

# Top ten tips for sponsorship seekers

*by Kim Skildum-Reid*

Before you get involved in seeking sponsorship, there are a few tips that can help you to get your head around the task at hand.

1. Sponsorship is not about your need; it's about achieving the sponsor's objectives. If you can't – or are unwilling to – accept this, don't even try to gain sponsorship. There is no such thing as free money.
2. Sponsors don't need to share your passion for your event or organisation in order to sponsor you. They just need to be able to see the commercial benefit. Focus on that in any proposal you provide.
3. Do your very best to gain sponsorship from companies or brands that are a natural fit with your event or organisation. The more they look like they are an authentic part of an audience's experience, the better marketing platform sponsors will have and the less potential they have to detract from your credibility.
4. Be sure your whole organisation understands why sponsorship is important to you and is prepared to treat your sponsors like marketing partners. If your colleagues think sponsorship is just free money or a necessary evil, the sponsors will know and your relationship will be difficult.
5. Putting logos on things for awareness and exposure is very old school and is no longer a primary goal of sponsorship. Go ahead and offer to put logos wherever you want – just make sure your proposals offer far more substance to sponsors. Exposure is not the cake, it's not the frosting, it's simply the cherry on the top.
6. Start at least twelve months before an event if you are seeking any kind of substantial sponsorship. It can take some sponsors months to make a decision and they usually need at least six months to get their leverage program together before the event. This is for your benefit, as well as the sponsors'. If you get knocked back, you need to have enough time to source another sponsor.
7. Keep in mind that you may be working with a very big, very bureaucratic organisation. Be sure your proposal can stand on its own without the personal enthusiasm you may put into your first presentation, as it will likely be passed around to a dozen or more people who will all have input into the decision.

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8. It's better to get a couple of big sponsors than lots of small ones, if at all possible. There is less clutter for them and less sponsor management for you. Small sponsors are just as hard to look after as big ones and can quickly drain your time and energy.
9. Don't ever think that once you've got the cheque your job is done. If you don't service sponsors properly, they will never give you another cent and will talk about you unfavourably to their peers. At worst, you will end up in litigation.
10. Be sure you understand the basics of sponsorship before you try your hand at it. Go to a workshop, read a book or two, and start networking with people in the business. This is a very rewarding field, but one that requires some very specific skills to be successful. If you don't do it properly, you will not get the money you are looking for, and may well burn bridges for funding in the future.

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- [The Sponsor's Toolkit](#) by Anne-Marie Grey and Kim Skildum-Reid, published by McGraw-Hill
- ["Last Generation Sponsorship"](#) – A groundbreaking, free, 10-page PDF article by Kim Skildum-Reid on best practice sponsorship and what it can do for you.
- Kim Skildum-Reid also offers workshops and in-house training and professional coaching for sponsors and sponsorship seekers, as well as options for government and industry associations. Contact Kim's team on [admin@powersponsorship.com](mailto:admin@powersponsorship.com) or more on customised in-house training and coaching, or register at [www.powersponsorship.com](http://www.powersponsorship.com) to find out about upcoming workshops in your area.

If you have any questions, a gripe, or would otherwise like to reach Kim Skildum-Reid, feel free to drop her a line on [kim@powersponsorship.com](mailto:kim@powersponsorship.com).