



Sponsorship and Partnership Toolkit



Introduction

Sponsorship is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

These days, brands and potential sponsors seek much more rounded and multi-faceted partnerships that will provide them with a genuine return on investment. Gone are the days where rugby sponsors are content with just branding on kit and some tickets to matches.

This toolkit provides a comprehensive guide to securing new sponsors & partners but also offers advice on how you can achieve more from existing sponsors.

This document has been developed to help clubs throughout England navigate the tricky path to landing and keeping valuable sponsors. This includes the following topics:

- **What sponsor see as important and what they want**
- **Maximising the value of your commercial assets and what to offer sponsors**
- **Building engaging sponsorship packages**

- **Creating sponsorship sales materials that stand out from the crowd**
- **Identifying potential sponsors**
- **Tackling the challenge of what to charge**
- **How to negotiate deals and agree sponsorship contracts**
- **How to manage and keep sponsors happy – making sure that deals last for a long time**

This toolkit is also supported by sponsorship sales presentation and contract templates, which can be found here:

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>

In summary, with more and more clubs (not just in rugby) hunting for those all important sponsors in what is a tough environment, this document will help give you a vital step-up to success!



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1. Setting the foundations of a sponsorship programme



What's covered in this chapter

This chapter details the foundations for sponsorship at your club.

Whether you already have sponsors on board or are starting afresh, this chapter will take you through what a sponsorship structure can look like, and the different 'levels' of sponsorship.

It will signpost the club 'assets' you have available at your club, these will form the basis of the sponsorship package.

From there, understanding what your sponsor is trying to achieve through understanding their target audience, their objectives and over what timescale.

We then look at how to deliver the sponsorship and what resourcing that will take from your club's perspective.

Finally, we review the four main types of sponsorship – cash sponsor, value-in-kind sponsor, marketing partner and supplier. We tell you what they mean, how they differ and most importantly, how they can offer value to your club.

By the end of this chapter, you should have a good base knowledge of sponsorship in order to begin to develop sponsor conversations.



Is sponsorship right for your club?

Sponsorship isn't right for every club.

For sponsorship to be successful for both parties, it requires commitment, in terms of resources – staff time and some of your own budget, in order to deliver the service required by the sponsor.

Sponsorship is not free money – the club will be required to work closely with the sponsor, and/or their agencies to deliver the agreed rights, to a schedule. This will take time and resources from the club side.

Some questions to ask before you enter into sponsorship:

- Do you need additional revenue right now?
- Can you find that from other revenue streams?
- Do you have sufficient assets and value to offer a sponsor?
- Do you have the resources (staff, knowledge and budget) to manage sponsorships at your club?





What sponsors are looking for

When you begin sponsorship discussions with a potential sponsor, you need to find out as much about them as a company, who they are, what they do, and what they want to get out of a sponsorship with your club.

This is the time to establish if there is a good fit between you as a club and the potential sponsor.

The best sponsorships are built on shared values between the club and sponsor, shared audience and shared objectives.

When beginning sponsorship discussions with a brand, you can assume they want to communicate with your fans, they may also want to use your club and the assets that you have to communicate outside of your fan base.

These are their target audiences. Understanding how important each audience is will help plan effectively to ensure the sponsor is happy.

The sponsor will expect you to be able to tell them about the audience make-up of your club. The better quality information you have on your audience base, the better.

From the outset, you will need to be organised and clear in your sponsor discussions.

The right structure for your club is a key part of this, which we go on to detail on the next page.



Structuring your sponsorship programme

If you haven't already, you will need a plan to structure your sponsor relationships – that is the 'hierarchy' of where each sponsor sits in relation to others.

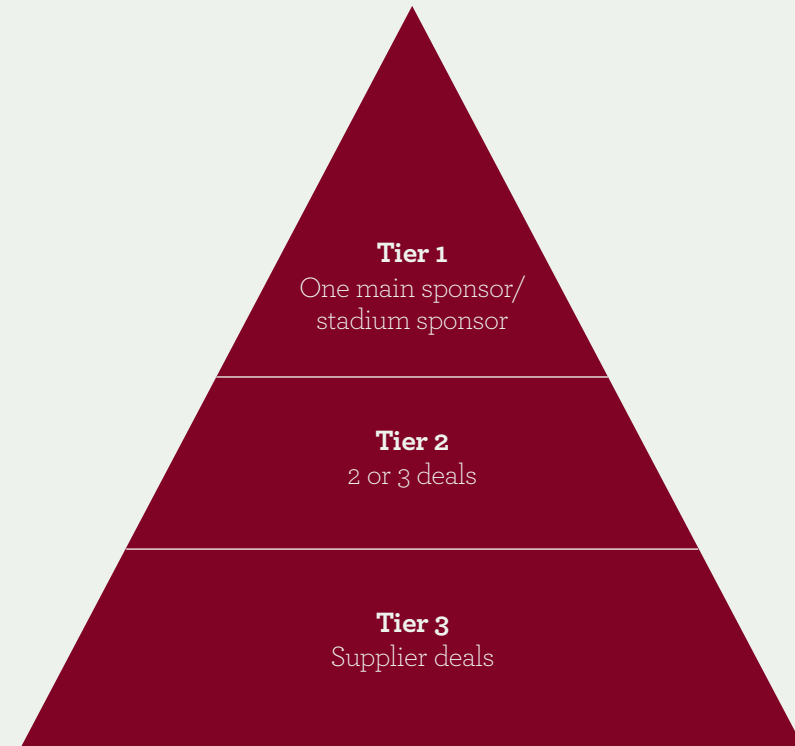
Many sports bodies use a pyramid structure (see diagram) for their sponsorships – with one main sponsor at the top, a small number at Tier 2 and then some supplier deals at Tier 3.

The key here is that fewer, quality relationships are better than too many, this way you offer sponsors more value, and a smaller number means you can focus your staff resource on managing them.

A good rule of thumb is to aim for a maximum of 5 or 6 core partnerships across your pyramid.

We want to avoid sponsorship clutter, which would look like 15 or 20 brands on the rugby shirt, which results in confusion for all.

Your team should be clear in agreeing a suite of rights/assets for use across each tier of the pyramid so that there are enough assets to share around and enough to satisfy sponsors who agree deals later in the season.





What to offer a sponsor

Each club needs to be clear on what they have to offer a sponsor – these are your sponsorship assets.

Assets are everything from, the rights you own, branding, events and event tickets, access to players etc.

There is a list of potential sponsorship assets on the next page, which you can replicate for your club, and build an asset list, which can act almost like a menu to choose from when building a sponsorship package for a new sponsor.

Don't fall into the trap of overly focusing on branding assets when creating a sponsorship package.

Selecting assets from different 'areas' of the asset list will create a more valuable sponsorship package than selling off individual assets such as Player of the Match, Match Ball etc..

Each sponsor is likely to be looking for something different from a sponsorship, there is more on this later in this chapter in Defining the Objectives. Remember to ensure the assets you include in the sponsorship package for Sponsor A are related to their objectives.



Example asset register

A downloadable Asset Register Template is available here:
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>

Potential asset list

Rights:

Official partner of xx club

Category exclusivity:

Ensuring that the club cannot sign two competitor brands from the same category

Branding:

Both on-site physical branding and digital branding on your website /e-marketing and social channels

Power of association:

Association with your sport's/club's values and what that represents

Access to tickets/hospitality:

Allocation of x number of season tickets/hospitality tickets per season

Use of players/club experts:

For the sponsor's own marketing or appearances at their head office etc

Content:

For sponsor's own promotional use through their marketing/social channels

Data:

Access to your membership/fan data for their promotions (subject to GDPR)

Use of your club intellectual property:

Use of your logo, imagery for their marketing/promotional use – to be mutually agreed

Live streaming rights

Sampling/activation rights

Community programme support

Supply rights to the stadium:

For food/beverage partners

Venue access rights:

Use of facilities for meetings/conferences



Defining the objectives

“Clarity on sponsorship objectives means the sponsorship is more likely to be successful, and therefore, renewed.”

Ideally the sponsor will have very clear objectives for the sponsorship – that is what they want to achieve from association with your club.

Clarity on sponsorship objectives for both the sponsor and the club means the sponsorship is much more likely to succeed, and be renewed in the longer term.

Is the objective to raise awareness of the sponsor’s brand?

Is the objective to raise awareness of a new product the sponsor is about to launch?

Is the objective to demonstrate that the sponsor are a community-focused local company who are supporting the rugby club?

Does the sponsor want to share values which the club already has?

Once both parties are clear on the objectives of the sponsorship, that will inform which rights or assets to include in the sponsorship package to the brand.

For instance if the sponsor has an objective to raise awareness of their brand name, then it makes sense to offer good branding opportunities in their package.

If they are more keen to show that they are a community-focused company, then promotional opportunities around the grassroots/juniors team might be more applicable.



Defining the timescale

Sponsorship is an effective part of the marketing mix when set up correctly and managed over time. However, it isn't a quick fix and usually generates better results over a longer period.

For these reasons, the timescale of the sponsorship should be discussed at the outset to understand what the sponsor expects to see and when, so that expectations can be managed.

Typically, sponsorship contracts are written for a one-year term, but it is worth stating to your new sponsor, that you would ideally like a three-year term, which will strengthen in effectiveness over time.





Delivery of a sponsorship/ agreeing ways of working

Great news! You've signed a new sponsor to your club.

What's next?

It is important that both the club and the sponsor are clear on what is expected from them in order for the sponsorship to be successful... and therefore be renewed next season.

The club will have to provide a certain level of support and servicing to the sponsor (and/or their agencies) on a very regular basis.

The club need to assign a person or a team of people (depending on the size of the sponsorship) to liaise with the sponsor/sponsor's agencies on a monthly, weekly and sometimes a daily basis. The club liaison will be answering questions, ensuring sponsorship assets are delivered to schedule and producing reports demonstrating delivery of those assets.

In addition to planning delivery of your sponsorship, budgeting for that sponsorship is also key.

The club will need to put budget aside to deliver the sponsorship, some examples of costs include:

- Travel costs to get a player to an athlete/team appearance
- The cost of tickets given to the sponsor, which you now can't sell



Sponsorship types

There are four main types of types of sponsorship:

Cash

Where the sponsor pays a fee for assets and association with the club.

Value in Kind (VIK)

Where a sponsor agrees to provide a service or product to the club free of charge in return for assets and association with the club.

Marketing Partnerships

A partner who supplies access and awareness opportunities through their marketing/media channels

Suppliers

A partner who provides it's products to be sold by the club through concession points, e.g. beer brands





Sponsorship types continued

Some examples of VIK sponsorship are:

- Hotel partner who provides free hotel rooms for club players and senior staff whilst on club business
- IT software partner who supports the club's IT requirements
- Electronic partner who supplies the AV equipment to the club

Some considerations for VIK partnerships:

- As with other sponsorships, it is detrimental to take on more partners than you need, as you will need resource (time and staff) to provide them with their sponsorship assets throughout the term of the sponsorship
- VIK sponsorships are really beneficial when the club already spends money in these areas, e.g. health nutrition/ sports drink. These partnerships can save the club money and therefore are invaluable

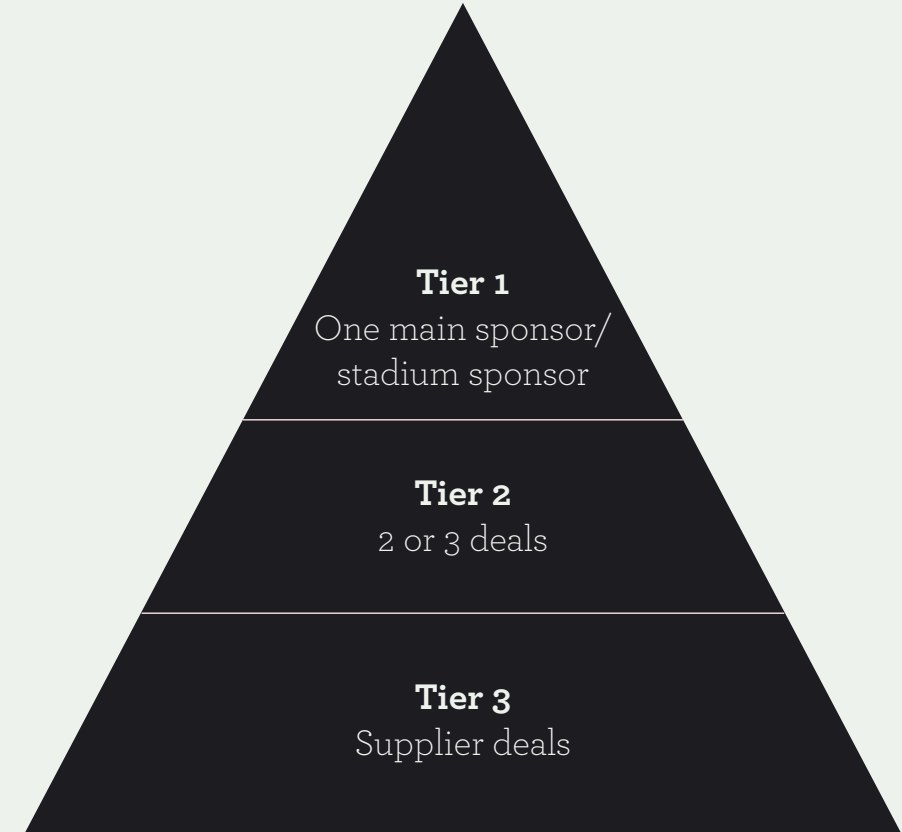




Task: Put any existing sponsors into a sponsorship hierarchy

Using the pyramid structure from earlier on in this chapter, put your existing sponsors or partners into a structure based on the size/importance of their relationship to the club.

Things to consider:	
Consider revenue but also any marketing rights they provide to the club or any value-in-kind they bring to the club such as kit/product	Think about what assets each partner has access to rather than the level of partner they are referred to, or think of themselves as. It might be interesting to realise that most of your partners exist on the same tier of the pyramid



Chapter takeaways

This chapter details the groundwork which you need to do as a sports rights holder before entering into sponsorship discussions with a potential sponsor.

We have covered:

Is sponsorship right for our club? Some considerations before you begin sponsorship discussions:

What sponsors are looking for.

The rule of thumb here is to only continue sponsorship discussions with a brand who share your values, your audience and your objectives. If you don't have these in common, the sponsorship will be very difficult to maintain successfully for both parties

Structuring your sponsorships

to ensure you have sponsors at different levels, that you can keep them happy and resource them effectively

What to offer a sponsor

what assets you have as a club which are of value to a sponsor

Ensure you and the sponsor are very clear on the sponsorship objectives and the timescale

confusion here will cause problems down the line

What it will take to deliver the sponsorship

is the club ready to deliver what you have agreed?

Different types of sponsorship, and what they can bring to the club





2. What to offer to a sponsor



What's covered in this chapter

In most cases, successful rugby club sponsorships are based on grouping your assets together to create packages that can deliver against a number of corporate objectives, rather than selling off assets (such as branding locations) individually.

This chapter focuses on what you can deliver to brands through sponsorship, how you can use your assets to build valuable & engaging sponsorship packages and ultimately how you can enhance your current sponsorship offering.



Sponsorship deliverables

Rugby sponsorships, as with a number of sports sponsorships, can deliver against many objectives for brands, beyond just brand awareness and staff and client entertainment (whilst these remain important in most sponsorships).

Some examples below of reasons why a brand may look to sponsor a rugby club:

- **Raise brand awareness**
- **Positive image enhancement**
- **Lifestyle association**
- **Increase customer loyalty**
- **Change brand perception**
- **Use of players as brand ambassadors**
- **Staff motivation and recruitment**
- **Entertaining clients or potential clients**
- **Change purchasing patterns**
- **Social Responsibility e.g., supporting the local community**
- **Sales**
- **Product showcasing**
- **Collecting data**
- **Trade incentives**
- **Online and social media benefits**



Establishing key assets

With the increased sophistication of sponsorship, brands expect a multifaceted and far reaching package of benefits. As such you should look to build a register of your key assets, which can then be developed into sponsorship packages. The key assets you should consider are as follows:

- **Playing shirts and training apparel**
- **Perimeter boards and stadium**
- **Stands**
- **Scoreboards**
- **Ticket box office areas**
- **Reception/office areas**
- **Matchday programmes and tickets**
- **Bar areas - hospitality boxes/areas**
- **Website and social media channels**
- **Player sponsorship**
- **The pitch/training ground**
- **Events, including End of Season Dinners and Networking events**
- **Marketing materials, including newsletters, stationary etc.**
- **Products (for licensing and merchandise)**
- **Database**
- **Vehicles**
- **Offices and meeting rooms**



Enhancing your assets and developing new ones

Most clubs will be able to build engaging packages through their existing assets and grouping them together. However, subject to resource and in some cases finances, there might well be an opportunity to create new assets, which can form part a sponsorship package.

The easiest (and cheapest) way of creating new assets is often to do so using social and digital media, with the objective of increasing or enhancing engagement levels:

- Behind the scenes access, such as match day diaries
- Training videos and/or health & wellbeing guides
- Co-developed content, such as workshops promoting sponsor products
- Online competitions with sponsors and the club providing prizes.

Other benefits that should be straight forward to implement and could be considered:

- Providing pitch access to sponsors so that they can have a corporate Touch Game (for example)
- Sponsors to have seats on the bench (or nearby) on matchdays, possibly joined by an ex-player or coach.



Example: Asset register

A downloadable Asset Register Template is available here:
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>

Benefit	Detail
Rights of Association:	<p>Official Partner designation: “Official Partner of <Club Name>”</p> <p>Official Supplier designation: “Official Supplier of <Club Name>”</p> <p>Category exclusivity i.e. exclusive rights to be the only company in your industry as a sponsor</p> <p>Partner lock-up logo (placing yours and the sponsor logo next to each other)</p> <p>Access to & use of approved Club imagery & logo</p>
Naming Rights of Assets	<p>Ground – i.e. The <Sponsor Name> Ground</p> <p>Stand – i.e. The <Sponsor Name> Stand</p> <p>Player of the Match Award</p> <p>Ball Sponsor</p>
Team Kit Branding	<p>Front of men’s playing shirt (Home and away)</p> <p>Rear of men’s playing shirt (Home and away)</p> <p>Rear of men’s playing shorts (Home and away)</p> <p>Sleeve of men’s playing shirt (Home and away)</p> <p>Front of men’s training kit</p> <p>Front of women’s playing shirt (Home and away)</p> <p>Rear of women’s playing shirt (Home and away)</p> <p>Rear of women’s playing shorts (Home and away)</p> <p>Front of women’s training kit</p>
Ground Branding	<p>Stand (exterior) – at all fixtures</p> <p>Stand (interior) – at all fixtures</p> <p>Stand (interior) – at all domestic fixtures</p> <p>Perimeter Boards LED (by minutes)</p> <p>Post protectors</p> <p>Pitch (i.e. painted logo)</p> <p>Accreditation Boards – (placed) in the car park</p> <p>Scoreboards</p> <p>Big screen (static branding next to and also logo placement on screens)</p>



Example: Asset register

Branding on Collateral (digital & print)	All match-day posters
	All match-day tickets
	Programmes or team sheets
Digital and Social Media Branding and Presence	Logo placement on the club website
	100 word introduction to the business (on the partnership package)
	Hyperlinks
	Guaranteed retweeting on social media
	Agreed number of social media promotion's each season
	Potential idents/adverts on any video content
Tickets and Hospitality	Agreed number of tickets (either per game or per season)
	Agreed hospitality allocation/or food and drink provision (either per game or per season)
Product Showcasing, Demonstration and Sales	The right to place appropriate products around the ground, especially on match days (could include products such as AV equipment or food for sampling etc.)
	The right to have a sales stand on the ground
Events	A table at the End of Season, plus sponsorship of an award
	Invitations to Network Events
	Invitations to other Club events, such as wine tasting or golf days
	The opportunity to co-create events for networking etc.
Access to the Ground	Use of meeting rooms or bar area for sponsor meetings or small conferences
	Access to the pitch for sponsor events, such as corporate touch rugby events and or family fun days
Access to Players and Coaching Team	Use of players and coaches for promotional purposes
Database Access (subject to GDPR)	Access to fan database for sales promotion
Additional Benefits	First rights of refusal for future sponsorship opportunities



Grouping assets to build valuable packages

As previously indicated, assets should be grouped together to form engaging and multi-faceted propositions that include a number of different rights. Such an approach will provide a more valuable sponsorship opportunity.

The Asset Register on the previous page, provides an example of what an Official Partner package could encompass.

As you will see (ideally), smaller assets, such as Match Sponsor or Player of the Match opportunities should be included as a benefit in a larger package (as an Official Partner), not a standalone sponsorship.

Building sponsorship packages that have a number of benefits will increase revenue and also be far easier to manage.



Task: Build your own sponsorship package

Build your own package of benefits together based on your assets.

Things to consider:

Think about your sponsorship model and where this package would fit in that structure, for example is an Official Sponsor Package or Minis Sponsor or Naming Rights for the Stadium etc.

What can you offer for branding or logo placement without causing too much clutter and still ensure your sponsor's brand 'cuts through'?

What 'money can't buy' elements can you offer – such as watching a training session, possibly taking part in a training session, a touch-game with your sponsor's staff vs 1st XV players?

Hospitality – what cost effective elements can you add into the offering?
E.g. meet a player after the game? Sit next to an injured or ex-player during the game?



Chapter takeaways and top tips

This chapter looks at building valuable packages for sponsors through efficient use of your existing assets, but also looking at ways that you can enhance these and build appropriate new assets.

The key recommendations of the process are:

Develop an asset register to identify everything you have

Group these assets together to form valuable packages

Whilst you need to develop packages, you should allow for flexibility to cater for sponsor's objectives and wishes – so listen to feedback and be prepared to amend packages to fit the sponsor's objectives

Consider developing new assets to help enhance the proposition and reach etc. – be creative!

Stick to your strategy and your tiered hierarchal structure





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.

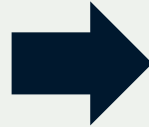


President's addresses



John F. Kennedy

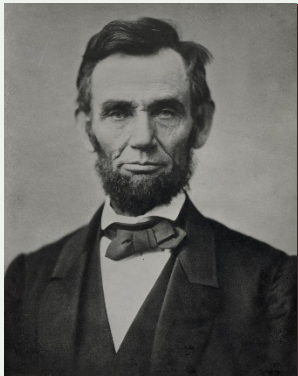
Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.



Meaning:

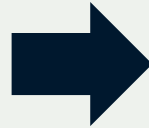
Sponsorship is a 'two-way' business relationship - it won't just provide you with 'free money'.

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.



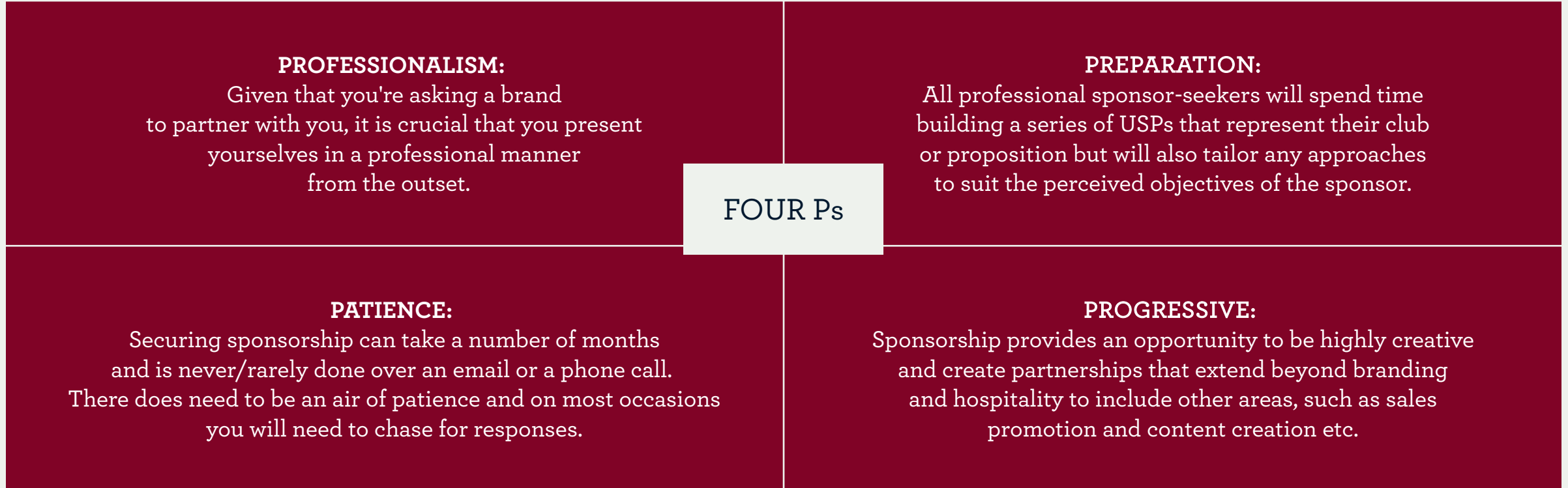
Meaning:

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

All individual sponsorship approaches need to be carefully considered.

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.

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.

These USPs should be used as the basis of ALL sales materials.

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.

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.





4. How to make a good first impression



What's covered in this chapter

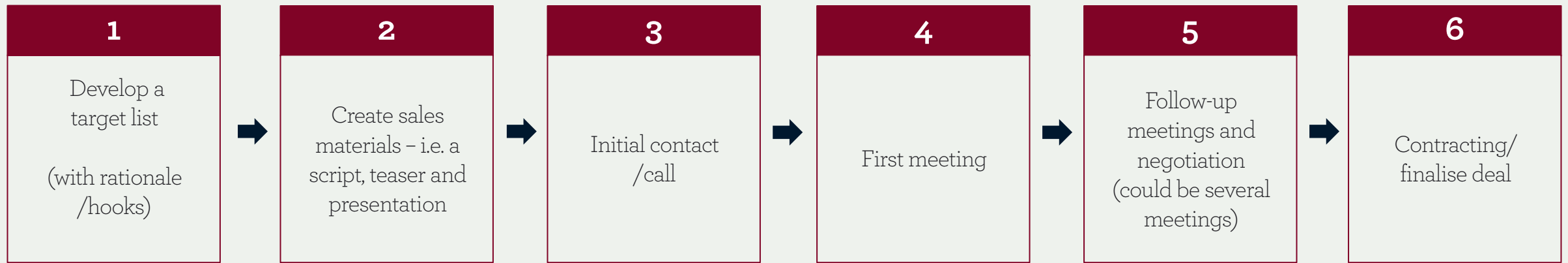
Once you have established your sponsorship strategy and determined your unique selling points, you are ready to begin preparing for the sales process and talking to prospective sponsors.

Making contact with brands for the first time can be nerve-wracking. This chapter looks to help with that, outlining the steps needed to develop a sponsorship target list, create engaging sales materials, hints and tips on what to say to brands and, ultimately, a step-by-step overview of the sponsorship sales process, so that you can achieve sponsorship success.



The six stages of selling sponsorship

In essence, there are 6 stages to the sponsorship sales process:



Sponsorships, especially Main Club sponsorships, won't be secured over one phone call and, in some cases, can take a number of meetings, so it is recommended that this multi-stage process is followed.



Develop a target list - which companies to approach

It is very rare, if ever, that brands will approach you to become a sponsor. Indeed, this is also the case with some of the major international teams and clubs in rugby.

Therefore, you need to have a proactive approach to speaking to potential sponsors. Depending on the resource that you have available, you should prepare to undertake one or both of the following routes to get in front of brands:

- Use your or your club's address book and contacts – or those of players, members and fans (N.B. speaking to people you know or who are very familiar with the club should be the starting point in any case)
- Cold contacting other appropriate brands – whether local, regional or some cases national brands

The time taken to secure sponsors can be extensive, especially if you don't know the brand, so patience, planning and a focused and strategic approach is vital.





How to make use of your network

Once you have an idea of what you can offer a sponsor you can start to think about how to find a sponsor.

There is no magic formula, but it will more likely be down to hard graft, a lot of legwork, time and effort.... and patience.

Sometimes it's a case of not what you know but WHO you know; relationships and networking are critical, particularly at club level.

Your network of contacts should always be your starting point – who do you know who works for, or perhaps even sits on the board, of an appropriate/local company? Can you get an introduction to the company via:

- A member of your club's committee
- Members/fans
- Friends of friends
- Family - especially parents or guardians of junior members
- Neighbours
- Your children's friends' parents
- Local Chamber of Commerce or business networks

Any of these routes could be very helpful, so try these first.



Building a target list of people you don't know

So, where to start

Think about all the brands that may suit your club based on location, your values, target audience/fan demographic, characteristics and USPs.

Be realistic. For obvious reasons, in many cases, most of the interest from brands is likely to come from those based or who have a major presence in your region.

Therefore, it is an idea to try and find a list of the largest local companies, whether that's based on staff and/or turnover. Often this can be Googled or can be secured, for free, from a local Council, Chamber of Commerce or Business Network. (It will cost money to get a comprehensive database with contact details). LinkedIn can also be a hugely useful tool for getting the right name.

Once you have this list, investigate the company/brand in more detail. Find out whether the company has ever sponsored anything before and, if so, what areas were they involved in? Look up their annual report and research their website carefully. What areas are of interest to them?

Once you've identified some of the bigger organisations in your community or region, focus on any that share a natural link or characteristics with your club, for example, a local brewery or company undertaking corporate entertainment, who may be interested in having hospitality as a major part of their sponsorship with you.

Recommendation:
You should constantly add to your target list based on continued research and insight.



Target list considerations

When thinking about which brand and industries to target, you should consider the following:

Does the brand have a good reputation? You need to think carefully about working with a sponsor whose brand or industry is constantly in the press for the wrong reasons.

It is worth agreeing with colleagues/board members industries and brands that aren't appropriate, some being more obvious than others, such as tobacco and arms, but some are less so, such as fast-food companies (and the obesity crisis).

Does the sector have a good natural fit with your club?

**Does the sector have a brand sponsorship heritage?
If not, your sales job could be more difficult.**

**Is the sector's product or service relevant to your sport?
For example, performance clothing.**

**Does the brand's product or service represent a significant cost to your club?
Most clubs require a lot of kit so a deal with sports apparel company could save you some money.**

**Does the brand appear to invest marketing activity in general?
If they don't, sponsorship is less likely to be a consideration for them in the first place, and they would be unlikely to spend much resource on promoting your partnership.**

**Are there opportunities to share messaging with the brand?
Consider the attributes of your club and how they dovetail with that of the industry sector, for example community focus, teamwork, agility, strength, speed.**

**How similar is the brand's audience to your own?
Does your club offer them an opportunity to talk their consumers.**

**Does the brand have a personality, i.e. could it use your club to give it a public 'face'?
Financial, legal and insurance sectors work hard to achieve a human touch with their consumers and rugby is a great way to do this, particularly with good use of imagery.**



Finding the right person to speak to

Finding out the best person to contact if you don't know them can be difficult...

Remember, each company structure is different, so it's worth trying to do a bit of research on each one to determine who it may be appropriate to contact.

If an organisation has been involved in sponsorship before, check to see whether you can find any press releases on the internet, which might have a contact name at the end.

Otherwise, try and find out who are the best people to talk to either through research (LinkedIn can be useful for this, depending on the size/profile of the company) or by simply calling their office and asking who the most appropriate person would be to approach – it may simply be the office manager, or they may have a marketing, sponsorship or community manager.

Alternatively, you can go to the top and approach the MD, Chief Executive and/or business owner – but ensure you make a professional approach.





Creating sponsorship sales materials

Whether you know the contact or don't they are likely to want to see an overview of the opportunity, so you will need to prepare sales materials. Successful sponsorship sales people will tend to develop three elements, as follows:

1. A short introduction (or two or three paragraphs) that can be used as the body of an introductory email or script for a phone call
2. A short (two or three page) 'teaser' presentation that can be sent as attachment or potentially a short (no more than 90 second) video

The aim of these two elements are to get meetings. As previously outlined, sponsorships are rarely, if ever, secured over the phone or email.

3. A 10-12 slide presentation that can be presented in person and used as the basis of a proposal document

A downloadable suite of sales template presentations can be found here: <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>





Email and phone script

Whilst sales approaches can still be made over the phone, and is still a very effective way of engaging with potential sponsors, email now tends to be the most used and acceptable method of making contact, especially if you don't know the target.

Whatever the method of contact, whether phone or email, a short and concise email and phone script needs to be developed, which can then be tailored to suit the perceived objectives of any sponsor.

This should include:

- A short introduction to who you are
- A summary of the USPs
- A line or two on potential benefits, specifically aimed at the target brand
- Recommended next steps, including a suggested meeting

The script/email should be supported with a short teaser document.

At this early stage, you don't need to mention prices or fees.

It's important to get an idea of their objectives first, as they will influence the final package of benefits and therefore what you should charge.



Template: Email and phone script

A downloadable Script Template is available here:

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>

Eye catching Subject to get them to read on

Subject: Become a Key Partner of the Largest Sports Club in the Region; Reaching 1,000 People Each Week

Introduction and summary of USPs

Dear **XXXX**,

I am writing to you regarding **<INSERT NAME>** Rugby Club. We are the largest sports club in the area and have been promoted twice in the last 4 seasons. We now play in the **<League>** and have a loyal fan based of 1,000 people attending all of our 1st **XI** home games. We also have a fast growing Women's and Mini's division.

An outline of why they're right for the club and why you're speaking to them

Given your involvement in the local community sports scene, we would like to review the potential of you becoming a high profile Official Partner of the club. We can provide a number of benefits to support your own objectives, which could include:

Example benefits, which can be changed depending on their perceived objectives

- Association with the largest and best sports club in the county – supporting the best in your local community
- Brand exposure and promotion, including on shirt, perimeter boards, website and social media
- Tickets and hospitality at every home game
- Invitations to our own networking events, plus the opportunity to host your own events at the club
- Invitations to other club events, including End of Season Dinner and Golf Days
- Promotional stand at the ground on match days

Demonstrate flexibility

There is a significant degree of flexibility in how we could work together. Therefore, I would very much welcome the opportunity of organising a time to speak to you further about our sponsorship programme and our exciting plans for the future.

Next steps, call to action

If you are interested, please suggest a time for us to meet at your offices, alternatively, I'd love to welcome you to the club on matchday and you can experience the club at its best.



Creating an introductory 'teaser' document

A 'teaser' should be created, which can be used to send to prospective partners either by means of first contact (to accompany an initial email) or as a follow-up after a call. The objective is to get a meeting.

The following should be included in the teaser:

- A brief introduction to the club with facts and figures i.e., league standing and history etc.
- The Unique Selling Points
- Brief overview of the ask/opportunity
- Recommended next steps i.e., a meeting in person or a video call
- Contact Details

These documents can be created in Microsoft Word or PowerPoint but are generally sent as a PDF.

It is very easy to make these documents too heavy on copy. In this instance, less is more - it's about getting interest and pushing for a meeting, so it doesn't require a huge amount of detail, which may not be read in full anyway.

They should also be pleasing on the eye, so use imagery and bullet points to break up text and more digestible. You also don't necessarily have to include costings in the document, it's about getting interest and subsequently building a package based on their objectives.

Once you have sent the teaser, and if you haven't had a response, you should leave it about a week before sending a polite follow-up email or phone call to see if they have had a chance to review the initial email and see if you can organise a meeting.



Initial contact/call

Once you have a target list and sales documents prepared, you are ready to make contact with prospective sponsors. As mentioned, in most cases, it is acceptable to make contact by email even if you don't know the individual. Here are a few things to remember:

- Use your script, whether for email or phone calls – referring back to your USPs
- Keep the first contact short, clear and concise and make sure you have a call to action in your mind i.e. progress to a meeting - the objective is to get a meeting, not necessarily do a deal straight away, so be patient
- Research their brand and demonstrate an appropriate understanding of their objectives
- Be polite and professional, even if they say no – you may think it's a great potential partnership but they sometimes won't... you are likely to get many rejections – also proof read any emails!!!
- If they don't respond to your initial correspondences do try again – but perhaps stop after 3 or 4 attempts. You could also consider contacting someone else in the company or using tools such as LinkedIn
- If they ask about money, it is advisable to give a rough ballpark but say that **“it will depend on your objectives and the final package”**



How to deal with objections

As outlined, successful sponsorship sales is not an easy task and you do need to be prepared for brands to say no - most sponsorship sales people have a very thick skin! It very important to not take any objections personally... you will get many more rejections than deals done and are likely to get many before the golden yes.

There isn't a formula as to how many people you need to speak to before being successful BUT it is important to use any rejections or objections to help develop your strategy further...and, where possible, attempt to counter objections. Traditionally, reasons brands give for not becoming a sponsor are as follows (we have also provided some potential responses):

- **Lack of budget:** Outline that, if they are interested, there is an opportunity to build a payment schedule or introduce incentives. Possibly find out when their financial year starts and finishes and work around those timings
- **Doesn't fit with our objectives:** Try to learn more about what they are looking to achieve as a business and how you can potentially help. For example, if it's increased sales, perhaps provide them with sales promotional space in a programme/newsletter or a promotional stand at matchdays. If it's brand awareness, logo placement on kit or ground or website.
- **Not currently looking for sponsorship opportunities:** It might be that a company has a full sponsorship programme (and therefore no capacity for more) or that they simply aren't considering sponsorship at this time. Either way there is an opportunity to build a relationship with the brand and review them becoming a partner in the future. Ask when is a good time to speak to them again, potentially invite them to a game.

Much of sponsorship is about forming relationships with relevant, often local, businesses. Even if they say 'no' now, they may say 'yes' in the future. Without being too overbearing, stay in touch and build a closer connection with them, perhaps through entertaining them at games and or inviting them to events etc.

Task: Develop your own script

Using the recommendations and guidance in this document, create your own 3 or 4 paragraph email and phone script.

Think about:

Why you are contacting them. How are your businesses aligned?	What makes you different and stand out?
What are you look for? Naming rights, official sponsor, vehicle supplier	
What you can give them in return?	What you would like the next steps to be?
Being clear and concise!	Being and coming across as professional



Chapter takeaways and top tips

Initiating contact and the whole process of securing partners can be hugely rewarding but equally does require a thick-skin and a strong degree of patience. The Top Tips to remember are as follows:

<p>Listen Listening to feedback is one of the most important things you can do. Use this feedback to get deals done.</p>	<p>Be professional and organised Stick to your strategy and research. There is no such thing in sponsorship as being underprepared</p>
<p>Don't take rejection personally All sponsorship opportunities get turned down</p>	<p>Review your sales strategy If you hit a dead end with one person, change your tack – e.g. maybe try and speak to someone else if you're being ignored or try LinkedIn etc.</p>
<p>Be creative and use your assets Sponsorship provides a licence to be creative both as regards the sales process and activations</p>	<p>Be Realistic For example, only approach brands who you think can afford the sponsorship and have a genuinely clear reason for a partnership. However, just because you think it's a good opportunity, it doesn't necessarily mean that everyone will!</p>





5. How to prepare for meetings and finalising a deal



What's covered in this chapter

Once you've made contact and the brand has agreed to a meeting, you know that they are interested in exploring a partnership. However, you need to work to turn initial interest into a final deal. This chapter provides on what to do and say in meetings and then how to enter into the final negotiation and agree a contract.



Creating a presentation for meetings and what to say

If you have secured interest from a brand and have scheduled a meeting with an individual that is a great result. For the meeting make sure you are well-prepared and plan the meeting carefully. You should create a short (**max. 12 slide**) presentation to outline the opportunity and send a meeting agenda ahead of the meeting. The content of a presentation should include the following:

1. Introduction to who you are and your role with the club (**doesn't necessarily have to be within the document**)
2. An overview of the club, including an introduction to the main teams, which leagues they play in, how many members you have, how big the crowd is for each game and some interesting details on the club's history
3. The USPs, brand values and club objectives
4. Any relevant information, such evidence of media coverage, event calendar (**such as End of Season Dinners, Christmas Parties or Networking Events**)
5. What you can do for the brand – this is the most important element of this meeting: Tailored initial sponsorship package and an outline of the sponsorship model i.e. showing different levels
6. Activation ideas and/or examples of how a sponsorship can link to the brand's existing activities
7. Next steps and Timeframes

Ordinarily a first meeting should last between 45 minutes and hour BUT should allow for Q&As, so the presentation should last no longer than 30 minutes or so.

Whilst you don't have to include costings in the presentation, you should be prepared to talk about 'ballpark figures' – the final price will be based on the final package of benefits. Where appropriate, you should ask what their budget is, so you can build the right package for them.

It is imperative to listen in the meeting and come away with a greater understanding of the brand's objectives, so that you can go away and develop an appropriate sponsorship package/proposal.



What to do after the meeting and creation of a proposal

If you have a good meeting, you will need to prepare a more formal proposal that outlines the opportunity. **Once again, having listened carefully in the meeting and understood their objectives, use this information to develop an appropriate proposal i.e. what benefits they do and don't want etc.**

This should include:

- A summary of the club
- An overview of the ask i.e. Official Partner status
- A list of benefits/rights
- A sponsorship fee **(based on the rights)**
- An outline of next steps and timings

It is likely that your contact will use this document to **'sell'** into their company colleagues, so it is worth asking what they require from you for them to make a decision.

It is fair better, rather than give them options, to focus on one package in your proposal **(based on feedback from your meeting)**. If need be, you can adapt the proposal based on their feedback.

Whilst you can email the proposal through, if are able to present back in person it may help to speed the process along and allow you to answer any questions that the brand may have.

Once you have verbally agreed the terms you should look to develop a Heads of Terms, which can be used as the basis of a contract



How to negotiate and finalise a deal

If you have got to the stage where you are ready to negotiate a deal with a potential sponsor, you are often on the home straight. By entering into formal negotiations, it is clear that the brand is interested in your club and what you have to offer.

However, it is important to remember that just because you are getting closer to signing a partner you don't need to give them everything they want in order to get them to sign as quickly as possible.

Using the Heads of Terms, it is important to spend time making sure that the detail is correct – e.g. that you are offering rights you can deliver and that the partner is only getting an equivalent level of rights for the investment they are proposing – this document will ultimately form the basis of the sponsorship for the term of the agreement.

A good deal is one in which both parties walk away feeling happy because they have both got what they wanted. This is the best way to lay a strong foundation for the partnership, which you can then build on as the sponsorship progresses. Finally, one of the most important things to remember during negotiations is you should never assume a deal is done until your sponsor has signed on the bottom line – things can always change!

If you are able to secure the services of a qualified lawyer, then it is advisable to do so.



Developing a contract/agreement

You should start by drafting the key terms and benefits that you are offering to the sponsor. The agreement can be in plain English, it does not need to contain much legal terminology, so when drafting the list of proposed rights keep it simple so everyone can work from it. The important thing is to have a clear statement of what you and the sponsor have agreed, which you both understand.

The list of key terms and benefits should include:

Parties

Who the sponsorship is between

Sponsorship description

What the sponsorship is about

Category definition

Which of the sponsor's brands, product and services are included within the sponsorship category and, if required, which are not included

Term

How long is the sponsorship for, when will it start, when will it end, when do both parties have to start re-negotiating for renewal **(consider including a right of first refusal clause, which means a sponsor gets the first option to renew the category sponsorship or offer to match an offer from a third-party)**

Investment and payment schedule

What is the agreed investment, when will payments be made and what are the payment terms **(e.g. penalties for late payment)?**



Developing a contract/agreement (continued)

IP

An outline of all sponsorship IP that the sponsor will have access to via the agreed rights

What rights will the sponsor receive

An outline of all of the key rights that have been offered and agreed with the partner. Be as specific as possible with agreed parameters on rights in order to avoid grey areas

What is not included

This section is not always included, but in certain cases it is worth listing specific rights that are not included within the sponsorship agreement, for clarification and to avoid future issues

What are the sponsor's obligations

An outline of what is required from the sponsor in return for the agreed rights, to include details on agreed marketing support and working processes.

Approvals

What is the mutual approval system for use of IP and rights

What are your obligations

An outline of what is required from you, the rights-holder, in return for the investment e.g. monthly partnership meetings, approving proposed partner marketing activity within five working days

Any other information

Finally, list any other information that has been discussed and agreed and which you feel needs to be included within the agreement

If you have the ability to work with a lawyer to formalize the contract, then that is recommended.



Basic contract template

Title: Sponsorship Agreement

This Sponsorship Agreement (“Agreement”) is made and entered into as of [Date] by and between [Company Name], hereinafter called “Sponsor”, a business whose head office is at [Address], and [Club Name], whose address is [address], hereinafter called “The Club”.

Purpose of Agreement. The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the terms and conditions under which “Sponsor” will sponsor “The Club”.

Term of Agreement. This Agreement shall commence on the date of execution and shall continue until [Date] (the “Term”).

Sponsorship Fees. In consideration for the Sponsorship, “Sponsor” shall pay “The Club” the sum of [Amount] (the “Sponsorship Fees”). The Sponsorship Fees shall be paid in [Number] equal instalments on the [Date] of each month during the Term of this Agreement.

Sponsorship Benefits. In exchange for the Sponsorship Fees, “The Club” shall provide the following benefits to “Sponsor”: [List of benefits to be provided by Sponsor]

Termination. This Agreement may be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice if the other party breaches any material term or condition of this Agreement.

Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with UK Laws.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the date and year first above written.

[Sponsor]

By: [Name] Title: [Title]

[Partner]

By: [Name] Title: [Title]

A downloadable version of this agreement can be found here:
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding/sponsorship>

Task: Develop a draft template agreement

Using recommendations in this chapter, create your own draft agreement...

Use the considerations opposite.

Clearly define the scope of the sponsorship, including the duration of the agreement and the specific activities or events that are being sponsored.

Identify the rights and benefits that the sponsor will receive, such as brand exposure, advertising opportunities, and access to exclusive events.

Specify the obligations of both the sponsor and the sponsored party, including any performance targets or milestones.

Include any restrictions or limitations on the use of the sponsor's brand or intellectual property.

Outline the payment terms and any contingencies for early termination or non-performance.



Chapter takeaways and top tips

Negotiating and finalising a deal can be a lengthy process and, if you're able to, it is advisable to seek professional legal support. However, if you are undertaking things on your own these are the top tips to remember:

Know your priorities:
Before entering into negotiations, make sure you have a clear understanding of your goals and priorities. This will help you stay focused and make sure you don't give up something important in exchange for something less valuable.

Do your homework:
Research the other party, the market, and the terms of the contract. This will give you a better understanding of the negotiation and help you make informed decisions.

Start with a fair offer:
It's important to start the negotiation with an offer that is fair and reasonable. This will help establish trust and show that you are willing to work towards a mutually beneficial agreement.

Be flexible:
Be open to making compromises and be willing to consider the other party's perspective. This will help move the negotiation forward and increase the chances of reaching an agreement.

Communicate clearly:
Make sure to clearly communicate your priorities and concerns. Be open and honest about your needs and be willing to listen to the other party's perspective.

Get it in writing:
Make sure the final agreement is clearly written and includes all the terms that were negotiated. This will help avoid misunderstandings and ensure that both parties are held to the same standards.





6. What to charge a sponsor



What's covered in this chapter

This chapter provides a guide to pricing a sponsorship and determining what to charge a sponsor. Pricing a sponsorship and, crucially justifying the fee, is often the toughest task facing a club.

Most companies seek a return on their support or investment (if they are not seeking any form of return on their investment it would be a donation and not a sponsorship). This can range from the most basic in terms of goodwill within the community, to the more complex guaranteed levels of media exposure, brand awareness and visibility.

Ultimately, like the process of buying a house, the sponsor (or buyer) will only pay the amount that they believe it is worth!

However, it is essential to go to market with a valuation that maximises income for you but that is also sensible and achievable. Within the next few pages, we will offer hints and tips based on best practice and how best to obtain this.



How the global sponsorship seekers value their packages

The largest national teams, clubs and leagues etc. will use **benchmarking** as a key tool in working out the value of any sponsorship and whilst it is highly effective, they will often use other tools to help justify a fee in addition, remembering that a brand will only pay what they feel it is worth to them.

Whilst there aren't any recognised industry-wide sponsorship pricing rate cards, large sponsor-seekers will price their packages using their own formulas for calculating the value of a sponsorship deal OR work with a specialist evaluation agency.

Recommendation:

Benchmarking is the most effective way of identifying a sponsorship price but, if you have the resources and finance, it might be worth working with experts to establish a justifiable price. Ultimately, it is all about being able to justify a fee, which you can then negotiate.

The formulas that they use combine a measurement of the following:

- **Tangibles (and things that you can value):** i.e., branding on kit, web and programme advertising, perimeter boards, tickets and hospitality.
 - These are measured using ratecards taken from the advertising and media industries based on cost per thousand of people reached etc.
- **Intangibles (and things that you can't value or physically see):** i.e. association with values, prestige of winning a league and reputation etc.
 - Given the nature of these elements it is impossible to provide a rate or measurement, therefore they will be providing with a 'rating' which they then use to influence the final fee.



Setting up a pricing structure – overarching rules

A notable error and trap that many sponsor seekers fall into is to charge a sponsor what the sponsorship will cost them (e.g., sponsoring to pay for shirts etc.) or what the deficit is within a budget.

SPONSORSHIP HAS A COMMERCIAL VALUE AND SHOULD BE PRICED ACCORDINGLY!

As with other areas of marketing, there isn't an industry norm rate card, so during the final negotiation phase the price will come down to negotiation. However, you need to be able to justify the fee you're offering. Key points to consider are:

- Just because you think an opportunity is worth X, it doesn't mean that other people do!
- Be reasonable and realistic once you have determined what else is in the marketplace
- Don't ask a small company for a large amount of cash, they will say no
- Have an idea on what a company is likely to be able to spend. The internet can sometimes give you an idea of advertising spend which is a useful benchmark – but don't rely on that too much. Check on their financial results in the news – have they made a profit or a loss?
- Decide on whether you want cash, product, equipment or services, or are you willing to take a combination?
- What other support can the company offer you that is of value, e.g. PR/marketing support, resource etc? This can often be worth as much, or more than, cash
- Be prepared to be flexible and know what your bottom line is – don't be afraid to walk away



Benchmarking – understanding what others charge

The marketplace is often the key indicator on what to charge for a sponsorship. Benchmarking (i.e. looking at how other clubs/organisations structure their sponsorship and what they charge) is done throughout all sports sponsorship, even at the very highest level. It is an essential process to establish what other similar propositions command and therefore what brands are willing to pay.

Whilst the details of most deals are kept private, you should try and build a database or list of known sponsorship deals. In some cases, although rare, it might also be possible to gather information from research and the press, especially sports trade publications., such as Sport Business Magazine and SportsPro.

Alternatively, where practical, you should be able to gauge what other clubs (which could be a football, netball or hockey club) are approximately charging through your network, for example from their own sponsorship sales materials or previously agreed sponsorship deals. From this you should be able to make a call on your own sponsorship valuations based on where clubs have been successful etc.



Staged payments and incentives

Sometimes it may be easier for a company to work with staged payments rather than a large lump sum. This could be a base fee with a performance-related bonus e.g., first place in the league or achieving promotion.

Incentives can also be used to reward certain performance targets more focused on pre-set sponsorship objectives, such as media exposure or other measurable factors e.g., the number of followers on Twitter, Facebook 'likes', etc. Be careful in structuring this type of agreement; if media exposure is important, you need to consider the quality, not just the quantity.





What it will cost you to service a sponsorship

The final thing to consider is how much it is going to cost you to deliver a sponsorship, should you secure investment from a commercial partner. This figure needs to be considered in addition to the investment you need in order to ensure you are covering all areas and determine whether sponsorship is a viable option to meet all your needs.

In some cases, such as the cost of manufacturing perimeter boards, should be borne by the sponsor and in most cases built into the sponsorship fee (rather than at your cost or a separate fee or invoice to the sponsor). Equally, the cost of placing branding on kit etc. should also be paid for a sponsor.

The cost (or price you charge) of providing tickets as well as delivering hospitality should be worked out and built into the sponsorship fee.

Where possible and if relevant, you should also factor in some additional fee towards the staffing required to manage the sponsorship (see Sponsorship Management).





Pricing your sponsorship - considerations

When pricing a sponsorship, you should think about:

- Cost of tickets e.g. £10 x by the number provided
- Cost of food/hospitality e.g. £20 x by the number provided
- What to charge for perimeter board advertising or on the website or social media, based on ratecards/benchmarking from media or other clubs
- The cost of kit etc. – making sure that you don't make a loss
- What the cost of delivery is in terms of, if appropriate, paying staff and the time they spend on servicing etc.



Task: Build Your own pricing model

Build your own pricing structure for each level of sponsorship by:

Pricing your tangible assets, e.g. the price of tickets, hospitality and perimeter boards (based on the level of exposure – perhaps by using ratecards from a local newspaper)

Factor in the cost to you in terms of delivery and resource etc.

Benchmarking -

Sense check your fee by looking at what has worked well for you in the past, researching what other clubs are charging - either by looking on the internet at press releases, seeing if you can locate a proposal from a rival club or (nicely) chatting to other clubs in your area or league

Does the final fee feel right based on what you've done in the past and how you understand the market to be at this time?!



Chapter takeaways

This chapter provides an overview of best practice with regards pricing a sponsorship. The key things to remember are:

Pricing sponsorship and crucially justifying what you're asking for is one of the hardest tasks you will face – so take your time and make sure you can prove why you're asking for that amount

Sponsorship has a commercial value, which should be reflected in the price. Don't simply offer the fee of what something costs you or the deficit in budget sheets

Benchmarking and studying what people are willing to pay in the marketplace is vital and a practice used by the largest sports organisations in the world

Make sure that you don't quote a fee that will provide a loss for you to deliver!

Make sure that you can justify the fee, if challenged, and don't ask for too much of a small company

The final fee will come down to negotiation



Top tips

As recommended, sponsorship packages should be based on grouping assets together to create valuable sponsorship opportunities

You should not individually price benefits (like a shopping list) instead give them one fee/total, if they try and negotiate and take benefits out of a package, make sure that you give them one new fee again based on the commercial value – don't reveal what each element will cost!

In some cases, it might be better to take a lower offer than you want, especially if, for example, it's a brand that you wish to work with who can offer additional benefits, such as access to potential ticket purchasers (if it's a local company with a large staff number) or they can help promote the club through high profile social media channels etc.

In order to further justify your fee, can you get ratecards from local media publications, which may help to price your kit branding and perimeter boards (based on reaching a certain number of people etc).





7. Resourcing a sponsorship & managing expectations of sponsors



What's covered in this chapter

This chapter runs through the importance of developing a good club/sponsor relationship, from when you first agree a deal and the initial information exchange between the two parties.

It goes on to cover your 'kick-off meeting' and the key points to discuss, and agree including ways of working, a 'who's who' on both sides.

The importance of good communication between the club and the sponsor can't be overstated, and that is a key point in the slide which covers 'how to build a strong relationship with your sponsor'. Then there are a few additional 'tips to keep sponsors happy', which should add value.

Moving on then to thinking about preparing for renewal conversations, we set out the 'measurables' you will need to demonstrate to the sponsor at the end of each contract year, and these become very important when it comes to renewal conversations.

We set out when to broach the subject of contract renewal to your sponsor, how to prepare for that meeting including agenda points for discussion.

Finally, we run through what happens when either side decide not to renew the partnership and the processes to go through to manage that.



How to develop a good club/sponsor relationship

A good club/sponsor relationship is much more likely to result in a successful sponsorship – meaning a sponsorship which is beneficial to both parties, achieves the objectives of the sponsor, and ultimately one which is renewed.

Sponsor relationships are lots of work to manage (on both sides), they require a high level of information sharing, honesty and regularity of contact.

However, they can be fun and result in very strong working relationships which last for years.

If the time isn't taken to resource and manage the sponsorship properly, the relationship can be hard work, and if it breaks down, the risk is that the sponsor requests some of their investment back if they believe the relationship hasn't been delivered to expectations.

Remember, as the rights holder, the onus is on the club to ensure all sponsorship rights are delivered, maximised and that the agreement is delivered.



Initial exchange of information/IP

At the very start of the contract a lot of information must be shared and exchanged such as:

- Logos in different formats (both parties will need to use each other's logos correctly)
- Any brand guidelines – this document shows how the brand IP (intellectual property) must be used
- Imagery – ideally the club should share a bank of club imagery which the sponsor is able to use for free, you can also advise when and how they use it if there are any restrictions
- Organisational structures – who's who in the business
- Roles and responsibilities and contact numbers/emails. Be very clear who are the key contacts for the sponsor
- Event/season calendars showing all important events and matches
- Team information the sponsor might find useful such as player biographies which they might want to share on their channels/with their employees





Kick off meeting and developing the activation plan

Once the contract has been signed, organise a kick-off meeting with the sponsor to plan how you will approach the sponsorship.

The objective of this meeting is to look at the first year of the sponsorship and work together to ensure both parties are going to get what they need from each other.

- A calendar approach is a good way to focus your plan. Ensure all matches and key events (e.g., club/company meetings, team selections,) are on the plan
- Discuss what each party need from the other ahead of each event e.g., understanding ticket, hospitality, branding and marketing & communications requirements
- Use the calendar to work out good dates for sponsor promotions and player appearances

Following this kick-off meeting, suggest a brainstorm meeting where the club, the sponsor and their agencies get together to plan additional activation ideas for the rest of the year to add to the plan.



Communication – ensure your sponsor feels part of the team

Communication with sponsors is so important. They should be made to feel like part of the club team – they should hear club news slightly before the news comes out publicly.

These small things will go a long way to maintaining a good club/sponsor relationship.

Keep your sponsor informed when:

- You're signing a new player
- A player is retiring
- There is important club/selection news
- There is a new sponsor coming on board
- There are funding announcements
- There are any new events being announced

With the exception of the new sponsor being announced, your sponsor may want to share the news on their own channels to support the club, or they may ask to be involved at a higher level.



How to build a strong relationship with your sponsor

Good communication is central to a successful sponsor relationship, so from the outset, the club's team should aim to develop:

- An open, two-way dialogue
- Regular communication, keeping the sponsor updated as to what is happening at the club
- Agree 'ways of working' – understand who the key contacts are on both sides, remembering this may be managed by the sponsor's agencies, and be clear about who the sponsor's 'point-person' is at the club – e.g. sponsorship account manager – that person will manage the relationship day to day, ensuring the sponsorship runs to plan...
- A clear sponsorship activation plan/calendar which details how and when all the assets will be delivered, including deadlines for artwork and who is responsible for each aspect
- Plan regular meetings to update on the activation plan – weekly calls is usual, with a more detailed monthly meeting, depending on the size of the sponsorship
- Keep a record of all media/PR/social coverage to include stats and examples in your monthly reports back to the sponsor
- Be proactive - it is the remit of the Sponsorship Account Manager to remind, nudge and sometimes cajole the sponsor into delivering their artwork on time/ use their allocated event tickets/ utilise the rights they have bought as part of the sponsorship package. Rightly or wrongly, the onus is on the club to ensure delivery of rights, not on the sponsor
- Get the sponsor as engaged as possible in your club, the more engaged they are, the more likely they are to renew e.g. invite staff to a team training session, to meet the players etc

If the sponsor don't require such regular updates, it is important that you collect and collate all the information anyway for your records. This will be useful when going into renewal conversations or when you go out to pitch to new potential sponsors.



Some additional tips to keep sponsors happy

- Give the sponsor signed kit/memorabilia for their use in competitions or for staff giveaways
- Ensure your website features their logo on your partner page, plus a paragraph about them and a hyperlink to their website
- Retweet/share their social media posts and encourage your fans to follow/retweet them too
- Send thank you notes for their support after they attend your events. If it feels right, you can also do this more overtly through your social media channels
- Offer the sponsor access to your top coaches to do a talk at their Head Office or Employees Christmas Dinner





Managing the measurables

It is important to remember that media values/PR values/social media stats are of importance to many brands.

Ensure you know what marketing metrics are important to your sponsor, and measure these metrics in relation to the sponsorship assets you are delivering.

Marketing metrics which might be important to your sponsor:

- Media – TV/streaming viewing figures
- PR – reach, viewership, titles
- Social media – likes, views, shares
- Digital stats – views, shares, interactions





Renewal conversations – when to start conversations

Keeping an existing sponsor is easier and cheaper (time and budget-wise) than searching for a new sponsor, so give yourself plenty of time to have renewal conversations.

6-9 months before the end of the contract, request a meeting to discuss renewal.

You will need to prepare for the meeting by:

- collating information which shows how you have delivered on the sponsorship contract, so check back on the assets mentioned in the contract and prepare a presentation to show the best examples of your delivery, there is more detail on this in the next slide
- reports which make the sponsor feel proud of the partnership
- think about the sponsor's objectives for the sponsorship which you discussed right at the start of the partnership, and demonstrate any ways in which you can show success in these areas



Renewal conversations – what to prepare for the meeting

Useful information to collate for renewal conversations are all of the ‘measurables’ from the last page:

- PR coverage/ any media monitoring reports you have showing the sponsor brand
- TV and digital viewership of your matches showing the sponsor brand
- social media which mentions the sponsor brand – particularly powerful are player or coach tweets/engagements with the sponsor brand, which provide a real feel-good factor
- a list of all other delivered assets such as tickets, hospitality
- any testimonials which show the sponsorship is a success e.g. a quote/thank you from the head of the club to the sponsor, thanking them for their support





Renewal conversations – questions/agenda for the meeting

You will also need to go into the renewal meetings prepared to ask questions and listen.

Questions you should begin with:

- How does the sponsor feel the partnership has been?
- Has it delivered on their objectives?
- What feedback have the sponsor received from their employees, customers, other stakeholders?
- What elements of the sponsorship have worked well?
- What could be better?
- What other plans do the sponsor have in the next two or three years? (E.g. if the company are expanding, launching a new product, upgrading their website, there are ways a sponsorship can support these plans)
- Would they like to renew? As part of your initial contract, there will have been a renewal clause in there, or ‘first right to refusal’, meaning you would ask them if they want to renew before you start conversations with a competitor/another sponsor for the same rights/package



No renewal – when the partnership ends

When the partnership ends, try to end it on good terms. As with everything else, sponsorships can come to a natural end where the sponsor decides to try something else, or has a change in their objectives which means the sponsorship no longer fits.

Here is a process to follow when a partnership is coming to an end:

Try to end on good terms because the sponsor speaking highly of the club will benefit you in the long run

Mutually agree a short statement for the media, and to share on your own channels. The club and the sponsor should be saying the same thing, otherwise it could negatively affect your reputation and therefore future sponsorships



Task: Develop a sponsor plan

Using the information shared in this chapter, sketch out a sponsor plan to incorporate all the key dates for the sponsor, and demonstrate how you (both club and sponsor) can activate the new partnership.

Considerations:

Include all key club dates such as fixtures, new season announcements, family days, networking dates, end of season dinner

Add in some (fictional at this stage) player appearances for the sponsor

Add in some dates for social media posts where the club will focus on the sponsor/their products/key messages

Any key sponsor dates in their marketing calendar where the club can support



Chapter takeaways and top tips

Managing sponsorships is time-consuming but the relationship between club and sponsor is key to a successful sponsorship.

These tips should help along the way:

<p>Communication is key. Developing a trusting, open and honest, two-way dialogue is really important to make managing the sponsorship easier and more successful</p>	<p>Know that the time taken on managing the sponsorship properly will be worth it. Building the relationship, sharing information, planning and execution of a sponsorship takes time, detail and good organisational skills</p>
<p>Agree ways of working which include the 'point-people' on both sides and diarise regular meetings from the outset</p>	<p>Manage (and measure!) the measurables from day one – keeping a record of all media/PR/social media coverage stats as well as tickets given to sponsors in order to report back at the end of the contract is really important</p>
<p>Be proactive: the onus is on the club to do everything they can to ensure the sponsorship is successful</p>	<p>Start renewal conversations early</p>





8. How to measure success



What's covered in this chapter

The data and insight collected from measuring your sponsorships can greatly aid your whole programme, whether that is helping to renew deals or enhancing your sales approaches for new sponsors. Therefore, where possible, you should always look to place measures to assess a sponsorship, even if it's simply tracking local media coverage.

This chapter provides recommendations on how you measure and evaluate sponsorship activity, including top tips, even if you have limited internal resource, and when to undertake the measurement and evaluation process.



Why we measure sponsorship

Sponsorship measurement will require resourcing, so if you and your team do have capacity to do it, it will be a highly worthwhile exercise. Not only will tracking sponsorship success increase the likelihood of renewing deals, but it will also provide key data that you can use in future sales approaches.

The fundamental rule to measurement is to review the partnership objectives that were agreed at the outset and see whether you have been successful in achieving these. You should always put in place your own measures to assess the success of a sponsorship and you shouldn't just rely on the sponsor to do this.

Whilst measuring and evaluating sponsorship has become increasingly sophisticated and now extends beyond on-kit branding and branded images in the media, you should endeavour to track the coverage that you and your partners may receive in publications or on television, including capturing examples. These, again, can be used for re-negotiations and/or in your approaches to new sponsors.

The major clubs and rights holders will also look to identify how their sponsorships are seen as a way to positively influence customer perceptions of a brand and as a result, the means by which its success is measured has had to evolve.



What to measure

Whilst the following isn't an exhaustive list, it will give you some ideas on how you can take steps to measure the value of the benefits your sponsor is getting from your relationship.

The Partnership Objectives and Review the Contract

During the sponsorship sales process, you will have worked with your sponsors to identify objectives, which should be captured in the contract. It is worth regularly referring to these to see how the partnership is working and seeing if there is anything that can be done to make it more successful. For example, this could include:

- **Increasing awareness across the community - do you have evidence of coverage/branding in local press? (see below)**
- **Increase the number of B2B events – have you co-hosted networking events?**
- **Increase sales – can you identify whether there is an uplift in sales based on retail at the ground?**

Media Coverage

Keep records of all media coverage secured which feature branded imagery or editorial mentions relating to your sponsor. You can also use Google news alerts / notifications to help you pick up all online coverage.

Player Appearances

If your sponsor is using player appearances as part of their programme, and one of your team members is accompanying, try and take your own pictures of the event and keep records of how many events your athletes have attended.



What to measure (continued)

Social Media

If you are promoting your sponsor via your social media channels, for example allowing them to run competitions / promotions, or providing details of an initiative that is relevant to your audience, keep a record of how many people 'like' or 're-tweet' a post. It shows the level of engagement between your sponsor and your followers – and also highlights what activity they like / don't like.

Website

If you have a page, or activity, specifically linked to your sponsor, make a note of visitors to that page – and how long they spend on it. If you run a link to your sponsor's website, perhaps for a special offer or promotion, log how many people used that link.

Hospitality at Events

How many of your sponsor's guests have been entertained at events? How many of them had the opportunity to meet an athlete, take part in a behind-the-scenes tour, etc?





What to measure (continued)

Depending on the objectives of the partnership and the resources that you have available, you may wish to look at other methods of measurement. One of which is to contact surveys using your fan base and database.

This could include asking the following questions:

- Are you aware that Brand **X** is a sponsor of our club?
- Do you think this is a sponsorship that fits well with the club and our values?
- Where have you seen reference to this club?
(Provide a list of comms channels)
- Do you think this sponsorship is of value to the club/the fans/
the players?

This will allow you to track perceptions of the sponsorship and how well your sponsor is engaging with participants.





When to begin measuring the sponsorship

It's essential to get a measurement programme in place as early as possible so that you have an accurate, base level starting point. Some measures will take place on an on-going basis, for example monitoring media or delivery of player appearances, whilst others are a one-time delivery, for example hospitality at the End of Season Dinner.

Measurement, if possible, should be an ongoing process but, particularly if you're unable to constantly monitor elements, you should agree a time with sponsors to review the partnership. This should be at least annually but ideally held more regularly i.e. monthly or quarterly.



Task: Developing a measurement register

Based on the recommendations outlined in this chapter, build a list of benefits that you can measure and how you would go about it.

For example:

Media Coverage
By tracking local media reports and using Google alerts

Tickets
Keeping tabs on how many you provide the sponsor with out of the allocation

Fan engagement
Build a questionnaire for fans to complete, which will focus on their opinions of the sponsorship etc.

Player appearances
Take pictures of how the sponsor is using this benefit



Chapter takeaways and top tips

Measurement is vital to the long-term success of a sponsorship programme. Even with limited resource, there are tasks that you can undertake to help demonstrate how any partnership is working and also provide you with intel that can be useful in search for sponsors in the future.

The key elements to remember are:

Refer to the sponsorship contract to check what you agreed and what each other's objectives were, use this as the basis to check all promises are being delivered, including:

Keeping track of all the benefits and items, such as tickets and hospitality

If possible, keep examples of media coverage

Have regular 'check-ins' with sponsors to make sure that they are happy and the success is being monitored





9. The current sponsorship marketplace



What's covered in this chapter

Before embarking on creating or enhancing your own sponsorship programme, it is essential to have a good grasp of the sponsorship industry, including what sponsorship is, how it can deliver value for your club and what brands are looking for within a partnership.

This chapter explores sponsorship, providing definitions as well as the latest trends and industry insights.



Defining Sponsorship

”Sponsorship is a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and a team, organisation, event or individual, which offers rights and association in return for sponsorship investment”.

SPONSORSHIP IS NOT FREE MONEY

Entering into sponsorship agreements with partners requires time and resource to be successful and must be seen as a two-way partnership.

Sponsorship and Partnerships are NOT Philanthropy.

Brands want a return on their investment - they are partnering with you to achieve their business objectives. The days of simply banking a fat cheque in exchange for a passing mention on the website, having branding on team kit or being provided with a perimeter board.

Mutually beneficial partnerships can add tremendous organisational value however, they should not be entered into lightly.





Overview: A Mutually Beneficial Marketing Tool

In years gone by sponsorship, or corporate partnerships, were considered a simple transactional arrangement between two parties. One party provided rights or an association and the other party bestowed either cash or a provision of services.

Sponsorship represented a relatively basic exchange, rights for money.

Some sponsorships do still follow this same simplistic approach, usually when a senior member of the company has a passion for a certain sport/team, however these sponsorships don't benefit the business.

In order to be successful, sponsorships need to run deeper – they should answer a business need and be beneficial for both parties. Sponsorship can uniquely offer business, brand and employee benefits that create opportunities and experiences which differentiate and add value to BOTH parties.

Partnerships should be powerful, exciting and engaging marketing and communication tools.





Current Market Trends and Life After Covid

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the sports sponsorship market. Many events were cancelled or postponed, and the lack of live audiences has reduced the value of in-stadium and television advertising. This has led to a decrease in revenue for many rugby clubs, as many companies faced a financial stress and subsequently cut down on their spending including sponsorships.

However, the post pandemic world is looking far more rosy, as companies look again to sponsorship.





Estimated Current Market Size

The total sponsorship spend in the UK, across all properties was £3.87 billion in 2021. Sport accounts for 78% of the total spend, so it is anticipated that that sport accounts for approximately £3 billion.

According to Nielsen, rugby generated the 3rd highest spend as a sport accounting for approximately £270m each year. (Football and Motorsport are ranked as 1 and 2)

Whilst not massively relevant to club's further down the English rugby pyramid, it is believed that the total sponsorship income in the Premiership is £40m per annum. There is very little current insight available for sponsorships below the Premiership.





10. Women's sport



Background

Historically, women's sport has trailed men's sport in all aspects from participation, through attendance, to media coverage and revenue, but in the last 10 to 15 years these gaps have begun to close.

Since 2010 there have been notable moments which have catapulted women's sport into the mainstream such as:-

The 2012 London Olympics were the first Olympics where women competed in all events. Saudi Arabia, Brunei and Qatar sent female athletes to an Olympics for the first time. The USA and Canada sent more female athletes than male for the first time at any Olympics. No wonder it was dubbed 'The Women's Games' by the press.

The Women's Boat Race in 2015 took place on the same stretch of The Thames as the men's race for the first time ever, expedited by the sponsor at the time, Newton Asset Management, signalling a new equity in one of the most traditional sports

GB Hockey win Gold at Rio 2016 Olympics, which went to a penalty shoot-out after a 3-3 draw at full time. The BBC delayed the start of News at 10 in order to continue their coverage and so over 10 million people watched GB women win the first ever Olympic hockey gold. Sport England research showed a huge increase in grassroots women's hockey participation from 4,500 to 92,700 following this win.





Background continued

England women winning the Cricket World Cup in 2017 was in front of a sell-out crowd at Lord's, coupled with record-breaking media coverage, enabling 50 million people to see the tournament globally

At the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018, England's women won Netball Gold in an exciting final against Australia. This prompted a huge resurgence of women picking the sport back up across the UK

The FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019 showed a real mainstream appetite for women's sport with 1.2 billion watching on TV globally. UK coverage on TV and other media

England winning the UEFA Women's Euros in summer 2022 seemed to herald the arrival of women's sport in mainstream consciousness. With the largest attendance (87,192) of any Euros match in history – men or women, this was a game-changing moment for women's sport

The Red Roses narrowly losing out to New Zealand in the final of the 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup, played in 2022 due to a COVID-delay, saw the largest ever crowd for a women's rugby international





Current context

Interest in and awareness of women's sports continues to grow and this is being reflected (and supported) by increased media coverage – A report from Women in Sport in 2018 showed that women's sports coverage was 10% of the total of UK sports coverage. The following year blew that out of the water, with BBC Sport reporting that coverage of women's sport articles comprised 45.7% of total coverage on their homepage.

However the issues of pay parity and lack of professional contracts in women's sport continue largely as they have been – that is languishing behind men's sports.

Ticket sales for the Women's Six Nations is already (in January 2023) double that of sales for the 2022 tournament. This is one example of where you can capitalise on the increased public interest in women's sport, by sharing these snippets through your comms channels, and using as a call to action for your fans to support the women's game.

It is important to ensure women's sport has the same coverage across the club website and social media channels.

Only with support from all sides will we be able to maximise the benefits of increased interest, new audiences and new revenue being brought into sport.





New Audiences, New Opportunities

One of the most exciting aspects of women's sport particularly for clubs is that the audiences are brand new – 80% of ticket buyers for the Lionesses in 2022 were unknown to the FA or UEFA. These new fans at international tournament level then converted into fans of the domestic game with a 70% increase in viewership of the Barclays Women's Super League on Sky. This was also reflected in matchday attendances which increased by 200%

The new audiences brought into women's sport are open to new concepts and formats, so it's a good opportunity to try something new in terms of your content delivery for example. There aren't so many restrictions and traditions associated with women's sport, which has been a barrier to innovation

Consider how you could improve the visibility of women's sport through your website and social media feeds





Be on the front foot of the movement

In case there is any doubt, these are the reasons your club should commit to a clear focus on women's rugby:

Access to new audiences and new revenue streams which will support the growth and sustainability of your club in the future

Social responsibility – offering women and girls equal access to play rugby as men/boys is of high importance to the future of the sport – this is also of high importance to brands who can connect their ESG (environmental, social, governance) goals to activity in this area

Club image – clubs are seeing the positive benefits of actively supporting women's rugby from their fans and wider society





The benefits of unbundling women's sponsorship rights

Unbundling women's team rights from men's rights can unlock revenue growth for your club. Manchester City recently announced a standalone deal with a formalwear partner for their women's team.

By unbundling these rights, the club can benefit from

Increased revenue – women's rights should no longer be seen as a 'free' add-on to men's team rights

Access to new audiences through sponsor activation

Wider offering to sponsors, who have better access to the sponsorship rights which will work best for their objectives

Greater understanding of the value of your women's teams, and understanding of what drives brands to partner with them

Clearer marketing of your women's team and the values they offer to brand partners

Teams who have begun to unbundle women's team rights have seen interest from sponsors of the men's teams, and also interest from completely new brand partners who have been enticed in by a new sponsorship offering.

Consider if unbundling would be right for your club, and if you have the resources to support such a move.

Chapter takeaways and top tips

Now is the time to demonstrate support of your women's team in order to:

Capitalise on the huge new interest in women's sport and importantly the new audiences and revenue streams

Promote gender equity and access for girls to enter the sport, helping to sustain it for years to come

Benefit the image of your club

Actively plan so that your club comms (website, social media, PR) are focusing on the women's game as much as the men's

Consider whether unbundling your women's team rights from the men's would be beneficial

Begin to develop a separate target list of companies who would consider supporting your women's team





11. Glossary of terms



Term	Definition
Above-the-line (ATL)	This is paid-for communication in the independent media and tends to focus on mass audiences, e.g. billboards, bus shelters, advertising on TV, in the newspapers or on social media channels. Also see 'below-the-line'.
Activation	Activation is the carrying out of marketing activity as part of the marketing and sponsorship process and at a basic level means bringing your sponsorship to life through a variety of planned activities.
Ambush marketing	A deliberate attempt by an organisation to associate itself with an event (often a sporting event) in order to gain some of the benefits associated with being an official sponsor without incurring the costs of sponsorship. For example by handing out branded merchandise outside an event with which a brand has no association, or raising a large branded blimp nearby.
Assets	“A useful and desirable thing or quality”. Assets can take many forms, including branding opportunities, your athletes, development programmes, social media channels, etc. Also see 'Tangible Assets' and 'Intangible Assets'.
Below-the-line (BTL)	Below-the-line marketing is activity focused on targeted groups of consumers rather than a mass audience like ATL activity. The purpose of these activities is to develop the brand by creating awareness and building a brand profile. There are many methods of below-the-line activity, including sales promotions, direct marketing, PR, personal selling and sponsorship.
Brand	In basic terms, a brand is defined as a "name, term, sign symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product", (Philip Kotler/Gary Amstrong). However, a brand should also incorporate the 'brand promise' of a certain experience in relation to a product or service i.e. a narrative around it; this will often help develop a logo into a brand.
Brand visibility	Simply put, the opportunity to see a brand by an audience. For example, at an event a brand's visibility will link directly to its prominence of branding in the programme, on perimeter boards, signage, official's uniforms, give-aways (e.g. balloons), etc.
Branding	The process of applying a logo or strapline to physical items, for example: kit, perimeter boards, website, scoreboards, media backdrops, etc.
Category exclusivity	The right of a sponsor to be the only company within its product or service category associated with the sponsored property e.g. BMW would be the exclusive supplier within the vehicle category. See also 'product category'.
Cause-related marketing	A partnership between a company or brand and a charity or 'cause' by which the 'cause' benefits financially from the sale of specific products. The term was first used by American Express in 1983 when it supported the restoration of the Statue of Liberty.



Term	Definition
Co-branding	Branding which features both your sport's logo and that of your sponsor - the logos aren't necessarily placed together.
Commission	A fee paid to an agency - or individual - based on a percentage of the overall value (of a sponsorship package / programme) to a sponsor.
Composite logo or lock-up logo	A specially designed dual logo which is made up of your sport's logo and that of your sponsor. The two sit close together, implying a partnership.
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both social and ecological) in which it operates.
Designation	The official title by which a sponsor is known and which is usually agreed at the start of an agreement. The wording depends on the level of sponsorship and the product category. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official partner • Official supplier of audio visual equipment • Team partner
Direct mail	Direct mail is promotional material sent through the post to your members and / or participants.
Direct marketing	All activities which make it possible to promote products, services or specific messaging to a segment of the population by post, telephone, e-mail or other direct means.
E-marketing or internet marketing	Internet marketing, or online marketing, refers to advertising and marketing activity that uses the internet and emails to drive direct sales.
Endorsement	This is when a team or an individual athlete promotes a product or service. This can range from them simply sending a 'Tweet' to say they've just been using a particular product and how great it is, to a full (paid-for) advertising campaign where they're seen pictured with the product or using the product.
Engage	To have a conversation with your audience. You can interact with your audience on a face-to-face basis, or remotely via social media channels, promotional offers, competitions, etc.
First refusal	Generally used in relation to renewing a contract or the opportunity to sponsor an event. The rights holder will give the incumbent sponsor, or one of its existing partners, the first option on renewing or taking-up a sponsorship opportunity ahead of any other brand.
Intangible asset	Assets associated with a sport that you can't physically see or hold, for example, the prestige of winning a gold medal, reputation, goodwill of participants, etc.



Term	Definition
Intellectual property (IP)	IP is something unique that you have created. It includes items which are copyrighted, trademarked or patented. Examples include: a brand or logo, content you have written (eg for a website or on a leaflet), imagery, programmes you have developed, merchandise, etc.
Interactive events	An opportunity to physically engage with your audience and where you have an opportunity to meet them face-to-face. Typically this will be at some form of event and the audience will be the spectators. This could include anything from a 'meet and greet' with an athlete to some form of competition or 'have a go' activity.
Leverage	"To make use of". For example, how best to leverage an athlete appearance and make the most of the opportunity.
Licensing	Sports licensing is a contractual agreement by which a sports organisation or team gives a third party company a license to use its name, logo or trademark on the company's products or services. Payment for these rights can be via an up-front fee or a commission based on each item / service sold. The benefits of licensing are that you don't shoulder any of the risk should an item not sell, however you should monitor the quality / consistency of the product or service to ensure it is of a suitable quality that fits with your sport.
Marketing in kind (MIK)	Payment made in the form of marketing support / promotion, either instead of a cash fee or as well as. MIK can be very valuable when linking with a sponsor that has a good audience base or a strong marketing spend. If your sponsor is promoting your events on their social media pages, on their website or running a digital marketing campaign which includes reference to - and is therefore promoting - your sport, this has a value to your organisation. MIK can be very valuable but needs to be carefully defined and managed. See also value in kind (VIK).
Media exposure	This is about the opportunity to see (OTS) your sport, brand or brand messaging across media channels, including print, broadcast and online media.
Media partner	An exclusive agreement between your organisation and a specific media title that brings mutually beneficial publicity. You provide the media title with exclusive content (e.g. imagery, interviews, behind the scenes access, etc) in return for broadcast, print or online coverage.
Merchandise	Merchandise is any manufactured goods you buy or sell and for which you take on all the risk associated with stocking it. Usually these goods include sports clothing, equipment, bags, drinking bottles, etc and feature your sport's logo. You giveaway or sell this merchandise at events or through your website. Normally does not have any other company logo on it other than your own.
Naming rights	A company or brand buys the right to name a facility or event, typically for a defined period of time. For example, the Emirates Stadium.
Partner	Generally used to refer to the highest ranking sponsor of an organisation. For example for the London 2012 Games, tier one sponsors were referred to as 'partners', tier two sponsors as 'supporters' and tier three sponsors as 'suppliers'. In some instances however, the term 'partner' can simply mean any commercial partner or supplier working with you at any level. For some, 'partner' refers to non-commercial organisations that they're working with. The key is to agree what terminology you use and stick to it.
Presenting partner	A 'presenting partner' or 'title sponsor' attaches the name of the company or brand at the end (or, sometimes, beginning) of an existing team, competition or venue name. For example, the Yonex All England Badminton Championships or the RBS Six Nations. It can also be a presenting partner of an event such as 'The National Championships presented by ABC Co'. This would be the designation (see definition earlier) you would agree at the start of your agreement.



Term	Definition
Product (or service) category	A particular group of related products or services. A sponsor will want the right to be the exclusive provider of a product or service within their category, e.g. cars, telecommunications, competitive apparel, sports drinks.
Property	A sporting organisation, event, programme or athlete which has potential to attract a sponsor and has some value or rights associated with it.
Renewal	The opportunity to renew a contract with a sponsor once the existing term has come to an end. Also see 'First Refusal'.
Return on investment (ROI)	<p>To understand the success of a sponsorship, a brand will want to measure the return on investment it has achieved. What it actually measures will be determined by its objectives, but could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of samples given away at events • Coverage in the press • Contact details captured at an event • Number of 'Likes' in response to a Facebook post, or re-Tweets received on Twitter • The number of test drives generated at a sponsored event • Number of clients entertained at an event • Number of promotional offers redeemed following a sponsored event <p>These measures can also be termed as key performance indicators or KPIs and are generally agreed at the start of a sponsorship. The ROI for a brand is very important so make sure you understand what their measurement tools will be at the start.</p>
Rights	"A legal or moral entitlement to have or do something." On receipt of a 'rights fee', a sports governing body (the rights holder) passes over certain rights to another organisation (the sponsor) to use and exploit certain assets and benefits in relation to their organisation, or an event, team or programme.
Rights fee	The payment made in cash or in kind (products or services) by the sponsor to the rights holder in order to secure the legal rights of association with a sport, programme or event.
Rights holder	An organisation - or individual - that owns an exclusive set of rights and controls who uses them and how they are used.
Royalty	A payment to the rights owner for the use of property, for example organisational or event logos. A royalty payment is made to the legal owner of the property by a third party who wishes to make use of it for the purposes of generating revenue. In most cases, royalties are designed to compensate the owner for the asset's use and are legally binding.



Term	Definition
Segmented marketing	Marketing activity which targets specific audiences. For example, one audience could be participants aged under 16, another could be those participants' parents. You'd use a very different approach to engage with the children to that which you'd use with their parents.
Servicing	This means looking after your sponsors and ensuring they have access to all of the rights they have paid for as part of their sponsorship deal.
Sponsor	An agreement involving a rights holder and a company / brand, in which the company / brand pays a sponsorship fee - consisting of cash or product / service - in return for the opportunity to use certain rights that the rights holder owns. The company/brand is known as a 'sponsor'.
Sponsorship	Sponsorship is a powerful marketing and communications tool uniquely combining brand, business and employee benefits. Through content association and targeted activation, it creates brand experiences that differentiate and add value.
Sponsorship package	A sponsorship package is a package of benefits or rights that are offered to a business or person in exchange for the provision of cash or value in kind.
Strapline	A strap line is a short sentence that represents a business, brand, project or concept. For example: Lawn Tennis Association - Getting more people playing tennis, more often Nike - Just do it
Suppliers	Suppliers are companies that provide a product or service to the property that is being sponsored. In many cases, their product / service will contribute as VIK to the sponsorship investment. For example:- Competitive apparel- Cars- Hotel accommodation- Insurance
Tangible asset	Physical assets which can be seen and / or held. E.g. tickets to events, branded perimeter boards, an athlete appearance. (Also see 'intangible asset').
Target audience	A specific group of people within the target market at which a product or the marketing message of a product is aimed at.



Term	Definition
Target market	A group of customers towards which a business has decided to aim its marketing efforts and ultimately its merchandise.
Term	The duration of a sponsorship contract; can relate to a multi-year deal or a single event deal.
Title sponsor	A sponsor that has rights to a specific title of an event or team e.g. The Emirates (Arsena;’s Football Stadium). (see also Presenting Partners)
(Value) In-Kind (VIK)	When a product or service is given in lieu of cash as part of a sponsorship deal.



This toolkit has been developed on behalf of the RFU by Orchard Connects.

Orchard Connects is a sponsorship agency who work with rights holders requiring strategic advice and sponsorship sales support.

They also work with brands seeking partnerships or looking to make existing partnerships work harder.