

# PREPARING TO APPROACH COMPANIES



1

What are possible reasons a company may have for supporting a non-profit? Thinking strategically about this question will help you find the right match and the right message. A company might agree to partner because:

- They are building a positive image as a new business in town.
- They are improving their image as an already established business.
- They want to improve their business presence.
- Someone in the company has a personal connection to an organization through experience or friends.
- They are seeking community service opportunities for their employees.
- They are looking for team-building activities for their employees.
- There are positive tax implications for philanthropic endeavors.

2

As with all situations where you approach a potential partner, brainstorm the connections you may already have to the company and determine who on your staff will be the best choice to initiate this particular relationship. (See [Mapping Preliminary Connections](#)).

3

Research the company's reputation thoroughly, including studying their mission to be sure it aligns with your organization.

4

Know who the company's rivals are, and be aware that accepting sponsorships from multiple companies who compete with each other may not be recommended. If you have already been offered a donation by a similar company, you may need to be up front with that information.

5

Choose your first method of contact (call, email, letter, networking event) and draft your script. Be clear and concise, but not too general. If you're calling or talking in person, remember to practice so you feel confident. Don't forget, however, that you want to sound sincere.

6

Consider setting up your initial meeting or call with the Marketing Department, as many companies have a larger budget set aside for marketing than for philanthropy. If you are pitching an idea that will involve promoting their business and will give the company name a lot of exposure with sponsorship, the Marketing staff may have more ability to make it happen.

7

Have your basic information (foundation of knowledge) ready for surprise over-the-phone questions or for when a company might say "Go ahead and email me your information." Nothing could be worse than making someone who is actually showing interest wait because you don't have your proposal prepared. (See [Organizing the Basics](#)).

8

Make sure your website is updated and your online presence is positive. A donor is likely to conduct an internet search.

9

Be prepared to clearly show how this partnership is mutually beneficial. Be certain you are indicating all the ways your agency can help the company, not just how they can fund you.

10

Be ready to follow-up your initial email, letter, or call with an in-person meeting and know in advance who will attend. Any materials you present should be personalized to your company.

11

Be courteous and friendly, even in the face of a flat-out “No” or when confronted with a rude or disinterested person. You never know when you might want to try again.