

# Team 3176 White Paper

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## Abstract

This paper will present some key factors in the process of obtaining a sponsor for the team. This information will be useful to all team members, but especially to new members and those who have little experience with business presentations. The goal is to guide a member through the process of finding, contacting and potentially meeting with a new sponsor.

## Before You Go

Sponsors are a vital connection to the community, regardless of their tiered donations. Therefore it is imperative that you research the company before initiating contact. It is recommended for businesses we have not worked together with in the past, you know their general function (I.E. DSR = Racing therefore they have machining capabilities), Knowing this you can gauge their sponsorship level (I.E. Panoony's = In-Kind). Getting to know things like when they opened, what they usually make in a year (Income, and what they can afford to give away), and who to speak to are great things to know before going in. Background knowledge can help present yourself as a reliable, confident person and can overall improve your first impression with a potential sponsor and help incoming team members to have sponsor knowledge bank.

## **Finding a Contact Through a Previous Connection**

Along with that, Sponsors can also be found with ease and with more compliance towards a larger sum of money or in-kind through having personal connections to potential sponsors. For instance, a student whose Dad works for CVS can easily come away with a few hundred dollars compared to coming in blind with no connection. Connections can come in many different forms. The most common are family connections, like a family business or student's parent's jobs (and potentially grandparents and other extended family's jobs, without taking too much of an advantage of those students care about). Other alternative routes to this gain is through our student's family's common purchases. A perfect example is if a student's parents always bought a Ford vehicle at the local Ford Dealership (Even though that specific group usually says no), a student could try to get a sponsorship through them, speaking to the person who sells them the cars. That way any student will come across as more friendly and possibly have a better chance of closing a deal.

## **Connecting With the Sponsor**

Meeting with a sponsor is more than just presenting the information about the team. A member of the team should attempt to form a connection with the potential sponsor. A meeting may stay strictly professional depending on the business, but in many cases sharing an anecdote about why or how a member joined robotics can help build the relationship the team wants to form between a business and the team. Connecting on a more personal level can establish trust and confidence between two groups. For instance, a member telling how they joined because of their aspiration

for a future in engineering can lead to a connection especially if presenting to an engineering company. An anecdote can also help with nervousness. A casual conversation about a past experience or another personal story can be much easier to talk about. Thinking of the meeting as high stress can sometimes only make it more stressful. Alternatively, changing the conversation from all business to a little bit of personal information can make the stress dissipate. However, a student should not talk constantly. Although the team does want to make a connection with the business, our team doesn't want to leave a bad impression.

### **Know the Team**

A member on a sponsorship meeting is there to do more than just present the information about the team. Fielding questions is very important to make a solid sale of the team. Be sure to know the information on the team in order to be able to answer possible questions from the sponsor.

Hopefully by following these guidelines, a student will better be able to understand the process of obtaining and meeting a new sponsor.