

# Identifying the Need for Sponsors 1

Before approaching a potential sponsor, you must define the objectives of and fully understand the opportunities available to both sides. **Sport and commercial partnerships have proven successful once both sides understand the benefits of their working relationship.** It is not realistic to ask for and receive funding without presenting a clear agenda and a method for measuring the impact of the program or event.

Therefore, you must first initiate a development planning session with members of your board or club. Determining the priority and the sustainability of your current and future projects can be done by assembling a small working group of people who are 'thinkers' and 'doers'. Whether it be in the form of a strategy document or a one, three, or five-year plan, setting objectives will not only help you understand the elements of the project, it will also show potential sponsors that you are forward-thinking and prepared for implementation. Investing time and effort in the planning stage will benefit you as you move through the sponsorship proposal and implementation process.

Also, as part of this step, you and your development group should look at your current income and spending budgets. Locate the projects on which you spend money and determine with whom you spend this money. Then examine ways to offset these costs. By looking at your income and expenditure from a different angle, you may find creative ways to involve existing and new commercial partners, both on large and small scales.

Once you have determined your financial needs, you must consider what you have to offer a commercial partner. In practice, most sponsors establish partnerships because they know they will receive PR and media exposure. No matter how small your organisation, you can always find opportunities for branding. Consider perimeter boards, logos on shirts, titles of competitions, promotional handouts, announcement mentions, and so on. If you think of these PR opportunities as a form of advertising for the company or organisation, you will see what the sponsor hopes to get out of the partnership.

## Points To Remember

- 1 Organise a small working group
- 2 Develop a clear agenda and set priorities
- 3 Define PR opportunities and what you can offer a sponsor

## Examples of What Cricket Clubs can Offer Sponsors

Perimeter board branding

Corporate logos on clothing and property

Competition titles

Promotional handouts

Announcement mentions

Invitations to club events and dinners

Award ceremonies

Advertising in fixture card, newsletter, club website, and on notice boards

Match day hospitality



# Researching Potential Sponsors 2

Now that you have organised and prioritised the projects and what you have to offer, you must research potential sponsors. **The most appropriate organisations for you to approach are ones with whom you currently have a relationship or ones that target the same consumer as you.** If you want to approach a new organisation, the Yellow Pages ([www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com)), your local Chamber of Commerce, and Business Link Network Company (national freephone number: 0845 600 9006) can offer some insight into the businesses in your area.

You may also want to look through local press reports, being sure to look for both positive and negative articles on local companies. Sponsorship is a form of communication and some companies may need to improve their public image. While you want to be wary of any activity that may give cricket a bad name, consider local organisations or branches of national organisations that may have received some negative press recently and are looking to invest in the community. The appearance of social responsibility is important for business, and this is where your local cricket initiatives can come in.

Next, you need to learn more about a potential sponsor and the best way to do that is to explore their website, or read their annual report. These two mediums should give you a good idea of what they do, their mission statement and their future goals, not to mention their budgetary situation. Don't forget to network with people in your community who have an interest in cricket, and who have connections to local businesses. They may be able to offer further insight, and if they cannot help you personally, then they may be able to refer you to others who can.

Once you have a short list of organisations you would like to contact, make a few phone calls to find out who actually makes decisions about sponsorships. Be sure to ask for the spelling of his/her name, his/her title, and the appropriate phone number and address for future communication. It is very important that your communication is directed to the right person, to ensure it is handled appropriately and that your hard work will pay off.

Throughout your research, keep in mind that some commercial money in the form of sponsorships might be appropriate for additional support from Sport England and lottery funded initiatives. Sportsmatch, for example, is a business sponsorship incentive scheme that is administered by the Institute of Sports Sponsorship on behalf of the government and Sport England. It aims to provide a much-needed boost to grass roots sport by providing pound for pound matching on sponsors' contributions. While the sponsorship must meet specific criteria and be approved by Sportsmatch, this is a great example of how you may increase the amount of money available for your development projects without overextending your sponsor's financial contribution. There are many different schemes available to cricket. Please contact your CDO or Local Authority for ones that may apply to your situation.

Finding appropriate sponsors takes time and research before you formally approach a potential partner. It is a good idea to have the facts about the commercial organisation in front of you when you enter negotiations, as your discussion may lead to a working relationship. As with any business venture, future surprises should be kept to a minimum. And remember, do not make any formal advances until you have completed your research of companies and organisations in your area.

## Points to Remember

- 1 **Research potential sponsors via websites, annual reports and newspaper articles**
- 2 **Create a short list of companies with the best profile to be your sponsors**
- 3 **Make some enquiries into appropriate contact names and addresses, but do not contact them just yet**
- 4 **Examine available government schemes which may maximise your potential sponsorship funding**

## Case Study Worcestershire Cricket Board

During Summer 2001, Worcestershire Cricket Board announced a £60,000 three-year sponsorship deal with Apollo 2000 and Sportsmatch. Securing this money would not have been possible without the organisation of a small working group who met almost one year before the deal was finalised to examine their projects and timelines. Through their planning sessions, the group was able to set realistic budgetary targets, research new and existing relationships, and properly prepare for discussions and events. The decision to approach Apollo 2000 with this development sponsorship package came from an already strong pre-existing relationship between Worcestershire cricket and Apollo 2000. By capitalising on their involvement in cricket and maintaining a working relationship with the individuals at Apollo 2000 and Sportsmatch, WCB was able to secure £60,000 for youth cricket development.

