Bowls Queensland

Sponsorship Handbook

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Introduction

The aim of this handbook is to assist clubs in how to go about securing sponsorship not only for the club or team, but for special events and tournaments.

The booklet will give an insight into what benefits sponsorship has for the club, how to approach a potential sponsor and the rewards of a sponsorship for a potential business sponsoring your club. There are also some model layouts of sponsorship proposals.

One of the first things clubs have to realise is that it's just not a sponsorship, it's a partnership. It's a mutual agreement between two bodies that will both benefit from the experience.

What is a Sponsorship/Partnership?

A Sponsorship/Partnership is when a business or organisation provides funds, resources or services to a club, in return for some form of rights and/or associations with the club that may benefit the business or organisation commercially. Examples could be:

- Logo on shirt
- Signs surrounding the greens
- Free advertising in club newsletter

Remember – donations are different to sponsorships. Businesses or individuals do not expect anything in return for their donation.

For a club to gain sponsorship it will go a long way towards securing financial stability and at the same time reaching out to the community and promoting the club. Businesses like to be associated with sports clubs and players especially at a local level. It helps build their reputation within the community, generates goodwill and can be considered as a cost-effective alternative to traditional advertising.

Making the decision

Before involving your club in sponsorship/partnership some questions have to be asked:

What are the benefits your club can offer a sponsor/partner? There are many reasons why businesses sponsor clubs, here are some examples:

- Improved image
- Increased sales
- Competitive advantage
- Increased awareness
- Ability to lock out a competitor
- Change in consumer attitude

Do you have the appropriate resources? If you promise to deliver a number of rights and benefits to a sponsor/partner, there needs to be time and members or volunteers to help carry these out.

Getting Started

The committee should elect someone to handle all the sponsorship duties, it could be somebody on the committee. It

could be a member of the club who's willing to give up his time and may have experience in this area. The key points in getting started are:

- Member support – discuss sponsorship/partnership proposals with your members. If a partnership is to work it needs to have the backing of your members, staff, board and committees.
- Enough resources – writing sponsorship proposals and contacting businesses can be time consuming. Make sure you have the time and people willing to help.
- Allow sufficient lead-time – depending on what you are asking for, the assessment, negotiation and planning involved to successfully manage a sponsorship/partnership takes substantial time.
- Stand out from the clutter – tailor your proposal by acquiring background information on the potential sponsor's desired image, products, services and business objectives.
- Price yourself competitively – find out what similar sponsorships are selling for. Before signing, a potential sponsor will independently put a value on your proposal. If your offer is cost effective or unique – you are in the running. Make sure you are making a profit.
- Target the correct person – address it to the right person. If you are unsure, phone the company and ask them who looks after sponsorship deals. Confirm the address details while you're on the phone.

Other questions that need to be asked are:

- Who should I ask?

- What kind of offer should I make?
- How does the paperwork need to be done?

These questions will be covered later on in the booklet.

Benefits to the club

Gaining club sponsors is one of the best ways to support your club financially and have your club recognised throughout the community. It can create awareness and increase the exposure of the club. It can attract people to the club who may have not considered using the facilities and potentially pick up social or bowling members.

Sponsorship can contribute to an event or tournament, whether it's a one day event or weekly competition. The event might provide financial assistance by means of prize money or promotional material, or simply by donating a prize. The sponsor can also assist in advertising the event by allowing you to display your promotional material or including the event information on their website. You may even be able to have them place an advertisement on their answering machine "John Smith's Coffee house – sponsor of the Charity day at Big Bowls Club".

By getting sponsorship from potential businesses and organisations, it may lead to other sponsorship avenues through their business partners. For example your major sponsor could introduce your club to business associates who might have an interest in becoming a sponsor of your club.

Another opportunity arising from sponsorship/partnership deals might allow you to form a relationship with businesses where one day down the track they might be able to assist the club. Forming close ties may allow them to assist in the running of the club, give direction in a business frame where their experience could be beneficial as Bowls clubs should be treated like a business. Potential sponsors could end up using your facilities to hold functions, meetings and events.

Approach

When approaching a business to form a partnership, remember to make it clear to them who your target audience is and how the business will benefit.

Have a plan in place, but have a number of options for the business to choose from, as some businesses may not be in a financial position to go into a partnership with a lot of money so a number of options are best practice.

Who to approach?

Members, family and friends

Like all forms of fundraising, it is easier to start locally with your members, friends and relatives. If people know your club and understand what you do, then they are more likely to listen and give the support required. There may even be someone within your club who has a small business and is willing to form a partnership with your club.

Local businesses and suppliers

Check with your suppliers of food & beverage, equipment, chemical & cleaning, gaming machines and sports clothing. Research local business and target those who could benefit from a partnership with your club I.E Greens – Fertilisers.

Larger organisations

Consider approaching larger businesses. They may have more resources but keep in mind they may not have the interest or commitment that your club wants. Unless you have a contact, it may be more difficult to speak to these businesses as they are generally inundated with requests for sponsorship.

Local Council

Don't forget to try your local council office as well. Most councils offer sponsorship or donation to assist clubs in conducting days/events which promote and support the community.

When looking for a sponsorship/partnership, you should make a list of local businesses or companies that are associated with lawn bowls or that your club has a lot of involvement with (a supplier). When a business is connected to your club in some way the sense of similarity creates a better chance of a sponsorship/partnership being formed.

The Offer

The best way to reach out to potential partners is through a sponsorship letter/package. The level of professionalism of this letter/package is going to determine the level of seriousness the business has with you. So use letterhead, logos and professional paper for your letters so that the businesses know you are serious. You can even hand deliver the letter yourself. Wait a few days after the letter has been sent and follow up with the person handling it at that company. Politely ask if he/she has read it and made a decision about your proposal, ask if you could come and meet with the person handling the sponsorship proposal to discuss in person.

Golden Rules of acquiring Sponsorship/Partnership

- Offer an opportunity and not a problem.
- Target businesses with the right fit.
- Be professional.

- Offer exclusivity – don't get companies that are in competition with each other
- Be persistent, ***not a pest***.

A sponsorship/partnership proposal is a formal offer to do business. It needs to be well presented and contain enough information for a business to gain a thorough understanding of what it is being offered and how sponsoring your club/event will benefit their business. Businesses are not charities.

Formal Contracts

It is essential if the sponsorship/partnership is to work to sign off on a formal agreement or contract between the two parties. A lack of written contract increases the potential for misunderstandings and the relationship turning sour. A change of personnel can mean the intent of an agreement is lost, unless the agreement is in writing. Detail everything in the contract that

way both parties will know what is required for the sponsorship/partnership to work. If unsure contact a lawyer to ensure the agreement is sound.

Keeping sponsors happy

You have now signed the contract to the sponsorship/partnership, now it's up to you and your club to honour these commitments and keep the partners happy.

Most businesses like to feel involved and to be kept informed about what's happening with their sponsorship deal and the clubs activities.

Depending on the type of sponsorship/partnership, here are some ways to ensure a successful sponsor relationship:

- Promote the sponsor at every opportunity.
- Acknowledge the sponsor/partner in every media story you release.
- Communicate with your members to ensure they look after sponsor's rights.
- Invite the sponsor to events and give prizes at awards nights.

- Establish more than one key contact in case the main contact moves on.
- Keep your sponsor/partner informed about the club, especially any potential unpleasant publicity.
- Before signing a new sponsor, give existing sponsors/partners the opportunity to address any concerns they may have.
- If you have sold naming rights, you must acknowledge them in everything you say and do. You must also ensure that the media are aware and adhere to the naming rights.
- Send your sponsor/partner an evaluation report.

Other things to consider when maintaining a healthy relationship between sponsors/partners is holding a sponsors/partners day where every partner is invited for a fun day at the club, food and drinks are provided and they can be presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Demo Sponsorship Proposal

Sponsorship Package Details

Package 1 Major sponsor

Only one package is available per event and offers :-

Sign on the fence on the middle green for one year

Display of banners and signage around greens on the day of the event.

Name on flyers as major sponsor

One team to wear sponsor's shirt (To be provide by sponsor)

2 Invites to lunch on day of event

Special acknowledgement over public address system before the game starts.

Invite to speak on behalf of sponsor at lunch time.

Invite to do presentation and speak on behalf of sponsor and end of event.

Media exposure through local paper.

Brochure of company details spread over lunch tables and tables in bar area.

Framed certificate of appreciation.

8 Social membership for one year

Cost $2,000 (excluding GST)