



Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship!

Al Brodie Sponsor My Cycling Club

A step-by-step guide for cycling clubs and teams answering the question:

"Why should a company
Sponsor My Cycling Club?"

www.sponsormycyclingclub.com

Find more
sponsors

Secure more
funding

Write better
sponsorship
proposals
and letters

Create
longer-term
sponsor
relationships





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One Sunday afternoon in July, 1989, I was sitting on our living room couch, channel surfing, trying to find something to watch on TV. Completely by accident I stumbled upon Greg LeMond, overcoming a seemingly insurmountable deficit, winning the closest Tour de France in history! It was at that very moment that I became a passionate fan of the sport of cycling.

In March of the following year, I was in search of an outlet from the stresses of an extremely demanding sales career. Throughout middle school, high school and college I had been an avid runner, but nagging knee discomfort no longer allowed me to run. As luck would have it, a friend and co-worker was an avid cyclist. We would often spend our lunch breaks talking about his morning ride, and the many great experiences he'd had while riding. At the end of one particularly stressful week, my colleague took me to his favorite bike shop. Less than 24 hours

later I was being fitted for my first road bike (a Klein Quantum)! Just as we often do not know where our rides will take us, I never realized how cycling would change my life, and where I would end up twenty years later.

Cycling has played a prominent role in my family's, and my, life and influenced decisions such as where we live and vacation. It has even impacted the design of our home! In fact, the same shop where I purchased my first road bike (and have purchased every one of our family's bikes

since) gave our son his first job, employing him from his early teens through his junior year in college.

Having been a member of several clubs, an officer in a few, and even dabbling in racing (although not very good dabbling), has made me come to appreciate the role sponsorship plays in a cycling club's success.

Less than one year ago, I decided to take my extensive knowledge and experience in Sales and Marketing and merge it with my love for cycling, to create a blog which describes how to secure cycling sponsorship. My blog, "[Sponsor My Cycling Club](#)," helps clubs answer the question, "Why should a company Sponsor My Cycling Club?" The purpose of the blog, and resulting e-book, [Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship](#), is to provide cycling clubs and teams with insight, guidance and direction, for securing sponsorship from corporate sponsors. The content of the e-book outlines an easy, yet structured, process to demonstrate the value of cycling sponsorship to companies.



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Following the process will enable your club to achieve differentiation from other organizations requesting sponsorship and funding. Hopefully, this will lead to your club securing more sponsors and more sponsorship dollars per contract, while maintaining stronger, long-term sponsorship relationships.

My primary objective is to share my expertise through posts, articles, references and examples, to explain how corporations can leverage sponsorship as a tool to help them achieve their business goals and objectives (increase sales, revenue and market share; increase brand visibility, awareness and value; increase customer and brand loyalty; increase exposure in, and penetration of, new market segments).

I hope you find [Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship](#) valuable in helping your club attain corporate sponsors. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me by leaving a comment on my blog, or sending an e-mail to: al@sponsormycyclingclub.com. I would love to hear from you!

Lastly, if you are not doing so already, and you find the information I provide valuable, please follow me on [Twitter](#), or become a [facebook](#) friend.

Thank you for purchasing my e-book!

And, as I always close my blog posts, remember to “Keep the rubber side down!”

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Al Brodie has been an avid cyclist for two decades and enjoys road and track riding, as well as mountain biking. He has been a member, officer, and co-founder of several cycling clubs in the North Texas area.

Al has spent the majority of his career working in Sales and Marketing in the Information Technology and Telecommunications industry, and is currently employed as a Worldwide Product Marketing Manager for an Information Technology company.

During his career in the corporate sector, Al has worked with global enterprises in the manufacturing, telecommunications, consumer products, and electronics industry, creating, selling and delivering solutions to address their business requirements. In doing so, it became apparent that the same process and principles used for working with corporate clients could be effectively applied to cycling clubs securing sponsorship. Al's blog, [Sponsor My Cycling Club](#) and e-books, [Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get Cycling Sponsorship](#) and [Top Ten Tips for Securing Cycling Sponsorship](#), provide cycling clubs with guidance, information and insight, for successfully working with companies to obtain sponsorship and funding.

Al is a graduate of the University of Texas Arlington with a BA in Speech Communication and Public Relations. He lives in North Texas with his wife Jean, and, son Eric.



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How to get cycling sponsorship by answering the question – “Why should a company Sponsor My Cycling Club?”

Getting sponsorship and funding for your club, team, or event is something we are all wrestling with at one point or another. Securing funding and sponsors can be compared to revenue for corporations; it's difficult to operate without it! Whether your sponsorship goals involve raising money for a worthy cause, advocacy initiatives, trips to events or races, or for equipment, sponsorship funding is the life blood of your club or team. The big questions we are typically thinking about when it comes to sponsorship are – “How do you get sponsorship and funding?,” and “Why should a company Sponsor My Cycling Club (or team, or event)?” If you have spent time reading my blog – [Sponsor My Cycling Club](#) you recognize that this is the area where I focus all of my energy, in an effort to help individuals, clubs, and teams understand the process involved in securing sponsorship and funding from corporate partners.

Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship is a handbook, providing you with steps, tips, templates, links and information to help you achieve 3 important sponsorship objectives – securing more sponsors, securing greater investment per sponsor, building and maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors. *Cycling Sponsorship 101* will give you insight into establishing an effective cycling sponsorship marketing campaign by helping you understand why companies sponsor, why companies sponsor cycling, and the value of cycling sponsorship in helping companies achieve their business objectives and motivations. With an understanding of these topics your club or team will be able to:

- Find and engage prospective sponsors,
- Quickly qualify companies that will be “good” prospective partners,
- Advance through the sponsorship process by identifying the resources involved, timeframes, and information you need to build effective sponsorship proposals and sponsorship letters

- Align your clubs, teams, or events value with the prospective partners business needs and objectives,
- Move through the entire sponsorship process faster, easier and more effectively.

The end result of applying the practices and process to your sponsorship campaign will be securing more sponsors, securing greater investment per sponsor, while building and maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors!



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The rules have changed – what are the NEW RULES OF SECURING CYCLING SPONSORSHIP?

The rules for securing sponsorship and sponsorship marketing have changed as a result of the explosion of the internet, social media, social networks, blogging and forums. Today, you have the ability to learn more than ever before about prospective sponsors using the web, social media and social networks to investigate, research, connect and establish a dialog; where YOU can shape the discussion. The information and intelligence gathered into a company's goals, objectives, strategies, and how sponsorship fits into their overall marketing and PR strategy. Conversely, you also have the opportunity to attract prospective sponsors by leveraging the web, social networks, blogs and forums. Leveraging words and terms that are relevant to companies looking for sponsorship opportunities can be very powerful in helping organizations find you.

David Meerman Scott's bestselling book *THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING and PR* outlines how companies, individuals, and non-profit organizations can use *Social Media*, Websites, News Releases, Blogs, and more, to reach their audience, and consequently achieve their goals. The "New Rules" are directly applicable to helping you become successful in securing funding for your club, team or event.

A few of the points I noted from the *THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING and PR* which should be the foundation for a club or team's cycling sponsorship campaign are:

Focus on your buyers' needs

For a club or team this means putting the needs of those you are approaching for sponsorship and funding first. Think in terms of the problems prospective sponsors are trying to solve – increasing visibility and awareness, increasing traffic to stores, events, or websites; increasing sales and revenue; improving public relations and image by supporting important social issues, etc. Focusing on what is important, and top of mind, to prospective sponsors will enable you to shape

your [messages](#), [sponsorship proposals](#), [sponsorship letters](#), and interactions in a manner which will resonate positively with them. In which case, sponsorship of your club, team or event can be viewed as a solution to a problem. In subsequent sections, we'll explore why companies sponsor, their basic motivations for sponsorship (making money, saving money, and projecting an intended image) and how your cycling club or team can align your messages to get their attention, establish differentiation, and increase chances of securing sponsorship and funding.

Define your goals

Start by clearly defining what you want to achieve for your club or team, or through an event. Make it quantitative – "We want to increase sponsorship funding by 20% in 20XX." Build a plan describing how you will achieve the goal. Include the problems you can solve for companies. List them. Each should clearly articulate the business problem or goal a company is trying to solve or achieve and how your club can provide a solution, and the benefit delivered.

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Understand your audience

Identifying how your audience views sponsorship, and the importance they place upon it for achieving their business objectives, philanthropic goals, or public image, gives you immediate insight into how to find prospective sponsors, and how to assist them in finding you. By using keywords, terms and phrases; in your sponsorship proposals, sponsorship letters, newsletters and news releases, on your web and social media sites; you automatically increase your ability to attract companies and organizations that might have an interest in supporting your club, team, or event. The key again is to focus on the audience and their needs.



Build your value propositions

Articulate your value in terms that will resonate with your audience. Always start by understanding the prospective sponsor's objectives; and what they are trying to accomplish. What's the **business problem they want to solve?** Second, describe how you can help them achieve their objectives. In other words, describe how your activities (participation in events, involvement in the local community) can provide a way for the sponsor to achieve their objectives. Third, and probably most important, is to always begin by taking the prospective sponsors view: "How can sponsorship help us...?"

Customize your content to your audience

Make sure that your sponsorship proposal, **sponsorship letter**, areas of your website, and all communications geared towards securing sponsorship and funding are customized to address the specific issues of the intended audience. An example – requesting donations from an individual (neighbor, friend, or colleague etc.) is very different from approaching a

company for sponsorship. The messages that appeal to an individual vs. a company are vastly different.

So, why would you use a **generic** page on your website, or in a proposal with two different audiences?

Customizing your messages, website, **sponsorship proposal**, and **sponsorship letter**, to focus on the needs of the targeted audience, gives you a better chance of making sure your value is understood, thus increasing your chances of achieving your intended goal.

Get your customers to talk about you

There is no better endorsement than to have a happy sponsor talk about what you have provided for their company or organization. **Quotes and references** can help to illustrate the value your club, team or event provided. Building a reference story describing how one of your existing sponsor views your value is even better! This lends immediate credibility to the value your club or team can deliver.



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Furthermore, quotes, references and reference stories, lend themselves very well to [sponsorship proposals](#), [sponsorship letters](#), [web and social media](#) sites. Not to mention, it also helps to spread the word, helping other companies find you! (See [“Using Quotes and References” for additional information](#))

Leverage Social Media

Use [social media and social networking](#) to find companies that could be prospective sponsors, and as a vehicle to help prospective sponsors find you. Employing keywords and phrases on your club's web and social media sites helps companies and organizations find you, while helping you to find them. Effective use of social networking tools as facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and twitter can be used to provide your club with better visibility, particularly if you leverage the correct words and phrases (those your audience would use to find organizations to sponsor, or to help them solve a problem).

Social media and social networking can help you identify, research, and subsequently engage companies that might be potential candidates to sponsor your club, team or event.

These are the topics [Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship](#) will cover in an effort to give you the tools and knowledge to—secure more sponsors, secure a greater investment per sponsor, while building and maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors. With these objectives in mind, let's get started!



Why companies sponsor and why companies sponsor cycling

Why companies view sponsorship as an important Marketing and PR tool; even in a down economy?

What we can learn about the value of cycling sponsorship by looking at companies sponsoring cycling teams in the pro peloton?

Secure cycling sponsorship by understanding why companies sponsor



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Why companies view sponsorship as an important Marketing and PR tool; even in a down economy

Although we are in a down economy, companies are still continuing to invest in sponsorship as a means to “get their message” into the market, create visibility for their company and brand, and to demonstrate a sense of community by supporting societal trends and concerns (healthy lifestyles, “green,” transportation issues, work-life-balance, etc.). Sponsorship is still an excellent vehicle to augment existing marketing and public relations initiatives; not to mention, it is definitely more affordable than traditional forms of advertising.

Companies see value in sponsoring cycling

The Reuters article [“Sponsors see value in backing cycling teams”](#) demonstrates the affordability, reach, and effectiveness of sponsorship to promote a brand increase brand visibility, awareness and sales, vs. traditional advertising and public relations mediums. In the article,

Chris Baldwin contrasts how sponsors can reap the rewards of increased brand awareness and reach, for less of an investment, through cycling sponsorship. Baldwin’s article quotes – “Team owners say cycling is a cheap path to pan-European brand awareness and this year sponsors have come to bike racing seeking inexpensive sports marketing deals.” Columbia-Highroad owner Bob Stapleton (now HTC-Highroad) states “The last time we did a cross-sport analysis, cycling was about a buck twenty-five,” speaking of the sponsors’ return on investment as a ratio of cost per one thousand media impressions, or CPM. “Formula One teams were about 25-30 euros (23-28 pounds) per CPM...and then football (soccer) was about 35 (euros). If we look at our results last year we were down in the 20-30 cents per thousand range,” Stapleton said ahead of the April 5 Tour of Flanders.”For five million euros a year, you can get a lot of exposure in cycling.”

Another example cited in [“Sponsors see value in backing cycling”](#) is Team Vacansoleil, sponsored by a holiday campsite operator with sites in 15 European countries. The team run by accountant Daan Luijckx, stated that,... “full naming rights and nine months of televised racing made cycling team sponsorship attractive to businesses.”

The quotes by team management and owners in Chris Baldwin’s article provides insight into how affordable, and effective, cycling sponsorship can be as an avenue to augment existing Marketing & Advertising programs when compared to other spectator sports. As we engage sponsors, we should be mindful of the major point, [“Sponsors see value in backing cycling,”](#) emphasizes how sponsors can reap the rewards of increased brand awareness and reach, for less of an investment, when compared with other sports, for vastly less funding. In addition, the return on investment for sports marketing, dollar-for-dollar, is greater when considering the ratio of dollars-to-visibility, making cycling a much better value.

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Also, one must consider the minimal cost of sponsorship vs. traditional marketing, advertising and public relations investments. Cycling by its nature, and because of its continued growth and popularity, provides sponsors with visibility, and the opportunity to align with the growing trends of “green” and, active, healthy lifestyles, and alternative transportation; making cycling an excellent vehicle to promote a product, brand, service, or image.

A recent example of a company promoting their intended image and mission, using cycling to demonstrate social consciousness and responsibility, came from retail giant IKEA. In December, 2010, [IKEA provided 12,400 of its U.S. employees with brand new bicycles for Christmas](#). According to an IKEA spokesperson the bikes were given to demonstrate IKEA’s commitment to fitness and being environmentally conscious. An IKEA public relations manager was quoted, “It’s a good way to support having a healthy and sustainable life. It’s also going to reduce CO2 emissions in keeping with IKEA’s mission.” The IKEA website clearly states their vision: “...is to create a better

everyday life for the many people. This includes doing what we can to help create a world where we take better care of the environment, the earth’s resources, and each other. We know this continuous improvement is a never-ending job, and that we are sometimes part of the problem. But we work hard to be part of the solution.”

Cycling’s growth and reach

Let’s also consider the the continued popularity of cycling internationally, and the growth of the sport in the United States, and the impact it has in reaching a company’s target audience, niche, promoting a product or service, or projecting an intended image. When taking these factors into account, coupled with the reach of the sport, it is not surprising for companies to continue investing in cycling as a platform to augment existing Marketing, Advertising, and Public Relations campaigns, in order to “get their message” to their targeted audience. A few comments from Presidents, Chief Marketing Officers, and Chief Executive Officers sponsoring professional cycling teams demonstrates the continued value of cycling as an effective marketing tool.

“We think cycling is the best means to promote our brand”

–[Paolo del Lago, President of Liguigas Sport](#)

“...we are excited about the opportunity to communicate HTC’s brand value through the great sport of cycling... “HTC’s sponsorship of Team Columbia-HTC is one step in HTC’s commitment to increasing its global brand value and recognition.”

–[Peter Chou, Chief Executive Officer, HTC Corporation](#)

“Professional cycling in the United States continues to grow as a major spectator sport and serves as a great way to reach health-conscious consumers,” he added. “This particular partnership provides a highly visible and mission-consistent opportunity to both advance our message and drive awareness of our products and services.”

–[Tom McEnery, Chief Marketing Officer, OptumHealth](#)

“The Saxo Bank-SunGard Professional Cycling Team represents a fantastic opportunity to gain visibility for our brand in front of a global audience.”

–[Brian Robins, Chief Marketing Officer, SunGard](#)

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Sponsorship trends in a down economy

Here are some interesting points I found while researching sponsorship trends during our current, challenging, economic times:

- More companies were planning to make a greater investment in sponsorship during 2010 than they did in 2009.
- Sponsorship is viewed by many companies as an important vehicle to augment existing marketing efforts, while also contributing to their philanthropic objectives (community service, etc.). This is HUGE nowadays because it's all about spreading good PR and being in touch with what's happening (healthy living, "green", transportation issues, etc.). For many companies, being perceived positively, in support of societal concerns, among consumers can mean positive brand recognition (which can lead to more sales). Also, consider the motivations for companies providing sponsorship and funding. These can be categorized into three basic areas: to help them make money, save money, while projecting an "intended" image for their company, brand, products and/or services.

- Sponsorship opportunities exist across a variety of industries—I'm not really seeing any industry coming to the forefront either in the research I have performed, or through the personal interactions I have had. At the professional level we're seeing every possible industry involved in sponsorship in one form or another. At a local level, the cycling club I belong to recently signed a sponsorship contract with a premier golf course community! One trend I am seeing though is local companies beginning to sponsor event venues.

This is no longer the exclusive territory of the professional sports stadiums and ballparks. An example of the value of sponsorship on a local level is a Toyota dealership paying \$1.5M to sponsor a park in Lewisville, TX! As of October 1, the official park name will be [Toyota of Lewisville Railroad Park](#).



Approximately 582K people visit the park annually for youth leagues, sports tournaments, and special events like the [Panda Cup International Soccer Tournament](#), [American Southwest Conference Women's Softball Championship](#), [Texas Firefighter Olympics](#) and [Regional Amateur Tour \(RAT\) Skateboarding](#).

Boulder Cup Cyclo-Cross Race: An innovative marketing approach

An example of an innovative partnership providing mutually beneficial results for cycling, the event coordinator, and the business community and consumers is the [Boulder Cup Cyclo-Cross event held in October, 2010](#). Cycling event coordinator Chris Gealish partnered with Flatiron Crossing Mall to host the Boulder Cup Cyclo-Cross Race on the shopping mall grounds! The comments from the Mall's Senior Property Manager illustrate how cycling could help drive additional traffic, customers, and positive PR for Flatiron Crossing Mall.

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"(Grealish) was looking for other options and ways to grow the race," said Campbell, the mall's senior property manager. "He came and solicited us and we immediately saw potential in the event."... "We see tremendous opportunity.... It's very community oriented and we want to be a good citizen and support events like this."... "When we have an opportunity to bring out 800 cyclists and their families and friends, we hope that is a benefit to the retailers in the mall," she said. "It's a great relationship; it's a win for everybody."... "Cyclocross seems to be a sport that is really growing and gaining popularity and we see a connection to the community in this event..."

–Kim Campbell, Senior Manager, Flatiron Crossing Mall, commenting on the Boulder Cup Cyclo-Cross race held in October, 2010



Companies provide sponsorship as a means to reach their audience and compete in segments they deem valuable to their brand, products and services.

The table below provides an example of

Cycling sponsorship value

Business Objective	Reason (Motivation)	How your cycling club/team can help them?	What they should care?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility and awareness of our products and services in the growing health and wellness segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase consumer interest, traffic, sales, revenue and market share Align offerings within a growing segment; creates greater opportunity for sales of products and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement in events; (rides, rally's, races, clinics, education...) Community service and local initiatives ("Share the road," trail building, development programs, street adoption...) Communication and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in events provides greater exposure in segment; drives visibility and sales Involvement in community; serving the "greater good"; is great PR for sponsors Creates B2B opportunity with other sponsors Communication vehicles and social media provide additional channels for delivering their messages

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In summary, companies generally use sponsorship to:

- Increase visibility of their products and services in targeted segments and niche's.
- Help create a "buzz" around NEW products and services.
- Drive more traffic for their store, website, or sponsored events.
- Help drive sales, revenue and market share.
- Create additional business for their partners (retailers, suppliers, affiliates, etc.).
- Demonstrate a sense of social responsibility and community involvement.
- Drive attendance at events, attracting existing and prospective clients and partners to promote and sell products and services.
- Promote an intended image.
- Augment existing marketing, advertising, and public relations campaigns.
- Save money vs. traditional forms of marketing, advertising and public relations.

The bottom line—companies are still investing a portion of their budgets in sponsorship, in spite of a down economy, because it helps them achieve their goals and objectives. By aligning your value with a company's goals and objectives you can increase your club or teams chances of successfully securing sponsorship.

So, it is very apparent that companies are still investing in sponsorship as a vehicle to promote their company, brand, products and services; even during difficult economic times. Also, equally apparent, is the investment companies are making in sponsoring pro cycling as a means of increasing visibility and awareness. Here's my question to you—"why shouldn't a company sponsor your cycling club, team, or event?"



Particularly when you consider the following equation demonstrating the potential impact of cycling sponsorship on a company's business:

$$\frac{\text{Cycling Sponsorship} = (\text{increased visibility} + \text{awareness} + \text{interest}) + (\text{increased traffic} + \text{sales})}{\text{greater market share} + \text{brand loyalty}}$$

The next several chapters will take you through ways you can leverage the growth of cycling, the trend of companies aligning with healthy, active lifestyles, and the inherent visibility cycling provides, in order to help you secure more sponsors, increase sponsor investment per sponsorship contract, while establishing/maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors.

Are you ready to answer the question, "Why should a company Sponsor My Cycling Club?"

Let's go!

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What can we learn about the value of cycling sponsorship by looking at companies sponsoring cycling teams in the pro peloton?

Potentially, as members of cycling clubs and teams, we can learn additional valuable information from the pro peloton. Many of us study, and apply lessons learned from the pro's: training programs, executing sound race tactics, purchasing decisions about frames and components. Why not do the same with sponsorship? Especially if it helps improve our chances of securing cycling sponsorship, and consequently, improving the opportunity for our voice to be heard for the interests, initiatives, and causes we support as a collective group!

(Ed. note: I stayed away from sponsors which are cycling business related example – Liquigas-Cannondale; I researched why Liquigas sponsors pro cycling; not why Cannondale does; we know why they sponsor!)

In this chapter, I have included a few examples illustrating the value of cycling sponsorship to corporations. Each example highlights the benefits, value propositions, and business reasons a company invests in cycling sponsorship. The purpose is to illustrate the value of cycling sponsorship from the sponsor's perspective; the added value cycling provides in helping the company to achieve their business, sponsorship, or philanthropic objectives. This section is meant to provide you with real world examples, from corporations making significant investments in cycling sponsorship, as a means of promoting their company, brand, products, services, and messages. In subsequent chapters I will present how your cycling club, team, or event, can use these types of value propositions to identify sponsorship opportunities, engage prospective sponsors, create effective sponsorship proposals and letters, to drive business value for your sponsors.

Hopefully, this will help give you additional information and ideas for positioning the value of your cycling club, team, or event with prospective sponsors.

Rabobank:

http://www.rabobank.com/content/about_us/sponsoring/cycling

Sponsors' business:

Dutch bank

Why Rabobank sponsors cycling:

Visibility for the Rabobank brand, social responsibility and positive PR.

What Rabobank says about the value of cycling sponsorship:

*"The Rabo Cycling Plan was established in 1996 **as a key spearhead of the strategy for attaining an improved positioning for Rabobank.**"... "Cultural sponsorship provides excellent opportunities for demonstrating Rabobank's versatility and social involvement. Rabobank supports the development and conservation of the Netherlands' cultural heritage through its association with cultural partners."*

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HTC-Highroad:

[High Road Sports and HTC Announce Partnership](#)

Sponsors' business:

Mobile Phone Company

Why HTC sponsors cycling:

Visibility for the HTC Brand; use exposure to communicate and increase brand value.

What HTC says about the value of cycling sponsorship:

*"The HTC High Road Sports partnership is a great match of like minded organizations driven by innovation, excellence and competitiveness and we are excited about **the opportunity to communicate HTC's brand value through the great sport of cycling.**"* said Peter Chou, chief executive officer, HTC Corporation. *"HTC's sponsorship of Team Columbia-HTC **is one step in HTC's commitment to increasing its global brand value and recognition.**"*



Kelly Benefit Strategies-OptumHealth:

<http://www.kbsprocycling.com/>

Sponsors' Business:

Health and Wellness focused company offering a range of innovative services and expertise, from behavioral and clinical health support, to online health coaching and counseling for complex conditions, to health savings accounts.

OptumHealth Joins Kelly Benefit Strategies Pro Cycling as 2011 Co-Title Sponsor

– January 8, 2011

Kelly Benefit Strategies Pro Cycling today announced OptumHealth as co-title sponsor for the 2011 season.

As of today, the team will be called Kelly Benefit Strategies

– OptumHealth Pro Cycling

"We are pleased to welcome OptumHealth to the team for the 2011 season," said Charles Aaron, managing director of Circuit Global Sports Management. *"We feel that this partnership will help take our team to the next level and continues our goal of partnering with leading brands that have a strong commitment to health and wellness."* [More](#)

Why OptumHealth sponsors cycling:

Visibility and awareness; align with healthy lifestyle market; cross-branding and B2B

What OptumHealth says about the value of cycling sponsorship:

"We are unabashedly proud, vocal proponents of active, healthy lifestyles," said Tom McEnery, chief marketing officer for OptumHealth. **"As co-sponsor of one of the country's top cycling teams, we can create greater visibility and awareness about the importance of fitness, health and well-being."**

"Professional cycling in the United States continues to grow as a major spectator sport and serves as a great way to reach health-conscious consumers," he added. *"This particular partnership provides a **highly visible and mission-consistent opportunity to both advance our message and drive awareness of our products and services.**"*

– [Kelly Benefit Strategies Pro Cycling I News | OptumHealth Joins Kelly Benefit Strategies Pro Cycling as 2011 Co-Title Sponsor](#)

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Another reason companies sponsor cycling is cross-branding and Business-to-Business (B2B). An example of B2B is illustrated in the cyclingnews.com article [“OptumHealth co-sponsors Kelly Benefit Strategies in 2011...”](#)

“We like to think of ourselves as more than just a cycling team, our sponsors are more like partners with us,” said Charles Aaron from the team’s management company, Circuit Global Sports Management. “We all share a common interest and goal and we wanted to bring them together to brainstorm ways to help them get the most out of their strategic sports sponsorship.”
“We spent a great deal of time discussing how sponsors can work together to make the most out of their investment.”
Aaron said. “This included, cross promotional, media and activation strategies for 2011.”

[Riders, Staff, Sponsors Kick Off Season With Training Camp, VIP Ride and Sponsor Celebration in California](#)
– January 28, 2010

[Kelly Benefit Strategies-OptumHealth Pro Cycling will head back to their beach house in Oxnard, CA at the end of the month on Sunday to kick off their 2011 training camp.](#) [More](#)

[Why OptumHealth sponsors cycling:](#)
Visibility and awareness; align with healthy lifestyle market; share benefits of health and fitness

[What OptumHealth says about the value of cycling sponsorship:](#)
*“It’s inspiring to see athletes honing their skills for peak performance,” said Tom McEnery, chief marketing officer at OptumHealth. “As co-sponsor, this is a focused forum to **introduce OptumHealth to the team and discuss how best to share the benefits of health and fitness with the masses** as these riders prepare to travel around the world.”* [More](#)

[Acura Joins Kelly-OptumHealth As Exclusive Automobile Sponsor](#)
– February 11, 2011

[Kelly Benefit Strategies-OptumHealth Pro Cycling today announced Acura as its exclusive automobile partner for the 2011 season. The new 2011 Acura TSX Sport Wagon will be the official team car.](#) [More](#)

[Sponsors Business:](#)
Luxury Automobile Manufacturer

[Why Acura sponsors cycling:](#)
Visibility and awareness for new product; reach target niche; align with healthy lifestyles and outdoor activities

[What Acura says about the value of cycling sponsorship:](#)
*“It’s an honor to sponsor one of the most successful professional cycling teams in the U.S. as part of the launch of the all-new Acura TSX Sport Wagon,” said Susie Rossick, Acura Brand Manager. “**This is a unique opportunity to expose our stylishly sporty and modern TSX Sport Wagon to those that are passionate about outdoor activities** and appreciate a good dose of refinement too.”*

[Europcar Sponsors Jean-René Bernaudeau’s Cycling Team](#)
– October 4, 2010

Europcar, the European leader in passenger car and light utility vehicle rental, announced today, that it will be the title sponsor of Jean-René Bernaudeau’s cycling team, which includes Thomas Voeckler, Antony Charteau, Pierre Roll, and Cyril Gautier. The partnership will take effect as of 2011, for at least three years.

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The cycling team will be called “Europcar.” This new partnership allows the team of Jean-René Bernaudeau to continue its tremendous human adventure, and the sport to grow.

Europcar confirms three-year sponsorship deal, cyclingnews.com
– October 3, 2010

Sponsors’ business:
[Car Rental Company](#)

Why Europcar Group sponsors cycling:
Visibility and awareness; greater brand recognition and image reputation.

What Europcar says about the value of cycling sponsorship:

*“The Europcar Group is delighted to participate in this new adventure and **this partnership will be the opportunity to further enhance awareness of the Europcar brand and reputation in Europe and worldwide,**” commented Philippe Guillemot, Chief Executive Officer of Europcar Groupe. “By partnering with Jean-René Bernaudeau and his cycling team, which we know well for its sports results as well as for its human values, Europcar will be happy to experience a*

new sporting enterprise in which we plan to involve our employees, our partners and customers.”

Liquigas extends cycling sponsorship: Basso and Nibali commit for two more years

– May 27, 2010

The President of Liquigas Sport, Paolo Dal Lago, announced that Liquigas will continue to sponsor and own a team for two more years and confirmed that both Ivan Basso and Vincenzo Nibali have re-signed with the Italian ProTour team for another two years.

Sponsors’ business:
[Leading Italian Supplier of LPG \(Liquefied Petroleum Gas\)](#)

Why Liquigas sponsors cycling:
Visibility and to promote their brand.

What Liquigas says about the value of cycling sponsorship:

“The President of Liquigas Sport, Paolo Dal Lago, announced that Liquigas will continue to sponsor and own a team for two more years and confirmed that both Ivan Basso and Vincenzo Nibali have re-signed with the Italian ProTour team for

*another two years.”...“We’re very happy to announce the renewal of our sponsorship. **We think cycling is the best means to promote our brand,**” Dal Lago said.*

As you can see, major corporations view cycling sponsorship as an important component of their marketing strategy. Some of the reasons cited for corporations sponsoring and funding professional cycling are to:

- Enhance awareness, brand recognition and brand reputation.
- Demonstrate social responsibility and involvement.
- Improve and/or increase visibility, position, and recognition for their company; brand, and products or services.
- Align with emerging trends and societal concerns such as conservation, ecology, “green,” transportation alternatives, health and wellness, active lifestyles.
- Communicate brand value.
- Develop partnerships yielding cross-branding, cross-promotional, and B2B opportunities with other sponsors.
- Deliver messages to targeted audiences and niche’s.

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Secure cycling sponsorship by understanding why companies sponsor

You can increase your ability to secure cycling sponsorship by understanding why, and how, companies use sponsorship to achieve their goals.

When you understand why companies provide sponsorship, and what motivates them, it is easier to develop effective messages, strategies, tactics, and [sponsorship proposals](#), and [letters](#) which will get their attention. Leveraging this basic knowledge can help differentiate your club, and enable you to develop long term, rewarding, sponsorship relationships, while securing more funding.



Three BIG motivating factors for any company are the desire to make money, save money, and project the “intended” image for their company, brand, products and/or services. Although there are several additional motivations, one can categorize much of the rationale behind corporate sponsorship into making money, saving money, and image.

Here's how.

Making money

Anything that can help increase sales, revenue, market share, and profitability is going to contribute directly to a company's bottom line. Sponsorship of a club, team, or event can help a company make money by increasing visibility, which in turn drives increased awareness, interest, and traffic. This results in increased sales. Your cycling club's participation in events (races, rally's, group rides...) community activities, initiatives (“Share the road”...) contributes to

increased awareness and sales for sponsors. Additionally, your club's use of the web, [social media](#), blogs, newsletters, and news releases also contributes significant dividends in driving visibility, awareness, and ultimately, sales for your sponsors.

Saving money

Cutting costs, saving dollars, and maximizing expenditures associated with advertising, marketing, and public relations directly impacts a company's expense budgets, operating expenses and profitability. Sponsorship is an extremely viable alternative for helping companies improve customer and brand loyalty, increase sales and market share, or to penetrate/dominate a new market segment. Sponsorship is also used to augment existing advertising and marketing campaigns by providing a cost-effective vehicle for getting their brand message into the market. Typically, sponsorship of a club, team, or event is less expensive, and will provide a faster return on investment, than more traditional methods (television, print, billboards, etc.) and delivers more “bang for the proverbial buck.”

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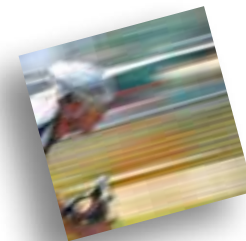
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Image

All companies have a certain image they would like to portray to the public, their existing and prospective customers. Sponsorship helps companies achieve this objective in a couple of ways. First, companies supporting emerging social concerns, such as [healthy lifestyles](#), are aligning themselves with a growing market, which can drive greater visibility, awareness, interest and sales for their products and services. Second, by sponsoring a club, team, or event involved in raising money for a cause (i.e., cancer, diabetes research, etc.), will help drive positive PR, foster an image of involvement and social responsibility.

As you develop your cycling sponsorship plan determine how your club or team can help prospective sponsors make money, save money, or project their desired image through sponsorship. Taking the company's view will enable you to develop messages that clearly demonstrate the value sponsoring your club can deliver to help them achieve their business objectives. Positioning sponsorship as a [solution to a company's problem](#) will differentiate your club, team, or event's request for sponsorship, from generic requests submitted by other organizations.





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Demonstrating the value of cycling sponsorship by solving a problem

Achieving differentiation by making your messages CLEAR and RELEVANT

How do you define the value of your club or team in order to secure cycling sponsorship?



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Demonstrating the value of cycling sponsorship by solving a problem

When approaching prospective sponsors it is always important to keep three simple ideas in mind:

- Securing sponsorship is about how well you sell yourself, and the organization you represent
- Selling yourself is always about demonstrating value (what's in it for the sponsor?). Your communication with prospective sponsors should always focus on answering the question, "Why should a company sponsor my cycling club?" (or team, or event)
- There is no better way to demonstrate your cycling club, or teams, value to a sponsor than by solving a problem!

I recently read an interview with the Director of National Strategic Partnerships for Southwest Airlines in which he discussed his goals, objectives and strategies for working with partners. When asked to describe what separates good partners from others, he is quoted, "They become problem solvers for us.

They are interested in what we are trying to accomplish, as opposed to what they have to sell...In a good sponsorship, the property tries to understand what I am trying to accomplish, either in the individual market or on a bigger scale, and how they can be a solution to that challenge."

Understanding a company's strategy, goals, objectives, and focus gives you insight into what is important to them. Determining how their business objectives fit into their sponsorship goals helps you identify areas where your cycling club can make a positive impact. Performing basic research, such as using their website, blogs, forums, and communities, and engaging them in a dialog, will give you a wealth of information you can use to create an effective sponsorship campaign.

Investing the time and effort to research, explore, and understand the prospective sponsor's perspective (the problems THEY are trying to solve), and the role sponsorship can play, helps your cycling club's sponsorship efforts in so many ways.

Building your cycling club's messages, by aligning with a company's goals and objectives automatically gives you a leg up on every other organization requesting sponsorship and funding! You differentiate yourself because your ideas, messages, and sponsorship proposals, are focused on delivering real business value. Aligning your cycling club's value with a company's business concerns; can be very powerful in helping you build effective business cases, messages, value propositions and sponsorship proposals.

As you begin to research and engage a company in sponsorship discussions, ask questions that will help identify and clarify what they are trying to accomplish. Focus on areas and issues which are top of mind, and will help them achieve their business goals and objectives.



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A few examples of the prevalent business imperatives where companies typically focus a majority of their time, money and energy are listed in the table below.

Placing the phrase – “How can sponsorship help us” in front of the business imperative gives it a different perspective, right?

Aligning cycling sponsorship with business imperatives

Business imperative

• Increase visibility and awareness

• Increase sales and market share

• Penetrate new markets and market segments

• Supplement existing marketing initiatives and campaigns

• Demonstrate social consciousness and responsibility

• Drive greater traffic to our website, locations (store, etc.), or events

Impact of sponsorship aligned with imperative

• How can sponsorship help us increase visibility and awareness?

• How can sponsorship help us increase sales and market share?

• How can sponsorship help us penetrate new markets and market segments?

• How can sponsorship help us supplement our existing marketing initiatives and campaigns?

• How can sponsorship help us demonstrate social consciousness and responsibility?

• How can sponsorship help us drive greater traffic to our website, locations (store, etc.), or events?

By taking this approach, you are taking the mindset of a company executive, and putting yourself in a position to provide a solution, helping them to accomplish their goal!

These are questions corporate executives are asking themselves; i.e., problems they are trying to solve? Taking steps to:

- Ask questions
- Engage in conversations
- Research and understand their objectives; what's on their minds, or problems they are wrestling with;

enables your cycling club to come up with creative ways to use sponsorship as a solution to their problems. This type of approach to identifying problems, and potential solutions your cycling club can deliver, allow you to differentiate your cycling club, team, or event, increasing the chances of securing sponsorship and funding.

The following table is included to provide you with an overview of the roles, responsibilities and concerns of corporate executives. The table can be used as a guide to help your cycling club create messaging, value propositions, communications, and proposals demonstrating how cycling sponsorship can help address their individual concerns.

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Executive responsibility and concerns

Job Title	Responsibilities	"What's on their mind?"
CEO/President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholder equity • Profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased competition • Inability to address new market opportunities • Eroding market share and profitability
CFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage expenses • Ensure ROI meets company objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs and expenses • Increasing profitability, ROI
VP Sales and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new services • Sell new customers • Keep existing customers • Increase revenue • Increase market share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to deliver new products and services • Ability to respond to market changes or competitors • Customer satisfaction • Name & Brand Recognition • Sell more of our stuff! Through MANY channels
VP Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase customer satisfaction • Increase responsiveness to new and existing customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase customer satisfaction • Decrease customer churn • "How responsive are we?"
VP Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine new business opportunities • Establish complementary business relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address new market opportunities • Develop/deliver competitive offerings • "Are we responsive to market changes or competition?" "How can we become more responsive?"
VP Product Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new products and services quickly • Reduce time-to-market and costs for new services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new products & services which will sell • Get new products and services out the door in a timely fashion. • Capitalize on market needs/desires.

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Achieving differentiation by making your messages CLEAR and RELEVANT

The foundation of any good marketing, public relations, or sales campaign is making sure the message you want to get across to your target audience, is the message you're delivering. Multi-billion dollar corporations, celebrities and athletes spend a lot of time, money, and energy ensuring their audience perceives them in a specific way.

It's the same with a cycling club. However, it extends beyond how you are perceived while on the road, trail, velodrome, etc.; and includes how existing, and prospective sponsors view YOUR club or team. When it comes to corporate sponsors, they are probably going to view your cycling club in a couple of ways – 1) how does your club add value to their brand, audience, and customers, and 2) how establishing a relationship with your cycling club will benefit them.

A few examples of the benefits sponsorship delivers are:

- Increasing sales and market share
- Improving image, awareness and visibility in existing, and new, market segments
- Improving/increasing customer and brand loyalty
- Promoting company, brand, and products
- Gaining visibility for brand and products with a wider audience
- Aligning with emerging social trends and concerns – i.e., health and wellness, active lifestyles; environment and “green”
- Penetrating new market segments, demographics, reaching new audiences
- Driving greater traffic to their website, locations (store, etc.), or event
- Augmenting existing marketing, advertising, and public relations initiatives, and programs

The examples listed are only one piece of the puzzle you need to consider when working with sponsors. However, careful consideration of these points, coupled with the perceived value YOUR cycling club can deliver, can be the difference between successfully landing a new sponsor, and continuing a relationship with an existing one.

As you begin to engage in sponsorship discussions, remember, the key is to make your messages clear and relevant. By asking yourself a few simple questions, which focus on “How sponsorship can benefit corporate partners,” Taking this approach ensures your messages are interpreted in the way they were intended.

- **What do we stand for or represent?**
Define what your cycling club stands for in a short, concise statement, such as “We are a club promoting the sport of cycling in our community as a means of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and as an alternative, eco-friendly, means of transportation, which all of our citizens can enjoy.”

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- **What is the value our club provides a potential sponsor?**

Describe your cycling club's value to sponsors by aligning with the benefits companies expect from sponsorship. For example, "...sponsoring our cycling club can provide you with a vehicle to provide additional visibility and awareness for your company, brand, and products; ultimately leading to increases in retail traffic and sales." Think in terms of how a company will benefit from sponsoring your cycling club: increasing sales and market share, increasing visibility and awareness, while establishing an affordable, effective vehicle to augment existing marketing programs.

- **What makes our club or team different from other organizations requesting sponsorship and funding?**

Articulate what sets you apart from other clubs, and organizations, competing for sponsorship dollars? What makes you unique and better? Why should the sponsor care? For example, consider using the following statement to demonstrate B2B value: "Our club facilitates business-to-business relationships between our

corporate partners, leading to incremental revenue. (see "[Leveraging B2B to drive added value for your cycling club's sponsors](#)" for additional information on how your club or team can leverage business-to-business relationships)

- **Have we completed the necessary research?**

Do we understand what the prospective sponsor expects from sponsorship? Take the time to gain an understanding of the companies mission, goals, objectives, image, initiatives, etc. Engage company contacts in discussions to understand their perspectives and to gain insight. Visit web sites, blogs, facebook pages, and social media sites to gain additional insight into their goals, objectives, vision for their company, brand, products, etc. Lastly, when engaging prospective sponsors in discussions, ask questions about their goals for sponsorship, community service and philanthropy. These discussions will give you valuable information helping you tailor, and deliver your messages in a clear and relevant manner. (for additional information regarding research refer to "[Cycling sponsorship proposals – Tips for writing an effective sponsorship proposal for your club or team](#)")

A few final thoughts before we leave the subject of your cycling club being a brand.

Regardless of where you are in public; on the road, trail, store, coffee shop, etc.; the behavior you exhibit is a DIRECT reflection on YOU, YOUR CLUB, and YOUR SPONSORS! This also applies to everything on the web, printed, photographed. A momentary slip up can have a negative impact. A fellow cyclist relayed a story describing how his club lost a huge sponsor due to a lapse in judgment by a few of their club members. It went something like this—large group ride, irate driver, obscene gestures and language. The driver made note of the largest logo on the club kit (happened to be the sponsor's), complained to the sponsor—you know what's coming; that's right—sponsorship pulled!



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All of us hate being harassed, or mistreated, and in the heat of the moment, stuff happens. Take a second before reacting (or, worse, over reacting).

The table below can be used as a worksheet to create your club or team's value propositions. Included are 6 common goals companies take into consideration when developing marketing, advertising or public relations campaigns.

The idea is to build your club's value propositions in a manner that will resonate with prospective sponsors. Taking this approach will help you achieve a level of differentiation from other organizations requesting sponsorship and funding, while helping demonstrate the value cycling sponsorship can provide.

Pick the goals and objectives where your club can demonstrate value or solve a problem for the prospective sponsor. Examples could be involvement in activities, events, communication vehicles, community service, local initiatives... Remember, this has to be focused on the audience you are communicating with. "What's in it for them?"

Cycling sponsorship value worksheet

Goal

Objectives

Your Value Proposition

Increase visibility and awareness for company, brand, products and services

Increase sales, revenue, and market share

Increase customer and brand loyalty

Improve/change image and promote Positive PR

Augment existing marketing campaigns

Target/expand into new market segments and niches

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How do you define the value of your club or team in order to secure cycling sponsorship?

There are a few simple rules you can follow to accomplish this effectively. *First*, always start by understanding the prospective sponsor's objectives; and what they are trying to accomplish? What's the business problem they want to solve?

Second, describe how you can help them achieve their objectives. In other words, describe how your activities; participation in events, involvement in the local community; can provide a way for the sponsor to achieve their objectives.

Third, and probably most important, is to always take the perspective of the prospective sponsor.

Here's a very simple approach you can follow.

Let's say there's a prospective sponsor that wants to increase visibility of their brand, products and services with consumers in the growing health and wellness segment. The following table walks you through the process of building

effective value statements. The first column shows the company's business objective. The second column lists a couple of reasons driving the company's business objective. As I discussed in

"Understanding why companies sponsor?", companies are motivated by three basic rules: "How can we make money?," "How can we save money?," "How can we project our intended image?" These motivations have a direct correlation to sponsorship, and how your cycling club, can begin building messages that will align, and resonate with the goals and objectives of prospective corporate partners.

Articulating cycling sponsorship value

Business Objective	Reason (Motivation)	How your cycling club/team can help them?	Why they should care?
Increase visibility and awareness of our products and services in the growing health and wellness segment	Increase consumer interest, traffic, sales, revenue and market share.	Involvement in events (rides, rally's, races, clinics)	Participation in events provides greater exposure in segment; drives visibility and sales
	Align offerings within a growing segment	Community Service and local initiatives ("Share the Road", trail building, Development programs, Street Adoption....)	Involvement in community; serving the "greater good"; is great PR for sponsors
	creates greater opportunity for sales of product and services	Communication and Social Media (websites, social networking, newsletters...)	Creates B2B oppty. w/other sponsors
			Communication vehicles and social media provide additional channels for delivering their messages

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The last two columns describe how cycling sponsorship can help the prospective sponsor achieve their business objectives. In this example, the business objective is increasing visibility and awareness in a targeted segment. Your clubs participation in events, community service and local initiatives, and use of communications and social media, provide the foundation for increasing visibility.

However, your value proposition has to state the benefit of sponsoring your cycling club or team, in terms that clearly articulate why a company should write you a big fat check. You MUST be able to describe how sponsoring you will help them achieve their objectives—raising visibility, which can lead to greater awareness, interest, traffic and ultimately sales. A simple way to build an effective value statement is:

*Your Cycling Club or Teams Value =
(company objective +
their motivation)
+ (your ability to solve a problem +
benefit to them)*

Sponsor focused value proposition

Note: A few examples of company objectives and motivations related to sponsorship decisions:

Objectives—increase; visibility, awareness, traffic, sales and revenue, market share; improve/increase customer satisfaction, brand loyalty

Motivations—make money, save money, project an intended image

A value statement as simple as the one below does the job!

“Our participation in events, activities, and initiatives within the community will help (company name) achieve your objective of increasing visibility, traffic and sales for its brand, products and services in the health and wellness segment.”

Use words to portray how your club's involvement in weekly rides, races, community activities and events can help the prospective sponsor reach their desired goal.

If you build your value statements following these simple recommendations you will shift the focus from what the sponsor can do for you, to what you can do for the sponsor. And, why they should write you a big fat sponsorship check. Taking this type of approach provides you with credibility, while differentiating you from other organizations requesting sponsorship and funding. Furthermore, it provides reasons the prospective sponsor should engage you in deeper discussions.

The following tables will provide you with examples of how to effectively align your club's messaging with the goals, objectives and motivations of prospective corporate sponsors. Use these to build your cycling club's, events, messaging to ensure you are highlighting the benefit of cycling sponsorship in a manner that will resonate with company executives.

The following series of tables will provide your club with a guide, advice, and examples, to align your value with the business objectives of prospective sponsors.

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Appendix

Cycling sponsorship value

Reasons for sponsoring

Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Increase traffic
- Attract new customers and channel partners
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive demand
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health & Wellness)

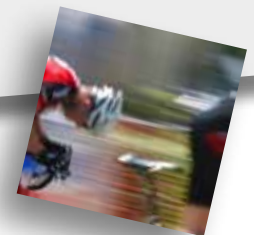
How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives, and communication?

Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races, charity rides, rallies, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives?
4. Through Communications and Social Media?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?



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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Reasons for sponsoring

Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Increase traffic
- Attract new customers and channel partners
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive demand
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health and Wellness)

How does your club support a companies need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives?

1. Races, charity rides, rally's, scheduled group rides

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

- Greater exposure - seen by participants, spectators, citizens, and a clubs other sponsors!
- Visibility with other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships = more business.
- Positive PR for a sponsor supporting a club involved in promoting healthy, active lifestyles; "green" transportation alternatives.
- Sponsor gets positive PR and exposure. Goes to image.
- Also, again, this is increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.

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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Reasons for sponsoring

Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Increase traffic
- Attract new customers and channel partners
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive demand
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health and Wellness)

How does your club support a companies need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives?

2. Community Service

Examples:
Club sponsored education, seminars, webinars, clinics (i.e. "Safe Cycling Clinic," "Commuting by Bike")

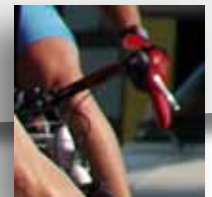
"Adopt a Street or Hwy."

NOTE-
NFL's "Play60" campaign is a community service targeted program!

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives

- Serving the "greater good" by helping others.
- Additional visibility with a wider audience. May reinforce company and brand loyalty.
- Sponsor gets positive PR and exposure. Goes to image!
- Also, again, this is increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive traffic and sales.



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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Reasons for sponsoring

Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Increase traffic
- Attract new customers and channel partners
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive demand
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health and Wellness)

How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in local and national initiatives

3. Initiatives

Example:
Activism with state and local government (i.e. "Share the Road" initiatives - Bike Lanes, Bike Routes, Bike Paths, Driver Awareness Education, etc.)

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

- Through participation in activities, events, initiatives
- Greater exposure for sponsor - seen by citizens, local businesses, press, and other sponsors!
 - Contributes to positive image and PR! Impacts brand loyalty and interest.
 - Aligning with a club involved in helping promote alternative transportation and safety; helps environment and constituency.
 - Visibility drives awareness, which drives recognition and interest; interest could drive increased traffic and potential sales!

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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Reasons for sponsoring

Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Increase traffic
- Attract new customers and channel partners
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive demand
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health and Wellness)

How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives

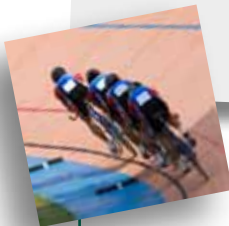
4. Communication

Web, Social Media
Newsletters and
News Releases
Press Releases and
Articles

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives

- New channels; new audience; potentially widening exposure of company, brand and products.
- Another vehicle for getting their message out!
- Augments existing marketing and advertising campaigns.
- Typically less expensive.
- Visibility with target market or targeted segment
- Awareness drives interest; interest drives potential sales!



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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase sales and revenue

Reason for sponsoring

Increase sales and revenue

What is the value of increased sales and revenue to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Profitability
- Stock holder share and equity
- Increase market share; become market leader
- Become dominant in segment
- Improve competitive position
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive greater demand
- Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales

How does your club support the company's need for increased sales and revenue?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives

Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races, charity rides, rally's, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives
4. Through Communications and Social Media

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

Sponsorship helps to drive greater exposure- seen by participants, spectators, citizens, and a clubs other sponsors!

- Visibility w/ other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships = more business
- Increased visibility can drive greater traffic resulting in more sales, distribution channels, shelf space, etc.
- Sponsor gets positive PR and exposure. Goes to image.
- Also, again, this is increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.
- Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or drive recognition with new audience.

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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase/Improve customer retention and brand loyalty

Reason for sponsoring

Increase/Improve Customer Retention and Brand Loyalty

*What is the value of increased customer retention and brand loyalty? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

- Increased sales and revenue
- Increased market share
- Increase cross-sell; upsell opportunities with clients; which can drive additional revenue
- Stock holder share and equity
- Increase market share; become market leader
- Become dominant in segment
- Improve competitive position
- Drive greater demand
- Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales
- Drive B2B opportunities with other companies

How does your club support a companies desire to increase customer retention and brand loyalty?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races charity rides, rally's, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

Sponsorship helps to drive greater exposure - seen by participants, spectators, citizens, and a clubs other sponsors!

- Visibility with other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships = more business
- Increased visibility can drive greater traffic resulting in more sales, distribution channels, shelf space, etc.
- Sponsor gets positive PR and exposure in segment supported. Goes to image.
- Also, again, this is increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.
- Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or drive recognition with new audience

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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase/Improve customer retention and brand loyalty

Reason for sponsoring

Increase/Improve Customer Retention and Brand Loyalty

*What is the value of increased customer retention and brand loyalty? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

- Increased sales & revenue
- Increased market share
- Increase cross-sell; upsell opportunities with clients; which can drive additional revenue
- Stock holder share and equity
- Increase market share; become market leader
- Become dominant in segment
- Improve competitive position
- Drive greater demand
- Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales
- Drive B2B opportunities with other companies

How does your club support a company's desire to increase customer retention and brand loyalty?

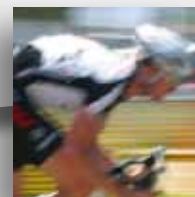
Through participation in activities, events, initiatives Consider the impact of the following:

4. Through Communications and Social Media

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

New channels; new audience; potentially widening exposure of company, brand, products and services.

- Another vehicle for getting their "message" out!
- Augments existing marketing and advertising campaigns.
- Typically less expensive.
- Visibility with target market or targeted segment.
- Awareness drives interest; interest drives potential sales!



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Cycling sponsorship value: Improve/change image and promote positive PR

Reason for sponsoring

Improve /change image and promote positive PR -

- What they stand for?
- What they believe in?
- Social consciousness?
- With new segment?
- Actions/support speaks louder than advertising - shows they care about a cause - NFL Play60 ex.

What is the value of improving/changing image and promoting positive PR? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Image impacts buyer perception, which can impact sales, revenue, market share
- Helps to define the company, brand, products and/or services
- Provide differentiation from competitors in space with target customers
- Leadership - Demonstrates social responsibility and consciousness by supporting societal concerns
- Increase sales and revenue
- Increase market share
- Drive greater demand
- Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales

How does your club support a company's need to improve or change image and promote positive PR?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives

Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races, charity rides, rally's, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives
4. Through Communications and Social Media

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

Sponsorship is an opportunity to align with organizations supporting target markets

- Helps to align with emerging societal concerns as Health and Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation concerns, Ecological concerns
- Aligns, and provides visibility in segments which can lead to increased sales, revenue, and market share
- Can drive greater traffic resulting in more sales, distribution channels, shelf space, etc.
- Sponsor gets positive PR and exposure. Goes to image.
- Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or drive recognition with new audience

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Cycling sponsorship value: Augment existing sales and marketing campaigns

Reasons for sponsoring

Augment existing sales and marketing campaigns

What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Get messages out using other vehicles
- Ability to easily target segments and niches to drive visibility, awareness, brand recognition, sales, revenue, share
- Can help reduce expenses for advertising budgets; or, help when budgets have been cut or reduced
- Can provide a good ROI vs. traditional advertising

How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives
Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races, charity rides, rallies, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives
4. Through Communications and Social Media

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

- Additional visibility at a lower cost than traditional advertising
- Enables greater targeting vs. traditional advertising
- Aligns company, brand and products with organizations in target markets and segments
- Aligns, and provides visibility in segments which can lead to increased interest, traffic, sales, revenue, and market share
- Helps to align with emerging societal concerns as Health and Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation concerns, Ecological concerns - promoting positive PR; bolstering image
- ROI (cheaper) can contribute to profitability



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Cycling sponsorship value: Target/Expand into new market segments and niches

Reasons for sponsoring

Vehicle to target/expand into new market segments and niches; or to augment efforts in existing

What is the value of using sponsorship as a vehicle to target/expand into new market segments and niches; or to augment efforts in existing (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)

- Easily reach targeted segments by aligning with an activity/sport
- Demonstrate social responsibility and consciousness by aligning with emerging social issues. Goes to positive image and PR
- Lower cost; good ROI
- Ability to easily target segments and niches to drive visibility, awareness, brand recognition, sales, revenue, and market share
- Can help reduce expenses for advertising budgets; or, help when budgets have been cut or reduced

How does your club support a company's need to expand into new market segments or niches?

Through participation in activities, events, initiatives.

Consider the impact of the following:

1. Participation in races, charity rides, rallies, scheduled group rides
2. Participation in Community Service
3. Participation in local or national initiatives
4. Through Communications and Social Media

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

- Lucrative demographic
- Cycling continuing to grow in popularity
- Helps to align with emerging societal concerns as Health and Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation and Ecological concerns - promoting positive PR; bolstering image
- Aligns company, brand and products with organizations in target markets and segments they can reach
- Aligns, and provides visibility in segments which can lead to increased interest, traffic, sales, revenue, and market share
- ROI (cheaper) can contribute to profitability



Developing a sponsorship plan

What's your cycling sponsorship plan?





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What's your cycling sponsorship plan?

I'll bet most of your members already have a pretty well defined training or racing schedule and goals for the year. They know what events they plan to race or ride, how many miles they want to log, events they want to crush! It's a process, right? Can't achieve the goals without a plan, right?

What's your plan for sponsorship and funding? Especially, in an economy that is still somewhat shaky? [Companies are still investing in sponsorship](#); are you going to be in a position to compete for their dollars? You'll get the results in the races, rallies and charity events. What's your plan to turn those results into securing more sponsors?

Think of all the really cool things your club or team could do with extra funding—new bikes, new kit, new support vehicle or van, training camps, road trips... More sponsors and funding can help you get, and do, all the cool stuff you want.

Here are a few tips you might find helpful as you "spin" towards your sponsorship goals for the year.

Start with a budget

How much funding are you getting from existing sponsors? How much do you need to do some of the "cool stuff"? What's the gap? This number becomes your target!

Make a target list

Determine which companies you want to target for sponsorship? Why would they be a good addition to your sponsorship portfolio? Do they currently sponsor other organizations? Could sponsorship of your club provide value to their business?

Rank the companies on your list

Now that you have a list, start to rank the companies based on the following factors: What do you know about the company, their brand or products?

Who do you know? Is there any relationship that can be cultivated through a referral? Where are they headquartered, and where do they make sponsorship decisions? Could the company be a good potential sponsor based on their business goals, directions and objectives? Is there potential overlap between what the company wants to achieve and the value your club, team or event can offer?

A few more questions which might be helpful in your ranking system—Is this a company you have approached for sponsorship previously? What happened? Have any changes occurred making your story more appealing to their needs? Are there problems you can solve?

Have a plan

Establish a plan, essentially in the same way you would create a training plan when preparing for a race, a charity ride, or a multi-day tour. The plan should outline how you are going to engage and qualify the companies on your list. A few components of the plan you might want to consider are:

- **Contacts**—Who do you know? Is someone in your club, social, or professional network somehow connected?

["How to find cycling sponsorship? Tips on where to start"](#)

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- **Social media and web**—What is the company saying in their websites and blogs, or in forums or groups? What are they talking about in their news releases? What is being published in their media room or through their RSS feeds? What is being said about them? How can you leverage this information? (For more information on effectively leveraging Social Media for Sponsorship please see “[Sponsorship Proposal and Social Media](#)” sections.)

- **Community involvement causes, and philanthropic activities**—How involved is the company in the local community? What’s their level of activity? What groups are they sponsoring or supporting? How can you use this to demonstrate your value? (Please see “[Understanding why companies sponsor for additional information](#)”)

- **Action you want to take**—what do you want to happen after making initial contact?

The adjoining table provides a template for organizing your thoughts, and helping identify what you know, and what you need to learn. It also gives you a guide for creating messages, benefits, and value propositions that will align with the prospective sponsor’s goals and objectives.

Cycling sponsorship account information worksheet

Company Name:

Industry:

Business:

Their goals and objectives
(or, “generic” goals and objectives for their industry, similar companies?):

1

2

3

Potential value of sponsorship? Their perspective:

How can your cycling club support their goals and objectives?

Why they should care?:

References? (Who have you worked with before? What is the value they achieved?):

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If you need help creating messages and value propositions, refer to the earlier sections of the e-book “[Understanding why companies sponsor?](#)”, “[Articulating the value of cycling sponsorship](#)”, and “[Why companies sponsor cycling?](#)”

Initiate contact

[Develop a script](#), a short message to be used in social media, e-mail or [introductory letter](#). What are you going to say, and why should they care? Be sure you follow the model laid out in the section—“[An effective cycling sponsorship prospecting script](#).” Focus on why and how sponsorship will help them achieve their goals and objectives. Point out why the sport of cycling and your club is the perfect vehicle to help them. The previous sections help you to highlight your club's value. “[Articulating the value of cycling sponsorship](#),” provides useful tips and guidelines. Use initial contact as a springboard to additional discussions.

Plan your next interaction

Document who you know, and what you need to know about their company, products, market, goals and objectives. Also, work towards having a clear understanding of their process, timeframes and who's involved (their influence and how to engage them).

Develop and deliver sponsorship proposal

Follow the basic premise of why companies sponsor: to make money, to save money, for image! Sell your story by integrating your club's value with their goals and objectives, describing how you can help solve their problems. If possible leverage your existing sponsors to demonstrate the value provided. If you don't have sponsors use examples from pro cycling sponsors to demonstrate the value of cycling. (Please refer to the following sections for additional information describing the value of cycling sponsorship: [Developing Effective Sponsorship Proposals I & II](#), [Sponsorship Letters](#), and [Using Quotes and References to secure sponsors](#)).

Follow-Up

You have put in the time and effort to do the research, engage in discussions, develop and deliver an effective sponsorship proposal. Now take the time to follow up! Understand what they liked and what they didn't. See if any modifications or additional information are necessary. If you won—congratulations! If not, consider continuing to nurture the relationship for next year. Or, maybe approach them about a temporary sponsorship arrangement on a smaller scale.

Like I said at the beginning of this section, sponsorship is a process just like training and racing. If you follow a sound, thoughtful process, you will certainly improve your results.





Incorporating Social Media into your cycling sponsorship campaign

Tips for using social media and social networks effectively for cycling sponsorship

Harness the power of social media to increase the success of your sponsorship efforts

facebook, blogsearch.google.com, and LinkedIn for cycling sponsorship: A practical example



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Tips for using social media and social networks effectively for cycling sponsorship

This section of [Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship](#) focuses on effective use of social media & social network platforms in your efforts to secure cycling sponsorship.

Recently I interviewed Carrie Himel, owner of Social-Pop, a Social Media Marketing company; and, Gordon F. Snyder, Director, National Center for Information & Communications (ICT), Springfield Technical Community College; regarding their perspectives on effective use of Social Media to engage one's intended audience. Although Gordon and Carrie each have different target audiences and segments, their comments and guidance were very similar, and extremely applicable to cycling sponsorship.

Below is a summary of recommendations from Carrie and Gordon. You can watch my entire interview with Carrie Himel on the [Sponsor My Cycling Club YouTube](#) channel.

Strive to educate your audience through your social media content and communications—Begin by focusing on what's important to them. Take advantage of using interactions to educate your audience on the value your club can provide in helping their business achieve its goals and objectives. As mentioned in "[Understanding why companies sponsor?](#)", companies have three basic motivations for sponsorship—making money, saving money and projecting an intended image.



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Use your connections through social media, e-mail, websites, communications, news releases and face-to-face discussions to articulate the value you can provide. Always focus on the prospective sponsor's needs first! Understand what they are attempting to accomplish, the problems they are attempting to solve, and how you can help. With this type of approach you will be able to position cycling sponsorship as a valuable asset that helps the prospective sponsor increase awareness for their brand and drive greater traffic and sales.

Incorporate social media into your club's sponsorship marketing strategy and plan

Create relevant content by using key words to help prospective sponsors find you. Disseminate content across multiple



social media platforms. Strive to establish long-term relationships, not the quick win; it's a century, not a 250m sprint.

Create relevant content on your social media pages and web pages

Build sponsor-centric content in your website, blogs, or social media pages, meant specifically for prospective sponsors. [Focus the content on answering questions a prospective sponsor may ask themselves such as](#), "How does sponsorship fit into our overall marketing plan and strategy?" Or, "How will sponsorship help us reach our target audience?" A quote from the bestselling book; [THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING & PR](#); further supports the messages I heard from both Carrie and Gordon; "...*what visitors really want is content that first describes the issues and problems they face and provides them the details on how to solve those problems.*"

Use key words on your social media pages to help prospective sponsors to find you

Utilize words and terms that are relevant to companies who are looking for sponsorship opportunities. This can be very powerful in helping organizations find you.

Also, if you are using terms used by prospective sponsors, and tying it back to the benefits they are seeking through sponsorship (making money, saving money, projecting an intended image) you are building immediate credibility.

Lastly, Gordon mentioned the importance of documenting your club's activities, and events, through photographs and/or videos, and posting these on Flickr. There are a variety of ways to post photos and videos, share, and link them back to your club's or teams site with an explanation of why it is important to sponsors.

Use multiple platforms to disseminate information

Use your website, blog, facebook, tweets, and news releases to highlight the things you are doing as a club. Using multiple platforms enables you to reach audiences in the medium they prefer. For example: your club exceeded its fundraising goal for charity, or your team placed well in a local race.

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Publicizing this is great! Include information on how it helped increase visibility for your sponsors, naming the sponsors, and including a brief statement that explains why they sponsored your club. This provides relevance to the audience. It describes the value you provide to sponsors. Remember: visibility + awareness = interest + traffic (*please see “[Understanding why companies sponsor](#)” for more information*). Anything, and everything, you publish should include a brief explanation of how you can drive sponsor value and interest.

Work towards establishing long-term relationships

As you begin using social media to identify and engage prospective sponsors, remember the word “social”. Carrie advised that we should strive towards a balance in our interactions, specifically, “...*follow the rules of making interactions with a given contact 80% social; 20% business.*” In other words, when engaging and building a relationship, try to remember it is for the long term, not for the short term.

Don't overlook LinkedIn!

Both Gordon and Carrie stressed the importance of using LinkedIn to build relationships between your cycling club and prospective sponsors. LinkedIn is a very powerful business-to-business site, which enables you to connect with people involved in making corporate sponsorship decisions (Marketing, Marketing and Communications, Sponsorship Marketing, Advertising, Manager of Sports Marketing, Manager of Public Relations, etc). Through LinkedIn, one can see who you know that can make an introduction for you. Then, join the groups these contacts are involved in. This enables you to start the conversation, understanding their goals and objectives, and shape your message accordingly. (For a step-by-step description of how I used social media to identify contacts, uncover information, and engage a prospective sponsor please see the [following section](#)).

With social media, blogs, and the web, you have the opportunity to engage, articulate, and demonstrate how your cycling club, team, or event can drive sponsor value. If your content is not addressing issues which are top of mind of prospective sponsors, then you are missing an opportunity to educate them on your value, and differentiate your club, from every other organization requesting sponsorship and funding. (Not to mention, you are also missing an opportunity to demonstrate thought leadership; which also contributes to your credibility). Remember, this could be the perfect way to move into deeper discussions with a prospective sponsor.

Special thanks to Gordon and Carrie for sharing their time and expertise.

Carrie Himel, Social-Pop – www.social-pop.com

Gordon F. Snyder's
Information & Communications
Technology (ICT) Blog
ictcenter.blogspot.com



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Harness the power of social media to increase the success of your sponsorship efforts

Even if you have a fantastic website, blog, and twitter account, describing everything your club or team does, you are not guaranteed your [sponsorship proposal](#) will be seen, or be successful in securing funding.

Simply tweeting “We are seeking sponsors for 20XX” via Twitter, publishing your sponsorship proposal on your web site, or blindly sending out generic sponsorship proposals and letters is typically NOT going to cut it! Don’t get me wrong, you might get some interest, and you may be lucky enough to land a few. But, are you really leveraging available tools to help you connect with companies that could have a genuine interest in sponsoring your club or team?

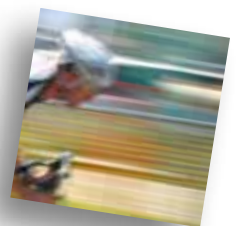
Here’s the deal, social media tools, such as facebook, MySpace, twitter, and LinkedIn, to name a few, can provide you with the information needed to identify companies that can be prospective sponsors.

I’m not talking about building a fancy, whizz bang, web or blog site, or blasting OUT a 100 twitter updates into cyberspace TELLING what your club or team is doing. No, what I am describing is a way to use all of the social networking tools we use in our personal lives to LISTEN to what companies are saying, UNDERSTAND their potential needs, and IDENTIFY how sponsorship could augment their existing advertising and PR campaigns to solve their problems. By LISTENING, your club or team, can gather valuable information, quickly determining which companies might be interested in hearing YOUR story. This isn’t about driving people to your website, blog, etc....sure, that’s important TOO! To be successful in the sponsorship process, you need to prospect, find companies, and people in those companies that have a need, and want to hear your story. By gathering intelligence you do a few things: you qualify which company might have a need, who within the company is driving and making

decisions, and therefore might be the best person to establish a relationship with, approach, and be amenable to your story!

Equally as important is creating content on your cycling club’s website, blog and forum, communities, and externally focused communications meant to attract and educate prospective sponsors on the value of cycling sponsorship. Effective content helps you address questions prospective sponsors may have, explaining the benefit of sponsorship to their company (brand, products, and services), and how it helps them meet their business goals and objectives.

In the past, most of us would gather their information about potential prospects by: buying lists, reading the newspaper, identifying who is moving into town, expanding, hiring people, releasing a new product, etc. But in today’s information age, by the time you see this information in traditional forms, it’s old news! Everyone already knows it!



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However, if your club is using tools such as search.twitter, or blogsearch.google, while researching company pages on facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn, you are already a step ahead. Taking this type of approach enables you to achieve a few things: A) you have identified valuable information early, and, B) you are able to begin thinking of how to align your club's value with the company you are investigating. Using social media can enable you to find companies that best align with the value your cycling club can provide.

So, here are 5 quick tips to help your club identify, connect, engage, qualify, advance, and close sponsorship opportunities, faster and more effectively than you ever have before!

Use tools to find companies that are prime sponsorship candidates—experiencing change; new products being released, targeting new market segments, expanding, growing, relocating, cost cutting initiatives. These are all signals of change, and signs that sponsorship can offer potential value.

Understand “who is saying what, where, when, why and how”—Listen, and observe, “what they are saying?” And, equally important, “who is saying it?”, using “which tools?” This clues you in to what is of concern or interest, who you might approach, and how you might approach them.

Customize your approach—Craft your messages around the problem they are trying to solve, or the desire they have to change something (i.e., increase market share, increase visibility, increase sales...). Establish a dialog using the tools they are most comfortable with. If the person you are interested in engaging “Tweets”, follow them, and communicate via twitter.

Be a “private eye”— Use social media tools to investigate companies; identify who you might know, their activities and interests, as well as their participation in various groups and communities. Determine how you can use this information to advance your sponsorship efforts.

Referrals still work wonders (and always will)— Investigate if you, a club member, or teammate, knows “someone-who-knows-someone”. You know what to do if you know them. In the case of the latter, ask for an introduction.

The more you understand about a company (their business and sponsorship goals and objectives) the better your chances of identifying companies where your club's value will resonate most! In addition, you are also quickly identifying who within the organization will be most receptive to your messages. Lastly, by using social media tools to their full potential, you can ensure maximum effectiveness for your club's [sponsorship proposal](#) or [letter](#).

Leveraging social media tools to improve selling effectiveness (which is essentially what you are doing during the sponsorship process) is a rapidly evolving, and highly discussed area. I found a very helpful whitepaper on the subject, “[Making Social Media Effective for Business,](#)” by Impact Interactions. The whitepaper will provide your club with useful information to leverage social media for success.

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facebook, blogsearch.google.com, and LinkedIn for cycling sponsorship: A practical example

The following example demonstrates how you can identify and engage prospective sponsors simply by doing a little research. This is not as time consuming as you might think.

Company sponsors local charity fundraising event

I was aware of a company that sponsored a charity sporting event in my home town, and wanted to learn more about them, and the potential for engaging them in sponsorship discussions.

A facebook search using the name of the event

I was directed to the page for the event, which provided me with the company's event committee contacts, and event chairperson. Their event's facebook page included local businesses, clubs, and groups, who "Like(d)", participate(d) in, or co-sponsored the event.

I also uncovered a link to the company's committee page for community relations/ involvement which outlined a description of the community committee's goals, and how the committee's goals aligned with the corporate mission. facebook also provided links to external websites for the company. At this point, I had the option of leaving a comment on the event page, however, it would probably be better to see what else I could find.

A Google search using the "company and event name"

This led me to their landing page. Visiting the page gave me the events information along with links describing the charity being supported. Good information to have. I kept digging.



A LinkedIn search

Using the event chairperson's name enabled me to identify this individual as the Special Events coordinator for the company. This is an excellent contact to approach regarding sponsorship. Looking at this individual's profile also provided valuable information on other employees at the company, including the Marketing & Communications Director for Special Events. It just kept getting better and better!

blogsearch.google.com

Using this site, I searched on the event name. It came back with plenty of useful information, including impressions from participants. Reading various blogs about the event led me to the conclusion that the company sponsored event was well attended, well organized, and was a success. I could have left a comment on the company's event committee facebook page, congratulating them on a successful event. But, I still wanted to do some additional research to see what else I could uncover, and leverage, to help make a favorable first impression. So, I continued.

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Another Google search

Using the search string: “company name “and community event + sponsorship,” helped me identify the Director of Marketing Communications and Community Outreach.

A LinkedIn search

Searching LinkedIn on the director's name brought up his profile page, title, common connections, and LinkedIn Groups he participated in. The LinkedIn profile page also showed others from the company sharing similar roles and responsibilities. Just more intelligence one can use. (Please also refer to [“Harness the power of social media to increase the success of your sponsorship proposal”](#) which will provide additional tips and hints for effective use of social media).

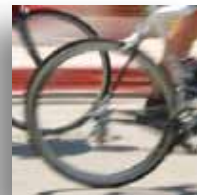


A facebook search

I now looked at the Director of Marketing's profile page on facebook which included interests and activities. As it turns out, this was another area I could leverage for initial contact because we shared a common interest. I also had the option to use the success of the company's event as the basis for initial contact. Again, I could have stopped here, but I still wanted to learn more to make that initial contact really great.

Performing another blogsearch

Going to google.com, I searched using the Director of Marketing's name. It returned what I was really searching for! I found out the executive was delivering a speech at a major event. The subject of the speech was to present the company's position on sponsorship, describing why sponsorship was important to helping achieve their goals and objectives, while



being a good steward of the community! So now, I had information on the company, their goals and objectives, their position on sponsorship, and an idea of the types of events they sponsor. Could have stopped there, but decided to go one step deeper. I noticed the blogsearch. google also delivered a lot of additional relevant information including quotes the Director of Marketing gave in news releases, interviews, articles, blogs, and magazines. I read the articles and gained a lot more insight than I had at the outset of this exercise. I now had a lot of information to pick and choose from, which was very relevant, and could help me engage, shape, and guide the discussions towards sponsorship! (Please also refer to [“Articulating the value of cycling sponsorship”](#))

What's the moral of the story?

Information and research are key!

How does the commercial go? “Spending 15 minutes or less can save you a lot of money on car insurance?” Well, in this case, spending 15 minutes or less can help your cycling club, team, or event end up with more sponsorship dollars!

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Fifteen minutes of research and investigation helped me uncover contacts, the role that community service plays, events they sponsored, the importance of sponsorship to them, and the role of sponsorship in achieving their goals and objectives. I could use many different approaches—congratulations on a well run event or, comment on a shared interest. Another alternative could be to comment, or ask a question, regarding the executive's upcoming speaking engagement. I had the option to comment on one of the many quotes or blog entries I found. Not to mention, I had identified multiple contacts within the company, while identifying committees responsible for sponsorship and community involvement. Lastly, I had also identified shared contacts in LinkedIn enabling me to ask for an introduction.

How can this help you?

With a little legwork, and effective use of the web and social networking, your cycling club or team can quickly uncover information regarding prospective sponsors. Furthermore, you can use this information to start a “meaningful” dialog, tailoring your initial contact, message, and approach for maximum benefit. Using the web and social media only increases your chances of differentiating your club from other organizations who simply request sponsorship and funding using a [generic form letter or proposal](#). Information and focus on your audience (prospective sponsors in your case) is ALWAYS paramount to differentiation and value! (Please also refer to the [sponsorship proposal and sponsorship letter categories](#) for additional information on creating effective cycling sponsorship proposals).





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Developing an effective prospecting script for cycling sponsorship

Quick, you're talking or exchanging electronic messages (via facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or e-mail) with a prospective sponsor about cycling sponsorship. You have one minute, or limited space, to describe why they should engage and pursue a dialog with you.

What do you say or write? Tick, tick, tick... time is a 'wastin'. (Hey, I've lived in Texas for 30 years!)

An effective script should follow three simple rules. First, it should provide a brief, easily understandable, description of your club, team or event. Second, it has to describe the value sponsorship can provide. Third, it should include a "call to action", i.e. why you are calling or writing, and a suggested next step (what you want to happen next).

Below I have created a quick guide you can follow, as you engage prospective sponsors in discussions. The recommended approach is divided into three sections: opening, middle, and closing.

Each section has a few points which you can use when contacting, or engaging, prospective sponsors in initial discussions.

Opening

Introduce yourself and who you represent. Quickly describe your club, team, or event, including a few of the key points listed below.

- Name of club or team
- Where you're located; area served
- How long the club or team has been in existence
- What you do and why—race, promote recreational cycling, participate in fund raising rides for charities, help develop trails and/or bike lanes, cycling advocacy, youth development racing program...
- Where you do it—road, mountain, track, cyclocross, local parks, shared trails...
- Activities—charity events, races, rallies, group rides, community service, initiatives ("Share the Road", "Safe Cycling Education"...))

Middle (What's in it for them?)

Focus on the potential benefits to them! Discuss the value you have delivered for other sponsors, or the value your club/team can deliver to them. Briefly describe how cycling sponsorship can help companies achieve their business goals and objectives. Remember, it is important to align your messages with the reasons companies provide sponsorship: to make money, save money, or promote an intended image. ("[Understanding why companies sponsor cycling clubs](#)")

Examples: describe how your participation in activities as group rides, races, rallies, etc. has driven, or can drive, greater visibility, awareness, interest, traffic and sales, or brand recognition. Another idea is to discuss how your club/team has helped its sponsors drive increased sales through **B2B** (business-to-business) relationships initiated by your club or team. Lastly, if your club or team is a registered 501©(3), non-profit, be sure to mention it, and describe the benefit.

If your club or team does not have any existing sponsors, describe the value of cycling as a sport helping companies increase visibility, awareness, etc.

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Refer to the following section for good examples describing why companies view cycling sponsorship as a good vehicle for increasing their visibility with a specific audience, market segment or niche.

Closing/Call to Action (What you want to happen next.)

This is where you should suggest a logical next step. The purpose of the closing statement is to have further discussions, enabling you to engage in the sponsorship selling process. An example of a potential next step could be an appointment to:

- Learn about their company – business, market served (clients, target customers), goals and objectives
- Understand who they sponsor or support through funding and donations and why.
- Explore potential areas where their company and your club, or team, can work together.

Another example of a “call to action” is, to understand who is involved in making sponsorship decisions and, to identify the process involved. Find out which company resources are involved, their time frames, their budgets, etc.

In the table below you will find the steps discussed in this section in an easy to follow format.

So, there you have it. A short, concise, effective approach you can use to engage

prospective sponsors. If you focus on the value your club can provide, aligning your messages with what motivates companies to sponsor, you should be able to engage more companies in productive sponsorship discussions.

Cycling sponsorship prospecting script

	<i>Value to your audience?</i>	<i>Suggested "Call to Action"</i>
<i>Introduction</i>		
<i>• Your Name and name of club or team</i>	<i>• Why should they listen, read, or care?</i>	<i>• What do you want to happen next?</i>
<i>• Location where you're located; area served</i>	<i>• Use the reasons companies sponsor as a guide: - "Make money." - "Save money" - "Promote an intended image"</i>	<i>• Discussion? Appointment?</i>
<i>• How long in existence?</i>	<i>• Describe how you have helped other organizations? Or, how cycling sponsorship can help companies achieve their goals and objectives</i>	<i>• Learn about their company – business, market served (clients, target customer), goals and objectives</i>
<i>• What you do and why?</i>	<i>• Focus on "what is in it for them?"</i>	<i>• Understand who they sponsor or support through funding and donations and, why?</i>
<i>• Where you do it?</i>		<i>• Explore potential areas where their company and your club, or team, can work together</i>
<i>• Why you are contacting them?</i>		<i>• Decision process and timing – identify the process involved (which company resources are involved, time frames, budgets, etc.)</i>



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Developing effective sponsorship proposals—
Generic or customized?

Tips for writing an effective sponsorship
proposal part I and II

Tips for writing and developing a quick, yet effective,
sponsorship letter for your club or team

Sample quotes from sponsors of the Pro Peloton



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Developing effective sponsorship proposals – Generic or customized?

“There are a kazillion amateur teams at all levels of ability whose sponsors provide everything from a case of product to a full complement of clothing and equipment... The process of acquiring sponsorship at this level isn't easy. These teams won't produce the same results as the professional teams, nor will they enjoy a great reach into the market, making them a tough sell to prospective sponsors.”

“At this level, the process of acquiring sponsorship usually begins with one proactive member of the club/team who takes the initiative to write a letter... It will be sent to one, two, or several local businesses and will contain a proposal for sponsorship that includes some explanation about the sport. There will be a list of the benefits of sponsoring a cycling team and, most importantly, a request for money.”

Jamie Smith, author –
[Roadie the Misunderstood World of a Bike Racer](#)

I thoroughly enjoyed Jamie Smith's book, [Roadie: the Misunderstood World of a Bike Racer](#), because it explains why, as cyclists, we engage in what non-cyclists would deem eccentric behavior and obsessive habits. However, what particularly hit home was Jamie's description of the process of securing sponsors. As team and club cyclists, we spend a lot of time designing the “perfect” kit, to distinguish ourselves from other cyclists. Are we spending the same amount of time and effort developing requests for funding? Shouldn't we?

Think about it. How often do you receive an unsolicited phone call, mail, or e-mail, offering you a product or service? Do you tend to pay closer attention, and be more responsive to offers which are customized specifically to you, versus those which clearly know nothing about you?

It's the same for companies that receive unsolicited proposals for sponsorship funding. So, how do you separate yourself from the hundreds, sometimes thousands,

of organizations vying for funding? Is a boiler plate, vanilla proposal really going to get it done? Probably NOT!

By following the same basic rules used in the corporate sector knowing your audience and tailoring your message you can vastly improve your chances of securing sponsorship and funding.

The following are recommendations you can keep in mind to create effective sponsorship proposals, which can help you achieve the desired results you want – securing funding!

- **Accuracy** – Make sure you have the right contact, and you spell their name, and the company name, correctly
- **Customization** – Add their logo to your template, or add the prospective sponsor's name to the title (“XYZ Cycling Club sponsorship proposal for ABC Electronics”)
- **Focus on THEM** – The benefit and value THE SPONSOR will gain from sponsoring your club. IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU, IT'S ABOUT THE VALUE TO THE SPONSOR.

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- **Demonstrate a basic understanding of their company, products, (and, maybe even their industry)**–

This sends a very positive message while giving you credibility, showing you have taken the time to learn about them. Secondly, what you learned through your research provides an excellent foundation for explaining the value your club can provide. Remember to focus on the three basic motivations that drive company sponsorship: making money, saving money, and to project an intended image (refer to “[Understanding why companies sponsor](#)”). Additionally, try to align with areas where sponsorship could support some of the following common goals and objectives to:

- Enhance awareness, brand recognition and brand reputation
- Demonstrate social responsibility and involvement
- Improve and/or increase visibility, position, and recognition for a company; their brand, products and/or services
- Align with emerging trends and societal concerns such as–conservation, ecology, “Green,” transportation alternatives, health & wellness, active lifestyles

- Communicate brand value
- Develop partnerships yielding cross-branding, cross-promotional, and B2B opportunities with other sponsors
- Deliver messages to targeted audiences and niche.

- **Reference relevant information which might be of interest to them**–If their target demographic and market aligns with cycling’s demographic, state it, and why it is important!

- **Differentiate**–VERY important. Anything describing why your club is different from the other organizations makes you stand out, giving you an immediate advantage

- **Reference stories and quotes**– Always helpful. Including a quote from a happy, existing sponsor is an endorsement for your club. It is validation that your club can deliver value.

- **Be creative**–Present ideas of how, your club, can promote the sponsors brand and products (will their logo be prominent on your jersey, website, blogs, forums, communities, social media, banner, newsletters, e-mail, etc.?)

Explain why this is important. Also, discuss the value your club provides by aligning with their market, customers or initiatives (“green”, or employee health and wellness programs are good ones). Come up with creative ideas for partnering with the prospective sponsor to provide visibility and awareness for their company, brand, products and services. Potentially, a one-time event might be a good start to demonstrate the value of partnering with your cycling club or team.

- **Provide clear options**–Ensure the prospective sponsor can clearly understand the various options. Include descriptions of various levels, cost, and benefit for each.

- **Give direction**–Provide a call to action describing what you want the sponsor to do (contact you, schedule a meeting, review a contract).

Remember, anything your club can do to demonstrate understanding, knowledge, and value goes a long way in differentiating you from others requesting funding and sponsorship.

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Sponsorship proposal – Tips for writing an effective sponsorship proposal for your cycling club or team: Part I

Following a few simple steps can really help to differentiate your cycling club, or team's, sponsorship proposal from those submitted by other organizations. As discussed in previous sections, demonstrating an understanding of the prospective sponsors business, and integrating their goals and objectives into your messages and value propositions, can go a long way in helping you demonstrate the business value of your proposal. This, in turn, will help you advance through the sponsorship process, and increase your chances of securing additional sponsors.

Know your audience: Do the research!

Take the time to understand a company's mission, goals, objectives, and core values. Explore their website, blogs and social networking sites in order to learn about them, their products and services, and their target market. Look for things that will help give you insight, and ideas, into how a company can benefit from sponsoring your club.

Spend time reading the "Chairman's Letter" or "Executive Summary" in the Annual Report. Scan the "Investor Relations" section. Each of these will give you valuable insight into the business objectives, goals, performance in achieving goals, strategy and markets.

Great areas to research on a company's website are any sections entitled "Philanthropy", "Stewardship," "Outreach", "Community", or "Partnership". These deal directly with what a company is doing to support initiatives, or organizations, in order to advance their objectives, live their core values, demonstrate social responsibility, or support causes they deem important to their community, their image, or their target audience. It will clue you in to the type of organizations a company supports, why they support them, and how it fits into their overall mission, goals, and objectives.

Also, as discussed in the section "[Incorporating Social Media into your cycling sponsorship campaign](#)," be sure to leverage social media and social networks heavily in your research. There is a wealth of information available, such as identifying who is involved in sponsorship decisions, while also providing a vehicle for making initial contact and establishing relationships (not to mention social networks are an excellent way to understand what is important to companies). Performing the research enables you to understand the key benefits your club should highlight in a sponsorship proposal, which brings me to my next recommendation.

The benefit you can deliver: "What's in it for them?"

Framing your sponsorship proposal by focusing on the benefit you can deliver puts you ahead of most proposals that companies receive. In background research done in order to write this section, it appears the number one complaint from companies regarding sponsorship proposals is that the proposing organization doesn't understand what they are trying to accomplish.

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You can avoid falling into this trap, and having your sponsorship proposal being pushed aside, by clearly highlighting how you can help a prospective sponsor achieve their goals. Identifying who a company currently sponsors, business goals and objectives, community and

social initiatives, and how these initiatives help them achieve their business goals and objectives, while supporting their core values, you automatically have insight into what is important to them. Hence, you can highlight what you can do.

Cycling sponsorship proposal messaging

Example

"As part of our core values we will continue to educate the public on the importance of healthy, active lifestyles."

What it means?

Directly reflects image, core value, goals and objectives of evangelizing the importance of healthy activity

How you can help?

Cycling is a rapidly growing segment providing numerous health benefits. Sponsoring our club will help support your company's core value and objectives. Group rides, newsletters, web presence, social media, clinics, and events geared to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, will help provide additional visibility and recognition for your company, products, and brand.

"We will open a new store in an effort to gain market share and increase sales in North County."

Need to gain market share and increase sales. Requirement to increase awareness of new store, drive traffic and increase sales and market share.

Partnership with us can help increase consumer awareness and traffic to your new store, leading to increased sales. Our club's activities, (rides, participation in charity and fundraising events, and FREE clinics) will promote your business in North County. These efforts supplemented by our club communications, web site, and relationship with other local businesses, can help increase visibility for your new location.

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Finally, as you are performing research, and begin to engage companies that have the potential to become sponsors, contacts that are typically involved in the sponsorship process can be found in the following table. This is not a comprehensive

list, however it will give you insight into the departments, executives, managers, and employees that you might interface with when engaging in the sponsorship process.

In the next section we will review the structure of an effective cycling sponsorship proposal.

Departments and contacts involved in sponsorship decisions

Department

Executive Officers

Potential Contact Titles

- Chief Executive Officer
- President
- Founder, Co-Founder, Owner
- Managing Partner

- General Manager, Managing Director
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Marketing Officer

Marketing, Marketing and Communications, Sports Marketing, Sales, Public Relations, Advertising

- Chief Marketing Officer
- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Director, Manager of:
 - Marketing, Corporate Marketing, Marketing and Communications
 - Marketing Alliances, Marketing Services
 - Sports Marketing, Partner Marketing
 - Strategy, Marketing Strategy
 - Sales, Corporate Sales, Channel Sales, Integrated Sales
 - Public Relations
 - Advertising, Corporate Advertising
 - Business Development, Channel Development, Partner Development

Sponsorship, Sponsorship Marketing

- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Group Manager, Director or Manager of:
 - Sponsorship and Corporate Sales
 - Media and Sponsorship
 - Sports Sponsorship

Partnership, Alliances, Community Service, Community Outreach, Community Relations

- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Group Manager, Director, Manager, Coordinator of:
 - Corporate Alliances, Strategic Alliances, Channel Alliances
 - Special Events

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Sponsorship proposal – Tips for writing an effective sponsorship proposal for your cycling club or team: Part II

Structure and Organization: Make it clear and straightforward

Picking up where we left off in the previous section, now that you understand the importance of research and focusing the sponsorship proposal on benefits, let's take a look at the basic structure. It consists of ten components.

Cover Letter

A cover letter provides an introduction and high level overview of your club or teams sponsorship proposal. I view this as a "mini-executive summary." In three to four, short, paragraphs you need to provide a quick synopsis of why you have submitted a sponsorship proposal, why the reader (and company) should be interested, a basic knowledge of the company's business, and the benefit sponsorship can provide. Include an explanation of when you will contact them to follow up.

Table of Contents

This lists the contents of what is included by section and page number.

Executive Summary

This provides an overview of the proposal. The executive summary provides more detail than the cover letter. Include a brief overview of who you are, and an explanation of why you are contacting them. Be sure you exhibit a basic understanding of their company, products or services, and the benefits of sponsorship to them (increased traffic, increased sales, increased brand awareness and brand loyalty...). Your research will allow you to align the benefits your club or team

provide with their specific goals, objectives, core values, community initiatives, etc. This is also a great place to describe the benefit your other sponsors may have received through partnership with you. Provide an overview of what you are proposing (how much, for what period of time, etc.). Lastly, close the executive summary by thanking them for their time.

Benefit to Sponsor

This section of the proposal should describe specific benefits to the sponsor. Go into detail describing how your club or team would promote the company's brand, products, or services. List events, races, fundraisers, group ride schedule, and meetings. Provide visuals of your website, blogs, social media tools (include URL's), and newsletters. Discuss where the sponsor's logo would be displayed on club or team clothing, on web sites, in communications, and collateral. Tie everything back to the specific value the company will receive. Explain how sponsorship will support their mission, goals, objectives, and initiatives. If your cycling club or team is a 501(c)(3), include the benefits for corporations who sponsor non-profit organizations in this section.

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Budget

Include a budget to illustrate how funding will be used.

Proposal Offer

Describe what you are proposing in this section. If you have various levels of sponsorship, make sure you provide a CLEAR description of what the company will receive, at each level. Be very specific. And, of course, include the benefit of each sponsorship level. For example, your biggest sponsor typically gets the largest amount of space on your club or team jersey. This means more visibility and exposure, which can lead to greater traffic, awareness, and sales.

Overview of club or team

This is an excellent place to give a BRIEF overview of your club or team's, activities, awards, accolades, partnerships, initiatives, etc. Weave in the value of cycling to sponsors. If you need help, refer to "Using Quotes and References," or "What we can learn from corporate sponsorship of pro cycling," sections of the e-book. Again, take the time to describe the purpose of your club, and illustrate how your mission, goals, and objectives correlate to the sponsors.

Sponsors and Affiliations

List, or depict graphically using logos, the company's, groups and organizations that sponsor or work with your club. Include quotes from companies that describe the benefits they received from sponsoring your club here. It gives you credibility, while giving the prospective sponsor ideas of what they can expect from sponsorship.

Call to Action

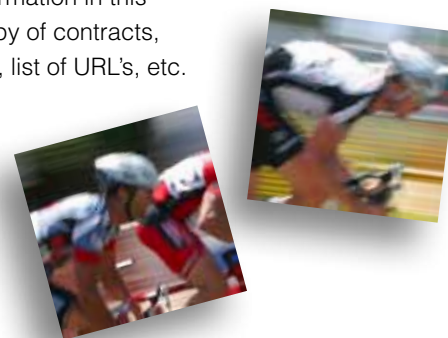
A good way to close the proposal is to describe the action you would like the company to take. Again, take the time to summarize what your club or team is offering. Let them know when you will be following up, and thank them for their time.

Appendix

Lists any additional information in this section, i.e., sample copy of contracts, news clippings, articles, list of URL's, etc.

I know it seems like a lot of work, but it can pay dividends to help differentiate your club or teams sponsorship proposal from all of the others! Not to mention submitting a well written, organized, and sponsor focused proposal can help "open the door," leading to in depth partnership discussions.

The following tables can be used as a guide as you prepare your club or team's sponsorship proposal. I have included them as a means to help you organize your thoughts, and to provide examples of potential value propositions and benefits. (You will also find a [Quote and Reference story worksheet in the Appendix](#), which can be used to highlight the benefit existing sponsors have experienced from sponsoring your cycling club.)



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Cycling sponsorship proposal planning worksheet: Cover letter and executive summary structure

Cover Letter

Overview of sponsorship proposal:

- Your Name
- Name of club or team
- Why you are contacting them?
- A few basic statements showing an understanding of their business, products, services, goals and objectives (from research)

Why they should care? (Value)
How does your club, team or event, help them achieve their goals, objectives, or add value?

- "Make money"
- "Save Money"
- "Promote intended image"

Executive Summary

1) Overview of sponsorship proposal (more detail than cover letter)

- Name of club or team
- Why you are contacting them?
- A few basic statements showing an understanding of their business, products, services, goals and objectives (from research)

2) Why they should care? (Value)
How does your club, help the prospective sponsor achieve their goals, and objectives, or add value?

- "Make money" - Increase visibility and awareness, sales, revenue, market share, customer retention and brand loyalty
- "Save Money" - Augment existing Marketing, Advertising and PR campaigns
- "Promote intended image" - Improve/Change image, promote positive PR, increase customer retention and brand loyalty

3) Leverage References
Describe how your club has helped other organizations?
Or, how cycling sponsorship can help companies achieve their goals and objectives

Focus on "what is in it for them?"

4) Overview of what you are proposing? Include proposal offer and time period

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Cycling sponsorship proposal planning worksheet: "Make Money," "Save Money"

"Make Money"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Increase visibility and awareness, sales, revenue,
market share, customer retention and brand loyalty

Sponsorship delivers:

Greater exposure -seen by participants,
spectators, citizens, and a club's other sponsors!

Visibility with:

• Other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships=
more business

• New channels; new audience; potentially widening
exposure of company, brand & products.

• Target market or targeted segment which can lead
to increased interest, traffic, sales, revenue, and
market share

• Wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those
that know the company and brand, or recognition
with new audience

Visibility drives awareness; awareness drives interest;
interest drives traffic, leading to increased sales!

"Save Money"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Augment existing Marketing, Advertising and
PR campaigns

Sponsorship delivers:

Another vehicle for getting their "message" out!
Augments existing marketing & advertising campaigns.

A way to reach new channels; new audience;
potentially widening exposure of company, brand
and products

A less expensive alternative when compared
to traditional marketing, advertising and public
relations mediums

ROI which can contribute to profitability

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Cycling sponsorship proposal planning worksheet: “Promote Intended Image”

“Promote Intended Image”

*Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Improve/Change image, promote positive PR, customer retention and brand loyalty*

Sponsorship delivers:

• Positive image and PR! Impacts brand loyalty and interest.

• A way to align with emerging societal concerns as Health and Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation concerns, Ecological concerns - promoting positive PR; bolstering image. This can lead to increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.

• Positive PR by partnering with an organization serving the “greater good” by helping others - i.e., Community Service, Community and Local Initiatives, Fund Raising, Support of Charitable Causes

• An opportunity to align with a club involved in helping promote alternative transportation and safety; helps environment and constituency. Promotes positive PR for sponsor.

• Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or drive recognition w/new audience which may result in increased awareness which drives interest; interest drives traffic, leading to increased sales!

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Tips for writing and developing a quick, yet effective, sponsorship letter for your club or team

Maybe you don't have the time to sit down and write a proposal which includes the basic structure and components I described in the previous section (cover letter, table of contents, executive summary, benefits to sponsor, proposal offer, etc.), but, you still want to send a proposal requesting sponsorship for your club. Another option is the one page, sponsorship letter. Depending upon how the letter is structured, it can be another very effective tool in the sponsorship process. Don't get me wrong, to do it right still requires a little time and effort. However, if you have performed some basic research, have a good handle on the

value you can provide, aligned with business goals and objectives, the letter can be a good way to provide an introduction, laying the foundation for in depth sponsorship discussions. The key is to make the letter crisp and tight, focusing on a few components that will help the reader quickly understand "who you are," "what you are requesting," and "why your club or teams proposal is of value to their company." Believe it or not, you can accomplish this in three paragraphs. The trick is to "net-it-out".

Let's take a closer look.

Opening Paragraph (Introduction)

The purpose here is to quickly provide the reader with information about "who you are" (club or team), "what you do" (activity your club or team is involved in), "why you are contacting them" (for sponsorship), and "why they should care" (what's in it for them?).

To capture the reader's attention, mention a benefit statement describing the potential value of cycling sponsorship (increased sales and market share, increased traffic...). Achieving differentiation by making your messages clear and relevant.

Second Paragraph (Body)

This is the body of the sponsorship letter. The objective of the second paragraph is to discuss the specific benefits sponsorship can deliver to the company you are contacting. This can be very effective if you have performed some basic research, and are presenting sponsorship in terms which relate directly to what you have learned. Align your club, or team's, value with what you learned about the company you are approaching. For example, if your research identified the company is interested in aligning with healthy, active lifestyles as part of their core values, write a statement describing how sponsoring your club can support their core value.



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The second paragraph is also a good place to drop in a reference or quote from an existing sponsor (refer to [“Using quotes and references with prospective sponsors” –Part I, II & III](#)). Including a quote, or mentioning the name of a company who sponsors your club or team, provides immediate credibility. It is an endorsement of your club or team. And, references and quotes give prospective sponsors an idea of the type of benefits you can deliver.

Closing paragraph

The purpose of this paragraph is to explain “what you are asking for,” and “what they will receive in return.” The closing paragraph should also include a description of suggested next steps, either the action you want them to take, “what you want them to do”, or, “what you will do.”

Include your sponsorship offer in this section. Be specific! Provide the reader with the proposal offer. List any options.

Also, describe what they will receive in return for sponsorship, such as “...as a sponsor, XYZ’s company name and logo will be featured on our team kit/uniform, on our website (provide URL), and in all club communications.”

Take a moment to summarize, and restate, the benefit the company will receive as a return on investment. In other words, answer the question, “what is the business value your club is providing the prospective sponsor?”

Lastly, include a sentence that describes the next step or action. For example, this can be anything from letting the reader know when you will contact them, to suggesting a meeting, or asking them to sign and return an attached contract. Whatever you state is truly based upon the action you will take, or you would like to see the prospective sponsor take. Just be sure to make it clear, and focus on the action you would like the reader to take as the result of reading your sponsorship letter.

Close the paragraph by thanking the reader for their time.

So, there you have it, a short one page, three paragraph, sponsorship letter. Concise, and to the point, it describes the value your club or team can provide, in terms that will resonate with a prospective sponsor.

The following tables can be used as a guide, as you prepare your club or team’s sponsorship letter. I have included them as a means to help you organize your thoughts, and to provide examples of potential value propositions and benefits. You will find a [Quote and Reference story worksheet in the Appendix](#) which can be used to highlight the benefit existing sponsors have experienced from sponsoring your cycling club, team or event.



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Cycling sponsorship letter planning worksheet: Structure and key points

Opening Paragraph

Overview of sponsorship proposal:

- Your Name
- Name of club or team
- Why you are contacting them?
- A few basic statements showing an understanding of their business, products, services, goals and objectives (from research)

Second Paragraph (Body)

Why they should care? (Value)
How does your club, team or event, help them achieve their goals, objectives, or add value?

- "Make money" - Increase visibility and awareness, sales, revenue, market share, customer retention and brand loyalty
- "Save Money" - Augment existing Marketing, Advertising and PR campaigns
- "Promote intended image" - Improve/Change image, promote positive PR, customer retention and brand loyalty

Leverage References

- Describe how you have helped other organizations?
- Or, how cycling sponsorship can help companies achieve their goals and objectives
- Focus on "what is in it for them?"

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What you are asking for? (Offer)

- Describe what is being proposed
- Call to Action (Next Steps)
- Summarize Major Points of Proposal

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Cycling sponsorship letter planning worksheet: "Making Money"; "Saving Money"

"Make Money"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Increase visibility and awareness, sales, revenue,
market share, customer retention and brand loyalty

Sponsorship delivers:
Greater exposure - seen by participants,
spectators, citizens, and a club's other sponsors!

Visibility w/:

- Other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships = more business
- New channels; new audience; potentially widening exposure of company, brand and products.
- Target market or targeted segment which can lead to increased interest, traffic, sales, revenue, and market share
- Wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or recognition w/new audience

Visibility drives awareness; awareness drives interest; interest drives traffic, leading to increased sales!

"Save Money"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Augment existing Marketing, Advertising and PR campaigns

Sponsorship delivers:

- Another vehicle for getting their "message" out!
Augments existing marketing and advertising campaigns.
- A way to reach new channels; new audience; potentially widening exposure of company, brand and products
- A less expensive alternative when compared to traditional marketing, advertising and public relations mediums
- ROI which can contribute to profitability

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Cycling sponsorship letter planning worksheet: Promote intended image

"Promote Intended Image"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to: Improve/Change image, promote positive PR, customer retention and brand loyalty

Sponsorship enables:

• Positive image and PR! Impacts brand loyalty and interest.

• A way to align with emerging societal concerns as Health and Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation concerns, Ecological concerns (promoting positive PR; bolstering image). This can lead to increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.

• Positive PR by partnering with an organization serving the "greater good" by helping others - i.e., Community Service, Community and Local Initiatives, Fund Raising, Support of Charitable Causes

• An opportunity to align with a club involved in helping promote alternative transportation and safety. Helps the environment and constituency. Promotes positive PR for the sponsor.

• Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or provide recognition with new audience resulting in increased awareness, interest; traffic, and increased sales!

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Sample quotes from sponsors of the Pro Peloton

Tom McEnergy, Chief Marketing Officer, OptumHealth:

"Professional cycling in the United States continues to grow as a major spectator sport and serves as a great way to reach health-conscious consumers. This particular partnership provides a highly visible and mission-consistent opportunity to both advance our message and drive awareness of our products and services."

Charles Aaron, Managing Director, Circuit Global Sports Management:

*"We are pleased to welcome Optum-Health to the team for the 2011 season. We feel that this partnership will help take our team to the next level and **continues our goal of partnering with leading brands that have a strong commitment to health and wellness.**"*

Philippe Guillemot, Chief Executive Officer, Europcar Groupe:

*"The Europcar Group is delighted to participate in this new adventure and this partnership will be the **opportunity to further enhance awareness of the Europcar brand and reputation in Europe and worldwide.**"*

Paolo Dal Lago President, Liquigas Sport:

*"We're very happy to announce the renewal of our sponsorship. We think **cycling is the best means to promote our brand.**"*

Peter Chou, Chief Executive Officer, HTC Corporation:

"HTC's sponsorship of Team Columbia- HTC is one step in HTC's commitment to increasing its global brand value and recognition."

*"The HTC High Road Sports partnership is a great match of like minded organizations driven by innovation, excellence and competitiveness and we are excited about the **opportunity to communicate HTC's brand value through the great sport of cycling.**"*

Brian Robins, Chief Marketing Officer, SunGard:

*"The Saxo Bank-SunGard Professional Cycling Team represents a fantastic **opportunity to gain visibility for our brand in front of a global audience.**"*





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Managing sponsorship meetings and interactions
for maximum effectiveness



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Managing sponsorship meetings and interactions for maximum effectiveness

Executing an effective sponsorship campaign and securing sponsors, as mentioned in previous sections “[Developing a sponsor plan!](#)”—is analogous to building and following an effective annual training plan. The better your plan and execution, the better your results! The same applies to effectively managing interactions; particularly face-to-face meetings, with prospective sponsors. The manner in which you handle any interaction, whether it is a meeting, presentation, telephone or video discussion, effective structure and focus can help your sponsorship interactions immensely!

Regardless of the medium, focusing your attention, and content, on meeting the needs of the prospective buyer, and articulating how your cycling club, or team, can add value to a prospective sponsor’s business will go a long way in helping you achieve your sponsorship

objectives of securing more sponsors, and securing larger sponsorship contracts per sponsor! Being able to [articulate the value of sponsorship](#) will help you advance through the process of securing sponsorship, while differentiating your club, team, or event, from other organizations requesting funding.

Here is some advice using the simple rules of “who, what, where, when, why and how.”

“Who”: “Who are you?”

As mentioned in previous sections regarding [sponsorship proposals](#) and [sponsorship letters](#), you should open by introducing yourself, club and team; describing the purpose of why you are meeting, or communicating, with the audience. Try to open with a very brief overview of your club or team. However, always describe your club or team in

terms that will resonate with prospective sponsors, i.e. “how sponsorship of your club could help companies achieve their objectives of making money, saving money, reaching an intended audience/niche, or projecting an intended image.”

For example, a good description could be—“We are a cycling team based in xyz city. Historically we have partnered with several local businesses to help provide visibility and awareness for their company, brand, products and services. Because of our involvement in the community, supporting various initiatives, we have been able to help our partners drive increased traffic and sales of their offerings. This is just one example of how sponsorship of our club can drive value for your company.”

Also, this is a good time to mention the names of sponsors that you have qualified as references for your club. (*For more information on effective use of existing sponsors to secure new sponsors please see “[Using quotes and references to with prospective sponsors](#)”*)

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“What”: “What is the purpose and objective of the meeting/interaction; what are you discussing?”

“What”– Take a moment to describe the purpose of your interaction, and your objective. State why you have contacted them, or are meeting with them, and what you intend to discuss. Is the purpose of the meeting is to discuss how the company uses sponsorship? Is it to determine the process? State it clearly.

Also, be sure to integrate the value of what cycling sponsorship offers companies. Use phrases to describe what cycling sponsorship could potentially provide in terms such as “partnership.” Example–To explore potential opportunities to establish a mutually beneficial partnership between their company, and your club, ie., helping them to achieve their goals and objectives– increasing awareness and visibility; increasing sales, revenue and market share; increasing or improving customer retention and brand loyalty; improving or changing image and/or promoting positive PR.

“How and Why”: “How sponsorship of your club, team or event, can drive business value? And, why they should care?”

Your club can provide a cost-effective, highly effective, addition to a company’s existing marketing, advertising and PR campaign. (For more information on the value of cycling sponsorship to companies please refer to [“Understanding why companies sponsor,”](#) [“Cycling sponsorship and lessons learned from sponsors of UCI top 20 cycling teams”](#), and [“Cycling Sponsorship News”](#)).

Participation in cycling related activities (races, rally’s, group rides), community service activities, local and national initiatives (“Share the Road”, “National Ride to Work Day”, etc.) and communication (web, social media, newsletters, etc.) helps to increase visibility and awareness for your sponsors, their brand, products and services. Cycling is an excellent plat-



form to help companies reach their target audience. This is why global companies as Rabobank, HTC, Kelly Benefit Strategies, Optumhealth, Acura, RadioShack, Europcar and countless others invest in cycling as an integral component of their global marketing strategies. Your club can help the sponsors reach their intended audience. (For more information describing key benefits, value propositions, and business reasons companies invest in cycling sponsorship please refer to [“Cycling sponsorship and lessons learned from sponsors of UCI top 20 cycling teams”](#), and [“Cycling Sponsorship News”](#))

“Where and When”: **Creating visibility, awareness & interest**

Where are you members seen? Where will the company receive additional visibility?– describe the geographic area where your club or team participates in most events and activities. This gives the prospective sponsor an idea of the markets you are supporting. Your club or teams activities should align with the markets, and audience, the company serves.

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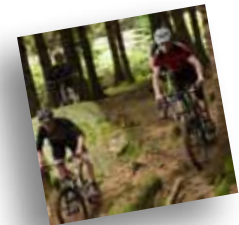
Describe the types of events, activities, and initiatives, you support, where they are located, and give an idea of some metrics if possible (number of people from your club that participate, amount of dollars raised for charity, number of people and spectators that participated in an event). This gives the prospective sponsor an idea of the audience they can reach, how many, and where.

“When”–“What are the opportunities for the prospective sponsors brand to be visible?”

Provide an idea of when your club or team participates in events and activities. An event calendar is an excellent way to visually present “opportunities” for the prospective partner’s brand, products and services to be visible. These are similar to appearances. Include weekly rides, races, charity events, fund raising activities, clinics, community service, etc. The more you can include, the more it demonstrates potential exposure for the company as a sponsor.

As you begin to conclude the interaction, meeting, presentation, or communication, recommend logical next steps. This is what you would like to see happen next. Are there additional meetings necessary, do they need to review contracts, do they need to engage other sponsors for references, etc? A “call-to-action” is a vital step in the process, and helps you move forward to the next step.

Hopefully this helps you run effective, productive, meetings with prospective sponsors, enabling your club or team to do what we are all interested in– securing more sponsors, receiving more sponsorship dollars per sponsor, and maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors.





Leveraging existing sponsors to secure new cycling sponsors

Use your existing sponsors, and B2B,
to attract NEW sponsors

Great quotes and references can help your
cycling club secure sponsors in a number of ways

Highlight success with sponsors through
reference stories



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Use your existing sponsors, and B2B, to attract NEW sponsors

Leveraging B2B to drive added value for your cycling club's sponsors

What does NASCAR and the NBA's New Jersey Nets have in common?

NASCAR and the New Jersey Nets have identified Business-to-Business (B2B) events as an innovative way to deliver additional value to their corporate sponsors. Through complementary relationships fostered through NASCAR's B2B Council and the Nets Chamber of Commerce, both organizations are creating relationship building events and forums, enabling sponsors to meet, share ideas and best practices, while developing complementary relationships to drive business.



Norris Scott, NASCAR's Managing Director of Partnership Marketing, describes the value of B2B to their corporate partners in "[Expansion keeps NASCAR B2B program rolling along](#)," "B2B gives our partners one more way to maximize their investment and maybe find some business opportunities that they hadn't seen before."

Generally, we think of NASCAR, and even cycling, sponsorship as a means for creating visibility and awareness to drive consumer business. However, the New York Times' article "[NASCAR Sponsors Find Customers in Other Sponsors](#)" illustrates why corporate partners are investing dollars in sponsorship and B2B membership: "While Nascar often trumpets the high visibility enjoyed by its sponsors, whose logos festoon cars, as well as fans' fidelity to brands that bankroll drivers, one of the highest returns for companies' investments actually comes not from consumers but from other companies. The biggest fish some advertisers are reeling in, it turns out, are other advertisers."

Good in theory right? But what kind of results can one expect?

"[Expansion keeps NASCAR B2B program rolling along](#)" and "[NASCAR Sponsors Find Customers in Other Sponsors](#)" cite the following metrics fostered by NASCAR B2B relationships:

- Sprint reported 15% growth in units sold as the direct result of B2B relationships
 - Bank of America increased wireless service with Sprint by 15%
 - Kodak doubled wireless business with Sprint
 - Cintas made Sprint its carrier of choice; estimated at \$7 million dollars
- Best Western hotel chain attributed \$16.7 million in incremental revenue generated through deals with other corporate sponsors
- U.P.S. increased the business it conducted with other NASCAR sponsors, through B2B relationships, from 40% to 90% between the years 2000 to 2009



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But, it even gets better! Leveraging B2B programs can not only assist sponsors by developing revenue generating business relationships. B2B can also help justify corporate sponsorship through return on investment (ROI)!

NJ Nets CEO Brett Yormark discusses the ROI value B2B programs provide corporate sponsors in the [IEG Sponsorship Report](#) “Inaugural B2B Program Yields Positive Returns for NBA Team and Sponsors”, “As we are all being measured differently in this economy, this is another important way for season ticket holders and sponsors to justify their investment in Nets basketball.”

ROI speaks for itself! The examples referenced below are from “[Expansion keeps NASCAR B2B program rolling along](#)”

- Cintas estimated that NASCAR facilitated B2B relationships returned \$3.89 for every dollar invested in sponsorship
- Best Western estimated a \$6.80 ROI for every dollar invested in NASCAR sponsorship through B2B

So, how can your cycling club use B2B to drive value for existing sponsors?

1 Companies are always looking for ways to establish relationships that will drive new business opportunities and revenue. Creating events, forums, communities, etc., enabling your sponsors to interact, will provide an environment for sponsors to—**a)** learn about other companies’ successes; **b)** discuss relevant trends, directions and imperatives; and **c)** explore ways to work together. Facilitating B2B events, or forums, bringing businesses together, will give you credibility, help your club demonstrate leadership and innovation, while helping you indirectly contribute to incremental revenue generation.

2 Differentiating yourself from other organizations seeking sponsorship is an excellent way to demonstrate you’re cycling club’s value. Establishing a B2B community, or forum, provides you’re cycling club with a level of thought leadership, immediately providing you with separation from every other organization requesting sponsorship and funding.

- 3** Value added events—consider hosting events which will drive high sponsor participation and interaction.
- Fun, non-athletic, events such as a chili and barbecue cook-offs are always a good means of fueling competitive spirit amongst participants.
 - More challenging events as a mini-duathlon, triathlon, bike relay obviously offer an excellent theme and tie in.
 - Host panel discussions focusing on emerging business trends with featured topics as leveraging social media to drive revenue.
- 4** Create a password-protected “Sponsor only” area on your website. Also, think of creating a “Sponsor Member Directory” to facilitate interaction and contact between sponsors.

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How can B2B programs be used to attract new sponsors?

- 1 Establishing a B2B program for your existing sponsors can help justify their investment in your cycling club. Leverage the value sponsors have garnered through B2B relationships—new partners, new clients, increases in sales, etc.
- 2 Highlight B2B sponsor successes in newsletters, on your website, and through social media tools with reference stories, quotes, etc. Present metrics wherever possible—i.e., 15% increase in sales due to new business relationship with XYZ company... Use these examples as you engage with potential sponsors, illustrating the value companies will receive through B2B relationships, as a result of sponsoring your cycling club.

- 3 Invite potential sponsors to participate in B2B events. Experiencing a B2B event in person, engaging with other companies, gives prospective sponsors the opportunity to understand the value sponsoring your club provides first hand.
- 4 Ask existing sponsors to track metrics associated with business results related to your club's B2B efforts. Have a sponsor quote, or publish, that they saw an incremental increase in sales relating to B2B business relationship with XYZ company. Or, better yet, have a sponsor quote that for every dollar invested in sponsoring your cycling club, they received \$ x in return. Both of these clearly exhibit the value of sponsoring your cycling club, and participating in an innovative B2B program (which you established!). Use these as you engage new sponsors!

Again, anything your cycling club can do to show differentiation, demonstrate value, and offer companies an opportunity to expand the visibility of their brand and drive revenue, will set you apart from other organizations seeking sponsorship and funding. Lastly, using B2B as a component of your cycling clubs sponsorship portfolio helps you to justify investment in your cycling club as a sound business decision. Not to mention, a solid sponsorship program can help you land new sponsors, while helping you justify greater investment from existing ones!





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Great quotes and references can help your cycling club secure sponsors in a number of ways.

First they can provide you with examples of how, and why, cycling is an excellent vehicle to augment a sponsor's advertising and public relations campaigns. Second, a reference gives you immediate credibility by describing the value your cycling club has delivered to companies in the corporate sector.

Recently, SunGard and Quiznos provided examples of positive endorsements touting the value of cycling to their brands! SunGard's CMO was quoted:

"We are pleased to extend our sponsorship of Riis Cycling in 2011 and join Saxo Bank as a co-title sponsor. We share Saxo Bank's enthusiasm for this project and we are looking forward to renewing our collaboration. The Saxo Bank-SunGard Professional Cycling Team represents a fantastic opportunity to gain visibility for our brand in front of a global audience."

– Brian Robins, Chief Marketing Officer, SunGard

The quote delivers an endorsement of the Saxo Bank-SunGard Team, while describing how sponsoring cycling contributes to increasing brand awareness and visibility.

Another example of a positive endorsement for cycling came during the announcement of the Quiznos Pro Challenge. The Quiznos executive describes how sponsoring cycling aligns with their brand, customers, and objectives of supporting the growing trend of healthy lifestyles.

"We always try to stay in front of what most interests our customers. Cycling is representative of the more contemporary American lifestyle and Quiznos customers participate in just this kind of activity.... With the creation of the Quiznos Pro Challenge we aim to promote an active lifestyle while bringing an exciting new pro-cycling event to a growing audience of fans in the United States."

– Ellen Kramer, Chief Communications Officer, Quiznos.

When talking with prospective sponsors, use quotes like these to educate the company on the value cycling can provide in promoting their brand. Furthermore, if you find the company's demographic aligns with cycling's demographic, the proposition becomes even more compelling. Not only are you offering the company the potential of increasing the visibility of their brand, but you are also helping to increase awareness of their brand in a growing market segment—cycling!

Another point to stress is the relative value of sponsoring a cycling club, to increase brand visibility, awareness and sales, vs. other advertising and public relations mediums. The Reuters article "[Sponsors see value in backing cycling teams](#)," contrasts how sponsors can reap the rewards of increased brand awareness and reach for less of an investment, when compared with other sports, like Formula One or Soccer, for vastly less funding. However, the return on investment for sports marketing, dollar-for-dollar, is greater when considering the ratio of dollars:visibility, making cycling a much better value.

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So, how do you build effective quotes and references from existing sponsors, to demonstrate your club or teams value to prospective sponsors?

A few tips for developing quotes highlighting your value and success with existing sponsors include:

- The contact's name and position
- The company
- Collaborate with your sponsor in building a quote which captures why they sponsored your club, and the value they received. Potential examples of value statements can be: aligning their company, brand, products, marketing messages, market plans, etc... with cycling.

Here are a few I found online:

"The HTC High Road Sports partnership is a great match of like minded organizations driven by innovation, excellence and competitiveness and we are excited about the opportunity to communicate HTC's brand value through the great sport of cycling."

– Peter Chou, CEO, HTC

"...but I spoke with the president and he told me of his idea of entering cycling because it's a sport of great tradition, with a huge following and for people of all ages."

– Mauro Giannetti, on Geox sponsorship of his team

"On a marketing front, we like to align ourselves with ideas that fit with our culture, and cycling is a great fit. We also like the fact that cycling is very much an international sport as the BISSELL brand grows around the world. We also believe in supporting a healthy lifestyle."

– BISSELL

"To us, this is more than a logo on a jersey, it is a relationship that embodies the qualities that we as producers of the finest coffee in the world would like to foster – hard work and hard play... we believe that it is more important to stay healthy and active. We think it's important for your physical health and your mental health."

– Mountain Khaki's/Jittery Joe's Cycling Team

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- If possible, see if you can get the sponsor to provide some type of metric in their quote... anything related to increased sales, website or store traffic, product downloads, literature requests and leads, etc. quantifying the value sponsoring your cycling club delivers. [“Leveraging B2B to drive added value for your cycling club’s sponsors”](#) has some excellent examples from NASCAR corporate sponsors.
- **PLEASE – ALWAYS GET THE SPONSORS APPROVAL BEFORE PUBLISHING! MAKE SURE IT IS ACCURATE!**
- **ENSURE THE SPONSOR APPROVES WHERE, AND HOW, THEIR QUOTE WILL BE USED** – some companies do not necessarily want their quotes used in all forms of media. This might be for legal reasons or because of confidentiality. It is important to have clear direction on exactly how, and where, the quote can be used.

The possibilities for using quotes with prospective sponsors are endless! A few recommendations are as follows:

- Use quotes to stimulate interest with prospective sponsors during early stages of contact. This can include e-mail and letters.
- As you progress through the process with sponsors, use quotes in supporting documentation, during face-to-face meetings, or during presentations.
- Sponsorship proposals can include quotes to help illustrate A) that other companies find value in sponsoring your club, and B) help provide ideas of how prospective sponsor can achieve similar value.

For additional information describing the use of quotes and references with prospective sponsors, please refer to [“Using quotes and references with prospective sponsors”–Part I & II.](#)



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Highlight success with sponsors through reference stories

Reference stories are another excellent and effective method for demonstrating your cycling club's value to prospective sponsors.

Why? Because a reference story does just that – it tells a story, from the sponsor's point of view, describing the value they see in sponsoring your cycling club. Well-written reference stories can help you create credibility, and attract prospective sponsors by:

- Portraying real world examples describing why sponsoring your cycling club is a good business investment.
- Providing an endorsement for your cycling club. Think of a reference story as validation of the value your club delivered to a corporate sponsor.
- Building a foundation for discussions with prospective sponsors. You are giving examples of how your club delivered value, enabling you to explore how you could deliver value for them.

A few recommendations for structuring a solid, descriptive, reference story which highlights your value include the following:

Sponsor Name (you can optionally also include the industry)

Logo—check with your sponsor to make sure it is okay to use their logo

Sponsor overview—this is a SHORT, one- or- two sentence description of the sponsors business. Try to describe in a couple of sentences their business, products/services, primary market they serve (ex.—consumer electronics, cell phone service provider, luxury auto dealer)

URL—include a hyperlink to their website



Length of relationship with your club—how long the company has sponsored your club

Explanation of why the company sponsored your cycling club—explain, in the sponsor's words, why they sponsored your club.

A few examples you can draw from are:

- Aligning their brand and products with a sport promoting an active, healthy lifestyle.
- As a vehicle augmenting existing marketing activities.
- Increasing visibility of their products and brand in a specific market segment or geography.
- Using sponsorship to drive more traffic to their website, or into their store.
- Promoting positive public relations by supporting a club involved in an eco-friendly activity.
- Leveraging the importance of fitness, health and wellness, with their employees (See [Health and Wellness blog](#) entries).
- Driving more sales and market share.
- As an aid driving awareness of new products or services.

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Metrics—as with quotes, try to work with the sponsor in quantifying specific metrics that can be associated with sponsoring your club. A few examples are:

- Increases in sales by xx% or dollars
- Increase in website hits or store traffic by xx%.
- Increases in leads by xx%.
- Increases in downloads from the sponsors site by xx%.
- Increases in company and brand visibility by xx% (*example – many companies conduct surveys identifying how a client learned of them, or where they last saw their brand mentioned, or the clients perception of their product or company, etc).
- Increases in penetration rate of a particular market segment.

These are only a few of the many reasons companies sponsor cycling clubs.

***NOTE—PLEASE—ALWAYS GET THE SPONSORS APPROVAL BEFORE PUBLISHING A REFERENCE STORY! MAKE SURE IT IS ACCURATE! AND, AS MENTIONED WITH QUOTES, ENSURE THE SPONSOR APPROVES WHERE, AND HOW, THE REFERENCE STORY WILL BE USED.**

Lastly, as mentioned in [“Using quotes and references with prospective sponsors—Part II”](#), quotes and reference stories can be used in proposals, newsletters, on your social media sites, in your blogs and on-line communities, as attachments to introductory e-mail... the list goes on and on.

The beauty of having solid, descriptive, quote or reference story is that you can use them at anytime during the Sponsorship process to describe “why a company should consider sponsoring your cycling club?” They provide your cycling club with immediate credibility and value!





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Congratulations! You made it to the end of the book. Hopefully, you have found the information valuable, and can apply it to your cycling club's sponsorship efforts.

The key points to keep in mind as you engage prospective sponsors are:

- 1 Focus on why companies sponsor teams, clubs and individuals: to make money, to save money, and to project an intended image. Your club can help companies achieve these objectives through activities, community involvement, local and national initiatives, and communications. Sponsoring your club will enable a prospective sponsor to achieve their goals of:
 - Increasing visibility, awareness, sales and revenue,
 - Improving or changing their image, or promoting positive PR,
 - Increasing or improving customer retention and brand loyalty,
 - Augmenting existing sales and marketing campaigns, using an alternative vehicle for reaching their target audience.

- 2 Strive to differentiate your club from other organizations requesting sponsorship by making your messages and proposals clear and relevant. Always align the value of your club with the prospective sponsor's business goals and objectives. Demonstrate how sponsorship can help solve a sponsor's business problems (example—reaching a specific target market, aligning with an emerging segment or societal concern).
- 3 Use references and quotes to demonstrate the business value of cycling sponsorship. These can be from the professional peloton, or from your existing sponsors.

- 4 Leverage social media to research, identify and engage prospective sponsors.
- 5 Develop a comprehensive sponsorship plan for your club and prospective sponsors.
- 6 Customize your communications to the company or audience being addressed (prospecting script, sponsorship letter and proposals).
- 7 Be creative in your approach.
- 8 Follow up!
- 9 Work at it! It takes awhile to become comfortable and proficient with the process. Plus, not every company is going to invest in sponsorship. However, the more your club pursues sponsorship opportunities, and uses the process outlined in [Cycling Sponsorship 101](#), the more you increase your chances of success.
- 10 Ride!

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Lastly, in the Appendix you will find worksheets your club can use to develop messaging, scripts, sponsorship proposals and letters, and to manage discussions with prospective sponsors.

Implementing the process outlined in Cycling Sponsorship 101 should be beneficial in helping a club's efforts to secure more sponsors, secure a greater investment per sponsor, while building and maintaining stronger, long-term relationships with your sponsors!

Thank you so much for purchasing and reading Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship. If you have questions, or are interested in having a conversation specific to your cycling club's sponsorship efforts, please feel free to contact me through e-mail, al@sponsormycyclingclub.com, the [Sponsor My Cycling Club](#) blog, [Twitter](#) or [facebook](#).

Good Luck!

Al Brodie

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I have to take a moment to thank the many people who helped me either directly, or indirectly, create *Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship*. Without your help, motivation, guidance, or insight, this e-book simply doesn't happen.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife **Jean**, and my son **Eric**. Without your tireless support, willingness to fill in the gaps when I could not, and understanding of the time commitment to this endeavor, none of this happens. Thank you for your continued unconditional love, understanding, assistance and encouragement.

Special thanks to:

Daniel and Carrie Himel for introducing me to a whole new world, and providing me with the education, direction and guidance necessary to create a blog and e-book which could be a valuable resource for cycling clubs. Also, sincere thanks to Daniel for your expert tutelage and patience.

John Murawski for taking my content and making it into an e-book I can be proud of!

Dave Larson for introducing me to the sport of cycling and to Richardson Bike Mart!

Jim Hoyt, owner of Richardson Bike Mart, for selling me my very first road bike, and every single bike our family has purchased since, including my most recent hot rod!

Dr. Bruce Magill for encouraging me to always follow my dreams!

Gordon F. Snyder for providing your perspectives on the effective use of social media.

Jason Dobbs-Hyer for agreeing to be my guinea pig, spending countless hours on the phone reviewing the material, which eventually turned into an important part of this e-book! Our sessions made writing the book so much easier. You are a quick study and a real gentlemen!

And, last, but not least, thanks to all the friends I have met in 20 years of cycling. You were the inspiration for this e-book!

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I hope you enjoyed reading *Cycling Sponsorship 101: How to get cycling sponsorship as much as I enjoyed writing it*. I cannot possibly thank you enough for your continued support of the Sponsor My Cycling Club blog.

Hopefully, *Cycling Sponsorship 101* will serve as a good reference tool for your club as it develops its annual sponsorship campaigns and will help you secure many new corporate sponsors. I wish you success in your cycling sponsorship efforts.

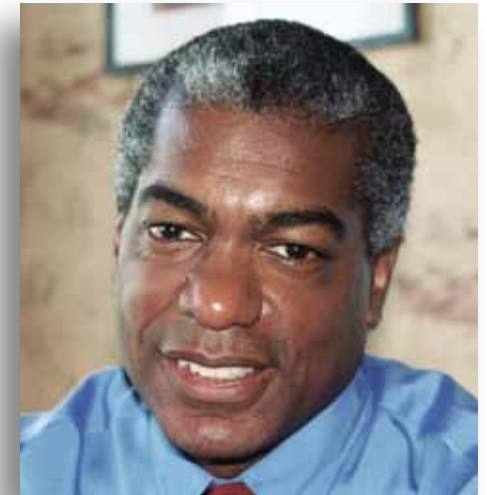
I would enjoy hearing your thoughts and comments on the e-book, as well as on my blog. As always, please feel free to leave a comment on my blog, or send an e-mail to al@sponsormycyclingclub.com.

Lastly, if you are not doing so already, and you find the information I provide valuable, please follow me on [Twitter](#), or become a [facebook](#) friend.

Thanks for reading, and remember, until next time, "Keep the rubber side down!" Maybe I'll see you on the road or trail soon.

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If you are interested in working with me please contact me through e-mail, al@sponsormycyclingclub.com, the Sponsor My Cycling Club blog, [Twitter](#) or [facebook](#).

I would be more than happy to talk with you about your club's sponsorship campaign. I have developed a variety of offerings to help your club effectively implement the process outlined in

[Cycling Sponsorship 101](#). The services range from a single (90) minute session with members of your club to multiple sessions including customized worksheets, templates, and detailed recommendations and action plans. Each service offering begins with a free consultation.

Sound interesting? Get in touch with me. I would be happy to learn about your club and its sponsorship campaign.





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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Cycling sponsorship value: Increase sales and revenue

Cycling sponsorship value: Increase/Improve customer retention and brand loyalty

Cycling sponsorship value: Improve/change image and promote positive PR

Cycling sponsorship value: Augment existing sales and marketing campaigns

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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase awareness and visibility

Reasons for sponsoring

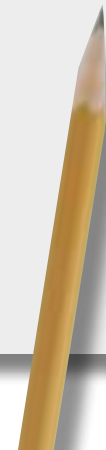
Increase awareness and visibility for their company, brand, products and/or services

*What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

- Increase traffic*
- Attract new customers and channel partners*
- Increase sales and revenue*
- Increase market share*
- Drive demand*
- Attract new channel partners to drive wider distribution = more sales*
- Penetrate new market segment, or increase penetration in an existing segment*
- Align with emerging social concerns (Ex: Health and Wellness)*

How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?



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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase sales and revenue

<i>Reason for sponsoring</i>	<i>What is the value of increased sales and revenue to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)</i>	<i>How does your club support the company's need for increased sales and revenue?</i>	<i>Why important to the prospective sponsor?</i>
<i>Increase sales and revenue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Profitability</i><i>• Stock holder share and equity</i><i>• Increase market share; become market leader</i><i>• Become dominant in segment</i><i>• Improve competitive position</i><i>• Increase market share</i><i>• Drive greater demand</i><i>• Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales</i>		



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Cycling sponsorship value: Increase/Improve customer retention and brand loyalty

Reason for sponsoring

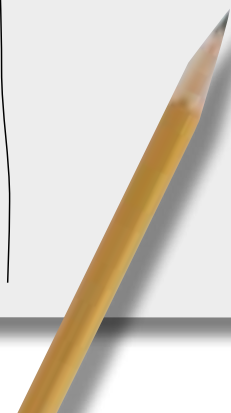
*Increase/
Improve
Customer
Retention and
Brand Loyalty*

*What is the value of increased customer retention and brand loyalty? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

- *Increased sales and revenue*
- *Increased market share*
- *Increase cross-sell; upsell opportunities with clients; which can drive additional revenue*
- *Stock holder share and equity*
- *Become dominant in segment*
- *Improve competitive position*
- *Drive greater demand*
- *Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales*

How does your club support a companies desire to increase customer retention and brand loyalty?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?



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Cycling sponsorship value: Improve/change image and promote positive PR

Reason for sponsoring

Improve /change image and promote positive PR -

- What they stand for?*
- What they believe in?*
- Social consciousness?*
- With new segment?*
- Actions/support speaks louder than advertising- shows they care about a cause- NFL Play60 ex.*

*What is the value of improving/ changing image and promoting positive PR? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

• Image impacts buyer perception, which can impact sales, revenue, market share

• Helps to define the company, brand, products and/or services

• Provide differentiation from competitors in space with target customers

*• Leadership
-Demonstrates social responsibility and consciousness by supporting societal concerns*

• Increase sales and revenue

• Increase market share

• Drive greater demand

• Attract new channel partners; wider distribution = even more sales

How does your club support a company's need to improve or change image and promote positive PR?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?



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Cycling sponsorship value: Augment existing sales and marketing campaigns

Reasons for sponsoring

Augment existing sales and marketing campaigns

*What is the value of increased visibility to a company? (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

• Get messages out using other vehicles

• Ability to easily target segments and niches to drive visibility, awareness, brand recognition, sales, revenue, share

• Can help reduce expenses for advertising budgets; or, help when budgets have been cut or reduced

• Can provide a good ROI vs. traditional advertising

How does your club support a company's need for increased awareness and visibility?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?



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Cycling sponsorship value: Target/Expand into new market segments and niches

Reasons for sponsoring

Vehicle to target/expand into new market segments and niches; or to augment efforts in existing

*What is the value of using sponsorship as a vehicle to target/expand into new market segments and niches; or to augment efforts in existing (*MUST be from the company's perspective!)*

- Easily reach targeted segments by aligning with an activity/sport*
- Demonstrate social responsibility and consciousness by aligning with emerging social issues. Goes to positive image and PR*
- Lower cost; good ROI*
- Ability to easily target segments and niches to drive visibility, awareness, brand recognition, sales, revenue, and market share*
- Can help reduce expenses for advertising budgets; or, help when budgets have been cut or reduced*

How does your club support a company's need to expand into new market segments or niches?

Why important to the prospective sponsor?

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Cycling sponsorship value worksheet

Goal

Objectives

Your Value Proposition

Increase visibility and awareness for company, brand, products and services

Increase sales, revenue, and market share

Increase customer and brand loyalty

Improve/change image and promote Positive PR

Augment existing marketing campaigns

Target/expand into new market segments and niches



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Cycling sponsorship prospecting script worksheet

Introduction

Your name:

Club name:

Location:

Years in existence:

What do you and why:

Where:

Middle

Your club's value to prospective sponsor:

Value of cycling sponsorship:

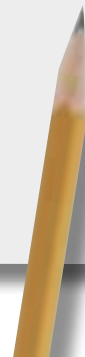
Value your club provides existing sponsors:

Goals and objectives your club can impact:

Why you're contacting them:

Closing/Call to action

Suggested next step(s)



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Executive responsibility and concerns

<i>Job Title</i>	<i>Concerns/Issues</i>	<i>"Your club's value statement"</i>
<i>CEO/President</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Increased competition</i><i>• Inability to address new market opportunities</i><i>• Eroding market share and profitability</i>	
<i>CFO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Increased costs and expenses</i><i>• Increasing profitability, ROI</i>	
<i>VP Sales and Marketing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Ability to deliver new products and services</i><i>• Ability to respond to market changes or competitors</i><i>• Customer satisfaction</i><i>• Name and Brand Recognition</i><i>• Sell more of our stuff! Through MANY channels</i>	
<i>VP Customer Service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Increase customer satisfaction</i><i>• Decrease customer churn</i><i>• "How responsive are we?"</i>	
<i>VP Business Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Address new market opportunities</i><i>• Develop/deliver competitive offerings</i><i>• "Are we responsive to market changes or competition?" "How can we become more responsive?"</i>	
<i>VP Product Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Develop new products and services which will sell</i><i>• Get new products and services out the door in a timely fashion.</i><i>• Capitalize on market needs/desires.</i>	



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Want to continue the conversation?

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Prospective sponsor contact information worksheet

Potential contact by department

Contact name and title

E-mail, blog, and social media contact information

Executive Officers

- Chief Executive Officer
- President
- Founder, Co-Founder, Owner
- Managing Partner
- General Manager, Managing Director
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Marketing Officer

Marketing, Marketing and Communications, Sports Marketing, Sales, Public Relations, Advertising

- Chief Marketing Officer
- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Director, Manager of:
 - Marketing, Corporate Marketing, Marketing and Communications
 - Marketing Alliances, Marketing Services
 - Sports Marketing, Partner Marketing
 - Strategy, Marketing Strategy
 - Sales, Corporate Sales, Channel Sales, Integrated Sales
 - Public Relations
 - Advertising, Corporate Advertising
 - Business Development, Channel Development, Partner Development

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Prospective sponsor contact information worksheet (Continued)

Potential contact by department

Contact name and title

*E-mail, blog, and social media
contact information*

Sponsorship, Sponsorship Marketing

- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Group Manager, Director or Manager of:*
 - Sponsorship and Corporate Sales*
 - Media and Sponsorship*
 - Sports Sponsorship*

Partnership, Alliances, Community Service, Community Outreach, Community Relations

- Executive Vice President, Vice President, Group Manager, Director, Manager, Coordinator of:*
 - Corporate Alliances, Strategic Alliances, Channel Alliances*
 - Special Events*



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Cycling sponsorship letter worksheet

Opening paragraph

Your name:

Club name:

Why contacting

Key points about prospective sponsors:

- Industry*
- Company*
- Product/services*
- Market*
- Goals or objectives*

Second paragraph (body)

Value statement (Why they should care?)

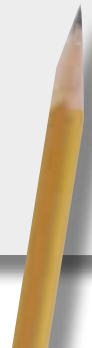
- Value of cycling sponsorship:*
- Value your club provides existing sponsors:*
- Reasons your club can help prospective sponsor achieve goals and objectives:*

Closing paragraph

What is your club proposing?:

Suggested next steps):

Thank them for their time



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Cycling sponsorship proposal and letter planning worksheet: "Make Money"

"Make Money"

*Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Increase visibility and awareness, sales, revenue,
market share, customer retention and brand loyalty*

Sponsorship delivers:

*Greater exposure -seen by participants,
spectators, citizens, and a club's other sponsors!*

Visibility w/:

- Other sponsors can facilitate B2B relationships = more business*
- New channels; new audience; potentially widening exposure of company, brand and products.*
- Target market or targeted segment which can lead to increased interest, traffic, sales, revenue, and market share*
- Wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or recognition w/new audience*

Visibility drives awareness; awareness drives interest; interest drives traffic, leading to increased sales!

*How can your club help sponsors
"Make Money"?*



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Cycling sponsorship proposal and letter planning worksheet: "Save Money"

"Save Money"

*Use sponsorship as a vehicle to-
Augment existing Marketing, Advertising and
PR campaigns*

Sponsorship delivers:

**Another vehicle for getting their "message" out!
Augments existing marketing and advertising
campaigns.*

**A way to reach new channels; new audience;
potentially widening exposure of company, brand
and products*

**A less expensive alternative when compared
to traditional marketing, advertising and public
relations mediums*

**ROI which can contribute to profitability*

*How can your club help sponsors
"Save Money"?*



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Cycling sponsorship proposal and letter planning worksheet: "Promote Intended Image"

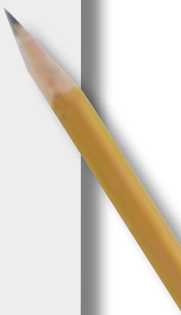
"Promote Intended Image"

Use sponsorship as a vehicle to: Improve/Change image, promote positive PR, customer retention and brand loyalty

Sponsorship enables:

- Positive image and PR! Impacts brand loyalty and interest.*
- A way to align with emerging societal concerns as Health & Wellness, Healthy Lifestyles, Transportation concerns, Ecological concerns (promoting positive PR; bolstering image). This can lead to increased awareness, which drives recognition and interest, which could drive increased traffic and/or sales and revenue.*
- Positive PR by partnering with an organization serving the "greater good" by helping others - i.e., Community Service, Community and Local Initiatives, Fund Raising, Support of Charitable Causes*
- An opportunity to align with a club involved in helping promote alternative transportation and safety. Helps the environment and constituency. Promotes positive PR for the sponsor.*
- Additional visibility with a wider audience. Might reinforce loyalty of those that know the company and brand, or provide recognition with new audience resulting in increased awareness, interest; traffic, and increased sales!*

How can your club help sponsors "promote their intended image"?



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Prospective cycling sponsor information and messaging worksheet

Company name:

Industry name:

Business:

Their goals and objectives

(or, use generic goals and objectives for their industry and similar companies?):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Potential value of sponsorship? (From their perspective)

How your cycling club can support their goals and objectives?:

Why they should care?:

References?

(Who has your club worked with before? What is the value they achieved?):



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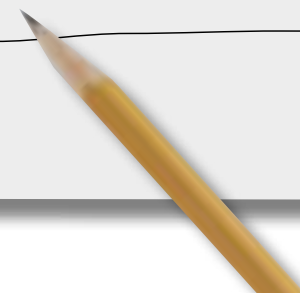
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Prospective sponsor tracking worksheet

<i>Company name</i>	<i>Contact name/title</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Estimated date for signed contract</i>	<i>Next step</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Coampany 1</i>					
<i>Coampany 2</i>					
<i>Coampany 3</i>					
<i>Coampany 4</i>					
<i>Coampany 5</i>					
<i>Coampany 6</i>					





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