



## **A quick guide to blagging sponsorship**

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The Mongol Rally could cost you absolutely bugger all if you put time and effort into Sponsorship.

### **The most important bit about sponsorship for your team:**

Make sure anyone you extract money from knows EXACTLY where their money is going and what it's for. You need to make sure there's absolutely no confusion between sponsorship for your own reasonable costs and donations to charity from companies in return for benefits.

### **Some things to do before you approach anyone**

#### **Know the charities**

There is no point arranging a meeting with someone and not being able to answer their questions about the charities and their work. Read up on all the charities' fine work and make sure you understand it – this may sound obvious but often development projects can have many additional benefits which contribute to the most obvious and visible benefits. Arm yourself with some solid facts about the charities and some leaflets. Have the name of a contact at each charity who can verify the event if the company wants this. (See charity section online for Charity contacts who will be able to help with your fundraising and your questions.)

#### **Get in touch with local media**

##### **Three main reasons:**

1. Get your mugs in the media and you will be surprised at the response that you will get. A plea for sponsorship and donations will often result in a few calls from individuals and companies because what you're doing makes people laugh.
2. Regional media are normally more easily convinced to include the names of your sponsors than national media – use the local link and get local sponsors into your regional media, and go for all of it: TV, online, print and radio.

3. Once you have a journo hooked at an early stage it's been shown by past teams that they will probably follow your progress all the way and do regular updates, which gets more exposure for your sponsors.

### **Information to hand out**

You'll meet loads of people who will probably want to know your contact details and website address – why not print out some brief blurb so you can direct people to your fundraising profile or team website...

### **Some ideas for pitching**

#### **Sticker printer**

Organise a sticker printer before you do anything! If you can go to a company and show that you have already sorted the publicity aspect of the deal, it'll be much easier to get their money! Remember, you have to make it worth while for the sponsors, so show them that you've put in the effort and that your promises of advertising space will be upheld.

#### **Know the business**

You will have to sell the Mongol Rally and your team to the company, so show an understanding of their business and show them how you can help promote their business. It's also worth mentioning that they will be the only company in their given field that will be offered this marvelous opportunity with your team.

(Companies will not appreciate having their rivals advertised alongside themselves)

#### **What would their alternative be?**

Find out what a full page colour advertisement in the local paper costs (probably the most expensive in the paper), and the price. The company will get an advert in the paper when you get your photos done with their name on your car, plus they get the goodwill gesture of supporting a team that is raising money for charity.

#### **Be nice to receptionists!**

The most powerful person in any company is the receptionist, upset them and you'll never get to speak to the people that can authorise your sponsorship. Try not to tell the receptionist too much however, otherwise they will just relay the message and you might not get put through to state your claim.

#### **Cash is expensive**

At the end of the day, we all want to raise money for the charity. Sadly, many companies will be reluctant to give you a pile of twenties, but they may well offer products or services that you can sell on or offer as prizes in raffles etc. A company can look much more generous if they donate £500 worth of products rather than £250 in cash, but the cost to them will invariably be less. Your local auction house may well be willing to put your items in their next general sale at a reduced (or free) commission rate.

Also try getting sponsors for a specific part of your trip so they know where their money is going and what you'll spend it on.

#### **Start small**

Smaller companies are much easier to get sponsorship from; large corporations will have strict budgets that will have often been assigned in advance, so you'll have to

work really hard to get a large company on board. A company that is run by the owner can make on the spot decisions.

### **Start where?**

If you are willing to take on lots of low budget sponsors, a great place to contact is your local chamber of commerce. Loads of start up businesses will welcome publicity. Remind them that charitable donations are tax deductible. If you go down this route, you'll easily get loads of extra press coverage, which in turn could lead to more sponsors.

## **Other advice...**

### **Tag it and bag it**

Take whatever is on offer, and if someone says no, thank them for their time and ask them if they know of any other companies that might be interested in your proposal, as with any sales position, success is all about networking – sounds like a bunch of shite but its true.

### **Owner's Clubs**

If you can find an owners club for your chosen vehicle, get in touch with them now! They are a great source of sponsorship, both from companies and individuals. Tell their website editor how crap everyone thinks the car is and how you are going to prove them wrong. Fans of the car will come flocking, with their pride spilling out of their wallets hopefully...

### **Delivering the goods** – ROI (Return on Investment – the vomit-inducing industry term)

Keep your sponsors informed at all the stages of your preparation. A newsletter won't break the bank and will keep interest levels in your efforts high. If the sponsors are local drop in and take some sponsorship information with you, as often the staff will know nothing about the event, so you may get a few extra pounds for ten minutes work.

Keep in touch with them after the rally and keep your promises for sending them pictures taken in the arse end of nowhere for their entertainment.

### **No corporate love?**

If selling your team to a company isn't your cup of tea, then stick to individuals. Friends, family and work colleagues are all good sources of funds, and make sure you've got lots of sponsorship information for them to hand out for you. Word of mouth is a handy weapon.

This guide is not intended to be the definitive guide to fundraising; it is just a few ideas so come up with your own master plans and let us know how it goes!