

Why go to business for support? –

Unlike Grant Making Trusts which have a fixed amount to spend companies might have a Donations budget, a Marketing budget and a Training budget. There are a number of ways to find money and support within a company. What is more often corporate money is unrestricted – something we all need!

What kind of support might you get?

Marketing related – sponsorship, promotions, licensing, cause related, events

Employee related – Charity adoption, Volunteering, payroll giving, employee fundraising

Others – Donations gifts in kind, secondments, mentoring.

Corporate fundraising may be about using corporate resources to generate money rather than just asking them to give you money. You might be offered a gift in kind,- if you can match it to a line in your budget then it is the same as having money!

BUT corporate fundraising is NOT a quick win. If you get something quickly you might have got lucky –but might have missed an opportunity for greater support over the long run.

Am I too small?

Corporate fundraising is not just for big charities. Very big companies can be happy to work with very small community groups if they appeal to their interests and priorities. It is all about personalities. Business decisions are based 20% on technical merit (you are a good cause but so are a lot of other charities) 80% of the decision comes down to your relationship.

How to Approach Businesses?

Focus – a scattergun approach via a hundred letters to local business may bring you in a little but is unlikely to get you very far. So you need to plan and research.

Research

How can you find out who to approach? You might be surprised who much information you have access to–

- Your staff
- Your trustees
- Your volunteers
- Current supports
- Local Paper
- Internet
- Chambers of commerce
- Rotary groups
- What other charities are doing
- Old information in your filing cabinets
- Driving or walking around your neighbourhood.

Do remember that people need to trust that you will use any information they give you carefully and not damage their relationship with the company you want to approach.

What can you offer a business?

Positive press
Local prestige
Staff development
Recruitment and retention

Employee development

Marketing – increased sales or market penetration

The reasons why a business might help you will vary – in some cases it is very business focused – how can you help their bottom line, other times it will be more emotionally motivated. You need to find out what is important to them.

Package up your 'project' to appeal to businesses.

You might need to create an event in order to generate sponsorship which can support the organisation. As long as you are honest with the company sponsorship does not need to only cover the cost of the event – it can be for more.

Ask a PR company if any of their clients are looking for an opportunity related to your cause.

Making the approach

- Identify the key contact – you may not always be able to start with the decision maker but you could get to an influencer.
- Can you find a connection?
- Have a clear objective – to build a relationship. You don't know how to influence them until you know what their motivation is.
- Get out of your chair – visit their offices and get to know the company culture, what do people wear, what time do they come in – it might sound like 'stalking' but you will be more confident if you can fit in with their style.
- Be 100% confident that you helping them to do their job – they will benefit from a relationship with you. You are not begging, they are not doing you a favour. Research says that in a conversation only 7% of the impact comes from the words. 55% is body language and 38% is tone. You need to feel confident to make an effective call.
- Have a Hook – you need to leave them wanting to meet you. Ask for help or advice, offer a benefit to them. Ask to take them to lunch and you might get a coffee.
- Pick up the Phone

The first meeting

The purpose of a first meeting is, in part, more research

- Continue the relationship you started on the phone
- Find out their motivations
- Warm them up to your cause.

Then what?

- Keep the relationship going
- Deliver on what you promise
- Ask for advice
- Say thank you

But what if they say no?

Pick yourself up and carry on

Say thank you for considering us – you never know when there may be a future opportunity.

TOP TIPS

- Research and choose a short list of companies to approach.
- Be confident you are helping them to do their job – there is a benefit to them.
- Focus on the relationship
- Don't only look for money donations - think creatively