



# HOW TO WRITE A SPONSORSHIP PROPSAL

Sponsorship is a great way for athletes to meet the costs of training and competing. This resource will look at that important first step of how to prepare a sponsorship proposal and ideas on approaching, making contact and signing on a sponsor.

## Before you start...

Remember that gaining sponsorship is not easy. It is just as competitive as taking on the opposition in your sport. To be successful you really need to approach sponsorship in the same way you approach training – through targeted, smart and focused effort.

## Step One: Identify Your Product

First off you need to understand what your product is. In short it is you, as an athlete. However you need think broadly to capture all the aspects that can be of value you to a potential sponsor.

## Activity One:

On a piece of paper write your name in the middle. Using a mind-map, write down all the things you believe are strengths that can be marketed to a potential sponsor. Use these four categories, X-Factor, Personal Skills, Sponsorship Properties, Achievements, to help.

Don't be shy when completing this activity. You need to be aware of all the factors that make you a great investment for potential sponsors.

This info should be specific. This information then forms the basis of the "product" that you can sell in your sponsorship proposal.





## Step Two:

## Identify Your Needs

Before approaching a sponsor or starting your sponsorship proposal, it is essential that you understand what your needs are. This will give you a clear indication of the level of support you require from a potential sponsor and show them that you are organized and that their investment is needed and will be utilized in the right way.

### *My Needs...*

#### *Financial...*

*Training Camp - \$780*  
*US Competitions - \$2,200*  
*Travel - \$3,000*  
*Accommodation - \$2,000*

#### *Equipment...*

*New Board - \$600.00*  
*Practice Boots - \$200*  
*Travel Luggage - \$300*

#### *Services...*

*Physio - \$460*  
*Equipment Maintenance - \$250*  
*Cell Phone - \$550*

#### *Wish List...*

*Massage Therapy - \$300*  
*Nutritionist - \$440*  
*New Outerwear - \$330*  
*Additional Training Camp - \$5000*

## Activity Two:

On another piece of paper outline what your current needs are. The four categories that can help are Financial, Equipment, Services and a Wish List to help provide an order.

Try to be as specific and realistic as possible and include a dollar amount for each item.

An Excel Spreadsheet is a good tool for keeping track of not only your needs, but also a budget.

Once you have your needs identified you can start to build your proposal.

Looking at the information you have pulled together in Activity One and Activity Two you can start to highlight opportunities with different sponsors. From your information you should be able to draw some conclusions from these two underlying questions...

- Which potential sponsors matches and links well to you as an individual? (These are the components identified in Activity One)
- Which potential sponsors have the ability to meet the needs you have identified? (These are the components identified in Activity Two)

If you are still struggling to find the answers to these questions, go back to Activity One and Two and take another look at completing this information. Other resources that could be beneficial in helping you determine your profile and needs for sponsorship include the 'Marketing Considerations for Athletes' and 'How to create an Athlete Resume' resources.



### Step Three: Choose Your Approach

From here, most athletes choose to target sponsors with either the 'shotgun' or 'sniper rifle' approach. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages and are explained below.

With a 'shotgun' approach athletes tend to construct a fairly generic sponsorship proposal and distribute this to a wide range of potential sponsors. The advantages to this are that it is less time consuming and you can hit a large number of potential sponsors efficiently. The disadvantage to the 'shotgun' approach is that it is not personal or specific and thus fails to really show a connection between you as an athlete and the potential sponsor. It is often easier for potential sponsors to disregard a generic and mass produced sponsorship proposal. If you do choose this method, here are some tips:

- Ensure that even though your sponsorship proposal is generic that it still reflects who you are and your needs.
- Decide whether you will mail, email or use both when sending your proposal to potential sponsors.
- Use a database to compile a list of sponsors and their contact details. This enables you to see who you are covering and ensures you don't send proposals twice.
- Using a 'Mail Merge' from your database is a great way of making your proposal a little more specific and it adds a personal touch.
- Don't forget to follow up. You can't expect sponsors to approach you. All it takes is a quick phone call to each potential sponsor that you sent a proposal to.

The 'sniper rifle' method takes the opposite approach and really looks to identify a smaller number of key sponsors that have a strong connection to the particular athlete. Once identified the athlete tends to spend more time putting a specific sponsorship proposal together showing the specific linkages and benefits of the partnership. The advantages to this are that potential sponsors are more likely to consider and say yes to a proposal that specifically identifies with their company. The disadvantage to this approach is that sponsorship is still very difficult to sell to companies and after all your time and effort, you still may be unsuccessful. If you do choose this method, here are some tips:

- Find out as much as you can about the potential sponsor first. Good information to collect includes, mission statement or company ethos, key products or services, contact information, their customers or target market, locations, connections to the community etc.
- Using this information make a short list of the base information that you need to link your proposal to.
- Construct your sponsorship proposal around linking your own traits with that of the potential sponsor.
- Be as specific as possible, connect your experiences and what you can offer to the potential sponsor and identify the specific benefits of the sponsorship.





## Step Four: Constructing Your Proposal

The actual Sponsorship Proposal is an important tool for athletes looking for sponsorship. However you need to keep in mind that there is no 'perfect' proposal and that what works for one potential sponsor may not for another. The real key to your proposal is that it makes a great first impression and gets you an interview with your potential sponsor.

Your sponsorship proposal should have two basic parts:

- One page that outlines who you are as an athlete; your accomplishments, your experience, your goals and what makes you a fantastic investment for a potential sponsor.
- One page that outlines your actual sponsorship proposal; what investment are you looking for, what benefits can you provide, what are your products, why should they invest, what you will use the money for etc.

For a guide to completing the first part of your proposal, check out the 'Creating an Athlete Resume' resource at [www.bcathletevoice.ca](http://www.bcathletevoice.ca).

The second page of your proposal covers the specifics of your proposal. The steps below offer a guide on what information this page should contain...

### The Goal or Objective of your Sponsorship:

This can be quite short and simple, but it is important as it provides the potential sponsor with an idea of what their investment will be used for and why you need it. You can even include a cost breakdown if you think it helps. Here is an example of what this could look like:

**KELLY ATHLETE**  
&  
**ANNA ATHLETE**  
**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**OUR GOAL:**  
To compete at upcoming elite beach volleyball tournaments in Portland, Vancouver, California and Toronto.

**THE COSTS TO REACH OUR GOAL:**  
The cost to accomplish our goal is approximately \$4,000. This includes;

• Transportation to Oregon, California, Toronto	\$1,000
• Accommodation while competing	\$500
• Tournament Entry Fees	\$1,000
• Training & Equipment Expenses	\$1,500



The example above is a sponsorship proposal from a pair of Beach Volleyball athletes. Although this information is very basic, it shows the costs of being a high performance athlete and you can go into more detail with the potential sponsor once you arrange a meeting or interview.



## The Selling Points of your Sponsorship Proposal:

This is where you need to clearly outline the benefits that are provided in return for the sponsorship investment. There are a couple ways of doing this, but a good approach is to provide different levels of sponsorship benefits and investment. For example, you may have 'Gold', 'Silver' and 'Bronze' levels of sponsorship that a company can choose from. To get a good idea of what types of benefits you can provide a sponsor, look back at Activity One, especially at the 'Sponsorship Properties' column, or check out the examples below:

- Branding – on gear / equipment
- Media recognition
- Involvement at galas and events
- Alignment to a positive role-model
- Use of services and image
- Connection to the community
- Motivational speaking
- Making personal appearances
- Press conferences and media events
- Public awareness campaigns
- Team building or sport demos
- Public speaking opportunities
- Association to healthy lifestyles
- Emails and/or postcards while training and competing

Below is an example of how you could insert these options into a sponsorship proposal:

### ***Major Sponsor:***

As my major sponsor for 2005 your company will receive the following

- Branding opportunities on the competition kayak and paddle bags used in all local, national and international competitions; training T-shirt and travel luggage for 2005. This will be carried out at no cost to your company.
- Major branding on my website, which includes newsletters and can also have a direct link to your website.
- Guaranteed press coverage and brand association in the 3 local newspapers.
- Positive alignment and association with a young, responsible sportsperson creating favorable word of mouth feedback.
- The possibility to use me and my services to promote your company and products.
- The opportunity to help and support a hard working athlete to continue competing on the world stage.

### ***Supporting Sponsor:***

As a supporting sponsor for 2005 your company will receive the following

- Branding of your company on my Training/Warm Up T-Shirt which will be worn both locally and at the 2005 Oceania Championships.
- Branding of your company on my website, which includes newsletters and will track my progress through the tournament.
- Association through press releases and the media.
- Positive profile for your company through your association with this sponsorship.
- An individual thank you on the completion of the 2005 Oceania Championships.
- The opportunity to help and support a hard working athlete to continue competing on the world stage.

The examples above are basic, but give you a good starting point. For more information, check out the 'Marketing Considerations for Athletes' resource at [www.bcathletevoice.ca](http://www.bcathletevoice.ca)





## The Cost of your Sponsorship Proposal:


One of the hardest parts to constructing a sponsorship proposal is to decide on the appropriate level of value for each of your 'levels' of investment. To help with this, it's important to go back to Activity Two and look at what your needs are and then match these with the benefits you are prepared to provide the potential sponsor. Remember to be realistic and think of the proposal from the potential sponsor's point of view. Below is an example of how this could look:

<b>GOLD LEVEL SPONSOR</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
As a major sponsor of both Kelly and Anna your organization will receive:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Branding opportunities on our training apparel, warm-up apparel, travel gear and uniforms (where appropriate).</li><li>• Positive alignment and association with two young, responsible athletes who are active role models within their local communities.</li><li>• The possibility to utilize our services and image to promote both your organization and product/services.</li><li>• Tournament Postcards to keep you updated on our process through this summer season.</li><li>• A signed photo and thank you letter recognizing your valued support.</li><li>• Recognition through all media opportunities.</li></ul>		
<b>BRONZE LEVEL SPONSOR</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>	
As a supporting sponsor of both Kelly and Anna your organization will receive:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive alignment and association with two young, responsible athletes who are active role models within their local communities.</li><li>• Tournament Postcards to keep you updated on our process through this summer season.</li><li>• A signed photo and thank you letter recognizing your valued support.</li></ul>		

The value of your sponsorship is up to you. Many athletes may not attract a 'Gold Sponsor', but by having levels of sponsorship, they may sign many 'Bronze Sponsors'.


## Closing your Sponsorship Proposal:

How you finish your sponsorship proposal is very important. You need to ensure you end on a good note and provide information on what the next steps are. Below is an example:

<p>I hope that we can work with you and your organization to support my dream of becoming National Champions.</p> <p>It would be great to set up a time to meet and discuss this proposal and get your thoughts on how we can work together in the future.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and I look forward to being in touch within the next two weeks.</p> <p>K Athlete Phone: 779-842-95876 Email: kathlete@hotmail.com</p>	
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It is a good idea to link your first sentence back to your goals and objectives for the sponsorship. Also make sure you provide an opportunity to get face to face with your potential sponsor. Remember that in most cases you need a meeting or an interview if a sponsor is going to invest in you. Finally, don't forget to include your contact details and a time frame of when they can expect to hear back from you.

## Sponsorship Proposal Examples



**KELLY ATHLETE**  
&  
**ANNA ATHLETE**

P: 778-848-97422  
E: kathlete@hotmail.com

**OUR GOAL:**  
To compete at upcoming elite beach volleyball tournaments in Portland, Vancouver, California and Toronto. These events are essential in our continued development as high performance athletes and towards our ultimate goal of becoming National Champions.

**ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Team BC Beach Volleyball
- Provincial High School Volleyball Champion
- Female Athlete of the Year
- Female Athlete of the Year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, BC Club
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place, National

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

- Volleyball and Beach Volleyball
- Volleyball and Beach Volleyball
- Volunteer work for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games
- Provided events for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games

**VOLLEYBALL SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

Height: 5'10"  
Standing Reach: 7'0"  
Spike Touch: 8'0"  
Position: Outside Hitter

**REFERENCES:**  
Roger Ref  
Volleyball Head Coach  
604-602-6769  
[ref@nbxcccvc.ca](mailto:ref@nbxcccvc.ca)

**KELLY ATHLETE**  
&  
**ANNA ATHLETE**

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**OUR GOAL:**  
To compete at upcoming elite beach volleyball tournaments in Portland, Vancouver, California and Toronto.

**THE COSTS TO REACH OUR GOAL:**  
The cost to accomplish our goal is approximately \$4,000. This includes;

• Transportation to Oregon, California, Toronto	\$1,000
• Accommodation while competing	\$500
• Tournament Entry Fees	\$1,000
• Training & Equipment Expenses	\$1,500

**MAJOR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY: \$1,000**  
As a major sponsor of both Kelly and Anna your organization will receive:

- Branding opportunities on our training apparel, warm-up apparel, travel gear and uniforms (where appropriate).
- Positive alignment and association with two young, responsible athletes who are active role models within their local communities.
- The possibility to utilize our services and image to promote both your organization and product/services.
- Tournament Postcards to keep you updated on our process through this summer season.
- A signed photo and thank you letter recognizing your valued support.
- Recognition through all media opportunities.


**SUPPORTING SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY: \$100**  
As a supporting sponsor of both Kelly and Anna your organization will receive:

- Positive alignment and association with two young, responsible athletes who are active role models within their local communities.
- Tournament Postcards to keep you updated on our process through this summer season.
- A signed photo and thank you letter recognizing your valued support.

We hope that we can work with you and your organization to support our dream of becoming National Champions.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

**CONTACT:**  
P: 778-228-87532  
E: kathlete@hotmail.com



To see this actual document, check out [www.bcathletevoice.ca](http://www.bcathletevoice.ca)



## Sponsorship Proposal Examples

### My Goal: Oceania 2005

Name: Michael Taylor

Age: 17

Achievements: NZ Under 21 Men's Canoe Polo Team  
NZ Under 18 Men's Canoe Polo Team  
Central Region Under 21 Canoe Polo Team  
Hawke's Bay Men's Canoe Polo Team

I am a Year 13 student at Karamu High School. As well as being Deputy Head Boy and a Year Nine mentor, I am also a High Achiever academically (both with NCEA and within the school). This year I was selected for the Telecom Hawke's Bay Secondary School High Performance Academy for my achievements in Canoe Polo. I have been playing Canoe Polo at a representative level since I was selected at 15 for both the Hawke's Bay Men's Team and the New Zealand Men's Under 18 team for the trans-Tasman series against Australia in 2004. This year at 16 I was the youngest player selected for the New Zealand Men's Under 21 team for the Oceania Championships.

Canoe Polo is a fast and exciting ball sport which can be played on or outside on a still water pitch. It consists of two teams of seven players in 20 metre long composite performance kayaks in a 20 metre long pool. The aim is to score goals worth one point by throwing the ball into the oppositions goal frame suspended two metres above the water. The ball may be boat tackled or hand tackled by members of the opposition.

What I want this year from Canoe Polo is to play in the New Zealand Under 21 Men's Team against the World Under 21 Men's Team. I want to continue to represent the Central Region in the Oceania Championships and to continue to represent Hawke's Bay in the Men's A Canoe Polo Team.

I need your sponsorship and support as Canoe Polo is a sport which as such receives only a very limited amount of funding at an International level is quite considerable as the competition will be no exception and although I have only been able to give you a small amount of support, I feel that we can work together to promote your company and products. If you have any questions please contact me on 027 225 1234.



### My Goal: Oceania 2005

Name: Michael Taylor

Age: 17

Achievements: NZ Under 21 Men's Canoe Polo Team  
NZ Under 18 Men's Canoe Polo Team  
Central Region Under 21 Canoe Polo Team  
Hawke's Bay Men's Canoe Polo Team

#### Major Sponsor:

As my major sponsor for 2005 your company will receive the following

- Branding opportunities on the competition kayak and paddle bags used in all local, national and international competitions; training T-shirt and travel luggage for 2005. This will be carried out at no cost to your company.
- Major branding on my website, which includes newsletters and can also have a direct link to your website.
- Guaranteed press coverage and brand association in the 3 local newspapers.
- Positive alignment and association with a young, responsible sportsperson creating favorable word of mouth feedback.
- The possibility to use me and my services to promote your company and products.
- The opportunity to help and support a hard working athlete to continue competing on the world stage.

Required Investment for Major Sponsorship: \$2,000.00

#### Supporting Sponsor:

As a supporting sponsor for 2005 your company will receive the following

- Branding of your company on my Training/Warm Up T-Shirt which will be worn both locally and at the 2005 Oceania Championships.
- Branding of your company on my website, which includes newsletters and will track my progress through the tournament.
- Association through press releases and the media.
- Positive profile for your company through your association with this sponsorship.
- An individual thank you on the completion of the 2005 Oceania Championships.
- The opportunity to help and support a hard working athlete to continue competing on the world stage.

Required Investment for Supporting Sponsorship: \$100.00



To see this actual document, check out [www.bcathletevoice.ca](http://www.bcathletevoice.ca)





## Getting your Sponsorship Proposal Out:

It's important that after investing time into creating a great sponsorship proposal that you have a strategy for getting it out to potential sponsors. Some things to consider include:

- The approach you choose to identify sponsors – shotgun versus the sniper rifle method.
- Who you identify to send your proposal to. In this case it is good to do some research to ensure you get it to the right person.
- How you will distribute your proposal?
  - Mail looks better and is more effective, but can be costly.
  - Email is an easy way to get your proposal out, but it's also easy for people to delete.
  - Dropping off your proposal in person can create a great first impression, but is also time consuming.

Once your proposal is in the hands of a potential sponsor, make sure you follow up! This could include:

- A phone call to the appropriate person to determine if they have any questions and to seek an interview.
- A thank you letter is a good idea after meeting with a potential sponsor, even before they let you know whether they will support you.
- In all aspects of dealing with a potential sponsor ensure that you are professional, well dressed, polite, enthusiastic and most importantly – be yourself!
- It's a good idea to keep track of the organization you have sent a proposal to, the contact person and the date you sent it. Once you have this database you can check back and see who you need to follow up with and also identify potential gaps on potential sponsors you haven't sent a proposal to.

## Remember...

Here are some final tips...

- Make sure you have professional layout and design
- Be clear and concise with all your information and messages
- Include your future goals and aspirations and educate your potential sponsor about you and your sport
- You don't have to do this alone! Tap into the skills and experiences of the people around you, your friends, family, teachers and even BC Athlete Voice.

For further information contact BC Athlete Voice on 604-333-3660 or at [info@bathletevoice.ca](mailto:info@bathletevoice.ca)