



## The James Madison University Sponsorship Toolkit

### Introduction

One of the many ways corporations engage with JMU is through sponsorship of university programs and events. Our office (<https://j.mu/cfr>) has developed this toolkit to help you think through your approach with companies you hope will sponsor your event, program, or project.

### Step 1. Develop a Sponsorship Package

- Look at your program/event budget and determine appropriate levels of support and number of sponsors needed at each level (e.g., will the top supporter be exclusive, or can there be co-sponsors?).
- Determine what you can offer as benefits *that offer no tangible value*:
  - Examples include company logo on signs, website, social media, etc.; item giveaways; recognition in publications related to the event; verbal recognition at events; keynote speaker from company; naming opportunities; event access for employees; and student recruitment opportunities.
- Design your sponsorship document, including a detailed description of your event, all sponsorship levels and benefits for each level, and information on the ROI your event provides to companies:
  - Include a detailed description of your event and what marketing opportunity/access/ROI it can offer a company, as well as who it impacts/reaches. Include information about the prospective audience and number of people your event will reach.
  - Include contact information and details about how to learn more.
  - Please note: When developing your sponsorship package, it is very important to understand the difference between “sponsorship” and “advertising.” Please see additional information at the end of this document.
- Include sponsorship information on your event website, if possible.
- Please contact our CFR staff with questions before sending your sponsorship package to [meckjh@jmu.edu](mailto:meckjh@jmu.edu) for internal approval.

### Step 2: Find sponsorship prospects.

- Do your homework:
  - Look at programs/events/organizations similar to yours and the types of companies that sponsor them.
  - Think locally: Look at local companies for support.
- Where to look for support:
  - Community section of a company’s website
  - Foundation Center (Corporate Directory)
  - Hoovers.com
  - Newspapers (business section)
  - Publications covering the corporate sector

- Relationships are key: Use connections you already have to corporations for better luck with finding a sponsor; cold calling is usually less successful but can work with persistence. Think of:
  - Personal connections
  - Professional connections
- Does your program align with your prospects' interests? Why they would want to participate in this program/event?
  - If the company has sponsorship requirements, read through and understand them.
  - Analyze the types of activities the company sponsors.
  - Determine whether your program/event aligns with the company's mission.
  - Does your event promote the brand or image of the company?
  - Does your organization have similar organizational values?
  - Has the company given to similar organizations?
  - Does the company have a connection to your program/event or school?

### **Step 3: Clear the Sponsorship Package and Prospect List with the Office of Corporate Relations.**

- Once you have developed your sponsorship package and the corporate prospect list, send it to John Meck at [meckjh@jmu.edu](mailto:meckjh@jmu.edu) for clearance. Corporate Relations will cross-check your list to see if we already have relationships, or if it conflicts with outstanding university asks or existing relationships.

### **Step 4: Reach out to your prospective sponsors.**

- Once your list is cleared, you are ready to begin to reach out to prospective sponsors.
- The Office of Corporate Relations is willing to join calls or attend meetings to help facilitate an ask to a company.
- Helpful tips for outreach include:
  - Keep emails short, request a meeting (local contacts) or a call, and attach your sponsorship package.
  - Allow up to a couple of weeks for an initial response, and follow up with a call if the recipient doesn't respond initially. You may have to follow up multiple times.

### **Step 5: After the Commitment:**

- If a company makes a commitment to sponsor your program/event, please reach out to John Meck ([meckjh@jmu.edu](mailto:meckjh@jmu.edu)) to draft a pledge commitment and complete the necessary paperwork to receive the funds.
- Be sure to deliver on all the benefits you guaranteed your sponsors.
- Stewardship: invite company to event/program and future events/programs

### **Sponsorship vs. Advertising**

While working with a company, a program or event must be careful to determine whether a company's support is considered sponsorship or advertising. A sponsorship is considered to be charitable when a company pays for part of or all of a program or event's costs and receives recognition (e.g., logo placement, signage, verbal recognition, a featured speaker, etc.) for its support.

The IRS defines a sponsorship as:

*Any payment made by a person engaged in a trade or business for which the person will receive no substantial benefit other than the use or acknowledgement of the business name, logo, or product lines in connection with the organization's activities. 'Use or acknowledgement' does not include advertising the sponsor's products or services. The organization's activities include all its activities, whether or not related to its exempt purposes.*

A sponsorship is different from pure advertising, which can be defined as:

*The organization advertises the sponsor's products or services including: 1) Messages containing qualitative or comparative language, price information, or other indications of saving or value; 2) Endorsements; and 3) Inducements to purchase, sell, or use the products or services. The use of promotional logos or slogans that are established as part of the sponsor's identity is not, by itself, advertising. In addition, mere distribution or display of a sponsor's product by the organization to the public at a sponsored event, whether free or for remuneration, is considered use or acknowledgement of the product rather than advertising.*

If you have questions or need help during any stage of the sponsorship process, please contact John Meck at [meckjh@jmu.edu](mailto:meckjh@jmu.edu).

## Resources

- Books
  - Calendaria, Roberto. *Relationships Raise Money: A Guide to Corporate Sponsorship*. Calidad Marketing, LLC., 2011.
  - Collett, Pippa, and Fenton, William. *The Sponsorship Handbook: Essential Tools, Tips and Techniques for Sponsors and Sponsorship Seekers*. Jossey-Bass, 2011.
  - Martin, Patricia. *Made Possible By: Succeeding with Sponsorship*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.
  - Klaff, Oren. *Pitch Anything*. McGraw-Hill, 2011.
  - Skildum-Reid, Kim. *The Sponsorship Seeker's Toolkit*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2014.
- Websites
  - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/corporate-sponsorship>
  - <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/Funding-Resources/Corporations/corporate-sponsorship>
  - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/corporate-sponsorship>
  - <http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-events/cultivating-corporate-sponsors/>
- Articles
  - Fritz, Joanne. *How to Make Your Nonprofit Attractive to Sponsors*. <https://www.thebalance.com/nonprofit-corporate-sponsors-2502063>
  - Tam, Simon. *How to Get Sponsorships and Endorsements*. <https://www.amazon.com/How-Get-Sponsorships-Endorsements-Simon-ebook/dp/B007Y6SCOO>
  - Thompson, Frederick. *Corporate Partnerships for Non-Profits: A Match Made in Heaven?* <https://www.snpo.org/publications/sendpdf.php?id=1879>

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