

Club sponsorship basics

Attracting sponsors for your sports club will take time and effort, there's no hiding it. But once the hard work has been done and you've secured your sponsors for the season it will only take a minimal amount of structured effort to have them want to come back year after year.

Sponsorships don't have to be difficult. Most often sponsors will contribute financially to assist with the purchase of uniforms, travel costs, equipment or other sporting needs. This contribution can make a big difference to the club, but it is not a one-way street. Having a sponsor also requires giving back. Everyone involved in your club's sponsorship program should always keep in mind, what is in it for the sponsor?

It is about business and community

From a business perspective, sponsorship is a marketing investment, sponsoring teams or club events results in positive exposure for the sponsor. This in turn can lead to increased sales, heightened brand awareness and customer loyalty. It is your job to show potential sponsors how a partnership with your club will deliver marketing benefits to their business.

Sponsors are usually pragmatic about the reality of donating money to sporting clubs. On a pure "return on investment" measurement, the money would probably be better spent elsewhere. But most of the time sponsors are contributing money because they also have a genuine connection to community sport and want the club to grow and succeed.

That goodwill cannot be bought. So, if your club is lucky enough to have that kind of committed sponsor, the club needs to put in the effort to show the sponsors how much they are valued, and how important their contribution is.

How to create a successful sponsor relationship

Sponsorships are not one-off transactions. The biggest mistake a club can make is working hard to secure the sponsorship dollars and then forgetting about the sponsor for the rest of the season. This is an important relationship and relationships need work.

- **Recognise their contribution:** Be loud about who is supporting the club. Not only does it make your sponsors feel good to advertise them in a positive light, it will make potential sponsors know that the club is good at working with and supporting its sponsors.
- **Make it personal:** Local community clubs are usually sponsored by small business owners who want to contribute to the club's success. If you're positing about their contribution recognise the people involved, connect them to your club members and mention the owners as well as the business.

- **Deliver on the deal:** If you offer a certain number of social media posts each year, deliver on this. Be proactive and remind your sponsors that they get this benefit, don't just sit back and expect them to remember. Give them support by showing you actively want to deliver on their benefits and promote their business.
- **Give them something extra:** Having a logo on a training shirt is great, but you should always give your sponsors a little something extra. If you're posting a picture of a jersey with their logo front and centre, tag them on the post. This might not be in a sponsorship agreement, but your sponsor will love it and it is such an easy way to give them extra benefits. If that isn't possible, run a feature on each sponsor in a way that will promote their business uniquely.
- **Make them welcome:** There might be VIP access to games included in the sponsorship package, but don't leave it at that. Make sure all sponsors are personally invited to games and other events, allocate a committee member to make them feel welcome if you know they're attending.

Don't forget, sponsorship is a mutually beneficial business relationship between two parties, the business (sponsor) and the club (sponsored). By going the extra mile, you'll find that your sponsors will be happy to support you again next year.

What to Offer Sponsors

When developing a specific sponsorship package, try to include as many benefits as possible. Sponsors want to get in front of your club audience and there are lots of ways to do this, and many are very simple to deliver.

Below are some suggestions on the types of benefits that can be offered. Depending on the type of sponsorship structure you go with, these can be tiered in different ways. For more on this, go to the KPI Knowledge Centre for our other material on club fundraising and sponsorship.

- **Place logos on your jersey, singlet, polo or other club uniform:** Try not to overcomplicate this for the club or the sponsors. For example, keep playing uniform sponsors as one package option, and training uniforms as another.
- **Offer banner positions at your home court or field:** Traditional but important for sponsors, who want to see their brand front and centre when visiting your grounds.
- **Prominent logo and link on your website:** Don't let this one slip. Recognising sponsors on your home page is most valuable to them and is a much better selling point than hiding them on a sponsor page that club members will never navigate to.
- **Include sponsor logo on all printed materials and email newsletters:** Every piece of club communication should include a standard sponsor banner to show they are not forgotten, and deliver on brand awareness promises.

- **Show their logo on your Facebook page (and any other social media):** An easy way to do this is have a thin banner at the bottom of posts that includes the logos of all your sponsors.
- **Original social media posts for each sponsor:** This is not just reposting their logo! This should be a genuine and original post that the sponsor determines overall content for, putting them in front of your community.
- **Reposting and sharing sponsor social media posts and special offers:** A minimum number of these should be included in each sponsorship package.
- **Presence at key sporting or community events:** This can be either part of the original sponsorship deal, or offered as an extra investment opportunity throughout the year. Physical presence at events, even training nights can be a great way to build sponsor relationships.
- **Distribute sponsored giveaways:** Promote these loudly in your marketing channels in a way that shows the club is genuinely supportive of the sponsors products or services.
- **Feature stories in the club newsletter:** A great feature of “premium” sponsorship packages, this gives sponsors a high-profile way to get in front of club’s members, and demonstrate the community and / or personal connection they have to the club.

Need help?

For more information on club fundraising, download our Guides or go to our Knowledge Centre. Some useful links are below. If you would like to talk to one of our team, we’re always available to chat, we have experience working with and on club committees and are happy to share our experiences.

- [Fundraising Tips from an Expert](#)
- [Club Guide](#)
- [Sponsorship Proposal Template](#)
- [Knowledge Centre – Club Fundraising](#)