposal sent out to all and sundry.

It is important not to focus on how the money will help you but rather on the **ROI** he can look forward to, by giving sponsorship.

Step 7 – the follow-up

Most companies just don't bother getting back to us so it's up to us to keep the ball in the game and follow up. You might discover that they haven't received the proposal you sent at all.

Be prepared that the odds are that from about 20 to 30 approaches you will make , you will probably nail 1 - that's the statistic.

But that by no means, says that the work and effort you have put in so far went down the drain! On the contrary, you have already created a personal connection with potential Sponsors, so it's important to maintain that relationship.

Here's an idea: Invite them to attend the event as special guests. Sometimes their impression of the magnitude of the event, and the audience, creates a momentum of its own and encourages sponsorship for the following year.

Step 8 - Maintaining a Sponsor

So we know it's difficult to get a Sponsor, it's even harder to keep him, yet so easy to lose!

A Sponsor can lose interest for many reasons:

For years, McDonalds sponsored the Olympic Games to the tune of tens of millions, and then stopped, owing to an 8% drop in the television coverage rating of the games in Rio.

Cigarette and Alcohol companies stopped sponsoring major sports events after surveys reported a connection between the adverts at these games and the rise of smoking and drinking among children and youth.

A sponsor can be pretty upset if at the event he discovers that he is competing within the same category within the same target population, stepping up the competition and reducing the return on his investment.

Sometimes a Sponsor will simply disappear, not for the reasons I have mentioned, but for no apparent reason.

So, how can we avoid being “deserted?”

First of all we need to understand that our relationship with the Sponsor does not end upon receiving the money or for that matter when the event is over. On the contrary, we now need to work that much harder to maintain and nurture our sponsor for the long run.

Make sure that the Sponsor knows that he is appreciated and valued.

There is nothing worse than having a Sponsor feel “used and abused”.

During the event make sure that the Sponsor receives all that he was promised. You may find that his representative is not happy with the location of his stand and a small act on your part will work wonders to appease him.

After the event - send your Sponsor, a personal letter of thanks and don't forget to include all the publications and advertising material with his logo.

If you have pictures of participants using his product that's even better.

Don't call the Sponsor only when you need him. Send him a Christmas card, wish him Happy New Year – maintain ongoing contact throughout the year, honor him by inviting him to the annual trophy ceremonies for example.

And what if in spite of the above efforts, your Sponsor cools off?

This sometimes takes some more extreme measures:

Let's pretend that the Bridge Festival is a woman and the Sponsor is a man.

If he has lost interest in the woman, he will probably look elsewhere...

However, what if the man discovers he has a competitor for her attention, some-one else who's very interested in his woman.

The tables could be turned and the man will probably regain interest in his woman even more enthusiastically than before, to keep her to himself.

So if this happens to you, think of brining a competitor to the arena.

To summarize:

1. Don't be intimidated by Sponsors, they are just as interested in you as you are in them.
2. Do your homework, to increase your chances of recruiting Sponsors
3. Succeeded in recruiting a Sponsor? Excellent, now make sure that he gets what he's promised, there's nothing worse than a sponsor feeling used and abused.
4. Nurture your sponsor for the long term, so that the sponsorship is not "a one time" gesture.
5. Maintain contact and develop a relationship with potential sponsors, remember: even if they were not interested the first time around, who knows? maybe they'll have a change of heart in the future!

Now go and get some sponsorships 😊