CREATED FOR rYA NORTHERN IRELAND

The Athlete Brand & Sponsorship program

workbook #5

Presented by the brand builders

**INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM**

Welcome to the RYA Athlete Brand and Sponsorship Program, presented by The Brand Builders.

This program will teach you how to build your unique brand and leverage it for social media and sponsorship opportunities.

You will take part in five online sessions between February – May of 2024. Each session will cover a different topic and equip you with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to bring your brand to life.

All workbooks, session recordings and updates to the program will be posted on the Program Hub which you can access [HERE.](https://www.thebrandbuilders.com.au/rya-northern-ireland-program-page/)

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Session** | **Date**  | **Zoom Link** |
| #1 Build Your Brand | Wed 07 Feb7.30 – 8.30pm | https://zoom.us/j/5806507910 |
| #2 Communicate Your Brand on Social Media | Wed 28 Feb7.30 – 8.30pm | https://zoom.us/j/5806507910 |
| #3 Creating Content for Social Media | Wed 20 March7.30 – 8.30pm | https://zoom.us/j/5806507910 |
| #4 Sponsorship (Part 1) | Wed 10 April7.30 – 8.30pm | https://zoom.us/j/2206846834 |
| #5 Sponsorship (Part 2) | Wed 01 May7.30 – 8.30pm | https://zoom.us/j/2206846834 |

## Introduction to session #5: Sponsorship part 2

It’s time to get sponsorship ready!

**During this session you will learn:**

* How to identify what you want and need from sponsors
* Identify what you can offer sponsors
* Create a list of potential sponsors
* Choose a target sponsor to approach

In this session you will complete some practical activities to get you ready to approach a target sponsor! All activities can be found and completed in your workbook. Please keep it handy during the session.

**What’s in this workbook:**

You will find the following resources in this workbook:

**Activity #1** Create Your Sponsorship Snapshot

**Activity #2** Pitch to Potential Sponsors

**Activity #3** How to Contact Sponsors

**Activity #4** Email Template to Send to Potential Sponsors

**Activity #5** Sponsorship Meeting Practise

**Activity #6** Sponsorship Agreement

## ACTIVITY #1 CREATE YOUR SPONSORSHIP SNAPSHOT

Use the Athlete Snapshot Template provide to complete this activity.

You can also create your own design in Canva or other software/platforms but try to keep to the structure and content and not be tempted to try and write loads of information. We want to keep it short, to the point and a document that the potential sponsor will enjoy reading from start to finish!

**ACTIVITY #2 (POST PROGRAM) PITCH TO POTENTIAL SPONSORS**

**Pitch to Your Potential Sponsors**

Now that you’ve completed the educational part of this process, it’s time to go and approach your first potential sponsor!

**The Simple and Effective Process**

1. Prepare your Snapshot
2. Make Contact - and introduce yourself/that you want to discuss sponsorship with them
3. Send Snapshot via email & Arrange meeting
4. Complete the Sponsor Profile template - to get to know more about the business
5. Attend Meeting – discuss their business and the snapshot you’ve created
6. Send Proposal – this is a specific offer and request
7. Negotiate
8. Sign off on Agreement

**We have provided some useful guides and tip sheets to help you through this process over the next few pages:**

* How to Contact Sponsors
* Email templates to send to potential sponsors
* Sponsorship Snapshot Template
* Sponsorship Meeting Practise
* Sponsorship Agreement

## Step-by-step guide to approach and engage sponsors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **STEP** | **ACTIVITY** | **RESOURCES** |
| **1** | **CREATE YOUR SNAPSHOT*** Make a copy of your Snapshot
* Add your information to Snapshot
* Add 2-3 Categories and 3-5 items in each category of what you can offer
 | * Sponsorship Snapshot
* Workbook 4
 |
| **2** | **APPROACH YOUR TARGET SPONSOR*** Make initial contact (intro, phone or message on LinkedIn)
* Send email with Snapshot and ask for a meeting
 | * Initial Contact With Sponsor
* Email Template
 |
| **3** | **MEET WITH TARGET SPONSOR*** Practise with a friend first using Guide
* Attend in person or online
* Take printed copies if in person or
* Share on screen during online meeting
* Use the Snapshot as your focal discussion to find out what they might be looking for
 | * Meeting Practise Guide
 |
| **4** | **TRANSFORM YOUR SNAPSHOT INTO A PROPOSAL*** Use the instructions in the original template to adjust Snapshot to become a proposal.
* Add specific Offer and Request
* Send to sponsor and offer to meet and discuss
 | * Sponsorship Snapshot
 |
| **5** | **NEGOTIATE AND SIGN AN AGREEMENT*** Once you are both happy with what’s been agreed to it’s time to add the offer and request into the Agreement and sign.
 | * Athlete Sponsorship Agreement
* Price List
 |
| **6** | **OPTIONAL (BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED) ACTIONS*** CELEBRATE! Congratulate yourself on not just getting a new sponsor but on taking the action!
* Also, when you’re ready, you can follow the process you’ve learned to gain more sponsors!
 |  |

## hOW TO CONTACT SPONSORS

These instructions are going to help you identify WHO to contact and HOW to make that initial contact!

First and foremost….IF you can get an introduction from a friend/family member etc, that is the best way to get your foot in the door to speaking with the right person.

That’s not always, possible, and so we’ve mapped out how you can go from having zero connection with a potential sponsor, to getting in touch with them about your sponsorship offer/request!

With the lean towards modern forms of communication such as DM’s, emails, and WhatsApp messaging, the old fashioned phone call often gets forgotten (or avoided to be more accurate!).

In this activity you will gain an understanding of the benefits of picking up the phone….and how to do it in a way that is effective and as stress-free as possible!

The most important thing is your attitude, and it should be one of positivity and knowing that there is an abundance of sponsorship available…….and each phone call is bringing you one step closer to it!

You won’t be sealing the deal with these phone calls, in fact you won’t even be discussing much about your sponsorship request or what you’re offering in return….this is really just a continuation of the ‘fact finding process’ that you’ve been doing since you started this programme!

The added benefits for you is not only will you gain more knowledge of your potential sponsors, but you will also make that first, important connection with them….and in a way that so many athletes fail to do!

**WHO TO CONTACT**

This is a really common question, and there isn’t a single answer……here are some of the TYPES of people you will be wanting to contact to approach for sponsorship:

For large organisations: Marketing Manager, Sponsorship Manager, Community Engagement Manager, and sometimes people who work in Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, and even Human Resources.

For smaller businesses: In addition to Marketing Manager or Sponsorship Manager, you may find that the Business Owner, Executive Assistant, Office Manager or Business Manager are responsible for athlete sponsorship.

**HOW TO GET THE RIGHT NAME & CONTACT DETAILS**

There are a few ways to find out the RIGHT person to speak to and their contact details, here are the WAYS you can find out these all important details:

**ASK**

* Use LinkedIn and their website to find out who you might need to speak with….it may not be 100% clear straight away, but don’t worry…..you’ll get there!
* Phone reception of the company and ask WHO you should speak to and if they are able to put you through OR give you their direct email address
* Ask your friends / contacts for the correct persons name and contact details
* Ask athletes who are already sponsored by this company for the contact details

**EVENTS**

Ideally when you attend any event from now on you are networking…..networking doesn’t mean trying to pick up sponsors, it means having good conversations with people, asking them about themselves and getting their contact details if you think there may be some potential in the future either because they are well connected or they are potentially a sponsor!

Never ever ask someone to sponsor you the first time you meet them!

* Take the time to find out about THEM
* Ask for their contact details
* Follow up with a polite email or text saying how nice it was to meet them.
* Then when the time comes to approach potential sponsors you will now either be calling them to speak about sponsorship with them/their company or to ask for them to connect you with someone else!

**FACEBOOK**

* Send a message on the company Facebook page
* Look at posts and see if there is any indication of the right contact’s name/details

**GOOGLE**

* Go on Google and search things like “<COMPANY NAME> sponsorship manager (or marketing manager, or sponsorship contact, etc)
* Search for “<COMPANY NAME> athlete sponsorship” or “sponsored by <COMPANY NAME>”…..sometimes you’ll see a media article, or a press release and there will be contact details on there.

**LINKEDIN**

Search for “<COMPANY NAME> Marketing” or “<COMPANY NAME> Sponsorship”

For smaller companies: Search for the Company name and then look at their employee list (this is better for smaller companies)

For larger companies: Search for the Company name, then using the menu on the left hand side, use the filters to narrow down the search criteria so that you are looking in a particular REGION i.e. your local country or city, JOB TYPE i.e. marketing etc

**GETTING THE CONTACT DETAILS**

Once you know the person’s name now it’s time to get their contact details if you haven’t already……

So, ask….ask the receptionist or via your Facebook message or contacts you already have.

On LinkedIn, request to connect with this person (HINT\*\* when you do this from the mobile phone app it generally connects you with everyone, whereas desktop you often have to provide an email address…..strange but true!).

**MAKING INITIAL CONTACT**

At the very least you should get a phone number for reception and be able to ask to be put through to the person (you know their name and title by this stage!).

The thing is, at this point it may feel like an easier option just to shoot the person an email or text message, but where at all possible FACE to FACE, or on the PHONE is your best starting point!

This will put you ahead of so many athletes who go for the easier option of just sending an email!

How to make that first phonecall to your potential sponsor!

**WHY SHOULD I PICK UP THE PHONE?**

The most important thing to remember is this is not a sales pitch. You are not selling anything, nor are you trying to convince them to sponsor you (not just yet!).

Your purpose for calling is simple; gaining information. Your main 3 reasons for the call are:

* To confirm you have the right contact details (for when it comes time to send the proposal through)
* To introduce yourself and let them know you exist!
* To ask a couple of questions (things you may not have been able to ascertain through your internet searching.
* To check that they are happy to receive a sponsorship proposal from you….and to let them know that they can expect to receive it soon

**WHY IS IT SO DAUNTING TO PICK UP THE PHONE?**

For many athletes, picking up the phone to call a person they don’t know is a daunting task. Even if it’s a personal referral from a friend, or someone you’ve met before. So, you’re not alone…..nearly everyone gets nervous! But that’s ok!

So what are some of the common objections athletes have to making these phone calls?

1. They aren’t confident in themselves and are worried they will come across sounding silly
2. They are worried they will ruin the deal before they send their proposals
3. They don t know what to say.
4. They don’t really value themselves as a great investment for their sponsors and therefore lack confidence in making initial contact
5. They are uncomfortable talking on the phone; they prefer face-to-face meetings…..or sending an email!

**HERE’S SOME FACTS TO GET YOU STARTED**

You are ahead of the game each time you pick up the phone! You will be one of the few athletes who actually calls rather than just firing off an email!

* Everyone gets nervous picking up the phone to speak to someone for the first time! Just remember…..they are just people, and while the company might be a big organisation, it’s still just one individual who you are speaking too.
* It’s ok to be nervous. Just like in your sport…being nervous shows that you actually care about the outcome. Use this nervous ENERGY and harness it. As you feel those nerves…in your stomach, in your fingertips, in your tightened breathing….just say to yourself “It’s because I care….it’s good to feel this!”
* You’re laying the foundations for an effective partnership. You’re demonstrating to your prospective sponsors that you take initiative, that you’re not scared of picking up the phone, that you really value them and are willing to step outside of your comfort zone to make things happen!
* You’re creating rapport. When they receive your emailed proposal, they can put a voice to the name, and they will already have a sense of connection, no matter how small, with you. As humans, we can’t help but pay a little more attention to a proposal when we have some sense of familiarity with the sender.

**IT’S ALL IN YOUR MIND**

1. FEAR It comes in the form of a knotted stomach, sweaty palms, shortness of breath or fuzzy thinking….it’s a human instinct and leads us away from danger! There’s nothing wrong with fear, and it can serve us well at times…..but all too often it can hold us back from doing something that is actually going to be incredibly beneficial for us. By trusting the process of this sponsorship programme you will allow yourself to face some fears and take the necessary actions to engage the sponsorship that you want!

Solution: Accept the fear. Accept that you’re nervous, that you’re scared of rejection, or of sounding foolish (which you won’t!). Accept that you may feel uncomfortable, but understand that you are not alone in this feeling but your actions will stand you ahead of the game!

1. MINDSET. Your fear may be telling you all kinds of wild stories – you're not good enough, you have nothing to say, they'll laugh at you, they'll say no, etc. etc. Do you hear any of this kind of talking?

Solution: If so, you need to outwit that voice and become clearer about the value of your sponsorship opportunity. And you need to change your mindset from beggar to partner. You're not begging for dollars. Your intention should be to enthusiastically let potential sponsors know that you intend to offer them a great proposal…..and all your doing in this call is getting a bit more information so you can really hit the spot with your proposal!

1. ACTION Yes, the old Nike slogan ‘Just Do It’ is your mantra, even if you’re going for a Reebok sponsorship! Feel the fear and do it anyway because if you don’t, you are reducing the effectiveness of your sponsorship pitch!

Solution: Set aside time first thing in the day, get relaxed and comfortable, smile, and make your calls. They shouldn't be cold calls, and therefore the person should be at least neutral to hear from you. No more excuses. Just make the calls.

**HAVE A SCRIPT**

By writing down what you want to say you will feel more confident. It is best not to read from the script, rather, you should use it as a guide, which you can refer to during the call.

When you finish reading this you can use the Step 9 Initial Contact With Sponsors Worksheet to create your SCRIPT……what are you going to say….what are you going to ask….write it down neatly and clearly.

**HOW TO CONTACT THE RIGHT PERSON**

In some cases you will be calling the Marketing / Sponsorship Manager directly, other times you will know their name but may not have their direct line so will need to speak with a receptionist or other contact within the business.

If you do not have the direct phone number, your goal for the call is to be transferred to the Marketing / Sponsorship Manager (or whoever makes decisions regarding sponsorship or marketing activities), or at the very least leave a message for them to call you.

Ideally you will speak directly to the person to whom you will submit your proposal to, but in some cases it feels impossible to get past the ‘guard at the gate’ aka the receptionist! If this is the case, perhaps try a little more investigation on the internet, see if you get a mutual contact on LinkedIn to connect you, or just get a little ‘creative’ and call someone else (other than the receptionist) within the company!

If, and this is a last resort, all you can do is get an email passed on to the ‘correct contact person’ then you can send an email asking to arrange a quick chat on the phone!

NOTE: *Be prepared to follow up if you are leaving a message on a voicemail, or having a message passed on from the receptionist…give it a couple of days and call again. Be friendly, polite and keep the tone light!*

**HOW TO SPEAK**

Speak clearly, and be friendly…..just be yourself! If you try to speak using words you wouldn’t normally use you won’t sound natural and you’ll feel uncomfortable……so, just smile, take a deep breath and speak with confidence!

You have every right to be making the call!

Some people will be warm and friendly, others may sound rushed (they might be really busy!!) and others may not give much away…..remember, they are all just PEOPLE like you and me, just doing their job and we can’t take it personally if they are choosing to speak or be a certain way when we call! (Most people are really nice….so don’t worry!).

**HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE FOR CALLING**

Be clear on why you are calling and stick to that. Try not to get into any detailed discussions about what you MAY be asking for or offering in return.

YOU ARE CALLING JUST TO MAKE INITIAL CONTACT AND TO ASK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR OUT OF SPONSORSHIP (you will be filling in your Sponsor Profile document with the information they provide).

If they are keen to discuss your sponsorship in more detail, see if you can arrange another time to chat so that you can have some more time to prepare…..but make sure you ask a couple of questions (this will help you prepare for the next chat!).

It may be that prior to sending a proposal (or even in place of on some occasions) the potential sponsor may want to have a more in-depth discussion with you, in which case you should be armed with all the content that would otherwise be contained in a sponsorship proposal.

**WHAT IF THEY TELL ME THEY’RE NOT INTERESTED?**

If they say they are not currently looking for an athlete to sponsor it may be an opportunity for you to ask if they would still consider your proposal, or it may be a clear message from them that your proposal will not be considered. Thank them for being upfront with you, it’s actually done you a favour as you can now pursue another, more suitable sponsor.

Perhaps pose the question, “Will there be a time in the future where you may consider receiving a proposal from me”, or, “Would it be alright with you if I got in contact at a later date to see if your position has changed”.

You don’t want to come across as pushy or desperate, but it certainly doesn’t hurt to ask; a ‘No’ today does not mean a ‘No’ forever! Situations change, marketing objectives change, and sometimes it’s as simple as a new person taking over the marketing/sponsorship manager role and they have a different view on which athletes the company should be sponsoring.

**THE TOP 5**

Here are the 5 tips that combine everything you’ve just read into a pre-call checklist:

1. Take 3 slow, deep breaths before you dial. Tell yourself ‘Nerves are good, it means I care’.
2. Have a script (don’t follow it to the letter, but use it as a guide)
3. Have a clear purpose for calling i.e confirming contact details and 2-3 specific questions
4. Try not to get into a discussion about specifics of your sponsorship
5. Remember to say a sincere Thank You at the end of the call!

**THE BOTTOMLINE**

If you don’t pick up the phone you are missing out on the chance to connect with your potential sponsors in a way that may just set you apart from other athletes who approach them for sponsorship.

You are endearing yourself to them and demonstrating your ability to take initiative, take action and communicate effectively.

The fact is, if you are serious about engaging sponsorship, you will make these phone calls, even if you’re nervous, knowing that you’re taking all the right actions to create the opportunities that will change your life.

**EMAIL TEMPLATES TO SPONSORS**

Use these templates to send your email to a potential sponsor or a contact (friend, family, colleague etc) who can connect you with a potential sponsor:

**EMAIL #1 – To a contact who might be able to connect you with a sponsor/s**

\*Attach the generic snapshot for these emails

Dear <name>,

I hope you’re well, <write something personal here e.g. and that your family/sport/business etc is going great this year>

I’m just beginning to explore sponsorship for myself as an elite athlete who represents Australia on the world stage.

I’m reaching out to you as I was hoping you might be able to introduce us to potential sponsors….and I’d be so grateful if you were able to assist me in this!

Sponsorship is something that really excites me and I know I can be of great value to my sponsors.

In the attached Sponsorship Snapshot you can see some of the ways I can bring value to a business who sponsors me including x, y, x (choose up to 3 great things you can offer)

The snapshot isn’t a proposal, more a way to introduce myself and show you some of the ways I offer value.

Please let me know if you’d like to chat with me, or if there are businesses you think could be interested in sponsoring me then I’d love an introduction if you feel comfortable doing that!

<Sign off>

**EMAIL #2 – To a potential sponsor**

\*Attach the tailored snapshot for these emails

Dear <name>,

I hope you’re well, and thanks for taking a moment to read this email.

<If you know them maybe write a short personal comment e.g. I hope you and your kids are enjoying the summer holidays).

(FEEL FREE TO RE WRITE THIS, especially if they know you…you may start with, ‘As you know’ or ‘as you may know’) I am an elite athlete (say what sport and level e.g. representing Australia), and just beginning to explore sponsorship for myself.

Sponsorship is something that really excites me and we know I can be of great value to my sponsors.

I’ve attached Sponsorship Snapshot …it isn’t a proposal, just a way to introduce myself and show you some of the ways I could bring value to <BUSINESS>. If it piques your interest, then I’d love the opportunity to meet with you to explore a potential sponsorship together!

<Sign off>

**SPONSOR MEETING SCRIPT**

Use these suggested questions to *start* a sponsor-athlete meeting! And then keep going from there. Make sure you introduce yourself first.

If you are playing the sponsor please choose one of these business as the one you are representing:

1. Sports Store
2. Healthy Café and Juice Bar
3. Casual Fashion Brand

And let’s pretend you are the business owner!

If you are playing the athlete, please just be yourself.

**SPONSOR QUESTIONS**

1. How are you? What has your day been like? Ask about something specific to their sport e.g. do you have any competitions coming up soon?
2. Why is sponsorship important for you?
3. What are your goals? In sponsorship/as an athlete?

**ATHLETE QUESTIONS**

1. Could I please take you through my Sponsorship Snapshot?
* I’ll be leaving this with you but I wanted to show you what is included:
* Briefly tell them that there’s a profile of you, a description of your approach to sponsorship
* Then specifically talk to them about the list on Page 3. Ask the ‘sponsor’ which 3-5 areas are of most interest to their business, and explain that this will then help you go and create a tailored proposal for them that includes ways that you can really add value to their business.
1. Then thank them for their time and say you’ll be sending a sponsorship proposal for them soon (say a week!).

**SPONSORSHIP AGREMENT TEMPLATE**

**SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_DD/MM/YYYY\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

BETWEEN: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Sponsor)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Athlete)

TERMS OF AGREEMENT:

1. The sponsorship will be for the period of dd/mm/yyyy until dd/mm/yyyy.
2. The Sponsor agrees to provide:
* 12 month sponsorship (as per page 3 of this document)
1. The Athlete agrees to grant the sponsor the following sponsorship benefits:
* Required actions and activities as per page 4 of this document
1. It is agreed that at the time of renegotiation, the Athlete will automatically invite the sponsor to renegotiate the agreement.
2. The Athlete is not to engage in conduct which brings or would be likely to bring him/her or the Sponsor into disrepute.
3. The Athlete will not accept sponsorship or endorse any business practices of a similar nature to Sponsor.
4. The Athlete must inform Sponsor of plans to engage additional sponsors.
5. In the event of a dispute arising that the parties themselves cannot resolve, the parties agree to refer the matter to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.
6. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator, or both parties do not agree with the decision of the arbitrator appointed, the agreement may be terminated in the following manner:

a) If the breach is one that can be rectified, then the non-breaching party can request in writing that the breach be rectified in 14 days. If the breach is not rectified within that time, the non-breaching party may terminate the Agreement immediately;

b) If the breach is one that cannot be rectified, the non-breaching party may terminate the Agreement by giving 14 days written notice of their intention to terminate.

c) If either party goes into liquidation, is wound up, dissolved (except for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation), enters into a scheme of arrangement or is placed under official management or in receivership, the other party may terminate the Agreement by giving 14 days written notice of their intention to terminate under the clause.

d) In the event of a termination under this Agreement, each party’s rights and liabilities will cease immediately but the termination shall not affect a party’s rights arising out of a breach of this agreement by the other party.

1. Where one party is unable to carry out its obligations under this agreement due to circumstances beyond its control or which it could not have prevented, those obligations are suspended whilst those circumstances continue, provided the other party is notified and the first party uses its best endeavours to overcome the circumstances preventing its obligations from being carried out.
2. Each party shall indemnify the other against any claims arising from any breach of the agreement by either party.
3. The terms and conditions of this agreement shall not be disclosed to any third parties without the prior written consent of both parties.

# SPONSORSHIP INCLUSIONS

This is the full list of sponsorship included within this 12 month contract.

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| What You Are Providing | **AMOUNT /FREQUENCY** |
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# MY OFFER AND ACTIONS

Throughout the 12 month contract period I will complete the following activities (at a minimum).

This will be used as my KPI list, and allows us both to keep track of completed activities

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| **ATHLETE ACTIONS** | **Frequency** | **Delivered** |
| Action | Details |  |  |
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Signed:

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| The Sponsor |  | The Athlete |
| Company |  | Name |
|  |  |  |
| Title |  | Date |
|  |  |
| Date |  |