

COMMUNITY ACTION: MK

Getting Support From Companies

Generating support from companies an increasingly common way to fundraise for many charities and community groups. Companies have lots of useful skills, resources and ideas which can benefit charitable organisations - sometimes it just requires a bit of 'thinking outside the box'!

How can companies help?

There are lots of ways that companies can support voluntary groups, not necessarily just with financial donations.

- **Support in kind**—Companies may give products, materials or old equipment
- **Grants programmes** —Some larger companies have grants schemes where groups can apply for financial support. Examples include the Santander group, Lloyds TSB Foundation and Co-op Community Fund
- **Sponsorship**—Common forms of company sponsorship include 'Charity of the Year' scheme's, sponsoring an event, activity or publication
- **Advice and support**—Companies may offer free advice or services from local firms, e.g. solicitors, accountants etc. Prohelp is a national network of professionals offering free support to voluntary sector organisations. Go to www.prohelp.org.uk
- **Employee volunteering**—Supporting employees to volunteer on a one-off or ongoing basis can help voluntary organisations, but bear in mind that supporting volunteers will take extra support from your group
- **Payroll Giving**— Also know as Give as you Earn. Companies can encourage staff to give an amount from their pay packet each month to a chosen charity, and often match fund this donation

Do your research!

Companies often look to support causes which are important locally or causes which are linked to their area of business. For example, a shop that sells baby care products may support a local parent and toddler group.

Connections with specific groups may also increase the likelihood of being supported, so when selecting a company to approach, think about whether anyone in the group may have links to particular companies. E.g. Do your trustees work within companies that may offer support?

Some charities also have nominated charities or causes which are pre-selected e.g. nominated charities of the year. Make sure you take this into consideration before applying.

After you have done your research and identified potential companies to approach, you will need to get in contact and explain your cause.

Tips for working with Companies and the Corporate Sector

Target and Tailor!

Research the company to ensure they would be interested in your cause. When selected, write tailored letters to the companies rather than sending a circular appeal. Tell them why you are asking for their help, or explain the link you have with them.

Build your relationship

Be personable and make sure you seek the right person to speak to at the company. A letter, followed up by a brief phone call is often a good way to make contact. Make sure you know the key points you want to say and keep it concise!

In writing

Letters should be short and concise—no more than 1 side of A4 paper (preferably on headed note paper). Be clear about what you want, why they should support you and why you chose them to help. Also tell them how it will benefit them and how you would acknowledge their help. Try to be specific about what you want e.g. refreshments for an event for 50 people, a raffle prize worth £50.

Leave contact details for your group so the company can contact you and include details of appropriate website/social media sites so they can their own research about your work.

Follow up

If you are offered support, remember to say thank you! Invite them to the event, acknowledge them in your newsletters, or send them photos of your activity. You never know if you may want to call on them again!

Be realistic! Companies may get more requests than they can support so make sure you are fair in what you ask for and leave plenty of time before your activity in case the requests don't come to fruition

Further Resources

- [The Guide to UK Company Giving](#) (available in reference section of MK Library)
- [Company Giving](#)
- Community Action: MK run a programme called 'Employee Volunteering' which links local business together with local volunteering opportunities. Contact the EV Team to find out more - ev@communityactionmk.org or call 01908 661623

Talk to our Support Team for more help
Support@CommunityActionMK.org or call 01908 661623

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Information sourced from FunderFinder's 'Companies' factsheet, and Buckinghamshire Funding Group factsheet

This information sheet has been produced by Community Action: MK and was last updated in 2015. Community Action: MK has taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that information contained in this document is accurate, but stresses that the content is not intended to be legally comprehensive.