



FOOTBALL  
QUEENSLAND

# SPONSORSHIP GUIDE

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## CLUB SUPPORT



# PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

**Football clubs, large and small, are ideally placed to create genuine financial and commercial value for businesses.**

This Sponsorship Guide has been created to assist clubs through the process of attracting and retaining long term sponsors. To support your sponsorship goals, we recommend having the following in place at your club, or working towards them:



## **SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR**

Someone who can attract and retain club sponsors



## **CLUB STRATEGY**

Clearly defined targets for sponsorship income and sponsorship retention



## **DOCUMENT HUB**

Vital information relating to existing sponsors including agreements and contact information

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**Sponsorship starts at the committee level.**

The journey to secure and retain sponsors each year should start with the committee making three important decisions:

1. What is their sponsorship target for the upcoming season?
2. Who will the committee delegate responsibility to regarding the attraction and retention of sponsors at the club?
3. How the person charged with coordinating sponsorship will interact with and balance the committee and their decision-making powers.

**Sponsorship is a mutually beneficial relationship between two parties: the business, and the club.**

Sponsorship is very different to a donation. A donation is a one-off contribution where the donor does not expect anything in return, whereas a sponsorship is a mutually beneficial business relationship. There are many different types of sponsorship inclusions and packages that clubs can offer to create value.

***'Real value' will be determined differently by each sponsor.***

Clubs should seek to maximise the benefit to their sponsors and build a solid ongoing relationship which in turn will encourage the sponsor to return year after year. This Guide will explore how this can be done and how to measure its effectiveness.

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Generally, the four reasons a business will sponsor a local football club are:

1. They have an existing connection with the club, either as a player, member or supporter, or have a family member or friend linked to the club
2. They want to be a part of the club, engaged and feel a strong sense of belonging and involvement with the club community;
3. They want to contribute, or be seen to be contributing, to their local community;
4. It is financially beneficial to them.

**Typically, clubs seek money in return for sponsorship packages.**

**However, businesses can also contribute goods, services, access, facilities and resources.**

Receiving 'in kind' from sponsors can be more valuable than cash particularly if the club is unable to afford the items or are already paying for them (e.g. a service). In kind donations can be used to save money on expenses and raise more money than the sponsor may have been able to provide in the first place.

For example, the local painter is willing to provide line marking paint for the field in return for promotion as a club sponsor. The club would have normally purchased field marking paint every year, so the value of the in-kind donation can be attributed to a sponsor package.

***It is important that your sponsorship package creates financial value for sponsors AND networking opportunities, so sponsors feel valued at the club.***



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**Set clearly defined targets to achieve your club goals and to secure and retain sponsors.**

Ideally your club will set a budget each year identifying the amount the Club Treasurer expects the club to receive in sponsorship.

Your committee should set at least two club sponsorship goals:

1. Specify exactly how much is to be raised through sponsorship within the fiscal year
2. Retain sponsors from previous seasons

For example, a committee could set their club's sponsorship goals for the upcoming season as:

By Round 4 of the upcoming season:

- Generate \$1,000 in sponsorship revenue (or any other nominated amount)
- Retain 85% of individuals and businesses who sponsored the club in the previous two seasons

It is important to set a date by which the goals are to be delivered.



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The next step is to decide who will be responsible for achieving these goals.

Committees can either allocate responsibility to a specific club role (i.e. Sponsorship Coordinator) or they may create a sponsorship group, often called a sub-committee.

It is vital that the committee document their expectations which include the following information:

- The sponsorship amount to be generated
- What authority the coordinator or sub-committee has to commit the club to a sponsorship agreement before they must seek approval from the committee
- Reporting mechanisms and agreed timeframes
- Any restrictions in place on the coordinator or sub-committee (e.g. the club may not want to enter into a sponsorship partnership with a gambling agency)
- What information needs to be reported to the committee and by when
- Any other information relating to the management and support of the sponsorship coordinator or sub-committee.

**[Download a Sponsorship Coordinator Position Description template](#)**



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**Transfer all the information from previous club sponsorship agreements to the new coordinator or sub-committee.**

Vital information includes:

- Who are your current and past sponsors?
- Who is the key contact person for each sponsor and their contact details?
- What is included in their current sponsorship package?
- Did the sponsor pay cash only or did they include an 'in-kind' contribution?
- What kind of relationship do they want?
- Any cash payment terms and conditions.
- What do they seek to achieve by sponsoring your club? (e.g. a financial return or brand awareness)
- What (if any) was the relationship with the club prior to becoming a sponsor?
- What documentation exists that can be edited and reused? E.g. sponsorship proposals, agreements, databases, opportunities etc.

If you are the incoming Sponsorship Coordinator or member of the sub-committee and you have not received any information, then proactively request this information. Start with the Club Treasurer or Secretary if you are unable to contact the people who were co-ordinating sponsorship last season.

The past, present, and potential relationships with your sponsors are the foundation which will see the sponsorship grow. The effort it takes to retain sponsors should reduce significantly over time.

**[Download a Sponsorship Information Checklist](#)**

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#### Contact your previous sponsors.

Generally, sponsors will continue their sponsorship for the next season if:

- They are invited
- Their own goals and objectives were met
- They feel a strong 'sense of belonging' to the club

#### Finally, induct the incoming Sponsorship Coordinator or sub-committee.

New Sponsorship Coordinators should be personally introduced by the outgoing coordinator to each of the sponsors (or at least the major sponsors). If the outgoing coordinator is unavailable, a member from the club committee who has had previous dealings with the sponsor should introduce the new contact.

This is a KEY act of respect and commitment, reaffirming that the club is not taking the sponsor for granted.

Ensure you are armed with knowledge on past interactions with the sponsor and what the current situation is. It is also helpful to research the business and understand who their target market is and what they have achieved recently. This will assist in making conversation and building rapport.



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To create the most effective sponsorship packages, each club must understand what major factors will add value to sponsors.

From a commercial perspective there are three key components to valuing your sponsorship packages.

1. How big is your club's audience or community?
2. What is your club's ability to engage its audience?
3. What is your club's ability to influence the behaviour of its audience or community?

As discussed earlier in this Guide, people sponsor football clubs for more than just commercial reasons, so it is important to consider two additional points:

1. What does the sponsor value or what are they seeking from your club? (For example, is it social, networking or community inclusion opportunities?)
2. What is the sponsor willing and able to pay for the sponsorship package?



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**Many clubs underestimate the size of their audience/community.**

From a sponsorship perspective a club's audience may include:

- Those actively participating in your club activities
- People who follow the club on social media
- People from the club's various databases
- Spectators and users of club facilities
- People who attend club events
- Local and broader community members in contact with the club
- Visitors to the club website and readers of club newsletters

You could assume that the bigger your club's audience the better, but that's not necessarily the case. A quality audience can be just as important as one of quantity. Know your audience well so that you can approach sponsors with confidence that you have an audience that is right for them.

***Once you have determined the size of your audience the next step is to identify how your club engages with them and how often. From a sponsorship perspective, the more often your club can promote the sponsor, the better.***



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Through co-branding we can promote how often our community is exposed to the sponsor's brand. Some examples include:

### Within the clubhouse:

- Trophies named after a sponsor
- Trophy cabinets
- Prize/honour boards
- Bar mats
- Coasters
- Table centre displays
- Back-of-toilet- door displays
- Signage barriers
- Changeroom walls

### Online platforms:

- Facebook/Twitter/Instagram recognition – posts & photos
- Recognition on social media banners
- Website space
- Newsletter advertising
- Feature articles

### On the field/external clubhouse:

- Ground signage scoreboard
- Seating sections
- Car parking sections (e.g. you are parked in the Electricity Wizard Lot)
- On equipment (marquees, training balls, portable goals)

### On players:

- Training jerseys
- Match jerseys, shorts, socks
- Polo shirts

### On club merchandise:

- Hats
- Bags
- Casual clothing (jumpers, shirts)
- Ticket sales (sponsor's names on ticket)



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Bringing your sponsor directly to your club audience can be invaluable for businesses as it provides an opportunity for them to grow a positive relationship with consumers in person.

***Introducing your sponsor to your club's audience can take many different formats. Ensuring the format attracts the right demographic helps support your sponsor.***

Your club may even choose to create an event for the sponsor to showcase their products. Examples include:

- Ask sponsor to start the game
- Ask sponsor to have an activation at a game (a marquee showing goods)
- To present the trophies/awards at the end of the game/season
- Schedule a special carnival or in-house tournament
- Hold a club function at the sponsor's place of business (further information on following slide)
- Offer members rewards when they use your local sponsor to purchase goods

Examples of ways the club can create opportunities for the sponsor to visit the club include:

- Sports store sponsors may visit during the pre-season to fit and sell new boots
- A coffee shop sponsor could be offered a stall on match day to sell coffee
- Dentist could come and fit mouth guards to the junior players
- Car dealership could display cars on match day
- Organising events specific to special days

***Opportunities can be created to showcase your sponsors to your community, adding value both to your events and to the sponsors themselves.***

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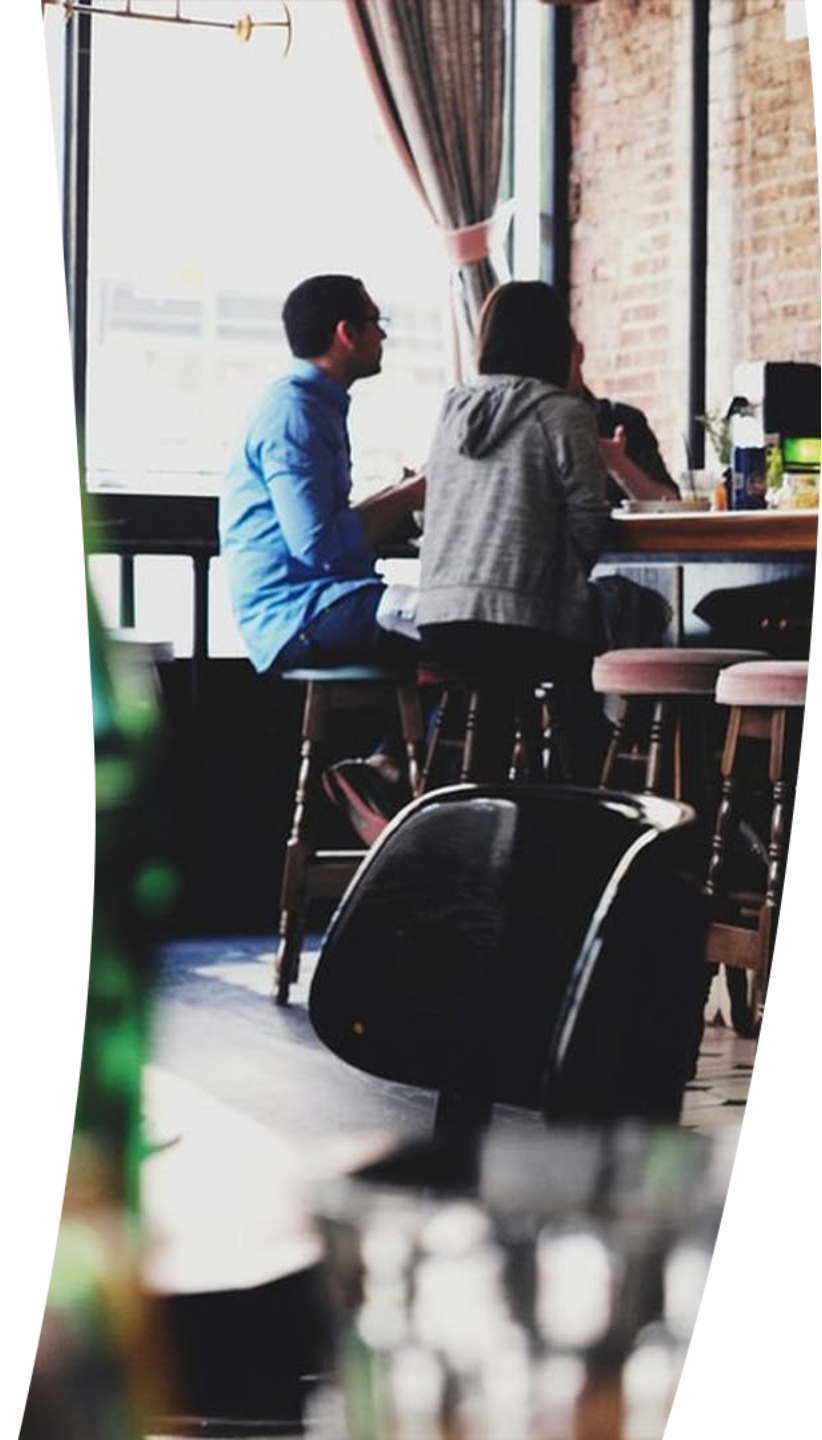
**You can also take your audience to your sponsor.**

For example, if you have a sponsor that is a pub, restaurant, cinema or gym, your club could organise an event at the sponsor's venue. It could be an auction night, presentation night, or cocktail party.

This creates opportunities for businesses to generate extra income, show off their venues and most importantly, develop relationships with your members.

***Including sponsor visits in your sponsorship marketing strategy is a powerful way of promoting and generating real value for your club sponsors.***

***Capture photos or short videos of your sponsors engaging with club members. This will be useful when promoting sponsors on social media and when reporting on the sponsorship at end of season.***



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#### Creating a strong sense of belonging between the club & the sponsor.

Possibly the most important part of creating long term partnerships is building a strong sense of belonging between the club and sponsor. If a sponsor has a strong sense of belonging to the club, they are more likely to assist the club to achieve its goals and to provide long-term support.

This long-term support gives a club the opportunity to renew the sponsorship each season, and potentially increase the level of the sponsorship agreement.

If the sponsor's friends and family are invited into club activities and made to feel welcome, this will strengthen the sponsor's sense of belonging. It may also provide opportunities for other connections to be made. Everyone has networks, and sponsors will be more likely to introduce people in their network to you if you have a genuine rapport with them.

***For many sponsors, maximising the social value of the sponsorship package is the most important component.***



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**Host an event where your club invites all sponsors to join them at the club for a social gathering.**

Generally, this will be on match day so that sponsors can socialise with a range of stakeholders and see their sponsored players/teams in action. It is recommended to hold two 'Sponsor's Days' – one early in the season and one close to the end of the season.

**Schedule social and fundraising activities throughout the year for the broader community.**

Invite sponsors to these events and remember to focus not only on the business owner, but also involve their family, associates, and friends.

**Create networking opportunities within your sponsorship community.**

Invite your sponsors to join you at other local club facilities or association events. This will further drive their sense of belonging at your club while presenting opportunities for the sponsor to chat with other neighbouring businesses.

Create as many networking opportunities as possible for your sponsors throughout the season, and your sponsors will thank you for it in the following year's renewal.



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### Gesture of appreciation

It is important for clubs to present a 'gesture of appreciation' to the sponsor at the commencement of the season (typically during their first club visit). For sponsors, this is important as they can show their own customers that they are supporting their local community.

Make sure your gesture of appreciation is given to the sponsor immediately after they come on board with the club. If possible, and to save time, organise and create your gesture of appreciation ahead of time so that it is ready as soon as required.

Take photos when you present your gesture of appreciation to the sponsor and include these in a post on your club's communication channels to promote the new relationship between club and sponsor.



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### Using websites, email newsletters and social media to promote your sponsors.

To maximise the value to sponsors, all website, email newsletter or social media posts should also have a 'call to action' or a reason to encourage people to click on the link to the sponsor's website.

Work with your sponsors to create offers and reasons for your audience to go to the sponsor's website - a logo alone is not enough. Making the offer relevant to your club community is a good start, as well as using football language to relate the goods and services provided by the sponsor directly back to the club.

**Football clubs often have a very large number of people visiting their club website for information, thus making it an ideal location to actively promote club sponsors.**

While having a webpage dedicated to club sponsors looks great, these types of pages attract few visitors and rarely create value for the sponsor. To maximise the value of your website to sponsors, their logos and 'calls to action' should be placed in the highest traffic areas of your website.



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### E-Newsletters

E-newsletters are not only useful for sharing news regularly with your audience (for example team selections, match results, standout players or upcoming social and fundraising events) but are also a great way to promote your sponsors, their products and services directly to your audience.

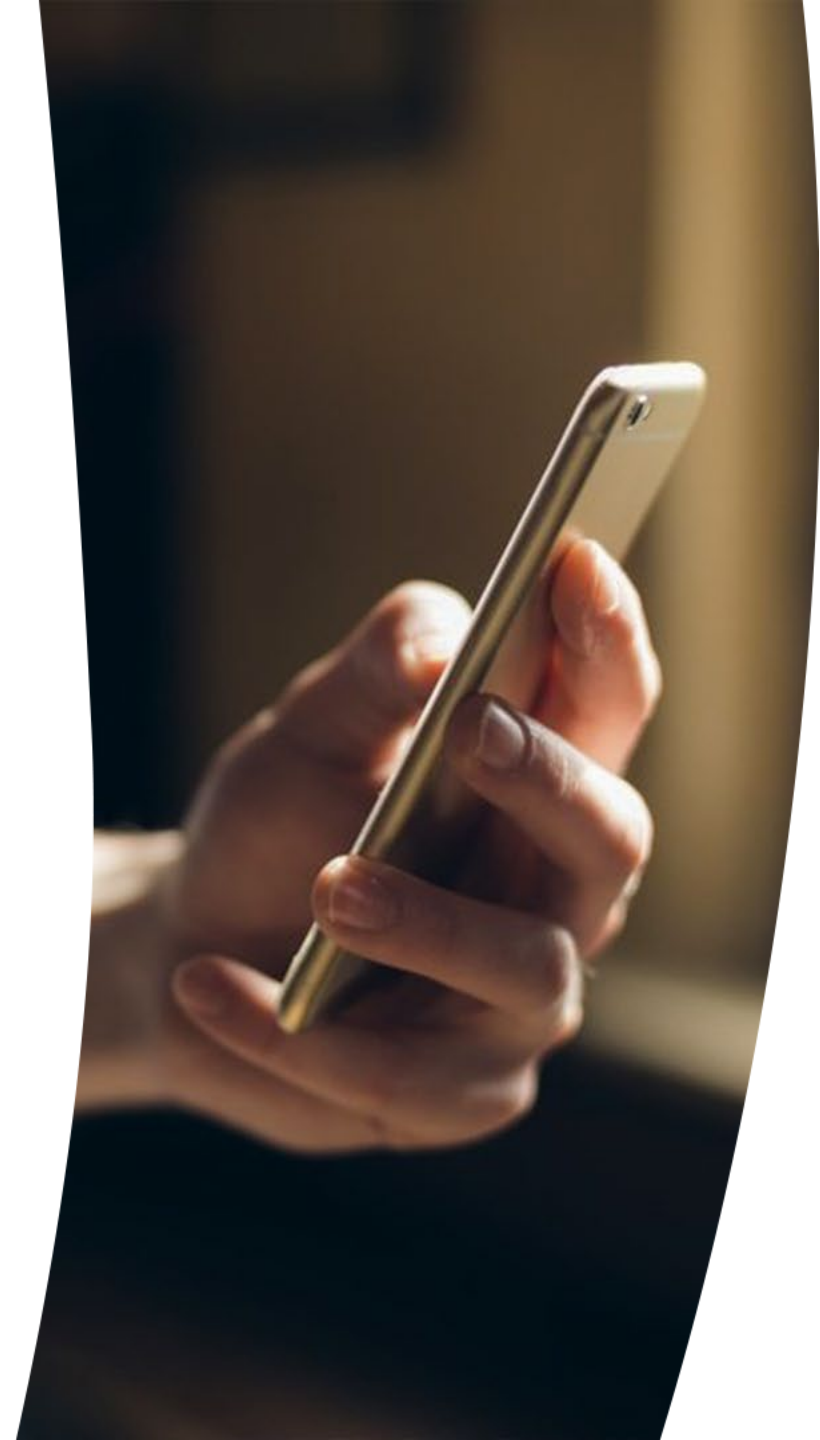
Sending regular e-newsletters allows your club to promote sponsors throughout the year while building a very strong sense of belonging between the club and the individual member.

Check out some of the following platforms  
[www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com), [www.campaignmonitor.com](http://www.campaignmonitor.com) or  
[www.activecampaign.com](http://www.activecampaign.com)

### Social Media

Social media is a fantastic way to promote club sponsors however to maximise the value, it is important that the promotion has a very strong 'call to action' which attracts the person to the sponsor's products or services.

***[Search for Football Queensland on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, & LinkedIn to learn more.](#)***



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### Creating the sponsorship proposal

The proposal should be professional and contain the following:

- Photos and contact details
- Club background and history
- Membership, numbers, and details
- The current players/teams at the club
- Audience and the ability for the club to communicate with these groups
- Traditional and social media details and audience numbers
- Social and fundraising events
- Future plans and goals
- President's Message
- Sponsorship options (try something unique instead of just Gold, Silver, Bronze etc.)

Once you have created your sponsorship proposal template, ensure it is added to the club website so that players and members can easily access it at any time. It can then be constantly referred to in club communications such as email newsletters, social media and even other pages of the website.

**[Download a Sponsorship Proposal Template](#)**

**[Download a Sponsor Letter Template](#)**

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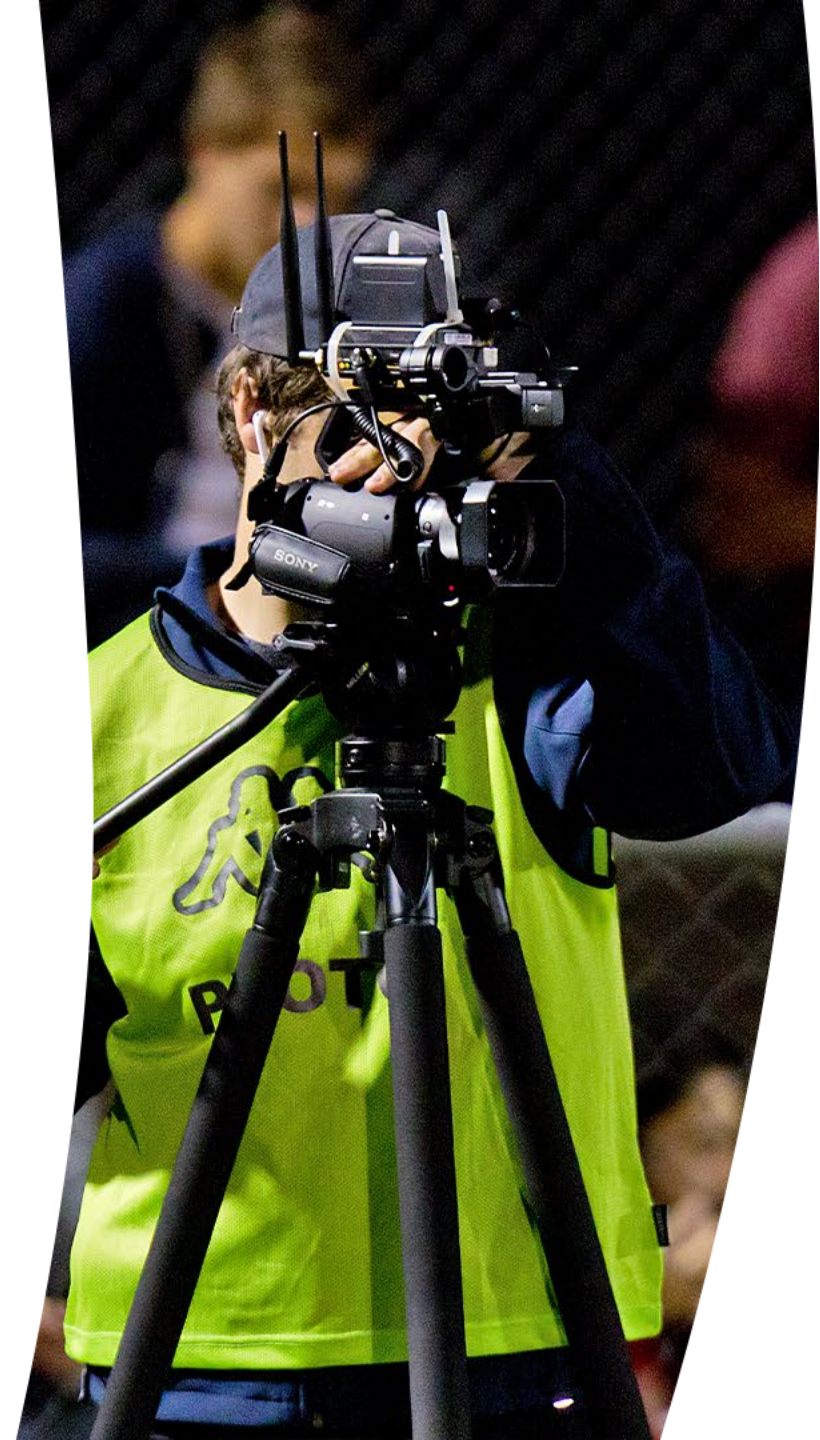
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### Using video to enhance your proposal

Many football clubs are now creating videos that highlight the club's identity and what it means to be involved with the club. A video about sponsorship should explain what the sponsorship funds will be used for and include a personal invitation to become part of the club.

Videos are a great way to illustrate the benefits of becoming a club sponsor. For example, if the sponsorship package includes naming rights to the scoreboard, then shooting the video while a match is being played will allow you to demonstrate how many people will see the sponsor's brand on the scoreboard during a game.

***It is often a lot easier to create an emotional connection with a potential sponsor using a video message than it is with an email.***



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### Attracting and retaining sponsors

Football clubs traditionally approach sponsorship in the same manner. Generally, they will appoint one or two people to be responsible for retaining the existing club sponsors and to attract new sponsors to the club each year.

Often clubs don't view the role of the Sponsorship Coordinator or sub-committee to be an essential function of the club and will go years without having someone in the role.

***If you are serious about getting sponsors, this role needs to be filled each year.***

**Sponsors help to reduce the direct cost to players and members of running the club.**

One way to attract new businesses is through 'player sponsors'. This approach involves players attracting sponsors to the club in a low-level partnership (may only involve a logo on the back of the training shirt) which provides a warm lead and opportunity for the sponsor coordinator to build a new relationship.

Building strong relationships ensures the club understands the sponsor, what they are seeking from their sponsorship and most importantly how the club can deliver and exceed their expectations.



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### Sponsorship Agreements

It is important that both the club and sponsor/s have a very clear understanding of exactly what benefits are included in the sponsorship, as well as:

- Objectives of both the club and sponsor
- Responsibilities of both club and sponsor
- When funds are due to be paid
- Exactly what benefits, such as memberships or tickets to club events, and sponsorship inclusions the club will be provided to the sponsor
- What marketing the club will undertake to promote the sponsor
- What reporting the club will provide to the sponsor at the end of each year

It is important that this information is documented and provided to both the sponsor and the club prior to the sponsorship commencing.

This information should be included within the club documents and in the initial sponsorship proposal. It should be signed off by both parties and kept handy for ready reference throughout the season.

**[Download a Sponsorship Agreement Template](#)**



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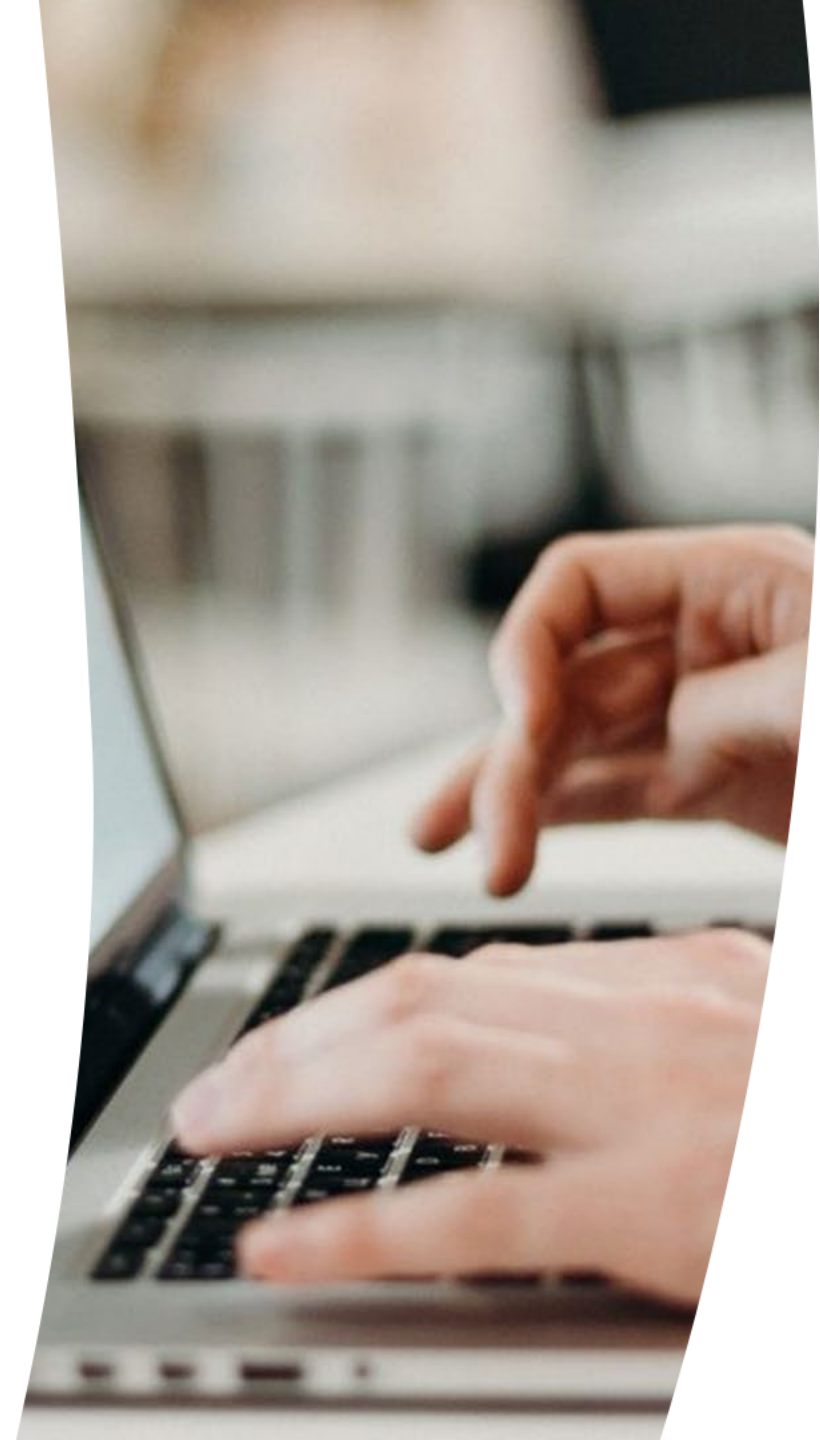
### Website, E-Newsletter & Social Media Analytics

These platforms enable you to measure exactly how often people viewed a website page, e-newsletter or social media post and who those people were. The analytics can provide in depth understanding of how many times someone 'clicked through' to the sponsor's website from the club website, e-newsletter or social media post relating to a sponsor.

The more people viewing the sponsor's information and clicking through to their website, the more the sponsor will see value in continuing the partnership. Many football clubs are creating significant 'traffic' to a sponsor's website without even realising it.

How to use:

- [Facebook Analytics](#)
- [Instagram Analytics](#)
- [Website Analytics](#)
- [E-Newsletter Analytics \(MailChimp\)](#)



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## **Reporting**

A great way to determine the success of a sponsor is to create a brief report highlighting how the club fulfilled their part of the agreement and the results.

The layout for the report should cover the following:

- Summary of how the year went for the club (player/team achievements, committee achievements, club facility changes, events or funds raised) – 1 to 2 pages
- Provide a table or summary of the contract requirements and whether these were achieved (use the words delivered, under delivered or over delivered and include notes if required) – 1 page
- Elaborate on the contract and provide examples showing how the club delivered the requirements (include images, screenshots of social media channels or website etc.) – up to 3 pages. This section should also include the analytics mentioned above.
- Finish with a one-page summary which thanks the sponsor for the year and includes details and ideas on how you can help them should they come on board for another year



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### Send a Sponsorship Survey

Measure effectiveness by asking the sponsor whether the efforts you have made within the contract have worked. Effectiveness for the business will depend on their reason for sponsoring and may not directly relate to a number of sales.

Don't wait until the end of the year to send the survey or to speak to your sponsor. Not staying in contact can often break down the relationship, and subsequently the sponsorship. Send the sponsorship survey at any point you feel necessary during the season.

### Download a Sponsor Survey Template

### Review the Contract

It is strongly recommended to check each contract mid-year to ensure you are on track to fulfil the obligations. Waiting until the end of the season may mean the club is unable to complete the requirements and may lose the sponsor for the following year.

***Stay on track and stay in touch with your sponsors.***

It's also common for Sponsorship Coordinators to come up with new ideas or ways in which you can bring your audience to the sponsor (or vice versa) during the season. Don't hesitate to get in touch with your sponsor if you have an idea as they are likely to get on board and increase exposure.

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**Sponsors rarely complain, they simply do not come back the following year.**

Meeting the requirements of the sponsorship agreement is the responsibility of the Sponsorship Coordinator or subcommittee. It is important they review each sponsorship at the start, middle and end of the season to ensure all commitments are met. It is especially important that all branding obligations are in place at the start of the season. In the early season review, ensure all sponsors receive tickets in advance to upcoming club functions.

The Sponsorship Coordinator should be monitoring the activities of the sponsors throughout the year and if sponsors are not attending events, they should contact the sponsor to find out why.

***Taking a real interest in the sponsor throughout the year will make it easier to negotiate a renewal for next season.***

Take the time to visit each sponsor in person and ask for their feedback on the year and how your club can create more value for them next year. This is the perfect opportunity to provide and discuss your sponsor report. In many instances Sponsorship Coordinators can get a sponsor's commitment for the following season immediately, thus taking some of the pressure and workload away from next year's sponsorship renewal period.

***The sponsor may be happy to pay for the following season's sponsorship immediately or at least commit to being involved with the club.***

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### Moving Forward

If the Sponsorship Coordinator is moving on, ensure there is a handover with the new volunteer to help them continue to foster the relationships and hard work you have put in place.

The information in the handover should include:

- Spreadsheet listing current/past sponsors and contract information
- Materials used to promote sponsorship packages for the clubs
- A face-to-face meeting introduction with the previous coordinator, the new coordinator and the sponsors

***The relationships built with sponsors is extremely valuable, so make sure the handover of sponsorship information is done correctly year to year.***



For more information or assistance, please contact Football Queensland  
at [marketing@footballqueensland.com.au](mailto:marketing@footballqueensland.com.au)

