

## Sponsorship top tips

### ***You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours***

Be clear about what you are asking for (e.g. what is the money for), but also be clear about what the organisation will get for their sponsorship money.

Could their logo go on the team's t-shirts, a thanks be sent out in a newsletter or a post be put on social media? Invite staff to mentor the team, watch a VIP project presentation or give them some free tickets to the school show.

### ***Doing it for the kids***

Whilst organisations like to know they are getting something out of sponsorship, they also like to know that they are making a change.

Let them know what impact their sponsorship will have on the young people. Maybe even get them to write their own letters or create a pitch video.

### ***Keep it local***

Teams often have more luck approaching smaller, local companies rather than large, multi-national companies.

These companies like knowing they are helping their local community.

### ***Six degrees of separation***

You'd be surprised how many contacts to potential sponsors you can find from the team members.

From an aunt who works in a local building company, to a family friend that runs a local shop, you don't need to look far to find the people you need.

### ***To quote the great philosopher Jessie J, "It's not about the money, money, money"***

So, a lot of the time money will help, but remember that organisations may be able to donate things other than money.

The materials to build a practice table, a box of LEGO® or site tours are all things that can massively help.

### ***Tips from a winning coach***

Neil Corrigan, a teacher from Wallace High School in Dumfries and Galloway, has been coaching FIRST® LEGO® League Challenge teams for several years.

His team have been UK and Ireland Champions, have qualified for international events, and have won awards at World Festivals.

He's also a fundraising magician! Here's Neil's top tips:

- Work very quickly. If you aren't quick you will miss your opportunity.
- Get your profile really high - this is crucial. Get on TV, radio and in the press. Then talk about this in your letter to potential sponsors - they want to know that you are quite 'savvy' and are going to make an effort to publicise their support.
- Emphasise the scale of the event. Talk about how their name would be mixing with NASA, Apple, Google, etc.
- Think about what is current? What hardships have you needed to overcome? Sponsors love a story to latch on to. I have always explained that I have mainly girls in my engineering teams and that we are a little country school taking on the UK and then the world. This year I'm also emphasising community involvement as that is very current and businesses are expected to demonstrate social responsibilities.
- Scattergun your emails but individualise them. Create a standard letter but then change it for each company. This takes a lot of work but is worth it. Don't get hung up with engineering companies. You'll be surprised who comes back. Last year we were sponsored for £2K by a national retail chain, having emailed them simply because they had a shop in Dumfries.
- Make sure the kids are seen doing something too - even a bake sale or bag packing. They need to feel they are contributing and smaller contributors in particular want to see this too. Nobody will give anything if the kids aren't seen to be deserving.
- Enlist the help of parents, friends and families - last year we quickly raised £2K simply through a fundraising website.
- Follow up with thanks and publicise their support - you may need them again.