

Sports SEN: Connecting with the Corporates

A Best-Practice Guide

Active communities, strong partnerships, a better world.

Connecting with the corporate sector can – and will – help to build the ‘enterprise’ part of your organisation. This leaves you more time to focus on what you know best: making a social impact on your community!



Connecting with the corporate sector to improve the *capacity* and *sustainability* of your social enterprise.

The Sports SEN believes that engaging with the corporate sector will help program deliverers, club leaders, and facility managers to build business capacity and improve long-term sustainability for their enterprises – freeing them up to focus on what drives them: social impact!

The key to engaging with the corporate sector is to remember that as a Sports SE, you have something to *offer*. Corporates are looking for cost-effective, beneficial ways to promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Sports SEN members represent an effective, sustainable, impactful place to invest time and money.

Impact Areas

Health	Helping people of all ages to be healthy, get moving, and have fun.
Youth	Youth development, education, and employability training
Community	Cohesion, delivering local services, and supporting the economy
Inclusion	Creating opportunities for all

Using social media is an effective, low cost way to connect with your community and to increase visibility for your organisation. Highlight your organisation’s social impact by focusing on specific events or initiatives.

This can be tied into any community/local outreach that your organisation wishes to engage in.

A guide to engaging with the corporate sector

There are a few important steps you can take to prime your organisation for engagement with the corporate sector.

The first is to ensure that you state your goals to yourself: what is it you're hoping to get out of a relationship with a corporate? You're going to have to ask for something sooner or later – so be sure that you know what it is.

The second is to be strategic about who you are seeking to engage with. Keep in mind that the key to engaging with the corporate sector is to offer something in return. For most social enterprises, that means building a partnership that allows a corporate to engage with the local community.

The SportsSEN's collective identity is centered on the long-term viability. Sports Social Enterprises are crucial members of their communities and deliver impact in a responsible and sustainable way.

It is recommended that you focus on the **return on involvement** that both you and your potential partners can look forward to.



Emphasise the strength of the SportsSEN brand

Communications with the Corporate Sector should focus on your organisation's ability to deliver social impact in your community, using sport.

You should emphasise that your social enterprise is a long-term, viable member of the community; for this reason, you are an excellent place to invest time and money.



What does *engaging* with the Corporate Sector mean?

The Sports SEN would like to create long-term relationships with value-driven corporates. This is likely to take one of two forms (but there could be more!)

1. Financial Support (Sponsorship/Funding)

This is what most people envision when thinking of corporate support. Funds would be welcome and well used, but are hard to come by in today's environment. Because the overriding goal is to improve the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises and the sector as a whole, receiving financial support does not have to be the only objective.

2. HR/Business Support

Corporate sector employees will provide business expertise to social enterprises – making recommendations on issues surrounding governance, operations, capacity, and sustainability. These types of relationships have proved successful in the past and will empower the Sports and Social Enterprise sector moving forward.

Proposing relationships with corporates

Pilotlight, Winning Scotland's Work Out for Sport, and Sported have established programs for facilitating relationships between Sports SEN members and corporate employees. You can, if appropriate, take advantage of one of these programmes.

By working within one of these frameworks, you can simplify the process for all parties.

SENSCOT

"It's fairly straightforward. You just have to know what it is you need, and what it is you can offer. Then everyone can benefit."

- Stevi Campbell, Newmilns Ski Slope

Practical Recommendations: Taking the first steps

Attached documents include sample and template communication styles. These can serve as a guide for your organisation as you attempt to navigate the process of engaging with the corporate sector. Below is a snapshot of what fundraisers call "making an ask" that has been adapted to fit our corporate sector engagement strategy. Use it to guide your engagement process.

1. Identify whom you are approaching.
 2. Define what you are going to propose.
 3. Understand that there will be "No's."
 4. Expect "Yes." (Be optimistic!)
 5. Show how corporate time/money can make a concrete difference.
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- ➔ Introduce yourself/your organisation.
 - ➔ Make a transition to the discussion you want to have.
 - ➔ Reference a connection that the business/individual may have to your community or to your sport.
 - ➔ Talk about the impact that your social enterprise makes/has made on the your community. This is the perfect time to tell a success story.
 - ➔ Explain how the corporate can help, and why your social enterprise has a need for such help.
 - ➔ Make the proposal.
 - ➔ Emphasise *return on involvement*.

In any situation, it is best to seek out personal conversations, whether they be over the phone or face-to-face. The following resources may help you to initiate conversations.

Below is a sample of an online “Contact Us” form. Use it to seek out contact information for individuals at specific organisations.

Good afternoon to TARGETED ORGANISATION NAME

I'm emailing from YOUR ORGANISATION. Our organisation uses BLANK activities to produce BLANK benefits for our local community. We are exploring the possibility of a partnership between YOUR ORGANISATION and the OUR ORGANISATION.

Is there a specific individual in that organisation that I can contact in order to discuss a potential partnership, or to whom I can send more details?

We are keen to engage with leading corporates in Scotland, and so would appreciate any direction that you can provide.

Thanks, and all the best.

Below is an example of a response, appropriate when a potential partner follows up on an initial contact. Use it to initiate a meaningful conversation.

Hi NAME,

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly, I really appreciate it.

To give you some background, NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION) ([Link to Website](#)), is a social enterprise that delivers social impact in NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY by BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS. As a social enterprise we seek to sustain ourselves through trading and are bound by *The Code*, a voluntary code of practice, to re-invest our profits in order to serve our communities. ADD AN ADDITIONAL DETAIL ABOUT THE SPECIFICS OF YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE.

I'd like to discuss an opportunity for partnership between NAME OF TARGET ORGANISATION and NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION. Our organisation, while driven by a passion for creating social impact through sport, understands the need to operate with a sustainable model and would benefit from business and operational support as we seek to improve our capacity. We feel that there are real opportunities for the skills within the corporate sector to migrate to the sports social enterprise sector. The *return on involvement* for NAME OF TARGET ORGANISATION comes from the opportunity for employees to engage in professional development practice and leadership in an area that they find rewarding.

We would hope to optimise and accelerate the growth of NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION by establishing partnerships with value-driven corporations that have recognised the power of sport.

Frameworks for such partnerships include *Pilotlight* (<http://www.pilotlight.org.uk>), Winning Scotland Foundation's *Work Out for Sport* (<http://www.workoutforsport.com>), and *Sported* (<http://sported.org.uk>). We are confident that the Sports Social Enterprise Network members represent a long-term, viable partner for a company like NAME OF TARGETED ORGANISATION. While we are keen to attract financial investment into the sector, we believe that the truly sustainable solution lies in human resource synergy between corporations and social enterprises.

If you believe that there is potential for a partnership between NAME OF TARGETED ORGANISATION and NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION, either now or in the future, we would love to discuss it further. If it were all right with you I'd love to have a quick follow-up chat this week or next to get your impressions regardless of your decision.

Thanks, all the best,

