

Sponsorship guide for clubs and societies

Introduction

This guide has been produced to help committees who are looking to secure sponsorship for their respective clubs or societies. The premise for this guide is to help clarify the process which you need to go through in obtaining a sponsor, reminding you of the responsibilities this entails, and ultimately protecting your student group.

Within this guide are a few notes about sponsorship, the questions you should consider when approaching a potential sponsor and establishing an agreement. Also included are some suggested methods of sponsorship and also a step by step guide through the process you need to undertake to make your sponsorship agreement official.

At the back of this guide you will also find three forms. There is a sample proposal letter which you can amend and send to potential sponsors, a Proposal Form, on which you can outline what it is you hope to get and finally a Sponsorship Contract Document.

Important things to Consider

Below are four key things to consider when looking to establish sponsorship for your club/society;

1. Sponsorship is a Two-Way Thing

Sadly it is very rare that you get money for nothing and sponsorship is no different. You must remember when seeking sponsorship that any agreement you come to will be a two-way thing. You and your club or society will be expected to honour obligations in order to maintain the sponsorship, so don't expect to take the money and run.

2. Keep it Simple and Realistic

The more straightforward your sponsorship agreement, the easier it will be to uphold. Don't enter into an agreement if you are not confident that you and your club or society will be able to honour your end of the partnership. Remember, not everyone in your club and society will share your commitment, so think of your members and what they will be prepared to give in return for sponsorship.

3. Be in it for the Short Haul

The make up of your club and society will change each year with new members and new committee members. As a result, what you are prepared to do for sponsorship, and indeed what you need to gain from it will vary from year to year. With this in mind, it can be risky to commit to lengthy sponsorship agreements, as in the future they may not seem such a good deal. Our advice would be to seek agreements on a yearly basis, as it is much easier to renew a short term contract you are happy with than break a long term one which no longer suits your needs.

4. Seek Common Goals

As sponsorship represents a partnership, it is best to approach potential sponsors to whom you know you can offer something genuine in return. Think about companies or businesses which you and your club or society are regularly in contact with, or those who have similar aims to yourselves.

What the Sponsor can do for you

It's not all about the money. Although a financial contribution is what most clubs and societies will seek from their sponsor there are more varied ways in which a sponsor can aid your club or society.

1. Provide Finance

The most obvious contribution a sponsor can make to your club or society is to give you money in return for advertising or use of their product or business.

2. Provide Clothing

A sponsor may provide kit or clothing for your club or society in return for their name being displayed on it. Please check with the SU that any kit is line with the agreement with Surridge.

3. Discounts

If you and your club or society are regular customers of a particular business, then you may be able to negotiate sponsorship in the form of a discount. This could be money off equipment or supplies ordered from a specific shop, a reduced admission price to events when taking all of your club or society along, or a discount when hiring specific services or facilities.

4. Offer Facilities or Venue

If your club or society has specific equipment or facility needs that cannot be met by the Union or the University, then effective sponsorship for you may take the form of an agreement for the use of a more tailored venue. A company may be willing to let you use their venue in return for advertising or your involvement in their other activities.

What you can do for the Sponsor

It is important to remember that as a club or society you can offer much more to potential sponsors than just a t-shirt with their logo on it. Playing kit sponsorship may be highly prized in professional sport, but there is a chance that your sponsors will not see it as such an effective marketing tool at University level. So, be prepared to think outside the box and use the strengths of your particular group to find something that can benefit both your club or society and any potential sponsors.

1. Advertising

Helping to get a company's name into the University and the community is the most accepted form of sponsorship. This can be done through displaying the sponsor's logo on playing, training or social kit, or possibly even displaying company banners at club or society events.

2. Attendance at their venue/business

As a collective, the business brought by just the members of your club or society can give businesses quite a boost. Arranging to hold events with potential sponsors, or simply ensuring your members use the sponsor's service or products regularly could be deemed a significant contribution to a sponsorship agreement.

3. Aiding with Promotions

Young, enthusiastic, vibrant people like you can be great ambassadors for businesses or companies. If your club or society is of an artistic bent, an effective form of sponsorship may be to agree to perform at or be involved in a company's events or promotions. Just offering the services of your members to help publicise your potential sponsors could prove valuable.

4. Involvement in Activities

The experience and knowledge of your club and society is another valuable commodity and you may be able to offer this to potential sponsors for the benefit of your group. For example, if you are working with an external venue, you may be able to get the use of their facilities at a reduced rate if you agree to offer your experience to help with their other activities, such as coaching community groups.

5. Fundraising

Most larger businesses - particularly chains - will have an expectation upon them to give something back to the community, which is known as Corporate Social Responsibility. Students can be really good ambassadors and people on the ground to help businesses do this e.g. fundraising activities for charity (which we ask to be the Union's charities) and to demonstrate their positive impact on Worcester.

What Not to Do

In addition to the advice listed above there are also three facts of which you must be aware of when looking for sponsorship.

1. No Bars

Quite simply, clubs and societies are not permitted to secure sponsorship from external bars or pubs (Excluding Tramps). This decision was made by Student Council in 2008, due to the detrimental effect these external partnerships were having on SU bar which is of course your Union venue. More recently the Students' Union has entered in to a partnership with Tramps Nightclub, which gives them exclusive access to our membership – any deals or partnerships with bars or clubs are in direct breach of our contract with Tramps Nightclub. We also do not enter into any agreement or contract, including vicariously through clubs and societies, with Bushwackers or Sin.

2. No Pizza Companies

The Union has a long-term agreement with Dominoes pizza and so any contract between a club or society with another pizza provider or pizza delivery company will contravene this.

3. No Letting Agents

The Union has a long-term tradition of working with the University and landlords advertised via studentpad, not least through our annual Housing Fair. The Union sees no reason, with the plethora of reputable landlords around and the housing they have available, that students should need to rent from Letting Agents and, consequently, pay extra charges and fees.

4. No Contract, No Sponsorship

This guide and the steps identified in it are designed to safeguard you from unfair and unreasonable sponsorship tie-ins. For your sponsorship to be official you must use the Sponsorship Contract form at the back of this guide and have it signed by representatives of your club or society, your potential sponsor, the VP Student Activities and the SU Chief Executive

5. No signature, you're on your own

If the contract is not signed by both SU parties, then any deal you have struck is not recognised by the Union and as such you will be entirely liable for any shortfalls resulting from the agreement.

Remember – we are here to support you – don't do anything you're not sure about and always ask. When contracts and money get involved, things can occasionally get tricky so we all need be sure you are doing the right thing and are here to help you. If in doubt, just ask us.

Maintaining Your Agreement

Signing a sponsorship contract is the start of a commitment and it is important that you do your best to maintain your agreement with a sponsor. The more pro-active you are in working with your sponsor the more likely they are to work with your group in the future. Honouring your commitment is vital to this, but doing a few extras also helps. A thank you letter when the agreement is signed or when money or services are received is a good start, as are pictures of events and examples of sponsor's money, logos, or donations in action.

Step By Step Guide

To help you through the process of finding and securing sponsorship we have produced a step-by-step guide. This guide takes you through the recommended six steps you should follow to obtain sponsorship for your club or society.

1. Find your Sponsor

The first step is to identify potential sponsors. Think about companies you use regularly, those to whom you can offer something in return or simply local businesses who may welcome the exposure. If you're not sure about a potential sponsor, check with us first.

2. Introduce Yourself

Once you have identified a suitable sponsor, or sponsors, the next step is to introduce your club or society to them. The most effective way of doing this is to send a letter (or email) including a proposal detailing who you are and what you are after. You can find templates of both these documents at the end of this guide which you can amend to suit your own group.

3. Prepare your Proposal and talk to us

Remember to keep your proposal simple and realistic, as this is just an introduction after all. Once you have completed both these documents you need to notify the VP Student Activities who will check your proposal and your potential sponsor to ensure that your plans do not contravene Union rules or put unnecessary strain on your club or society. You are also welcome to ask the Union's Finance and Commercial Manager for help if you are unsure. Once everyone is happy and the proposal has been signed move on to point 4.

4. Meet with the Sponsors

Once you've been given the green light by the Union the next step is to arrange a meeting with the sponsors to discuss your proposal. This gives you a chance not only to meet face to face but also to discuss other options that may not have been considered in your original proposal. If you are happy with both what the sponsor is offering you and what your club or society is offering them in return then progress to step 5.

5. Complete the Sponsorship Agreement

Fill in the sponsorship agreement detailing all you have agreed when meeting with the sponsor. It's important that you make include as much detail as possible in case there are any later issues with your sponsorship.

6. Get it Signed

Lastly, to make it official you need to get your agreement signed. The first signature you need is that of the VP Student Activities followed by the Chief Executive, as this will mean that the Union recognises your agreement. Then you need get the agreement

signed by a member of your club or society committee and also by a representative of the potential sponsor. Once you have all these signatures, ensure that both the Students' Union and your new sponsor have a copy of the agreement.
