

Title:

How to get sponsors for your vehicle

Word Count:

841

Summary:

What does it take to get a sponsor for your custom vehicle project? There is no simple answer, but the short answer is with a unique idea, a killer website and a lot of hard work.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

What does it take to get a sponsor for your custom vehicle project?

Everybody always asks me, "how did you get so many sponsors?" The short answer is, "because I asked". I know this is an overly simplified answer, but it really is the main key to getting sponsorships. The second key to being successful when soliciting potential sponsors is having something worth sponsoring that is interesting and unique. It sounds easy, but it's not as simple as it sounds. I got the idea for soliciting sponsors from truck I saw in Four Wheeler many years ago called "Project MPG". It was a nondescript, white Ford F-350 dually which had been customized under the hood to produce the maximum miles per gallon possible. Their project truck had about eight or nine companies sponsoring it. When I first began my Custom Ford project, I contacted the owner of Project MPG for some advice. He very quickly gave me the brush off and being unhelpful was an understatement. So I took the initiative, based on my experience in marketing and business in general, and started making 'sales' calls to companies that manufactured the products I needed for my project.

I knew that there would a lot of folks out there with a desire to build a custom four wheel drive truck and hope that they could get corporate sponsorship to lessen the financial burden. So before I even started disassembling the truck, the first order of business was to build a website about the project so that potential sponsors would be able see that I'm not just another "Joe Schmoe" trying to get some free parts. Once the website was created and online, I had a powerful sales tool with which I could contact the companies for which I was seeking products. I never asked for money, and conversely, never received any either. What I did receive was significant support financially through companies

providing products and services for my project in exchange for the advertising and marketing opportunities my project provided. This was a win/win program for both of us. I won because I was able to secure products for 'free' or at cost. The sponsor won because they got to have their product associated with a potentially high profile marketing vehicle (pun intended).

The next step was determining who to contact at the various companies when the need arose. Finding the right person with whom to speak in a large company can sometimes be quite challenging. When dealing with smaller companies, it is usually much simpler, but not always. Once you find the right person, the next step is introducing yourself in such a way as to not come across as "wanting something". It is much better to explain why you are calling, what you need and ask if they offer any kind of sponsorship opportunities. This sets the stage for your conversation. The person on the other end now knows who you are, what you want and that you're not trying to get something free right out of the gate. This greatly helps your chances of success. Now you have room to discuss and negotiate with them. Always be honest, but you don't have to show all of your cards up front. Let them speak. They will usually give you a lot of good information about their company and about how they operate. Makes sure you let them know that you're flexible and that even a partial sponsorship such as offering the product at cost or a significantly reduced rate would work as well.

Once you've set the tone, you need to let them know, somehow, about your website. Many times, they are curious and will pull up your site while you're on the phone. Use this to your advantage. They can now see that your project is real and not just some pie in the sky pipe dream. Let them know how their "donation" will benefit them. Answer these questions for them: How will my company benefit? How visible will the vehicle be? (translation: how many shows will the vehicle attend and where). How visible will my company be? (translation: how will people know my company sponsored you?) If you can answer these questions effectively, you have a very good shot at receiving a "Yes". If you can't answer these questions effectively, then you have no business even picking up the phone. All you're doing is wasting their time and yours.

Once you get the much sought after "Yes", the next step is to show you're sincere. Get their name up on your website under the list of sponsors. Make sure that everyone knows that Acme Corp. supplied the XYZ brand muffler bearings for your custom creation. Lastly, when the vehicle is done, get it out in front of the public. If you stay true to your word, you'll have a much better shot at the next company as your project progresses. Good luck and be sure to let me know how your sponsorship quest pans out.

