



3. Standing out from the crowd



What's covered in this chapter

This chapter provides hints and tips on how best to 'standout' in a very competitive sponsor-seeker marketplace. Brands, especially those with a history of sponsorship, will receive many proposals throughout the year. In some cases, major national brands may receive hundreds each week. Equally, brands who have not sponsored before will need more convincing as to the effectiveness of sponsorship and becoming your partner.

Therefore, the importance of developing a clear set of concise and unique selling points should not be understated.

Using the latest sponsorship trends and insights, this chapter offers advice on creating a clear and engaging set of objectives and Unique Selling Points (USPs) and ultimately developing a pitch that will resonate with potential sponsors.

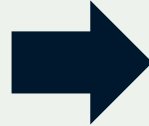


President's addresses



John F. Kennedy

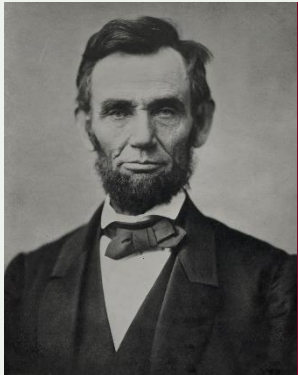
Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.



Meaning:

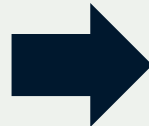
Sponsorship is a 'two-way' business relationship - it won't just provide you with 'free money'.

It is imperative to consider not only what a sponsor can do to help your business, but crucially what you can do to help theirs.



Abraham Lincoln

If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six sharpening my axe.

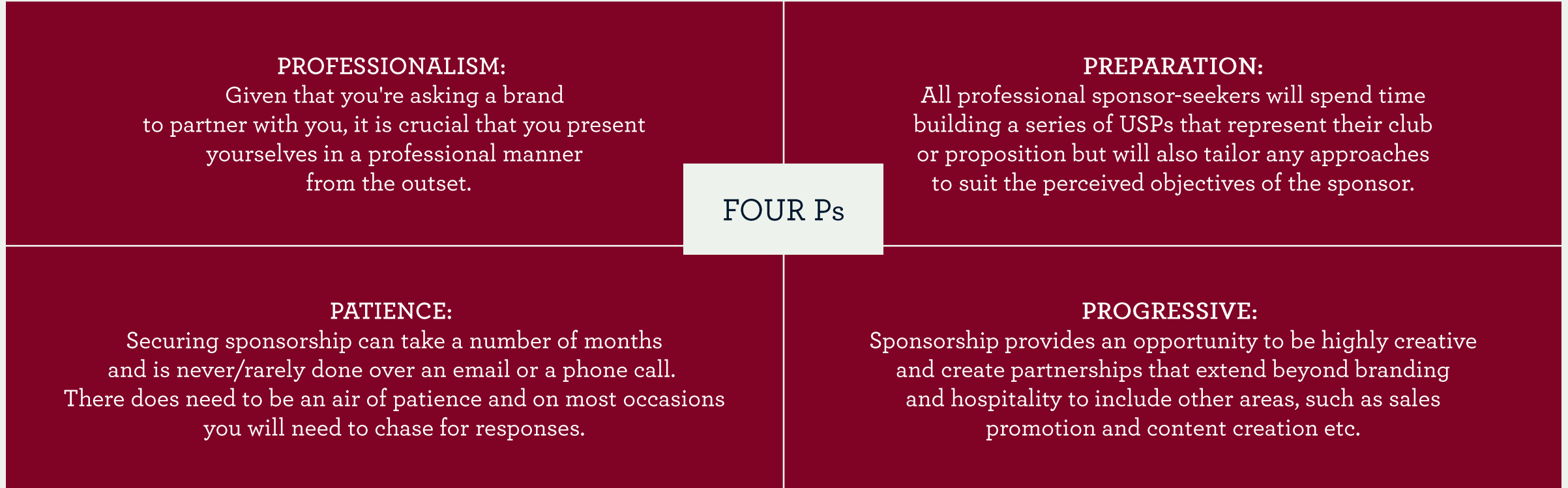


Meaning:

Before making approaches to potential sponsors, you must prepare! A pitch should demonstrate a clear understanding of the brand's business & objectives and how you can support/deliver against them.



Key points for sponsorship approaches



If you follow each of these four key points, then it will help you to really stand out from the crowd!



Example USPs

Whilst USPs should be adapted to suit the perceived needs and objectives of a potential sponsor, a core set of USPs needs to be created. The following offers a template for a set of potential USPs:

- ✓ Association with the <region/town/area's> largest and oldest sports club
- ✓ Directly communicate with 500 passionate rugby fans at each home game
- ✓ Gain coverage in local media
- ✓ Tickets and hospitality at every home game and selected away matches
- ✓ Branding and accreditation throughout the ground, on playing kit and our digital channels
- ✓ Invitations to club events, such as the End of Season Dinner/Awards
- ✓ Host and attend regular networking events to engage with the regional business community
- ✓ Develop co-created engaging content for your marcomms and digital channels
- ✓ Access our club house for meetings and conferences etc.
- ✓ A key part of the club's new sponsorship programme, offering your business significant value
- ✓ A strong platform to communicate to the local community and champion your local rugby club!



Example elevator pitch

“Our club is a pillar of the local community; we have been promoted 3 times in the last 8 seasons, currently play in the <insert league> and are the county's largest sports club. For every home game we have over 500 loyal fans coming to watch and enjoy our first-rate hospitality.

We are currently looking for major local brands to join us on the club's next chapter. Benefits include high profile branding at our home ground & on playing kits, tickets hospitality, social and digital media content, access to the players, use of the clubhouse and ultimately association with the biggest sports club in the area.

Are you interested in hearing more about how we can help your business?”





The golden rules of standing out

Whatever the level of sponsorship or ask, all initial sponsorship approaches to brands need to demonstrate:

- ✓ A clear business case and rationale for an involvement, including a clear set of USPs and demonstrating a ROI
- ✓ An understanding of the potential sponsors' business and objectives
- ✓ An outline of potential benefits to suit the objectives of the brand
- ✓ Potential activation ideas, such as creating events, use of player visits, behind the scenes access to the club
- ✓ Recommendations on next steps and suggested meeting



Task: How are we different and what makes us interesting?

Now think about and prepare your own sales narrative...

Considerations:

Most rugby club sponsorships will offer similar elements within their propositions, i.e. supporting a local club/community engagement, branding and tickets/hospitality. In preparing your sponsorship proposition and developing your USPs, you should challenge yourselves to identify what makes you different.

History & success
Any unique stories or narratives in the club's past

Assets
Does your ground or facilities have any special features?

Past players
Do you have any ex-internationals or well-known players?

Competition in the community
– potential sponsors may consider other sports clubs in the area (i.e. football, netball or hockey etc.) – are you the largest sports club in the area?
The most high profile?
The most fans or members?

Current players and club stats
Do you have the biggest rugby club in your region? The largest Mini Rugby section? The largest Women's section?

Outreach programmes
Has the club directly helped anyone through community or education programmes?



Chapter takeaways and top tips

<p>All individual sponsorship approaches need to be carefully considered.</p>	<p>Ideally, if resource allows, they should include some evidence of research into the target brand and reflect their perceived objectives and value – so most approaches might be slightly different.</p>
<p>However, you do need to prepare a clear set of USPs to promote your club and the opportunity in the most engaging and concise way.</p>	<p>These USPs should used as the basis of ALL sales materials.</p>
<p>Spending time planning your approaches early will reap rewards and ultimately lead to less resource or time required further down the line i.e. due to create a consistent message etc.</p>	<p>Within the sales narrative and USPs it is imperative that you think about how you can benefit the sponsor (beyond just branding and hospitality), and develop ways that you work together which are mutually beneficial – thereby delivering against their objectives too.</p>

