FIRST® Fundraising Toolkit

Section 4 – Sponsor Presentations

Once a team understands their needs, identifies potential Sponsors and creates supporting documentation, it's time to contact organizations and prepare Sponsor presentations. Take the time to coordinate a team meeting to practice talking to mock business professionals, over the phone and in person, before jumping right into calling the companies. Taking the time to learn how to talk to business professionals helps build confidence and increases the chance of a successful fundraising experience for the team.

Review the additional documents in this section to find examples of phone scripts, sponsor presentations and 'best practice' examples from *FIRST* teams. The following list details the steps a team can take to better prepare themselves for a Sponsor presentation.

Before contacting a Sponsor:
- Clearly identify the companies/organizations the team will be contacting using a 'Database of Partnerships'. (See *FIRST* Fundraising Toolkit – Section 2) Doing so:
  - o prevents a team from contacting the same company twice; and
  - o gives students a deadline for contacting their organizations.
- Develop a mock phone script.
  - o Include tips should any of the following happen:
    - the phone call goes to voicemail;
    - the direct contact is unavailable and a message should be left;
    - the direct contact is available; and/or
    - the target company/organization is not interested in forming a partnership with the team.
- Practice calling a company/organization and delivering a sponsor presentation using mentors or parents as the mock business owners. It helps to:
  - o create business backgrounds for the mock audience to reference;
  - o ask the mock audience to react to the presentation in different ways; i.e., be engaged; ignore the students; ask lots of questions; and/or be rude during the presentation; and
  - o have the mock audience respond to the request in different ways, such as:
    1. "Yes, we can donate";
    2. "We can only provide in-kind materials"; and
    3. "We are unable to sponsor the team".

Contacting a potential Sponsor by phone for the first time:
- Ask for the contact information of the best staffer to speak with about having the team bring in their robot for a demonstration.
  - o Be sure to record this contact information when you hang up in order to add it into the team database later.
- Connect with the designated staffer either during the first call or call them at a later time, to coordinate a date for a team demonstration.
  - o Use the mock phone script to help the caller stay on track, being careful not to read off the script or sound robotic or unengaged.
  - o Identify the time and date for a follow-up call or meeting before hanging up (if an organization is interested in learning more or if the contact is unavailable).

- When coordinating an onsite demonstration, be sure the following questions are answered:
  - What time is the presentation?
  - What is the size of the meeting space?
  - Can the robot be run in the space provided?
  - How many team members may attend the demonstration?
  - Where does the team park?
  - What building should the team go to and/or what entrance is best?
- **BE POLITE** and do not be discouraged if the team cannot hold a demonstration.
  - **ALWAYS** thank the staffer for their time before hanging up; and
  - **REMEMBER** to document the details of how the call went in the team database while the conversation is fresh in your mind.

Making a presentation to a potential team Sponsor in person:
- Look professional.
  - Determine if professional clothing or team uniforms is best (may vary by sponsor).
  - Clothing must be clean and show no damage (ripped, torn, buttons missing, etc…)
  - Do not wear a hat.
  - Do not chew gum or bring food/drink to the meeting.
  - **NO CELL PHONES** – focus ALL your attention on the meeting and don't allow yourself to be distracted by ringing phones, texts, email, etc….
- Bring appropriate team documentation.
  - Bring presentation documents to leave with the potential sponsor.
  - Create team business cards and give them to the meeting attendees at introduction.
  - Review Section 3 of the _FIRST_ Fundraising Toolkit for team documentation examples.
- Have confident and purposeful body language.
  - Give a strong, firm handshake looking the person in the eye when doing so.
  - Do not slouch, cross arms or fidget.
  - Do not overuse hand gestures.
  - If standing:
    - Keep equal weight on both feet.
    - When speaking, turn to the audience; when a co-presenter is speaking, turn your body towards them.
    - Do not lock your knees.
    - Be aware of your movement throughout the room.
  - If sitting, DON'T:
    - swing feet;
    - sit on the front of the chair; and/or
    - put elbows on the table (forearms are ok).
- Speak clearly.
  - Remember to slow down and stay calm during the presentation.
  - Enunciate to prevent stumbling over words.
- Stay focused.
  - Listen to other team members when they are speaking and don't interrupt.
  - Listen carefully to the questions being asked by the potential sponsor being careful to answer the question fully.
- Be human and be yourself.
  - Show your excitement and passion for the program.
  - Tell your personal story as to how being a member of the team has impacted you.

- o   Be proud of who you are and the team and organization you represent.

At the end of the presentation:
- Answer any final questions that arise from the presentation clearly and concisely.
- Identify a follow-up date and time to touch base.
- **REMEMBER** to record the follow-up date in the team database.
- **THANK** the potential sponsor for taking the time to meet with you.
- Leave team documentation for review.
- Shake hands on the way out again looking the person in the eye as you do so.
- On the appropriate date, follow-up as necessary.